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Teaching About the Other in Primary Level Social Studies: The Sami in Norwegian Textbooks

- The article discusses the role of textbook discourses in constructing national imaginary.
- Textbooks for primary school are analyzed by applying critical discourse analysis.
- The empirical example is portrayal of the indigenous Sami people in Norway.
- Discourses on history and national days entail an active othering of the Sami.
- The textbooks provide limited opportunities for education that promotes social change.

Purpose: The aim of this article is to discuss to what extent and in what ways the Sami people are included in national imaginary in textbooks. The article sheds critical light on important aspects of democracy, inclusion and multiculturalism in education through the example of indigenous peoples in Norway. The article also explores what opportunities textbooks provide for promoting anti-oppressive education and pedagogical subjectification.

Method: Social studies textbooks for primary school are analyzed based on critical discourse analysis (CDA) and elements from multi-modal analysis. The analysis focuses on the use of vocabulary and pronouns signaling inclusion and exclusion. Specific attention is paid to the hidden curriculum.

Findings: The Sami are essentialized and actively constructed as the Other through the structure and content of narratives. This corresponds to the strategy described in anti-oppressive education as education for the Other. Externalization of the Sami from the story of the Norwegian national day and in particular, treatment of the discriminatory Norwegianization politics, reinforce the image of Norwegian exceptionalism.

Practical implications: Potential for education that promotes social change and subjectification through disrupting hegemonic discourses are located. Extended knowledge on this implicates further research on the workings of discourse in educational practice.

Keywords:

Textbooks, Sami, Nordic exceptionalism, anti-oppressive education, subjectification

1 Introduction

The aim of this article is to discuss to what extent and in which ways the indigenous Sami population are included in construction of the greater “we” in social studies¹ textbooks for primary schools in Norway. The Sami are the only indigenous people of northwestern Europe, and the ancestral homeland of Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie² covers parts of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and northwestern Russia. After a brutal history of experiencing state-driven discrimination, the Sami population achieved formal recognition and rights as indigenous group in Norway. Educational policy declares that Sami culture and history is part of the common national heritage that should permeate education in all subjects for all pupils (The Norwegian Directory for Education and Training [UDIR], 2017). Paraphrasing Røthing and Svendsen (2011) on the construction of national and ethnic borders, I focus on how the imagined national community (Andersson, 1983) is informed by images of

the Sami. I investigate how textbooks construct “Saminess” as well as the role such conceptualization holds for understandings of the Norwegian nation-state. The analysis is grounded in insights from postcolonial theory and specifically the idea of *Nordic exceptionalism* (Eidsvik, 2016; Keskinen, Tuori, Irni, & Mulinari, 2009; Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2016). However, the goal is not solely to shed light on the well-acknowledged and contested relationship between education and nationalism but also to explore what opportunities textbook discourses provide for democratic and inclusive education. These questions are approached by applying strands of critical pedagogy, such as *anti-oppressive pedagogy* (Kumashiro, 2002) and the concept of *subjectification* put forward by Gert Biesta (2005, 2009, 2014). According to Biesta, democratic education depends upon the possibility of each individual to “come into presence” as unique subject. This idea presupposes recognition of plurality and difference as the norm, which challenges the inherent methodological nationalism of social studies. The significance of these theoretical frameworks lies especially in their potential for locating agency and enabling social change.

Norway has ratified the International Labour Organization [ILO] convention 169 (ILO, 1989), and the state is declared to be “founded upon the territory of two peoples, the Norwegian and the Sami” (White paper 55, 2000–2001). Norwegian minority politics is inspired by the hierarchic structure put forward by Kymlicka (1995), and the Sami hold extensive formal rights as a

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collective. As category, Sami encompass several different groups with distinct self-identities, languages and traditions, acknowledged as a community by their common recognition as indigenous. As the Norwegian state abstains from registering information on the ethnicity of its residents, there are no approved number of the amount of the population identifying as Sami. The official approach to this topic is mainly geographical, and ten Norwegian municipalities with approximately 55.000 inhabitants are defined as "Sami management areas".³ However, due to urbanization, the majority of pupils with Sami affiliations probably live and go to school outside the Sami management areas (Gjerpe, 2017). The juridical status of the Sami posits a contradictory rhetoric for curriculum policy documents. While they promote integration of minority groups within a common "Norwegianness" with monocultural connotations, they also aim at providing culturally significant recognition to the Sami (Education Act, 1998; UDIR, 2017). Fundamental questions in this context include, what role do minorities have in images of the nation, and who can identify as subject and citizen in educational narratives? The research question guiding this article is hereunder

- To what extent and in which ways are the Sami included in construction of the greater "we" in social studies textbooks for primary schools?

