



UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

DIPARTIMENTO DI CULTURE, POLITICA E SOCIETÀ

**DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN SCIENZE PSICOLOGICHE,
ANTROPOLOGICHE E DELL'EDUCAZIONE**

CICLO: XXXIII

**TITOLO DELLA TESI: «Putting the Márka on the map» An anthropological
perspective on cultural efflorescence in Stuornjárga, Norwegian side of Sápmi**

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ANNI ACCADEMICI: 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021

SETTORE SCIENTIFICO-DISCIPLINARE DI AFFERENZA: M-DEA01

Per Giuseppe, Maddalena e Antonio

Your Sami names may be lost but your lives will not be forgotten.

This work is in your memory and in the memory of all those peoples whose stories were lost to time...

“I wash the dishes the Sámi way,” he says.
“How so?” says the anthropologist.
“It’s in the wrist,” he says.
“But for people who are not so familiar with Sámi culture
it might seem like I do it exactly the same way as everyone else.”

(S. Skåden Notáhtat márkosámi čoahkázis, 2020)

*A bordo di Olaf Trygvason-Bado
6 settembre 1879
Come vedi dalla data di questa lettera, anch'io
sono finalmente sul punto di ripassare il Circolo
Artico, e mi ravvicino a tutto vapore alia famiglia,
agli amici. Pure, nonostante il piacere che ne prove- ,
dicendo addio a Tromsce mi parve di dire addio ad
un vecchio amico. Quando ci arrivammo insieme
appena sbocciavano le foglie della betulla : ora digià
cadono, ingiallite dall'autunno.*

(P. Mantegazza, Diario di un viaggio in Lapponia, 1881)

*Min bálgat leat báhzan
Vaikko massan mii leat min giissa
Go cohkon dat leat min jogat
De dollagáttis mun cippostan
Visot máid don oainnat
Lea vássan áigi hápmen
Ja visot máid don gulat
Lea ivttabeaivve skádja*

(Keiino)

Acknowledgments

Giitu

As this dissertation is the result of my doctoral research, I would like to thank first of all Professor Lia Zola, my PhD supervisor, for her constant academic (and personal) support and her assistance at every stage of the research project. She has been an attentive reader and an understanding mentor who provided me with the tools that I needed to choose the right direction and successfully complete my dissertation.

Besides my tutor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Prof. Anna Painsi, Prof. Enzo Vinicio Alliegro, Prof. Nadia Breda, and Prof. Amedeo Boros for their insightful comments and encouragement, but also for their questions, which gave me the opportunity to widen my research from various perspectives.

My gratitude goes to Prof. Paolo Viazzo for the unceasing support he gave me. Similarly, my thanks go to Prof. Laura Bonato. I would also like to thank all the other academics from the department of Culture, Politica e Società (Università di Torino) who have mentored me throughout the years. In particular, my thanks go to Professor Stefania Palmisano whose kindness and encouragement have accompanied me since I was a Masters student.

My warmest thoughts go to late Professor Enrico Comba who tragically passed away in early 2020. I owe him this thesis since, without him, I would have not been working on Sámi-related issues in the first place.

I would also like to thank all the people who warmly welcome me in Tromsø, where I was hosted at the Sámi Dutkamiid Guovddáš /Senter for Samiske Studier/Centre for Sami Studies. Without the help, support, and guidance I found at SESAM, I would have never been able to complete (or start) this dissertation. SESAM has been a safe haven for me and I will never be able to show all its members how much their support has shaped this work. Ollu Giitu to all of them, in particular Prof. Torjer Olsen, Hildegunn Bruland, Professor Dikka Storm, Dr. Velina Ninkova, Dr. Camilla Brattland, Dr. Berit Merete Nystad Eskonsipo, Kajsa Kemi Gjerpe, Paulette Van der Voet. Their advice proved invaluable in formulating this thesis' research questions and methodology.

I will never say “grazie” enough to Prof. Rossella Ragazzi and Prof. Trude Fonneland (Tromsø University Museum) for their advice, guidance, and support. Their perspectives and their feedback have been invaluable, and so has been their personal emotional support.

This dissertation would have never come into being without the invaluable help my interlocutors gifted me with. For this reason, I would like to thank them all for having shared their cherished memories, their fears, and their hopes with me. Háliidan giitit visot olbmuid, earenoamážit mu ságastallanguimmiid ja ustibiid, geat leat dahkan dan barggu vejolažžan.

I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Marit Mirvoll, whose perspectives have enriched me as a person and as a researcher. Ollu giitu for all your help and support.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Margherita Poto. Grazie per avermi ospitata e per avermi mostrato la forza che una ricercatrice può avere.

I will forever be thankful to Prof. Geir Grenersen for his help, support, and insights into the recent history of the Márka and of Bjerkvik (Det lille Kjøkken included).

I would also like to thank Prof. Ola Graff for providing valuable insights into luohiti and for sharing with me some of his memories from his own fieldwork in Snefjord. My thanks also go to Gjertrud Maheussen and her amazing granddaughter Eva. They showed me how interconnected we all are. It was a privilege to meet Eva and, through her, her áhkku.

My research pal, Giacomo Nerici, was instrumental in defining the path of my research, and in stealing eggs out of despair. For this, I am extremely grateful.

I am very grateful to Sigbjørn for taking time out of his tight schedule to meet me, explain me the complex local history and the hi/stories beyond Márka toponyms and, more generally, for sharing with me Márkomeannu's ideological backgrounds. Ollu Giitu, Sigbjørn, for all our meetings and conversations (and the Norwegian kaffe) which were vital in inspiring me to think outside the box and made this dissertation possible. Above all though, I would like to thank you for being such a good friend to me. You helped me out when I most needed it, you gave amazing advice on how to survive Tromsø buses, and you always know the right thing to say to make me smile. I'll bring you (and the ghosts) presents! Ollu giitu.

My deepest thanks to Lemet Mahtte, Gunn-Tove, Nils, Nihlas and Isallill, all of whom have been not only amazing interlocutors whose insights inspired me but also kind and supportive friends. I will never be able to thank you enough for that. Ollu giitu.

I would like to thank Astrid, the dearest of all my Norwegian friends, with whom I was able to speak Italian while having a stroll in Storgata. Grazie cara, senza di te, questa tesi non sarei mai riuscita a scriverla.

A good support system is important to surviving and staying sane, especially in difficult times. For this reason, I would like to thank Apo, Dani, Pietro, Freja and Edella (now joined by little Niilas), Akie, Ayaka, Klio, and Loke. Without you I would not have been able to complete this research, and without whom I would not have made it through my PhD journey, emotionally and physically. All of you gave me a place to sleep when I was stuck in Tromsø due to Covid19. Without you, it would have been much harder to go through those weeks...

A heartfelt thank you to Jane Juuso for her hospitality and for having made me feel at home in her own home.

A special thanks to Paul, to whom I will always be grateful for all the amazing things we did together, hitting the road and travelling across Unjárga where some of my best moments in Sapmi took shape. Grazie.

My warmest thanks to my dear friends Lidia, Laura (just one word, giallo), Clarissa, Linda, Federico, Ingrid, Ibrahima, Manuela, Maria, Giulia G. Giulia M., Gemma H., Gemma G., Costanza, Livia, Martina, Martellozzo, as well as my beloved cat-lady Valentina.

I would like to thank my family, my mother, my sister and my uncle, my cats Cleo, Grisù and Mali. Thank you to my beloved Corrado, the best man I ever met. Without you I would have lost myself so many times... you are my strength. Grazie per avermi ~~supportato~~ supportato in questo viaggio. E grazie per guardare al futuro con me. Adventure awaits.

To my father go my deepest thanks and thoughts. Takk for at du har gått ved siden av meg pent på hullene i veien og de glatte stunden. Grazie Pã', davvero. I'd give everything I've got... per i mille

papaperi rossi. Spero che questa ricerca possa essere per te interessante. Non è come fare l'archeologa e scavare nelle rovine romane...ma è bellissimo!

Kedves nagypapa, köszönöm szeretetedet és kedvességedet. Bárcsak láthatnád ezt a diplomamunkát befejezve. Remélem büszke lettél volna fogadott unokádra. Hiányzol, és szeretném, ha nem hagynál el minket ilyen hamar. De a sorsot nem lehet megváltoztatni, és csak remélem, hogy még mindig érzi a szeretetünket.

To my beloved Pocio, thank you for having been there for me every time I needed it. I miss you dearly.

A special thanks go to all my ghosts. There are more and more of them around and I wonder whether they are unable to let go of us or the other way round. Either way, our lives are filled with ghosts and mine is no exception. I cherish my ghosts and I will never forget any of them. So, thank you to you all for having been part of my life and for having allowed me to be part of yours. See you on the other side.

13. Mii mátkkoštít Sámis

a) Vállje doalu masa áiggut searvat, dahje báikki gosa áiggut vuolgit:
Velg et arrangement som du vil delta på, eller et sted du vil besøke:

- Sámi álbmotbeaivi-ávvudeapmi Oslo Sámiid Searvvis
- Slettnes čuovgadoardna Gáŋgaviikka gielddas – máilmmi davimus čuovgadoardna mii lea nannámis
- Pomorfestivalen Várggáin
- Mearrasámi siida Smiervuonas Porsáŋggus
- Álttá musea ja báktesárgumat
- Ákšovuonjiekki Jiehkervuonas
- Spoahkkanjárgga riddoladni Gáivuonas
- Oimmáivákki oaggunfestivála
- Ivgobađa geassemárkan Omasvuonas
- Márkomeannu Skániin ja Evenáššis



Álttás sáhttit geahččat báktesárgumiid.



Jiehkervuonas sáhttit geahččat Ákšovuonjiekki.



Spoahkkanjárggas leat soahtebázahusat.



Oimmáivákki lea oaggunfestivála geassemánus.



Smiervuonas lea mearrasámi siida.

Image 1: North Sámi teaching materials from the *textbook series Váriin, Vákkiin, Vuonain* (North Sámi). These textbooks were published by ČálliidLágáduš publishing house. The textbook series' title can be translated as "On the mountains, In the valleys, By the fjords". This textbook series has been developed by authors and North Sámi language teachers Toril B. Lyngstad and Edel Monsen. 12 books series has been designed for students who are learning North Sámi as a second language in primary and lower secondary school (photo by the author).

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Foreword

The event in the Márka

Every summer at the end of July – at least before the outbreak of Covid19 pandemic – a festival called Márkomeannu is held on the Norwegian side of Sápmi (in Northern Norway, between the counties of Nordland and Troms og Finnmark) in an area commonly known as “Márka”. This festival celebrates pan-Sámi music and art as well as local Sámi customs. This is only one of the many Sámi gatherings held in Sápmi. Yet Márkomeannu is distinct from other cultural festivals with a Sámi profile with regard to its history, its objectives and importance in the identity-construction and preservation of the local Márka-Sámi culture. Its uniqueness stems from the specific socio-cultural context in which it first developed. The peculiarities which make Márkomeannu a *reMárkable* event in Sápmi can be traced back to the visionary and idealistic principles that inspired a group of resourceful and creative Márka-Sámi youngsters – the members of the local Sámi youth organization Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak – into creating “an event” – *meannu* (NS) – in the “Márka”.

These young Sámi were inspired by Riddu Ridđu, a festival organized by Sámi youngsters belonging to a Sea-Sámi community where Sámi identity was heavily stigmatized. Fascinated by Riddu Ridđu and its role in lifting the perception of local Sea-Sámi culture, the members of Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak wanted to create a festival in their own community that could celebrate the Márka-Sámi culture. These young people poured all their energy in organizing an event that marked the beginning of a festival that, over the years, has become increasingly important and variegated as to its objectives, its political overtones, its innovative function and its role in establishing the Márka as a cultural point of reference in the symbolic landscape of Sápmi.

The primary scope of this thesis is to analyse contemporary issues in Sámi societies with the Márka and Márkomeannu as a reference point from which look at them. I shall also elaborate on the functions and meanings of specific Sámi cultural expressions and institutions from an anthropological standpoint. In order to do so, I traced back the origins of Márkomeannu festival and the history of the Márka while trying to understand how a small gathering among the local youth grew into an international festival with important roles in Sápmi's cultural landscape. In order to do so, I shall look at Sámi art and cultural and political activism – that are intrinsically connected with Márkomeannu – since they are a prism through which it is possible to identify some of the political issues perceived as relevant in Sámi milieus. Politically engaged artistic practices challenge the status quo that

reinforces subjugation and asymmetrical power relations. Through art and activism, exponents of Sámi cultures engage with such issues in often provocative ways, attempting to bring into light what has often been made invisible through normalization processes that obscure the imbalance in power relations while also reinforcing hegemonic narratives.



Image 2; 2018, Gállogieddi: this map of the Stornjårga area displayed at Gállogieddi shows the area's old administrative division into 3 municipalities: Tjeldsund, Skånland and Evenes. Its original function was to signal relevant cultural heritage sites in the region. The site n 10 is the Gállogieddi farm-museum. (Photo by the author).

Introduction

I. The scope of this thesis and its organization

Many sections of this dissertation have been devoted to the analysis of contemporary forms of Sámi self-representation through art-ivism (art-activism), to articulations of cultural valorization, and to processes of heritagization. In order to grasp the core of these multifaced phenomena, and to start to understand the challenges that have almost torn apart the fabric of Sámi societies, it is necessary to delve deeper into the history not only of the Sámi but also of the perceptions and assumptions cultural outsiders entertained. As a result, I devoted part of this dissertation to an analysis of sources produced by people who had first-hand experience of contact with the Sámi between the 17th and the early 20th century. Because I am Italian, and because this thesis is not primarily devoted to a critical reading of literary production concerning Sápmi, I have narrowed down the field to a selection of Italian travellers' accounts of Sápmi, consciously leaving aside translations from other languages into Italian¹. Therefore, it is my hope with this work to contribute to the documentation of Italian perception of Sámi cultures limiting my examination to the literary production of Italian travellers who visited Sápmi and recorded their experiences. Since the majority of this literary production has not yet been translated into English – or any other language – I hope to provide a useful introduction to it. Following in the footsteps of these Italian travellers who have gone before was for me quite an emotional experience, especially when I approve of neither their actions nor their conclusions regarding Sámi cultures and peoples. I would also wish to make a contribution to the documentation of contemporary articulations and expressions of Sámi identity and cultures. To this end, as I mentioned earlier, I shall focus on one specific Sámi cultural context, the Márka², and the festival that celebrate such context, Márkomeannu. My aim is to demonstrate its role in the valorisation of the local Márka-Sámi identity while also highlighting the multiple layers of meaning this festival has acquired throughout the years, for the Márka as well as for the whole of Sápmi. Furthermore, and in order to address my initial research question – in answering which I slowly started to grasp what is currently happening in Sápmi – I would like to provide an interpretation and a contextualization of

¹ The texts I have selected are only a fraction of a larger body of Italian literary production, which spans across six centuries. This does not mean I was unaware of the availability in Italy of texts produced by foreigners and translated into Italian. Furthermore, most educated Italians were fluent in other European languages, facilitating access to foreigner texts, contributing among other things, to increase knowledge about Sápmi and its inhabitants.

² Márka-Sámi and Márka used to be generic terms, both derived from the Norwegian 'Markebygd', (the outlying fields), Márka referred small settlements situated in the inland areas of northern Nordland and southern-central Troms, far from the coasts (Storm 1993), areas dominated by Norwegian-speaking communities, often with Sámi origins. Márka-Sámi in turn referred to Sámi people dwelling in Márka settlements.

the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu, an edition that had profound political overtones and expressed them through various artistic expressions.

Márkomeannu's relevance to the Sámi cultural landscape makes it a privileged point of entry into the complexity of contemporary Sámi society. It was through this festival that I came into contact with a series of issues and questions that shaped my research process. Even though Márkomeannu was not the first festival to which I took part – the other being Riddu Ridđu – this festival shook my confidence and forced me to reassess my convictions. In order to understand the themes that run through it, I had to retrace the origin of these themes and their implications and ramifications, as well as their entanglement with the history of Nordic colonialism and the resistance against it. In Northern Fennoscandinavia, as well as in many other colonial contexts, colonialism in its multiple manifestation does not belong with the past but is still an ongoing process that reproduces itself by hiding in plain sight, normalized and insinuated as it is in the fabric of society. Colonialism and colonial attitudes affect the lives of millions of individuals across the world³. In the geo-cultural area this thesis addresses, Sápmi, Sámi peoples have for centuries endured colonization, stigmatization and marginalization and today they are still dealing with colonialism in some of its subtlest and most recent expressions that are reproduced through actions and performative discourses: green grabbing, cognitive colonialism and introjected stigma.

This dissertation is organized as follows:

After this introduction, the 1st chapter devoted to methodology allows me to account for the methods – such as participant observation and interviews – I employed in the course of the PhD program of which this thesis is the final step. In this chapter I also address methodological issues relevant to cases where research is carried out in indigenous contexts. In particular I devote my attention to my positionality as a female Italian researcher working in a Sámi context. The second chapter “Sápmi and Italy through the lens of the written wor(l)d” is divided into two parts. The first section deals with contemporary Italian depictions of Sápmi as well as Italian scientific literature – mainly within the field of anthropology – about the Sámi. The second section is entirely devoted to the analysis of Italian travellers' accounts of Sápmi from the 16th until early 20th century. The main themes I focused upon are the projections of the travellers onto Sámi peoples – seen as being either uncivilised barbarians or noble savages – and onto Sápmi which they portray as heaven and hell at the same time, eutopia and dystopia. I also address how aspects of arctic imagery – ice and snow, rivers and woods, the tundra and the Northern sea – are attributed a series of connotations in Italian travellers' accounts.

³ It can actually be argued that colonialism affects all people on the world.

In this context the religious element often played a fundamental role in shaping italians' perceptions of Sámi people, as I explain. This chapter also includes an examination of an unpublished document which has never been addressed previously and of which there is no mention in the literature. By examining this document, I aim to introduce new perspectives into Sámi Studies. The document provides evidence of the mobility of Sámi peoples in a historical time of which there is no other record of Sámi travelling and settling outside of the Fennoscandinavian counties. This document also affirms Sámi agency as the journey I examine was undertaken under Sámi initiatives rhater than a result of curtailed agency⁴.

In the 2nd chapter i adress festivals as social phenomena, with a specific focus on indigenou contexts. I also examine Sámi festivals in a broad perspective which includes their origins, their social functions and cultural relevance.

The 3rd chapter examines the militarization theme, demonstrating the centrality of Sápmi during World War II, that saw the Arctic regions of Europe as a major theatre of war, a condition determined by both its strategic geopolitical position and its wealth of highly demanded natural resources. My analysis then focuses on the consequences of the conflict on the Sámi as well as its ramifications over time.

Then chapter 4 – “the Márka between past and present” – addresses the multifaceted history of the geo-cultural region known as Márka, the area in which I carried out my fieldwork and in which Márkomeannu takes place. Particular attention is devoted the time of forced conversion and more recent religious developments in the area, in the light of which, the following analysis of internal tensions acquires a greater depth. This chapter addresses also the persistence of indigenou knowledge systems as well as forms of preservation and heritagization aiming at protecting cultural features specific to the Márka-Sámi context.

In chapter 5, “The road so far”, the analysis focuses on more recent historical and developments and addresses toponymic silencing and Sámi initiatives to counteract this colonial policy. I also examine how processes such as language shift and language revitalization have shaped the recent history of the area and its social dynamics⁵. In the latter section of this chapter the attention is focused on the establishment of three key Sámi institutions in the Márka – the Sámi language kindergarten Sáráhká

⁴ It was not proper coercion, as Baglo demonstrated (2014).

⁵ Language shift implies various forces which need to be counterbalanced as a condition of language revitalization. In general, in most language loss situations similar series of factors seem to play out. However, each case is unique. Language shift is affected by specific historical, societal, economic and political conditions. Individuals in a specific community may choose their language as a consequence of facing variegated series of elements which lead to language revitalization.

Sámemánák, the Gállogieddi Friluft Museum and the cultural center Várdobáiki – highlighting their role in paving the way for further processes of cultural re-evaluation. Chapter 6th contextualize festivals with a specific Sámi profile within the wider category of Festivals. In particular, after an overview of the various Sámi festivals held in Sápmi, I address three major Sámi festivals: Riddu Ridđu, Márkomeannu and Isogaisa, of which I examine the history, the ideological grounds as well as the role and functions these festivals fulfill in contemporary Sámi society. The analysis of these festivals sheds light on the various articulations of Sámi identity while also offering important insights into processes of self-representation.

The 7th chapter of this work concentrates on an analysis of Márkomeannu and its ideological grounds, paying special attention to the 2018 edition (#Márkomeannu2118) and its connections with wider indigenous discourses about the past, the present and the future(s). This latter section is informed by discourses about indigenous futurism, a theoretical approach that links Sámi experiences to those of other indigenous peoples throughout the world. In the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th chapters, Sámi art constitutes the basis of my reflections on the phenomena I address because Art in Sámi communities has become a means of ethno-political expression and hence provides an important interpretative key to Sámi self-understanding in relation to the wider socio-cultural context.

The last chapter, 8, “Greetings from the Arctic” talks about the centrality of the Arctic – and hence of Sápmi – within the wider current geo-political context of the global race for resources in a time of climate change, which fosters today's ecological and social anxieties. I address such centrality in the context of old and new concerns and fantasies about the far North, as well as in political discourses informed by contemporary imageries grounded in long-lasting imagines of the Arctic as a space of discovery. Such analysis reverses the socially-constructed perceived and imagined liminal position of the Arctic by highlighting its central status and axial position with reference to its wealth of greatly coveted – but difficult to access – natural resources, a topic addressed in an increasingly expanding corpus of literature and art devoted to a rapidly changing arctic as consequence of anthropogenic climate change. A further aspect, from this point of view is the growing militarization of the Arctic. The aim of this chapter is to provide an outline of the current complex socio-political context of Sápmi. This analysis shows that colonialism is not over but it is still perpetuated, albeit in new and often subtler ways, often masked beyond claims for sacrifice for the greater good. The analysis of the impact of infrastructures like mining, windmill parks, dams and other forms of land-grabbing as well as other expressions of the new “green” colonialism sheds light onto the current challenges that Sámi individuals and institutions have to have to face, leading to constant friction with State authorities and private companies. I became interested in these topics while examining the festival plot of

Márkomeannu 2018. It soon became clear that future apocalypse they imagined at #Márkomeannu2118 is very much a denouncement of current forms of exploitation and their possible future consequences articulated through a narrative form.

II. A specific indigenous context

As Roche, Kroik and Maruyama have highlighted in their 2018 volume “Indigenous efflorescence, beyond revitalization in Sápmi and Ainu Mosir” the Sámi contexts – as well as the Ainu one – is not part of the better-known Indigenous context they define as CANZUS (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the US) settler states. According to these scholars, the CANZUS is over- proportionally represented in English language anthropological and Indigenous studies literature. Working on the European Arctic and sub-Arctic indigenous peoples can enrich debates about indigenous issues on a global level. Nevertheless, Sápmi and its people, the particular indigenous context with which I am dealing, has been the object of intense scholarly attention resulting in numerous academic works from scholars belonging to numerous disciplines such as history, archaeology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, education science, social sciences, film studies, indigenous studies, and anthropology. This work aims to contribute to the field of cultural anthropology with a work focused on a Márka-Sámi area and its community. In order to do so, I shall address the community past and present by applying the concept of indigenous efflorescence to this specific Sámi cultural context.

III. Sápmi, an overview

The Sámi people have dwelt in Sápmi for centuries as did their ancestors long before Germanic tribes settled in the southern regions of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Nevertheless, the Sámi have managed to see their status as indigenous to the areas encompassed by Sápmi recognized only at the end of the 20th century, albeit only by the Norwegian state. The Sámi are today a minoritized group in each of the states cutting across Sápmi. Sámi cultures have long been stigmatized, at the local as well as at the state level. Such stigmatization has deep roots that run deep in the history of Fennoscandinavia (Minde 2003; Henriksen 2008) The Sámi have always been a heterogenous people. The best way to interpret their cultural and linguistic similarities and differences is to acknowledge their shared cultural substrata while appreciating the internal developments leading to the development of a cultural-linguistic continuum ranging from Eastern Kola Peninsula and north- central Finland to the southern-Norway/central-Sweden. Differences in lifestyle, languages, and worldviews as well as subsistence activities can be identified along the continuum. Neighbouring Sámi languages are more

or less intelligible⁶ while those further apart are less so (Todal 2006; Sollid & Olsen 2019). Linguists divide Sámi languages into ten⁷, called after the regions where they are spoken⁸ (Kejonen 2017, 2020). From a cultural point of view, these regions roughly correspond with distinct Sámi cultures – having their own languages, worldviews and folklore (Gaski 2020). Nevertheless, Homogeneity did not exist even within these Sámi cultures, with differences depending upon subsistence activities and the greater or lesser distance from the Scandinavian settlements. Despite their differences, these cultures all belong to a Sámi cultural continuum and foreigners often failed to recognize the distinctive features of individual cultures. The Sámi cultural-linguistic areas do not correspond with national borders transversal to these areas, and this fact was a major factor in the fragmentation of Sámi cultures (Todal, 2006; Lantto 2010).

group	name	Estimated speakers	Colour in the map
Southern Sámi Languages	South Sámi	600	Light red
	Ume Sámi	20	Red
Western Sámi Languages	Pite Sámi	20	Dark red
	Lule Sámi	1000 - 2000	Green
	North Sámi	20.0000	Yellows
Eastern Sámi Languages	Inari Sámi	400	Light blue
	Skolt Sámi	420	Blue
	Kildin Sámi	500	Dark blue
	Ter Sámi	>10	Navy blue

Table 6: Sámi languages divided according to the three main language groups. Table by the author⁹. data: <https://site.uit.no/sagastallamin/the-Sámi-languages/>

⁶ Since the latest decades of 20th century, North Sámi has exerted a growing influence over Sámi speakers given its predominant position in Sámi media (tv news, radio, newspapers and books). Furthermore, it is the most accessible Sámi language in terms of didactic and self-study material. Similarly, it is the language which counts the highest number of speakers – albeit with dialectal differences – making it increasingly the strongest Sámi idiom with the consequence of exerting influence over the other Sámi languages which have fewer speakers and less teaching material. Consequently, people who do not speak any Sámi language but wish to do so – even those who have a Sámi background, not necessarily a north Sámi one – tend to study North Sámi. A possible consequence of the relatively accessibility of North Sámi is a linguistic homogenization threatening the survival of the most endangered Sámi languages.

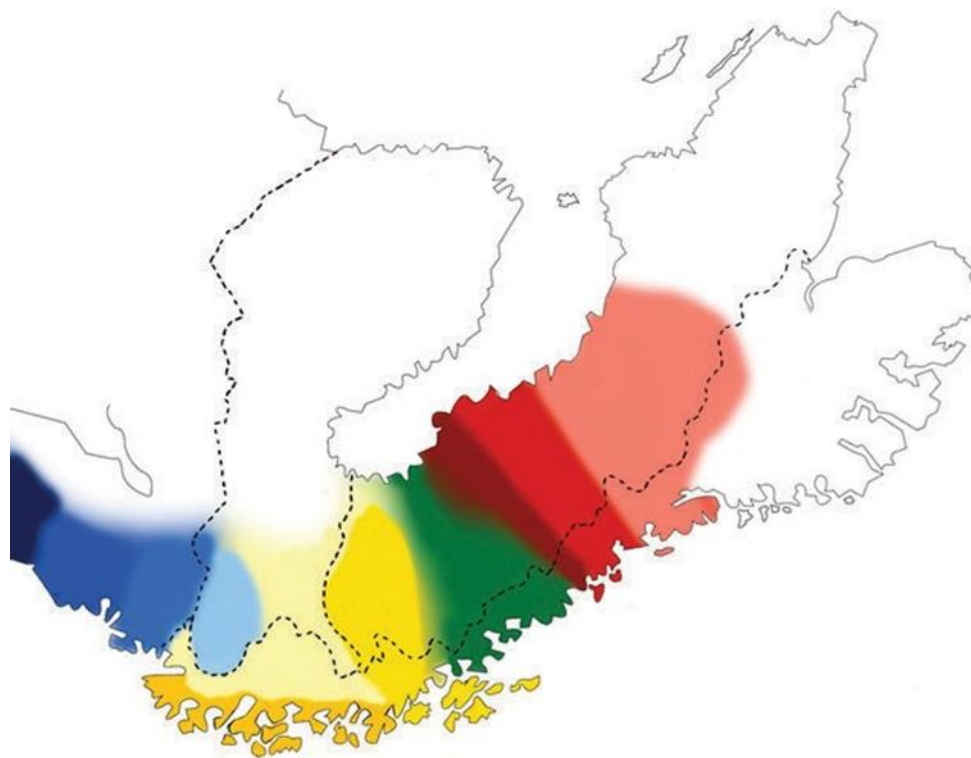
⁷ In the academic literature controversies have arisen with regard to the way Sámi languages are classified, on the distinction between language, dialect, and varieties. See for instance Valijärvi, & Kahn (2017)

⁸ Western Sámi languages, further divided into Southern Sámi (Åsele dialect and Jämtland dialect) and Ume Sámi; Northwestern Sámi Languages: Pite Sámi, Lule Sámi; Northern Sámi: Duortnus/Torne Sámi, Finnmark Sámi Sea Sámi; Eastern Sámi languages, further divided into mainland, Inari Sámi, Kemi Sámi (extinct), Skolt Sámi, Akkala Sámi (extinct), Kainuu Sámi (extinct) and peninsular Kildin Sámi, Ter Sámi.

⁹ The numbers concerning estimated speakers of any Sámi language are highly debated as very few statistical research has been carried out about the numbers of language users. Furthermore, such statistics – often based on the respondents' perception of her/his language proficiency – are based on relatively old data and are highly political. For all these reasons, it is very difficult to have a clearer picture of the actual number of speakers of any Sámi language. Recent studies are focusing on the number of children who receive education through Sámi but, with regard to older generation, the numbers are still vague (Walter & Andersen, 2013).

	Torne Sámi (Duortnus Sámi)	Yellow
North Sámi varieties	(Inner) Finnmark Sámi	Light yellow
	Sea Sámi	Light orange

Table 7: North Sámi varieties table by the author. Table by the author.
Data <https://site.uit.no/sagastallamin/the-Sámi-languages/>



Map 1: Arctic-centric map of Sápmi. The different colours correspond to different Sámi languages (see table 6) (map by the author).

Duortnus/Torne	<p>Gárasavvon (Karesuando) southern parts of Giron/Kiruna municipality and the northern parts of Gällivare/Jiellevárri-Váhčir) municipality in Sweden;</p> <p>Čohkkiras (Jukkasjärvi): spoken in southernmost parts of Romsa ja Finnmarku /Tromsø and Finnmark county and the northernmost parts of Nordlándá /Nordland county in Norway</p>
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Table 8 Duortnus/Torne Sámi varieties (table by the author. Data Kejonen: 2020).

With the exception of North Sámi, which today has around 20000 speakers many of the still existing Sámi languages have today few active speakers¹⁰ left. All Sámi languages, divisible in dialects with specific local varieties, are currently labelled as endangered.

As of today, North Sámi is spoken by about 20000 people who either learnt it as their mother tongue or as a second language (Jokinen et al 2016). The majority of the other extant Sámi languages, with their various dialects and local varieties, have so few speakers that they are categorized as being either endangered or on the brink of extinction¹¹. Despite its relatively strong position, even North Sámi is classified by the UNESCO as endangered of disappearing.

Many of the elements I address in this work are of immediate understanding and clarity for those who grew up in or have been socialized in a Sámi culture.

However, for cultural outsiders, such elements are often enigmatic, and their deep meanings are often obscure or impossible to grasp. External observers or listeners do not have the cultural background necessary to decode the implicit signs and messages that are immediately clear to cultural insiders for whom such symbols are often inscribed in a wider series of connections, meanings and emotions. In the course of the research, I became more and more acquainted with urban North Sámi culture but I acknowledge that I will never really be able to fully understand it. Despite participant observation, I was a mere observer and never fully involved, my interest and my involvement notwithstanding. I am not Sámi and therefore I have not grown up in their world, nor had I or my ancestors experienced the ramifications of this identity, in its beauty and value but also – unfortunately for those forced to

¹⁰ With this expression I refer to those speakers of a language who have an active command of the language and hence are able to use it as a means of communication in various contexts and spheres of life.

¹¹ Recent socio-linguistic and anthropological literature questions the choice of words when discussing “endangered” languages. In 2008 the sociolinguistics Duchêne & Heller edited the volume “Discourses of endangerment: Ideology and interest in the defence of languages”. In this work they argue that language endangerment discourses can be useful to advocate on behalf of minority(-ized) languages, and, in the case of indigenous languages, they also benefit the indigenous community that speaks that language. Nevertheless, discourses constructed upon the idea of endangerment may foster potentially negative and problematic consequences. As Heller & Duchêne (2008) demonstrate, talking about a language as endangered focuses the discourse on the language rather than on the people who still speak it. In doing so, language is perceived as an autonomous entity removed from the everyday context and practice into which exist. This perception distances the language from its speakers even though its existence is deeply tied to the culture and the community into which it is spoken. These discourses are a potential menace to the survival of the language since they reiterate the very nation-state ideologies that contributed in artificially reducing the number of speakers of that language (Heller & Duchêne, 2008). Furthermore, such discourses contribute in essentializing languages removing them from their context and from the historical dynamics that determined their current situation. Anthropologist Gerald Roche summarized these issue in a powerful “tweet” where he called for a paradigmatic shift in the way issues about “endangered” languages are addressed (<https://twitter.com/gjosephroche/status/1204582968745844737>)

experience with it – the subtle and pervasive persecution and the stigma still associated with everything Sámi.

More than once I asked myself if it was appropriate, if I had the right to put those meanings it took me so long to grasp on paper. As professor of Sámi Literature Harald Gaski has demonstrated (1999), in Sámi cultural expressions – in the case examined by Gaski, a Joik (Sámi chant) – cryptic messages have long been employed with the specific purpose of confounding cultural outsiders and while communicating among cultural insiders. Gaski consider this as a form of resistance. The complex symbolic and cultural-specific visual and oral language – due to its complexity and crypticity – has, among other strategies, allowed the Sámi cultures to survive and thrive today. I often talked with my interlocutors about what was, in their personal view, appropriate for me to discuss in this thesis. I followed their advice at the best of my possibilities, attaining myself to ethical guidelines as well as my own sense of respect towards my interlocutors.

IV. On the Norwegian side of Sápmi: Sámi recent history

In Norway, the Sámi path to auto-determinations has been a complex process: In 1987, the ratification of the Samelov (the Sámi Act) led to the institution of the Norwegian Sámediggi (the Sámi Parliament), a consultative body established in 1989 in Kárášjohka (Broderstad 2011). In the same year, the Norwegian parliament amended the constitution including the §110^o paragraph, modified in §118^o in 2014. The Samelov guarantees the Sámi rights to protect and develop their cultures, languages and lifestyles. In 1990 Norway ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 169. In 1991, the Samelov was modified, and important language rights were included. These modifications were the result of the ratification of ILO:169 (Elvebakk et al. 2010). The recognition of the indigenous status was a political achievement that came after decades of struggles that even led to episodes of civil disobedience in relation to the construction of a dam along the Alta River in central Finnmark (Spangen et al. 2015). The Alta damming constituted a turning point in the relations between Sámi communities and the Norwegian state which, for almost a century, had enforced a rigid policy of structuralized assimilation (known in Norway as *fornorsking*, Norwegianization in English) and state-led stigmatization that deeply affected Sámi societies. Thanks to social battles and nation-wide mobilizations, as well as thanks to Sámi cultural activists' engagement in numerous acts of protest, in Fennoscandinavia there has been positive re-evaluation of minority cultures, followed by the patrimonialization and musealization of their cultural heritage, often referred to as cultural revitalization processes (Cocq 2013).

V. Sámi Art(s) as a means of protest in Sápmi

The pervasive effects of colonial processes have been met with forms of resistance that have taken various shapes and forms. In recent decades, Sámi artistic expressions – often politically engaged – have gained a role of prominence in the articulation of indigenous Sámi resistance against the colonial overtones that still permeate Nordic societies. In order to appreciate Sámi art and the context in which it has been developing, it is necessary to take into account not only indigenous Sámi epistemology but also Sámi perspectives over the debates taking place in Sápmi and around Sámi issues. Art as emerged as powerful instrument of protest in Sápmi (see Stephansen 2017; Bladow, 2019) as well as among other indigenous peoples (see Martineau & Ritskes 2014). For this reason, the expression “artivism” has become quite popular in the Fennoscandinavian academic literature (Sandström 2017). Art has become a locus of Indigenous contestations and as such it often addresses thorny topics with a strong visual language. Given these reasons, in this thesis I also address specific Sámi artistic expressions that have had a prominent role in promoting Sámi causes in recent Sámi history both at a pan-Sámi and at a local (Márka-Sámi) level.

VI. Theoretical framework: Indigenous efflorescence in the Márka

The analytical framework that informs this thesis is based on the concept of indigenous efflorescence as examined by Roche, in the 2018 volume ‘Indigenous Efflorescence, Beyond Revitalisation in Sápmi and Ainu Mosir’ he edited along with Maruyama and Kroik. These scholars employ this relatively new theoretical concept following in the steps of sociologist and political theorist Jack Goldstone, who first employed in social studies and who in his turn borrowed it from the hard sciences. As Roche, Maruyama and Kroik explain, the purpose of concentrating on Indigenous efflorescence is twofold: to both increase and supply alternative options to widely adopted conceptual categories employed in the study of contemporary indigenous cultures and their expressions (2018). Initiatives such as festivals, cultural centers, publications in indigenous languages, place-names documentation and language programs have demonstrated indigenous peoples' ability to not only survive but also – once state policies provided at least some recognition and support – thrive thanks to individual and collective indigenous entrepreneurship. For these reasons I think that the concept of efflorescence is particularly suitable when addressing the contemporary context of Sápmi.

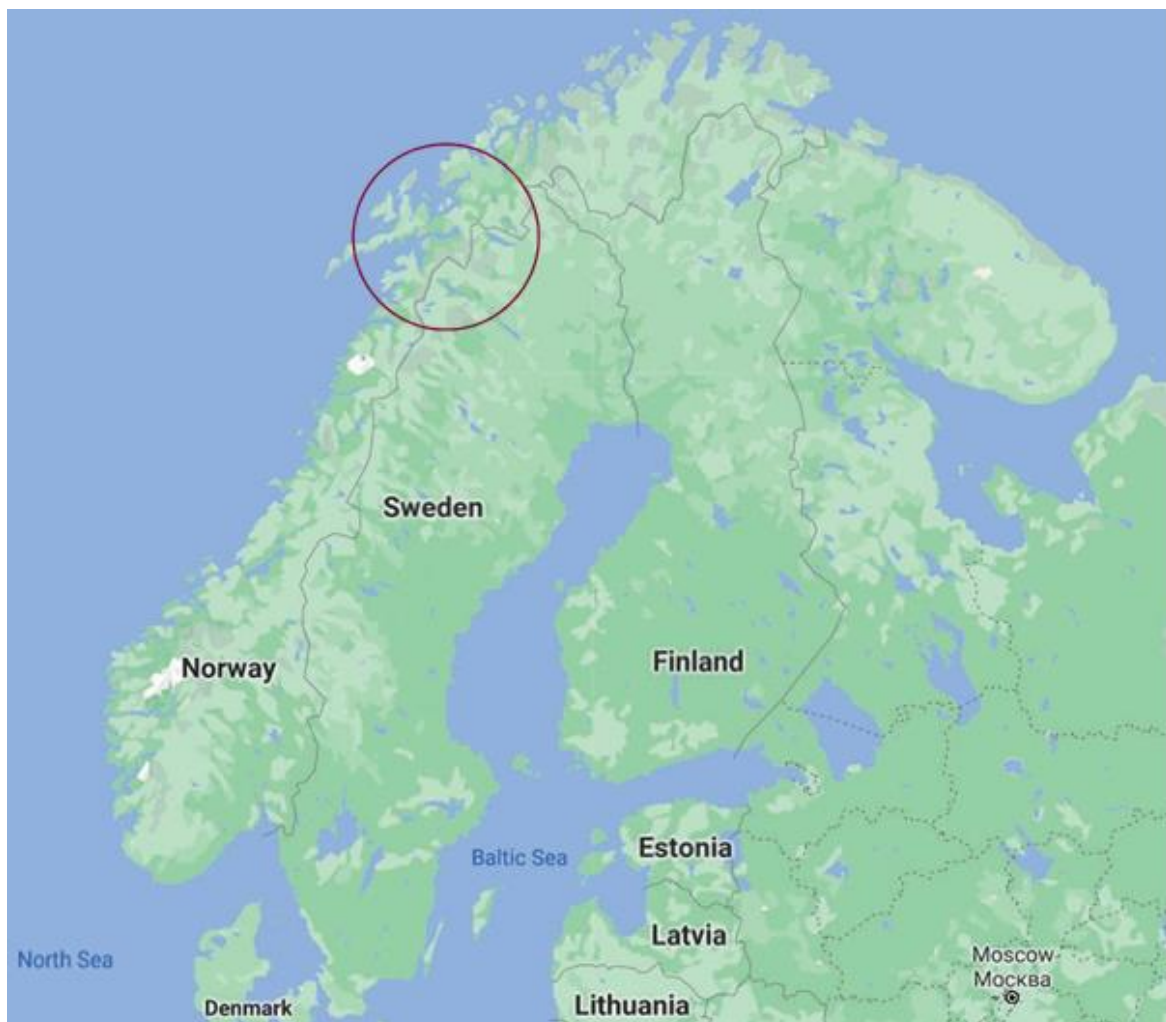
‘Indigenous efflorescence’ emerges as an especially relevant and suitable conceptual framework in that it focuses on indigenous initiatives and is centred on indigenous achievements and aspirations.

Furthermore, it offers a conceptual tool that allows us to interpret Indigenous cultural, social, artistic, and linguistic blossoming - as the ones we are witnessing in Sápmi – as what Roche et al. define «everyday acts of resurgence». The scholar further explains that these « [...] quotidian practices of efflorescence, demonstrate how even simple, 'banal' actions are saturated with the legacy of historical process, and conditioned by systems and structures of ongoing domination and manifestations of power asymmetries» Roche, 2018b, p. 125). A further point that makes Indigenous efflorescence a suitable theoretical framework when addressing early 21st century Sápmi is its focus on the subjective experiences of individuals that perform acts of Indigenous efflorescence as part of their daily life. As Roche et al. Note (Roche et al., 2018:125), « [...] individuals bringing about Indigenous efflorescence come from all walks of life». These words mirror my experience with my interlocutors, people from very different backgrounds but with similar attitudes towards their Sámi heritage. They all engaged in practices that can be framed as acts epitomizing Indigenous efflorescence. Their dedication, commitment, determination and desire to make Sámi cultures and languages flourish has characterised their life-experiences, shaping them but also shaping contemporary Sápmi thanks to their activism and their initiative. A further reason why I deem important to resort to Indigenous efflorescence as a framework of reference lies in the fact that the presence of practices and acts ascribable to Indigenous efflorescence reveal, « [...] the ongoing colonialism and the ways it impacts on individual efforts to reclaim language, identity and culture, and to be Indigenous» (Roche, 2018b, p. 124). Hence, such approach can help recognize colonial practices even where they are hidden and normalized.

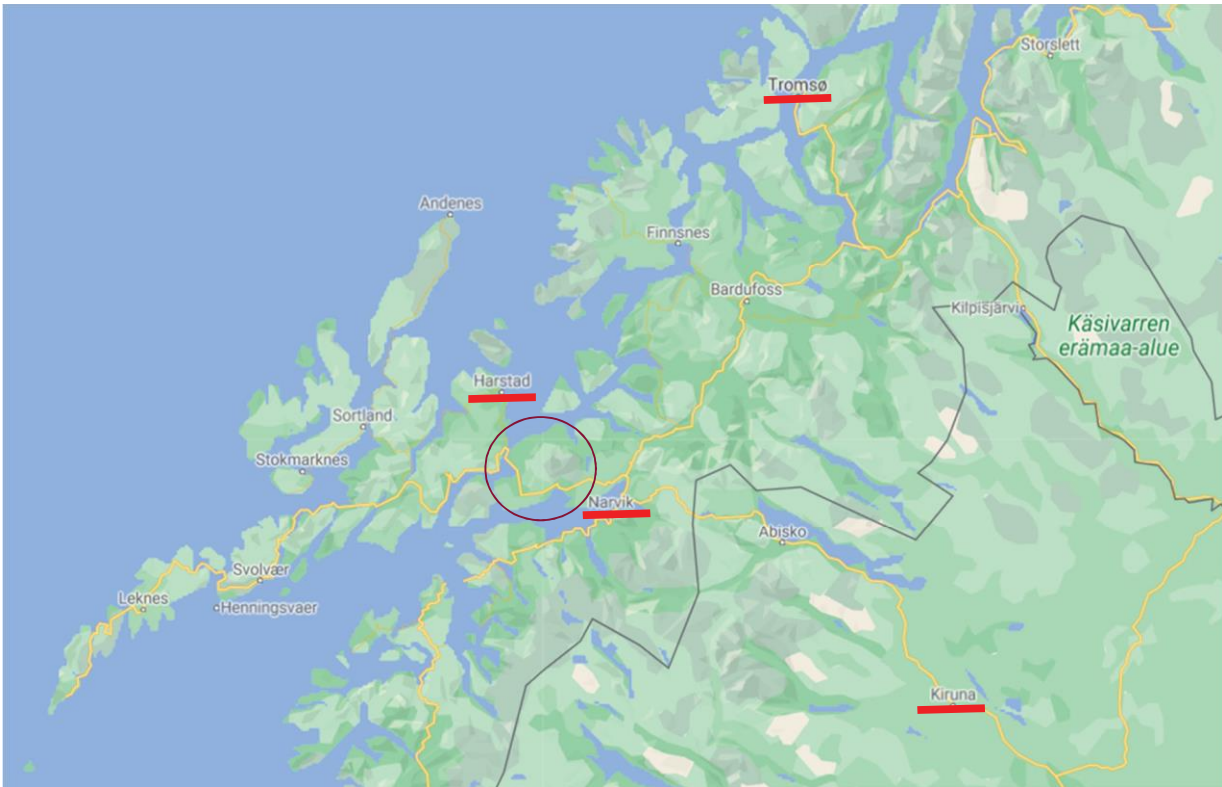
Today's indigenous efflorescence, and how it undermines colonial trajectories as both explanation and ideology, demands looking at the future in its intrinsically different and unforeseeable dimension as the future can be imagined and speculated about but never truly predicted (Pink et al 2017: 133). Thus, I ought to, following Roche et al., analyse instances of indigenous efflorescence in the light of the multiple possible futures for which they might pave the way, through what Tsing refers to as 'about-to-be-present[s]' that do not yet – but could soon – exist (2005: 269). In light of this reasoning, the analysis of instances of indigenous efflorescence acquires a position of privilege in the examination of indigenous past present and future(s), providing tools for understanding contemporary phenomena pertaining to indigenous contexts while also addressing the historical circumstances that constitute the background – often marked by repression and stigmatization – of indigenous efflorescence.

This dissertation was hence inspired by a future-oriented approach underlying the importance of examining and interpreting indigenous efflorescence in the light of not only the enduring survivance

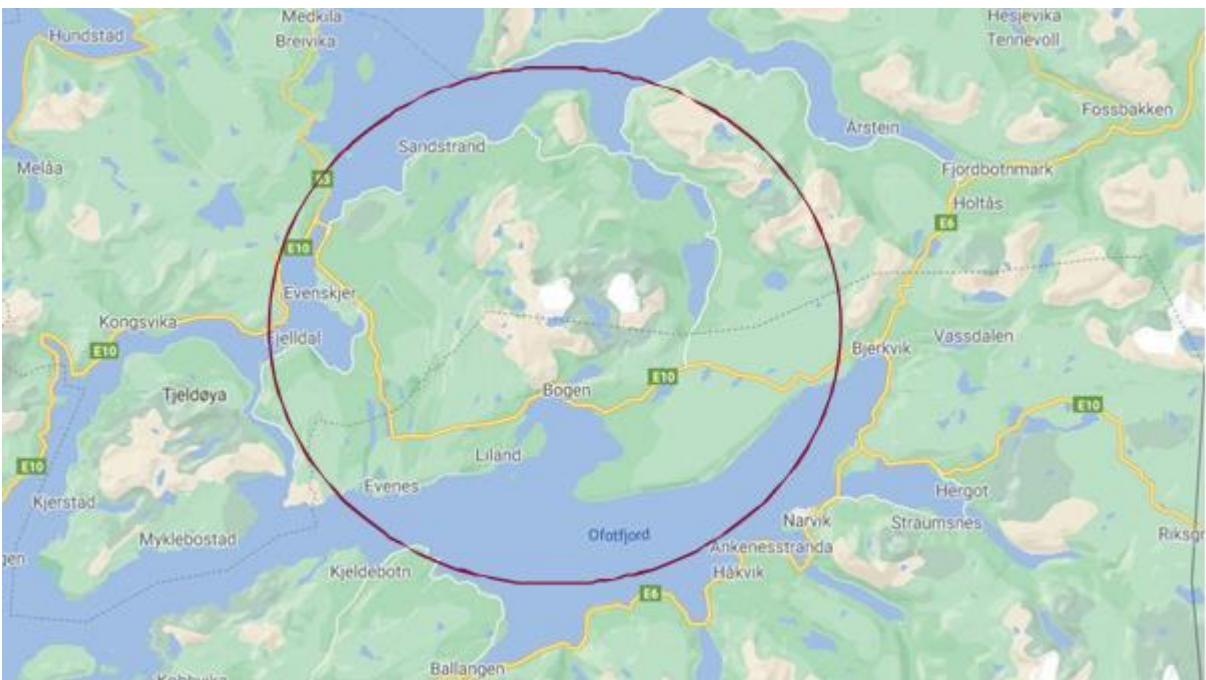
of indigenous people – in the context I address, the Sámi – despite persistent Western expectations of their imminent disappearance as a result of absorption into hegemonic societies but also their creativity and their ability to cope with colonial circumstances. In order to highlight the strength, endurance and ingenuity of many Sámi individuals and communities, the past too has been a primary object of analysis as it is only in light of what happened that what is happening now can be really appreciated. Past, present and future are all dimensions that shall be considered when addressing any context or phenomena and even more so in those contexts where both past and future had been denied. Furthermore, as Roche et al. show, acts and practices of efflorescence draw attention towards « [...] the creative, generative nature of Indigenous efflorescence, and the complex links between past, present and future that this entails» (Roche, 2018, p. 126). I adopted this framework, employing a diachronic perspective, in my analysis of the Sámi cultural region known as Márka (map 1,2,3).