This is further operationalized through the following sub-questions:

- How is the Sami conceptualized through text and images?
- How does the Sami inform production of Norwegian national imaginary?

Choosing textbook discourses as an empirical indicator, some pivotal remarks must be made. This article does not imply that textbooks determine teaching. Schools deal with representations rather than actual social realities, and large discrepancies between these levels might exist (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011). However, research implies that teachers depend more upon textbooks than on ideals of professionalism suggest (Børhaug, 2014). In many cases, textbooks hold a stronger sense of authority than other books and can be said to represent important expressions of national identity (Lorentzen, 2005; Røthing, 2015). The core of the idea of imagined community is that it is conceived in language rather than blood (Andersson, 1983) and thus can be approached through looking at discourses. The educational system is among the most pervasive institutions discursively reproducing hegemonic structures of society and ideas of national identity (Van Dijk, 1998).

2 Theoretical framework: Postcolonialism, subjectification and anti-oppressive pedagogy

The postcolonial perspective focuses on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, marginalization and relationships between constructions of nation, ethnicity, gender and race. Norwegian nationalism is commonly presented in educational discourse as a positive and liberating force,

thoroughly depicted through symbolic events, such as the enactment of the constitution in 1814 and resistance to the Nazi occupation (Røthing, 2015). The country's national self-image is characterized by the idea of Norway as a peacebuilding, inherently good and humble country that is innocent of imperialism and colonialism (Eidsvik, 2016; Gullestad, 2006). This image epitomizes the manifestations of Nordic exceptionalism, a particular form of nation branding described by Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2016) as expressing two central ideas:

"It can express the idea about the Nordic countries' peripheral status in relation to the broader European colonialism and to the more contemporary processes of globalization. Or it can represent the idea that Nordic self-perception is rooted intrinsically different from the rest of Europe." (p. 2)

This is highly relevant for the case of national imaginary and the Sami in the Norwegian context. The Norwegian self-image as a do-gooder actively overlooks the blatant racism in policies that has been directed at the Sami and other minorities, as well as undermining of race and ethnicity as relevant social categories today. From the early 19th century, the Sami population was subject to assimilationist politics known as *Norwegianification* as they were regarded as a threat to a homogeneous national culture (Niemi, 2017). The Sami gradually lost influence in areas where they had been living for decades. Children were taken from their homes and placed in schools where Sami languages were prohibited, and laws that undermined traditional Sami ways of living were passed. During the 1970s and 1980s, the political climate shifted, and the official Norwegianization politics was discontinued. This change was highly influenced by strong ethno-political mobilization within Sami societies. Although commonly regarded a success story in comparison with indigenous peoples on a global scale, an extensive study of current living conditions indicated that one third of Norwegian Sami still experience discrimination related to ethnic identity, including structural and indirect discrimination (Midtbøen & Lidén, 2015). Today, there is not as much talk about revitalizing Sami culture as about processes of decolonization (Vars, 2017). Thus, the postcolonial perspective applied to the Norwegian context is relevant for exploring and deconstructing knowledge production in relation to more tacit power structures and majority privileges. One of the central ideas in postcolonial studies going back to Edward Said (1994) has been theorizing the construction of the Other, intertwined with Western nationalism and modernity. In the Nordic countries, race biology and epigenetics flourished during the early 20th century. Majority images of the Sami informed construction of an racialized Other of an "Aryan" normative standard still traceable today.

While analyzing textbooks and school policy through postcolonial lenses might serve as important windows for understanding the reproduction of social order, approaching this idea in education entails critique and

transformation of structural oppression (Freire, 1995; Giroux, 1997). Kumashiro (2002) creates a typology of four approaches to an anti-oppressive pedagogy. The two most common are teaching *for* and *about* the Other, spurred by intentions to improve the experiences of Othered students, as well as provide knowledge about minorities for majority students. However, both approaches fail to focus on relations and power structures, and implicitly position the Other as the essential “problem.” Oppression is not only about marginalization of the Other but also privileging of the normal. In this context, Kumashiro argues that in order to enable social change, pupils must understand that what society defines as normal is a social construct, and unlearn what is taken as given. This can happen through what he describes as education that is *critical* of privileging and othering, and education that changes students and society: “Changing oppression requires disruptive knowledge, not simply more knowledge” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 42). This necessary condition of uncertainty and disruption for enabling learning is paralleled in Biesta’s idea of education as an arena for democratic subjectivity. Biesta (2005) argues that in order for the pupil to come into presence as a unique being, the teacher must conduct what he describes as *transcendental violence*:

“Coming into presence is, therefore, not necessarily a pleasant and easy process since it is about challenging students, confronting them with otherness and difference and asking them difficult questions. This suggests that, in a sense, there is a violent dimension to education.” (p. 63)