Map 2: Map of the Fennoscandian peninsula. (from google maps).
The red circle indicates the location of Stuornjárga in the Ufuohtta/Ofoten district.



Map 3: Map of the Northern regions of the Fennoscandinavian peninsula. The red circle indicates the location of Stuornjårga in the Ufohtttá/Ofoten district. The towns of Narvik and Harstad and the cities of Tromsø and Kiruna are underlined in red (from google maps).



Map 4: Map of the area between Nordlândia/Nordland and Romssa ja Finnmárkku fylka/Troms og Finnmark counties. Detail of Stuornjårga (map adapted from google maps).

VII. Notes on terminology

In this thesis, I consciously use the terms “society” and “societies” with different connotations, not just as singular and plural in the Sámi environment. The plural denotes the whole variety of Sámi cultural milieux, whereas the singular form may have two different connotations: one refers to a specific context-bound Sámi community; the other refers to a generic pan-Sámi community which has developed since World War II, with foundations that can be traced back to the works of the first Sámi activists at the beginning of the 20th century, and which has developed in recent decades thanks to arenas such as the social media, festivals and a growing body of artistic expressions.

A sense of a unified Sámi identity was absent as late as the 19th century, even though there was a clear understanding of the distinction between Sámi and non-Sámi (as exemplified first by the Tsjudi – the folktale human enemies of the Sámi – and later by the Finnish, Swedish/Norwegian and Russian identities of the Sámi neighbors). Nevertheless, members of communities belonging to different Sámi cultures were fully aware of the respective differences in terms of language, customs, worldviews and ritual practices as well as livelihoods. Recently, as a result of internal and external factors, there has been a growing sense of a shared Sámi culture encompassing elements transversal to the variegated local Sámi cultures.

An example of an external factor is the homogenizing pressure exerted upon Sámi cultures by the Nation States. The implementation of state-led policies resulted in the formation of an idealized colonial understanding of a “pure”, fabricated, Sámi identity, which corresponded with what was, to the colonizers, furthest removed from their own customs. This is the reason why certain elements were selected as “authentic Sámi”, becoming iconic of Sámi in the eyes of cultural outsiders: reindeer tending, “nomadism”, poor language skills, “simplicity”, ferality, a low resistance to alcohol, and dubious religiosity. These became performative stereotypes and those who did not comply with them were considered to have a doubtful claim to call themselves Sámi.

On the contrary, Sámi practices that did not conform to colonial prejudices were not just ignored but understood as signs of a loss of the perceived traditional Sámi way of life and recognized as not just deviations but also as contamination, with the result that the communities where such practices were the norm were not considered Sámi enough to be acknowledged as such but also not “civilized” enough to be regarded as part of the nation, resulting in a double stigmatization. This performative understanding (or misunderstanding) of the Sámi on the part of outsiders has had long lasting consequences on the lives of thousands of Sámi. Hence, it not only important but also obligatory for

scholars to acknowledge and investigate the detrimental effects brought about by a simplistic colonial approach.

It is an ethical and moral imperative to expose the colonial curbs and the epistemological violence imposed upon not only colonized people but also upon us all. In the words of the illustrious author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the colonization of the mind. I am aware that the wide majority of English language academic literature in dealing with Sámi issues and topics employs the expression “reindeer herding” when addressing the pastoral dimension of reindeer tending Sámi cultures. In Norwegian, the term is “reindrift” while in North Sámi is Boazodoallu. both terms translate as “reindeer husbandry.” I decided to resort to the locution “reindeer tending” – attested in the literature (Durrah Scheffy 2004; Järpe 2005; Brännlund 2018) – to convey the idea of Sámi relationship with reindeer. This decision derives from a conversation I had with a friend in Unjárga. While riding a snowmobile in the duoddaris (the tundra), we chased some of his family reindeer reindeer. Later, while discussing the local reindeer-based economy, he told me «Yes, we are “herders”, in english we say herders. but it's more complicated than that, they are free. We guide them but we actually go close to them only about four times a year. But we care for them and we protect them» (fieldnotes, February 2020, Unjárga).

Chapter 1

Methodological reflections

1.1 Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography a methodological excursus

This thesis is the final step of my three-and-a-half-year journey as PhD student in Scienze Psicologiche, Antropologiche e dell’Educazione – Cultural Anthropology at the University of Torino. In this chapter, I address the methodological issues I have reflected upon throughout the research process that led to the elaboration of this thesis in cultural anthropology. This discipline has a long, complex and at times controversial history.

During the 19th century, a new discipline emerged in the European and North American scientific milieu and went by the name of anthropology. The term Anthropology is formed by the Greek noun ἄνθρωπος (*anthrōpos*, i.e. human) and the suffix -λογία (-*logia*, i.e. study, from the Greek term λογος i.e. word). Literally, anthropology broadly defines the study of humans. This compound noun, however, is not attested in Greek or Latin texts, both ancient and medieval, and it is actually a neologism developed in renaissance France. Similarly, another neologism became a central term to anthropology: ‘ethnography’, a compound noun formed by ἔθνος (*ethnos*, i.e. people) and γράφω (*grapho*, i.e. to write). Ethnography can be translated as “writing about people”. According to Skinner (2012), the word “ethnography” is first attested in English in 1832, when it figured among the entries of the ‘Penny Cyclopaedia’, vol II.

As has Hammersley (2015) has outlined, early anthropology was characterized by the aim to provide the public with a descriptive account of that were perceived as «[...]distinctive social or cultural features of a particular society». In line with Hammersley’s analysis, the ethnography entry of the ninth edition of the ‘Encyclopaedia Britannica’, published in 1878, defines Ethnography as «the descriptive details [...] of the human aggregates and organizations» (Skinner 2012:5).

Albeit sometimes mistaken for synonyms outside of academia, anthropology and ethnography indicate a discipline the former and a method the latter. The term ethnography today refers to a qualitative research method at the heart of the discipline of Anthropology itself and is considered a valuable method in other social sciences such as sociology and communication studies. It is difficult to define the main characteristics of ethnography as a method and many scholars have embarked

themselves in this task¹². Even though it is beyond the scopes of this thesis to define ethnography, I nevertheless consider it relevant to give an overview of ethnography as a method since it has been, along with interviews and bibliographic research, at the core of my fieldwork research. According to the historian and anthropologist James Clifford¹³ (1983), ethnography aims at « [...] transl[at]ing experience into text» and «brings experience and discourses into writing». Clifford defines this process as the «practice of textualization». The anthropologist Tim Ingold (2014:385) describes “ethnographic description” as

[...] more an art than a science, but no less accurate or truthful for that. Like the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, the European and American ethnographers of the twentieth could be said to have practiced an ‘art of describing’ (Alpers 1983), albeit predominantly in words rather than in line and color. Theirs is still a standard against which we measure contemporary work.

As Ingold notes, the issue of the scientific value of ethnography has been topic of seemingly endless debates and, in the end, some ethnographies are really worlds painted with words.

This dissertation, in which I analyze the information, the impressions, the stories I came into contact with in the last three and a half years, will be a work of words. I will try to translate my experience into a text, which will not have colors, nor weight nor smells; not even that of paper out of a printer since now everything is submitted online. Nevertheless, this thesis was made possible through colors, smells, flavors and impressions. Scientific rigor notwithstanding, I will try to paint the encounters between my interlocutors and me. I will not be able to convey the emotions and the feelings that characterized my fieldwork. There are no words to illustrate the scent of freshly cut grass on the fields of Gállogieddi, the stickiness of beer on a bench and the constant echo of rain dripping through a tent in Olmmáivággi; the smell of burnt fire and wet reindeer skin inside a *lavvu* (Sámi tent). How can I describe the humidity sinking into the bones while sleeping in a cold sleeping bag? Or the taste of hot chocolate and fireball at -20 in a dark night, the sight lost among the endless shades and shapes of the withe Finnmark mountains... the flavour of freezing winds on your face while on the backseat of a snowmobile, chasing reindeers and the *guovssahasat* (Northern lights). Similarly, it is not possible to really express the feeling of your hearth beating at the pace of a heavy-joik band playing in the shadow of high hills with the midnight sun shining behind a cloud. How to describe the thickness of the mist raising from the ground, hiding everything on its way, even the chemical toilet my bladder so longed for... These are all elements that shaped my life in Sápmi and that, despite the obvious limitations, I

¹² For an analysis of the history of the discipline, its detractors and its supporters as well as the critiques ethnography has received see Pels and Saleminck (1994).

¹³ His historical and rhetorical critiques of ethnography contributed to Anthropology's important self-critical, decolonizing period of the 1980s and early 1990s.

will try to integrate them all and many more into my ethnographic account of Sámi festivals in Northern Norway. In order to enhance my memory, along with my diary, I took numerous photos while on fieldwork. These pictures work for me as mnemonic devices. I am a visual person. By looking at an image, smells, scents, flavors, emotions and impressions come back to me. They are almost as powerful as if I were back there, at the time and place where I took the picture. To look back at the photos I took while on fieldwork has become an act of (auto-)photo elicitation (Harper 2002). In order to make my thesis richer and my descriptions more nuanced, I will integrate these photographs into this dissertation. To me, taking pictures was integral part of the research process and a form of visual ethnography. Photography has constituted a research method (Collier & Collier 1986) that, in retrospective, proved essential in the analysis of festivals and of their linguistic landscape. The richness of the festival experience could not be transferred on the paper of a booknote and hence, when I wrote down my fieldnotes, many were the details that went lost. Furthermore, especially during the first months of fieldwork I often found myself in front of details what I was then not fully aware would have later proved to be extremely relevant in developing a nuanced understanding of the context in which I was carrying out research. This is the case, for instance, of the linguistic landscape of Márkomeannu 2018. I documented it in great detail through photographs long before I knew that the context into which it emerged was going to inspire one of the most thought-provoking and important questions that guided my research: why was it so important to have a handmade sign with the term *hvisset* (image 4) next to the toilets' door while everything was so chaotic and extraordinary as it was during that festival? And, more than anything, why writing 'toilet' in front of what was self-apparently a toilet? I did not need a label – furthermore half of it in a language with only a few thousands of speakers – to understand that. My nose was more than enough. I asked myself these questions that night at Márkomeannu when I came across it and, months later while I was in Tromsø, I came back to it while writing an article about the festival. Had I not documented details such as this through photography, I would have lost most of the context into which they were situated, and which gave them meaning since the notes on my diary were mere mentions of Sámi and Norwegian terms with just a few references to their location. As a method of documentation, photographs became a way to reproduce what was in front of me by creating what Pesch, Dardanou and Sollid defined «[...] a frozen representations of the [linguistic] landscape» (2021:11). Nevertheless, pictures alone would have allowed only a quantitative exam of the Sámi words displayed at the festival or, maybe, an analysis of the spatial organization of the festival area. To be able to grasp what these signs really represent for the staff and festivalgoers, pictures would not be enough. Only interviews with culture-bearers, cultural workers, festival staff, and artists as well as extensive fieldwork provided me with an insight of my interlocutors' emic perspectives into the

festival's linguistic landscape, hence enabling me to elaborate a more nuanced interpretation of what my photographs had biasedly captured. Conversations with my interlocutors made me not only focus on elements pertaining to the linguistic landscape of the festival (i.e. roadsigns, banners, signs, texts, posters, as well as colours and location) but also to the local and global contexts within which these signs express their true meanings, the history(-ies) behind them and, ultimately, the fight for indigenous rights each of these signs embodies.



Image 4: bilingual (North Sámi and English) Toilet sign at Márkomeannu, Gállogieddi 2018 (Photo by the author)

Taking pictures became for me a tool, a way of doing fieldwork. I was not the first one to do so and, actually, photographs have long been tools and instruments of anthropological enquire. There is a long and often controversial history tainted by colonial overtones behind the camera. Taking pictures is not an innocent act and shall be done with respect and awareness of the potential problems connected with this act. I am aware of the colonial history and the objectifying potential of photography (a topic I will come back to later in this thesis). Moreover, as Wolbert (notes, pictures taken on the field are « [...] delicate documents of the anthropologist's transgression of intimate boundaries and temporary participation in the lives of others» (2000:322). When I took the pictures that I used as a sort of private photographic field-diary, I tried my best to follow ethical guidelines offered at festivals and at both my home and my host institutions: the University of Torino and the Arctic University of Tromsø. When photographing people, I always asked for permission unless I was photographing a crowd in a public space during a public event (for instance, festivals). When it was not possible to ask for permission, in the editing phase I blurred the faces of those depicted in the picture. Taking pictures is a way of stopping what is happening around us, of transforming fluidity and hecticcy into a static image. Or, rather, it is an attempt to do so. By taking a photograph, the

author alludes herself she is about to capture the moment even though, once she takes the picture, that very moment has just passed. Photographs are like an echo of what is gone by the time fingers manage to touch the camera. They are like windows into a present that is already the past. When it comes to ethnographic photographs, the past these images hold on to most often is not even the author's one, the subject of the picture being someone else's his/stories and customs.

As anthropologists, we try to peek into other peoples' lives. We must be aware though that, even if we may naively think that what we observe is an example of daily life, we are actually observing only what our interlocutors want us to see. Moreover, as researcher we influence the context we wish to research. This is one of the many challenges of ethnography and anthropology have to face. My specific field of enquire, Sámi festivals, are public events where members of Sámi communities gather to meet, spend time together and enjoy themselves. I shall address this ludic dimension albeit it will not be the core of my analysis. Festivals are indeed social as well as physical and temporal spaces where Sámi people negotiate what they want others to see and what they rather keep out of the public eyes. Reversing the colonial frame of earlier encounters between Sámi and foreigner peoples, festivals represent one of the few social opportunities Sámi individuals and communities have to show their cultures at their own terms. From a methodological perspective though, festivals constitute a challenging research field. As I shall address later in this chapter,

There is no univocal definition of ethnography. Simpson & Coleman (2017) describe ethnography as 'the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution'. Similarly, according to Hammersley (2017:4)¹⁴, the following features characterize Ethnography as a qualitative method:

- relatively long-term data collection process,
- taking place in naturally occurring settings,
- relying on participant observation, or personal engagement more generally,
- employing a range of types of data,
- aimed at documenting what actually goes on,
- emphasizes the significance of the meanings people give to objects, including themselves,
- in the course of their activities, in other words culture, and
- holistic in focus

Nevertheless, Hammersley points out how such features are not univocal and leave space for interpretations, ambiguities and opacities. Moreover, albeit being at the core of cultural anthropology

¹⁴ For an investigation of the definition of the concepts of ethnography, see Marcus 1986; Clifford 1983, Clifford 1986 Hammersley 2017, Ingold 2017).

as a discipline, the concept “ethnography” has been criticized by scholars such as Ingold, whose criticism has been directed, among other things, towards the overuse of this term in academia (Ingold 2014:385).

1.2 Ethnographers before ethnography

The origins of ethnography have been traced back to the works of ancient Greek and Latin authors who confronted their cultures with that of the people they encountered or heard of. In such respect, ethnography indicates the description of peoples perceived as different, strange and exotic.

Authors such as Herodotus resorted to a variety of terms and concepts to define their descriptions of other cultures. It is thus in its origin closely associated with the confrontation of different cultures. Despite being these accounts distant from modern understanding of Ethnography, they show that literature has emerged as a medium of cultural contact as early as in the 5th century BCE. The accounts written by classic authors are what Skinner defines «ethnography before ethnography» (Skinner 2012:3)¹⁵. Of these «ethnographers before ethnography», the roman lawyer and civil servant Tacitus is of particular relevance for my field of enquiry¹⁶.

According to Rowe (1965), Tacitus treatise is the only text in Classical Latin literature that could be compared to an ethnographic report. Around 98 C.E., Tacitus wrote a text commonly referred to as *Germania*. The original title is *De origine et situ Germanorum*¹⁷. Despite the descriptions of peoples and places, there is no proof Tacitus ever visited the lands of the Germans. Whether he actually met the people he describes or relied on secondary sources, Tacitus devoted an entire volume to these peoples and their customs. As it happened for many later accounts of foreigner peoples, Tacitus' reasons behind his ethnographic interest were political. What now some scholars consider ethnographic accounts *ante litteram* often had a very pragmatic aim.

Rowe notes that, by the time *Germania* had been *compiled* the emperor Trajan was on the left bank of the river Rhine. Seemingly, Tacitus' motivations lied in the wish for Traian to undertake an invasion of Germany. One thousand and four hundred years later, another text would be written to

¹⁵ Cfr for instance Hustwit, E. (2016).

¹⁶ Tacitus's work had also an important political output: It was a means through which to Influence public policy while giving an account of foreign peoples. The author took advantage of the opportunity to read his fellow citizens a moral lesson by praising the Germans for maintaining certain values which Tacitus identified as part of the older Roman tradition and which he felt that his contemporaries were neglecting. In discussing those German customs, which conflicted with Roman values, however, Tacitus' attitude was one of marked disapproval. The *Germania* failed to influence Trajan's foreign policy, and it inspired no interest among the Romans in making more detailed studies of the Germans or of other foreign peoples. In fact, it had little effect on anyone's thinking until after its rediscovery in the 15th century, when this text was read through different, culturally and time-specific lens.

¹⁷«On the origin and location of the Germans».

lure a ruler into investing to conquer distant lands, that time it would be religion the battlefield. In 1539 Olaus Magnus, the catholic archbishop of Uppsala exiled in Rome, designed a map known today as *Carta Marina*. This map provided minute details about the richness of Fennoscandinavia, showing the different productive activities and the local customs of the different areas. Olaus Magnus conceived the map as an illustrative tool that could impress the Pope, persuading him to invest in catholic missions in order to regain control over the region's inhabitants. The *Carta Marina* was followed, 16 years later, by another work by Olaus Magnus: a volume entitled *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*. The "*Historia*" is a history of the Nordic peoples as seen from the perspective of a former member of the local elite. This extremely influential work was published only a few decades after Tacitus's work had been rediscovered. Tacitus' *Germania* became a significant text in the European Renaissance, a time «[...] when a new tradition of interest in cultural differences had developed on a different basis. In this new context the *Germania* was read with enthusiasm and attention for the ethnographic information it contained. It was hailed as a "golden book" and it had a considerable influence on pioneer ethnographic writings» (Rowe 1965:5). Beside its relevance for its influence over later literary productions with ethnographic features, Tacitus' text is relevant to this dissertation since many scholars have identified the Sámi in Tacitus' descriptions of the Fenni¹⁸. Even though this thesis has its detractors (Whitaker 1989) and proponents that highlight the presumptive character of this connection (cfr Edström 2003), the association between the ancestors of the Sámi and the Fenni described in the *Germania* is widely accepted both among modern authors (cfr for instance Niurenius and Schefferus in Naum 2016: 496) and contemporary scholars (cfr Allison 1953, Fjellstrom 1985; Aikas 2015).

Besides Tacitus, many other ancient authors throughout the centuries have provided their readers with accounts of the livelihoods and the customs of faraway people. If, during the late antiquity, these accounts were most likely based on secondary sources, during the middle ages these authors were often travelers who wrote about their journey and about the peoples they met. Even though, in these medieval accounts, the borders between experiences and imaginary are often blurred, these texts constitute valuable sources on the perception of "the others". Among the earlier European travelers who produced accounts of their journeys, Marco Polo is probably one of the most famous. His travelogue¹⁹ *Livre des Merveilles du Monde* is better known as "il Milione", compiled in 1298, is the

¹⁸ Tacitus' Fenni, Procopious' scythifinnoi, Adam of Bremen's Skritifengi, and Saxo Grammaticus' Finni differentiate

¹⁹ Travelogues are descriptive accounts recounting the journey the author had undertaken. During these journeys, the travellers came into contact with other peoples and their cultures. Ultimately, travel led to contact with alterity, often through the observation of cultural diversity.

most famous among a number of accounts produced by travelers who ventured in lands beyond Europe²⁰

Schwab (2017) highlights the relevance of Marco Polo's 'Book of the Marvels of the World' as a model for future travelogues. In Schwab's view,

[...] This late 13th century document was to become a model for the colonial travel narratives during the so-called discovery of the New World and shaped the Western cultural imaginary with its Orientalist phantasms and its fascination with the marvels of foreign worlds. 'Il Milione' made its impact on 15th century geographical, ethnological, and cosmographic conceptions, and served as the prime intertext for the genre of travel narratives that began to flourish at the time (Schwab 2017:6).

Travel memoirs such as those of Marco Polo are interesting sources of information about both the imaginary and the perceptions early modern Europeans had of "the others". These accounts though are not ethnographies: they belong to a specific literary genre today known as travelogue, or travel literature. Despite originally being compiled as memoirs about voyages in far-away lands, these accounts offer important insights concerning the perception travelers had prior to their departure and fostered upon their return. If read bearing in mind the context in which the authors of such accounts are positioned, these literary works can offer important, albeit fragmented, pieces of information regarding the peoples the traveler had encountered.

Albeit being the most famous 13th century European traveler, Marco Polo was not the first one to record his journey east: Other travelers before him wrote memoirs of their expeditions in the Far East. Among them, Giovanni da Pian de Carpine, who wrote in 1245 an account of his journey: *Historia Mongalorum (history of the Mongols)* and William of Rubruck who compiled the *Itinerarium fratris Willielmi de Rubruquis de ordine fratrum Minorum, Galli, Anno gratia 1253 ad partes Orientales*. Unlike Marco Polo, both these travelers belonged to a religious order (Rockhill 2017). In the following centuries, other accounts were produced as the result of missionary activities. This is the case of the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies-1542) is extremely relevant in this analysis, given its peculiar ethnographic character. Las Casas wrote his pamphlet to draw the king of Spain's

²⁰ During the 14th century, other Italians such as Giovanni de' Marignolli and Odorico of Pordenone travelled to China and wrote about their journeys even though their works have not reached the fame of Marco Polo's *Il Milione*. (Colless 1968) (Liščák 2011). Accounts of travels in Asia have been produced also outside of the European mediaeval world. Among them, Ibn Battuta's *A Masterpiece to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling* (تحفة النظار في غرائب الأمصار وعجائب الأسفار) also known as "The Travels" (الرحلة, Rihla, 1354) has reached wide fame in the Islamic world (Chism 2013).

attention towards the atrocities carried out by Spanish colonizers on the local indigenous peoples. Liebersohn considers Las Casas *relación* as «[...] an early example of an important genre of anthropological writing», and, at the same time, an « [...] exposè of colonial abuses» (Liebersohn 2008:21-22) which distances itself from other accounts used by colonial powers to reaffirm their control over the peoples they had subjugated. Usually, the intents of clergymen active in religious missions around the world were primarily religious. As Rubiés (2017:273-274) states, these « religious concerns were key to the ethnographic practices of the majority of early modern missionaries, whether Catholic or Protestant, and that such concerns account for the large proportion of ethnographic materials from this period that we owe to their pens ». These clergymen and travelers have been sometimes defined as proto-anthropologists

Shifting the focus on the northern European context, there are some modern accounts that have become important for historians and anthropologists wise. Compiled for politico-religious reasons, the works of the Archbishop of Uppsala have been considered relevant from an ethnographic perspective: the details about local customs, the minute descriptions of practices and rituals as well as the accurate and often primary sources Olaus Magnus' relied upon have made both the '*Carta Marina*' and the '*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionaibus*'. Both the map and the account provide important insights into the 16th century Nordic understanding and perception of their own customs and those of the Sámi. They also offer important information concerning the economic, cultural and social life of both Sámi and non-Sámi inhabitants who lived in the time of Olaus Magnus. Despite the acknowledgment of the anthropological character of these early accounts, the method and practice of anthropology and ethnography as we know them today has emerged in the period of the European expansion at the expense of what has become known as the 'third world'.

1.3 Facing the (colonial) past

Many scholars have addressed the role of ethnography and anthropology during colonial times. Following the publication of Talal Asad's seminal work *Anthropology & the colonial encounter* (1973), debates have arisen around the issue « [...] despite Asad's statement that it is a mistake to view social anthropology in the colonial era as primarily an aid to colonial administration, or as the simple reflection of colonial ideology » (Asad, in Pels & Salemink 1994:2). These studies have fostered debates over the «[...] practical or ideological complicity of anthropologists in the construction of colonial (or neo-colonial) power» (Pels & Salemink, 1994:2). Ethnography and anthropology emerged in connection to the creation and perpetuation of colonial and neo-colonial powers. This association led to critical consideration on the relations between ethnography and

colonialism. It has also fostered debates over the authority of anthropology as a discipline (see for instance Clifford 1983).

In the late 18th and early 19th century, the encounter between anthropology and subjugated peoples took the shape of a «salvage anthropology» described by Clifford (1986: 112) as a socially constructed «last chance rescue operation» aiming at recording, and hence preserving, cultures believed to be vanishing. As Bratlinger points out: «From the start, anthropology has been a science of mourning. Its «disappearing object is,» writes James Clifford, «[...] a rhetorical construct legitimating a representational practice: 'salvage' ethnography' [...] » (2003:5). As Beattie (2004:48) explains, « [...] salvage is a potent theme in much early ethnographic writing ». Similarly, this rhetoric has deeply influenced other forms of data collection connected to ethnography, such as photography and films.

Clifford questions both the premises as well as the scientific and moral authority associated with this practice. He indeed highlights that this practice is based on the assumption that « [...] the other society is weak and 'needs' to be represented by an outsider (and that what matters in its life is its past, not present and future) », the recorder and interpreter of fragile custom is custodian of an essence, unimpeachable witness to an authenticity. (Moreover, since the 'true' culture has always vanished, the salvaged version cannot be easily refuted » (Clifford 1986:112). As it is clear from this quotation, according to Clifford, salvage ethnography is rooted in a specific understanding of authenticity based on immanent essence rather than dynamic exchange and hybridity. Salvage ethnography is indeed constructed on the presumption that 'primitive cultures' were vanishing because of the encounter with 'more developed' cultures. Indigenous societies were to succumb to the strength and innovation embedded in western modernity. Virginia Dominguez (in Clifford et al, 1987: 131) further explores the deep implications of the salvage paradigm, the power asymmetries embedded in it and the legitimizing power intrinsic in its application. Dominguez states that:

[...] When we assert the need to salvage, rescue, save, preserve [a culture], we announce our fear of its destruction, our inability to trust others to take appropriate action and our sense of entitlement over the fate of the [culture]' observes the ethnographer. The notion of a 'disappearing world' legitimized the confiscation of objects and artefacts from native cultures before, as the argument went, the culture disappeared ».

Clifford (1986:112) defines «ethnography's disappearing objectt as a « [...] rhetorical construct legitimating a representational practice » where the text produced by the anthropologist constitute the only way of preserving memories of supposedly soon-to-be-lost cultures. The implications of Salvage ethnography are deep and manifold. Items of material culture like daily objects, costumes, ceremonial

items but also human remains were collected and exhibited in museums and other institutions. The consequences of that practice still today profoundly affect indigenous peoples around the world. The issue concerning the rightful owners of these objects has raised heated debates²¹.

Since the 1980s, many communities have undertaken legal actions in the attempt to have at least some of the items improperly acquired and exposed in museums returned. Museums are complex institutions, whose origins can be traced back to sixteenth century *wunderkammer* or cabinets of curiosities²². Some museums and cultural institutions have entered into negotiation with indigenous communities in the attempt of finding compromises regarding repatriation of valuable objects. Many objects and human remains have found their way back to the communities they originally belonged to. As Fisher (2012) shows, this process is marked by tensions and misunderstandings but also communications and collaborations. Among some communities, the process of repatriation is linked to revitalization and cultural renewal (Simpson 2009). Despite the criticism it has encountered (see Pels & Salemink 1994). Talal Asad's work has the merit of highlighting the ambiguous role some anthropologists had fulfilled in colonial contexts. Asad (1973:92) does indeed highlight that anthropologists «[...] can claim to have contributed to the cultural heritage of the societies they study by a sympathetic recording of indigenous forms of life that would otherwise be lost to posterity. But they have also contributed, sometimes indirectly, towards maintaining the structure of power represented by the colonial system». Asad' text shows that often anthropologists do not acknowledge the potential political implications of their actions. The collection of essays in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* helps to illustrate in a more or less effective way the serious consequences of an anthropology that is unaware of its political implications. Anthropologists are increasingly being denied what has always been their domain; the "field" The intelligentsia in developing "Third World" nations are a great deal more aware of the historical and political implications of anthropology than are most anthropologists. The connection between colonialism and anthropology is a theme particularly dear to me since my country, Italy, has a strong but often overlooked dramatic colonial history. Italian colonial past has to be contextualized within a wider European colonial attempt to subjugate the so called third world countries by exerting its ruthless power over their inhabitants. Nevertheless, I had to confront myself with a colonial legacy I was aware of but that I had never really addressed. In this respect, this research has emerged as a journey of discovery of my own

²¹ It is important to notice that the practice of collecting and shipping valuable cultural items to the colonial capitals not only involved indigenous material culture but also archaeological heritage pertaining to ancient civilizations. Priceless pieces of art have been bought for little sums or have been stolen and sent to Western major museums. This is the case of the Parthenon Marbles, the "Priam's treasure".

²² On this topic, see among others Geczy, A. (2019).

country colonial past. A colonial past very different from the practices implemented in Eastern Africa and in Libya of which I was aware of.

More than 100 years ago, in the second half of the 19th century, two Italian anthropologists visited the Tromsø area. One of them continued then his journey until he reached Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino. These are familiar place-names to me: Tromsø and Guovdageaidnu are two of the physical places I had visited, and where I had carried out fieldwork myself, during my time in Sápmi. These are places where I lived and that I learned to love. In particular, Tromsø has become a part of me with its churches and its docks, its *gater* (roads) and its beaches and the old buildings that have witnessed a small hamlet grow into a thriving town and, ultimately, a cosmopolitan city 350 km beyond the Arctic circle. Tromsø has become home to me and to know that it was the place where two Italian positivist anthropologists started their journey into Sápmi first inspired me and then, after I started looking into their work, I felt growingly uncomfortable even though I acknowledged that their approach to anthropology was grounded in late 19th century scientific concepts and methodologies. Paolo Mantegazza, the older of the two, was the founder of the first chair of anthropology in the country and hence he is considered to be the father and founder of the discipline in Italy. He was a son of his times and he engaged in practices that today would be considered unethical and without any scientific basis but that, in the late 19th century were considered scientific and ethical. It was both disturbing and fascinating to read his travel account (1881) and it has been unsettling to review the anthropometric data he collected in his stay in 1879. From a methodological perspective, it is relevant to note here that Mantegazza's work, deeply rooted in the late 19th century anthropological practices, showed me the extents to which people can get to reach their goals, disregarding of their interlocutors' emotions. I am aware he was following the then latest anthropological practices and that he was probably not fully aware of the power dynamics at play when he encountered Sámi people. Furthermore, the discipline of anthropology has changed methods and aims in the last 140 years. Nevertheless, as a young female researcher, I found some passages of Mantegazza's diary disturbing. By reading his thoughts, it is apparent that he, as a male middle age man from a southern country, took advantage of his position and positionality and exerted power over the people he met; in one case even a young girl. Nevertheless, reading between Mantegazza's lines, acts of resistance and defiance emerge powerfully, showing that the Sámi were not passive victims but that they actually tried to counteract the colonial power imposed upon them, albeit within the opportunities available through the limited means they had.

Mantegazza's anthropologic approach was deeply rooted in positivistic attitudes and shaped by social Darwinism (Puccini 2010). His "scientific data", acquired through "scientific means" were

craniometrics measurements. He collected – often illegally - and examined human remains. He also noted the characteristics of his living human subjects: he wrote down the size of the head, the height, and any special feature. Nowadays, these practices are no longer acceptable and are openly deprecated. Reading and studying his diaries proved to be an important part of my research, especially with regard to my ethical approach. It made me aware of my own positionality as an Italian researcher in an indigenous context where in a time not too far in the past, other Italian anthropologists exerted their position of power to exploit local indigenous communities and individuals to obtain information that helped them prove their – now controversial – point and, in doing so, reinforced power asymmetries and harmed the Sámi people they interacted with. Being Italian carrying out fieldwork in a context where Italian anthropologists had exploited local peoples for their own gain made me reflect upon my duty as a researcher not only not to harm but also – within my possibilities – to increase awareness about Sámi issues. Furthermore, it forced me to confront the colonial heritage Italian cultural anthropology inherited. The awareness that, at the time he carried out research, Mantegazza's behavior was not considered unethical should have helped me but it did not ease my distress. It was only by committing myself to my work and by discussing this issue with some of my interlocutors that I managed to come to terms with the past, hoping one day to be able to trace back all the descendants of the people Mantegazza took photos of so that I can offer them the picture Mantegazza took of their relatives. Insofar, I managed to trace two of them and to reconstruct the lives of two women whose photographs appear in 'Bozzatti Lapponici'.

1.4 The Journey to Sápmi

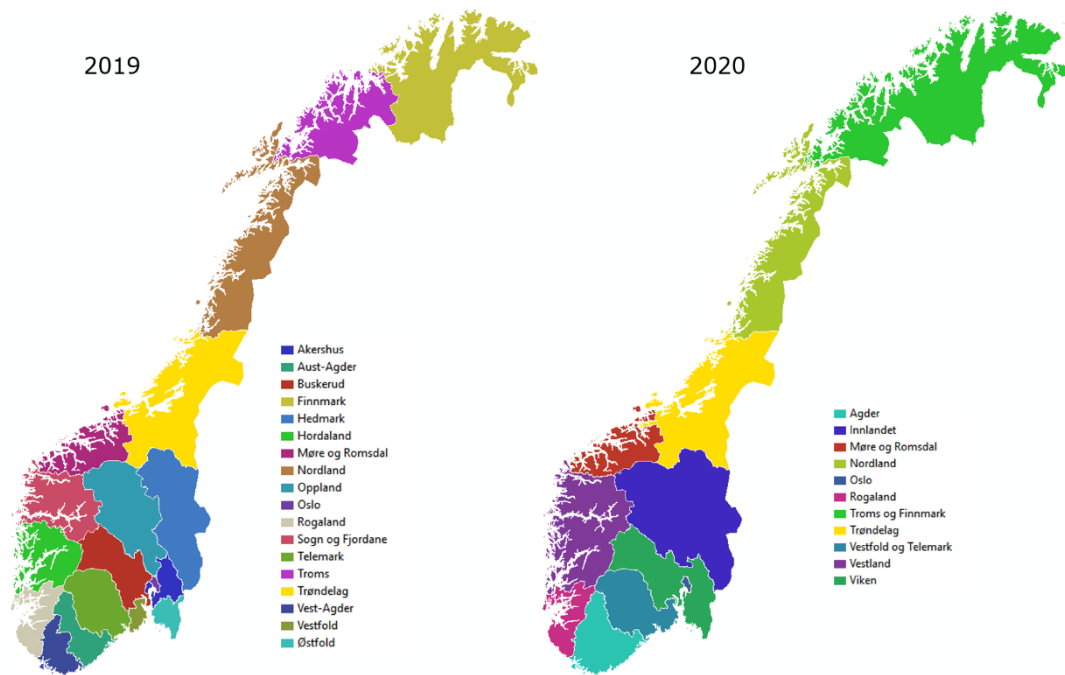
My interlocutors' insights have been extremely thought provoking and they shaped my research work in ways I could have not foreseen when I first embarked on this journey.

It was through their stories that my research topic developed from a preliminary draft to a more detailed project concerning issues that both my interlocutors and me deemed relevant. The changes my research project underwent epitomize the processual character of research. The metaphor of fieldwork as a journey stems from the acknowledgement that fieldwork entails both «[...] spatial and physical movement as well as shifts in ideas and imaginations» (De Neve et al. 2016:vii). In my case, the research process has indeed entailed both a physical and a symbolic journey: I left home, family and friends in Torino and I arrived in Tromsø for the first time in summer 2018. When I left home, I left my comfort zone to enter into a different context marked by both uneasiness and happiness, encounters and self-discovery, anxieties and expectations. It has been a transformative process, which made me the person I am now. It has indeed been, in the words of Palaganas (2017:426), a «journey of learning».

In this chapter, I have often mentioned my fieldwork. Since it is a core element of anthropological enquire, it is relevant to examine what this practice is and what it does encompass. Fieldwork is a physical, symbolic and, in my case, spiritual space and experience. As Wolber (2000:321) frames it, the field is «the central methodological and highly symbolic domain of the discipline of cultural anthropology».

In my case, my field and fieldwork are constituted by both actual fields, the meadows where festival take place during summer, and by a web of relationships that constitute the infrastructure upon which I have built this dissertation. Fieldwork for me is a network of people, a constellation of life stories all linked together by my own experience as a researcher. Fieldwork is a challenging and fulfilling experience, which shapes the ethnographer way beyond what it is usually acknowledged. In my case, fieldwork was characterized by phases marked by an uttermost loneliness during the long Tromsø winter nights, and moments of pure exuberant life during the festivals. The research experience changed me and it constituted what Palagans et al define a “journey of learning”. Fieldwork changed me as much as it changed my research project. Similarly, the arctic landscape and its elements played a role in my research process. I travelled to Sápmi and I lived there for 16 months. 3 months in 2018, 9 in 2019 and 4 in 2020. While there, I travelled across Troms and Finnmark Counties²³. I also briefly visited the northernmost Kommune of Norland. I stayed in Unjárga (Nesseby) in February 2020 and Guovdageaidnu in 2019, to attend the local famous Easter festival. On multiple occasions, I visited areas close to Stuornjárga: Loabák/Lavangen, Rivttát/Gratangen and Harstad. I also visited Olmmáivággi during the Riddu Riddu festival and in September 2018. I visited Gállogieddi during Márkomeannu 2018 and 2019. I went to Gállogieddi also during my last stay in Stuornjárga – in Roabavuotna/Grovfjord – during spring in 2020. On that occasion, I had the opportunity to visit Skánik/Evenskjer and Evenášši/Evenes.

²³ On 1st January 2020, the two counties were merged and now constitute the Troms-Finnmark County, the biggest and least populated county in Norway.



Map 4: Norwegian Counties (*fylker*) before and after the 2019 reform, (source: Trøndelag Fylkeskommune kart og statistikk access at www.trondelagfylke.no).



Map 5: Map of the Ufuohhtá/Ofoten area, in bold the locations where I carried out fieldwork. (Adapted from google maps).



Map 6: Map of Northern Sápmi, in bold the locations where I carried out fieldwork. (Adapted from google maps).

Fieldwork changed me as a person as much as it influence my research project. Similarly, the arctic landscape and its elements played a role in my research process. During my fieldtrips, it clearly emerged that my interlocutors had a strong connection with the festival area, its landscape and its surroundings. The inner fields and farmyards of the Stuornjårga peninsula, known collectively as Márka, meant a lot to them. This awareness awakened my curiosity and my interest and made me pay more attention to my surroundings and how people related to them. From Tromsø Island, I could see the massive of Sálašoaivi, a Sámi holy mountain. The beautiful Ersfjordbotn was just half an hour from the place where I lived. In Tromsø, no matter where I was, the sea was never far from it. On my way to Guovdageaidnu, on Easter 2018, the Alta canyon and its frozen waterfalls were everything I could think of while the bus rode the E45. Everything else disappeared and my mind was blank. There was only snow, ice and the dim light of the sun behind the river cliffs. Hiking on the Gratangen Mountain, the fjords, lakes, woods, stones, and the sky were all around me, making me fell small and free at the same time. While we were walking, the two women I was with told stories to each other as these stories came to their mind. A mushroom, a sound, a smell were enough for shaping their thoughts and transforming them into sounds. This interaction was a revelatory moment for me. It helped me understand the context into which I was walking and working. Crossing a stream, barefoot and cold and with my shoes hanging around my neck, I thought of the people who used to walk that same path with their reindeer herds. Not far from the woods where we stopped to boil some water for a coffee, a few years ago found a *goavvdis* bowl-shaped Sámi ritual drum) more than 300 hundred years after its owner hid it from Christian priests. Sámi *goaddit* (turf huts) used to be scattered all over the surrounding valleys, even if now almost nothing of them was left, their wood and turf long

since rotten. That mountain was embedded with history and with stories. Holy and dwelling places where everywhere, even if I was not able to see them. The Márkomeannu meadow, with its boulder and the *Ulddat* living beneath it, as well as the fields of Riddu Riđđu were crucial element in the understanding of these festivals and community around them. At Gállogieddi, the interiors of the house, of the barn, and of the *goahti* and their disposition in the meadow gave me a glimpse of how the lives of those who dwelt there were. These experiences revealed to me the highly anthropic character of these landscapes. The memory of the past was embedded in the landscape which, according to Kuchler (1993) it's itself a support for memory or, in his words, an *aide-memoire* encapsulating a culture's knowledge and understanding of its past and future. Subjective recollections of the past and collective memories are articulated through place names, archaeological sites, and historically relevant places. All these elements keep the past alive and strengthen the connection with the ancestors. In the Márka, such a connection is renewed through place-names protection projects, a local museum and through *historievandring* (history walking), organized group-walkings around the area's historical places. In a given context, the local landscape, with its features and its marks, encapsulates the actions of those who once dwelt there. Through what they left behind, through the way they interacted with their surroundings, the ancestors left marks of their very existence. It also fosters the continuous reaffirmation of personal and collective identities (Rossler 2009, Ingold 2000).

Landscape, or our physical surroundings, reflects and shapes how we live and how we think, how we understand the world. Similarly, the way we inhabit landscapes can reveal details about the society we belong to. For these reasons, spaces and places have been central to cultural and social anthropology. Likewise, landscapes have often figured in ethnographic accounts but often as a passive background to social interaction, inspired by the works of Durkheim, many anthropologists had resorted to sacred and profane as important analytical categories in their works. In the 1970s, landscape took a role of prominence in the exam of « how communities and individuals relate to the divine in a mountainous valley of northern Spain» (Christian 1972:I). In Italy, the geographer Eugenio Turri examined the anthropic characters of landscape, publishing a book with an evocative title: *Antropologia del paesaggio* (Anthropology of landscape) (1974). In Turri's view, landscape is to be considered a sensible manifestation of the interaction between humans and Nature. This landmark text was followed by other publications on this topic (1979, 2001), and throughout his works, Turri underlined the anthropologic and semiologic characteristics of the landscape, contributing on the debates around the concept, meanings and experiences of Paesaggio (Landscape) in the Italian context.

In the 1990s, research into the ‘spatial dimensions of culture’ (Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003: 1) became an important feature of late 20th century cultural anthropology. This approach fostered a renewed anthropological interest in landscape. Scholars challenged the concept of landscape, now seen as a culturally determined, modern, western cultural concept. The explanation of landscape as the juxtaposition of elements in a physical setting was no longer accepted. Feld and Basso (1996), in their volume “sense of places”, stress the complex relations between humans and the landscape they inhabit. A few years later, Tim Ingold focused on the temporality of landscape (1993: 152) and introduced a dwelling perspective (1995, 2000) on landscape, stressing the interdependent character of the relation between humans and the environment and the engagement of the former with the latter in a system. Focusing on human actions, Ingold focused on how activities and time are intertwined. Today a growing number of scholars are working on the anthropology of landscape. In Italy, the works of Ligi (2016) and the reissue of Turri’s book in 2008 testify the vitality of this topic in the Italian milieu.

Ingold worked for many years in a *siida* community²⁴ in Neiden (Norway), and in an area on and the border between Norway and Finland. Since I work with a Sámi community in Norway, albeit not in a reindeer tending context, Ingold’s work has represented an important source of inspiration for me. Landscape is not static nor passive but it changes through time. Besides specific cases (landslide, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and, lately, land erosion), humans cannot perceive big geological changes. The landscape though changes continuously and the clearest variations perceivable by humans are seasonal changes. In the arctic, these seasonal variations are extremely evident. The patterns in vegetation change sharply according to the time of the year, with a stark contrast between summer and wintertime. A thick layer of snow covers vast areas for months and then, seemingly all of a sudden, it melts leaving behind streams and mud. In a few days, flowers and grass cover the fields. The passage is so quick that, to me, it seems there were only two seasons in the arctic: winter and summer. My understanding of the environment was very poor and, since I am used to a four seasons system, I was just unable to collocate the different manifestations into my own cognitive categories. Similarly, light and darkness alternate each other differently from the way it was used to. both the polar night and the midnight sun disoriented me as it did the sharp increase or decrease in light time according to the month. Throughout the centuries, Indigenous Sámi people have developed

²⁴ A *Siida* is a Sámi social organization. Not strictly based on blood or kinship relations, the various *Siidas* had – and still maintain – a primary economic function. This institution, once at the base of Sámi social organization, persist in certain areas although the functional and cultural purposes of the institution have been bestowed with new meanings (Næss, Fisktjønmo & Bårdsen, 2020).

a deep understanding of atmospheric phenomena and their interaction with the landscape, developing skills that enable them to decode the different nuances of the weather. If I was able to perceive only two seasons, historically, Sámi people divided the lunar year in eight seasons (Manker 1975).

When I enrolled into the PhD program in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Torino my aim was to explore contemporary Sámi shamanism in Northern Norway. I had just completed a master in Cultural anthropology at the same institution and I was relatively familiar with Sámi issues since I had written my master thesis on Sámi identity markers in Finland. A young Finnish man who cherishes his Sámi background introduced me to this topic. I met him in 2016, while I was in Helsinki as an Erasmus Project student. Thank to him, I developed a growing interest in Sámi history and Sámi cultures. Among the courses offered by the Helsingin Yliopisto, I was able to choose modules focusing on themes related to Sámi and other indigenous peoples. Furthermore, while in Finland, I visited Sápmi for the first time. I spent two weeks in the municipality of Aanaar/Inari and I visited the villages of Avveel/Ivalo and Aanaar/Inari. I was impressed by the stark contrast between the Aanaar/Inari Sámi context and that of the Finnish capital. That experience left an indelible mark on me and deeply influenced my later academic and life choices. It was during those months I spent working on my master thesis that I became acquainted with contemporary Sámi shamanism. Through the works of Fonneland (2015), Fonneland and Kraft (2014, 2015), Äikäs and Spangen (2016), Äikäs and Salmi (2011, 2013) and other scholars such as Mulk (2007), I develop an interest in this topic so, when the time came to develop a PhD project, I decided to focus on Contemporary Shamanism in Troms County.

It was through the encounter with my interlocutors that I slowly realized that I wanted to investigate other aspects of contemporary Sámi society. During my first months in Sápmi, I realized that, outside of the (neo-)shamanic milieu, many of the people I had the chance to talk to were not interested in contemporary shamanism. This topic was considered marginal despite the attention it has received in the academic literature. My interlocutors' responses to my questions on their perception of contemporary shamanism were often dismissive and I frequently perceived a sense of annoyance in my interlocutors when I asked questions pertaining to this topic. Along with carrying out preliminary interviews, my aim during the first three month of fieldwork in 2018 was to attend two Sámi festivals I read about in my preliminary readings: Riddu Riđđu and Isogaisa. The first festival, which takes place in Olmmáivággi, a couple of hours drive from Tromsø, is a well-known Sámi festival, which, in the last years, has developed into a major international indigenous festival. Isogaisa instead is a festival that focuses on contemporary Sámi shamanism.

At both festivals, it was possible to enroll as volunteers and work for the festival for a set number of hours, carrying out specific tasks. In exchange for their work, volunteers are granted a free ticket and free meals. I decided to enroll as volunteer. At Riddu Riđđu I worked in the *miljo*²⁵ service, collecting garbage in the festival area, and in the bar, serving drinks. At Isogaisa the shifts and the tasks were not as organized as at Riddu Riđđu. We were asked to do what was needed where it was needed. I mainly worked in the kitchen and in the *miljo* service. The next summer I attended again both festivals as a volunteer. At Riddu Riđđu I worked again at the bar while, at Isogaisa, I was mainly assigned to the kitchen.