This process enables *subjectification*, which Biesta (2009) describes as one of three different but interrelated functions of education. First, education has a central role in *socialization*, passing on current social and cultural values. The role of the Norwegian educational system in constructing and managing national imagery and cultural unity can be understood in this perspective. The second function of education is *qualification*, through advancing students’ competences and knowledge for functioning in society and in the labor market. For Biesta, subjectification is the most important part in light of democracy and social change, and he argues that other functions are prioritized in the current neo-liberal educational policy. Subjectification is the way pupils can experience democracy through being subjects, allowing the students to express themselves but also experience resistance. Subjectification as the process by which people come to experience themselves as subjects is also thematized in postcolonial literature through the focus on power and resistance in self-definition and the experience of marginalization (Fanon, 1967; Phoneix, 2009).

3 Background and previous research: The Sami in curriculum and textbooks

Contrary to the central role of education in the policies of Norwegianification, educational policy has over the last decades been central to the efforts by the Norwegian

government towards bettering the situation for Sami language, culture and society. However, Gjerpe (2017) raises the pertinent question of whether the visibility of Sami culture and rights in current curriculum documents represent a symbolic commitment without real influence on educational practice. In a study of upper secondary schools, Lile (2011) found that pupils learn little about Sami history and culture and that the quality of teaching is low. A current study of textbooks for secondary school showed that Sami history is highly visible in many social studies textbooks in lower and upper secondary school. Some authors tentatively attempt to relate Norwegianization to experiences with being Sami or other minorities today (Midtbøen, Oruapabou & Røthing, 2017). However, when the books thematize the fight against racism, the suggested “cure” is knowledge. Racism becomes an individualized phenomenon, related to extreme attitudes. Thus, racism and discrimination become a marginal and less relevant aspect of society today. Arguably, racism as a social category is still relevant through current processes of racialization (Røthing, 2015). Textbook authors strive to present texts with which Sami pupils can identify, and the Sami are commonly presented in an essentialized way with a strong presence of stereotypical images (Askeland, 2016; Kolpus, 2015; Mortensen-Buan, 2016). This depiction appears as close to the category of anti-oppressive pedagogy that Kumashiro (2002) describes as education about the Other, exposed to the risk of reconstructing borders of “us” and “them” through presenting dominant narratives, while having intentions of being inclusive and emancipatory. This reflects an assumption in the Norwegian educational policy that knowledge through partial content integration alone will promote respect (Lybæk & Osler, 2014).

4 Methods and empirical material

4.1 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA; Fairclough, 2010; Van Dijk, 1993) is a common and helpful tool in postcolonial exploration to locate how unequal power relations and stereotypical images are constructed and reconstructed through discourse. Education might privilege certain groups and marginalize others, and thus legitimize the social order. This manifests as ideologies that constitute social cognition, bringing about “schematically organized complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 258). Gramsci describes this as hegemony, which is the ruling consensus in society tacitly justifying the political, social, cultural and economic order. Importantly, he argues that this ideology might influence the minds of the subjugated in such a way that they accept dominance (Gramsci, 1971). Applying the pedagogical philosophy of Biesta (2005, 2009, 2014), this also holds significance related to possibilities for learning and democratic education. A core element in my analysis is the use of vocabulary and pronouns signaling inclusion and exclusion, such as “we/us” and “them.” This has to do with locating the subject of discourse, as well as the



construction of national imagery. As Van Dijk and Atienza (2011) argue, the structure of knowledge may be controlled by the overall ideological square that contributes to the negative image of “them” while constructing a humanitarian view of the subject group. Moreover, in line with basic principles of CDA, I pay specific attention to what is not said or implicitly communicated, known as the hidden curriculum (Marshall, 1992). Table 1 presents the battery of analytical questions applied in the analysis. The list of questions is a modified version of Fairclough’s (2001) practical guide to CDA.

Table 1. Analytical questions applied in CDA

Analytical questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What classification schemes are applied? • How are the pronouns “we” and “you” used in the text? • How is agency allocated? • Does the text presume particular subject positions? If so, which? • What knowledges do the texts take for granted? • Are there ideologically significant meaning relations between words (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy)? • Which topical connections are made, and which logics do they follow? • How do the texts conceptualize the Sami? • Is there a hidden curriculum through the representation and structure of the content?

As the textbooks are made for the initial stages of primary school, the pages generally have more pictures and illustrations than texts. Working with multimodal texts, it is imperative to pay attention also to the visual grammatics. As the research questions focus on conceptualization, the categories of narrative and conceptual representations in Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) was useful for shedding light on these. They distinguish between narrative and conceptual representations. While the first category represent action, events and transitory processes, the latter is recognized by symbolism related to reification and classification of what something or someone essentially *is*. Another characteristic of pedagogical expository texts are repetition (Van Dijk & Atienza, 2011), and this is interesting for looking at visual as well as textual grammatics. Repetition is connected with the construction of hegemonic visions of society, and socialization into established discourses. In this regard, Andersen (2003) argues that the “official” narrative about the Sami perceptible within popular media and education, creates a ranking of Saminess where the stereotypical Northern Sami is presented as the orthodox Sami. This strengthens the othering of the Sami by obscuring internal diversity within the category, as well as further marginalizing other Sami groups such as the Southern and Lule Sami.

As CDA has a normative agenda in deliberately addressing social wrongs, it is criticized for choosing texts that fit with the analysis and being too ambitious about the potential for creating social change (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This criticism is important to keep in mind when

aspiring to inform education and didactics in a constructive manner. In this regard, the idea of positive discourse analysis within the postcolonial tradition appears inspirational (Askeland, 2016). Inspired by this, I also look for potential didactical opportunities informed by the idea of anti-oppressive and democratic education in discourses providing disruption (Biesta, 2014; Kumashiro, 2002). In applying CDA, acknowledging the role of the researcher in constructing and representing knowledge and meaning is vital. Seeing the research as apolitical or atheoretical is neither possible nor desirable within such an approach. Importantly, the existence of power and privilege often appear invisible especially to those who possess it. Being positioned as a majoritarian subject of the educational discourse as a majority Norwegian, middle-class woman, I might be subjected to what is termed the “double blind” (Comeau, 2015) in Whiteness studies. While making the analysis, I might simultaneously perform the idea of superior rationality and be compliant in constructing the Other. If I abstain, I risk permitting re-production of a possible discriminatory status quo. However, here I stand with Kumashiro (2002) in claiming that in the case of anti-oppressive education, acknowledging and altering the understandings and position of the privileged are as vital as locating the oppressed.

4.2 Empirical material: Social studies textbooks

The initial material for this analysis consisted of eight textbooks in total, and the selection includes the two main series used for social studies level 1-4 in Norway. Each series of textbooks have four separate volumes, one for each level. There is also a third alternative that holds significant market shares, but a choice was made to focus on the two series that has been updated after the curriculum was revised in 2013: *Mylder 1-4* (Haugen, Hægeland, Reiten, Sandberg, & Steinset, 2013) and *Nye Gaia 1-4* (Holm et al., 2015). Social studies is especially interesting in studying inclusion of the Sami. Firstly, it is the subject that is to provide the most extensive knowledge of Sami history and culture. Social studies also holds a special responsibility for fostering democracy in the Norwegian school (UDIR 2013a). Besides a clear absence of research on the lower levels of social studies in the Nordic context, there are also analytical benefits in looking at the primary level. I here draw upon insights by Fanon (1967) and his psychoanalytical approach to postcolonialism and subjectivity. He highlights the tacit unconscious training instilled in the minds of Othered children through the effects of images in cultural representations. Fanon argues that when young children are exposed to stereotypical images and repeated narratives of their affinity group, the children experience a psychopathology where images might become part of their personality. This is not to imply that power and dominance are deterministically imposed on children through textbooks, and a broader analysis of socio-cognitive processes of resistance is needed for a fully-fledged analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). The scope of this article, however, is to focus on the discursive strategies



in textbooks that take part in legitimating dominance, and that might exert power on self-image and subjectivity.

As one of the topics raised in previous analysis of the Sami in Norwegian textbooks has been an absence of the Sami (Olsen, 2017), I initially made an overview of chapters in which the Sami was explicitly mentioned by text or featured by pictures. Not surprisingly, they corresponded almost completely to the learning outcomes explicitly mentioning the Sami. After level four, pupils

should be able to “describe central characteristics of Sami culture and way of life up to the Christianization of the Sami people” and “converse about and explain why 17th of May and 6th of February are celebrated⁴” (UDIR, 2013a). For the second learning outcome, it was necessary to include all chapters dealing with early history as one of the series had a separate chapter on Sami history, while the other had included the Sami sporadically throughout the general historical topics.