As it often happens, the turning point in my research though was a casual encounter with one of my interlocutors. This encounter took place in mid-July 2018 and the interlocutor was a young Sámi woman who, at the time, worked at the museum. I had already had the chance to talk to her on a few occasions and she knew I was interested in contemporary expressions of Sámi cultures. While I was paying some postcards, she incidentally mentioned that, if I was really interested in Sámi cultures, I should visit Márkomeannu instead of going to Isogaisa. That name did not ring any bell and so I asked her more about this festival and she explained to me that this festival takes place at Gállogieddi, close to Evenes and many young Sámi from all over Sápmi attend it. Only later on, while I was going through my fieldnotes from Riddu Riđđu, I found a note about this festival. A Russian lady who has a small stand at Riddu Riđđu told me in broken Norwegian mixed with English and Russian words, that, if I wanted to see “the real Sámisk kultur” I had to go « *po Marcomeanno, fordi, gde, bare sameliudy* » (private conversation)²⁶. Albeit I had misspelt it, it was definitely Márkomeannu had written about.

As is frequently the case, a small detail in a casual conversation later proved to be a key element in the development of my research. Gállogieddi, the name of the location of the festival emerged as a crucial detail that led me to reflect upon the linguistic landscape of the festival and on the language policy implemented in the Márka area and in Sápmi. This short anecdote shows how research does not only depend upon a solid literature review but also is, in a way, unpredictable and dependent upon unforeseeable events, casual meetings and contingencies.

Márkomeannu proved to be one of the most interesting experiences I had while on fieldwork. By attending it, I was exposed to a reality different from both Riddu Riđđu (which I had already attended)

²⁵ Miljo is a Norwegian word that translates into English as “environment” and, in the context of festivals, this term referred to the cleaning of the premises where the festival was held.

²⁶ This woman and I communicated using words, gestures and google translate. This sentence is a mixture of Norwegian, Russian and English and it can be translated as “to Márkomeannu, because there (are) only Sámi people.”

and Isogaisa (which I still have to attend). Once I came back to Tromsø, I carried out some bibliographical research on this festival, but I realized that very little had been written about Márkomeannu, despite it being regarded as one of the most important Sámi festivals by my interlocutors. The more I focused on this festival, the more I realized it would have been a privileged entry point into contemporary Sámi cultures. The more I explored the history of the Márka, the area where Márkomeannu takes place, the more I felt I could relate with the stories of its inhabitants. This feeling of connection, despite the differences, increased my interest in the festival as a locus of social interaction and cultural creativity. Hence, I chose to focus on this topic for my research. In a way, I feel it has been the topic to choose me.

During summer 2019, I volunteered again at both Riddu Riđđu and Isogaisa and I attended Márkomeannu as a guest. The then CEO Magnus S. provided me with a ticket. Magnus S. has indeed been one of my most important interlocutors regarding Márkomeannu, which, by July 2019, had emerged as one of the main topics of my research. I feel it has been a privileged to take part to these events as a volunteer. This position gave me the opportunity to witness how the frontstage-backstage dichotomy plays out during events such as festivals. As a volunteer, I had access to areas forbidden to guests. Similarly, I engaged in conversations with people from all walks of life who joined the volunteer community for the most diverse reasons. Besides being a volunteer, I was also carrying out research and, at the same time, being a festivalgoer, I always made very clear my position as a PhD anthropology student working on her thesis. Nevertheless, the festive context led some people to speak without too much attention. The dynamics at play during festivals were complex and often blurred by euphoria, lack of sleep and, on some occasions, alcohol. Since most of the talks I had with fellow volunteers and random visitors were beyond the structured environment of the interview, the impressions and the information I gathered during those encounters will only partially be part of my thesis. I have mostly dealt with those data to reconstruct the context into which events took place but I did not dwell into the experiences of people who did not give express consent to be part of my research, albeit their remarks informed my research and me. Furthermore, I have been extremely careful not to report any sensitive data nor any information that may lead to the identification of those I interacted with.

1.5 Participant observation

In the discipline of cultural anthropology, information is gathered through a number of means, mostly qualitative methods. Participant observation is one of ethnography's most well-known methods and it constitute a key technique employed by researchers to acquire a nuanced

understanding of the context and the dynamics taking place within a given context. Similarly, in anthropology interviews constitute one of the main loci of knowledge production.

During my fieldwork, I carried out numerous interviews with people who identify themselves as Sámi and are recognized as such by the wider Sámi community. This research journey would have not been possible without the help of all those people who decided to share with me their life stories, their personal experiences, their feelings and their emotions. The interviews have been moments of reflection and self-reflection for me and for my interlocutors, who are acknowledged in this research as co-producers of knowledge. This acknowledgement allows methodological reflections over the very nature of participant observation; this expression describes an experiential approach to research first developed by Bronislaw Malinowski (Roldán 2013). In participant observation, it is the researcher who supposedly takes part to the “native” daily life. The idea of research-participants as co-producers of knowledge reverses the ethnographic paradigm implicit in the idea of participant observation. Now is the “native” that becomes an active participant, no longer an object of study but a subject able to express her/his agency throughout the research process.

Ethnography has been heavily criticized for « [...] objectifying the marginal and powerless» (Hale 2006:120). Observation had for a long time been turned into forms of objectification and there is a connection between academic discursive traditions and objectification (Storfjell 2003). Objectification practices perpetuate marginalization and a sense of helplessness (L.T. Smith 1999). Observation as objectification was a key element of 19th and early 20th century research practice and this attitude is particularly apparent in the 19th century ethnographic displays. Ethnographic displays tended towards objectified and essentialised representations of culture (Burnett 2011), establishing a link between cultural objectification and ethnographic salvage (Fuglerund 2016). Objectification of peoples from foreigner cultures through ethnographic practices: museums, exhibitions, photographs, ethnographic films (Myres 1994; Lien & Nielssen 2011) have been used to show the supposedly essential alterity of “the other”. Today though, museums and other institutions, aware of the colonial implications of such methods, try to avoid objectifying practices. For instance, the Tromsø Museum “new exhibition” Sápmi Becoming a Nation constitute an attempt to present Sámi as «active and creative subjects» (Eidheim, Bjørklund 2012). This exhibition shows the dynamicity and diversity inherent within contemporary Sámi cultures while, at the same time, providing the audience with a diachronic perspective over recent Sámi histories. Consequently, it constitutes a counterpart to the 1970s Sámi exhibition at also hosted at the Tromsø university Museum. Commonly referred as “the old exhibit”, this exposition offers a static view of Sámi Cultures.

Participant observation may seem an oxymoron since participation and observation may suggest two completely different attitudes: empathy and emotions the first, detachment the second. The strength and weakness of this method may appear to lie in the tension between these two ends of the researcher's experience-continuum. These two apparently opposite approaches merge during fieldwork. Moreover, according to Tim Ingold, participation and observation are actually inextricably linked and even interdependent upon each other. As Tim Ingold (2014:287) points out, there may be no contradiction between participation and observation. In his view, the idea that observation and participation cannot take place simultaneously is based on a specific perception of knowledge production «founded upon a certain understanding of immanence and transcendence, deeply rooted in the protocols of normal science, according to which human existence is constitutionally split between being *in* the world and knowing *about* it. The alleged contradiction between participation and observation is no more than a corollary of this split». Heidegger discusses the ontological difference in the critique of the objectifying habits (Svestad 2013).

Ingold further analyses the meaning of observation deconstructing the notion that observation in ethnographic practice equates to an act of objectification. Ethnography as indeed being critiqued as a practice that objectifies the marginal and powerless (Hale 2006:120). In Ingold's words, «observe is not to objectify; it is to attend to persons and things, to learn from them, and to follow in precept and practice. Indeed there can be no observation without participation— that is, without an intimate coupling, in perception and action, of observer and observed. Thus, participant observation is absolutely *not* an undercover technique for gathering intelligence on people, on the pretext of learning from them. It is rather a fulfilment, in both letter and deed, of what we owe to the world for our development and formation» (Ingold 2014: 387). Observation in contemporary ethnographic practice has to avoid objectifying attitudes. If properly performed, observation can and does constitute a positive and respectful way of acquiring knowledge²⁷. In many societies, teaching and learning are based on the acts of showing and observing rather than verbal explanations. This is the case in many indigenous societies such as the Sámi ones, which approach explanations through practice rather than through direct teaching in many fields (Porsanger 2011).

My aim has been to acknowledge the essential role those who participated in my work played in my research, highlighting the dialogical character of knowledge production and leaving behind the

²⁷ The importance and centrality of participant observation as an anthropological technique was remarked by Stocking who though, while recognizing the importance of participatory observation, acknowledges its intrinsic ambiguity as it is fundamentally impossible to both observe and fully participate, as the two practices are antithetical (1992).

dichotomy between researcher and researched. I tried to adopt a participatory approach in the attempt to reduce the distance between me and my interlocutors.

As Batallan et al. (2017:465) note, « participatory approaches to research form part of current debates about knowledge production in the social sciences and the deeply embedded positivist assumptions about the relationship between the researcher and the researched». Despite acknowledging my interlocutors as co-producers of knowledge, I am conscious about the limitations of my approach and I am aware that this research is far from a collaborative project. Power relations²⁸ were not even and collaboration could take part only to an extent. Given the very nature of a PhD project, I am the one who has designed the research outline; the one who presents this work at conferences and workshops, and the one who is writing about a world to which I do not belong but that, as an outsider I will describe through the lens of my perspective and background. I will defend this dissertation and the name to be associated to this thesis will be mine. Restitution will take the form of private communications with my interlocutors, workshops, and, hopefully, publications that I shall share with them. Nevertheless, I will never be able to fully acknowledge the crucial role my interlocutors played in this journey of mine. I cannot return the time and passion others put in my work but I hope not to let them down and to be worth of their trust. On the other hand, this thesis is still a very personal piece of work, deeply influenced by my personal experiences and interests.

1.6 My interlocutors and I

When I had to select a term to use in this thesis to refer to the people who decided to embark with me on this research journey, it was not easy to select a term that could convey the dynamics that take place during interviews and throughout fieldwork. Terms are indeed concepts imbued with meanings.

Albeit the word “informant” to refer to the persons interviewed by the researchers has become part of the anthropological terminology, terms such as participants, interlocutors, and subjects have been proposed instead of it (Morse 1991). All terms are actually concepts charged with different meanings and embedded in power relations. Even if it is practice that ultimately defines whether a researcher follows ethical rules, words are important. They carry embedded meanings and reflect both attitudes and perspectives. Given the programmatic and performative character of words, I carefully selected the terminology I employed. For instance, I avoid using “explore” and “exploration” when referring to my research process. The verb “explore”, synonym to investigate, has a colonial overtone. The

²⁸ The concept of ‘power relations’, developed by Michel Foucault (see Foucault 1988), is based on the premises that power, is not an autonomous entity localized exclusively in certain individuals or institutions and nor is something that people or intuitions can acquire, possess, and loose. Rather, power is subject to negotiation and lies in the relations between different actors. Such relations – in all their forms - permeate all sectors of society.

verb has many meanings with different nuances but, in anthropological enquire, it is associated to the explorations of the 19th century. Hence, it may convey the notion of something unknown ahead, in this case a cultural context, that has to be discovered and tamed. I wanted to avoid these implications and hence I resorted to other, more neutral terms such as investigate, analyze, look into or scrutinize. The English term explore and its derivate come from Latin (“*ex*” “out, away” and the verb “*plorō*” “to cry”) through medieval French. There is not agreement upon the etymology of *ploro* but, according to the linguist De Vaan (2018:473) its original meaning might be “to scout the hunting area for game by means of shouting” and hence “explore” would originally mean.

Participant refers to an active role in the research process, while subject has ambiguous connotations. It can simultaneously refer to the active agent as well as a passive object of research, someone under the authority of someone else. Research participant is the term usually employed in human subject research. It implies engagement, active consent, and awareness on the part of the subjects. The word “informant” conveys the idea of a transmission of knowledge from the person who informs to the person who is informed. Beyond the field of Anthropology, this term has a negative connotation since it is associated with police enquire (Morse 1991). Within anthropological debates, already in the early 1990s scholars such as Hastrup have proposed to abandon the term informant since, according to the Danish scholar, the term ‘informant’ «posits people as categorical “others,” through whom we can get access to a separate world. The concept of ‘informant’ belongs to a past when the anthropological practice was conceived of in terms of translating cultures. But in the newly discovered world between them and us, the illusion of distance is broken» (Hastrup 1991:57). Nevertheless, and regardless of terms we employ, the underlying factor that our interlocutors are, for ethnographers, ultimately representatives of the very alterity we seek to understand still persists. Hence, the choice of terminology has a programmatic aim and synthetizes the kind of relationship researchers wish to establish with their interlocutors without though having the power to erase the fundamental alterity such researchers seek and projects upon them.

In this thesis I have chosen to resort to the term interlocutor when referring to the people I worked with and who shared their experiences with me. I opted for this term in order to give resonance to the dialogical aspect of interviews. Dialogue has been the main goal of my encounters with my “informants”. For the sake of flexibility, most of my interviews were semi-structured. Through my questions and their answers, and by adjusting my questions to their answers, I tried to grasp what was relevant for my interlocutors. This approach enabled me to deepen topics I first had not deemed relevant. Similarly, it facilitated access to issues I otherwise would have never even addressed nor explored. And this was possible because I did not want my interlocutors to tell me what I wanted to

hear but what they wanted me to know. By keeping in my mind and notes a strong line of thought, I let them guide me in a world I soon realized I knew very little about.

In etymological terms, interlocutor is an agent noun derived from the Latin verb describing the action of “speaking between”. *Interlocut-* is indeed the past participle stem of the verb *interloqui*, formed by the preposition *inter*, meaning “between”, and *loqui*, a verb that translates into “to speak”. From an etymological perspective, the word dialogue has the same meaning as the Greek verb *διαλέγεσθαι* (*diagesthai*) (*διά*: through and *λόγος* word/speech), which literally means “to converse with”. By resorting to dialogue as an approach, I wanted to reduce the risk of objectifying, my interlocutors, “the others”. As Ulin highlights (1975:294), «objectification (here coincident with reification) is a denial of both personal and cultural history [...]. To avoid such pitfalls requires an approach that is dialectical and historically self-conscious, for both the anthropologist and the “native” are revealed through their dialogue ». Dialogue has been the core of my interactions while on field. The possessive pronoun “my”, when referred to the interlocutors I talked with, in this thesis does not refer to ownership but signals a relation.

I want, in this dissertation, to show respect for my interlocutors and for the complexity of their experiences, which are exceptional and personal. Each story is different from the other and, despite a shared past of oppression and stigmatization, each answer to that shared past has been unique. By contextualizing these life-stories both geographically and historically, it is possible to highlight a complex system of interactions, of struggles, and hopes that marks, defines, defies and allows every individual’s life path. Within two collective subjects, individual agency allowed people to reach outstanding life-goals

The aim of this thesis, in the end, is to bring these accounts together without losing the threat of individual experiences. Contrariwise, I hope to be able to highlight the personal stories that compose the tune of life. Working on indigenous issues poses interesting questions regarding the relations between individuals belonging to different cultural realities. Despite the everyday challenges, they have to face when confronting public arenas and academia, Sámi peoples do not need advocacy. Albeit rooted in good intentions, this is a paternalistic concept and practice loaded with pity and condescendence (Gray 1990). Sámi peoples can and do speak for themselves (Junka-Aikio 2016). I believe it is important that their voices can be heard, even beyond the borders imposed upon them by the Fennoscandinavian nation states. In this context, also terminology is relevant. As concepts such as “informant” and “participant”, the term interlocutor is not neutral and it implies a dialogical exchange of ideas and knowledge between the interviewer and the interviewed. As Bojsen (2014)

highlights, this term though may be vague and this ambiguity may conceal power relations which, by their very nature, are embedded in the encounter between the «researcher and the researched» (Evjen 2009). Furthermore, as the Sámi indigenous scholar Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) explains, in the case of the encounter between members of indigenous and dominant societies, the asymmetry is even more uneven since there are «pre-existing social and political hierarchies and epistemic regimes that regulate [this] relationship, [and these hierarchies] are hard and slow to undo». With regard to this last aspect, I do not belong to either the Scandinavian or the Finnish majority population. This has proved to be a vantage point for me since I did not have to personally confront myself with the heavy colonial legacy members of the Nordic nations carry. Nevertheless, I had to confront myself with a colonial legacy I was aware of but that I had never really addressed. In this respect, this research has emerged as a journey of discovery of my own country colonial past. A colonial past very different from the practices implemented in Eastern Africa and in Libya of which I was aware of.

1.7 Interviews in Situ and by remote ie, research in the time of Corona

In Mantegazza's travel account, there are some hints about how he collected the material he later systematized in his accounts. As it was custom in his time, he often does not nor acknowledges his sources, albeit he reported some of them in the bibliography. With regards to the material he collected himself, it is mostly constituted by data gathered through physical examinations or Mantegazza's own impressions during his journey. Albeit Mantegazza's main interest lied in the analysis of anthropometric data, he also took note of some of the Sámi customs and habits he had observed. Even if he did not carried out fieldwork in the modern sense of the term, the episodes recorded in Mantegazza's diary show that there have been some ethnographic encounters between Mantegazza and Sámi people. According to Ingold (2014: 386), « ethnographic encounters are about meeting people, talking with them, asking them question, listening to their stories and observing what they do during the time of the research » .

In Mategazza's and Sommier's works there is no mention of any interview with "the Lapps" as they call the Sámi. Nevertheless, there are some accounts of meetings and exchanges that took place between Mantegazza and Sommier and members of Sámi families. Reading about these encounters, where Sámi voices are silenced, made me eager to let the voices of my interlocutors being heard through their words and their emotions.

Interviews though are not just about sharing experiences. They are about co-constructing knowledge about and around a given topic addressed during the time of the interview. Ethnographic interviews are characterized by a collaborative character that allows a degree of flexibility and informality in the

interaction between researcher and interlocutor (O'reilly 2012). Ethnographic interviews are different from other forms of interviews such as survey interviewing, including those with open-ended questions. In quantitative research, there is no time to develop the kind of on-going relationships, based on mutual respect and trust that enable anthropologist to carry out in-depth and semi-structured interviews. In the past few years, several major works have focused specifically on doing interviewing with an awareness of the postmodern and feminist critiques in anthropology and sociology (Kvale, 1983; Briggs, 1986; Maso and Wester, 1996; Michrina and Richards, 1996; Mishler, 1986; Reinhartz, 1992; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). These researchers stress that interviewing involves a complex form of social interaction with interviewees, and that interview data are co-produced in these interactions. Furthermore, they recognize that *what* the interviewees in each study choose to share with the researchers reflects conditions in their relationship and the interview situation. Central to this process is how interviewees reconstruct events or aspects of social experience, as well as how interviewers make their own sense of what has been said (Heyl 2001).

It is apparent that, during an interview, the exchange of knowledge is unbalanced since this dialogue is based on the questions asked by the researcher. In order to reduce the distance between me and my interlocutors, I have always started the interviews by presenting myself and the reasons why I decided to work on Sámi festivals. I then left some room for the questions my interlocutors may have had with regards to my work and my personal life. I am aware that this limited moment of discussion and exchange does not dissipate the power relations embedded in research but this was the only way I had to try to reduce this distance and to allow my interlocutors to better understand me and my research. For these reasons, the choice of the concept interlocutor over the other possible terms is both a pragmatic and a programmatic choice. Dialogue, trust and mutual respect are, in my opinion, the basis for a fruitful research relation. Moreover, as Batallan et al. (2017) highlight, «[...]building trust with participants is important in any form of qualitative research ».

The dialogue I tried to establish in this dissertation is not limited to the interaction between my interlocutors and me. My aim in this thesis is to let my interlocutors' accounts, my fieldwork experience and the bibliographic material dialogue. The sources I relied upon formed the basis upon which I developed the interviews drafts and they helped me reconstruct the social and historic context into which the events narrated by my interlocutors took place. Nevertheless, dialogue with my interlocutors – chats in front of a coffee, walks in the *meacci* (NS, Landscape)²⁹ or long car drives

²⁹ *Meahcci* is a North Sámi term that broadly refers to the landscapes in which natural resources are located. It can be translated as “out in the nature” – a common Norwegian translation is *utmark* i.e. outfields (see chapter 4, section 1) - but in Sámi languages there is no sharp divide between nature and human lace in the world. *Meahcci* is everything that lies beyond the settlement: the rivers, the valleys and the marshes, it covers all aspects of the landscape, from the mountain

along the Northern Norwegian coast – provided me with some of the most interesting and important insights about past and current issues as well as hopes for the future in Sápmi. These informal moments proved to be extremely important to my research process since they provided me with new perspectives and ideas while also being very spontaneous moments - and, hence, less constrained than a formal interview setting – where exchange of ideas and thought was truly inspirational.

The interviews have been conducted over a relatively long period as I spent overall 16 months in Sápmi. I engaged in one-to-one, semi-structured, in depth interviews. Many of these had a focus on festivals as personal and collective experiences. I also collected life stories and stories connected to places or institutions (mainly the Gállogieddi museum and the Sáráhká Sámemánák kindergarten as well as the Várdobáiki cultural centre) and events (festivals and protests). Personal and family histories not strictly connected to the Márkomeannu area provided me with a broader perspective over issues such as *Forsnorsking*/Norwegianization policy, cultural activism as well as personal struggles and achievements. Friendly chats and questions born out of sincere curiosity informed my understanding of the wider north Norwegian and North Sámi context.

Given the topic of this thesis, the majority of the people I interviewed are from the Márka-Sámi area and may be festival-goers and have been involved at different levels in organizing Sámi festivals like Márkomeannu and Riddu Riđđu. I have also interviewed people who are involved in cultural activities or who work for cultural institutions, mostly museums. During these interviews, discussions over festivals have constituted a starting point for broader reflections on contemporary Sámi identities as well as on the challenges and opportunities Sámi people today encounter in their daily life.

I have contacted some of these people through formal channels such as their personal websites, official Facebook pages or institutional emails. On a few occasions, it has been through words of mouth that I met members of the local Sámi community. In some cases, it has been a casual encounter that determined the lines of my interactions with people who later have become important contributors to my work. Now that this research period has come to an end, I feel confident to say that I have established important relations with many people from Sápmi. I met extraordinary people who are passionate about their jobs, their academic careers and their cultural activism. Many of them have become friends and I am grateful that they let me peek inside their lives. To an extent, I had the impression that, as an anthropologist I was indeed trying to peek into peoples' lives: through their

plateaus of inner Fennoscandinavia to the fjords and mountains of the coast. Other important Sámi terms connected with *meacci* are *duoddaris* (the arctic tundra) and *luonhti* (nature). See also Mazzullo & Ingold 2008.

words, their voices and their gestures, I was able to catch sight of my interlocutors' experiences, their sorrows and joys, their pasts and their hopes for the future. No written account can convey the intensity of a gaze, the weight of a teardrop nor the grace of a wrinkle sparkling from a smile. Similarly, there is no way to express on paper the meanings hidden in a muffled laugh or in a sigh. Nevertheless, these emotions, expressed through a myriad of gestures and tones of voice, echoed lived experiences, memories, regrets, sadnesses, and desires. They informed me about my interlocutors' feeling and about the sensations that the topic we were addressing evoked in them. I therefore try in this thesis to do justice to my interlocutors' experiences, feelings and expectations by contextualizing and reporting their testimony with their own voices as often as possible. Many of my interlocutors want their names to be associated with their words and take pride in sharing their daily struggles and achievements as Sámi living in Norway, Sweden and Finland. On the other hand, I respect the privacy of those who wanted to be anonymous but felt comfortable enough to share with me their thoughts. For this reason, I have sometimes used pseudonyms, in accordance with my interlocutors' wishes. Nevertheless, as one of my friends and interlocutors once said, «The Sámi world is small, and people know one another. Everyone knows people in all walks of life» (Sigbjørn Skåden, 9/01/20, private conversation). Compared to the wider Fennoscandinavian society of which it is today part, the Sámi world is indeed relatively small and Sámi communities share strong ties. People belonging to Sámi communities are easily identifiable through key elements such as age, academic or working career, marital status, family name, place of origin, and that of residency. For this reason, I had to be extremely careful when dealing with the testimonies of those who rather remain anonymous. I always make people choose their pseudonym, so that they can feel they have some control over their identity and so that they are able to recognize themselves in my texts.

Some of the interviews reported in this text were carried out via the Internet. Despite the lack of interpersonal contact during interviews by remote, this was the only option available when the COVID-19 outbreak reached Europe.

When I first heard of a new disease spreading quickly across central China, it was late December 2019-early January 2020. By the end of January, fear was already spreading across the streets of *Borg di Scigolatt*, commonly known as Milano's Chinatown. I lived in that district for 23 years and for the first time, upon visiting my family before my scheduled trip to Norway, I witnessed a surreal silence permeating the streets of my childhood neighbourhood. All shops were closed, no soul walked the streets surrounding my house as a spider-net and the sound of my own steps gave me shivers down my spine. The local Chinese population had decided to go under a self-imposed lockdown. They decided to halt every activity upon hearing about the true proportions of the outbreak from their

relatives and friends. Reliable information about Covid19 had reached them before the Italian and International news had really started to address it. As for many, those last days before everything changed have become impressed in my mind. I visited a hospital on the 28th of January for a routine visit and that same hospital, at the time, was the only one in the whole Northern Italy with Covid positive patients. When, 3 days later, I left Italy for Norway, I was planning to stay in the country for little more than a month of fieldwork. My return ticket was booked for the 6th of March. After I left Italy, news started to spread that the situation was quickly deteriorating. I was in Unjarga, sitting with my host family sipping tea and watching the news when my friend's mother told me: « look, it's Milano ». The Norwegian National Broadcasting agency NRK was broadcasting images of empty shelves and people in complete shock, wearing masks and rushing to buy paracetamol and other drugs. Until that moment I was totally unaware of what was unravelling in Italy, having spent a few days in a cabin somewhere in the mountains of Mieskarohu, between Kirkenes and Varangerbotn. I distinctly remember my friend talking to his mother in North Sámi, looking at me and at the tv, exchanging eloquent gazes. Then I asked my friend, Paul, if he thought it was a good idea to go back to Milano, in amidst the first Italian outbreak. His clear answer was a simple “no”. A few days later I flew back to Tromsø and when there, while I was at SESAM the Centre for Sámi Studies, my flights were cancelled, I rebooked them and they were cancelled again. This dance went on for a few days until the Scandinavian company operating in the region suspended all flights towards Italy. And that's how I got stuck 350 km north of the Arctic circle, with 2 and a half metres of snow covering the streets out of Tromsø and a temperature of minus 15°. These were not unusual circumstances had it not been that the contract for my flat had expired and I found myself homeless, couch-surfing at friends' places while Norway was entering a relatively strict lockdown. I was extremely lucky in that I received support from UiT and SESAM, helping me with finding an accommodation and endure the hardship of witnessing disaster unravel at home. Family friends succumbed to Covid19 and so did one of my former supervisors, Professor Enrico Comba. The news of his death touched many as he was a kind and much beloved person. Those long spring days spent alone in Breiviklia (a guest house for visiting researchers on campus at UiT) gave me much time to think about the situation we all were going through. It also led me to reconsider what I was doing in Sápmi, and what the pandemic was gonna bring to the lives of those close to me, among them my Sámi interlocutors. Some of those reflections are reflected in this thesis while others did change my perspective on issues I had already examined and written about. Stuck in Sápmi, I was lucky enough to have friends around me that became my family and treated me like a daughter, a sister and an auntie. In way, those months of unexpected unplanned – and to an extent unwanted – fieldwork were the most important of all. When life was on hold, I lived some of the most invaluable experiences of my life. For these reasons, I

deemed it relevant to address the context into which part of this thesis took shape. Within Norway the Covid19 pandemic hit hard but, compared to other regions of Europe, we had the chance to live relatively normal lives as the restrictions were not as strict as elsewhere in Europe. It was like living in a time out of time. We were able to have coffee downtown, to walk along the coast and enjoy the May sun on the beach on Sydspissen. I met many interlocutors during those months but we seldom discussed the topics covered in previous interviews. Covid19 had changed peoples' priorities, almost erasing what mattered before the pandemic. Nevertheless, once I managed to come back to Italy and the situation had become a little more stable, I had the opportunity to carry out a few interviews which were carried out via zoom, skype or other platforms.

1.8 Terminology

The reflections upon the use of terms such as informants of interlocutors, and the implications embedded in the choice of one term over the other, introduces us to a broader issue: the terminology employed by those who work on indigenous issues.

In this section I do not intend to define the terminology commonly employed, both inside and outside academia, when referring to people who endured processes of colonization. I rather examine the origins and implicit meanings of the terms in order to highlight how they are influenced by - and influence - people's perceptions of others and of themselves. I consider that reflection upon "indigenous" as a term and a concept is an important premise towards understanding some of the topics I shall address concerning contemporary Sámi issues in this work. During my fieldwork, the expression "indigenous people", and the meanings it encompasses, has emerged as a key element in my interlocutors' lives. The political implications embedded in the indigenous peoples' status are at the core of contemporary Sámi politics in all three European countries where Sámi peoples are recognized as either a minority or an indigenous group.

For these reasons, I consider it relevant to address this concept, although I am aware that a complete analysis of this notion would be beyond the scope of this dissertation. In order to clarify the importance of self-determination in indigenous contexts, I shall also examine other labels currently in use, often used as if interchangeable with the term 'indigenous', but endowed with specific connotations. Since the language I have chosen for writing this thesis, and given that the vast majority of the material I consulted was in English, and English has been the vehicular language between me and my interlocutors, I shall limit my reflections to the most common English terms employed with regard to indigenous issues. I am aware that each language has its own linguistic terminology referring to "indigenous peoples" and that, as a consequence, my analysis has limitations.

Nevertheless, for the reasons mentioned earlier, I deemed it important to devote a section to this specific kind of terminology.

These locutions substituted previous and often derogatory labels³⁰ deriving from the Western need to classify, by giving names to peoples, natural features as well as places. Name-giving is as a means through which establish power. It is clear that words, as in the case of ‘indigenous’, are not just nouns but also concepts. These terms are neither neutral nor unbiased. Given the fact that each of them carries a specific nuance and particular implications, it is relevant to view their meanings through the lens of etymologically sensitive analyses. This approach can indeed reveal the implications embedded in expressions often taken for granted. Words are indeed always loaded with hidden connotations, even when their meanings seem self-apparent. Furthermore, it is essential to examine, albeit briefly, the history of these terms as their etiology can provide important clues to the political context where they came into being.

A further reason to address the vocabulary referring to and defining indigenous peoples is the fact that asymmetric power relations have often shaped the terminology we employ in our daily interactions. The use of often-derogatory exonyms constitutes a clear example of these dynamics. Indigenous peoples had long been prevented from defining themselves in their own terms in public and official arenas. They use words such as “indigenous”, “aboriginal”, and “native”, charged with institutional meanings and easily recognizable at both local and international levels, in tandem with emic terminologies³¹ that often remain used only within the communities and are obscured by the such Western categories. The use of proper and culturally sensitive terminology is at the core of Decolonizing Methodologies (L. T. Smith 2016) and results from the awareness that words and designations have symbolic and practical consequences whose ramifications are often difficult to foresee. The locution “Indigenous people” usually refers to culturally distinct groups descending from populations who endured processes of colonization and assimilation. Throughout history, indigenous peoples have undergone different yet similar experiences, which constitute, according to Tuhiwai Smith (2016), a shared history of subjugation and colonization. The English adjective “indigenous” derives from *indigena*, a Latin word of Indo-European origin. The Online Etymology Dictionary “indigenous” entry reads:

³⁰ For instance, the racially connoted term ‘Indian’ in the North American context.

³¹ All research on culture has been affected by the emic/etic debate. Based on language studies and the concepts of phonemic and phonetic, the two concepts describe the distinction between studying behaviour from within a given cultural system (emic) and studying behaviour from the outside of a cultural system (etic). (Olsen 2012:32)

“[...] born or originating in a particular place” [first attested in the] 1640s, from Late Latin *indigenus* “born in a country, native” from Latin *indigena* “sprung from the land, native” as a noun, “a native,” literally “in-born” or “born in (a place)” from Old Latin *indu* (prep.) “in, within” + *gignere* (perfective *genui*) “to beget, produce,” from PIE root **gene-* “give birth, beget,”³² with derivatives referring to procreation and familial and tribal groups. This adjective entered political and academic discourses at international, transnational, and global levels during the second half of the 20th century. It was in the 1970s that “indigenous” became commonly used in multiple arenas as a consequence of the effort devoted by organized groups struggling to gain recognition by the UN. The International Labour Organization employed this term already in 1957, when it signed the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (ILO107). Although it had ready being already in use for decades, the term entered broader public and academic discourses in the 1970s and, as Jentoff et al. (2003:2) note, it was not until 2002 that the UN formally resorted to this expression in a formal document. Despite the relatively recent origin of this locution, the concept behind it originates in Classical Roman culture, as can be seen in Tacitus’s *Germania* (71 CE), where he uses *indigenae* as an adjective referring to the German tribes living in areas the Romans had been unable to conquer. Even though the original meaning of “indigenous” signified that a given people had lived in a same place since their origins as a people, today the term connotes a relational dimension between the indigenous and ‘the other’. As Bêteille (1998:188) notes, «[...] the designation of any given population in a region as ‘indigenous’ acquires substance when there are other populations in the same region that can reasonably be described as settlers or aliens». Here it emerges clearly that a population is indigenous to a region or area if compared with later “settlers”. Hence, from a historical-political perspective, “indigenous peoples” refers to the members of societies who inhabited a given geographical area when people belonging to different ethnic or cultural groups invaded the region they inhabited. After the initial contact, whether pacific or violent, the newcomers became dominant in the areas they settled. Domination was reached through a variety of means: pacific settlement and erosion of the indigenous lands, forced occupation, and conquest through violence in a pattern recurring in both space and time.

“Indigenous peoples” refers not only to the historical people who first came in contact with, and later had to deal with, foreign colonizers. Today indicates the descendants of these peoples. According

³² The verb *gignere* is related to words such as Latin *gens* (a term which initially indicated a “tribe” or the Roman clans related by birth or marriage and sharing a common name as well as “people”, “family”) and *genus* (whose prime meaning is “birth”, “origin”). Cognates words which share the same indo-european root include the Ancient Greek verb *γίγνομαι* (“to be born”, “to grow”, “to become”) and the related noun *γένος* (“offspring”, “descendant”; “family”, “clan”; “nation”, “race”) and *γονεῖς* (“parent”), as well as English term kin.

to UN guidelines, current « [...] indigenous people have maintained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live» (UN Factsheet 2006:1,2). The people who regard themselves as indigenous share similar historical and current experiences, often marked by asymmetric power relations, oppression, stigmatization, violence, deprivation and exploitation at the hands of the colonizers or “settlers”³³. Nevertheless, as Tuhiwai Smith (2016) notes, the use of this label raises important issues as it suggests a homogenized image of populations which are in reality essentially very diverse. Tuhiwai Smith’s concerns resonate with Yellow Bird’s (1999:16) considerations regarding the use of general labels to address North American indigenous groups. In his eloquently-entitled 1999 article «What we want to be called: Indigenous peoples' perspectives on racial and ethnic identity labels» (1999), Yellow Birds explains that:

the strongest criticisms of the present labels [Native American, American Indian] are that they are oppressive to individual tribal identities and are foreign names imposed by colonizers who have failed to respect and distinguish these identities. Several respondents suggested that these labels cancel out tribal self-definition and identity and create abstractions of these groups through the promotion of the myth that Indigenous Peoples are a monolithic people.

Later on in the article, Yellow Bird states that:

Several respondents agreed that newer labels such as “First Nations”, “Indigenous”, “Native” “Aboriginal Peoples” or “tribal affiliation”/ “American Indian” or “Alaska Native” are appropriate, preferred overall labels. Some believe these labels could counter the ones imposed by colonizers, and at least one person feels that the label “Aboriginal peoples” could help build group solidarity by being more inclusive of those groups who are left out in other labels. Conversely, others in the sample feel that some of these labels are still the names imposed by the colonizer, while others feel they are “too new or awkward” to use, especially in social interactions with Indigenous elders who are not accustomed to some of the terms.

The word ‘indigenous’ is not the only term employed today in the Anglophone literature to refer to the people (and their descendants) who inhabited a land prior to colonization. These terms do not denote a specific ethnicity. Instead, they encompass and refer to a number of groups bonded by a

³³ Settler is a term that indicated the colonizers. It refers to the a person who settles in a new country; hence, a colonist. Settler is a word of Germanic origin, deriving it from the verb “to settle”. It According to the online etymology dictionary, settler as “a person who moves into a new country” is attested since the 1690s. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/settler> Both colonist and colonizer derives from the Latin verb *colere*, meaning: “to cultivate” (the land). Wolfe (2006) has examined the processes of settlers’ colonial practices, highlighting, among others, the pivotal role of renaming in colonial contexts.

collective colonial experience. The Indigenous scholar Yellow Bird (1999) highlights how Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the USA do not regard themselves as a uniform ethnic group. Not only are they aware of the profound differences between different groups but they are also proud of the cultural richness springing from the hundreds of distinct languages, costumes, customs, myths, cosmologies and systems of knowledge that characterize North American indigenous societies. The Aotearoa indigenous scholar Tuhiwai Smith compiled a list of these terms: « First peoples, First Nations, Aboriginal peoples or Native peoples, Native, People of the land, Fourth World people » (2012:6). A further expression in the literature is 'autochthonous people'. In the following paragraphs, I shall address the terms proposed by Tuhiwai Smith. In doing so, my aim is to highlight the main features of each locution and to examine their peculiarities.

The expressions 'First Peoples' and 'First Nations' share an important characteristic: they are both relational terms as the adjective "first" is a clear reference to the temporal dimension of the encounter between foreign groups and the (indigenous) peoples, in these cases defined as 'peoples' or 'nation'. In both 'first peoples' and 'first nations', the temporal dimension is preponderant while the spatial one is implicit in the idea of the original encounter 'in a space' which was the indigenous land. Both expressions refer to a specific geographic area since they denote indigenous peoples inhabiting the areas of the North America continent, in today's Canada. "First Nations" gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s, when it replaced the previous and exonym 'Indian' and 'Indian band'³⁴. Nevertheless, unlike the "Indian bands", First Nations do not enjoy a legal definition.

It is important to note that 'first Nation' does not include Inuit and Metis peoples. While "First Nations" has a collective connotation, the singular 'First Nation' is used to denote a band, a reserve-based community, or a larger tribal grouping and the status Indians who live in them. The meaning of the adjectives 'Aboriginal' and 'native' as well as 'autochthonous' are relational terms as well, but the relationship is with "the land" rather than with "the other". These terms refer to both the temporal and the spatial dimensions of the encounter, as is the case with "indigenous".

The adjective 'aboriginal' derives from the Latin word *Aborigines* (meaning 'the first inhabitants of a place')³⁵ and it entered the English language in the 1660s, its meaning already the one we are

³⁴ From the French expression *bande indienne*. Indian band is a legal term under the Indian Act and it denotes a group of 'status Indians'. 'Status Indians' is a legal identity in Canadian legal system. It refers to those indigenous individuals who are registered as "Indians" according to the Indian Act.

³⁵ In Latin, *aborigines* meant "the first inhabitants". This term referred to the inhabitants of Latium, the region surrounding Rome. So this term referred to "the first ancestors of the Romans;" (www.etymonline.com). *Aborigines* is a compound adjective: the prefix *ab-* (away from) precedes the word *origo* in its ablative form (meaning rise, beginning, source, descent, lineage, birth). The root of this word is the verb *oriri*, which translates as "arise, rise; be born, be descended, receive life". The English word "origin" came from the Latin word *origo*.

familiar with: 'first, earliest, existing from the beginning', especially with reference to inhabitants of lands colonized by Europeans, (hence, Aboriginal is linked to the idea of origins and beginning). In a colonial context, it refers those who were in a given place before the arrival of settlers. The etymology dictionary further reports that the "the specific Australian sense [of Aboriginal] is attested from 1820. The noun meaning 'an original inhabitant, an autochthon' is attested from 1760 (www.etymonline.com). According to Wolf (2010), the term "Aboriginal peoples", meaning 'being in a given place *ab origine*' (since the origins of a group as such³⁶), has a subtle implication that would play out as powerful in the process of colonization, as we shall see. In Wolf's opinion, the word "aboriginal" implies a denial of history. In order to understand Wolf's statement, it is necessary to look at "aboriginal" as a relational term. When it is employed in a colonial-settler context, where history begins with "the arrival" of the settlers in a land perceived as empty and ready to be conquered, the human groups who already inhabit those lands automatically became like the land itself: empty, although this emptiness refers to their history. Throughout the century, history has proved to be a central element in the development of national identities and all human societies have their own history and histories. In many Western, North African, and Asian societies, the preservation and transmission of history took the form of the written words. Other societies, and most of the indigenous ones, relied on oral transmission of knowledge and history³⁷. In colonial contexts, western settlers have failed to acknowledge the very existence of local histories. According to Veracini (2014:51). History-writing is always central to constructions of national identity, but in the settler societies it was bound to be more central than elsewhere. On the one hand, the indigenous peoples had to have no history. 19th-century social theory and, earlier, the Enlightenment-informed thinkers had often construed extra-European peoples as allochronic: human collectives that literally inhabit a different time (Fabian 1983). On the imperial displacement of "natives" into "anachronistic space," see McClintock (1995: 40–42)

The Latin adjective *Nativus* developed into the French *natif*. In the late 14th century, *natif* entered English as native³⁸. The meaning of native as "natural", "inborn", "hereditary", "connected with something in a natural way" acquired extremely derogatory connotations during the Age of Empire. The Online Etymology Dictionary notes that from the early 15th [native meant someone] "'born in a particular place, of indigenous origin or growth, not exotic or foreign', also 'of or pertaining to one

³⁶ In Latin, *ab origine* means 'since the origin'.

³⁷ This is not the case of some Amerindian peoples who had developed a complex writing system that, after the colonization at the hands of Spanish conquerors and the introduction of the latin alphabet, was soon forgotten and has only recently been deciphered. (for more on this topic, see, among others: Houston & Taube (2000).

³⁸ (cognate with the English 'naïve')

by birth' (as in native land)". The original Latin adjective *nativus* ('innate', 'produced by birth') is formed by the term *natus* (past participle of *nasci* 'to be born') and the suffix *-ivus*. The archaic form of *nasci* was *gnasci*. Therefore this term is cognate with verb *gignere* (to be born) and is connected with the Greek *γίγνομαι* (cfr note 50). It was not until the early 1970s that "native" became part of North America's indigenous lexicon. Activists from different indigenous backgrounds began resorting to 'Native' when referring to themselves and their communities. They mutated the term 'Native' Americans from the Native American Church, incorporated in 1918 in Oklahoma and subsequently in other states. According to Rawson (1989:57), «The newer term, aside from disassociating its users from the reservation life of the past, was a form of one-upsmanship, since it reminded whites just who was on the premises first»³⁹.

Indian is unusual among ethnic terms for not having much pejorative value until comparatively recently. In contrast with the terminology hitherto examined, it is exclusively the spatial dimension that defines the coordinates of autochthonous. Autochthonous (*αὐτόχθων* in Ancient Greek) is a compound noun formed from the pronoun *αὐτός* (self) and the noun *χθών* (earth, soil). Its literal meaning is «one sprung from the soil he inhabits, one sprung from the land itself». A Graecism that has entered the English language in the 1640s, autochthonous is similar in meaning to 'aboriginal', 'native', primitive inhabitant'⁴⁰. The term autochthonous openly refers to the idea of 'coming from the land' and, in this respect, bears similarity to the locution 'people of the Land'. The open reference to a general concept of land stresses the link between indigenous people and the area they inhabit and where their ancestors lived. When compared with the aforementioned terminology, the locution "Fourth World" belongs to a different theoretical framework: developed at the end of the 20th century by the Secwepemc Chief of the National Indian Brotherhood, George Manuel, this expression gained prominence in the 1980s, and is built upon a conceptual expansion of the three-worlds model. The 'fourth world' concept revolves around the notion of self-determination and is grounded economic and development in theory. Manuel developed the 'fourth world' notion after a conversation with Mbuto Milando, the Tanzanian High Commission First Secretary. According to the story developed from a historical event, Mbuto Milando pronounced the following statement that inspired Manuel «Native peoples come into their own, on the basis of their own cultures and traditions, that will be

³⁹ With regard to the use of the adjective Native in the North American context, Yellow Bird (1999:16) points out how the majority of his interlocutors dislike the label 'native American'. In the analysis of the data he collected, he states that "many do not like the term because it is being used by individuals who, although not descended from the First Nations of these lands, claim to be native Americans because they were born in the Americas"

⁴⁰ According to the online etymology dictionary, in classical times Athenians and other Greek peoples used Autochthonous to define themselves. In doing so, they claimed to be descending from the Pelasgians, the mythical original inhabitants of the Aegian Sea. https://www.etymonline.com/word/autochthon?ref=etymonline_crossreference

the Fourth World» and these words inspired Manuel (Veracini 2004: 459), who developed and systematized the “fourth-world” concept in his book ‘The Fourth World: An Indian Reality’» (Manuel, G., & Posluns, M. 2019 [1974]).

It is important to note that the expression “indigenous peoples” is conventional and its use in scientific and popular literature alike has become widespread. In the Scandinavian countries, where the coordinates of this research are located, the locution “indigenous people” is translated into *urfolk* or *urbefolkning* (No), *ursprungsbefolkning* (SV), *alkuperäiskansa* (FI). In North Sámi, the language of the vast majority of my interlocutors, *eamiálbmot* is the term most widely used when referring to indigenous peoples. *Eamiálbmot* is formed from *eami-*, which has the same origin as *eamis* (“innate”) and *álbmot* (“people”). *Alkuperäis-* in Finnish means “original” and the noun *kansa* translates as “people” or “nation”. Hence, the Finnish word *alkuperäiskansa* literally means “original people”. The Swedish word *ursprungsbefolkning* is a compound noun where the prefix *ur-*, the nouns *sprung* and *befolkning* merge to convey an idea of origins (*sprung*) and original (*ur-*) in association with the concept of people (*folk*). Therefore, the literal translation of *ursprungsbefolkning* is “original people”. The Norwegian words *urfolk* and *urbefolkning* have a similar construction and meaning. According to *det Norske Akademis ordbok* (from now onwards NAOB), *urfolk* derives from the German *urvolk* (prefix *ur-* and noun *folk*) and means: *folk som har vært den opprinnelige befolkning i et land eller i en verdensdel* i.e. «people who were the original population of a country or continent». The prefix *ur-* has various meanings (among which: primeval, primordial, primitive, proto-; first, original; extremely, very) and in this context means original/primaeval while *folk* is equivalent to “people”. According to NAOB, *urbefolkning* is a compound noun composed of the prefix *ur-* and the noun *befolkning*. *Befolkning* means People / residents (in a place, in a district, in a country etc.).⁴¹

1.9 To define or to identify? That is the problem

As we have seen, the expression “Indigenous people” encompasses a variety of meanings and is considered an umbrella term. Today it is conventionally used in different political, public, and cultural arenas. Even if there is a permanent forum on indigenous issues within the United Nation⁴², no UN body has adopted any official definition of “indigenous” people.⁴³ Similarly, the International Labor Organization gives no formal definition of “indigenous people”. Both institutions, in line with the principle of self-identification, do not define Indigenous Peoples but, as stated in 2006 by the

⁴¹ Folk/ innbyggere (på et sted, i et distrikt, i et land e.l.) <https://naob.no/ordbok/befolkning>.

⁴² For an analysis of the UN events concerning indigenous issues which led to the establishment of the UNPFII, see Minde et al 2008.

⁴³ UN acknowledges the indigenous knowledge system

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), they rather identify them according to specific criteria. (fact-sheet 2006). This statement has a strong political overtone resonating with indigenous demands for the right to define themselves consistently with their own understanding of their sense of identity and belonging.

A brief analysis of the first section of the ILO107 (signed in 1957) provides a better understanding of the emergence of “indigenous” as a political term.

The first section of the convention reads:

«1. This Convention applies to

- a) members of tribal or semi-tribal populations in independent countries whose social and economic conditions are at a less advanced stage than the stage reached by the other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- b) members of tribal or semi-tribal populations in independent countries which are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization and which, irrespective of their legal status, live more in conformity with the social, economic and cultural institutions of that time than with the institutions of the nation to which they belong».

It is interesting to note that, in ILO107, “indigenous” does not yet represent a conceptual category but is used as an adjective (as in Tacitus), whose significance is close to its literal meaning: ‘born in [the Land]’. Here this adjective indicates the spatial dimension of the relationship between a group and the land they inhabit through the temporal dimension represented by their ancestors. The 1957 ILO107 convention does not offer a definition of “indigenous” but decrees those whom it applies to, paving the way for later acknowledgment of the relevance of the self-determination principle⁴⁴. In doing so, it is implicitly providing some core elements helping to identify the characteristics individuals should possess to be recognized as indigenous within the ILO framework. The ILO107 theorizations had some controversial consequences such as the fostering of a process of reification of cultures perceived and portrayed as immanent and not in constant flux. Despite its weaknesses, this convention prepared the ground for later institutional developments leading to the ratification of the

⁴⁴ As opposed to the oppressive colonial attitude of definition, classification and generalization imposed from outsiders. Cfr Yellow Bird 1999 “foreign names imposed by colonizers who have failed to respect and distinguish these identities”

ILO169. The UN 2006 fact-sheet reports the following elements as central qualifications for individual and collective indigenous status:

- self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

According to the UN, these are the *conditiones sine qua non* for a contemporary people to be recognized as indigenous at national and international levels. Similarly, the ILO

The Sámi context is extremely complex and requires an analysis of the historical premises of the current situation. There are many similarities between the history of the Sámi and that of other indigenous peoples. These concerns, among other things, the historical processes that led to the fragmentation and the partitioning of indigenous lands at the hands of the colonizers. Nevertheless, the history of the colonization of Sápmi constitute a thorny issue, at least among some Scandinavians.⁴⁵ In contrast to what has happened in other contact-contexts between Europeans and indigenous peoples (such as the “discovery” of the Americas by Columbus, the colonization of Africa, Oceania and South-East Asia), there is no recorded date for the first contact between members of Sámi communities and “colonizers”. Since time immemorial, Sámi people have had contacts with their neighbors, as the archaeological remains clearly show. The history of the settling processes in the Fennoscandinavian Peninsula is complex and characterized by different migration waves whose routes had been determined by the climatic conditions as well as by the technologies available to the early inhabitants of these regions⁴⁶. Continuity in archaeological sites shows that the ancestors of

⁴⁵ Segments of the Scandinavian society often minimize or even deny the indigenous status of the Sámi and their rights to self-determination as well as the autonomous management of resources in the Sámi areas. These attitudes constitute deep wounds in the fabric of Nordic society and I will address them later on the text.

⁴⁶ Glacial ice covered the regions of today Fennoscandinavia until at least ca. 19 500 BC, when the thick layers of ice began to retreat at the geological speed of an estimated few kilometers per generation. (Weinstock 2010)⁴⁶ before 20 000

today's Sámi people had inhabited these lands for a very long time as did other groups. In the V century BCE, German tribes reached the southern areas of the peninsula and slowly merged with the local inhabitants. This new culture had its specific social features and their political organization later developed into chiefdoms, kingdoms and, ultimately, nations (as in peoples). Throughout the second millennium CE, these nations formed, through complex and interrelated processes, the Nordic States as we know them today (Chiesa Isnardi 2016). The controversial nature of this category is manifold. As Tuhiwai Smith (2013) highlights, the very term “indigenous” is problematic and suggests a homogenized, collective understanding of many distinct populations which, actually, are very diverse both *inter* and *intra* themselves. Today there are many indigenous organizations working on both the local and the international level. Indigenous people have started organizing themselves since the 1970s. In those years the World Council on Indigenous Populations (WCIP) was established. It was followed, in 1982 by the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP). The WCIP was founded by indigenous people with the explicit aim of protecting the rights and interests of indigenous people from all over the world. The aim of the WGIP founders was to work for the self-determination of indigenous people as well as for their economic independence. Given its huge impact, it represented an important boost for indigenous activists in many countries. The origins of this council can be traced back to an international conference, held in 1975 in Port Alberni (British Columbia), organized by the leader of the “Canadian National Indian Brotherhood” George Manuel (Seurujärvi-kari 2005a).

Given the vigorous engagement of indigenous activists in public debates, “Indigenous People” has become a familiar concept for many non-indigenous people. According to the common understanding of this expression, it refers to a non-dominant population whose livelihood usually is or did not use to be associated with the industrial mode of production (which instead characterizes the dominant segment of society). Another distinctive feature the “indigenous peoples” are known for is their often-difficult relationship with non-indigenous institutions, particularly the nation-states. A neologism derived from “indigenous” and gaining a growing prominence in the scholarly literature is “indigenitude”. This term, first employed by James Clifford (2013) is today widely used among scholars working on indigenous issues. The concept and term Indigenitude is modelled upon that of “negritude” and reflects a similar process of re-articulation of identity. According to Clifford (2013:16) «Traditions are recovered and connections made in relation to shared colonial, postcolonial, globalizing histories. Like negritude, indigenitude is a vision of liberation and cultural

BC, glacial ice-covered today's Europe in its totality. The only areas where climatic conditions allowed human activity to persist in thin ice-free corridors such as the Iberian area and some eastern Plains in today Poland.

difference that challenges, or at least redirects, the modernizing agendas of nation-states and transnational capitalism. Indigènitùde is performed at the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, at arts and cultural festivals, at political events, and in many informal travels and contacts. Indigènitùde is less a coherent ideology than a concatenation of sources and projects. It operates at multiple scales: local traditions (kinship, language renewal, subsistence hunting, protection of sacred sites); national agendas and symbols (Hawai‘ian sovereignty, Mayan politics in Guatemala, Maori mobilizations in Aotearoa/New Zealand); and transnational activism (“Red Power” from the global sixties, or today’s social movements around cultural values, the environment, and identity, movements often allied with NGOs). Indigènitùde is sustained through media-disseminated images, including a shared symbolic repertoire (“the sacred,” “Mother Earth,” “shamanism,” “sovereignty,” the wisdom of “elders,” stewardship of “the land”). The images can lapse into self-stereotyping. And they express a transformative renewal of attachments to culture and place. It is difficult to know, sometimes even for participants, how much of the performance of identity reflects deep belief, how much a tactical presentation of self » Clifford (2013:16).

Indigenitùde is a complex and controversial concept: even if it is often described as a condition inherent to specific groups or individuals, it is actually a social construction deeply rooted in the western conceptualization of the world. Indigenitùde is indeed a culturally and politically constructed category (Domokos 2004) developed within a western colonial framework (Olsen: 2004). As such, it constitutes a highly contested conceptual category which has played a decisive role in cultural policies of representation (Levy: 2006) as well as in the self-perception of millions of people in the world. It would then be more accurate to describe it in the sense of being indigenous not as an intrinsic condition but as conceptual tool scholars and citizens can avail themselves. “Indigenous people” is indeed an umbrella term many peoples can identify themselves with. Hence, this term fosters a sense of unity among populations. The indigenous movement has indeed been regarded as a network which operates at an international level with strong repercussions on the national one. The construction of a shared and common indigenous identity imply a process of essentialitaton of difference that hindrance indigenous peoples’ localized and culturally-specific identities The compilation of the ILO convention 169 in 1989 constituted the final step of a political process that started when the UN commissioned a report on the emergence of discrimination and racism in Latin America to Martinez Cobo. Cobo submitted the report in 1984 and the report reads:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies that

developed on their territories. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems (in Seurujärvi-kari 2005:148).

Consequently, according to the ILO convention 169, there are a few criteria groups and individuals are required to meet in order to gain recognition as indigenous. Self-identification constitutes a prerequisite regarded as subjective. It is necessary to prove an acknowledged descendant from indigenous populations. Moreover, it has to be proved that a distinctive culture and its social, political and economic expressions have been preserved -totally or partially- both on a collective and individual level. The continuity with the pre-invasion society, hence a cultural and historical distinctiveness in relation to the majority society, is then an important element in the construction of the indigenous identity. It can then be argued that the indigenous identity is built on difference, in opposition with “the others”, conceived as the invaders. To acknowledge the right of indigenous peoples to define themselves is at the basis of ethical research. Similarly, to be really ethical, research should also be relevant and answer to the needs of indigenous communities (Smith 1999). When designing a research project, it is important to do so in a way that both respects and reflects the needs of the community we are planning to work with. Truly listening to the interlocutors enables the researchers to gain a more nuanced perspective and, at the same time, to produce a piece of research that is relevant not only to the author but also to the community.

Indigenitude, as I have used it up to now, stimulates reflection on the very concept of identity, which I have only touched upon lightly. I am aware that the concept of “indigenitude” is interwoven with that of identity and the politics of identity (see for example Bargas-Cetina 2013). Identity as a concept has been at the core of numerous debates within social sciences, among them cultural anthropology. It is not a neutral category, responding as it does to the need for belonging, which individuals and communities feel and express in thoughts and deeds. The term “identity” has been used in a multitude of ways and with various meanings. Often understood as an anthropological category, it is not acritically accepted as such in academic contexts. In social sciences, individual and collective identities are no longer regarded as innate qualities or unchangeable entities but as social constructions hybrid in nature and characterised by contradictions and fluidity. Individual and collective identities are processual in that they are not static and are subject to change according to historically and culturally bound conditions, and depend upon both external attribution and self-identification, which is inherently charged with ambivalence. In the case of Indigenous identities,

when the relational character of the term has been taken into account, identity emerges once again as a way of framing the difference between one group and another and is connected with the issue of recognition. The quest for recognition is often measured by with difficulties and dangers and interests behind such quests can be treacherous. Hidden dangers lie in processes of reification and un/conscious policies of indigenization. The power and vulnerability of identity is that all identities, and consequently indigenous identities, can become tools allowing forms of normalisation, identification, exclusion, and inclusion among others. The political use of “identities” can lead to mobilizations and recognition as well as conflicts.

As the Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti (2021) demonstrates identity policies are a conceptual and dichotomy-based way of organizing the (social) world. They do so by resorting to two rigid, albeit interdependent, categories: identity and alterity. According to Remotti, two qualities of tipology are normally assigned to these categories: positive to the former, negative to the latter. Such approaches may give rise to feelings of superiority or inferiority when they are expressed in reality. The scholar also reminds us that these topics are connected with the ideology of identity which contains the germ of the rhetoric of purity leading to both conceptual and physical rejection of the perceived others, with the devastating consequences this entails. He says that the policy of identity based on the us-vs-them dichotomy can be traced back to the often-unconscious attempt to reduce the unmanageable complexity of our world. In the attempt to offer an alternative to such reasoning, Remotti proposes the concept of resemblance. According to him, who follows Hume’s reasoning, identity should be understood as part of a network of resemblance in which “elements of connection rather than the barriers of identity” should be emphasized (2021:7). In his scientific production (2001; 2012; 2014, 2019, 2021; et al. 2012), Remotti has strenuously highlighted the relational aspect of identity by pointing out two different and opposing ways of approaching the intricate world in which we live: the perspective – or logic – of identity and the perspective – or logic – of resemblance.

The above reasoning is connected with the complex concept of authenticity, which is not an innate quality but an artificial construct that responds to contextual needs. When they are used with a specific goal in mind, these element may lead to identity drifts characterized by crystallization of differences, asymmetric power relations, establishment of systems of privileges, and other manifestations dangerous of identity as a static entity. One such manifestations is the reification process, according to which cultural phenomena go unquestioned but are accepted and taken for granted even though they are the result of continuous processes. Similarly, the essentialisation phenomenon is also connected with identity drift, and it can lead to the creation of petrified identities, denying the processual character of identity itself. Not only identity but also cultural heritage and even the past

can undergo processes of essentialization. Before Barth's 1969 seminal work, a common and widespread popular idea of ethnicity perceived ethnic groups as social units with some unvarying cultural characteristics, frequently strengthened by popular stereotypes. Connecting ethnicity to explicit cultural characteristics caused unending doubts about the definition/reification relationship, the significance of ethnic markers and how far things could be changed without trespassing the borders of ethnic boundaries (Saugestad 2001). Given these premises, the acknowledgment of the processuality of identity and of its relational nature allows for an examination of ethnic phenomena partially avoiding a process of cultural reification. Indigenousness can be analysed in a similar way as indigenous people are in a processual and relational position to other groups and indigenous identity, like all identities, is not fixed or static but fluid and porous.

It should be acknowledged that reification, as a social process, is fundamental to the articulation of ethnic identity (Gaski 2000). In the light of these considerations, the actions of Sámi politicians and political-cultural activists can be read as strategies for recognition from cultural outsiders (Gaski 2000). As Silvén discusses, there is a risk of confining "the others" in essentializing and marginalizing categories when choosing how to discuss and portray various ethnic and social groups (Silvén 2014).

Rather than interpreting this negatively as "self-exoticism" or "self-orientalism", concepts such as "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1985/96) and "reappropriation of indigenous images" (Sissons 2005:9) traditionally being utilized in academic examination of these processes connecting with ulterior analysis of core signs of nations and ethnic groups alike. Silvén further demonstrates that signs and symbols of essentializing and stereotyping can be employed as liberation tools both in terms of tactics and strategies as the case of the reindeer tender Sámi in the early years of Sámi rights recognition movements. In the latter context, symbols are maintained but informed fresh significants, attenuating possible opposition between essentialism and emancipation. Similarly, other Sámi communities who did not identify with reindeer tending later developed their own emancipation strategies. This is the case of some Sea-Sámi communities (like the one in Olmmáivággi, where Riddu festival is celebrated) or the Márka-Sámi community of Stuornjárga, within which Márkomeannu festival is celebrated, and to which most of my interlocutor belong. This rural Sámi community had long suffered from a process of marginalisation as a consequence of the dominance in public discourses of the Inner Finnmark reindeer tending culture. Such a culture was understood as epitomizing Sámi cultures as a whole as a consequence of centuries of essentialisation on the part of foreigners and cultural outsider (among them Italian cultural elites, as chapter 2 demonstrate). Marginalised by Sámi and ethnic Norwegians alike, the Márka-Sámi community has suffered the consequences of exclusion because it did not conform to the common performative ideal of authentic

Sámi identity, an identity constructed in the mind of outsiders. In response to this socio-cultural affliction, member of the community worked towards encouraging pride in their own identity among the community itself. This strife has been articulated through projects and enterprises such as the local cultural centre, local initiatives for the valorisation of the Márka-Sámi language, the preservation and documentation of Sámi place-names, and the foundation of a local museum (Chapters 4 and 5). A further expression of this strife is the Markomeannu festival, from which my own research journey into the Márka-Sámi culture began. The young activists who gave birth to the festival did so out of their desire to celebrate their Márka-Sámi identity and culture. Inevitably, this valorisation process entailed selection and rejection of cultural features considered more or less emblematic of the culture itself.

1.10 Positionality, Gender and opportunities

In this paragraph, I will examine my experience as a young woman carrying out research alone, in a foreign country where, by the time of my arrival, I had no personal connections.

Norway, as the other Scandinavian countries, is famous for its gender equality policy and the relative safe environment for women. I felt perfectly safe at travelling alone and I even hitchhiked to reach the festivals. Nevertheless, while on fieldwork, some of the episodes I lived and witnessed led me to pay attention to gender in the field and to reflect upon the field as a gendered experience.

I visited Sápmi as a PhD student in Anthropology on three separate occasions in 2018, 2019 and in 2020. On my first fieldtrip, I was travelling with a male friend who was carrying out a fieldwork research on patrimonialization processes⁴⁷ in Sápmi. When I returned to Sápmi, a year later, I was alone. By comparing these different events, it became apparent to me that fieldwork is a gendered experience⁴⁸.

Once I had reflected on my positionality, it soon emerged that my situation was quite peculiar. Contrary to the experience of many anthropologists, I did not come from a higher class than that of my interlocutors. I often did not have a higher education level than they do. Moreover, contrary to the experience of the majority of my colleagues taking my same PhD program, I undertook fieldwork in a wealthier country than the one I came from. This aspect, which may seem irrelevant, had actually played a role in the way I approached the field. On multiple occasions, my interlocutors expressed

⁴⁷ A process through which specific cultural features, either material or immaterial, are risemantized into a people's cultural and historical heritage.

⁴⁸ Cfr Bell, D. et al. (2013).

their worries over economic issues and I had to shift my point of view to be able to understand their perspective and appreciate their concerns. Moreover, the vast majority of the ethnographies I read and studied deal with fieldwork experiences carried out in countries poorer than that of the ethnographer, and this has not been the case for me. For this reason, I was not prepared for the kind of challenges I faced while in Norway.

I felt that, being a researcher, people would perceive my position as one of privilege. For this reason, I tried to deconstruct my positionality by always explaining my research, giving my contacts to my interlocutors, having them sign a consent form and offering them to revise my notes. In doing so, I try to establish relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Many of these relations resulted in genuine bonds of friendship that I cherish and hope to maintain way beyond the time-limits of my research. Through these relationships, I had the opportunity to learn about local social norms and I acquired a more nuanced and situated knowledge, that transcended my topic and enriched my research.

During meetings and interviews, I wanted to make my interlocutors comfortable and I always asked them if they wanted to know anything about my research or me. My efforts to reduce the distance between “them” and “me” put me in a vulnerable position. My openness about myself generated curiosity and interest in some interlocutors. During my second stay, I indeed experienced some episodes like explicit flirting and personal questions that made me uncomfortable. During a festival night, while I was leaving my tent to reach the toilet, a young man I had briefly talked to during the day saw me and approached me to talk. Trying to be polite, I started a conversation with him but he probably misread my genuine interest in him as a person and supposed I was interested in him as a potential sexual partner. During festivals is not too strange to transform casual meetings into more intimate events. I soon realized he had interpreted my politeness as a clumsily attempt to flirt. I found myself cornered between him and my tent. His arm was outstretched and it was almost around my shoulders even if I tried to avoid the contact. His advances became more and more insistent. Finally, at his umpteenth allusion to how warm and comfortable his sleeping bag was, I openly said: « I am not going to sleep with you tonight ». My voice was a tone too high than usual and I am sure my body language was quite eloquent since he left without saying bye. When he turned away from my tent, he muttered something about me having wasted his time. His reaction scared me. As it is usual practice at Sámi festivals and gatherings, he had a long Sámi knife hanging from his belt. As many friends pointed out to me, these knives “are tools” and are not meant as weapons. Nevertheless, I did not manage to sleep that night, in fear he would come back. The camp I was staying at was almost empty and the few people who were there were already fast asleep. I later reflected on this interaction. I did

not push him away when he first stretched his arm around me because I was scared to hurt his feelings and I feared my rejection could have hindered future interactions with him and, maybe, with other festival goers. I was unsure whether my reaction would be considered rude or inappropriate or if what I had been doing could be interpreted as « a silent agreement to turn a professional meeting –or, in this case, my presence as a researcher- into something akin to a date» (Mügge 2013:543).

I did not openly contest sexual pressures “in the field” in the ways I would, had they occurred “at home”. Back then I thought that, being me the researcher, the power relations between me and my interlocutors were asymmetric and that I was in a position of power. Hence, I was not entitled to complain. I realized only later how fluid and relative power relations can be. Once I was back in Italy, I recounted this episode with a female flat mate. I was surprised and shocked when she blamed me for what has happened. She told me «You should have known better. Why did you go to a festival alone? Why did you camp alone? You went looking for that» (private conversation). This remark, inscribable into the “victim blaming” attitude, forced me to rethink my fieldwork. It also foster a wider reflection on which image of me I did convey to those around me. Did I look weak? Did I look lost? Fragile? Strong? Self-conscious? A threat? How did the others perceived me, a young woman traveling alone? What did they think of me? I have no answer to these questions but I realized that the way my interlocutors perceived me may have influenced our meetings and their willingness to participate or not in my research.

I recount here another episode, which exemplifies how deeply embedded is gender in fieldwork dynamics and how little we understand about people’s perceptions of us. In 2019, when I first arrived at a festival with a male friend, the MA student from Torino University, we both introduced ourselves as researchers to the festival leader and the other volunteers. We had written in our application forms that we were working on Sámi issues for our thesis and the festival leader was aware of whom we were. I clearly remember having told to a foreign woman from southern Europe that I was working on a PhD project about Sámi festivals. Similarly, my friend Giacomo briefly explained his master project. During that festival, Giacomo and I were often spending time together since we had no friend and there were not many people in our own age group. Despite being often together, we slept in two different tents and we never even touched each other. A couple of days after our arrival, the foreign woman, herself a volunteer, went looking for me. She was very excited and she told me: « go call your boyfriend. Something interesting is happening. I am sure he wants to see that! » (from my field notes, august 2019). It shocked me to understand that this woman, and probably many others at the festival, had completely misunderstood the nature of the relation between my fellow Italian and me. Her assumptions were deeply influenced by stereotypical gender roles. She did not question my

positionality in the field. First, to her Giacomo and I were a couple since we were travelling together. Secondly, she remembered research was part of the reasons why we were there but, in her mind, the man was the researcher. I, as a woman, was a mere appendix whose role was to help and “call him” when something relevant happened. Even if I was older, even if I presented myself as a PhD student, even if we were not sharing the tent, in her eyes the only role I could fulfill was that of a helpful girlfriend. This seemingly innocent episode has been a revelatory moment for me. It powerfully showed me that we have no real control on how people perceive us and that gender structures are deeply embedded into peoples’ worldviews, even if (or especially because) they are not aware of them. When I attended festivals alone, none questioned my positionality as a researcher.

Interestingly enough, some people positioned me according to widespread stereotypes about female Italian young women. I noted in my field-notes that more than one person made reference to my “hot Italian blood”. My sexuality, in relation to my job, even emerged as a topic of discussion: One day some friends spotted a person they knew and told me he would have been a suitable groom or, as they put it, a “good catch”. This remark made me reflect on what, in that context, is perceived as a good marriage. Moreover, as one friend pointed out, marrying him would have been “good for the research”. Similarly, an acquaintance joked about me having sex and getting pregnant with prospective interlocutors as that would have given me an easy access to the field. I was humiliated by this comment as I felt this person believed I could only reach my academic goals through sexual favors. In my opinion, this episode emerges as extremely relevant since it remarks how pervasive sexism is. I had ingenuously believed I would have been an a-sexual presence (Isidoros 2015) identified primarily as a researcher. I failed to understand that our gender shapes the way people perceive us. As I frustratingly wrote in my notes, I had been “such a naïve girl...”

Albeit the events I recounted constitute a minimal part of my fieldwork experience and may seem minor episodes, they left a mark on me and led me to reflect upon gender dynamics in contemporary Sámi and Norwegian societies. These episodes emerge as marginal if I put them into the broader context of my fieldwork experience. I mostly felt extremely safe in Sápmi and fieldwork had been one of the best experiences of my life. Nonetheless, this reflection forced me to come to terms with my gendered experience of fieldwork. It enabled me to understand I was not the only one to have faced difficult situations in the field. Through the literature review, I discovered that, despite being a rather common experience for female and non-normative fieldworkers, this topic is still marginal in methodological discussions (Ross 2015, Kloß, 2017).

Despite the occasional distress I experienced in relation with the aforementioned episodes, these events had also constituted important moments of reflections not only on my positionality but also on the implicit cultural norms of the societies I was interacting with. Through the dialogue with my interlocutors, I had the chance to see these events through different lenses and to gain a more nuanced, albeit still etic, understanding of what was going on around me. With reference to the boy-at-tent-episode, when I took this event out with a Sámi friend and interlocutor, he understood my distress but he also casually and lightly told me that I «should have let the belt loose»⁴⁹. This remark took me aback as I did not understand the reference and I had to have its meaning explained to me⁵⁰

The episode became an opportunity to examine with him ancient customs related to courting practices that have persisted, at least among some cultural insiders, through their metaphorical meaning and symbolism. I was aware that the belt, as other elements of the *gákti* used to be an important element in signaling information concerning the person wearing them, since they carried (and still carry) messages about the background of the wearer⁵¹, but I didn't know that the belt had also a specific meaning connected with courtship. This example had showed me that the interaction with my interlocutors was crucial for my research and for navigating difficult situations with more culturally appropriate behaviours. Similarly, it showed me that even moments of distress can develop into important moments of exchange and learning.

1.11 Ethics: Dilemmas and opportunities of studying Indigenous issues as a non-Indigenous researcher.

This attention towards privacy and consent is part of a wider reflection concerning ethics in research.

Following the advice of my supervisors, I applied for my research to be approved by the ethical committee of my home university, the University of Torino and my research project was approved by the commission since it was deemed consistent with the ethical standards established by the University of Torino. Once in Norway, I made sure that no further approval was needed to conduct

⁴⁹ As my friend later explained me, this comment was a reference to ancient Sámi courting practices according to which, a woman who did not want to accept a man's advance was to let her belt loose so that, once the man ritually tried to grab her by the belt, she was able to easily walk away, and in doing so presenting the man with her negative answer to his proposal.

⁵⁰ If a woman has her belt tightly fasten, this element would convey interest in the other individual. Conversely, a loose belt signifies that there is no interest in having a sexual intercourse. The reasons behind this symbolism is to be traced in the ritualized act of "dragging the woman by the belt". If the belt is fastened, the man can actually pull the woman towards him. With the belt loose, the woman can turn down the proposal by slipping from her own belt.

⁵¹ The belts had/have specific meanings connected to marital status of the wearer: in the belts of married Northern Sámi individuals, square buttons decorate the leather. On the other hand, unmarried members of society adorn their belts with round buttons.

research in the country. In Norway, if a person is carrying out research has to be approved by the committee hosted by the researcher's home institutions. In my case, it meant the approval I received from the University of Torino was considered sufficient. The University of Torino follows the "Singapore Statement on Research Integrity", a document issued during the 2010 Second World Conference on Research Integrity, as well as "The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity" (Università di Torino, DR n. 2880 02/09/2016)⁵². Nevertheless, in carrying out my research, I not to relied upon the research guidelines provided by the University of Torino - my home university – but I also availed myself of the Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology issued by the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH).

Ethical guidelines apply in all contexts where human interaction is at the basis of research as a practice and by applying the prescriptions contained in them, researchers show their commitment to follow the rules inscribed in the research ethos proposed by the guidelines. To follow them means showing commitment to research as a practice that aims at increasing knowledge while trying to avoid causing harm. Guidelines are extremely important in the field of Social and Cultural Anthropology as this discipline's origin are intertwined with exploitative enterprises and early researchers in this discipline have performed research that, according to today standards, would be considered dehumanizing – albeit perfectly acceptable at the time – and hence today carries the responsibility to not only amend for its past wrongdoings but also to foster ethically sensitive approaches. Ethic guidelines are extremely important as they outline the potential problems connected with research and literally guide researchers by providing them with norms on how to conduct ethically sustainable research. As Olsen highlights, "research ethics is about responsibility" and researchers have to accept responsibility for their actions as well as for the reasons at the origin of their research. Furthermore, they also have to assume responsibility «[...] for the people and communities that might be affected by [...] research» (2016:28). Responsibility, as well as respect, should inform all stages of the research process, from the design of the research to the gathering of materials (interviews, surveys, fieldwork) and, ultimately, the restitution of the final consideration.

While working on this thesis I primarily adhered to the following guidelines (adapted from the NESH guidelines):

- performing research that does not violate laws and regulations, or may represent a risk to people, society and nature;

⁵² The document is available at https://www.unito.it/sites/default/files/reg_integrita_scientifica_2016.pdf

- respect for human dignity and personal integrity;
- show respect for human dignity in the choice of topic, in relation to the research subjects, and when reporting and publishing research results;
- respect privacy when individuals actively contribute in providing information useful for research, for example by agreeing to be observed or interviewed;
- duty to inform when individuals can be identified, directly or indirectly, either as participants or as part of communities recognisable in publications or in other dissemination of research.

In order to comply with the duty to inform, I always provided my interlocutors with information about the nature of my research, its purposes and other relevant pieces of information prior to interviews or informal conversations. I also provided them with a copy of the consent form – signed by both me and my interlocutors – in which I listed the aforementioned details plus further information such as the body who funded my research – the Italian Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (Ministry of Education, University and Research) -, the methods I employ, the intended use of my work – this PhD thesis – and the topic of my research. Confidentiality has been one of the cornerstones of my working ethics. I made sure my interlocutors were aware I consider confidentiality of the uttermost important and I tried my best be worth of their trust and to show each of them respect they deserve⁵³. Respect is one of the key words that inspired my work and, to me, it acquired an even greater value the more I developed an insight of my interlocutors experiences within the complex and often delicate context of Sápmi. Given the indigenous context in which my work is situated, I decided not only to follow my home University's guidelines but also to follow research principles inspired by indigenous methodologies.

In Norway – the Nation State within which my fieldwork is situated - there are no specific ethical guidelines for research on Sámi topics (Porsanger 2008)⁵⁴ even though in Norway, Sweden and Finland national guidelines for research ethics regulate research in Sámi contexts (Olsen 2016). The lack of formal guidelines for research on Sámi topics, indigenous and non-indigenous scholars who work in this specific indigenous context have developed ethical principles inspired by those first outlined by Linda Tuhiwai Smith and that, following Torjer Olsen (2016), Professor in indigenous

⁵³ Respect, documentation and accountability are also required when conducting research on deceased persons. Out of respect for the deceased and their bereaved, researchers should choose their words with care.

⁵⁴ Porsanger, J. "Ethical conduct in research involving Indigenous peoples: General considerations" in *Sáme- ja álgoálbmotdukkama etihkka/Ethics in Sámi and Indigenous Research. Nordisk Sámiisk institutt report 1* (2008)

studies Centre for Sámi Studies (SESAM) at the Arctic University of Tromsø (UiT), can be outlined as follows: respect, reciprocity, relationally, and responsibility (see also Chilisa, 2012).

Outlined by indigenous researchers and scholars from Indigenous Studies (see Smith 2012,⁵⁵ Kuokkanen 2000, Olsen 2012), such principles help researchers in delineating research methods that are considerate, among other things, of indigenous values and ways of knowing. My decision constituted a conscious choice that I took after spending my first summer in Sápmi. As Olsen points out, after all «Ethics are about choices and about what lies behind as well as follows the choices» (2016:27). My choice to carry out indigenous-sensitive research was the result of multiple events that shaped my experience as a young researcher in an indigenous context. Reflections over my positionality as a non-indigenous researcher, furthermore from a country – Italy – with a dark colonial past, in an indigenous context (see chapter 2.15) made me more and more aware that such an approach was necessary if I wanted my research to be relevant not only to me but to my interlocutors as well; working with indigenous interlocutors and about topics that cover both the colonial legacy of the past and contemporary struggles for indigenous self-determination and representation poses ethical questions and challenges that indigenous sensitive methodologies can help face in a respectful and productive way. In this respect, my first stay at SESAM was a turning point in my life under many points of view, not least my approach to research. During those first three months I was exposed for the first time to this specific methodological approach – of which, prior to my stay at SESAM, I only knew the basic contents – and I had the chance to discuss my research project with local researchers and professors – to all of whom I owe very much - who introduced me to indigenous methodologies and provided me with invaluable advice on how to conduct fieldwork in a context as complex as Sápmi.

In this dissertation, I shall frequently address Indigenous Sámi issues from my own perspective. Such perspective is indigenous-conscious and it has been informed by my interlocutors' own understanding of Indigenous Sámi issues. I consciously decided to position myself as such following numerous conversations with many interlocutors, the majority of whom identify themselves as Sámi. The aim of the analyses provided in this dissertation is to attract academic attention to processes of self-representation and hence I describe such process as I understood them thanks to my interlocutors' perspective. One of the red threads running across the dissertation are indeed the various and multifaceted declination of (Márka-)Sámi self-representation.

⁵⁵ Smith L. T., (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* London: Zed Books

Chapter 2

Sápmi and Italy through the lens of the written word

2.1 Introduction: Italy and Sápmi, contemporary perspectives and early modern approaches.

In Italy we are witnessing an increasing interest in Sámi cultures, as an expanding body of (non-) academic literature shows. This interest is connected with an ever-growing curiosity about the Nordic Countries and their cultures. Despite the increase, compared with a few decades ago, in available materials about Nordic countries this interest in the “North” is not a new phenomenon. For centuries, Italian travellers and scholars have visited and written about Fennoscandinavia and Sápmi (in the vast majority of Italian sources the designation for Sápmi is *Laponia*). Furthermore, for centuries the Northern regions of Europe have been a coveted tourist destination for (mostly male) Italians. Even though there has always been a great fascination with “the North”⁵⁶ among the Italian public, such interest has often been limited to cultural elites who had the means to travel to those Nordic destination and were educated enough to have access to Nordic literature.

In the last few decades, the Italian cultural milieu has changed profoundly as has the Italian literary landscape: a growing number of Nordic books – translated directly from Nordic languages into Italian – is available today among bookshops throughout the country. Having escaped from the shelves of university libraries and specialised retailers where they had been relegated until recently, these books are now enjoying a considerable success among Italian readers. The existence of a popular publishing house focusing on Nordic literature reflects the Italian public’s interest in Nordic cultures and literatures. The name of this publishing house, founded in Milan in 1987, Iperborea⁵⁷ programmatically evokes “the North”. During its early years, Iperborea published exclusively Fennoscandinavian authors, but it now includes in its catalogue titles by authors from other northern European countries, such as the Baltic Republics. Iperborea not only provides the Italian public with Nordic works of literature; it also organizes events focused on increasing interest in, and knowledge

⁵⁶ Scholars, among them Lehtonen (2019) and later Klain (2020), have resorted to the concepts of “borealism” and “borealist gaze” to describe the fascination exerted by the North on European travellers. The term ‘borealism’ has been developed after Said’s 1979 concept of “orientalism” (Lehtonen 2019). Hirvonen (2008) identifies this in “Lappology” the exoticism at the core of contemporary borealism.

⁵⁷ The term ‘Iperborea’ comes from the ethnonym Hyperborean, who, according to classical Greek worldviews, were a people living in [their world’s] North. Iperborea (gr Ὑπερβόρειοι) literally means ‘[peoples] beyond the Borea’. *Boreas* (Βορέας) was the Greek personification of the cold north wind. Given its cold nature, such wind was also regarded as the bringer of winter. This association, stratified into European understanding of the world, fostering long-lasting connections between the North and the Winter, with the peculiarities of Mediterranean people considered specific to this season.

about, Nordic cultures. Nordic Cultures are also becoming increasingly popular among university students: many Italian universities offer courses in Scandinavian languages and cultures. Finnish, however, can only be studied at Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II and Università degli Studi di Firenze. There is no university offering courses specifically devoted to Sámi cultures and languages even though basic notion concerning them may be covered in bachelor and masters courses in a wide range of disciplines. In Italian academia, works dealing with Sámi cultures relate to four major fields of enquiry: Cultural Anthropology, Nordic History and Cultures⁵⁸, History of Religions⁵⁹, and Italian Literature⁶⁰. These fields often overlap and it happens that scholars belonging to one field rely on sources and methods mutated from other disciplines when addressing Sámi issues.

In this chapter, I shall address how Sápmi and its people were once perceived and imagined in Italy by examining ancient sources and modern Italian accounts of Sápmi. I shall also briefly address contemporary understandings of Sapmi in contemporary popular culture and academic milieu.

In the first section of this chapter, I shall analyse the state of the art in Sámi studies in Italy. In particular, since this work falls into the cultural anthropology category, I shall offer here a brief overview of Italian anthropological works devoted to Sámi cultures. This analysis is only partial, covering only the major works published in the period between WWII and the writing of this thesis. I shall limit my analysis to academic works published as either monographs or as articles in scientific journals, and I will not take into account Masters or Bachelors theses dealing with Sámi Cultures⁶¹ unless they have later been published as monographies or academic articles. I shall then briefly address the books that have made Sápmi familiar to a wide public as well as the Sámi voices that have reached Italy through films. By addressing Truc's noir trilogy and three major Sámi films

⁵⁸ See, among others, Chiesa Isnardi's volume '*Storia e cultura della Scandinavia. Uomini e mondi del Nord*', Bompiani, (2015).

⁵⁹ A number of academic works have examined ancient Sámi indigenous worldviews, often from an anthropological perspective. In particular, see Fago (1983)..

⁶⁰ There is a number of academic works on Italian travel literature that address an author's understanding of the Sámi cultures with which s/he came into contact. These analyses though are usually part of a wider study of a given travelogue. In these cases, the scholarly attention towards the information on Sámi Cultures has arisen from the interest in the literary production of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Italian travellers. These scholarly works offer extremely thought-provoking analyses of travellers' accounts on Sámi peoples. They may also offer clues on space- and time-bound Sámi customs. In most of these studies though, Sámi cultures happen to be means through which examine the authors' lives and productions rather than ancient Sámi Cultures *per se*. The vast majority of these studies are in Italian. There are also Italian scholars working outside of Italy and writing in Italian as well as in foreign languages. Among them Professor Luigi De Anna, based in Turku University, has often worked on this topic and published in both Italian and Finnish (See: De Anna L, 1994). In the current chapter, I shall examine some of these travelogues, and address whether these accounts can offer clues about Sámi peoples' past, examining whether the information contained in this typology of works can be regarded and used as ethnographic material.

⁶¹ It is important to highlight that there is growing interest in Sámi cultures as the growing number of bachelor and masters thesis show.

(*Ofelaš*, *Kautokeino Opprøret* and *Sameblot*), this analysis provides clues about how imaginaries surrounding Sámi cultures in Italy are reinforced, challenged or deconstructed in the non-academic context.

In the second section of the chapter, I shall focus on early modern and modern travel accounts written by Italian travellers who visited the northernmost regions of Europe and described their journeys in letters or travelogues.

2.2 Italian academic works addressing Sámi cultures

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is an increasing body of literature available in Italian focused on Sámi cultures. Monographs, articles and other academic texts are contributing to increase the knowledge about Sámi peoples, their history and the challenges they are facing today. In this section, I shall examine this specific scholarly production by providing an overview of the Italian academic works devoted to Sápmi and its peoples.

2.2.1 A remnant of a not-long gone past: on Bosi's "*i Lapponi*"

The first monograph I shall address was written in 1959 by Cultural Anthropologist Roberto Bosi and bore the general title '*I Lapponi*'⁶² (The Lapps). As we shall see, this monograph is extremely relevant to the analysis of Italian Sámi Studies because of its contents and its approach to Sámi cultures. Five years before the publication of '*I Lapponi*', in 1954, Bosi wrote an article for the scientific journal '*L'Universo*' under the title '*le dimore di un popolo nomade*' and, an year later, he published in the same journal another article entitled '*Il problema delle origini dei Lapponi*'. (1955). These two essays already contain some of the main features that Bosi developed in his 1959 monograph even though, as the titles suggest, in the articles the author focuses on the "problem" of the origins of Sámi peoples⁶³. When Bosi published his book for 'Il Saggiatore' publishing house in 1959, he did not expect the poignant criticism the monograph was subjected to. The following year '*I Lapponi*' was translated into English and was published in a series entitled 'Ancient Peoples and Places'. The fact that the Sámi peoples (in English edition still named Lapps) are discussed along with historical cultures such as the Etruscan and the Celtic ones hints at the approaches of both the author

⁶² The exonym "Lapp" is employed by Bosi throughout the book even though the author acknowledges that the Sámi would rather be called as they call themselves i.e. *Sabme* (Bosi 1960:13)

⁶³ In line with the late 19th and early 20th century fascination for origins and following new development in linguistics, with the development of theories that crossed the boundaries of the discipline and influenced the perceptions on human societies' (see for instance the Indo-European theory), the origins of Sámi people attracted the attention of scholars and became a recurrent object of enquiry in academic research until the mid 20th century (see for instance Keane 1886, Lundman 1946, Bosi 1955;)

and editor towards Sámi cultures. In the “general editor’s preface” of the English edition, Glyn Daniel states:

[...] this is the first volume to deal with a living ethnic group. Lapps today live north of the Arctic circle [...] There are, in all, hardly more than 32000 of them, and, at present, only between a fifth and a sixth of this number live the traditional life of reindeer herdmens. It will be asked why we are devoting a volume in this series to a group of people numbering no more than the inhabitants of the London Borough of Finsbury, and whether we are changing the policy of this series to include modern peoples. The answer to these questions is simple. There are in the world some peoples who, while contemporary with our own society, yet are cultural fossils from an earlier time: they are in fact ancient peoples who have survived to the present day. Such are the Bushmen, and the Gipsies. Such would have been the Tasmanians had they not become extinct in 1876. Such are the Lapps, who may not survive very long as a cultural entity with an Arctic herding economy. Seeing how they live, we may with new eyes look back to the ancient peoples in the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Europe without of course falling into the error of supposing that the Lapps are necessarily, or at all, surviving representatives of the Europeans of the Late Ice Age.

The editor’s preface proposed a reading of Sámi cultures that is reminiscent of cultural evolutionary theories already outdated by the time the book was first published in 1959. Daniel explicitly describes the Sámi as a ‘primitive people’, a theory Bosi endorsed in the book. Had it been published in the late nineteenth or early twenty century, Bosi’s work would have been in line with the then current theoretical understanding of human cultures. Times had changed though, and the book met with harsh criticism from other scholars. In particular, Ralph Bulmer (1961) published a scathing review of Bosi’s work in the *North American Journal of American Anthropology*. He defined ‘the Lapps’ as an «amateurish work» lacking both scientific rigour and anthropological consistency, which also contained, in his view, many approximations and misleading statements. Bulmer pointed out the major weaknesses of Bosi’s monography and acerbically explains that the author naively « ... present[ed] information from different periods and places with so little coordination that is quite impossible to build up a coherent picture of how any particular Lappish group had lived at any particular time. The literary sources drawn on by the author are quite inadequate. It would appear that the author has consulted hardly any Scandinavian author ». Bulmer highlighted how Bosi had failed to understand Sámi societies not only as modern but also as adaptable to the changes occurring around them. For instance, Bulmer noted that Bosi not only treated reindeer tending as the Sámi activity *par*

excellence, hence reinforcing harmful and inaccurate stereotypes, but also relegated it to subsistence activity, hence failing to report it as an industry by. Had Bosi addressed reindeer tending as an economic activity deeply intertwined with Nordic economic tissues, this element would have certainly dismantled his analysis of the Sámi as almost primitive peoples. Although Bosi apparently had carried out fieldwork, this aspect did not emerge in his book. As Bulmer noted: « Some of the information the author uses was apparently gathered by himself in the field, but he gives no indication of the circumstances under which this was obtained beyond admitting that his knowledge of Lappish is rudimentary: circumstantial evidence suggests that his knowledge of Swedish is little better»

In the late 1950s, fieldwork was already a central aspect of anthropological research and the lack of clearly identifiable ethnographic materials discredited Bosi's work, which appear grounded in outdated theories and read more like an encyclopaedic yet inaccurate collection of information about Sámi cultures than an ethnographic monography. The most negative and most incisive point of Bulmer's review regards the justification given by the editor, Daniel, for the inclusion of Bosi's work in a series thitherto devoted to archaeology. He stateded that the Sámi were «cultural fossils from an earlier time». Thisreference to the Sámi as living fossils, which echoes the salvage ethnography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was harsly criticized by Blumer, who considered this statement offensive not only towards the Sámi but also towards all other European minorities, defined this remark as «outrageous».

Reviewing Bosi's book for an international journal, the Norwegian scholar Nesheimhe states:

The Lapps have, sadly enough, frequently been "described" by people who consider themselves specialists on Lapp life after one or two short stays among these people and some casual reading on the subject. Roberto Bosi must be reckoned among the authors in this category

Neishemhe then describes Bosi's work as:

[...] a hopeless mixture of correct and incorrect information, of fact and fabrication. The bibliography is limited and inadequate and no exact references are given. It is unfortunate that the book should appear in a scientific series of repute and in a universal language, for this leads to the danger of the errors and misunderstandings in this volume being carried into future works on the Lapps (Nesheimhe 1961:383).

Bosi's treatise emerges as an anachronistic description of the Sámi. Not only was his material scarce but neither did he seem to master the then-most recent anthropological techniques nor the theories

that characterized the discipline. He rather seemed to have embraced a Social Darwinist approach that, by the time he published the book, was already discredited in the academic world.

Since Bosi published his book, many other Italian scholars have approached Sámi issues, producing works based on stronger methodologies and with a greater scientific relevance. Since the 1960s, Italian cultural anthropologists have distanced themselves from Bosi's work, and soon after its publication, *'I Lapponi'* was no longer considered as an authorial source on Sámi cultures. Availing themselves of sound methodological tools, Italian anthropologists produced valid ethnographic accounts carrying out ethnographic fieldwork or worked with historical materials within the framework of cultural anthropology and comparative history of religions. In this sense, noticeable are the works of the late anthropologist Gilberto Mazzoleni. Furthermore, it is important to mention the 1962 ethnographic mission led by Zavatti Silvio and sponsored by the Istituto Geografico Polare (July 1962). Some of the reflections and photographs from this ethnographic mission were published in a 1963 issue of *l'Universo*, the same journal which, less than ten years earlier, Bosi chose for his essays.

2.2.2 Italian anthropologists back to the field: Mazzoleni's works on the 'Same'

Mazzoleni was Professor of History of Religions at the prestigious La Sapienza Università di Roma, but he had also a keen interest in cultural anthropology. He carried out fieldwork in Mexico, Cuba, Perù, Brasil, Argentina and Scandinavia. Among his numerous publications, there are three books devoted to his studies on Sámi cultures (1981, 1982, 2002). In these volumes, Mazzoleni analysed the data he and his colleagues had collected during a number of fieldtrips to Guovdageidnu County between 1978 and 1980. The first two volumes, *'Same la dimensione remota'* (Same, the Remote Dimension) (1981) and *'Same la Diversità Relativa'* (Same, the Relative Diversity) (1982), consist of a collection of articles written by Mazzoleni himself and by some of the other researchers who had joined him on his fieldworks in Northern Norway. The topics covered in the essays range from Cultural Anthropology to Cultural History as well as History of Religions and are addressed through their various lenses. In 1990, in his book *'Le ceneri del selvaggio. Itinerari critici di un antropologo'* (The Ashes of the Savage. Critical Itineraries of an Anthropologist) (1990) Mazzoleni devoted numerous sections to Sámi cultures, addressed from a historical and cultural perspective. In 2002, more than twenty years after he first published a text exclusively devoted to Sámi cultures, he published a third volume under the title: *'Same fra Tradizione e Innovazione'* (Sámi, between Tradition and Innovation). It is interesting to note that many of the works on Sámi cultures and societies written by Mazzoleni and by members of his team have a specific focus on the spiritual

dimension of Sámi cultures. Mazzoleni was not the only one in Italian milieux to show an academic interest in Sámi spirituality. Until recently, the vast majority of Italian academic works devoted to Sámi cultures focused primarily on Sámi Worldviews⁶⁴. Monographs and articles dealing with “Sámi Religion” reflected and fostered a deep interest in this topic among Italian scholars. It comes as no surprise that many of these works were developed within the field of History or Anthropology of Religions. One of the possible reasons for Italian interest in this specific aspect of Sámi cultures is to be identified in the profound fascination Sámi worldviews have exerted on the Western imageries of the North. As documented in the Norse Sagas, since pre-Christian times Sámi people have been famous among Scandinavians for their “magic”. Their fame as powerful sorcerers soon spreading across Europe to the extent that, in the seventeenth century, European cultural elites blamed the Sámi for Sweden’s victory in the Thirty Years War⁶⁵. The interest in Sámi worldviews in European academic milieux can be traced back to a shift in the representation of Sámi peoples that dates back to the late antiquity and that is connected with the development of a Christian Europe. If classical authors like Tacitus (98 CE)⁶⁶ were more interested in the economy and customs of foreign and distant peoples – in a religiously heterogeneous continent – later authors’ interest shifted to Sámi indigenous worldviews. The magical qualities of the ancestors of the Sámi are first reported in the Norse Sagas in which, as Aalto and Lehtola (2017) explain, the ability to perform magic is a key feature in the stereotypical depiction of these peoples. Magic though was not a prerogative of their spiritual practitioners. The Finnair (so are called in the Sagas) ability was so great in skills such as skiing and archery that the origin of their talent was often explained as of supernatural origin.

There may be multiple explanations to the lack of mention of ‘Sámi magic’ in the earliest available sources and it is possible that ritual practices deemed magical in Christian contexts did not catch earlier/pagan authors’ attention, because such these rituals did not appear as unfamiliar or wicked nor deviant from their own. As Hagen (2005), DeAngelo (2010), and Aalto and Lehtola (2017) highlight, the sagas describe the craft of magicians of Sámi origins who worked as advisers or teachers in Norse

⁶⁴ In recent decades, though, there has been growing interest in fields of enquiry other than Sámi Religions.

⁶⁵ The widespread perception that Sweden had won the war thank to the presence of “pagan sorcerers” in the Swedish army was among the reasons that made the Swedish crown commission an extensive book on the current State of Sámi people. The task was assigned to Schefferus who, after collecting materials from various interlocutors, wrote his famous “*Lapponia*” (1763, Frankfurt). The book, originally written in Latin, was soon translated in many European Languages and enjoyed a widespread success. The English translation of *Lapponia* was the first book to be ever published by the Oxford University Press. Despite its original purposes and due to an extensive section devoted to Sámi indigenous worldviews, *Lapponia* contributed to fostering the association between Sámi and Sorcery. An association that has become so deep into collective imagination that it persists still today and is reflects in Tourism, researcher as well as many spiritual tourists on their quest for the authentic Sámi Shamanism. This issue will be addressed in more details in chapter 6.9.