Table 2. Overview of textbooks, content and learning outcomes

Textbooks	Content (chapter headlines) Chapters included in the final analysis indicated in bold	Learning outcomes after level 4 (UDIR, 2013a)
<i>Mylder 1</i> <i>Mylder 2</i> <i>Mylder 3</i> <i>Mylder 4</i> (Haugen, Hægeland, Reiten, Sandberg, & Steinset, 2013)	1: “New at school”, “Walking to school”, “Here I am”, “Families”, “We live here” 2: “Making decisions”, “The Stone Age” , “Fjords and mountains”, “National days” , “Heaven and seas” 3: “The Bronze Age” , “Boys and girls”, “Run and buy”, “Countries far north” 4: “Living together”, “Online”, “From stone to iron” , “Where do you live”, “Time and the world”, “Sameness and difference”	*Describe the central characteristics of Sami culture and way of life up to the Christianization of the Sami people *Converse about and explain why the 17th of May and the 6th of February are celebrated, and tell others about national days in other countries
<i>Nye Gaia 1</i> <i>Nye Gaia 2</i> <i>Nye Gaia 3</i> <i>Nye Gaia 4</i> (Holm et al., 2015)	1: “The school”, “Family”, “Norwegian landscapes” 2: “Families then and now”, “National days” , “Maps”, “Continents” 3: “Children have the right to co-decision”, “The Stone age” , “Home”, “The Nordic”, “Sami history” , “Boys and girls” 4: “Bronze Age & Iron Age” , “Money”, “Our World”, “Take care of yourself and others”, “Historical traces”	

5 Findings and discussion

5.1 Education about the Other: What is a Sami?

This approach of teaching about the Other straddles the thin line in multicultural education between attempts to normalize differences and stimulating Othering through the production of stereotypes. The main challenge is that knowledge is always partial. Pupils acquire this partial knowledge inside and outside school, and are influenced by multiple discourses that invisibly structure knowledge. Therefore, non-Sami pupils might have clichéd images of the Sami (if any) when they start school. An interesting question is how the textbooks relate to the question of conceptualization: “What is a Sami?” One of the first chapters in *Mylder 1* is titled “Where we live”, presenting different landscapes and geographical areas in Norway. Two pages are dedicated to Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie. This appears as an attempt at culturally sensitive education or teaching for the Other with the intentions of providing identification for Sami children through the text, by including the Sami. The choice is also probably influenced by the focus on absence of the Sami in current curriculum debate. However, although Norway as a whole is presented first, and readers are invited to interact with the information in maps and pictures by identifying their own home place, the Sami are consequently portrayed as “them.” This implicitly leaves out the possibility of a Sami reader, through formulations such as “The Samis call their area Sápmi” (Haugen et al., 2013, p. 46). The pupil is asked to draw her home and then make a cross on the map of Norway, answering the question “Where do you live?” Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie is not made visible in the

map, but featured on separate pages. The pages about Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie are covered with pictures of reindeer herding and people wearing the folk costume *kofte*. Pupils are then invited to color the *kofte*. Although this illustrate important aspects of Sami culture, there is also a hidden curriculum in the communication of a stereotypical set of common identity markers for what appears as the “authentic” Sami lifestyle. Stordahl (1987) describes how semantic density related to the Sami is made up by associations with reindeer and *kofte*, serving as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion in the category. This reindeer-herding and *kofte*-wearing Sami tend to be presented as the Sami *per se*. Importantly, this also reinforces the conceptual hegemony of the Northern Sami. Although no longer commonly an everyday outfit, the *kofte* is a symbolic marker of geographical and social affinity for many Sami through different designs, colors and woven bands. The *kofte*s portrayed throughout the textbook are exclusively Northern Sami. The use of the term Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie is only done in Northern Sami language (Sápmi), although Lule- and Southern Sami are also official Sami languages in Norway. In this way, the chapter exemplifies teaching about the Other in presenting a stereotypical and reductive narrative. On the one hand, this serves to place the Other outside the norm (Kumashiro, 2002). Furthermore, it fails to recognize the Sami as a heterogeneous category. As education for the Other, the chapter might offer recognition for some but holds limited opportunities for identification possibly far from the everyday life experiences for many Sami pupils.

Another avenue of the hidden curriculum is the selection and structure of topics in the curriculum and textbooks. Within postcolonial perspectives on education, this idea is exemplified through the ethnocentrism that characterizes much history teaching in the West (Kumashiro, 2002). When studying the competence goals after fourth grade, such externalization of indigenous history is evident. While knowledge of early Norwegian history is covered by several learning outcomes related to historical periodization, such as the Stone Age and the Iron Age, knowledge about early Sami history overall is featured in a separate learning outcome. Through this construction, the Sami are excluded from the image of a common history of the geographical Norway. As the learning outcome states that pupils should be able to “describe central characteristics of Sami culture and way of life up to the Christianization of the Sami people” (UDIR, 2013a), the Sami are positioned as passive objects for the processes of the majoritarian society rather than as actors of historical processes.

The textbook series handles these learning outcomes somewhat differently. *Nye Gaia* presents early Sami history in a separate chapter. This chapter states that “the Samis have been living in Norway for thousands of years” (Holm et al., 2015, p. 68). This presupposes the Norwegian state as a given, and obscures the fact that the Norwegian national state was placed on the ancestral homeland of the Sami, rather than the opposite. The reader is left with the impression that the Sami arrived in Norway at some point in time. The vision of time and place is blurred, leaving the impression that Sami culture existed a long time ago in an unspecified place. Such construction the Other as diffuse, mythical or primordial is a characteristic aspect of Orientalism (Said, 1994). On the contrary, the chapter on early Norwegian history is contextualized within the structures of “official” historical periodization, referring to the end of the Ice Age about 12000 years ago and presenting different theories on the first settlers. The text states, “The Stone Age in Norway lasted more than 8000 years. About 4000 years ago, the Norwegians started producing weapon made of metal. That was the end of the Stone Age” (Holm et al., 2015, p. 22). Here, history is presented as dynamic and progressive, in contrast to the more static image of early Sami culture. The chapter on Sami history is introduced by stating: “The Sami have lived in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia for thousands of years. Today, the Sami in Norway live not only in the north, but throughout the whole country” (Holm et al., 2015, p. 68). There are no specific periodization provided in the chapter, and the history is depicted by temporal descriptions such as “before and now” and “old Sami culture”. It is also interesting that although the chapter is titled “Sami history”, it includes several paragraphs presenting “Sami culture” in a temporally indefinite manner. This is exemplified by the modern picture of a woman with folk costume integrated several places within the narrative on “old Sami culture”. In this, it is not really clear what is “old” and what is contemporary.

In *Mylder 2*, early Norwegian history is featured in an integrated chapter on the Stone Age. The people in the narratives are predominantly described as “the first human beings in our country,” avoiding the potential anachronism of applying modern concepts of ethnicity and nationality to pre-modern contexts. It might also lead to children’s curiosity about who these first human beings in the country might have been, and enabling identification for all. Thus, while *Nye Gaia* focuses on teaching about the Other through increasing knowledge about Sami history in particular, *Mylder 2* aspires to teach about the Other through opening up narratives that include different identifications in the common history. The examples shed light on the importance of not only the content but also the structure of curriculums. Historical narratives might give the impression of the story being told as objective and impartial, not recognizing history as constructive and interpretative (Paxton, 1999).

5.2 Norwegian exceptionalism and the Other

A more explicit presentation of the Sami people as a group is done through descriptions of national holidays. Both book series have chapters depicting the history and celebration of national days in Norway and other countries. Comparing the portrayals of the Norwegian national day with the Sami peoples’ day sheds interesting light on the construction of national imagery. In *Nye Gaia 2*, the two days are presented as follows:

May 17: May 17 is the Norwegian national day. We celebrate that we got our own constitution. That means that we got our own laws and a parliament. For a long time, Denmark decided over Norway. But in 1814, people in Norway wanted their own constitution. That gave us the right to decide more in our own country [...] Henrik Wergeland was a well-known author. He worked for making May 17 a day of celebration. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson was one of our greatest poets. He wrote the lyrics for our national anthem. (Holm et al., 2015, pp. 30–31)

February 6: On February 6, the Samis celebrate Sami peoples’ day. That is the Sami national day. The day is in memory of the first time Samis from Norway and Sweden gathered to talk about important issues. [...] Samis in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia celebrate the Sami people’s day on February 6. The day might be celebrated with singing and dancing, and activities for the children. Many meet to eat good food together. (Holm et al., 2015, pp. 32–33)

While the Norwegian national day is described in relation to specific historical events and formal affairs, the presentation of the Sami peoples’ day primarily focusses on celebration. Pictures exclusively show people wearing kofte and engaging in festive meals. Although “important issues” are mentioned, they are not specified, and the time and place of the first common Sami meeting (Trondheim, 1917) is not given as with enactment of the Norwegian constitution. The overall epistemic strategy of the knowledge about Sami culture here is that of a typology of a category of people, where



knowledge is represented as attributes of the groups presented as descriptions, taking shape as definitions or examples (cf. Van Dijk & Atienza, 2011). The “words to learn” accompanying the respective texts accentuate this discourse. They give the Norwegian national day a more “official” outlook than the Sami peoples’ day. It is also closely related to what Banks (1993) describes as “heroes and holidays,” the well-intended focus on highlighting cultural differences through a focus on holidays and celebration, which often reproduces the stereotypical discourses of the dominant culture. Multicultural education in the shape of teaching about the Other might thus unintentionally take on this form of essentializing. Highlighting ethnic identities in the curriculum might paradoxically contribute to a renewed orientalism in spite of good pedagogical intentions.