⁶⁶ If the connection between the ancestors of contemporary Sámi peoples and Tacitus’s ‘Fenni’ and Ptolemy’s ‘Phinnoi’ is accurate, in the earliest known accounts of these peoples and their ancestors there is no association between them and sorcery.

communities. Furthermore, in the Sagas beautiful women of Sámi ethnic origin were often married into Norse families, becoming the ancestors of heroes and kings. The Norsemen conversion to Christianity led to a shift in the perception of Sámi worldviews and practices which, after the adherence to the Christian faith, became synonymous with devilish magic (Hagen 2005, De Angelo, Aalto and Lehtola).

Once the European continent had grown more and more homogenous with respect to religion, with Christianity in its different expressions becoming the religion of the vast majority of the population, the indigenous worldviews of the Sámi people stood out, confusing and fascinating the cultural elites of the emerging Nation States. The cultural border that once was constituted by customs and way of life was now represented by religion.

2.2.3 Contemporary works by Italian scholars in Italy and beyond

In the contemporary Italian academic context, the most important scholar who has worked on Sámi issues is Gianluca Ligi, Anthropology Professor at the Università Cà Foscari of Venice. Inspired by international research streams, Ligi has published a series of works on the concept of Space in a Sámi community on the Swedish side of Sápmi. As a PhD candidate at the University of Torino, Ligi wrote his PhD thesis on Sámi perceptions and organizations of space⁶⁷. Since then he has written extensively on a variety of topics concerning contemporary and historical Sámi cultures, focusing on the area of Swedish Sápmi where he carried out his research fieldwork. In his works, Ligi pays extreme attention to historical sources – literary and iconographic alike – providing Italian readership with a historically grounded insight into past Sámi societies. In 2004, Ligi published an article about Sámi spatial organization in graveyards and its relation to Sámi understanding of the afterlife. Since then, Ligi has published a number of articles on various topics connected with Sámi perceptions of and relations with the Sápmi environment. He focused also on Sámi reindeer tending as a bodily practice and experience, with senses and impressions as the basis for Sámi perceptions of themselves and the environment around them (see Ligi 2019b). Resorting to a cultural-historical perspective, Ligi addressed the central role reindeer have played in Sámi societies, examining how this role was reflected in the complex spiritual and mythical symbolism associated to reindeer (2018). He has also focused his attention on the landscape of Sápmi from a merged anthropological, historical, and literary perspective: he developed this topic in a 2002 article devoted to the analysis of landscapes as sources of information. His latest book devoted to Sápmi and its peoples is *‘Lapponia, Antropologia e Storia di un Paesaggio’* (Lapland, anthropology and history of a landscape, 2016). In this

⁶⁷ Ligi later published his PhD thesis as a monography under the title *‘La casa Saami. Antropologia dello spazio domestico in Lapponia’* (the Saami house. Anthropology of domestic space in Lapland) (1999, second edition 2003)

monograph, Ligi addresses Sámi issues from a particular perspective: shifting his anthropological reflections from the Sámi as a people to Sápmi as a land and a landscape, he outlines a history of Sápmi, and through it, of the people who have long inhabited and shaped it. This approach enables Ligi to delineate a historical account of Northern Fennoscandia as a cultural area, covering a timespan that stretches from the Viking age to the beginning of the 19th century. In this cultural analysis of the Sámi areas, Ligi dwells in the investigation of the relationships among Nordic political institutions, Sámi reindeer herders, and settlers. Ligi has also addressed Sámi indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems in a number of articles, in which the author analyzes Scandinavian historical sources on Sámi ritual practices from an Anthropological perspective, with a focus on colonization and Christianization (see Ligi 2019) while also addressing Sámi traditional cosmology associated with the rainbow through an anthropological perspective (2018).

A recent work by Giacomo Nerici, a PhD student at the University of Milano Bicocca, enriches the Italian academic production devoted to Sámi issues. His volume, entitled '*Sulle orme dei nostri antenati. Riappropriazioni culturali e usi del passato tra i Sámi norvegesi*' (2021)⁶⁸ was based on his masters thesis, for which he carried out extensive fieldwork in the Troms area, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi.

It is important to mention other Italian scholars who have worked extensively on Sámi cultures but who are not based in Italy: Rossella Ragazzi (University of Tromsø) and Nuccio Mazzullo (University of Lapland) have devoted their research to different aspects of contemporary Sámi issues. Ragazzi, whose specialization is in Visual Anthropology, Anthropology of Media and Museology, has worked on visual ethnography and on Tromsø University Museum collections. She has filmed documentaries and films such as 'Firekeepers', investigating, among other things, the role of joik (Sámi chants) among contemporary Sámi youth (see Ragazzi 2015b; 2015a 2019; Ragazzi & Nerici 2019)

Mazzullo, a scholar of Italian origins who studied in the UK and is currently based in Finland, has worked on perception of Space among Sámi people living on the Finnish side of Sápmi. Mazzullo's work is deeply inspired by the work of the famous anthropologist Tim Ingold, with whom he has collaborated on the subjects of Sámi reindeer tending and Sámi perception of Landscape and Time (Mazzullo & Ingold 2008). He has also examined the conflictual relationship between the Finnish legal system and the local Sámi communities (see among al. Mazzullo 1994, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013; Strauss & Mazzullo 2014). Alessandra Orlandini Carceff, an Italian scholar who holds a PhD

⁶⁸ Literally: 'In the footsteps of our ancestors. Cultural reappropriation and customs of the past among the Norwegian Sámi'

in comparative French Literature from Université Paris-Sorbonne and specialized in Travel Literature with a focus on the Nordic countries, has published a series of works devoted to Sámi ritual practices as it was outlined in Italian travel accounts. In 2019, she published a monography – originally in French – entitled “*Sciamanesimi, Storia, miti e simboli dal Grande Nord al Mediterraneo*” (Shamanisms, history, myths and symbols between the Great North and the Mediterranean) in which she touches upon Sámi ritual practices. In 2021 she published “*Canti dello sciamanesimo boreale*” (Songs of Northern Shamanism) in which she included, among other lyrics mainly reported by Lönnrot in the Kalevala (1835), some Sámi chants recorded by both French and Italian Travellers in the 19th and early 20th century.

Many Italian students from diverse fields of study choose to work on different topics related to Sámi cultures for their bachelors and masters theses. All these works demonstrate the continuing interest Italian scholars and students in Sámi issues. Parallel to the academic world, Italians’ interest in Sámi and their cultures is fostered by a number of novels, movies and short films, children books and cartoons, references and even travel experiences centred on the Sámi world. All these visual and written texts contribute to shaping a specific perception of Sámi cultures as much as the ancient sources did. These media have a performative character, as they have a strong influence on defining peoples’ understandings and expectations of Sámi cultures.

2.3 Sápmi in popular Culture and popular perceptions

2.3.1 The appeal of the Nordic Noir and the fascination with Sámi cultures:

Truc’s trilogy

Many people in Italy became familiar with the lands of the Sámi and the complex local dynamics through the eyes of the French author and journalist Olivier Truc, and those of his characters. Acclaimed author of best-selling thrillers set in Sápmi, Truc himself developed an interest in Sámi cultures after having lived in Sweden for a number of years. During his stay, he realized that the majority of his friends and colleagues in Stockholm had little if no knowledge at all about Sámi people. Truc explains how he was surprised by the ignorance his interlocutors showed about Sámi issues and by the discrepancy between the perception of Nordic countries as champions of human rights and the treatment Sámi people have endured at the hands of these very countries throughout the centuries. According to what he stated in a 2018 interview with Italian journalist Luca Corvi, in Truc’s view his work is an attempt to bring awareness over the cause of the Sámi to a wider public through his literary production. Moreover, he hopes to convey an accurate depiction of contemporary Sámi life albeit within the frames of fiction. Discussing the ‘*Le dernier Lapon*’ with Márka-Sámi

author and cultural activist Sigbjørn Skåden (2019 private conversation), it emerges that, in Skåden's view, the book « [...] is not completely far-fetched», despite being a work of fantasy⁶⁹.

Truc trilogy enjoyed considerable success in Italy and his first novel, '*Le dernier Lapon*' (2012), was translated into Italian and published by Marsilio Ficino publishing house in 2013 under the title '*L'ultimo lappone*' (the last lapp). '*Le détroit du loup*' (2014) was published in 2015 as '*Lo stretto del lupo*' (The Wolf Strait) and his last book, '*La montagne rouge*' (2016) was translated in Italian in 2018 as '*La montagna rossa*' (the red mountain). In conjunction with the Italian release of Truc's last book, the newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*⁷⁰ published a review of the book in an article titled '*L'insostenibile pesantezza dell'ultimo thriller della Lapponia*' (the unbearable heaviness of the last Lapland thriller). The negative image of the book emerging from this review is counterbalanced by the positive image conveyed by the dialogue Luca Corvi had with Truc on the pages of *Il Messaggero*. Corvi (2018) interviewed the French author, enabling the public to gain insights into the creative process behind his famous trilogy. Moreover, the interview sheds some lights on aspects of the books that may otherwise be lost to a public not familiar with the context into which the books are set. The interviewer asks elucidations over the historical bases of some of the topics Truc addresses in his works. In particular, Corvi appears curious about the *reinpolitiet* (reindeer police) as he wonders if it constitutes an artistic license for the sake of the plot or an actual division of the local police forces. The existence of a police division responsible for the law maintenance and security related to Sámi Reindeer Tending may indeed surprise the Italian public. Truc specifies that the presence of the *reinpolitiet* in Sweden is indeed an artistic license since this special police force is active only in Norway. In the eyes of outsiders and for those who have not read the books, this specific branch of the national police may appear as a folkloric element and, unfortunately, the interview fails in

⁶⁹ Sigbjørn Skåden is a Marka-Sámi man who was in his early 40s at the time of writing. Born in Tromsø, he spent his childhood in the Marka, where his mother Asbjørg Eriksen Skåden was from. There, he – along his late cousin Torgrim – was the first pupil to be able to access Sámi language education. He was a founding member of the local branch of the Sámi youth organization: *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak*. While a teenager, he worked at the local open air museum as a summer job. He then moved to Tromsø to attend University, where he was active in the university Sámi youth association. He also attended the University of Oslo jointly with the University of Tromsø, where he obtained a degree in Literature with a thesis on Sámi literature and the University of York, where he graduated with a Masters degree in English literature. Since a young age, Sigbjørn has been working, first along with his mother and other relatives and later on his own, to projects aimed at valorizing the local Sámi culture. Upon graduating, Sigbjørn lived for two years in the town of Guovdageaidnu where the majority of people have strong connections with reindeer tending. He has developed a nuanced understanding of the reindeer tending society, into which he was not born, and of Guovdageaidnu society. Since 2004 Sigbjørn has collaborated to numerous artistic projects, has edited various books about the Marka, the Marka-Sámi language as well as local Sámi place-names. He has published novels in both North Sámi (one of such novels was written in the Marka-Sámi language) and in Norwegian and his work as an author has been recognized at both the Sámi and the Norwegian level. Sigbjørn Skåden not only has he been one of my key interlocutors but he has also become a very good friend to me. I am extremely grateful to him for his kindness and for having shared with me many memories and insights.

⁷⁰ L'insostenibile pesantezza dell'ultimo thriller della Lapponia di Fabrizio d'Esposito | 23/2/2018 <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/in-edicola/articoli/2018/02/23/linsostenibile-pesantezza-dellultimo-thriller-della-lapponia/4182387/>

conveying the cultural significance of this police force, fostering hence an exotic view of reindeer tending and the activities surrounding this practice. A further topic brought up by Corvi is the relationship between the Swedish establishment and eugenics. Given the reputation enjoyed by Sweden, the Italian journalist finds it hard to believe that Sweden engaged in forced sterilization of Sámi women in the early 20th century. Replying to this question, Truc takes the chance to briefly address the 1920s Swedish eugenic policy of which the majority of Italians is oblivious. Throughout the interview, Truc makes explicit some of the implications of his work. According to the French author, his books have a meaning that moves beyond the plot of the thriller itself. Hidden between the lines are the power struggles, the pollution of the North, and the conflicts over reindeers and access to land that are menacing contemporary Sámi cultures. Moreover, specifies Truc, he wishes to make visible the growing influence of industries and infrastructures on Sámi lands, the menace of mining industries, hydroelectric power stations, eolic parks and even tourism. He also aims at deconstruct some of the most common stereotypes concerning Sámi people. For instance, he acknowledges that the landscapes that constitute the background of his novels are seemingly uncontaminated. This remark is relevant since it shows that the French author acknowledges the anthropic action over the arctic environment. The human action he refers to is both that of Sámi people who, for millennia, have lived and shaped the arctic tundra, and that of the multinational companies competing for the rich resources of the Arctic. Moreover, by pointing out that only less than 10% of the overall Sámi population is involved in reindeer tending and by highlighting the long-term implications of the introduction of snowmobiles for those Sámi living off reindeer tending, Truc forces the public to come to terms with the fact that Sámi people are indeed as modern as the reader themselves. The interview emerges as a platform for Truc to present the Italian public with a crude overview over the setting of his novels.

2.3.2 Life of a “Lapp”, Johan Turi’s *Muitalus Sámiid birra*

As of 2020, no works by Sámi authors have been published in Italy except for the Italian translation of Turi’s ‘*Muitalus Sámiid birra*’. ‘*Vita del Lappone*’ (The life of the Lapp) was first published in 1991 (and re-published in 2010) for the prestigious Adelphi publishing house. The publication of Turi’s book constituted a turning point in the re-presentation of Sámi cultures in Italy. It was the first time a Sámi author was published in the country. Even though the work was not translated directly from North Sámi into Italian⁷¹, It was also the first time a Sámi voice, albeit from the past, had reached the Italian public without being mediated by others. Yet somehow by the time Turi’ had been

⁷¹ Bruno Berni worked on the translation from the Danish text edited by Emilie Demant.

published in Italy, Sámi voices, in the form of legends and tales, have already reached Sámi readership. For instance, in 1954 Abbado published ‘*Leggende Lapponi*’ (Lappish Legends), the first collection focusing on Sámi tales. More than fifty years later, a renewed interest in Sámi oral texts led to the publication of an Italian translation of Sámi folktales.

2.4 From TOS to MXP⁷²: Qvigstad’s *Lappiske Eventyr og Folkesagn* in the Milano-based Iperborea publishing house “Nordic fairy tales” Series

In 2014 Iperborea released ‘*Fiabe Lapponi*’ (Lappish fables), curated by Berni. This volume was the first of a series devoted to fairy tales from the Fennoscandinavian countries in whose literature Iperborea has specialised. This short book enjoyed a wide success and after the first edition was sold out, it has been reprinted in 2015 and 2017.

2.4.1 Fairy tales and raspberries, between Sápmi and Lamponia

‘*Fiabe Lapponi*’ has the merit of introducing the Italian public to a selection of Just Knud Qvuigstad’s Sámi tales’ collection. Moreover, in the attempt to render justice to Sámi cultural expressions, the curator decided to reproduce in the volume drawings by the late Sámi artist John Andreas Savio instead of commissioning new illustrations for the book. This short collection of just 28 tales was extremely successful in Italy selling, according to Berni, more copies than the books by famous Finnish author Paasilinna, distributed in Italy by same publishing house. In the curator’s view, the success of ‘*Fiabe Lapponi*’ is ascribable to the fascination exerted by Sámi people and their land, perceived as distant and enchanted by the Italian public. According to Berni, this perception, which also emerges in the analysis of Sámi-related articles in the media, is strengthened by the long-lasting impression left among the Italian public by Gianni Rodari’s enchanted land of Lamponia⁷³. Lamponia is a word pun playing on the Italian word for raspberry (*lampona*) and its assonance with Lapponia, the noun under which Sápmi is usually known in Italy. In Rodari’s nursery rhyme, Lamponia is indeed a fantastic country where he arrived by mistake after misspelling the name Lapponia while writing on his typewriter (Rodari 1995).

As mentioned above, ‘*Fiabe Lapponi*’ is the first in a bookseries Iperborea publishing house has devoted to Nordic folktales. In the same series, readers can find Norwegian, Icelandic, Swedish and

⁷² TOS is the IATA airport code of the city of Tromsø while MXP is the IATA airport code of Milano Malpensa airport.

⁷³ Si può viaggiare in treno, in automobile, e in macchina da scrivere perché no?/Io ci ho provato. /Semplicemente battendo /un tasto sbagliato /sono arrivato in Lamponia: /un paese dolcissimo /che sa di marmellata e di sciroppo /e somiglia un pochino, ma non troppo, /alla Lapponia propriamente detta /che se ne sta a rabbrivire /lassù alle soglie del Polo. /Il popolo dei Lamponi /confina con altri popoli /buoni e tranquilli: /fragole, mirtilli, /luciole e grilli./ Spesso giungono in visita/ dagli Stati vicini/ farfalle, api, bambini/ con il cappellino bianco/ che presto sarà nero di more.../ O paese felice,/ scoperto per errore,/Lamponia del mio cuore! (Gianni Rodari 1995)

Danish collections. What makes *‘Fiabe Lapponi’* worthy of analysis is the exegesis of the book and of the folktales it presents. Unlike the other folktales in the series, the original collection from which the tales have been translated into Italian was carried out not by a member of the society from which the folktales originated but by a Norwegian scholar who devoted his life to the study of Sámi languages and folklores: the ethnographer Just Knud Qvigstad (1853-1957). His wish to write down and systematize Sámi folktales did not emerge out of romantic and nationalistic impulses, as is the case with other contemporary folktale collections. Qvigstad’s effort was prompted by the desire to prevent Sámi cultural heritage from disappearing.

2.4.2 The purpose behind the Italian translation of Qvigstad’s collection

Qvigstad’s collection of Sámi folktales is neither the only nor the oldest one. Lars Levi Laestadius, a preacher and founder of the Laestadian movement (1800-1861), was active in collecting and systematizing materials related to Sámi oral tradition. His work, known under the title *‘Fragmenter i lappska mytologien’*, was published posthumously in 1959 (Cocq 2008:39). Folklorist Friis had published a collection of Sámi myths and folktales already in 1871. Despite the existence of other, older, collections, Iperborea decided to rely on Qvigstad’s material for their volume. Berni provides an explanation for this editorial choice that shows the publishing house’s philological rigor. According to Berni (2014), the editorial board decided to publish folktales taken from Qvigstad’s collections, rather than that of Friis or other authors, primarily because of the methods through which the material had been collected and systematized.

Friis, who had published a collection ten years before Qvigstad’s first publication on the topic, had not collected the material himself. On the other hand, Qvigstad, who published his first collection in collaboration with Sandberg in 1887 and then issued four volumes in the late 1920s, had relied on materials he or his collaborators collected firsthand through interviews with local interlocutors. Moreover, as Sjöholm (2017: 250) notes, in his four-volume collection of Sámi legends and folktales Qvigstad listed the names of those who recounted the stories and the places where the narrations took place. Nevertheless, as Cocq (2008) highlights, Qvigstad recorded only a few items of information concerning his interlocutors. Despite the relative decontextualisation of the material, Qvigstad’s volumes on Sámi folklore, published between 1927 and 1929, constitute still today the most comprehensive collection of Sámi myths, stories and legends available. Given the precise references to the places of origin and to the tale-tellers, they also offer an insight into local Sámi societies while acknowledging the narrators’ agency and identity. As Cocq (2008:50) notes in his PhD thesis, in Qvigstad’s collections

... the stories are classified first geographically, secondly, within each volume, according to themes. They are numbered; variants are sorted under the same number. At the end of each story, the name of the informant, his/her geographical origin and the year of interview are mentioned. Alternatively, the name of the one who collected the story if other than Qvigstad himself is noted. In some cases, we are given other information revealed by the informant on the sources of the tale or legend, like *hørt i min barndom* (heard during my childhood).

The aim of the volume edited by Berni was to present the Italian public not only with original tales but also, as far as possible, with some coordinates about the region of origin and the source of the material therein presented. In his four volumes, Qvigstad covers five geographical regions in the Norwegian side of Sápmi: Lyngen and Nordland, Troms, Finnmark, Varanger. The majority of the tales in the Italian adaptation are from Inner and Eastern Finnmark⁷⁴.

Despite the great effort the editorial board and Berni put into publishing a selection as close as possible to the original Sámi tales, thereby showing great respect for Sámi cultures, they chose to refer to the Sámi by the exonym Lapp. Even if Berni is well aware of the derogatory connotation of this exonym (2014: 169), he resorts to this term throughout his introduction to the volume and even in the title of the book itself. The reason behind such a choice probably lies in the awareness that, outside academia, the Italian public would not be attracted by folktales of a people it would not recognize. Nevertheless, such a choice emerges as controversial, given Berni's (2014:163) acknowledgment that the Sámi «represent for Scandinavia a silenced and almost forgotten minority», leading to marginalization. He adds: «... centuries of isolation had made the Lapps themselves think of their culture as inferior and something to reject in order to be accepted [by the majority society] ». Through this comment and by publishing Sámi folktales in the same series as the folktales from the dominant Nordic societies, Iperborea is endorsing a view that acknowledges Sámi oral tradition as being valuable as that of its neighboring cultures. Hence, the editorial choice of using the term “Lapps” to refer to the Sámi, albeit a choice possibly informed by the public's need to understand the origin of the folktales, is highly debatable.

Of the works presented in these paragraphs, only Breni's translation of Turi brings Sámi agency to the Italian public as Truc's thrillers represent an outsider's view over Finnmark and Qvigstad's collection, albeit documenting the Sámi oral repertoire at the end of the 19th century, is the product of western scholarly interest in indigenous cultures.

⁷⁴ Only two of these 28 tales were collected outside of Finnmark, both in Troms County.

2.5 (FIL)MADE in Sápmi: Sámi myths, stories and histories in (Italian) cinemas

Sámi indigenous voices have reached the Italian public not as much through literature as through another form of communication: cinema. In recent years, they have indeed found their way to the Italian audience through films such as ‘Sámi Blood’-‘*Sameblod*’, director’s Amanda Kernell praised *opera prima* which, according to religious scholar Torjer Olsen (2018), originates from the margins: this film, a bildungsroman drama set in the 1930s, tells the story of a South Sámi girl from the Swedish side of Sápmi. Olsen’s remark refers to the fact that the South Sámi are often considered a minority among the wider Sámi minority. To fulfill her dreams, the South Sámi girl has to fight against the Swedish establishment while turning her back to her own culture. This film, which premiered at Venice film festival, is a coming-of-age story whose central nodes are emancipation but also cultural assimilation, stigma, violence, racism and prejudice. Sámi Blood has been well received in Italy and it may remind older generations among the Italian audience of a film where similar topics were covered: ‘Sámi Blood’ is not the first major Sámi feature film to have reached Italy. In 1977, the Italian public television RAI broadcasted ‘*Ante, ragazzo Lappone*’ (Ante, a Lappish boy). This film, originally produced by NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) in 1975, was based on the homonymous children’s television series from 1975 directed by Arvid Skauge and Nils Utsi (Mecsei 2019). The feature film shows the life of Ante, a young Sámi boy who had to navigate himself between his culture and Norwegian society, which is associated to modernity. According to Mecsei (2019: 304), «the film is openly critical of how Sámi children were forced to go to boarding schools and leave their families, culture and language behind». In these respects, there are various assonances with Kernell’s Sámi blood. Moreover, as Mecsei points out Ante has been the «first feature film in which Sámi actors spoke for themselves and not through the narrative voice of an outsider».

2.5.1 To show the way

More than 10 years after Ante had been broadcasted in Italy, a second production came to the attention of the Italian audience. In 1989, *Ofelaš/Veiviseren* (Nils Gaup, Norway), known in English as Pathfinder and in Italian as ‘*l’arciere di ghiaccio*’ (the ice bower), was broadcasted in cinemas all over the country. In a 1989 review titled “Blood on eternal snows” published in La Repubblica, the journalist describes the rerelease of Ofelaš in Italy as “Unusual and curious”. The film is described as the cinematographic transposition of a “Lappish legend”. It is also reported as a Norwegian film made by a Lapp actor, Nils Gaup. According to the reviewer, this epic tale leaves very little space to the characterization of the protagonists and to individual stories. By criticizing both the dialogues and the ending as predictable, the journalist fails to understand that the characters are transpositions of

archetypal figures recurrent in Sámi legend and that the indigenous aspect of the film was not limited to the language and costumes: in *Ofelaš* not only the language but also the narrative perspective is Sámi (Skarðhamar 2008). The Italian journalist did not have the means to understand and convey neither the complexity nor the political and cultural significance of this film. Christensen (2012:66) considers *Pathfinder* «the landmark first Sámi feature film ever» that, «... almost 25 years following its release, [...] is still the keystone of Sámi filmmaking's ethno-political resonance ». The historian of literature Skarðhamar consider *Ofelaš*, alongside the later *Kautokeino Opprøret*⁷⁵ a turning point in the representations of Sámi peoples in films. In her view, these two films epitomize

... a radical change in the representation of Sámi culture” and milestones in the “gradual process of representational shifting of the Sámi culture and identity from the colonialist discourse of the early films that reproduces stereotypical images of the good savages to a more complex anti-colonial image. (Skarðhamar 2008: 300,301).

Skarðhamar's reflections are particularly relevant if we take into account Dokka's (2016) considerations. In Dokka's view, Norwegian feature films from the late 1920s (the reference here is to the silent film *Laila*⁷⁶) to mid-1960s had a marked discriminating approach and reflects the general attitude inherent in Norwegian society which saw and depicted the Sámi as “the others”. Gaup's films are instead «Sámi productions in Sámi language » which «undermine stereotypical conceptions of primitivism and marginality» and «contribute to strengthening Sámi consciousness» by «challeng[ing] the representation of the Sámi culture as romantic and inferior».

Through these films «Sámi culture is no longer represented as romantic and inferior» but as complex and worthy of respect as that of the dominant societies. Moreover, *Kautokeino Opprøret* «break[s] with the old oppressive colonial discourse of ethnicity, [and] portra[yes] Sámi tradition and history from a Sámi perspective» (Skarðhamar 2008: 302). Unfortunately, *Kautokeino Opprøret* had never been released in Italy but, in 2017, *Sámi blood* made it to the Italian cinemas.

⁷⁵ the *Kautokeino* rebellion or, in North Sámi *Guovdageainnu stuimmit* (Gaup Nils, Norway)

⁷⁶ The 1929 film *Lajla* was based on the novel under the same title composed by Jens Andreas Friis. Friis (1821-1886) was a renowned Norwegian philologist, linguist and lexicographer expert in Sámi languages as well as an author. He also published cartographic maps of a section of Northern Norway, reporting the ethnic affiliation of each household, the language its members spoke, and even the form of dwelling structure into which each family lived. These maps have become useful tools in studying the history of language and ethnicity in localised areas. In 1881, Friis also published a novel, *Lajla*, in which the main character is a Norwegian-born girl who is taken as a foster daughter in a Sámi family. The plot revolves around her love-story with a Norwegian man. Her position as a Sámi woman poses challenges to their love until she finally discovers her true identity.

2.5.2 A girl's story, a generation's tragedy

Unlike Kautokeino Oppropret, Sámi Blood is not about a famous and controversial historical event; nevertheless it is a film deeply rooted in Sámi contemporary history: its plot revolves around a story that potentially epitomize the challenges faced by an entire generation. A lost generation. The narrated events are indeed the dramatization of hundreds of real stories. In a 2016 interview with the Variety website, Kernell explains how her own grandmother's story inspired her work and how, in order to convey an accurate portrait of the context surrounding the event of the film, she interviewed many elderly peoples from South Sámi communities. The historical context Kernell is referring to, and which she describes in the film, is that of early 20th century Sweden. Such context was characterized by acts of structural violence that marked the asymmetric relations between Swedes and Sámi in early twenty century (Kernell, interview in variety.com 2016).

From the early 1910s until the mid-20th century, the Swedish state implemented the so called '*Lapp-skall-vara-Lapp*' policy, (literally: Lapp shall be Lapp). This was a segregationist and assimilationist policy against the Sámi which also furthered internal fragmentation since it regarded the semi-nomadic minority of reindeer tenders as intrinsically different from the rest of the Sámi population. Based on this assumption and on the idea that reindeer tending was the "natural" lifestyle of the "pure" seminomadic Sámi, only semi-nomadic Sámi were allowed to engage in reindeer tending. Such an approach not only stiffened the otherwise fluid boundaries among Sámi communities engaged in different economic activities but, through a performative circular process, it also reinforced the assumption on which it was based . The primary targets of the '*Lapp-skall-vara-Lapp*' policy were children from reindeer tending families. These children were prevented from attending the same school as sedentary pupils (Lundmark, 1998 in Cocq 2008: 31). While the formers were considere more "pure" and less "civilized", the latters were instead believed to have already sarterd a process of civilization and were encouraged to become good Swedish citizens.

The protagonist of Kernell's film is a young member of one of these nomadic reindeer herding communities and the storyline revolves around her own traumatic experiences in the Swedish school system and around her efforts to become a Swedish teacher. This film does not only recount a story about the past but it is also dealing with the present since it discusses the process of colonial assimilation and its consequences. In doing so, it implicitly addresses the intergenerational. cultural trauma experienced by families with a Sámi background. By showing what assimilation really meant for those who experienced it and for their families, this film gives voice to hundreds of people who have been silenced and whose life-stories have been reduced to a few lines in Nordic textbooks. Sámi Blood shows how the encounter with colonizing institutions and with member of the colonial society

may lead to fragmentation on a personal, family, and community level. Nevertheless, this film is not about explaining to outsiders the pain of fragmented identities. In Kernell's words, « It's not an educational film. It's about healing » (Vivarelli 2016). The personal tragedies of so many Sámi who were children in 1930s Sweden are here honoured and remembered through the fictional experience of Ella-Marja/Christina. Furthermore, the gendered viewpoint of the plot is relevant since such a perspective enables the viewer to be acquainted with an otherwise underrepresented part of Sámi society: the women's one⁷⁷. Sámi blood can be viewed as part of what Mecsei refers to as «gendered counter-narratives to a male-dominated » Sámi film tradition (2019: 303). This aspect is of particular importance when it comes to the Italian reception of the film. Sámi Blood offers insights into a Sámi female experience that has never before reached the Italian public. As aforementioned, 'Kautokeino Opprøret' did not make it to Italian cinemas, preventing the audience from listening to Elen's voice. Hence, the local public had only access to dated, male-dominated film-productions. Not only did Sámi Blood bring a female perspective over Sámi history to Italy, it also forces its public to confront with the inhuman practices Sámi –and especially Sámi children – were subjected to by the Swedish colonial State. In regard to this aspect, Olsen (2018) consider Sámi Blood as a possible expression of decolonization and indigenization. By showing colonial practices from the point of view of the affected community, this film exposes the dark side of a Sámi family's encounter with the Swedish State and its representatives. This encounter is rendered on the screen through scenes that the viewers may find disturbing. Particularly unsettling is the episode of the forced interaction between the boarding school's pupils and the scientists from the Statens Institut för Rasbiologi (State Institute for Racial Biology).

The scientists depicted in the film are fictional counterparts to those real researchers who travelled from Uppsala, the cultural centre of Sweden, to the cultural margins of Sweden, embodied here by the pupils, for a specific reason: gather data in order to prove Sámi people's intrinsic and biological inferiority and, by contrast, the superiority of the "Nordic race". In the film, the young students are coerced into being photographed, naked in front of strangers, their peers and teachers. They also have their craniometrical measurements taken and they have no say into the actions carried out on their bodies. In these circumstances, they are treated as passive objects with no agency. The scene is even more disturbing when viewers understand it actually reproduces a form of dehumanizing and abusive racial research that was common practice in 1930s Sweden (Marttinen 2015). The original

⁷⁷ In 'Kautokeino Opprøret', the viewers observe the events from the point of view of a Sámi woman, Elen. She is the narrator and one of the main characters of the film, which, despite this unconventional approach, is still male-dominated: even if Ellen has a role of prominence in the film, the majority of the characters are male and the plot revolves around the lives of the male leaders of the rebellion.

anthropometric research on Sámi people re-enacted in the film was conducted by the aforementioned Statens Institut för Rasbiologi. Established in Uppsala in 1921, the institute had the racial biologist Herman Lunborg appointed as its first director in 1922. Once he settled into this position, Lunborg initiated a wide range of studies within the field of physical anthropology. His aim was to describe the “racial character” of the Swedes and the Sámi from northern Sweden and to prove his main argument: that racial mixing would be a degenerative factor for the Swedish race (Lundstrom 2008). In order to demonstrate his thesis, he started a campaign to measure hundreds of thousands of individuals (Tydén 2010). Despite their relative widespread and documented implementation in Sweden anthropometric measures were not performed only in Sweden though and, in the Nordic context, they had been carried out way before the 1920s.

In Norway, a series of measurements had been performed on Sámi peoples since the 1870s. Moreover, the subjects of such measurements were not just living human beings. Anthropometric measurements were used to classify both ancient human remains and living people. Examinations and measurements were hence carried out not only on people but also on skeletons. In order to collect human skeletal remains, and skulls in particular, researchers desecrated graves throughout the country. By the 1930s, around 2,000 Nordic and 500 Sámi skulls had been deposited at the Norwegian Physical Anthropology Institute (Evjen 1997). The late 19th and early 20th scholars’ interest in skulls, believed to be the most important and indicative of all human bone structures, shall be traced back to the practice of craniometry, the measurement of the cranium. Craniometry originated in the mid-19th century debates on the origin of nations. According to Kyllingstad «these politically charged debates stimulated archaeological research in Europe and the use of craniology to determine the ethnic identity of archaeological remains» (2012: s47). Craniometry is based on the measurement of the cephalic index, a criterion defined by Swedish professor of anatomy Anders Retzius (1796–1860). In 1843, Retzius submitted his doctoral thesis in which, according to his findings based on the calculation of the encephalic index, he claimed that the Scandinavian heads could be divided into two different categories: long and short heads, the Sámi belonging to the latter category (Evjen 1997).

The use of body measurements to classify supposed different races became an influential practice within a wide-ranging positivist discourse on not only racial classification but also purity⁷⁸ (Lundmark, 1998 in Cocq 2008). Italian viewers who watched *Sámi Blood* are probably unaware that the disturbing scenes depicting physical measurements of human beings are part of their own history since Italian scholars performed similar measures on indigenous groups in the late 19th and early 20th

⁷⁸ Race purity was a concept inspired by social Darwinism and racial biological conceptions concerning the supposed evolutionary stage of different peoples around the world (Hawkins 2021).

century. As we shall see (cfr this chapter, paragraph 15), the irony is even stronger if we take into account the fact that, 50 year before the events represented in *Sámi Blood*, exponents of late 19th century Italian anthropology travelled to Sápmi to carry out research on Sámi people. Once in Sápmi, they contributed to the development of this practice, and resorted to it their own study of Sámi peoples, perpetuating and fostering forms of oppression and structural violence to their own benefit.

2.5.3 A film *sui generis*

Through the lens of gendered experiences, *Sámi Blood* introduces the Italian public to one of the expressions of diversity within indigenous communities: that of gender.

As Olsen (2018) has highlighted, in this film, diversity is not only expressed through the opposition between indigenous and non-indigenous people, as it was the case in ‘Kautokeino Opprøret’ and ‘Ofelaš’, but also through gender. If compared to the other two major feature films addressed earlier, *Sámi Blood* appears to provide the audience with a fresh perspective over the female section of South Sámi society. Women, whose voices have long been silences, are the main characters of this film. It is important to bear in mind though that not all women are the same, not even within the same community.

In *Sámi blood*, difference does indeed emerge within the intangible borders of the smallest element of society: the family. In the case of Elle-Marja’s family, difference plays out through the diverse choices the characters take throughout the film. Elle-Marja and her sister, despite belonging to the same family and despite having shared similar experiences, chose different paths in life and, by the end of their lives, belong to two different worlds. These choices are both expressions of agency and the results of constraints imposed upon them. As Olsen (2018:186) notes, some of Ella-Marja’s decisions are also the consequence of the «internalization of patronizing talk about the Sámi» and the «colonization of the mind». Kernell availed herself of this expression when she stated that she «wanted to explore shame and the colonization of your mind» (Variety 2016).

The ‘colonization of the mind’ is a concept originating in post-colonial theory and was developed by Kenyan novelist and theorist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986), who has written of the necessity to move beyond the “colonization of the mind” that occurs when people resort the language of imposed powers to communicate among themselves. Ngũgĩ’s analysis was inspired by Fanon’s considerations on the need to decolonize national consciousness and emerge as extremely valuable in contemporary Sámi contexts.

2.5.4 *Samegiella*⁷⁹ on screen: how to fight a centuries long language stigmatization

The reflections delineated above bring up a further point of strength of Kernell's Sámi Blood: the use of languages. When it comes to Indigenous films and other Indigenous cultural expressions, the use of language(s) is extremely relevant since language policies and colonization are deeply intertwined. Moreover, resorting to a native language conveys a sense of realism that empowers indigenous viewers while disorienting the rest of the audience. As Christiansen points out in his analysis of 'Kautokeino Opprøret', «The employment of 'native' language belongs to feature films' most reputable means of creating cinematic realism, especially when dealing with cultural and/or historical 'otherness'» (2012: 63,64). The same principles apply to Sámi Blood in which, given the setting and the context of the plot, South Sámi language and the dominant Swedish language are spoken.

The use of a Sámi language in a feature film, as in other public arenas, has a strong symbolic meaning. Until a few decades ago, because of the assimilation policies and the stigmatization of Sámi cultures and languages, many people did not speak Sámi to their children, in order to protect them from further stigma and from the burden and shame hegemonic societies associated with Sámi identity (see among al. Hirvonen 2008). Among the consequences of this widespread linguistic choice, in many Sámi communities, Sámi languages were gradually disappearing from younger generations' daily life, resulting in a dramatic language shift (Nyssonen 2007, Minde 2005, Pietikäinen 2010). In those Sámi communities where Sámi languages were still spoken and passed down to younger generations, they were relegated to the private sphere, away from foreign listeners. (Eidheim 1971:52). In light of these premises, we can appreciate the importance of Kernell's use of South Sámi language in her film. Sámi Blood brought the Sámi Language to both Nordic and foreign audiences, among them the Italian one. It is important to note that the dialogues in Swedish have been dubbed into Italian but those in South Sámi have been just translated in the subtitles. Hence, Italian viewers were able to experience the same contraposition between their language (Swedish in the original) and South Sámi. A contraposition which characterized the original version of the film, and that Swedish/Norwegian/Danish viewers were able to appreciate. Furthermore, since Italians most likely do not understand the dialogues in South Sámi, they become "the others" themselves when Sámi actors speak in their native language. Were it not for the subtitles, Italians would have been excluded from the dialogues and hence prevented from understanding the events unravelling in the film. Such an experience constitutes a temporary and limited, albeit powerful, reversal of the

⁷⁹ Literally, 'the Sámi language' in North Sámi.

condition suffered by generations of Sámi children, forced to attend schools and speak in languages foreign to them⁸⁰. Nevertheless, this nuance is not always fully appreciated and the use of the indigenous Sámi language may reaffirm the “otherness” of the Sámi. For instance, in a 2017 article published on the magazine *Panorama*, the journalist describes Elle-Marja’s mothertongue as a “strident language” (Trionfera 2017). This observation is a form of othering that can be linked to the scene of the film in which the protagonist shouts to her sister in Swedish, telling her she does not understand Sámi and calls her ‘Lappjável’.

Elle Marja herself, in a previous scene, had been called Lappjável, and « through her own internalization of patronizing talks about the Sámi » she calls her sister so. (Olsen 2008) Lappjável is a Swedish derogatory term being used as an insult and meaning “Lappish Devil”⁸¹. By stating she does not understand South Sámi, the main character is distancing herself from her culture, symbolized here by her native language, depicted as foreign and unintelligible. Trionfera’s remark about Sámi being a “strident language” bears resemblance with an early twenty century description of the sound of Sámi languages outlined by an Italian wealthy young woman who visited the Nordic countries and wrote a diary of her time in “The North”. Giulia Kapp Salvini visited a Sámi camp in Tromsdalen (Troms area) in 1907 and, in her travelogue, she noted:

Tutta la popolazione del campo, che era stata avvertita della nostra visita, ci aspettava con grande agitazione, e ci attorniava offrendoci in vendita ogni sorta dei loro articoli: corna di renne, pelli, coltelli, borse e scarpe ricamate, cucchiai d’osso e d’argento e bambole vestite con i loro costumi, ciangottando un po’ di norvegese e anche qualche parola d’inglese (Kapp Salvini 1907:252-253)⁸².

The idea that Sámi languages are unintelligible is deeply rooted in the history of relations between Sámi and non-Sámi. Schefferus, the author of one of the most influential modern works on Sápmi, held Sámi languages in a very low regard. A passage from his 1674 tractate “The History of Lapland” reads:

⁸⁰ The same is true for other indigenous children worldwide who were forced to attend school in a language foreign to their own and who were often forbidden to speak among themselves in their native language (see among others: Green 2017; Reyhner 2018; Allemann 2019; Carpenter and Tsykarev 2020; Landertinger 2021).

⁸¹ This derogatory term can also be translated as “Lappish Bastard”. It is still used to offend people who identify as Sámi, contributing to ethnic discrimination (see Sverigesradio 2017, TV4 2017).

⁸² «The whole population of the camp, that had been informed of our visit, was waiting for us in great expectation, and surrounded us offering any kind of article for sale: reindeer horns, skins, knives, embroidered bags and shoes, spoons made of bones or silver, dolls dressed in their costumes, twittering some Norwegian and also some words in English» (my translation).

Others, that are of a more probable opinion, confess indeed that they used no words in their trading, but that it was not out of rusticity, want of cunning, or the like; but because they had a language quite different from others, and so peculiar to themselves, that they could neither understand, nor be understood of their neighbors; so that it was rather the barbarism, and roughness of their speech, than manners, that made them use this dumb way of trafficking (Schefferous 1674:67,68)⁸³.

Schefferus openly states that Sámi language is barbaric. This idiophone is a word borrowed from classic Greek. It is an onomatopoeia developed in a context of language contact and it was actually «[...]used to refer to speakers of foreign languages, but also to foreigners speaking bad Greek» (Janse 2002:334) and already in the I century BCE it had a negative connotation. The use of this term to refer to “others” is indeed an expression of a perceived cultural superiority and epitomized contemporary power relations.

As the ultimate form of othering, Sámi languages were not only perceived as different but also they were regarded to be so unintelligible that they could not belong to this world. We can trace this understanding of Sámi languages to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century missionary accounts that regarded the Sámi as the “devil’s language” (Aikio 1986). Not only languages but also other Sámi cultural expressions were regarded as so distant from the European frames to be only explainable if ascribed to demoniac interventions. This is the case of the *joik* (Sámi chant), which Laestadius⁸⁴ compared to the noise of the Devil (Paine 1987) in his sermons. contributing to the stigmatization of the *joik* as a cultural practice.

As we shall see later in these chapter, Sámi words may have reached the shores of Italy long before these films were broadcasted and they will soon take the stage at one of Italian most important cultural events, the 2022 Biennale di Venezia. In 2022, three Sámi artists will bring their art to Venice. Pauliina Feodoroff, Máret Anne Sara and Anders Sunna will represent Sápmi at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia and the whole Nordic Pavillion will be temporally renamed ‘The Sámi Pavillion’. This is the first time that Sámi artists are guests at the Biennale and their presence marks an important achievement for the Sámi community as a whole. It is likely that the Sámi participation to the Biennale, and the physical presence of pieces of art inspired and shaped by Sámi experiences and their past and current struggles, will bring a renewed interest in

⁸³ Access at <https://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/efa65ac951a69b3a075b80593e09f66f?lang=no#0> on 8/3/20

⁸⁴ Laestadius was of Sámi background on his mother’s side and was fluent in South, Pite and North Sámi. Laestadius kept Sámi languages in high regards. In 1843, he defended his pastoral thesis written mostly in Latin and Finnish. He though wrote the twelfth point, *Crapula Mundi*, in Sámi. The point stated: «A Lapp is a man of better quality than a new settler or a non-Lapp» (Laestadius 2002:27).

Sámi cultures in Italy. In this country for centuries knowledge about Sápmi had been mediated through the lenses of books and lithographic images. Among the texts written about Sápmi and read in Italy, there are important accounts by Italian-speaking travelers, researchers and educated tourists.

2.6 Sápmi and Sámi peoples in Italy: between projections and collective imageries

Given my cultural background, my personal interests and my knowledge of the Italian language, I decided to focus my attention on the texts produced by Italians who visited Sápmi in the past five hundred years. In the following pages, I analyse some of the works that meet the abovementioned criteria. I selected the following accounts: Querini, Fioravante and de Michiele's reports (15th century), the work of Francesco Negri (published posthumously in 1700) and Vidua's letters from Scandinavia (1818). Querini's account established a literary connection between Northern Fennoscandinavia and Italy, while the importance of Negri's travel account in shaping Italian understanding of Sápmi cannot and shall not be underestimated. Defined by Wis (1981) as the first ethnographer of the Sámi peoples, Negri was indeed the first continental educated man to travel to Sápmi in order to "see" the Sámi with his own eyes. Later travellers were inspired by Negri, and his journey became emblematic of the Italian lonely traveller who embarks on a perilous journey for the sake of knowledge⁸⁵. This narrative is obviously charged with different layers of meanings and Negri himself carefully chose what to disclose and divulgate while keeping for himself his innermost reflections, as well as probably the real reasons behind his journey. Given its uttermost relevance of the work of the German-born scholar Schefferus and the influence his volume '*Laponia*' had on the European – and Italian – cultural understanding of Sámi peoples, I have decided to address Schefferus's work in this chapter.

2.6.1 The most famous Italian travellers in Sápmi: an overview

Besides the authors I shall address in this chapter, other Italian travellers composed volumes concerning their journey in Fennoscandinavia. In particular, Giuseppe Acerbi's Travelogue *Viaggio a Capo Nord* – originally published in English and later translated in different European languages – enjoyed a wide circulation in Europe. Travelogues by authors such as Acerbi have already been extensively studied by scholars belonging to different disciplines. In particular, Acerbi's work has been examined through the lenses of literary criticism (in particular, see the works of De Anna 1993, De Caprio 1996). Acerbi's travelogues enjoyed a wide success first among its early 19th century readers and today among the historian of Italian literature. This approach highlights important

⁸⁵ A tropos reminiscent of Dante's depiction of Odysseus (Dante, [1314] 2015 vv. 112-120).

features of Acerbi's production but often fails to read through the lines and extrapolate important ethnographic reflections compared to other travel accounts. Given the number of works either exclusively or partially devoted to Acerbi's travelogues, I will limit my analysis to an exam of the ethnographic material concerning Sámi peoples scattered across the '*Viaggio a Capo Nord*'. Acerbi's journey took place in 1779 but the book was first published in 1825. Half a century later, in 1851, Filippo Parlatore decided to travel to Fennoscandinavia. Parlatore was a Sicilian medical doctor and botanist who, inspired by the works of Linneus and driven by his interest in the different specimens of flora, travelled to Paris – the then centre of botany in Europe – and then to Sápmi.

Upon his return from Fennoscandinavia, he published '*Viaggio per le Parti Settentrionali di Europa Fatto nell'Anno 1851*'. During his stay in Sápmi, Parlatore encountered numerous Sámi individuals and interacted with them on multiple occasions. His remarks about Sámi peoples though are quite harsh and paint the Sámi in quite a negative light: «*Trovammo per via una capanna e vi entrammo lieti di scampare alla pioggia dirottissima, che allora cadeva, ma una vecchia lappone, brutta e sudicissima, che vi era dentro ci fece tali cose che ci costrinse a uscire e a prendere sulle nostre spalle quella pioggia siano a Cuttane*⁸⁶ » (1851:224). In this line, Parlatore seems to be oblivious to the fact that he was trespassing into the Sámi elderly woman's house. Furthermore, the fact that she refused Parlatore and his equipe hospitality during a rainstorm may be connected to a wide range of reasons. By describing her as old, ugly and extremely dirty, Parlatore shows a negative attitude towards the Sámi which will be reinforced later in the text:

Describing the appearance of the Sámi as a people, Parlatore specifies that they are “ugly to the point of disgust”: «*I Lapponi inoltre hanno le membra assai sottili, il che li rende assai brutti. Anche le donne sono brutte e spesso in modo da fare schifo. Solo di quando in quando ne vidi alcuno alquanto piacente*⁸⁷ (1851: 251)». Despite these negative remarks, Parlatore showed in the text an approach that today would be regarded as cultural relativism. He stated that, despite being regarded as ugly by him and by other travellers, the Sámi probably consider themselves beautiful as so believes every “race of the human species” about itself (1851:245). In the mid-19th century, anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza⁸⁸ left Italy for his first ethnographic mission. Along with friend and fellow researcher Stephen Sommier, in 1879 he reached Sápmi and, for three months, he carried out research

⁸⁶ We found a hut on the way and entered it happy to escape the very pouring rain, which was then falling, but an old Lappish woman, ugly and filthy, who was inside it did such things that she forced us to go out and take that rain on our shoulder until Cuttante (my translation).

⁸⁷ Lapps also have very thin limbs, which makes them very ugly. Women are ugly too and often in a way that is disgusting. Only from time to time did I see some quite attractive ones (my translation)

⁸⁸ Paolo Mantegazza, was the founder of the first chair of anthropology in the country and hence he is considered to be the father and founder of the discipline in Italy.

among Sámi peoples living on the Norwegian Side of Sápmi. He mostly stayed in Tromsø while Sommer visited the Sámi village of Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino.