Table 3. “Words to learn” in *Nye Gaia 1*, “National holidays”

Words to learn May 17	Words to learn February 6	Words to learn July 14 (the French national day)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National day • Celebrate • Free country • Constitution • Parliament • Author • Poet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sami • The Sami peoples day • Important issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date • Protest • Inhabitant • Fireworks

The presentation of the national days and the history of the constitution can be understood on basis of the idea of Norwegian exceptionalism. In the text in *Nye Gaia 2*, Norway is portrayed as a victim rather than a perpetrator of colonialism. The fact that Norway was subject to Danish rule in the period 1537–1814 is pointed out when May 17 is described, while the Norwegianification process is not mentioned when the Sami peoples’ day is presented. One could discuss whether children in second grade should become familiar with the dark histories of discrimination and oppression of minorities. However, oppression and resistance are included in the portrayal of May 17, as well as in the paragraph on the French national day later in the same chapter, stating that in 1789, the French “protested against an unfair king who decided almost everything” (Holm et al., 2015, p. 35). The history of the Sami peoples’ day is directly connected to resistance against discrimination. In light of the learning outcome covering the ability to explain *why* February 6 is celebrated, it is therefore indispensable to mention the Sami fight for recognition. In this context, the complete exclusion of Norwegianification might serve as a hidden curriculum and an active component in reconstructing the discourse of Norway as a humble and intrinsically good nation. By leaving out the Sami opposition, the text not only misses an important aspect of historical events, but also overlooks a valuable pedagogical opportunity for illustrating the significance of protesting injustice. Additionally, the Sami meeting in 1917 was organized by the Southern Sami woman Else Laula Renberg in a time where women were not fully

recognized as political actors, which is a powerful narrative in teaching for democracy.

5.3 Disruptive narratives? Education that is critical of privileging and Othering

As Kumashiro (2002) argues, fighting oppression through education requires not only education about or for the other but also knowledge about oppression in itself, described as education that is critical of privileging and Othering. In this perspective, it is interesting that *Mylder 2* thematizes oppression of the Sami through explicitly mentioning aspects of Norwegianification:

“The countries where Sápmi is situated, tried to make the Sami people forget their own culture. About a hundred years ago, Samis from all over Sápmi gathered for a big meeting. They discussed what they should do in order to be treated just. The big meeting was held at February 6, 1917. That is why February 6 is the Sami national day.” (Haugen et al., 2013, p. 148)

The text is followed by a drawing of children in school, stating that “Sami children were not allowed to speak Sami in school” and asking the reader: “How do you think it feels not to be able to speak your own language?” As Norwegianification processes have not been commonly discussed in the public sphere, including them in the textbook might be described as a break with the traditional role of textbooks as consistent with presupposed knowledge from public discourse (Van Dijk & Atienza, 2011). Thus, it is likely that the presentation of pupils not being able to speak their own language in Norwegian schools represents something radically new for many readers and provides information that stimulates critical disruption or works in the sense of a transcendental violence. This opens up opportunities for challenging the hegemonic discourse and providing a more pluralistic context for teaching.

However, the possibility for disruption also depends upon influencing the ways majority students see themselves, not only the Other (Kumashiro, 2002). Although learning about the Other through stories of oppression is valuable, the ability to act upon injustices relies on input that makes pupils able to reflect on their own positionality (Banks, 1993). The narrative in *Mylder 2* focuses on empathy through asking the question “How would you feel?” This question might stimulate identification with the Other but does not necessarily alter how the majority pupil sees herself. Thus, teaching about oppression does not automatically force a separation from the sense of self for majority pupils. Interestingly, the presentation of Sami oppression is done passively without any clear perpetrator, as the Norwegian state as actor is not explicitly mentioned. The summary of the chapter states, “The Samis were not always respected in the countries in which they lived” (Holm et al., 2013, p. 155). Similar to *Nye Gaia 2*, *Mylder 2* describes the history of the enactment of the Norwegian constitution through the resistance of Norwegians to Danish rule. The point is made that “Norway was not always free” (Holm et al., 2013, p. 155) and that the people mobilized



against this injustice. Norwegians are presented as agents, standing up against the illegitimate force. The mode of structuring the content and narratives here fuels the discourse of Norwegian exceptionalism. The hegemonic discourse here resides in the negative information about the in-group that is not stated.

Learning through disruption is risky, because if we allow pupils to truly react in their own unique ways to the curriculum, we cannot instrumentally predict the outcomes. Critical teaching, in this perspective, should aim for effect rather than a specific understanding in order to entail subjectification. Learning in this perspective is connected to transcendence, offering something completely new or radical. This quite often involves encountering inconvenient truths, or knowledge that we were not aware of or did not want to be aware of, fostering transcendental violence that might lead to change (Biesta, 2005). For enabling subjectification, pupils must meet diverging narratives and resistance toward their own worldviews. In this sense, the examples of Norwegianification politics could offer opportunities for pupils to react. Didactical opportunities might also be found in making use of the hegemonic discourses to challenge pupils' preconceptions. The historical materialism apparent in the idea of hegemony might be overcome by arguing that the discourses can be investigated in order to challenge them (Gramsci, 1971). Where *Mylder 2* has a picture of the all-male assembly deciding on the Constitution in 1814, it asks the reader, "Why were there no women?" (Holm et al., 2015, p. 31). Here, there is an obvious opportunity to include discussion on "Why were there no Sami?" in light of the coming presentation of Norwegianification. The narratives could also simply be opened, inviting exploration of the overall question of why some were left out, and what that means. Education might not only facilitate reproduction of dominant ideologies but also propagate counter-ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998).

6 Summing up: The aims of education

In this article, I have discussed the role of discourses on the Sami in social studies textbooks in constructing the Norwegian national imagery, and the implications for multicultural education. Within the typology of anti-oppressive education posed by Kumashiro (2002), the implicit pedagogy on cultural diversity in the textbooks is mainly placed in the category teaching about, and to a certain extent for, the Other. This corresponds to the qualification function of education, providing pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding that in this case amount to a general cultural literacy (Biesta, 2009). Arguably important for functioning in society, an overt focus on qualification might imply the instrumentalist undertaking of producing certain citizens with pre-defined, measurable skills. This criticism applies well to the common idea of multicultural and anti-oppressive education as pure knowledge integration, reflected in the analysis. Furthermore, the sections on national days in the textbooks reinforce the national imagery of Norwegian exceptionalism, stimulating the educational

function of socialization as inserting newcomers in the existing cultural and political order. Although socialization should not be disqualified as simple indoctrination, it might cause the continuation of not only desirable but also undesirable parts of the national tradition and discourse. As Biesta (2009) argues, "even if socialization is not the explicit aim of educational programmes and practices, it will still function in this way as, for example, has been shown by research on the hidden curriculum" (p. 40). In the previous analysis, it was quite clear that the image of Norwegian exceptionalism is further enforced by the role of the Sami as the Other. This hegemonic construction of the Sami as Other exerts power on the self-understanding of the majority Norwegians and the Sami, pointing to the role of education in subjectification. Subjectification is, in one sense, the opposite of socialization, as it is related to providing agency for the individual to seek independence from the current societal order. In terms of anti-oppressive education, this amounts to education that challenges injustice and might lead to social change. Suggestions for such disruptive education were located in the text that mentioned Norwegianification.

A danger of focusing on structural oppression is the implicit idea that it has the same effect on all people (Kumashiro, 2002) and thus might reinforce the positionality of the Sami as oppressed. Although the school in one perspective might be regarded as a site for epistemic violence for Sami pupils through the construction of themselves as inferior, the consequences for subjectification are not given. Responses to colonialism can be understood as identity-building projects and as a critical self-examination of processes of internalization (Heith, 2016). While Fanon (1967) argued that the colonized only gain recognition by seeing themselves through the images constructed by colonizers, newer postcolonial writings also focus on the dynamics of identity constructions of the subjugated through counter-action and resistance (Phoenix, 2009). The Sami political uprising in Norway led to reinforcement of Sami culture, identity and pride. On the other hand, Mathisen (2001) argues that the relationship between the Sami minority and the ethnic Norwegian majority is by no means equal, and that majority culture still is hegemonic to the extent that it influences the strategies of the minority. In the educational context, the hegemonic discourses work in performing translations between individual experiences and strategies and collective frames of representations. However, a strong focus on socialization into these ideas might paradoxically lead to subjectification through resistance. Thus, a complete analysis of the discourses' role for subjectification would include a wider contextual study and a look to "subjective definitions of the relevant properties of communicative situations that influence text and talk" (Wodak, 2009, p. 14). However, the different perspectives imply we must leave the desire for final knowledge, exposing ourselves to "the wonderful risk of education" (Biesta, 2014).

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Endnotes

¹ The subject social studies is a mandatory part of the core curriculum in Norway and is a compilation of history, geography and various disciplines of social sciences.

² Corresponds to the name in the different Sami languages; Northern-/Lule-/Southern Sami.

³ The Sami management areas includes the following municipalities: Karasjok, Kautokeino, Nesseby, Porsanger, Tana, Kåfjord, Lavangen, Tysfjord, Snåsa and Røyrvik. Not all of them have a Sami majority.

⁴ May 17 is the official Norwegian national day, and February 6 is the official Sami peoples’ day.