The outcome of this journey was collected in two volumes: 'Bozzetti Lapponici' and a public-oriented diary⁸⁹. The first volume is a book recording Mantegazza's reflections and his "findings", reporting data collected through body measurements. The volume is accompanied by a number of photographs Mantegazza took of Sámi individuals (both women and Men) either dressed in a *gákti* (Sámi garment) or naked. There are also pictures Mantegazza took of skulls Mantegazza or his associates dug up from Sámi graveyards, as Mantegazza himself stated in the volume's preface⁹⁰.

The second book, written in the form of a diary, is entitled 'Un Viaggio in Lapponia, Coll'amico Stephen Sommer'. This second text falls within the category of the travel-writing genre and recounts the daily events of the three months Mantegazza spent in Sápmi. Both works will not be able examined in this chapter despite their importance in both the field of Sámi Studies and that of the History of Italian Cultural Anthropology. I decided to only partially focus on these works for two reasons: Mantegazza's production has been already extensively studied by historians of Anthropology (see in particular, Puccini's works 2010, 2014) even though these studies have only marginally addressed Mantegazza's works on Sámi peoples. Secondly, it would be beyond the scopes and reaches of this chapter to provide a contextual analysis of Mantegazza's works on Sápmi, in his wider anthropological production. Hence, I shall only briefly address his works on Sápmi. I hope to be able to carry out further research on this issue at a second time, once it will be possible again to have access to both archival materials and materials held in various museums' storage rooms (in particular, the ethnographic museum Pigorini in Rome and the Museo Nazionale di Antropologia ed Etnologia in Florence). My analysis will focus mainly on the documents written by the authors/travellers insofar mentioned but I am aware that these are not the only works produced by Italians on Sámi peoples. Interest in Sápmi and Sámi peoples has led a number of Italian scholars to specialize in Sámi studies, approaching this field from different perspectives and different angles. First though, I shall briefly address the different components that constitute the concept of North in classical and modern European intellectual history.

⁸⁹ Both volumes were published in Milano 1881.

⁹⁰ Furthermore, in the "instructions" (Istruzioni Etnologiche per il viaggio dalla Lapponia al Caucaso dei soci Loria e Michela) published in 1883, Mantegazza stated that If you have no qualms about desecrating Christian tombs and if the natives do not oppose them, skeletons and skulls even of modern Lapps would be very welcome by the Museum of Anthropology (1883:111)

2.6.2 On the naming of the North

The North is a complex concept based upon a relational term involving a central reference point from which the North itself is defined. Conventionally depicted and identified with the top side of maps⁹¹, the North is one of the four major compass points, it is usually abbreviated with the initial “N”. The concept of North, as that of all the other compass points, implies a distinction between a centre and what is perceived as its peripheries⁹², organized around the conventional cardinal directions. In the graeco-roman world, the cardinal directions were associated with astral phenomena. Stars were the main reference points used for orientation, as the etymology of *septentrio*⁹³ (Latin for North) demonstrates. *Septentriones* is indeed a name written in the stars: it refers to the seven (*septem*) oxen (*triōnēs*) and refers to the constellation of the Plow Oxen (as the Romans called the constellation of the big dipper)⁹⁴. This constellation was also known in Latin as *Ursa Major* (Greater Bear) or, in Ancient Greek, *ἄρκτος* (*árktos*, “bear, and hence *Ursa Major*”) from which the adjective *ἀρκτικός* (*arktikós*, originally “of the Great Bear” constellation and hence the “northern”) comes from⁹⁵.

Boreal, the third classical term is an adjective associated with the North. *Boreal* does not come from the stars but is carried by the wind. *Borealis* (which is part of the scientific name of the Northern lights, i.e. “Aurora Borealis”) derives from the Greek name of the wind that blows from the North: the *Borea* (*Βορέας*). In the past, the adjective “boreal” was employed to describe the Sámi as well as other Northern peoples, as the following extract from Parlatore shows:

I Lapponi appartengono ad una razza diversa dalla nostra, che I naturalisti chiamano iperborea perchè vi comprendono oltre ai lapponi anche i Samojedi, I

⁹¹ This conventional organization of space in maps has become preponderant but there are examples of medieval and modern maps that have a different orientation. Furthermore, in recent years, a number of indigenous artists have composed maps that overturn colonial and western approaches to cartography and embedded in the South-North/East West orientation. See for instance the works of Hans Ragnar Mathisen (*Sámisat 01.07.90 Fennoskandia sett fra Nord mot Sor 'fra satelitt' Liste med stedsnavn pa Sámisk, nordisk og russisk*) and Katarina Pirak- Sikku (*Har borjar Sápmi och har slutar Sverige*). Both authors have produced maps with a North-South/West-East orientation reproducing Sápmi as seen from the North Pole.

⁹² The term ‘periphery’ comes from the Ancient Greek noun *περιφέρεια* (*periphérea*, “the line around the circle, circumference, the outer surface”), which derives from *περιφερέης* (*peripherés*, “moving around, round, circular”), from the verb *περιφέρω* (*periphérō*, “to carry around, move around”), a compound verb formed by the preposition *περί* (*perí*, “around, about, near”) and *φέρω* (*phérō*, “to bear, carry”).

⁹³ *Septentrio* is a Latin noun meaning “north”. From *Septentrio* derives the adjective “*septentionalis*” meaning ‘northern’. cfr Olaus Magnus volume *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*.

⁹⁴ Access at <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=septentr> on 13/11/20.

⁹⁵ Access at <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=arctic> on 13/11/20.

*Groenlandesi e gli eskimesi che abitano le regioni boreali dell'Asia e dell'America*⁹⁶
(1851:224)

The term “North” which has counterparts in the other Germanic languages⁹⁷ (*noord* in Dutch; *noard* in West Frisian; *Nord* in German, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian) derives from a Proto-Germanic **nurþraq*⁹⁸. There are different theories on the origin of this stem. It may derive from a Proto-Indo-European stem “*h₁ner*” (“inner, under”), or from a Proto-Indo-European “*ner*” (“left, below”). The explanation for the association between the concept of north and the idea of “under/below/left” is based on a supposed connection between these concepts and the Sun: when facing the rising Sun, the north lies to observer’s the left. As etymological dictionaries explain, the geographical expression “North Pole” is attested from mid-15c. (it was earlier defined “the Arctic pole”, late 14c.); north pole in astronomy stands for «the fixed zenith of the celestial sphere»⁹⁹.

2.6.3 The North, an ambivalent concept

Both positive and negative traits have long been associated with the North as a vaguely identified geographic area. The cultural construction of the North as a contradictory place where Good and Evil ambivalently coexist is deeply rooted in ancient European and Western cultures, in which the North has had a dual and ambiguous character since it was considered the site of both purity and evil. This dichotomous understanding of the North is deeply rooted in different, often overlapping, literary and cultural traditions that stretch back to ontologies originated in classical antiquity, in Greek and Roman as well as Judaic cultures. In Greek and Roman times, alterity lied beyond the borders of the civilised world, i.e. the Greek-speaking world and, later, the Roman empire. This was the centre of Oecumene (the known lands) and, according to Greek and Roman worldviews, the inhabitants of the lands beyond the Oecumene where exceptional, super- but also sub- human, and tremendous beings.

As Balzamo (2014) notices, classical authors such as Plinius and Pomponius Mela have described the North of Europe as a cold, savage area where human life is almost impossible. These desert-like regions wrecked by the cold were later associated with the Christian Hell. Hell, in its innermost circle, is indeed frozen, as Dante vividly describes in his masterpiece ‘La Divina Commedia’. These lands hid dangers, fearful creatures, and destructive forces that were considered a menace to humankind and to the stability of society as a whole. For this reason, the North was also considered the abode of

⁹⁶ “The Lapps belong to a race different from our own, which the naturalists call Hyperborea since it comprehend besides the Lapps also the Samojeds, the Groenlandics and the Eskimos who dwell in the boreal regions of Asia and America”.

⁹⁷ In the Romance languages, the usual noun for “north” comes from Old English *norð* through Old French *north* (Modern French “*nord*”). Cfr Italian “*nord*”, and Spanish “*norte*”.

⁹⁸ This stem is cognate with Greek *νέρτερος* (*nérteros*, “infernal, lower”)

⁹⁹ Access at <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=North> on 12/11/20

Satan (Burnett 2010). In these spaces though, according to classical mythology, dwell humans with extra-ordinary features and it was in these lands where «[...] the utopias of good governance were located» (Santini 2017:564) and here was located the kingdom of Hyperboreans, who live beyond the Northern wind (the Borea). Here was the retreat of Poseidon and, in its southern corners used to be Atlantis, and there lived the Ethiopians with their mythical town of Meroe.

2.6.4 Thule, the ultimate Nordic land

Thule is another semi-mythological land connected with the North, whose importance in European imaginaries shall not be underestimated. Thule was among the northernmost lands mentioned in classical Greek and Roman cartographic and geographic literature. This land acquired a metaphorical dimension, epitomizing the idea of remoteness associated with happiness. In the Georgics (1st century CE), Virgil coined a new term modelled upon these notions, creating the expression “Ultima Thule” (*ultima* means last, i.e. farthestmost Thule). Throughout the centuries, Thule acquired semi-mythological features and often its peoples were described as having the characteristics proper of a utopian society. Despite these elements, many scholars for centuries tried to identify the location of Thule, associating it with a number of existing lands, islands and regions.



Image 5: The island of Thule, detail from Olaus Magnus's 1539 *Carta Marina* (public domain)

2.6.5 Changing cultural and symbolic geographies: the place of the North in the known world

Derived from the ancient Greek verb *οἰκέω* (to dwell, to live), *Oecumene* was originally a Greek concept that has undergone a process of resemantization over the past centuries. It came to mean “the known lands” as opposed to those areas unknown to Europeans. On this premise, the lands beyond the Oecumene came to be understood as *terra nullius*¹⁰⁰, ‘no man’s lands’ inhabited by barbarians. The notions embedded in the concept of Oecumene are particularly relevant in this study because they had long influenced European perceptions of “the other”, who inhabited lands beyond the borders of the Oecumene. The borders between people, dichotomously perceived as civilised and barbaric, were cultural and, the limits of the oecumene were considered as the site of alterity at least since the Greek times. Santini (2017) though highlights the ambivalence of such alterity, which could be both ideal and monstrous¹⁰¹; for all these reasons, extra-human creatures often are placed beyond the borders of a given society’s known world.

The advent of Christianity changed the European cultural context and its symbolic reference points; the centre of the Oecumene as a cultural and geographic concept shifted with the acceptance of the biblical perception of Jerusalem as the centre of the world, at whose North lied the dangers of Evil.

In particular, in the Old Testament, the book of Ezekiel reads (5, 5): «Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the centre of the nations, with countries all around her». This passage remarks the centrality of Jerusalem in the world’s geography, placing it at the centre of civilization, and hence order. On the other hand, Ezekiel also presaged that the armies of Gog would come from the north at the end of days. Furthermore, according to Isaiah (14:12-13), Lucifer started his rebellion against God by setting up a throne in the North¹⁰² (Burnett 2010). These passages foster the association between Evil and the North, which is attested in other biblical as well as later – medieval – sources. In the ancient biblical worldview, the North was a region that lied beyond the borders of Israel but, with the expansion of Christianity, whose cosmography heavily relied on the Old testament, through a process of extension, the North became the region at the north of the Oecumene, at whose centre was Jerusalem. Being Jerusalem the heart of the Oecumene, everything was measured

¹⁰⁰ This concept became one of the basis for justifying western colonial invasions and subjugations of indigenous peoples as well as independent sovereign states not acknowledged by the colonial powers with their same level of civilisation.

¹⁰¹ The adjective “monstrous” did not originally have a necessarily negative connotation. It derives from the Latin verb *moneō* (“advise, warn”) and *-trum* (suffix). *Monstrum* is a *vox media* (a term that can have both a negative and a positive meaning and that usually denoted something intrinsically ambivalent) which means “divine sign, prodigy, portent” and refers to anything that can evoke both fear and wonder.

¹⁰² “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart « I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon » Isaiah 14:12-13

from, and in contrast to, this symbolic centre. According to this framework, when moving away from this centre, travellers would witness civilization slowly vanish and savagery prevail: the further from Israel, the more savage would be the people, harsher the climate and the lands, more dangerous the animals and more terrifying the monsters. According to Balzamo, this is the symbolic framework that regulates the medieval and modern depictions of the North and this dichotomous and polarized understanding of the “borders of civilisation” characterised European cultures for many centuries, and its echoes are still fostering people’s imaginary (2014). Drawing probably on classical authors and on the scarce information available – due to the physical distance between the then knowledge-centres of Europe and the northernmost areas of the continent – the medieval accounts of the North are not accurate descriptions of these lands but, rather, reflect the then current understanding of geography. The works of Adam of Bremen and Saxo Grammaticus describe the North as a frozen land where civilised life was almost impossible and only savagery existed. As Balzamo (2014) highlights, ancient authors framed the dichotomy between the world they knew and what laid beyond its borders by resorting to the concepts of civilisation and barbarity. She also points out that, in the Middle-Ages though, this opposition came to embody the difference between Christianity and paganism. As Piludu and Partanen (2011) frame it, in medieval times the borders among different peoples was embedded in religion and the ultimate alterity no longer was determined by ethnicity or language but lied in the faith. Olaus Magnus was familiar with both understandings of the North and reproduced them by incorporating their main features in his Map and treaty. Despite his reliance on these older frameworks, Olaus Magnus’s works constituted a turning point in the history of representation of the European North and the people who there dwell and thrive.

2.6.6 Italian sources on Sápmi through the lense of Finnish scholars

To my knowledge, the only study devoted exclusively to the examination of Italian sources on Sápmi is Piludu and Partanen’s article ‘Terra hyperborea incognita’ (2011). This article, which features in a collection of essays dedicated to the analysis of the Grand Tour in the lands of the Sámi, provides an overview of Italian accounts of the lands inhabited by Sámi peoples and their ancestors. The text’s point of departure is the Finnish interest in travel accounts set in the Nordic countries. Both authors have strong connections with Finland and, in Piludu’s case, with Italy. The authors notice that Italian travelogues set in the North have attracted less interest than their French and British counterparts. In their view, the only Italian travel author to have gained fame in Finland is Giuseppe Acerbi. The Finnish interest in Acerbi lies in the fact that the Italian diplomat travelled extensively in the Nordic countries, including Northern Finland. Not only did he document his encounters with Sámi and Swedish/Norwegian people but, unlike other Italian authors, he also described Finnish costumes

and music in a detailed diary which was later published under the title ‘*Viaggio al Capo Nord fatto l'anno 1799 dal Sig. cavaliere Giuseppe Acerbi*’ (Acerbi 1832). Piludu and Partanen point out that, despite the relevance and prominence of Acerbi’s work, he was not the first Italian to have visited Sápmi. Many Italian travelers, before and after Acerbi, undertook perilous journeys to Lapland in the past five centuries. Unable to address them all within the space of an article, they selected only few of these travellers, one for each century. Their choice fell on five of those who visited Sápmi and have left a written account of their journey. They outlined the experiences of Pietro Querini, Sebastiano Caboto, Francesco Negri, Giuseppe Acerbi, Filippo Parlatore and Ivo Pannaggi in the northernmost regions of Europe. Before focusing on these men, they examined the classical sources that refer to people today identified as the ancestors of the Sámi.

In Piludu and Partanen’s view, the Italian travelers’ accounts of the Nordic peoples fall within two categories: some of them are characterized by an idealistic and positive attitude, which often sees in the Sámi “the true savages” endowed with a pure and simple soul. Others are marked by negative, often racist, insinuations. In these accounts, the Sámi emerge as lazy, dirty, dumb human beings¹⁰³. While reading these accounts, I noticed the ambivalent feelings Italians expressed towards Sámi peoples. From Piludu and Partanen’s analysis, a dualistic understanding of Sámi as either inherently good or bad savages emerges as a recurring theme in Italian travelers’ accounts. The scholars also highlight how Christianity, along with the Graeco-Roman culture rediscovered during the Italian Renaissance, had shaped these travelers’ worldviews. For this reason, they also demonstrate both the mythological dimensions of these travel accounts and their relationships with Graeco-Roman culture.

As mentioned earlier, in this chapter I focus on some of the accounts written by those Italian travellers who visited Sápmi and recorded the experiences, the impressions and the encounters they had during their journey in the lands of the Sámi. Following Piludu and Partanen’s line of thought, my aim is to highlight the dichotomous understanding Italians had of Sámi peoples. I will also focus whether the texts I take into exam have an ethnographic value, and why so.

2.7 On travel accounts and private epistolaries as ethnographic documents: Reflecting about their reliability and other methodological issues

In the last five centuries, Sápmi and the Nordic countries have become the object of growing curiosity on the part of European travellers. Throughout classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, very

¹⁰³ According to these accounts, they lack culture, a history and, consequently a future.

little was known in Europe about the northern areas of Fennoscandinavia. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the perceived remoteness and wilderness of these lands sparked the interest of educated European elites. In the twentieth century, the interest had not diminished but had been transformed: from reports produced for economic and political purposes or driven by personal curiosity, attention towards the North had developed into a scientific interest. In the case of the interest towards these areas' indigenous peoples, curiosity was fuelled by social Darwinism and its "ideology of conformity (Hirvonen 2008). In the eyes of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars, Sámi people became living fossils¹⁰⁴. This unfortunate association led to actions that would today be regarded as highly unethical and unprincipled, if not downright immoral¹⁰⁵.

Throughout the centuries, scholars, travellers and educated people compiled a wide textual corpus devoted to various aspects of the European North.

2.7.1 Travelogues as a textual representation of the journey as a life-changing experience and their potential as repositories of ethnographic information

Since the sixteenth century, one genre in particular gained popularity among Europeans: the travelogue. Similarly, costume books and maps were especially appreciated by educated European readers. A detailed analysis of these cultural products provides us with important information concerning the development of modern European culture. They also often offer a window into the society that produced them. Despite being a fascinating topic, an analysis of European cultural history is beyond the scope and interest of this thesis. Nevertheless, approaching these accounts from an anthropological and historical perspective reveals that they contain important details concerning Sámi and Nordic cultures as well as evidence of Sámi relations with non-Fennoscandinavian peoples.

I highly value the ethnographic and historical information scattered among the lines of these texts even if I am aware of the complexity of extrapolating ethnographic evidence from these kinds of texts. Travelogues shall not be considered ethnographic accounts even when they describe the social

¹⁰⁴ Mantegazza, in 1881, considered the Sámi (*Lapponi* in his own words) as one among the races "*condannate a scomparire in un tempo più o meno breve*" ("condemned to disappear in a more or less short time" (Studi Antropologici sui Lapponi 1881:9).

¹⁰⁵ In order to study and document the "disappearing races" before they became lost to history, anthropologists like Mantegazza performed measurements on both living people and human remains. In some cases, the skeletal remains were excavated and removed from their resting places without the consent of the community to which they belonged. Similarly, initiatives like the Swedish "*lapp skal vara lapp*" policy were meant to isolate "pure" Sámi communities, preventing them from mingling and mixing with other groups. For these reasons, and due to these ideologies, Sámi communities were isolated in settlements that evoke the North American reservation system. This form of marginalization and reduction of personal freedom was implemented with the "hope" of saving the last "pure" Sámi from losing their cultural identity (Weinstock 2013).

life of cultures foreign to their authors. Travel accounts can be primary sources and may provide important data for ethno-historians. As Brettel recommends, the ethno-historian has to be able to isolate literary conventions, *topoi* and rhetorical elements from actual observations and descriptions of “the other”. This task is anything but simple since these features are deeply embedded in the writers’ way of thinking and hence permeate their texts. When examining travelogues as ethno-historical sources it is also necessary to be able to distinguish between fictitious and factual elements even if the line between the two may be subtle when authors rely on literary conventions (1986). Literary devices are worthy of interest since they often epitomize the authors’ own preconceptions and presumptions about the people they encounter. As part of a circular process, these presumptions are often built upon other travel accounts, older geographical texts, or costume books.

Accounts of journeys in faraway lands are attested throughout the ancient world but, according to Rubies, before the 16th century these were isolated narratives scattered across literary genres. It was only during the 17th century that we witness the creation of a new literary genre commonly known as travel literature or travelogues. Travelogues emerge as important objects of enquire for anthropologists interested in the creation and perpetuation of specific popular imagination and stereotypes concerning the societies the travellers visited and wrote about. Many scholars have carried out research on the issues connected with travelogues and ethnography (see among others: Brettel 1986; Rubies 1993, 2000, 2002, 2007; Campbell 2002; Hester 2006). In some cases, travel writing reaffirmed older perceptions, in others they proved earlier theories wrong or fostered new imageries. Travelogues spur from the privileged experience of travellers who, through personal and direct observation, witnessed and experience alterity (their own toward their interlocutors and that of their interlocutors when compared to the travellers’ culture of origin). Following Rubies’ line of thought, travelogues can be regarded as a way of translating the experience of alterity into text. At the same time though, such accounts are also reproducing the perception of the self specific to their authors who, when travelled abroad, were always carrying with them their own cultural baggage, inevitably resorting to their own frameworks to look and examine the world around them. Ethnocentrism is indeed one of the main features of these accounts.

In the following paragraphs, I shall highlight the ethnographic dimension of travel accounts composed by Italians who visited Sápmi and described their journeys while recording the customs, practices and systems of knowledge of the peoples they encountered in lands perceived as distant geographically and culturally wise. I deem it pertinent to cover this topic since, when addressing the perception of Sápmi, the exam of relevant travel writings offers important insights into the construction of a specific image of this land and its indigenous inhabitants. Since the Middle Ages,

travelogues recording travellers' experiences throughout the world had indeed a deep influence upon European intellectual culture, contributing to the shaping of narratives about "the other". In the case in exam, some of the stereotype that still today circulate about Sámi people can either be traced back to travelogues or may have been disseminated and reinforced by these accounts. During fieldwork, I encountered such stereotypes, and it was during my search for the meanings and the messages encoded in such common places and in the imageries associated with Lapland that I developed an interest for travel writing. This interest led me to the literary and scientific works produced by European educated travellers and, among them, exponents of the politically fragmented Italian intellectual milieu whose accounts I shall examine in the following pages. First, though, I consider it important to delineate the coordinates of travel writing as a genre and its connection with ethnography.

Travel literature is a complex genre. As Hester, a history of literature scholar, notes, travelogues are a malleable and interdisciplinary form of writing that encompasses a variety of sub-genres and has various scopes. Furthermore, as Hester highlights, travel literature intermingle with many different disciplines such as history, ethnography, economics, literature, geography and astronomy (2006). Displacement and an "ethnographic impulse" driven by the interest in diversity and alterity are at the core of such writings (Rubiés 2006). The centrality of the journey in travel literature is apparent and yet travelogues cannot be reduced to stories about journeys in faraway lands. Written by educated individuals, they are often complex texts with different layers of meaning. In some cases, travel accounts conveyed political critiques or were meant to glorify the author and his country of origin. In the introduction 'Travel literature and Ethnohistory' to the 1986 volume 'Ethnohistory', Brettell identifies the main features of odeporic literature and their importance in ethnographic analysis of past cultures, paving the way for further research in this field. Less than two decades later, Joan-Pau Rubiés published a series of books and articles devoted to the intersection between history, ethnography and literary critique. In his works, which have a specific focus on the sub-Indian continent, Rubiés examines the way European travellers' perceptions of ethnic, political and religious diversity were shaped by the experience of the journey and by their society's three hundred years contact and exchange with local communities.

Travelogues are based upon direct observation, which is also at the core of the ethnographic practice. Similarly, experience has a central role in both ethnographic accounts and travelogues. Travel accounts were meant to describe and explain worlds that may have already been known to the wider public through ancient texts, many of which had been rediscovered during the renaissance. Unlike the ancient authors, whose authority (*auctoritas*) lied in the consolidation of classic theories

into the medieval scholastic knowledge system, these travellers though had first-hand experience and direct observation of the topics they covered. During their journeys, their experiences often proved the ancient *auctoritas* wrong, leading to a change in popular opinions that, until that moment, were based on ancient texts passed down through the centuries. Since the renaissance, experience gained a role of prominence in the European scientific thought. Consequently, first-hand knowledge was becoming more and more important in the academic circles of modern Europe, making travel accounts important sources of knowledge for those who had the chance of reading them. According to Norman Dorion, it is the experience that is at the core of travelogues and hence, in Dorion's view travel literature represents «the source of a veritable epistemological revolution» (in Hester 2006 p102). For these reasons, Rubies warns us not to underestimate «[...]the influence of [medieval and early modern] travel writing upon humanistic culture» since, in his opinion, such influence is essential «in order to understand how the Renaissance eventually led to the Enlightenment» (Rubies 2016: 132).

2.7.2 Travelogues in the 17th and 18th century

Renaissance travel accounts constitute a valuable source of information about the complex sixteenth century web of long-distance relations and international trade routes in Europe and beyond. In the fifteenth century, these texts were initially produced not for the amusement of the readers or because of disinterested curiosity about distant lands but for pragmatic reasons: to keep track of all kinds of political, economic and cultural information that could be useful in trade relations. In the 16th century, travel accounts underwent a transformation, becoming a popular literary genre. They had become works of literature characterized by specific literary and narrative devices (Brettel 1986). Even if some of these accounts were fictitious, most of them were based on travellers' real experiences, albeit sometimes slightly embellished. During the 17th and the 18th century, besides merchants, authors of travelogues were mostly explorers.

Some of the travellers who composed the texts examined later in this chapter were adventurers who travelled alone for pleasure and edification. Many were the missionaries, ambassadors and state officials who wrote about their experiences abroad. In some cases, some accounts have even been traced back to seemingly innocuous individuals who are now suspected of having been spies travelling abroad on a secret mission; some were domestic travellers, “exploring” places and cultures they deemed exotic in their own countries; other travelled across continents to reach their destinations. Among these travellers, Rubies considers the missionaries as holding a peculiar position, which differentiate them from other travellers who produced accounts of their journey. Their position derives from the scopes and methods they employed when interacting with the ultimate “other”, pagan

indigenous communities. Having them received a “quasi professional training” and given their motivation to learn about local cultures and languages with the specific goal of writing about them, missionaries working in every corner of the world produced extremely valuable – albeit biased – documents (Rubies 2017). For this reason, Rubies considers their works as the predecessors of 19th century ethnographic practices, a feature that he also identifies in travel literature at large. In particular, the missionaries’ linguistic proficiency allows a comparison of their works to ethnographic accounts. Henceforth, missionaries’ accounts emerge as extremely valuable for ethno-historians. Nevertheless, as Rubies notes, it was religious concerns that were at the core of the missionaries’ ethnographic practices. These clergymen produced knowledge about the people they wanted to evangelize in order to be better able to convert them to Christianity. In order to communicate the gospel, missionaries needed to be able to communicate efficiently in the local language. Such proficiency meant that they could grasp the different shades embedded in linguistic expressions, giving them access to some of the deepest meanings of many cultural practices. This linguistic expertise, which is at the foundation of what Rubies defines «[...]the most insightful ethnographies[...] enabled missionaries all over the world to develop accommodation strategies that proved vital in spreading Christianity>>, especially among indigenous peoples (Rubies 2017:286). In the missionaries’ case, the knowledge they generated about “the other” was used to spread their own faith and this phenomenon is the counterpart to the spread of western dominion. In some cases, the missionaries were among the first to resort to ethnographic knowledge in colonial contexts, supporting colonial agendas with the material they produced. This is the case of many clergymen and missionaries who worked among Sámi communities in the 17th and 18th century. Many were the clergymen who contributed with their materials to the first surveys in Sámi territories. Their prolonged presence in those territories, and their knowledge of the local languages proved to constitute a colonial tool. Through Christianisation (either enforced or willingly embraced), State institutions managed to get a hold on Sámi territories while, simultaneously, claiming the right to rule over Sámi peoples. In some cases, the materials collected by local clergymen became the sources scholars relied upon when compiling treaties about indigenous peoples. This is the case of Schefferous who, in 1673, composed the first comprehensive book dedicated to Sámi cultures to be published. He based it on both classic sources and on the reports he received from members of the clergy working and preaching among Sámi peoples (see paragraph 2.10.3)

2.7.3 Travelogues in the 19th and 20th centuries

During the 19th and early 20th century, before the advent of mass-tourisms, the profile of educated travellers had changed: Besides political delegates, the majority of educated people who embarked

on long journeys were travelling for scientific purposes. Most often, they organized the materials they collected through empirically informed and methodologically organized research processes. The results were usually scientific works accompanied by diaries with an either more private or public-oriented profile.

The analysis of odeporic literature holds potentials as well as limitation and presents researchers with many challenges. Through their accounts, travellers often created and spread knowledge about “the other” of whom very little was known among the accounts’ prospective readership and hence the exam of these literary products can shed some light on the imageries connected with travelogues. These travelogues also disseminated knowledge about other cultures to a growing readership. These works of literature brought relatively accurate representations of alterity into European readers’ mindscapes. Nevertheless, when examining a travelogue we have to read them critically, and, as Rubies warns, it must be born in mind that these text shall not be regarded as true illustrations of a place and a people but, rather, as a culturally biased representation of them (2006). Furthermore, Campbell points out that these pieces of literature, as valuable as they are, are not proper ethnographies *ante litteram* since in these texts “the others” only appear, and hence implicitly exist, when in relation to the author, relegating their experiences to the margins of the text (2002). Expectations and ethnocentric biases heavily influenced travellers and are inevitably reflected in their texts, which often present moral assessments based on the author’s own cultural sets of values (Campbell 2002). Similarly, when working on these texts as sources, it is necessary to consider their cultural context of production and reception (Rubies 2002). Furthermore, in most examples of travel writing describing lands perceived as distant and exotic, extreme alterity – as that of the indigenous peoples – is either reinforced or categorized and tamed through specific *topoi* (like the notion of barbarity). Additionally, most often there is no dialogue between the author and members of the local indigenous society, preventing indigenous voices from being reported and, centuries later, heard. It is also very likely that most of the travellers had little if no direct contact with the vast majority of the local indigenous peoples. Only once all these factors have been taken into account, it is possible to try and read through the lines and extrapolate ethnographic information from travelogues. In the next paragraphs though I shall not focus on the potential ethnographic value of the accounts produced by Italian travellers, a theme I will only marginally cover. Rather, I would like to examine the nature of these travelogues and the meaning they had in then-contemporary Italian society. Literary *topoi* and rhetorical devices have the merit of shedding light on the connections between the text, its author and the contemporary social and intellectual world to which it belongs and fuels. Common ideas about faraway places had long circulated in Europe and travel literature had been one of the most important

vehicles in the spread of this knowledge. As it emerges from this introduction, travel accounts are complex documents that, before being published, had undergone a long process of preparation. They were meant to tell the story of the author's travels in faraway lands. Letters, on the other hand, had often a different reason to be written and served specific purposes.

2.7.4 Private epistolaries and public letters: travellers' innermost thoughts and their public persona, some ethical reflections

Reading letters as historical documents is a daunting task that has to be performed with respect and awareness of both the possibilities and the shortcomings of such a practice. When examining letters, both private and public, as potential historical sources it is necessary to bear in mind that they are valuable yet problematic historical sources. An important element that is crucial when examining missives is the social and cultural context into which these letters were produced. Similarly, both the author and the recipient, as well as the relationship between them, have to be taken into account.

Private letters differ a great deal from traveling accounts since missives were meant for a private readership and often discussed personal matters not meant to be disclosed. They also differ from notes taken on the spot since the latter were usually meant for the author only while the former were often compiled at a later moment and were written with a specific recipient in mind. For instance, as we shall see, Vidua wrote about his journey across Sámpi when he was already in Petersburg. It is reasonable to assume that he relied on both his memories and his notes to compile the letters. Hence, the material in the missives had already undergone a process of selection and rearrangement. Nevertheless, these letters offer the reader a vivid and private account of Vidua's own emotions, feelings and impressions while providing information he regarded as relevant and interesting enough to be communicated to his private interlocutors.

In a study on 19th and 20th century women's epistolaries in Iceland, Professor Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir points out that private letters in the past emerged as the «[...]only way to communicate for persons living far apart». Hence, they constituted a sort of «[...] dialogue or conversation» between the addressee and the addresser, a conversation with the limits imposed by distance in time and space (Halldórsdóttir 2007). Nevertheless, letters are not simply «[...] a conversation on paper» and hence, historians and other scholars who resort to this «[...]delayed mode of communication» (Bödeker 2004:199) as a source of information on a given topic have to address a number of methodological issues before doing so. Halldórsdóttir (2007:36) addressed this complex subject and identified three major issues that emerge when dealing with private epistolaries:

First [...] the question of the nature of private letters: How reliable are they as a source in history? Second, the ethical question of the use, interpretation, and representation of private letters. From my point of view it is essential for every researcher who uses sources such as these to consider what information can be used, to what extent it is possible to interpret a life once lived—and who has the right to interpret another’s life?

These reflections call for attention towards the researcher’s positionality as well as towards the author’s agency and right to privacy. Even if I am only marginally resorting letters as primary sources and I am examining Vidua’s missives to get a glimpse of his own understanding of Sámi peoples and not as sources of ethno-historical data, I considered it important to address the issues tickled by Halldórsdóttir with reference to my work. With regards to Halldórsdóttir’s first remark, the reliability of Vidua’s letters is here not a major source of concern since there is a high degree of certainty that Vidua himself wrote the letters I will examine. Furthermore, I am not looking at them to gather ethnographic information about early nineteenth century Duortnus/Torne Sámi way of life¹⁰⁶. I am more interested in examining the author’s perspective and experience of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and its people. Vidua’s descriptions were meant to convey these specific features and hence they can be regarded as reliable sources on his understanding of ‘*Laponia*’.

Ethics instead poses a challenge in this context. When addressing private correspondence, it is important to take into account the author’s and the recipient’s privacy, the purpose for which letters had been written and the material they contain. In the case of Vidua’s epistolary, it is most likely that the author would have not agreed on making it available to a wide public. Considering that he had all his diaries burnt, it is reasonable to ask ourselves if it is ethical to read and use his letters as historical sources. Furthermore, the use of letters for scientific purpose has an intrinsic shortcoming as it is about attempting to interpret other peoples’ thoughts without the possibility to directly ask them if our assumptions are correct. Oxymoronically, reading and using letters as sources is a unidirectional dialogue. Despite my concerns, I decided to avail myself of Vidua’s epistolary for two reasons, which compensated for the above-mentioned criticalities. Vidua’s epistolary constitute an interesting and useful source of information on his journey, on the local society, and on the individuals he encountered. Most of all though, it offers an insight into Vidua’s own understanding of the European North and its peoples.

2.8 Glimpses from the North: on Sámi people in Italy in antiquity.

¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, according to Coaloa (in Brevini, 2009:183) Vidua’s notebooks apparently contain a detailed account of Duortnus/Torne Sámi culture and it would be interesting to examine them from an ethno-historical perspective. Vidua’s notebooks are currently kept at the Accademia delle Scienze di Torino.

Until the first travelogue recounting the (mis)adventures of the Venetian merchant Pietro Querini and his crew became available upon their return in Venice in the early 15th century, in Italy and in the rest of Southern Europe notions of Scandinavia were vague and imprecise because ill-informed. Were it not for Olaus Magnus's 1539 map of Fennoscandinavi, continental Europe's knowledge about the North would have remained inexact well into the 16th century. Before the appearance of the map and Querini's account, little was known about the North of Europe. Until the second quarter of the sixteenth century, scholars and learned men relied on literary texts such as Homer, and ancient sources such as Pomponius Mela's 'Cosmographia' (early 1st century), Plinius's '*Naturalis Historia*' (77 CE), Tacitus's 'Germania' (98 CE). The importance of these texts, whose contents are often mythic in nature, is not to be underestimated. For centuries, they provided the European cultural elites with reference points, concepts, ethnonyms and paradigms through which to see, understand and tame the Unknown. According to Piludu and Paratanen (2010), in the Odyssey's Book X there is one of the first Greek descriptions of the North and its peoples. Sealing the ocean, Ulysses reaches the end of the known-world to find the Cimmerians. The lands they inhabit are under perennial clouds, fogs cover everything and locals can never see either the Stars or the Sun. In Piludu and Paratanen's view, the aforementioned description could easily fit Scandinavia.

2.8.1 Ethnonyms crossing boundaries, time, and space

Pomponius Mela compiled his *Cosmographia* at the beginning of the first century and this map circulated in manuscript form until its first modern edition, which dated to 1471 and was published in Milan, heavily influenced perceptions of spaces and places. Similarly, by the fifteenth century, the notions contained in Ptolemy's book, first compiled around 150 CE, had long circulated in Europe and beyond in the form of maps. Among the people Ptolemy's work mentions, there are the Phinnoi. This is among the earliest traces of this ethnonym. Other sources such as Plinius's '*Naturalis Historia*' (77 CE) and Tacitus's *Germania* (98 CE) contain written information concerning, among others, the Northern regions of Europe. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the *Germania* contains references to the Fenni, a people today believed to be the ancestors of the Sámi. The *Phinnoi* mentioned by Ptolemy in the 150 CE '*Geographia*' cartography treatise are most likely to be the same people of Tacitus' *Fenni*, the noun being hellenized (Kulonen 2005). According to Hansen and Olsen (2013) and Ligi (2019), at some point, the term *finn* underwent a semantic shift and came to indicate only some of the hunter-gatherers communities dwelling in Finland. This hypothesis is supported by the sixth-century European authors' use of another ethnonym, beside *fenni/Finnoi*. In the 6th century sources, a new term was used to refer to the Sámi people: *skridfinner* or "skiing Finns". Scholars agree that the ethnonym *skridfinner* is a compound noun made up of the ethnonym *Finn* and the suffix

skird. According to Gotaas (2012), this suffix comes from the Old Norse verb “to travel on skis” and it would hence be linked to the way these hunter-gatherers used to travel on snow. This exonym terminology, as Ligi explains (2019), encapsulates the perception of mobility associated with those groups of people who were referred to as Finni. Similarly, Hansen and Olsen (2013) have suggested that the idiom *skridfinner* can have derived from the Old Norse verb *skrida* or *skidum* (to go “to ski”, and “skiing”) associated to the ethnonym Finn. Hansen and Olsen (2013:37) have also proposed an interpretation of the change in names with regard to the Sámi. In their opinion, the distinction between *Finn* and *Skridfinner* arose in conjunction with a differentiation in means of livelihood, which led to the consequent diversification into separate ethnic groups: the Finns (whose ethnonym is *Suomalainen*) and the *Sjridfinner* (the Sámi). The association between an activity (skiing) and the Sámi people would represent a link between the Norse people’s ethnic stereotyping of the Sámi and the Sámi themselves. According to Hansen and Olsen (2013:38) «[...] an Icelandic oath formula (*Grdgds; Grettis Saga*), [...] says that revenge shall befall the one who breaks the agreement just as surely as the sun shines, as the shield sparkles, falcons fly, and Sámi ski (*finnr skridr*)». Hansen & Olsen (2013) report the different variations this ethnonymic. *Skridfinner* was transliterated in the Greek and Latin speaking worlds as *Scerefennae*, *rerefannae* and *crefennae* (Jordanes, 6th century CE); *Skritiphinoi* (Prokopios¹⁰⁷, 6th century CE); *Scirdigini*, *sirdifeni*, *serdifenni*, *rerefeni* (anonymous of Ravenna, 8th century CE); *Scridowinni*, *scritofinni* and *scritobini*, (Paulus Diaconus, 8th century CE). Similar ethnonyms appear also in the works of Adam of Bremen (11th century CE) and Saxo Grammaticus (13th century CE).

2.8.2 On the possible origins of *Skridifinner* as an ethnonym

Hansen and Olsen (2013:37) have suggested a hypothesis concerning the origin of *finner skridr*. According to their theory, in ancient sources, the expression *finner skridr* was related to

[...] their descriptions of the trappers’ way of life, with an emphasis on mobile dwellings, different kinds of gender roles, and special hunting techniques and means of getting about, first and foremost through the use of skis. *Skridfinner* appears to have developed from a designation based on conspicuous aspects of the way of life of those Finns who continued hunting and trapping. In this way they could be contrasted with the “other” Finns from which the exonym *Finn* would have developed.

¹⁰⁷ Prokopios speaks of the gliding Finns in his description of Thule (Sörlin 1995).

If, as other scholars suggest, the term *Skridfinner* derives from the Germanic root “to walk, to wander” (from Old Norse *finna*, from Proto-Germanic **finþana*.) plus the ancient Norse verb “to ski” (*skrida* or *skidum*), this ethnonym can be considered to be an exonym which reflects the group’s occupation or lifestyle rather than a label originally indicating an ethnic affiliation. An important and influential source concerning the Sámi people circulating in pre-modern Europe is Paulus Diaconus’s ‘*Historia Langobardorum*’ (8th century). In this text, Paulus Diaconus uses the term *Scridowinni*, *scritofinni* and *scritobini*. Similar ethnonyms appear also in the works of Adam of Bremen (11th century CE) and Saxo Grammaticus (13th century CE) and are commonly believed to refer to the ancestors of today Sámi peoples. In Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum* (The Deeds of the Danes), the noun *Lapp* appears in a description referring to two types of Lapplands (*utraque Lappia* meaning ‘both Lapplands’). Saxo resorts to the ethnonym *skridfinner* (*skricfinni*) describing, among other things, the *skridfinner*’s curious ability to move and hunt in landscapes completely covered by snow (Hansen & Olsen 2013). The images evoked by these accounts had a determinant role in shaping continental European perceptions of the Sámi. It was only in the first half of the fifteenth century that first hand information concerning the North reached southern Europe. Upon his return in his hometown of Venice, Querini wrote an account of his perilous journey: the *Relatione*, which widely circulated in manuscript form until it was published by Ramusio almost 100 years later. Around the time of Querini’s journey, in 1425, a copy of Tacitus’s *Germania* was discovered in a monastery in Germany. The text then started circulating, contributing to the increase in the fascination towards the lands it describes.

It was in the early sixteenth century, with Olaus Magnus’s works, that first-hand information were introduced into major European discourses over the North. Since then, curiosity towards Sámi people has inspired the works and the journeys of many Italian intellectuals. When examining Italian historical sources on Sápmi, it is important to bear in mind the context into which these works were produced. Travellers wrote their accounts for a number of different reasons: justification, curiosity, edification. Each of these reasons shaped these accounts, influencing and often driving the experience of the authors whose works I shall examine.

2.9 *A Dio piazendo metigar l’ire del mare e vento*¹⁰⁸: A shipwreck along the coast of Sápmi

As it often happens, a fortuitous event is at the basis of one of the most famous fifteenth century travel accounts. A shipwreck led to the first documented encounter between a Venetian merchant and

¹⁰⁸ Literally: “If pleases God to mitigate the wraths of the sea and the wind”.

the inhabitants of the northern parts of Scandinavia. Unlike other reports produced by Venetian merchants, Querini's *Relazione* constitutes an exceptional record of a tragic experience which led a group of Venetian seamen to a land nobody from their country had ever visited and of which very little was then known in the Italian States. Pietro Querini's and Fioravante and de Michieli's relations constitute the earliest and most famous of the travel reports of their time in Sandoy and Rost in Lofoten¹⁰⁹ and of their return journey to Venice.

As Knutsen highlights, the written sources about Northern Norway produced during the 15th and 16th century are limited and of these, Querini's account is the best-known. Querini's fame can be traced back to the success his report enjoyed from the sixteenth century onwards (2008).

2.9.1 Just a stone-throw away...

Even if there is no evidence Querini ever met any person identifying herself as Sámi, or that he ever had visited any Sámi settlement during his time in Northern Norway, I included his account in my study for three reasons: first, the *Relazione* is one of the most important sources on 15th century Northern Norway; secondly, the Lofoten archipelago is geographically close to Stuornjárga, the area where I carried out fieldwork. This proximity led to contact and exchanges between local anglers and Sámi communities living in the area either permanently (Sea Sámi) and seasonally. Furthermore, the abundance of fish along the Lofoten coasts constituted an important source of income for many Márka-Sámi families (Hansen 2006)¹¹⁰, whose members travelled to Lofoten on seasonal fishing expeditions. Lofoten, as well as the northern coasts of today's Norway, were part of Sámi cultural waterscapes, whose richness allowed Sámi coastal culture to thrive. The close connection between water and specific Sámi cultures has long been overlooked (Wickler 2010) but, in the last decades of the twentieth century, Sea Sámi cultures became more visible than ever before¹¹¹. The Sámi had indeed had a strong, ancient relation with the sea and the ocean. The Norse peoples regarded them as skilled boat builders, as supported by archaeological evidence: A

¹⁰⁹ Querini's and crew's accounts of the 15th century will then be translated from Italian by Amund Sommerfeldt and published under the title *Pietro Querinis fantastiske reise* (Pietro Querini's fantastic journey) (Aschehoug, 1908) with Amund Helland as lead author and editor. Access at <https://norge.sandalsand.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Pietro-Querinis-fantastiske-reise.pdf> on 23/6/20.

¹¹⁰ Nielssen, who studied the local history of Nordland's Lødingen, Tjeldsund and Tysfjord counties, has developed a theory concerning the Tysfjord Sámi's participation in the Lofoten fisheries. According to Nielssen, the Tysfjord Sámi had been active in the Lofoten fishing since the mid-thirteenth century. According to Nielssen, the importance of the stockfish trade has to be addressed by examining it in relation to other subsistence activities, which were part of the local Sámi multi-resource exploitation strategy. In his view, the decline in the demand for furs and in the hunting of wild reindeer in the mountains, led many to turn to fishing for an economic and subsistence alternative for local Sámi households. (Nielssen 1990 in Hansen 2006).

¹¹¹ Historical and political circumstances led to a growing prominence of inland Sámi reindeer tending culture, at the expenses of other subsistence Sámi cultures and ways of living

Norse woman was buried in a Sámi-type sewn-boat in a Nordic boat grave in Västmanland, Sweden (Nylén and Schönback 1994, in Zachrisson 2008:37). The Norwegian king Sigurðr Slembidjárn ordered two sewn Atlantic ships to be built for him by Sámi in Lofoten. (Zachrisson 2008)¹¹²¹¹³. Thirdly, in the ‘Relazione’, there are germs of narratives, rhetoric and imageries about the North that have antecedents in older sources and that would characterised later accounts: the association between these norther islands and an ideal simplicity and happiness. In Querini’s case, this association is grounded in a Christian understanding of the world and consitute in a juxtaposition of the Lofoten archipelago to a terrestrial transposition of paradise. Unaware of the complexity of his positionality, Querini found himself in a sort of border zone between Norse and Sámi populations.

2.9.2 From a manuscript to an incunabulum: Ramusio and the publication of Querini’s *Relzione*

Querini’s ‘Relazione’, compiled in 1434, figured among the accounts published by Giovanni Battista Ramusio in his mid-16th century collection of travel accounts. Ramusio was a learned publisher and curator who, during his youth, had also been the Venetian ambassador to France. His three-volume anthology, published between 1550 and 1559, made accessible to a wide public the journeys and adventures of travellers who, during their voyages, visited the various corners of the then-known and unknown worlds. This collection gathered texts that, until then, had never been published and had circulated only in manuscript form. Ramusio chose to publish not in Latin, the language of culture and still a lingua franca, but in Italian *vulgus*. As literary historian Franco Brevini (2009) highlights, Ramusio intended to reach a new, wider public. He desired his collection to be read not only by educated men of letters but also by aristocratic merchants and members of the emerging middle class. Ramusio also wanted to celebrate the Venetian mercantile attitude that had made the Serenissima powerful and famous worldwide. The anthology, as Brevini notes, has a strong apologetic character and aims to celebrate the strong, albeit nascent, Venetian travel tradition. The publication of Ramusio’s collection epitomized the convergence of complex dynamics taking place in sixteenth century Europe. After the so-called “discovery” of the Americas and the development of

¹¹² During the Viking Age the interaction between Sámi and Nordic peoples was intensified, especially in central Scandinavia. There was a high degree of reciprocity and social acceptance between them. They had near economic, social and religious contacts. Steadfast forms of collaboration developed, based upon the specialisation of the respective group.

¹¹³ Throughout historic time, the coastal Sámi are known to have been skilled boat-builders. They not only constructed small boats, but also larger vessels, which they sold to the Norwegians. The Sámi boatbuilding tradition features prominently in documentary records such as the sagas relating to the turbulent times of the twelfth century (Nielsen, 1990: 150165), letters written by local authorities in the sixteenth century, tax registers produced in the seventeenth century, and court assize minutes generated after 1700 (Hansen, 1986: 157). The reputation of the Sámi boat-builders is further substantiated by the probate records material of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, in Tysfjord (Nielsen, 1994: 214)

innovative printing technologies, travel increased and consequently so did the potential readership of travelogues. The fifteenth century European geographical ‘discoveries’ had unexpected consequences: these new notions challenged people’s worldviews as the discoveries forced them to question what had until then been accepted as true. The authority of classic authors such as Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, Jordanes or Plinius the Elder was now no longer blindly accepted. The certainty of many assumptions that had characterized Medieval Europe crumbled under the evidence travellers witnessed, experienced and later described in their accounts. In this context, commercial routes shifted from the Mediterrean to the Atlantic Ocean and a cultural and economic transformation, deeply influenced by Italian Renaissance, was slowly shaping the European cultural milieu. A growing interest in geography, in remote lands and cultures, as well as the opening of new trade routes paved the way for the rise in importance of a genre, that of travel literature, that had already enjoyed popularity during the Middle Ages. As Del Puppo (2011) notes, in sixteenth century Italy an epistemological shift rooted in the cultural development of foregoing centuries was taking place. From a culture deeply influenced by Catholic dogmas, a more secular, pragmatic culture imbued with scientific scepticism was emerging.

Venice, once a major trade hub whose prominence on the international arena decreased with the loss of importance of Mediterrean routes, reinvented itself thereby managing to maintain a place of prominence in the international trade system. Availing itself of long-established trade networks and thanks to its political autonomy, the Republic of Venice became one of the most significant European centres of the then-developing printing industry. By allowing a large-scale distribution of books much, now much cheaper than they had ever been, printing made knowledge available to a wide, bourgeois public (Del Puppo 2011). When addressing the fifteenth and sixteenth century cultural landscape, a significant indicator of the printed books’ prospective public lies in the languages these books were written in: texts written in Latin were aimed at an educated international audience, while accounts written in (Italian) vernaculars had a more local, often less educated readership. In the 16th century, the presence of a nascent printing industry in the city, along with the long-standing Venetian interest in travellers’ tales, led many publishing houses to print a number of travelogues and geographical treaties. It is in this vibrant Venetian context that in 1539, Olaus Magnus printed his famous map *Carta Marina*¹¹⁴.

2.9.3 The *Relatione*: an *ante-litteram* ethnography of a fishing community in Lofoten

¹¹⁴ Olaus Magnus referred to *Carta marina* with the name “*Carta Gotihca*”.

Historians Caracausi and Svalduz (2019:12) consider Querini's text as an «*ante litteram* ethnographic account» where the author describes in detail the customs of the people who saved him and his crew from certain death. Pietro Querini (1402-1448), who was a trader from the Republic of Venice and the ship's captain, wrote a report of the time he had to spend in the islands of Rost¹¹⁵ and Sandøya, in the Lofoten archipelago, after a storm had wrecked his ship, the *Coca Querina*, and most of his crew had perished. The *Coca Querina*'s journey started in Mediterranean waters, along the coast of Crete, and was supposed to end in Bruges (Flanders). The ship transported Greek wine to be traded with furs and other northern goods. A storm along the western coast of France wrecked the *Coca Querina* and forced the 68 crew members to board the lifeboats. Only eleven men survived the cold northern sea and landed in Rost, an uninhabited island off the coast of today's northern Norway. Rescued a month later by the inhabitants of Sandøya, the eleven survivors lived with their saviours for a few months before boarding a boat to continental Europe sailing to Trondheim and then, travelling on horseback to Goteborg, in Sweden.

Once back in his home country, Querini was instructed by Venetian authorities to produce a 'Relazione' describing the people, customs and products of Lofoten. Similarly, two of the surviving members of Querini's crew, Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolò di Michiel drafted a report on their experience. These documents were then stored in the Republic's archives. It was only after more than one hundred years since the shipwreck that Querini's work found a way out of the Venetian archives and reached a wider public. In 1559 Ramusio (1485-1557) published these accounts in the second volume of his collection of travel writings 'Navigazioni e Viaggi' (Venice)¹¹⁶. Querini's account became known as 'Viaggio per le Fiandre e Naufragio' while his companions' work was published under the title 'Naufragio del sopradetto messer Piero Qvirino'. These texts enjoyed wide success throughout Renaissance Europe. Besides introducing both the term and the product known as stockfish (*stoccafisso*) in the Venetian republic, these travel-accounts made known to the South Europe the riches of the North, by means of first-hand description. Querini, Fioravanti and de Micheli had taken notes and described the variety of local the fauna, highlighting its economic potential. The value of northern furs and birds such as the falcon were already well-known in continental Europe through mainstream trade channels and the Venetians pragmatically hoped they could turn their bad experience into a lucrative opportunity for the Serenissima (De Anna 1992).

¹¹⁵ In their accounts, the castaway call the island Rusente, an Italianized transcription of the Norwegian toponym Rost (Fioravante and de Michiele, manuscript held at Biblioteca Marciana, in Pluda 2019:81)

¹¹⁶ It included the accounts of Marco Polo, Niccolò Da Conti, Magellan, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and Giosafat Barbaro, as well as the *Descrittione dell' Africa*. [1] The description of China contains the first reference in European literature to tea.

In this respect, Querini's report echoes Olaus Magnus's 'De gentibus Septentrionalibus', whose descriptions of Northern natural wealth aimed at sparking the Papal States' interest in those rich northern lands lost to the Reformation. Despite the seemingly similarities between the two texts, the reasons behind Olaus Magnus's and Querini's focus on Nordic resources lay in different political and economic interests. Querini's emphasis on the economic sphere can be better understood if we take into account the Venetian tradition of collecting all useful information concerning potential trading partners. In the fifteenth and sixteenth century, it was common practice in the Serenissima for the authorities to acquire and collect reports from different parts of the world visited by Venetian merchants and emissaries. This huge corpus of documents, stored in the city's archives, functioned as a repository of information about the different cultures Venetian merchants had come into contact and later traded with. Querini's account was commissioned by a Sovereign State for that exact reason: be stored in the archives to serve future generations of traders. Olaus Magnus's 'De gentibus Septentrionalibus' instead was written by the Swedish clergyman with a specific purpose: the thoughtful descriptions of the Northern Countries' natural wealth was aimed at sparking the Papal States' interest in those rich northern lands lost to the Reformation. Besides the importance of Querini's 'Relatione' as the first written testimony of Italians in Northern Fennoscandinavia, an additional element that makes Querini's report relevant for this study is a locution the merchant resorted to when describing Rost:

Questo scolio era dinstante verso ponente del cavo de Norvegia, luogo forean et estremo perchè vien chiamato in suo languazo "culo mundi" da melia 70 (Querini in Pluda 2019:59)¹¹⁷.

Here Querini defines Rost's position in relation to its distance from another geographical location: Norway's northernmost place, 'cavo de Norvegia' located on Porsanger Peninsula. Querini describes this place as windy and inhospitable and he also specifies how far from Rost it was. Rost's inhabitants knew the distance between their island and this northernmost isthums. They were aware of local weather conditions (*forean* - windy) and its distance from Rost (*estremo* – outer limit; *da melia 70* - 70 miles away). The route between Røst and Porsanger was familiar to the local seamen and it can hence be inferred that they had maintained trade relations with northern populations for centuries: the Sámi people.

¹¹⁷ Denne ø laa vest for Norges yderste pynt i en afstand af 70 miglier; det er et vildt og fjernt sted, paa deres sprog kaldtes det verdens ende, idet det er lavt over vandet og fladt med undtagelse af nogle steder, hvor deres huse er bygged.. (Sommerfeldt's translation 1908)

It is interesting to notice that Querini refers to this northern location as ‘*cavo de Norvegia*’ or ‘North Cape’. This passage now is often quoted in connection with today’s famous tourist destination (De Anna 1992, Brevini 2009). Stating that Querini’s ‘*cavo*¹¹⁸ *de Norvegia*’ is today’s Nordkapp¹¹⁹ or ‘North Cape’ is misleading since, in 1434, it is highly questionable that Lofoten people localised the northernmost area of Norway with today’s location known as Nordkapp. It is more likely that the locution refers to either a northern spot of Magerøya, the island on which today Nordkapp stands, or Cape Nordkinn on the mainland.

In addition to the reference to the ‘*cavo de Norvegia*, this passage contains other interesting features, which attracted the attention of philologists such as De Anna. De Anna (1992) has compared the different available versions of Querini’s manuscripts to verify whether *culo mundi* were a copyist’s mistake or a genuine Querinian expression. In both the Marciana and the Vatican manuscripts, De Anna identified the same locution, leading him to believe they were Querini’s own words. *Culo* refers to “the bottom” “the extremity” or “the far end” of something. To an Italian reader, this locution evokes and conveys the idea of remoteness, a feature that to her would suit Magerøya Island, north of Porsanger Peninsula. The idea that the island of Mager was remote would not be peculiar if it had been the author to define it as a place at the bottom (hence the end) of the world. In this case though, Querini openly states « as it is called in their language ». Therefore, it was an emic definition that Querini reported. As De Anna (1992:355) notes, the Norwegian philologist Gustav Storm translates it into ‘*verdens ende*’, literally: the end of the world. It is highly unlikely that the Magerøya local anglers regarded Magerøya as remote. Furthermore, De Anna highlights that the distance between Lofoten and Magerøya could have been traversed in few days of coastal navigation and hence, even to Lofoten people that place would have not appeared remote after all. According to De Anna, the explanation of ‘*culo mundi*’ lies in the polysemy of the Norwegian *Ende*, as well as that of its Italian translation *culo*. As an extension of the meaning “extremity”, this term can also refer to “the bottom” as an anatomical part, i.e. the buttocks. Such an expression must have sounded familiar to the Italian

¹¹⁸ The Venetian ‘*cavo*’ corresponds to the Italian term ‘*capo*’, which is of Latin origins and is characterized by a variety of meanings, all associated with and derived from its initial meaning, “head”. The Latin term *caput*, also developed into French *cap* through the Occitan *cap*.

¹¹⁹ The famous tourist attraction known as “the North Cape” is located on the northern coast of Magerøya Island. Nevertheless, it is not the northernmost point of the Magerø Island, since that description better fits Knivskjellodden, 450 metres (4,760 ft) north of Nordkapp. Furthermore, since Magerøya is an Island (albeit today connected to the mainland through a tunnel), the northernmost point of continental Europe is Cape Nordkinn (Kinnarodde). The place known as North Cape/Nordkapp owes its fame to the English arctic explorer Steven Borough, captain of the Edward Bonaventure, who named it North Cape in 1553. Borough sailed past Magerøya before reaching Wardehouse (today Vardo) while trying to reach Chatai (China) through a supposed, legendary North-East passage (Mayers 2005). He was also the first person to report Kildin Sámi-Russian bilingualism. In 1557 he collected a list of 95 Kildin Sámi words, also reporting their Russian equivalents. (Abercromby 1895).

public and it fostered a connection between the High North and the idea of remoteness. De Anna notes that this rendering of the Norwegian word is a pun, combining a Venetian vulgar term signifying buttocks and the notion of distance. Querini played on the physical and symbolic distance between that place and Italy, to whose inhabitants it really was in a way, the end of the world. Between the lines of this short paragraph, a further aspect worthy of exam can be detected.

Querini and his companions' adventurous journey became widely known in Europe even before Ramusio published it in his collection. Fra Mauro's "*mappamundi*" acknowledges the lands of northern Norway as «[...] *questa provincial di Norvegia scorse missier Querini come e [sic] noto*» (Caracausi and Svalduz 2019:9)¹²⁰. Fra Mauro's text was distributed in 1457-1459, some 25 years after Querini's journey took place and roughly thirty years before Ramusio's collection was published. This reference shows that knowledge about the voyage was circulating way beyond Venice: within Europe, many knew about the perilous journey that Querini and his crew had to face. Nevertheless, it was only after Ramusio had published the accounts of Querini, Fioravanti and de Michieli that the wide public came into contact with their experience.

2.9.4 Querini's shipwreck: establishing a connection between the two sides of Europe

From an anthropological perspective, Querini and his fellow sailors' reports are extremely relevant, as they constitute the first accounts of the North written by people who identified themselves as belonging to an Italian culture in a time when Italy as a nation did not yet exist. No person from Venice or from any other Italian city had ever set foot in and wrote about those northern regions of Scandinavia before 1431. Furthermore, these texts contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about the northernmost areas of the European North. Querini's description of the encounter between the *Cocca*'s crew and local anglers conveys both the urgency of people in desperate need of help and the difficulties of an encounter in which the actors' actions were framed by the impossibility to communicate. For those men stranded on the shore of Sandoy, the human voice signalled the possibility of survival, and the very presence of civilization. To grasp these elements though, one has to read through the lines. As it emerges from Querini's own words, as recorded in the document preserved at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (the Vatican Apostolic Library), at the beginning the presence of people on the desolated island was unbelievable:

Ma pervenuta prima la voze umana a le orecchie a uno mio compagno nomeva Cristofalo Fioravante, dise mirative verso de nui: "non udite voze umana?". Rispoxe

¹²⁰ Literally: 'This province of Norway saw Sir Piero Querini as it is known'.

el nochie nostro: “sono questi maledeti corvi che aspetano la morte nostra per divorarne. Come hano fato li altri corpi de nostri marinari e compagni”. Ma poi, aprosumandosi i duo prediti, a tuti fu clara zerteza la voxe esser umana, sichè verxo de l’usio con infuzion de inopinata speranza andasemo, et, loro vedendo, i volti nostri se reimpino di estimabile conforto, ma loro, che si viteno di tanto numero di persone incognite incontrate, rimaseno spauriti con puoca durazione, perochè con li giesti e bele voze nostre si azertò perochè ieramo persone pericolade e di aiutorii bisognoxi; comenzono in sua idioma nominar el suo scolio et altro che serviva a prepositi, ma per nui zero se intese [...] da chi aspetavamo marzede e refugio, sichè di nostri do nostro, chè con parole alguna de le parte se poteva intender (Querini in Pluda 2019).

Querini, Fioravante and de Michieli outline in their accounts the desolation of the island of Sandøy, which, along with the humbleness of their saviours the inhabitants of the nearby Rost Island, conveys to them an idea of remoteness. Nevertheless, and despite these accounts’ suggestions, it would be misleading to think of those lands as cut out of the fourteenth-fifteenth century European and global system, as I shall demonstrate in this chapter.

2.9.5 Rost: an unlikely international hub

In the castaways’ accounts it emerges that, upon their rescue, on very first day on the inhabited island Rost, they encountered two foreigners:

Sopravenuta la dominica, al ‘ora de la mesa, el capelano suo che iera todesco, el quale abuto coloquio con uno di do andano lì, che iera fiamengo, compita la mesa rezitò a tuti che iera là el caso e condizion e nazion nostra [...] vene con loro el frate suo capelano di l’ordine de santo Dominico. (Querini in Pluda 2009:56)

The priest of Rost was of German origins (*todisco*) while one of the persons attending mass was Flemish (*fiamengo*). As surprising as it might seem, Rost was connected to the rest of Europe within the limits imposed by the then available technologies. Given the German origins of the priest and the preparation in classical studies he must have had to perform his pastoral duties and read the medieval Christian authors, it is likely that the priest in Rost was able to read and write – and even speak – in Latin. Hence, it is possible that Querini and the local Rost priest were able to communicate between each other by resorting to this common language.

Fioravante and de Michieli explain that:

Soprasemo in dito loc (Rost) zirca giorni 41¹²¹ per aspeta tempo congruo al nostro ostieri, el quale voleva pasare in Datia con lo cargo suo, uxato del pesse stocafisi, el quale è aponto lo marzo dove questi paezanii si mutano, conducendoli per li tre reami del Re de Datia, per quali baratando ale penurioxe cosse mancano a quelli [...] A dì 14 mazo vene la dexirata ora del volere cusì lo passo e lixo volgiere verso la tenera et amorosa parte, como avevemo l'animo, et lasare lo caritativo sito de Rusante, [...] se partimo per tirare a Berma, primo luogo ato al suo spaco, lo qual loco è distante da Rusante da miglia mile latine. (Fioravante and de Michieli in Pluda 2009:84-85)

Similarly, Querini notes:

Venuto el tempo de mazo, al'insita dil qual scolio solieno condure el pese loro in l'antedito luoco de Burgi, se preparano per quello [...] (Querini in Pluda 2019:59)

Thanks to the connections between Rost and the outer world, the Cocca's crew had the chance to travel back home. The eleven survivors joined their saviours on their annual journey to Bergen (Berma/Burgi)¹²². The seamen from Rost travelled to the once capital of Norway¹²³ every march. In Bergen, they sold or traded their stockfish and bought or bartered goods that were not available in the North of Norway¹²⁴. These passages show that the people of Rost were engaged in trade relationships with southern ports and inland settlements. In the 15th century, Bergen was a cosmopolitan town. Since the mid 13th century, the Hanseatic League had a *kontore*¹²⁵ in town and Bergen was deeply interconnected to the rest of Europe through a network of trade routes. The most important of the goods exported from Bergen was indeed the dried cod from Northern Norway. Bergen worked as a link between the North of Norway and the rest of Europe.

As the historians Caracausi and Valduz (2019) note, an extensive trade system connected northern and southern Europe, bridging the Baltic and the mediterranean Seas. London and Bruges were the nodal point in this web of trade routes. It is by no chance that the Coca Querina was heading to the Flemish port when it incurred in the storm that destroyed it, letting its passenger at the mercy of the Gulf Stream that led them to Lofoten archipelago. It is interesting to note though that the mediterranean

¹²¹ Pluda notes that the number of days reported by Fioravante and de Michieli is wrong since the crew of the Cocca stayed in Lofoten for three months (Pluda 2019)

¹²² The town of Brema (ie Bergen) is quoted in both Querini's and Fioravante and de Michieli's texts.

¹²³ Bergen had been capital of Norway during the 13th century. In the early 14th century, the capital was moved to Oslo.

¹²⁴ Until 1789, the city had the monopoly on the trade with northern Norway.

¹²⁵ In Norwegian, *kontor* became the word for "office"

and the Baltic route trades were independent from one another and constituted close systems connected by intermediaries such as the German traders (Caracausi and Valdúz 2019).

2.9.6 On the way home: Trondheim as the spiritual capital of the “North” in pre-reformation Norway

On their journey back home, the crew of the *Cocca* visited some of the major settlements of Norway and Sweden. Among them, Trondheim¹²⁶ (alternatively spelt Tronto or Trendon in the texts). Fioravante and de Michieli state they reached Trondheim on the 29th of May 1434 while Querini notes that they reached it after fifteen days of sail along the northern coast of Norway. The Venetian travellers joined Nordic pilgrims and visited St Olav’s Cathedral where they venerated his remains¹²⁷.

A dì 29 de marzo, al Tronto, in la costiera de Norvega, loco del Re de Datia, dove se pose l'onorato corpo del glorioso santo Allao (Fioravante and de Michieli in Pluda 2019: 85)

Similarly, Querini writes:

*Nui el dì sequente, che fu el venere, dì de la asension del nostro Signr, fo semo conduti in dito luoco e menati ad uno templo ornatissimo di santo Olavio, dove era el pretor con tuti li abitanti ala mesa del divino culto*¹²⁸ (Querini in Pluda 2019:61).

¹²⁶The *Archidioecesis Nidrosiensis* (the Nidaros archdiocese) was established in Trondheim in 1152–53 Nordeide, S. W. (2016). In the 18th century, Trondheim katedralskole (cathedral school) played an important role in the education of Sámi children.

¹²⁷ During his life, Saint Olave was known as king Olaf II Haraldsson. He was baptised abroad and is traditionally believed to be the man who brought Christianity to Norway. He was canonized in Trondheim, where his remains rest, as patron saint of Norway after he died in battle.

The Lutheran priest and missionary Thomas von Westen (1682 – 1727) worked toward the institution of a special mission school, known under the Latin name *seminarium lapponicum* (Lappish Seminary). The Seminary was established in the town of Trondheim and many were the missionaries who attended the *Seminarium* to learn Sámi languages before moving northwards to proselytize among the Sámi.

During the early 18th century, the priests working in the Sámi missions started selecting the best pupils who frequented their churches and Sunday schools. An increasing number of Sámi boys were sent to Trondheim to attend the *Seminarium Scholasticum*. This institution was a college where pupils were trained as educators, clergymen, and missionaries. There, the Sámi students could further their education in both Norwegian and the Scriptures. Conversely, students who belonged with the majority population – who also made up the majority of the *Seminarium*’s students - learnt the Sámi languages so that they could work among the Sámi and communicate with them in their own languages.

Wråkberg and Granqvist highlights the fascinating paradox intrinsic in the process of assimilation and enculturation that, eventually and in the long term, enabled Sámi peoples to fight against the colonial oppression implemented through those same tools. As they point out: «There is some irony in the fact that those Sámi individuals brought into this centre of religious learning in hope that they would lead their people to serve the state church of a southern nation were provided with the language skills and training in reading, logic, writing and rhetoric, gained access to libraries and books, the principles of moral and political philosophy and a battery of flexible Western ideas that proved to be the tools of self-articulation» (Wråkberg and Granqvist 2014:84)

¹²⁸«A richly ornated temple dedicated to San Olav»

In fifteenth century Norway, the wide majority of the population practiced Catholicism¹²⁹ and Trondheim was the most important ecclesiastical centre of the region.¹³⁰ It was also an important commercial hub, connecting Northern Norway to the rest of the country.

Dimorasemo fina fenito l'ofizio, e poi fosem apresentati al ditto pretor, e, datoli a saper e chi e come eramo li capitati, con meravelia e pietà me interogò se io sapeva paralar latin; disi de sì [...]

Language emerges as a key element during Querini's time in Trondheim. There the Venetians were able to speak in Latin, still a lingua franca across the commercial routes of Europe. In Trondheim¹³¹ Querini managed to obtain information and help on how to reach his hometown. War was then ravaging between Norway and Germany so they were advised to travel through Sweden in order to reach Germany.

Zonti in loco ditto (Trondheim) perchè avevamo notizia dal patron che el si fazeva la quera tra Alemani e lo suo signor re de Norverga, deliberò de non andar più oltra, sichè in uno scolio apreso Trendon abitato mi mise, arcomandandomi ali abitadori di quello, e lui aritorno indrieto [...]. "El zorno sequente al primo dimandai conselio et aiutorio per tuti nui per andare verso la Fiandra, over in [Inghil]tera o per aqua, come melio parexe a loro conseliare; dapoi molte parole fo concluxo, per più segurtà per la quera e per el pasar de tanto mare, che nui andasemo a trovar uno miser Zuan Francesco, cavaliere fato per loro re, ezian de nostra nazion, el qual abitava in uno suo castelo del regno di Suvergia [...]" (Querini, in Pluda 2019:61).

The Venetians stayed in Trondheim for ten days and visited the town's cathedral along with the Rost seamen and other pilgrims. In the 15th century, Trondheim was the centre of Christianity in Norway. In a letter Ramusio sent to a Venetian man called Alvise de Mula, the editor writes:

In volgar in quell paese di chiama Troudon et del 1434 vi andò un gentilhomio di Venetia che si chiamava per nome messer Pietro Querini [che] caminò dui mesi

¹²⁹ Archaeological and written evidence demonstrate that Sámi people had been exposed to and probably had incorporated elements of Christianity into their systems of knowledge since the time this new faith had reached Fennoscandinavia and Novgorod. Before the active missionary activity of the 17th century, the Sámi peoples had acquired knowledge about Christianity through the trade contacts they had with Christianised peoples.

¹³⁰ The Church of Norway was established as state church around 1020s and was created as a separate church when Denmark–Norway embraced the Lutheran reformation in 1536–1539; (editor Encyclopaedia Britannica, access 22/6/20 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Church-of-Norway>)

*dilongo col giorno continuo et col sol verso mezzogiorno*¹³² (Donattini M 2016:86
in Caracausi A and Svalduz 2019:11).

Besides a reference to the town of Trondheim, here spelt Troudon, in this epistolary exchange Ramusio mentions a natural phenomenon today known as midnight sun. The European public was aware of the varying length of the light time in the North through earlier sources. This element suscitated the awe of later travellers and readers and was noted by Querini in his account when he describes the hardship he encountered when landing in Rost: «[...] *così demorando la longissima notte [...] aspetasem el breve zorno*¹³³». Similarly, Cristofalo Fioravante and Nicolò de Michiele wrote:

Quivi da dì 20 novembrio din a dì 20 de febraro la notte è de scurità ore 21 o plui, non absondendosi mai la luna del tuto. Quivi da dì 20 de marzo fin a dì 20 agosto sempre si vede tutto il solle, over parte di suoi razi mai non manca. (In pluda 2019:84).

On the 14th of June 1434, the castaways departed from their saviours. They left Trondheim and headed towards Sweden:

[...] Dov'è 10 giorni asogirname per aspetar pasaco conforme al nostro camino, et non lo trovando lasamo lo nostro osto da Rusente con li figlioli et compagni et la sua fusta, partendo con despacere, combiado per sefuir nostro camino prendesemo, ricommandandozi a Dio. A dì 14 zugno se partimo dal Tronto per tirare a piedi, et tiramo a Vastena [...] (Fioravante and de Micheli in Pluda 85-86)

They then embarked on a journey to Stegeborg, where the Venetian knight Zuan Franco had a castle.

[...] nel quale abiando raxonato per lo nostro soccorso de andar a ritrovare a Stintinborgo (Stegeborg) miser Zuan Franco nostro zitadino veneziano (Fioravante and de Micheli in Pluda 85-86)

[...] Che nui andasemo a trovar uno miser Zuan Francesco, cavaliere fato per loro re, ezian de nostra nazion, el qual abitava in uno suo castelo del regno di Suvergia [...] (Querini in Pluda 2019:61).

On their way to Stegeborg they stopped over at Vadstena, the hometown of St Brigid the Saint patron of Sweden. In their accounts, Fioravante and de Michieli write: «*Vastena, loco pur del di'*

¹³² «In the vulgar language in that land called Troudon and in 1343 went there a gentleman from Venice who was under the name of Sir Pietro Querini [who] walked for two months along with a perennial day and with the sun towards noon».

¹³³ «So enduring the extremely long night [...] we were waiting for the very short day».

reame de Svetia pur sotoposto al Re de Datia, dove è la masela e parte del osso de la testa de madona santa Brigita» (Fioravante and de Micheli in Pluda 85-86).

Similarly, Querini recorded their visit to the shrine where Saint Brigid's remains rested:

[...] Aprosumandose el tempo che, in devozion di zerta indulgenzia, ala giesa de santa Brigida fià nominada de Vastena innumerabili cristian de lutane provincie solieno andare, el valoroso miser ZUane, a nostro conforto et instruzione, dise che l'iera proposto in lui de andar e menari nui al dito perdone, perché non solamentie aquistasamo la indulgenzia, che iera grande, ma vedesamo concorso de asai divote persone et avesamo notizia se de nesuna parte maritima se aritrovaxe navilii che apartendoxe verso Alemania o Ingiltera, loco dove nui per nezesità del nostro repatriare convegnivemo capitare (Querini in Pluda 2019:63)

These religious stops enabled the Venetians to gain information on how to reach Germany and England. Locals informed the crew that two boats were soon departing from Goteborg (called by Queirini Lodese) to England and to Germany. Querini and seven of his fellow crewmembers opted for the ship heading to England while Fioravanti, e de Michiele, along with one other survivor boarded the ship to Germany. The crew managed to reach their hometown of Venice, where they were all presumed dead.

2.9.7 Paradise found: Rost as the land of salvation

The generosity Querini and his companion enjoyed while in Lofoten is a recurrent theme in their reports. The Norwegian anglers offered refuge and food to the Venetian men and refused to accept the castaways as servants in exchange for their hospitality. From the corpus compiled by Querini and his fellow crewmembers, Lofoten emerges as a place populated by generous and civilized people, who engaged into a modest and pious Christian life. Fioravante and de Michiele describe the good qualities of the locals and linger in the explanation of their Christian behaviours.

Quivi è d'ogni avaritia spenta la radice, però in alguna guixa uxano nè porta cossa nè altro vano da serare per sospeto alguno, salvo che per Silvestre ferre o domestiche. Quivi è giunta le lor coluntà con Dio che d'ogni loro caxo de morte naturale o padre o marito o figlio o altro plui caro grafo, quando l'ora venne se uniseno consorti ett amici a pregar Idio per l'anima et ringratiarlo de la sua voluntà venuta et amdimplita, non avendo né mostrando alguna sentila de dolore, ma convivendo insieme lodano Idio.

They then openly compare Rost to the first sphere of Paradise: «*Veramente posamo dirre eser stati da dì 3 febraro 1431 fina a dì mazo 1431 nel primo zerchio de paradixo, a confuzione et obrobrio de costumi italici*».

In this last line, by praising the way of life of the people of Rost, they also express a strong critique of the Italian customs. This narrative device will often recur in later travel literature and that will contribute in shaping a collective imagery of Sápmi as an ambivalent land at times seen as heaven and at times as hell.

2.10 «It hath bin a received opinion among all that did but know the name of the *Laplanders*, that they are People addicted to Magic» Schefferus and the Magic of Sápmi

When Querini undertook his journey, which would have ultimately and inadvertently led him to the coasts of Northern Norway the geopolitical situation of Europe was characterised by a strong fragmentation on the political level while, on the religious one, the continent was characterised by a relatively homogeneity. When, one hundred and fifty years later, Francesco Negri embarked on his own journey northwards, with the idea of reaching North Cape, the situation had completely changed on both the political and the cultural-religious level. The so-called “discovery” of the Americas brought massive changes in all aspects of European societies by introducing new goods, new foods, precious metals but also by opening new trade-routes. Meanwhile, war had ravaged Europe and new cultural movements deeply influenced both politics and religion. A movement born within the Catholic Church started a schism that resulted in the division of Europe between Catholicism and Lutheranism, soon followed by the separation of England from the Pope, at the hands of Henry the VIII, and the establishment of the Church of England. At the same time, the emerging and expanding European Nation States fought over the domain on contested territories while often fighting internal revolts, resulting in lengthy periods of war. While major States contended the supremacy over Europe, Italian States slowly and progressively lost their prestige and their power, becoming often subject to more powerful European nations.

2.10.1 A land of lost souls and incommensurable resources: Swedish colonial aspirations in Sápmi

Meanwhile, after a centuries-long process, the emergent Nordic Nation States started encroaching in the Sámi areas, which were rich in resources (fur, wood, minerals). To exploit the local resources Nation-States had to be able to claim ownership over the land where the resources were located. To do so, outposts were built, settlements were established – usually close to mines and other neuralgic

points – while churches started to appear in the areas inhabited by the Sámi, both along the coasts and in the inlands. Furthermore, taxes were imposed upon the Sámi, as a way of guaranteeing control over Sámi communities' lands and the resources they enshrined¹³⁴.

As Huggert (2000) has stressed, during the fifteenth century, the developing Swedish state had tenaciously advanced its positions in the north, reaching the shores of the Arctic coast. By late the 16th century, the population inhabiting the contested territories between Unjarga and Lofoten (along the border between today Nordland and Troms-Finnmark County in Norway and the current border between Sweden and Finland) had to pay tributes to the State of Sweden, to Denmark-Norway and, to Russia. From a historical point of view, the organised missionary activity among the Sámi took place while the Kingdoms of Denmark-Norway, Sweden-Finland and Russia were competing for the supremacy over the Sámi territories and the Barents Sea. The borders between these states were not settled yet and each state was trying to claim as much territory as possible. According to a 1362 treaty, Finnmark's inland areas had been defined as «[...] common territory for the Danish-Norwegian, Swedish and Novgorodian powers, which possessed equal rights to trade and taxation in that region (Niemi 1997:64f in Ojala 2009: 89-90). The aforementioned emerging nation-States tried to extend their influence on those contested lands through the subjugation of the indigenous Sámi. A way to do so was by integrating them into the ecclesiastical organisation. As Rydving (1991) highlights though, such an integration had for centuries often been just formal since many Sámi people had contacts

¹³⁴ According to Loeffler (2015) it was this specific political interest to lay behind these States' effort in evangelising the Sámi. Since religion permeated every aspect of daily life and the Churches were bounded to the States, conversion was seen as a form of state control over the Sámi. Upon conversion, the Sámi did indeed swear loyalty to God and to the King. In particular, Loeffler examines the Swedish case and relates the conversion of the Sámi to the Swedish nation-building process. Quoting Hagg, Loeffler (2015:75) states that the 16th century foundation of an independent Swedish kingdom, along with the rejection of Catholicism «resulted in the establishment of a fundamentalist military-religious dictatorship». In Loeffler's view, «Conversion necessitated an ideological offensive directed towards Sweden's multicultural population. this offensive made it compulsory for all subjects to swear allegiance to King, Church and the Lutheran faith. (...) the priesthood and the parish churches were instrumental in the realization, management, and administration of this new regime as devised by the Royal Kingdom». Loeffler's analysis focuses on the homogenising effects of a shared faith: in his view, the Swedish nation-state forced conversion of the Sámi to the Lutheran faith aimed at nullifying the ethnic divisions within Sweden. If Loeffler's analysis is correct, the forced conversion of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries constitutes a precedent to the assimilation policies, which characterised the 19th and 20th century assimilation policies implemented by Sweden and Norway. Another scholar who has studied the Swedish case and shares Loeffler's approach is Lindmark (2006). Lindmark connects the Swedish colonialist policy to the missionary activity. In Lindmark's view, the Swedish crown perceived the Sámi indigenous religion as a threat to national stability. Such a perception was heavily influenced by the Orthodox Lutheran state theory. According to this interpretation of Lutheranism, a functional social order requires unity in Religion. For the sake of the State, the Sámi were to be converted to Christianity. Similarly, Pulkkinen (2005:219) sees in the «spirit of the Lutheran Church» a reason for the intensification of the missionary activity. In His view, the Protestant Church's dedication to the issue of conversion was higher than that of the Catholic Church. Lutheran doctrine is described as more stern in condemning the presence of pagan traditions within the Kingdom's borders. Hence the Scandinavian Nations, once converted to Lutheranism, were more zealous than before in converting the Sámi.

with members of the clergy only once or twice a year and only on specific, formal occasions¹³⁵. In 1606/07 the Lycksele church was established beside Lyckselet in Umeälven, in Today Swedish Ume Lapland. This is among the oldest churches built in inner Sápmi and it was soon followed by the church built in *Čohkkirasjávri*¹³⁶, in 1607/1608¹³⁷.

Colonisation and Christianisation were gradual processes that continued for several centuries. Since the sixteenth century, Sámi peoples have been the object of an intense evangelising activity, which led to the conversion of Sámi peoples to the Lutheran and the Orthodox Religion. The emerging Nation-States and their Churches employed men and resources in the «[...] missionary-led crusade to Christianise the Sámi » (Olsson & Lewis 1995: 150). The organised missionary activity among the Sámi occurred at the same time as the establishment of the Nordic Nation States and is deeply intertwined with the wider European geopolitics. Wars taking place far away from Sapmi had a massive impact on the Sámi people: at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Thirty Years' War had brought back the Sámi to the international attention. For reasons that will be explained in details in the following paragraphs, the Thirty Years war led to the composition of one of the most influential books on Sámi peoples published before the twentieth century: *Lapponia* (1673) by Johannes Schefferus (1621 - 1679). The making of this volume was a long and complex process and

¹³⁵ Since the middle-ages, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish peoples established small farms further and further North Along the coasts and in the inland, and many Sámi came in direct contact with these newcomers and their faith: Christianity.

During the Roman Catholic time, a number of churches were built in the Sápmi. In the thirteenth century, a church was built in Lenvik, near Tromsø, becoming the northernmost catholic building in Fennoscandinavia. Later other churches were founded along the coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia and Finnmark. During the Middle Ages, an ethnically Sámi woman known as Margareta worked as a missionary among her own people. Her missionary experience was unique as she was both a woman and a Sámi. A document places her activity to at least the late 1380s (*Svensk biografisk lexicon*).

¹³⁶ In the local Sámi language, *Čohkkirasjávri* means “lake of assembly”. Jukkarsjarvi in today Swedish Duortnus/Torne Lappmark.

¹³⁷ Consistent with a pattern that attested in early medieval continental Europe (Tabacco 2009), the spread of Christianity in Sápmi was made visible and tangible through the physical evidence of its most important institutional symbols: Churches were built on Sámi territories and became the bulwark of both religious and state power.

The chapel of Saint Andrews in was founded in the Duortnus/Torne area before 1345, when the Archbishop Hemming Laurenti visited it to baptise both Sámi and Finns living in the region. (Meriot 1985)

In examining the 17th century Swedish missionary policy, Ojala has draws a connection between the creation of parishes in the inland Sámi regions and the expansion of the State. The establishment of parishes implied the establishment of Churches and market-places which had an important function in controlling and assimilating the Sámi people. Churches and market-places were founded at the beginning of the 17th century by order of king Karl IX, becoming the physical representation on the territory of the otherwise immaterial nation-state. According to Ojala, through these institutions, the king aimed at strengthening the power of the Swedish kingdom on the North Calotte. These churches in Enontekis, Jokkmokk, Arvidsjaur, Lycksele and *Čohkkirasjávri*/Jukkasjärvi were to «function as central gathering places for the Sámi populations in the area, where the activities of the state and the church connected with trade, taxation, legal and religious matters could be conducted during certain periods of the year» (Ojala 2009: 90). Pulkkinen (2005:219) regards the aforementioned Churches as “landmarks” built by the Swedish-Finnish State on the outer edges of the Kemi and Duortnus/Torne Lappmark. In Pulkkinen’s interpretation, these landmarks were to make the presence of the centralised state in those remote territories manifest to the neighbouring Norway and Russia. Similarly, Russian monks, supported by the central government, worked strenuously to build Orthodox Churches and monasteries in the eastern Sámi regions, especially along the border with Sweden-Finland and Norway-Denmark (Porsanger 2004)

the book, originally written in Latin, enjoyed such a great success it was soon translated into various European languages. As we shall see though, the book failed to achieve one of its primary goals. Not only it did not dissipate rumors about Sámi magic used as a weapon by Swedish troops during wartime but it actually reinforced the idea of Sámi were sorcerers that was already establishing itself as a known truth in the continent.

2.10.2 The myth of Sámi sorcery before “Lapponia”

In the European imagery, Sámi peoples had long been associated with some forms of magic long before the Thirty Years War. In particular, as Willumsen (2013) highlights, Sámi men had a reputation all over Europe for being versed in sorcery, and in particular in wind-magic (the ability to sell wind to seafarers) (Ligi 2019). Such fame, already present in the ancient Norse Sagas (Pálsson 1999) and testified by ancient laws forbidding people from seeking the help of *Finnar*¹³⁸ (Mundal 2018), is attested also in the iconography as the lithography reproduce in Olaus Magnus *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (cfr image 6), demonstrates. In the same paragraph, Olaus Magnus describes the as skilled witches able to influence the wind thanks to their magic skills.



Image 6: The selling of wind to fishermen. Detail from Olaus Magnus's *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* original caption: *de magis et maleficis finorum* (1555:119)

The connection between (wind-)magic and Sámi peoples was also probably reinforced by the spread of witch trials in the lands of the Sámi and by the involvement of Sámi individuals in such trials. Witch-trials were a modern European phenomenon that, in Fennoscandinavia, came to carry an ethnic connotation. If ethnic Norwegian individuals were accused of witchcraft even if they belonged to the Church, in the case of the Sámi their crime was the practicing of their own indigenous worldview (Hagen2004, 2006, 2014)¹³⁹. During these witch-trials Sámi drums were confiscated and shipped southwards, often becoming the bulk of private and public collections.

¹³⁸ Old Norse for Sámi.

¹³⁹ Hagen has examined legal sources from Arctic Norway (Northern Norway, in the seventeenth century under Swedish rule) and his studies show that, between 1593 and 1695, at least 177 people were prosecuted for the crime of witchcraft.

As Hagen has demonstrated, witch-trials had been taking place in Northern Fennoscandinavia since the late sixteenth century, at least thirty years before the beginning of the Thirty Years War, a conflict whose political propaganda contributed to spreading rumors about Sámi peoples being sorcerers. Such rumors though have started circulated long before the war, and are also interconnected with the success of Olaus Magnus ‘*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*’. The importance of Olaus Magnus’ work in shaping an image of the Sámi as well-versed in magical arts cannot be underestimated but it is also relevant to highlight how Sápmi was, in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, the site of bloody witch trials which often involved Sámi individuals because they were Sámi practicing their own indigenous rituals. As part of a circular process, the witch trials taking place in Northern Fennoscandinavia may have fuelled European imaginary about the Sámi as sorcerers. Information about the Fennoscandinavian witch-hunt circulated in Europe also thanks to the personal connections between important figures of late sixteenth century witch prosecutors in Fennoscandinavia and other regions of Europe¹⁴⁰ in a time when the continent was undergoing deep cultural changes as well as devastating wars that ravaged through Europe, bringing death and destruction.

2.10.3 War, German pamphlets, anti-Swedish propaganda and the charm of Sápmi

The victorious Swedish Army, symbol of a previously “marginal” but now emerging power in the European political arena, had triumphed during the thirty years war (1618-1648). For decades after the end of the war, pamphlets – mostly published in Germany – spread rumours to discredit Sweden by allegedly ascribing its unexpected success to the Sámi Sorcerers’ help in the military campaigns. As Ojala (2009) stresses, Sweden, a Christian Kingdom, could not accept such accusations and henceforth wanted to show that such allegations were absurd by showing that the Sámi magic was not used during the war but that Sámi people were even capable of such acts even if Sámi soldier may

According to Hagen’s analysis, the majority of these cases occurred in the region of Vardøhus, (today’s Finnmark). Many Sámi individuals, both men and women (but statistically, more men than women) were accused of sorcery and/or devil worship and some were sentenced to death by the local state authorities. (Hagen 2006, 2014, 2017)

¹⁴⁰ Many of the officials in charge of the investigations in the 1621 Vardo witch trials were neither locals nor Norwegians, but often came from countries like Scotland and Germany (and also mainland Denmark, at that time ruling over Norway). All these countries had already a decades-long history of witch trials. In particular, Willumsen (2013) examines what she defines “the Scottish connection”, highlighting the role of John Cunningham/Hanns Kønningham, Lesmenn of Finnmark, in changing the structure –and henceforth the scale- of northern Fennoscandinavian witch trials. Cunningham had powerful connections and documents show he knew King James I of Scotland. Scotland was among the centres of demonology in modern Europe and the connection between Scotland and Fennoscandinavia dates back to King James’ marriage to Anne, a noblewoman from Denmark. Due to some circumstances concerning the wedding, James persuaded himself that his wife had been the target of Northern Witches. In his home county of Scotland, the Parliament had criminalized witchcraft in 1563, short before James’ birth. In 1597, King James published a treatise about witches, ‘*Daemonologie*’ while Scotland witnessed a growing number of witch trials (Willumsen 2013).

have been fighting in the war. It is historically accurate to state that, among the soldiers enrolled within the Swedish troops there were men that belonged to different nationalities. Pamphlets circulating around Europe at the time show that Irish, “Lapps” and “Livonians” caught Protestant and Catholic propagandists’ attention, as shown by Foster (2012) in his PhD research on the Thirty Years’ War Protestant Propaganda. Foster is confident that the number of foreign soldiers enrolled in the Swedish army was not sizable. Scots, Irishmen and Englishmen fought in the Swedish troops but, as Foster highlights, their contribution to Swedish victory is debatable. According to Foster, there are evidence that at least the Scots played a major role in at least some of the key-events of the war. The Protestant propaganda defended and even promoted soldiers who came from the aforementioned ethnic groups. Regardless of their actual role in battle, these foreign Swedish soldiers’ involvement in the war raised curiosity among continental Europeans. This curiosity fed and was fed by various publications trying to make sense of a seemingly impossible Swedish victory. The demand for information, in a time when large-scale and cheap printing was becoming more and more available, led to the publication of pamphlets such as the following ones (Image 7a, 7b,7c):



Image 7a, detail from a broadsheet: Auß Lap vnd Lifflandt (1632). Currently held in the Bavarian State Library, Munich. The image is reproduced in Foster (2012).



Image 7b, detail from a leaflet of unknown origin, early 17th century.

The man on the left, holding a rifle and carrying a bow and a sword is identified as a Lapp. (Unknown source)

Seltzames Gespräch/
So in dem Königl. Schwedischen Lager zwey frembde Nationen/ als ein
 Lappländer mit einem Newen ankommenden Irländer/ von den jetzigem Zustand und
 Kriegswesen gehalten/ etc.
 In solchem Habit gehen die Lappländer. Also sehen die 1000. in Stetin ankommene Irländer oder Irren aus.

Die Lappländer seyn dß
 Person fast darme / nie-
 derländige Menschen/
 über vier oder fünf
 Schuh nicht lang/
 tragen lange Haar / so
 sie in einem Beyß ge-
 flochten / auch den Hals
 den hinunter hän-
 gen / haben breite flache
 Augelider / schwarz-
 seckig / einen großen
 Korb / kleine Augen/
 kurze Schwanzel / die
 gar krum sind / dann
 ihre Knie rüch wie von-
 nere voran / sondern
 answarts sehen / und
 sind schnell mit lauffen
 und frungen dertma-
 ßen / daß ihnen leicht-
 lich nicht nachzufol-
 gen / ihre Kleider sind
 von Gämsen oder
 Reithieren Häuten/
 vomb das Klauke in
 Winter rein / vomb in
 Sommer vasser se-
 ren.



Die Iriländer seyn
 stark / dwerbaltige
 Leute dreyßig mit
 geringen Gasse haben,
 sie nicht breit / so lö-
 wen sie den oder vier
 Tage gar wol hinar-
 laden / essen darfür
 Wasser Kreß / War-
 zeln und Gras / wovon
 auch die Hec erfordert/
 können sie des Tages
 oder die 20. Meilen
 lauffen / haben neben
 den Musqueten / ihre
 Weger und lange Wis-
 ser dabei.
 Fragt sich / ob nicht
 die hundert Irigen/
 welche so blüßig im
 Deutschland vor ein-
 ighen Jahren geflogen
 kommen / wie auch die
 fremden Vögel / so
 niemand kenne / und
 vordit gesehen haben
 wollen / diese fremde
 Vögel dertma-ß
 sein?

Image 7c, from a broadsheet: Seltzames Gespräch: So in dem Königl. Schwedischen Lager zwey frembde Nationen/ als ein Lappländer mit einem Newen ankommenden Irländer/ von den jetzigem Zustand und Kriegswesen gehalten/ etc. (Stetin, Schröter, 1632). The soldier in the centre, dressed in a furcoat, holding a sword and carrying a bow in identified as a Lablenter, akterbatuve spelling of Lapplanter/Lapplander, i.e. a Sámi, The image is reproduced in Foster (2012).

The image n° 7a is the reproduction of a 1632 broadsheet named ‘*Auß Lap vnd Liefplandt*’. As Foster shows, the majority of the space in the broadsheet is occupied by an illustration: four men carrying weapons as they were ready for war. These men are labelled in the caption as a “Lapp”, an “Irishman”, a “Scotsman”, and a “Livonian”¹⁴¹. All these soldiers are norther Europeans. Their own clothing

¹⁴¹ Livonia is part of today Estonia and Latvia.

suggests and symbolizes their geographic origin: the Livonian and the Sámi men wear fur coats and the Livonian one is riding an exotic animal that, according to Foster, is a reindeer. In Foster's view, the meaning embedded in this image is that the heterogeneity of the Swedish army did not undermine its cohesiveness. Furthermore, the weapons the soldiers carry (a spear, a bow and arrow, a musket, a dagger, and a sword) convey the notion that the « international troops of the Swedish army are geared for battle » (Foster 2012:162). Examining the details of this image, the fur coat emerges as an important symbol that conveyed a specific set of implicit meanings to the readers and the wider public. As De Anna (1994) explains, fur was an ambivalent piece of cloth in the Sixteenth century as it could symbolize both nobility and barbarity. Clothes were indeed symbolic descriptions easy to read for those familiar with that specific symbolic language. The context and the combination with other symbolic elements were central in determining the meaning of this piece of clothing. When referring to northern peoples, furs represented either the hunter or the warrior (as it is apparent in Olaus Magnus' map – image n8 –) conveying the aggressive nature of the peoples who wore them and, by extension, that of their fellow compatriots¹⁴². Furs enshrined the potential danger that, for centuries, had been associated to peoples coming from the North (a commonplace that has its roots in the Old Testament and that was reinforced during the late antiquity¹⁴³ and early middle age

¹⁴² Cfr Jan Luyken's 1670 costume book, which provides us with a further example of this specific iconography. (image n18) (1670:33) Luyken's costume book was published in 1670 in the Netherlands. Luyken, a Dutch engraver originally trained as a painter, contributed to the Dutch translation of Schefferus's *Lapponia* with engravings. Costume books were extremely popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century and their success lasted well into the nineteenth century. Costume books provided European readerships (even illiterate ones) with windows into other cultures. Even though, such images were often more imaginative than accurate, their iconography conveyed specific meanings and were read according to the contemporary iconographic codes.

¹⁴³ The association between furs and barbarity with reference to the North is already present in Tacitus. The furs are indeed one of the few elements Tacitus mentions when discussing the Fenni, who are *vestitui pelles*. De Anna (1994) defines Tacitus' association as a model that would become popular in later accounts on Sámi peoples. This ethnographic element (the fact that the ancestors of the Sámi most likely wore furs) reached southern Roman and Late antiquity scholars, becoming a feature connoting these peoples. Through a process of reciprocal associations, the fur became a symbol of the barbarity of the people of the North and of the Sámi, inherently barbarian. As it is clear from Adam of Bremen's account of the Scythians, wearing furs was an index of barbarity understood as lack of culture. Culture is the ability to sew and use line. The ancestors of the Sámi have more feral connotations and « they dress on skins; they have neither linen nor devices to sew, but with the nerves of the beasts connecting the skins of those together cover the whole body» (Procopius of Caesarea, sixth century, Book 2, cap XV, par II) and will later appear also in Jordanus, Paulus Diaconus and in Adam of Bremen.

https://ia802808.us.archive.org/25/items/laguerragoticadi02proc/laguerragoticadi02proc_bw.pdf

Of the barbarians who inhabit Thule only one nation, which is called Scythifinni, leads a bestial life; for they do not wear clothes, neither footwear, nor drinking wine, nor eating products of the earth; that the land does not cultivate, nor do women do any work for them, but men and their women dedicate themselves entirely only hunting. The woods, which are very large, and the mountains of the country provide them with large quantities of wild beasts and other animals. They feed on the meat of the beasts that they are hunting, they dress on skins; they have neither linen nor devices to sew, but with the nerves of the beasts connecting the skins of those together cover the whole body. Nor do the children they feed at manner of other men, since the children of the Scythians do not they are fed with women's milk, nor attached to the maternal breasts, but are fed only with the marrow of the wild animals took to hunting. So as soon as a woman has given birth, place the child inside a skin, soon suspends him from some tree, and putting marrow in his mouth, he goes off to the usual hunt; this occupation which, like any other, they have in common with men. Such is the life these barbarians lead.

migrations that the Europeans perceived as barbaric invasions). Following Foster's line of reasoning, this image was supposed to convey the idea that foreigner troops enrolled into the Swedish army were both physically strong and able to endure different conditions. This last message would derive from the provenience of the soldiers themselves. Coming from a harsh region where the climate was unfavourable, these soldiers would have been inherently fitted for the tough conditions of war and, consequently, their value in battle would have been unquestioned. These depictions of foreigner troops in pamphlets and other materials produced in Swedish contexts were aimed at shaping a positive perception of these foreigner soldiers. Rather than random cruel mercenaries, these fighters were to be seen as elite troupes or, in Foster's words, « Gustavus Adolphus's special forces» which were presented to the readers as characterise by «[...]piety, discipline and skill of the Swedes merit their respect and allegiance, not least because these forces have come to protect the German Protestants from danger and to prevent the Catholics from extending their attack into northern Europe» (Foster 2012:164).

Furthermore, as an answer to the public interest in the victorious Swedes, who were seen as different and hence other from the Germans, these pamphlets incorporate the Swedes' otherness by positively risemantizing it. The othering process was used as a tool to exalt Swedes' qualities and that of their fellow foreigner soldiers. In the years that preceded the publication of these pamphlets, German audience had grown suspicious of Gustavus Adolphus's troops but these new media specifically aimed at portraying the campaigns fought by the Swedes as « acceptable on political, religious and moral grounds» (Foster 2012:164). In a time when the continent's religious and political landscape was extremely fragmented and alliances were volatile, pamphlets and other tools became instrumental in pressuring the audience in aligning with the protestant German, and hence Swedish, armies against Catholic authorities who were described as the enemy.

I was not able to find the origin of the image 7b even though, given the iconography and the letters' characters, it was most certainly published during the Thirty Years War. The iconography of the Sámi warrior (here labelled "da Lappe") is specular to the image of the Sámi soldier ("Laplanter") in the image n 7c even though the undated image n7b is more complex and detailed, a feature that may signify the image 7c was reproduced after the image 7b or, less likely, that the image 7c constituted a source of inspiration for a later, more detailed image (7b). The third image (n°7c) belongs to a text dated to 1632, just like image n°6. The illustration shows three men carrying weapons. A label upon each man identifies them as a Finn, a "Laplanter" (Laplander ie Sámi) and an Irishman. Two paragraphs accompany the image, providing the reader with information on the soldiers. Here too the Sámi soldier is characterised by a fur coat that symbolizes his northern origins and his barbarity. He

is also carrying a musket and a bow. According to Foster, pamphlets like this one were part of a propagandistic campaign to build confidence in Gustavus Adolphus and aimed at the promotion of the international troops in the Swedish army. These images were distributed with the hope of increasing peoples' trust towards these contingents while lessening the resistance they encountered. Even though the images 7b and 7c are probably connected, a detail emerge from the three pamphlets here examined. They all show a recurrent set of details that characterised Sámi warriors' iconography, which make their figures easily recognizable to the continental European public. Among these iconographic symbols, the fur and the bow dominate the pamphlets.

Bow and arrows are weapons associated with Sámi peoples since at least the works of Olaus Magnus (images n8, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11,12,13a, 13b, 13c,14) and that became iconic of Sámi peoples along with fur coats. Sámi on skies, wearing furs while carrying bows and arrows became part of a standardized iconography reproduced in costume books (image n°16) and later maps such as the 1626 'Orbi Arctiou nova et accurata delineation' (image n°9, image nn°15, 17a, 17b, 17c) by Bureus (Bure) Andreas (Anders) (1571-1646), a famous Swedish cartographer and mathematician¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴⁴ Bureus's 1626 Nordenkarta represented a breakthrough for Swedish cartography as it constituted a significant advance compared with the previous map by Olaus Magnus (Venice 1539). From a cartographic perspective, the 1626 map contains significant improvements to Olaus Magnus' Carta marina (1539), especially with regards to geo-morphologic features of the Nordic regions (like the Norrland's lake and river). The popularity of Bureus's Nordenkarta was so great that it became the map of Scandinavia *par excellence* in Europe for almost a hundred years. It was copied and reprinted throughout Europe in many editions, as a map and in atlases, from 1635 until the beginning of the 18th century. The map was reprinted in Wittenberg in 1631, under the title *Orbis Arctoi imprimisque regni Sveciae nova & accurata description*. Compared with the 1626 edition, the Wittenberg edition presents numerous printing errors. A corrected edition was published by Henricus Soterus under the Elzevier publishing house in Leyden in 1631 and 1633. The map also circulated through a German translation. In 1614 Andreas Bureus, who learned the cartographic crafts from his cousin the cartographer Johannes Bureus, had designed a small map of Lake Mälaren, as a preliminary study to the large map of the North (1626). Andreas Bureus was able to complete his project thanks to the help of his cousin but also the contribution of other individuals who either had a profound knowledge over the territories they presided or visited. For instance, the fortification officer Olof Hansson Swart, a nobleman from Örnehus who also worked in Livonia, Skåne and Germany. Hansson mapped Småland. In mapping the non-Scandinavian areas, Bureus resorted to foreign sources. Bureus's map depicts also regions on the far east of Fenno-Scandinavia, including not only the Kola Peninsula but also Moscow. The Swedish economic and political interests in Russia are at the basis of the accuracy Bureus put in mapping these areas, reporting places-names and other features. It should be born in mind that, in 1610, Jakob de la Gardie had captured Moscow with troops sent by Charles IX to help the tsar in the ongoing Russian civil war. Bureus's map represents a clear statement on the side of Swedish authorities and, in intent, the production of this map is analogous to the composition of Schefferus's 'Laponia' and embodies the Swedish rising ambitions in the international arena. The map is accompanied by a text in Latin, describing the political geography and history of the region. «Here I show you, benevolent readers, a map of the Nordic countries and in particular the vast kingdom of Sweden, prepared with greater care than before, for it contains provinces, seas, rivers, lakes, islands, cities, communities and all the strange places. which have been able to penetrate into such narrow spaces, whereby I intend to include the rest on special maps, all under their proper longitude and latitude. As for the numbering of the longitude, I have adapted the meridian, below which there is no magnetic declination, to the 45th degree, for so far these meridians are considered to be apart». (Rystedt 2016; Göran Bäärnhjelm N.A.)

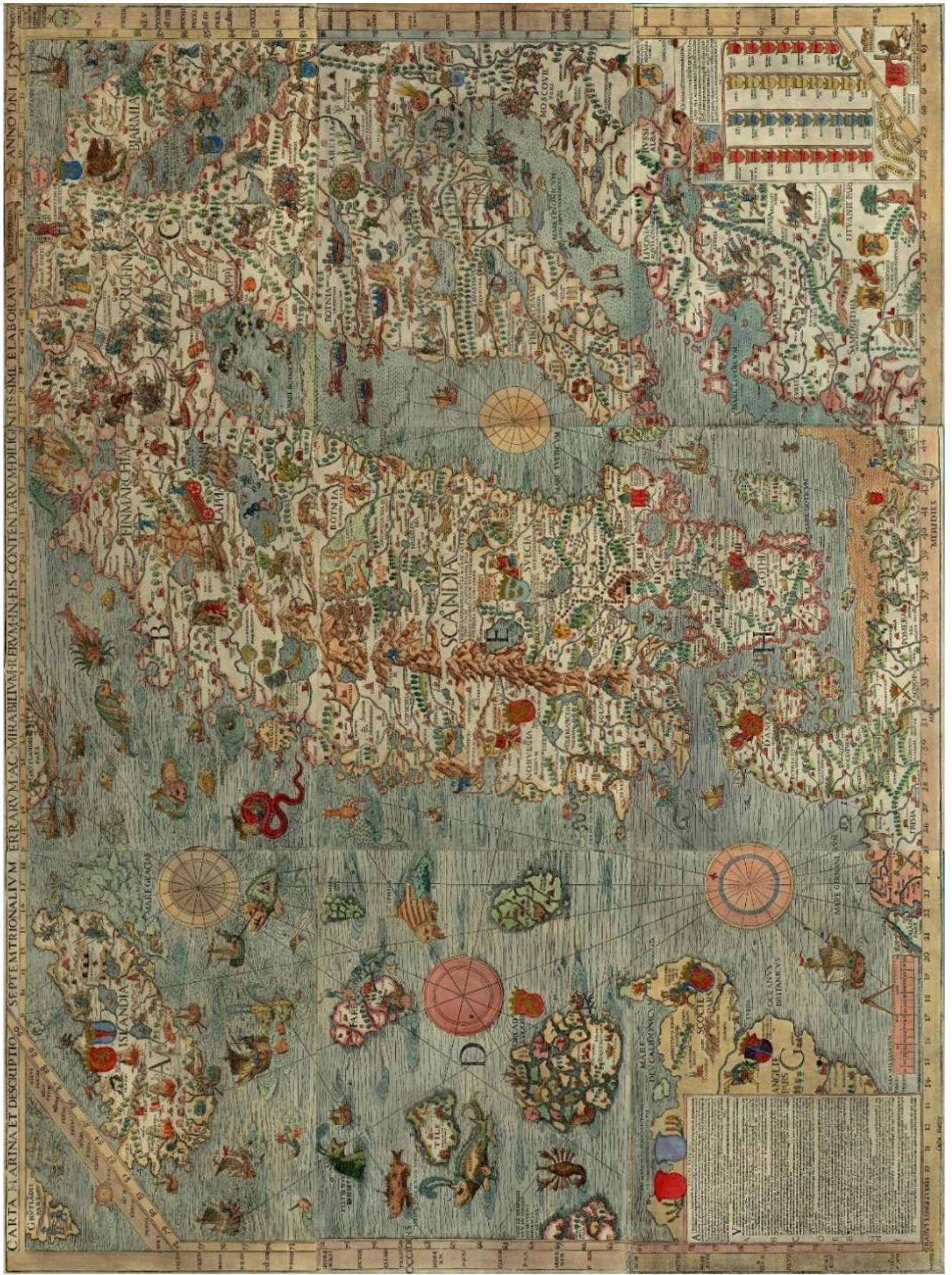


Image 8. Carta Marina by Olaus Magnus 1539, creative commons.



Image 9: Nordkarta by Andreas Bureus, 1626 (held at Kungliga biblioteket), map dedicated to Gustav II Adolf and Queen Maria Eleonora.

The map, dedicated to Gustav II Adolf and Queen Maria Eleonora, depicts Fennoscandinavia and is based on the 1611 map ‘*Laponia*’, by Bureus himself. Both maps lack the mythical creatures that populated the 1555 *Carta Marina* (image n°8) and show the growing importance of Sweden in Europe. Such maps were indeed published to reaffirming the supremacy of Sweden on the areas depicted and worked as important visual/symbolic instruments in the colonial expansion in – and in the administration of – these areas.



Image 10a: Detail from Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina* (1539) Men in fur-coats riding reindeer and chasing an enemy army with bows and arrows and cudgels.



Image 10b: Woodcut from Olaus's Magnus *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*. The image shows the army of Tengild, the king of Finnmark. Some of the soldiers are riding reindeer, while others are skiing. The two buglers are on foot. The soldiers are called Birmanians in the original text (1555:130).



Image 11: Men in fur-coats on skii. Two of them hold a bow and arrow while the third holds a spear and carries a sword. In Olaus Magnus's *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555:134). The original text describes them as «*ferocissime gentes*» and «*Scrifinnes*».



Image 12: Detail from Olaus Magnus's 1555 *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555:144) Sámi people's archery training. The Sámi are recognizable as they wear fur-coats. The original caption reads: *De Instructione Saggitandi*.



Image 13a, 13b, 13c Details from Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina* 1539, Sámi men and woman hunting on skii (notice the tents in the background of image 13.c).



Image 14: Sámi peoples (two men and a woman) hunting on skis Detail Olaus Magnus *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* 1555, original caption reads *De Venatione Lapponium* (1555:146).



Image 15: A Sámi in a fur-coat, wearing fur gloves hunting with an arrow on skis, detail from Andreas Bures *Orbis Arctoi Nova et Accurata Delineatio* 1626 creative commons.



Image 16: "Lapps' costumes" Jan Luyken, costume book 1676¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁵ This image, reproduced in a costume book published 3 years after the publication of Schefferus's *Laponia* (the original Latin edition), predates Luyken's copper engravings reproduced in the 1785 Dutch translation *Lapponia*.

2.10.4 An attempt to dismantle a rumour that eventually fostered a myth:

Schefferus's *Laponia*

In order to discredit the aforementioned rumours that attributed the merit of the Swedish victory to Sámi witchcraft (see paragraph 2.10.2), Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, Chancellor and Regent of the young King Karl X Gustav, commissioned the compilation of a text that was to replace and update older accounts such as Olaus Magnus's ones which, albeit important in disseminating knowledge about Sámi people, had only briefly addressed Sámi cultures. The volume commissioned by De la Gardie was to focus solely on Sámi peoples and their customs (Burnett 2019), describing them through positive lenses and as realistically as possible. It was important to identify a suitable scholar who would compile a volume able to contest suggestions linking the Swedish military success to the use of Sámi "magic". The choice fell on a learned humanist and philologist, Johannes Schefferus. Originally from the Holy Roman Empire, Schefferus had come to Sweden as a young man invited by the then-Queen Christina. Upon her abdication, he did not return to the Holy Roman Empire but decided to stay in Sweden and, so great was his role in Swedish academic circles that, as Sjöholm (2005) notes, he was later regarded as the 'father of Swedish literary history'. When, in 1671, he was commissioned to write '*Laponia*', in the second half of the seventeenth century, Schefferus was working at the University of Uppsala as a professor of eloquence and government. Schefferus accepted the job being aware of the importance of the task assigned to him. In order to reach a wide educated European readership, he decided to compose the text – to which he gave the title '*Laponia*' – in Latin, the learned language of his time. He also wanted to be sure his readers knew why he had written it: he stated openly that he had undertaken this task to dissipate rumours concerning the resort to Sámi magic by Swedish armies during the War. According to Schefferus, as well as to Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie who commissioned the work, these rumours were dangerous as they weakened Sweden's reputation. Schefferus, in the first lines of the preface, specifies that

[...] quid impulerit me ad suscipiendum hunc laborem, alibi jam dixit. nempe illustrissimus excellentissimus regni huius academiaeque cancellarius, comes Magnus Gabriel De La Gardie, cum is videret circumferri pluscula de Lapponibus apud exteros, quaedam fabulis anilibus, quam veritati propiora, quaedam etiam in odium gentis Sueticae, diminutione gloriae quam armis victoribus per tot annos sibi peperit, labemque conflictam, interesse patriae putavit.

Schefferus's primary task was to demystify the myths about Sámi magic so, as Burnett's analysis shows, instead of denying pagan practices among the Sámi Schefferus organized his argument by constructing the Sámi people as innately unfit for warfare. In doing so, he laid the foundation of a

longlasting myth: to support his argument, Schefferus described the Sámi as «[...] useless in warfare since they were timid, peaceful, and cowardly, and could not live anywhere else but ‘Lapland’ since the lower-latitude Swedish climate and diet did not suit them» (Burnett 2019: 141). More than dissipating already existing commonplaces, Schefferus’s narrative fostered stereotypes concerning Sámi peoples that are still common today. Burnett also notes that Schefferus’s construction of the Sámi as inherently pacific contrasted with a previous account by Anders Bure. Bure was a Swedish cartographer who in 1632, describing the «[...] memorable battell [sic] fought near [sic] Leipzig» defined Sámi men as «[...] very good souldiers[sic] » (Bure 1632: 13 in Burnett 2019:141). The construction of the long-lasting stereotype of Sámi people as intrinsically unfitted for warfare brings to our attention one of the major, albeit unforeseeable, consequences of Schefferus’s ‘*Laponia*’: the construction of Sámi as “others”. Many scholars have examined how different features of ‘*Laponia*’ have contributed to the othering process of Sámi peoples¹⁴⁶ (Nordin 2012, Bergesen 2015, Burnett 2019) through what Brunett (2019) defines a «grammar of difference». Such otherness was reinforced by the fact that, in 1702, Thomas Campanius Holm published a volume describing life in then Swedish kingdom (Nordin 2012). To the European readers, the stark contrast between Sámi people and Swedes (with whom, as Europeans, the readers could relate) have contributed to the perception, imagination and understanding of Sámi peoples as inherently different from other Europeans. Ironically, one of the main concerns behind the commission of ‘*Laponia*’ was the desire to show that Sámi people were, after all, not so different from other Swedish subjects and that they were not inherently different from the rest of Europeans, i.e. the “other”, as depicted by classical sources and reinforced by the Thirty-year-war anti-Swedish propaganda¹⁴⁷.

It is possible that, during his time in Uppsala, Schefferus had had personal contact with people with Sámi of background or identity. Sámi people did frequent Uppsala, especially during the town’s

¹⁴⁶ Similarly, the land inhabited by Sámi, and to which Sámi were intrinsically connected were depicted as ambiguously both part of and apart from Sweden.

The supposed and constructed intrinsic alterity of Sápmi became another important feature associated to these areas and such a perception is still part of the contemporary etic understanding of these lands (cfr the perception of the North as more powerful and magic than the South of Norway; Fonneland 2017).

Schefferus tried to make his construction of Sápmi as different and other coexist with his (and his commissioners’) claims that those areas belonged to Sweden and hence, were Swedish. The connection between the otherness of peoples and the place they inhabit is rooted in the climate theory that links the character of a people to their lands and that, originating in ancient Greek culture, was still very popular until the twentieth century (De Anna 1994).

¹⁴⁷ Classical and Old Testament-related sources described the inhabitants of the northernmost regions beyond the borders of the then-known as quasi-humans. These sources were often not referring to real human groups but were mythological in nature and part of a complex symbolic worldview. Later scholars have tried to make sense of the “expanding world” resorting to classical sources as reference points, trying to identify the groups living in the previously unexplored – by them- areas resorting to the descriptions offered in antiquity and often forcing these descriptions upon the peoples living at or beyond the borders of the World explorers knew.

winter market, and it is not unlikely that Schefferus might have encountered Sámi individuals. Nevertheless, scholars agree that Schefferus relied on the information contained in Olaus Magnus's '*Carta Marina*' and '*De Historia de Gentibus septentrionalibus*' and that, concerning Sámi material cultures, he examined the objects available in Swedish private collections as well as items sent to him directly from Lapland. The objects he examined were at the basis of some of the woodcuts reproduced in '*Laponia*' (drums, *pulka*, hats) even though, for many of the woodcuts he included in his volume, Schefferus also relied on sketches drawn and sent to him by pastors working among the Sámi. As Bergesen (2015) notes, the illustrations in *Laponia* later became iconic in Sámi etic iconography. Among these objects were Sámi drums confiscated either during witch-trials against Sámi individuals or by missionaries and clergymen during their proselitizing activity. Demonstrating the importance of Schefferus in mediating knowledge about Sámi peoples, Håkan Rydving has studied the iconography that associates Sámi peoples with indigenous rituals and ritual objects and has identified its origins in the works of Schefferus (1990). Similarly, in the 1990 article *Ren dragande en ackja*, Leif Lindin and Ingvar Svanberg examined the history of one of the classic Sámi peoples' iconographies: a Sámi on a sledge pulled by a reindeer. The two scholars traced this motif back to Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina*. But Olaus Magnus's iconography, which was reproduced also by Bureus, was popularized by Schefferus's '*Laponia*'.

Schefferus, inadvertently limited public perception of the complexity of Sámi lives by focusing, in his iconographic production, on tropes such as the reindeer-drawn sledge, Sámi indigenous rituals and the centrality of reindeer in Sámi relations with the multiple elements of the Arctic environment. Nevertheless, as the frontispiece of '*Laponia*' shows, Schefferus was well aware of other central elements of Sámi daily life upon which he wrote about but which did not depict in woodcuts. Examples are Sámi fishing culture, hinted at in the frontispiece by the sewn boat, and the hunting of wild birds indicated by the bird hut. In spite of all the different, various elements reproduced in the frontispiece, the first thing the readers – even illiterate ones – would see were three Sámi and a reindeer: a man carrying a bow, a woman leading a reindeer by reins, and a baby in a wooden cradle carried by the reindeer. This iconography soon became part of the public imaginary of the Sámi, even though it was marked by a reductive approach that led to a homogenization of Sámi iconography as such, at the expense of cultural, territorial and temporal specificity determined by location, lifestyle, and seasons of the year. As already mentioned, various editions of the book in different languages were published across Europe in the late 18th century, none of which was a literal translation of the original. As sentences and words changed in translation, so did the images, which often underwent either a process of embellishment and enrichment or one of editing (similar to the process undergone

by the images n° 7b and 7c), both resulting in an alteration of the originals. Nevertheless, the core features of the iconography remained the same, thereby contributing to a shared European imagery of the Sámi. Later texts dealing with Sámi people reproduced Schefferus's images (the lithography on either the latin original or its translation with the modified images) sometimes without acknowledging Schefferus's authorship, a common practice at a time when copyright as we know it did not exist. However, these images are most likely connected with Schefferus's. As Klein (2021) highlights, 'Laponia' inspired several authors who then produced new volumes on the subject, often copying Schefferus contents and illustrations and hence contributing to literally promoting a certain image of the Sámi peoples.

To conclude this section, the importance and long-lasting impressions of Laponia's iconography on European readers should not be underestimated. Images such as the 'Laponia' woodcuts – and their implicit references – reinforced an already existing iconography (cfr Olaus Magnus). They also contributed to the construction of Sámi peoples and Sápmi as exotic and foreign – the ultimate other – endowed with a specific set of meanings conveyed to the readers through non-textual information such as the arrangements of the characters, the backgrounds, and the objects portrayed (Bergesen 2015)¹⁴⁸. Many of the images depicted in '*Laponia*' became archetypal in later Sámi iconography, which proved to be extremely powerful in constructing a shared imaginary of Sámi peoples inside and outside the Nordic countries. Even people who could not read were though able to understand images of Sámi people circulating throughout Europe.

2.10.5 Swedish priests' contribution to '*Laponia*': Schefferus's network of informants

Even though he also relied on materials he himself had examined, Schefferus extensively resorted to second-hand sources to compile '*Laponia*'¹⁴⁹, mainly reports from Lutheran pastors stationed in Sápmi. Contacted by de la Gardie, these priests in charge of Sweden's northernmost parishes provided Schefferus with detailed descriptions of local Sámi peoples, including information about their customs (e.g. skiing), reindeer hunting and herding practices, family structure, rituals such as weddings and funerals, housing structures and languages (Sjoholm 2005). Many of those pastors had learnt Sámi languages to communicate with their floks but, given their positionality as exponents of

¹⁴⁸ Bergesen examined how illustrations in '*Laponia*' contributed to othering processes fostering the association between Sámi and witchcraft «by displaying differences in gesture between Sámi and Europeans» (Bergesen 2015: 103).

¹⁴⁹ Schefferus approach lacked of empiricism and direct observation, which, as Sjoholm (2005) notes, was not endorsed by the Swedish intellectual elites by the time '*Laponia*' was written and published. Conversely, (Pulkkinen 2003a) points out that Schefferus broke with the then practice of relying on classical *auctoritates* and, instead, availed himself only of eyewitnesses who had spent time in Sápmi among the Sámi and who were able to understand and speak Sámi languages

the colonial Nation State and Church¹⁵⁰, their understanding of Sámi peoples and their cultures was biased, and so were the accounts they sent to Uppsala, upon which Schefferus based large parts of his own text (Sjoholm 2005). The pastors who submitted their materials to Schefferus lived in close contact with their Sámi parishioners and often spoke one or more Sámi languages. The location of the parishes where these preachers worked, and the timespan in which they produced their accounts allow scholars to extrapolate important information concerning specific Sámi cultures in a precise period. Samuel Rheen, preacher in Jåhkåmåhkke/Dálvvadis/Jokkmokk and Huhtán/Kvikkjokk, was one of the most important of Schefferus's informants. According to Ojala (2009) Rheen wrote the primary and most autonomous of 'Lapponia's sources. Furthermore, Rheen's sketches were later modified and incorporated by Schefferus in 'Laponia' (Bergesen 2015). The other accounts came from Nicolaus Lundius, a clergyman who was himself Sámi, and Gabriel Tuderus, who was a clergyman in Kemi Lappmark – today's Finland –, Olaus Graan, vicar of Piteå and Johannes Tornæus, vicar of Duortnus/Torneå (Ojala 2009). Since these accounts refer to Sámi peoples living in specific areas of Sápmi – those where the Swedish State presence was stronger – it is apparent that the descriptions in 'Laponia' refer to only some of the numerous 17th-century Sámi cultures. Despite this partial depiction of Sámi peoples, for a long time 'Laponia' has been read and studied as a comprehensive text, with consequent homogenizing effects similar to those of Schefferus's iconography.

¹⁵⁰ It is important to highlight that some of the priests and clergymen in the Nordic States had Sámi background and/or personal ties with Sámi communities. Besides Margareta in the 14th century, between 1584 and 1876 there are ten known cases of clergymen whose parents were both Sámi, among them: Gerhardus Jonae, Andreas Petri Lundius, Jacob and Paulus Matthiae Backius, Olaus Stephani Graan and Olaus Matthiae Sirma. The idea of teaching to Sámi in Sámi was embraced by many priests engaged in the missionary activity in what is known today as Sápmi.

With the establishment of churches in Sápmi, it was possible for Sámi children to undergo specific training pathways to become ministers. In some cases, children were taken from their families to be trained in the southern cities only to come back and proselytize among their own communities.

According to Norlin (2018), the first known Sámi minister was Gerhardus Jonae (vicar of the parish of Skellefteå, 1584–1616). He received training from a clergyman in Piteå and was then sent to Uppsala University where he was able to complete his study. During the first half of the 17th century, as a growing number of churches appeared in the Sámi territories, ministers started fostering Sámi boys in order to train them as ministers, catechists, and sextons. From 1617 to 1632 the first permanent Sámi school was active in Piteå, followed by a Sámi school in Lycksele, which opened in 1632. Sámi boys who would become priests usually begun their studies either at Piteå or Lycksele or at the local priest's household. After completing their preliminary studies, they would join the trivialskolor (junior secondary schools) in Piteå, Frösön or Härnösand. Once completed the secondary studies, they would go to Uppsala, where they could attend the university and enrol in theology courses. In 1723 a decree was issued, declaring that schools should be established at every main church in Sámi areas. On the now Norwegian side of Sápmi, such a policy was fostered by Thomas von Westen (1682-1727), who founded the *Seminarium Scholasticum* in Trondheim, Norway. The Seminarium was active for ten years, from 1717 until von Westen's death in 1727. This institution trained missionaries and priests who later moved to the Sámi coastal settlements to live and preach among the Sámi (Storm 2009). Westen also funded the *Seminarium domesticum* were Sámi students learnt basic literacy skills and religion. In the same town in Knud Leem (1697-1774) established the *Seminarium Lapponicum*. Leem run it for 22 years, from 1752 to 1774, the year he died. The *Seminarium Lapponicum* had been established with the aim of educating Sámi pupil and teaching ministers Sámi languages so that they would have been able to go and teach in the Sámi regions using the indigenous languages as the medium of instruction (Keskitalo, Määttä & Uusiautti 2011).

2.10.6 The circulation of ‘Laponia’ and the strengthening of a collective imagery of Sápmi

Almost immediately, ‘Laponia’ became well-known throughout Europe, enjoying fame and success. First published in Frankfurt in Latin in 1673, ‘Laponia’ was soon translated into other major European languages, among them Italian. The German translation appeared in 1675, the French one in 1678, and the Dutch one in 1682 (Mattson 2014). In its 1674 English translation, ‘Laponia’ was the first book published by the Oxford University press (Burnett 2019). Interestingly though, the first Swedish translation dates to 1956. Throughout the late 17th century, the book became instrumental in providing the European readership with new and relatively accurate information concerning Sápmi, and it was regarded as a reliable source on Sámi peoples throughout the 18th, 19th and even the early 20th century.

Burnett (2019:138) has examined how Schefferus’s ‘Laponia’ constituted an «[...] attempt to control and incorporate Sámi culture[s] into Swedish colonial culture» and therefore, in Burnett’s view, the target of this work were educated Swedes as well as European elites. Indeed, in ‘Laponia’, Sámi peoples are described not just as specialists in witchcraft but also, and more importantly from a Swedish colonial perspective, as «[...] recipients of Swedish religion and civilization » (Mattson 2014). Schefferus’s ‘Laponia’ had a long-lasting colonial legacy as ‘Laponia’ was not only the first of a long series of academic works on Sámi cultures but also constituted the beginning of a discipline known as Lappology. According to Kulonen (2005: 189), in Sweden such a discipline has been «[...] a key support mechanism for Nordic colonialism built and maintained through the study of the territory and inhabitants of Sápmi – or “Lapland” as it was termed – which was devised and promoted primarily by outsiders». As Burnett (2019) notes, Schefferus’s ‘Laponia’, despite being meant to show Swedish control over Sápmi and to prove that the Sámi peoples were not involved in the War, fostered an increasing European interest in Sámi peoples. Such interest was mostly focused on their rituals and their worldviews. Instead of dissipating the myth of Sámi as wizards and sorcerers, ‘Laponia’’s descriptions of Sámi indigenous worldviews and the woodcuts depicting Sámi rituals reinforced the perception of Sámi as practitioners of magic which, at the time, was perceived as connected with devil worship (Hagen 2006a, 2006b).

According to Mattson (2014), Schefferus’s work informed the readers not only about the Sámi but also, through the Swedish descriptions of Sámi peoples and their practices as foreign, about the Swedes. Through a narrative built on contrasts, Swedes emerged from ‘Laponia’ as the opposite of the “nomadic”, “superstitious”, “uncivilized”, “wretched”, “war-hating”, “weak”, “mysterious” Sámi peoples. Upon reading this volume, European readers would understand the Swedes as powerful,

strong, stable, pious – Lutheran – civilised, prosperous, skilled warriors but also as Europeans with colonial ambitions, a perception that would place Sweden on the same level as other European colonial powers. Thereby, ‘Laponía’ was an instrument of Swedish foreign policy as much as a tool in developing knowledge about areas perceived as remote yet Swedish.

2.11 Disseminating knowledge about Duortnus/Torne Lappmark throughout late-17th-century-Europe: Johannes Tornaesus

Given the importance of Johannes Tornaesus in disseminating knowledge about the Sámi cultural area to which my interlocutors belong, I deem it relevant to briefly address the life and works of this mid-17th century vicar of Duortnus/Torneå Parish, whose seat was in the town of Duortnus/Torneå. Through such analysis, I also have to opportunity to examine the history of the colonization and christianization of the Duortnus/Torneå geo-cultural area.

2.11.1 Duortnus/Torneå, a brief history of long-lasting colonial encroachment

The town of Duortnus/Torneå was founded in 1621 by Swedish administrators with the specific aim of being an administrative outpost from which Swedish authorities could exert control over the region. For instance, taxation of the Duortnus/Torne population was managed from the town. Built in 1607 as a missionary Church in Sámi territories, the local church’s foundation preceded the establishment of the Swedish settlement and was one of the physical manifestations of the contacts between the Sámi/Finnish population and Swedish people. For centuries, the area had constituted a meeting place and a cultural melting-pot where peoples with different ethnic backgrounds met, traded and lived, as testified by a 1420s’ document describing a court session held in Duortnus/Torneå area and examined by Nordlander at the beginning of the last century (1906, in Bergman & Edlund 2016). The area had indeed been integrated into a complex network of trade and mobility that involved communities belonging to various ethnic groups and/or speaking various languages. Swedish-speaking settlers, known as *birkarlar* had inhabited the region for over three centuries by the time the town of Duortnus/Torneå was established and, for over three hundred years, they had collected taxes from the Sámi on behalf of the southern, Swedish-speaking institutions¹⁵¹. Given its richness in resources, the area was deemed strategic by Swedish authorities. In the early 17th century the area’s population saw an increase, with a growing number of Swedish and Finnish speakers settling in the

¹⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of the *birkarlar* presence in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and in the Swedish side of Sápmi, see Bergman & Edlund (2016).

town of Duortnus/Torneå and in the nearby villages. Despite these immigration flows, Sámi still made up the majority of the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark population. In the town of Duortnus/Torneå, some of the inhabitants spoke Swedish, others Finnish. It is likely that the community was multilingual and that also Sámi was heard around the streets of Duortnus/Torneå. The demography of the region changed abruptly when the mining industry started developing in the area. In the late 1630s, families of Finnish-speaking farmers settled in the region and many were later employed in the local mines. From the mid-1660s, Vallons and Germans, along with Swedes and Finns from the rest of the respective regions of origin, settled in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark, to work in the mines. Their presence constitutes a further evidence that the area was everything but cut off from the international modern European economic and cultural networks. According to the historian Siv Rasmussen (2016), despite the growing heterogeneity of the local population, the workers employed in the mines were mostly local Finns but many were also the Sámi. The latter were hired because their skills and adaptation techniques proved essential to the mining industry: they were hired to transport the ore with their reindeer, the only effective transportation method then available in the snow-covered long winters of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark.

Local churches and the priests working and living in the communities were indeed instrumental in slowly assimilating the local Sámi population into the majority society. On the other hand, the materials they produced constitute today a priceless documentation concerning the daily life in the Duortnus/Torne region. As mentioned above, Rasmussen examined the history of the churches in the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark region, analysing when these churches were established, the original function they fulfilled and the target they were hoping to intercept. Her works proved extremely useful in my attempt to contextualise both Italians' presence in the region and the history of the Márka-Sámi community, whose ancestors seasonally travelled across the mountain from Deartnu/Torne to the coast of the Atlantic ocean.

2.11.2 The 'Manuale Lapponicum' and other notable works of a committed parish priest

According to the Norwegian historian Rasmussen (2014), Tornaesus was the most distinguished among the priests responsible for the Sámi in the Övertorneå and Nedertorneå Parishes. Fluent in North Sámi and, in 1643, he was commissioned to translate the 1639 Swedish Service-book into Sámi. Tornaesus's translation of the Service-book was published in 1648. The language he chose was the local Duortnus/Torne variety of North Sámi and, as Lindmark notes (2014), Tornaesus tried to use a standardized form of language that would enable Sámi peoples from other regions of Sápmi to

comprehend it. In his attempt to create a *dialectum maximam commune* Tornaerus had to turn for help to Sámi individuals who spoke different North Sámi varieties or dialects.

The product of Tornaerus's work, the 'Manuale Lapponicum'¹⁵² was a brief service-book containing excerpts of the Old Testament and the prayers recommended for each Sunday and Holiday, and contained extracts from the Psalms, Proverbs and other biblical books. The 'Manuale Lapponicum' represented a major accomplishment, providing one of the earliest examples of written Duortnus/Torne Sámi texts, but was still a tool employed by Swedish authorities in their attempt to subjugate Sámi peoples¹⁵³. As is clear from Lindmark's remark that this volume was a tool for preachers and was «... never intended for use by the Saami themselves, but rather by the ministers serving among the Saami » (2014:55). In 1672 Tornaerus wrote a book focused on the history of the Övertorneå and Kemi regions: 'Beskrifning öfver Tornå och Kemi lappmarker'¹⁵⁴¹⁵⁵¹⁵⁶.

The Swedish priest also played a central role in the compilation of Schefferus's '*Laponia*' (1673), one of the most remarkable and famous modern books about Sámi cultures. Tornaerus had been indeed among the informants¹⁵⁷ who, at the request of the Swedish King's Antiquity Collegium, provided Johannes Schefferus with information about Sámi peoples living in Sweden (Raunio 2019).

2.11.3 The unforeseeable impact of Tornaerus's hospitality in shaping the European perception of Sámi peoples

While a parish pastor in lower Tornio, Tornaerus hosted many travellers and invited them to attend events such as Lutheran weddings and ceremonies taking place in his parish. His accounts led to the production of distinguished early modern works on Sámi cultures. Tornaerus had been a central figure in the then emerging field of Lappology, and his encounter with these guests constitutes not only a

¹⁵²This volume is the earliest known book produced in the North Sámi variety spoken in the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark region.

¹⁵³ The production of religious texts (for instance, Luther's little catechism), prayer books and edifying writings in Sámi languages in both Norway and Sweden, as well as in the Kola Peninsula, are manifestations of the colonial agenda of the Russian, Dano-Norwegian and Swedish states which, through missionary campaigns, were trying to convert Sámi peoples and hence subjugate them politically (Hansen & Olsen 2014).

¹⁵⁴ Among the information reported by Tornaerus, there are details concerning Sámi religious practices that, to a Lutheran priest, must have looked abominable and may have influenced his point of view regarding Sámi cultures. For instance, he mentioned that: «A priest in Jukkasjärvi described how the Sámi brought reindeer calfskins into the church and sacrificed them on the altar at the feet of the priest, and on the pulpit (Tornaerus [1673]: 41).

¹⁵⁵ *Berättelser om Lapmarckerna och Deras Tillstånd. In Berättelser om samerna i 1600-talets Sverige. Kungliga Skytteanska samfundets handlingar*. No. 27. Umeå: Skytteanska samfundet, Länsmuséet. In Granqvist, K. (2004).

¹⁵⁶ The Swedish historian Samuel Lönbom published the manuscript in 1770.

¹⁵⁷ The famous Sámi priest and first Sámi to have written a poem, Olaus Matthiae Sirma, had been another of Schefferus's informants. Sirma's best-known poem is *Moarsi favrrot*, (Kovář 2019)

Kovář, M. (2019). Sámi Texts from Kemi Sápmi Recorded by Jenny and Samuli Paulaharju. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Philologica*, (3), 39-44.

cultural encounter but also a unique opportunity for them to receive reliable and relevant information about local Sámi cultures.

During his encounters with foreign travellers, Tornaues shared with his guests his profound knowledge of the local people and their customs. Furthermore, as Raunio observes, Tornaues and other priests became not only translators but also –to an extent- cultural and mediators since their proficiency in North Sámi and Latin, as well as their knowledge of both Classical and Sámi cultures, enable them to communicate efficaciously with foreigners (Raunio 2019). Tornaues's considerations towards Sámi people were ambivalent. He lived close to them for many years, he learnt their language(s) and worked to spread the gospel among them to – in his own view – save them. Despite his efforts to save Sámi souls, he regarded them as greedy and prone to swindling Swedish and Norwegian settlers. He blamed the Sámi for not accepting the Swedish trading rules¹⁵⁸: for instance, when discussing the trade practices in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark, Tornaues describes the Sámi as “wise” and states that « ... if they learn what things cost in Stockholm, they want to have the same price » (Tornaues [1672] in Kylli et al (2019: 132,133). Tornaues also accuses the Sámi of overpricing their goods and altering them to earn more money than what they were worth (for instance by adding water to dried fish or by overstretching reindeer hides) (Kylli et al 2019). Tornaues, who was deeply influenced by the 7th century cultural understanding of Sámi peoples, failed to recognize the ability of the local Sámi individuals to negotiate their position and, instead of acknowledging the Sámi's attempt to empower themselves and reject the Swedish colonial and exploitative attitude, he considered the Sámi as greedy and dishonest.

Among the travellers Tornaues hosted while a vicar over Duortnus/Torne Parish, a name stands out: Johan Ferdinand Körningh, a Swedish missionary priest converted to Catholicism who visited the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark area in 1659-1660. Upon his return home, Körningh compiled a text based on his journey: *'Berättelse om en missionresa till Lappland' 1659–1660* (Uppsala, 1956). According to Meriot, Körningh managed to convince a Sámi man to entrust him with his own son who was only 13 years old. Körningh took the Sámi boy with him to Prague where the child was educated and trained as a catholic priest. It is likely that Körningh's – and his superiors' – plan was to send the boy back to Sápmi once he had completed his training, in order to have a cultural insider to work from within Sámi communities to convert his fellow Sámi to Catholicism (Meriot 1985).

¹⁵⁸ In other passages, he though confirms that, in some cases, Sámi peoples did conform with Swedish laws. Describing inheritance practices, he affirms that it had happened that « Sámi brought cases of inheritance to court when the Swedish laws on inheritance corresponded with the Sámi laws » (Tornaues [1673]: 44–45, 47) In Granqvist, K. (2004: 109).

Hansen and Olsen (2014) have highlighted the role Tornaeus had played in Körningh's work as it is presumed that most of the concrete knowledge about the Sámi included in Körningh's report were provided to him by Tornaeus himself. There is an interesting aspect that makes Körningh's journey of great relevance to the perception of Sámi peoples in renaissance Italy. Once back in Rome Körningh reported to Propaganda Fidei difficulties that evoke the later accounts written by Negri. In particular, Körningh reported that "pagan practices" were still deeply rooted among the Sámi, making it extremely difficult to try to convert the Sámi to Catholicism. Raunio stated that it has not yet been possible to draw a direct connection between Körningh and Negri even though it is definitely unusual that two priests should travel across the same area at the same time, especially bearing in mind the religious tensions in post-Reformation Europe and the rupture between Catholics and Lutherans. In Raunio's view, the experiences of Negri and Körningh demonstrate the special interest in Lapland shown by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide in Rome (Raunio 2019). More specifically, Körningh's exploratory journey in Swedish Lapland may have served as a preliminary investigation whose results may have later encouraged the Catholic Elites in Rome to send another priest, Negri, to the area to further assess the possibility of preaching to the Sámi and to restore them to Catholicism. Körningh, who originally converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism, studied at the Jesuit College in Prague. He had powerful personal connections with the Catholic elites and was ordained as a priest by the Pope himself.

Hansen and Olsen (2014) are confident that Körningh's trip was organized with the specific purpose of charting the potentials for a Catholic mission among the Sámi. In Rome, Körningh had described this plan to important members of the papal court and also to Christina, the former Queen of Sweden who, upon her abdication, converted to Catholicism and moved to Rome, at the earth of the Papal state. Given these premises, it comes as no surprise that, while travelling through Sápmi and meeting with local clergymen like Johannes Tornaeus, Körningh did not disclose the real motivations behind his journey.

This episode shows how, in 17th century Europe, religious and political aims were often intertwined and how a region like Sápmi, so often considered and depicted as peripheral and marginal, could become the centre of international intrigues and political plots. Tornaeus indirect centrality in developing of an image of Sámi peoples outside of Scandinavia in the 17th century shall not be underestimated. Not only was Tornaeus among Schefferus's main informants, providing him with crucial information that later was included in the greatly influential '*Laponia*', but also, by hosting foreign priests and educating them about the local indigenous Sámi cultures, he helped in spreading first-hand knowledge about Sámi peoples. Besides Körningh, Tornaeus hosted in his home other

travellers and foreign priests. Among them there was a man travelling under a false name, in order to conceal his true identity and, more importantly, his cultural background and, possibly, the real reason of his journey: this man was a humble priest with very important political connections, whose secular name was Francesco Negri.

In my opinion, the fact that both Körningh and Negri were hosted by Tornaeus is a remarkable coincidence which causes us to wonder whether Negri reached out to Tornaeus following Körningh's path or his presence in Duortnus/Torne was a coincidence, since the village of Duortnus/Torne was the last outpost in Northern Sweden/Sápmi.

2.12 «Io non meno che per vedere tali meraviglie che per conoscere la nazione de' Lapponi, ed altre particolarità, mi son trasferito in questa zona glaciale artica...¹⁵⁹ » (Negri 'Lettera prima' 1700:58)

Francesco Negri's experience in the North of Europe and his textual translation of his journey have attracted the interest of scholars belonging to different fields: Christina Wis, in 1981, wrote an article specifically focused on the ethnographic dimension of Negri's work: '*Francesco Negri, primo etnografo dei Lapponi*' (Francesco Negri, the first ethnographer of the Sámi).

Finnish scholar Anu Raunio (2019) and Hester (2006) have examined '*Viaggio Settentionale*' as a piece of odeporic literature and, in doing so, have highlighted the political and ethnographic features of Negri's account. The only international scholars to have examined, albeit briefly, Negri's work through ethnographic lenses are Piludu and Partanen. (2014)

Here I will address Negri's construction of the North as well as his descriptions of the people he encountered on his way to North Cape. The analysis of Negri's works has proved his experience extremely relevant to my field of enquire. In particular, in the '*Lettera Prima*' (the first chapter of the book) Negri gives a details account of his time in Sápmi. During the first part of his journey (1663), Negri visited the Duortnus/Torne Sámi area and there he stayed for a few days with a local priest. He also visited local Sámi families. He recorded his encounters with the local Duortnus/Torne people and wrote about them in his book *The Duortnus/Torne Sámi have a close connection with the Márka-Sámi people*. In the seventeenth century, the Duortnus/Torne Sámi were still crossing the mountain rift to reach the ocean, on their seasonal migration routes.

¹⁵⁹ «I'm not boasting when I say that I moved to this glacial Arctic zone to see such wonders and get to know the Lappish Nation, and other distinctive traits » (my translation).

2.12.1 On Negri and his ‘*Viaggio Settentrionale*’

Francesco Negri was born in 1623 in Ravenna, then under the rule of the Papal States¹⁶⁰. The Negri family was wealthy and respected and had the means to allow young Francesco to undertake ecclesiastical studies, with the result that he was ordained a priest. The young man soon expressed a keen interest not only in theology but also in subjects as variegated as Classic literatures, natural science, history but, most notably, astronomy and geography. He was also an avid reader of travelogues (Vistoli 1700). As a priest, he remained in his hometown of Ravenna. The turning point in Francesco Negri’s life was a journey that led him to «the very end of the world» (Negri 1700). According to Mario Catucci (2013), it was the ‘*Histora de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*’ which inspired Negri, stimulating his desire to see the lands described in Olaus Magnus’s book¹⁶¹. As we shall see, this explanation may conceal the complexity of the motivations for his journey. When he embarked on a journey to a place he perceived and – in his book, constructed – as the end of the World, Negri recorded his own experience with the idea of publishing a travelogue centred around his voyage. Upon his return to Italy, he worked on the manuscript for almost thirty years. The book was published posthumously by his heirs in 1700 and was more than just a travel journal. The title itself offers interesting clues to Negri’s work: ‘*Viaggio settentrionale Fatto e descritto da Francesco Negri da Ravenna*’ (literally: A northern Journey undertaken and described by Francesco Negri of Ravenna). At the core of the book are the places and the peoples the author encountered while travelling in Fennoscandinavia. Negri highlights his authorship, stressing the importance of the first-hand experience he acquired and that confers authority on his work. Unlike many writers of the time, Negri chose to write not in Latin but in the Italian vernacular. In the concluding remarks of the opening section “*Achilegge*” (To those who read [this]) Negri states:

*Io ho stimato bene di metter in volgare ogni passo, o sentenza Latina, e ciò in riguardo delle Donne, e di quegli Uomini, che non intendono la lingua Latina (1700:XV)*¹⁶².

The use of the Italian language ensured that a wide domestic public could read and appreciate the text. Had it been in Latin, ‘*Viaggio Settentrionale*’ would have been accessible to only a small percentage of the then literate Italian population. On the other hand, a text in Latin potentially had a

¹⁶⁰ Ravenna had been part of the Papal States from the first decade of the 16th century until 1796 and then from 1814 until 1859, when the Piedmontese troops invaded the city. In 1861 Ravenna was annexed to the kingdom of Italy.

¹⁶¹ [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-negri_res-f565ece1-a5b4-11e2-9d1b-00271042e8d9_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-negri_res-f565ece1-a5b4-11e2-9d1b-00271042e8d9_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

¹⁶² « I regarded as a good idea to write in vernacular each passage or Latin sentence, and I did this bearing in mind the women, and those men, who do not understand the Latin language » (my translation).

wider circulation in the international circle of educated people across Europe and beyond. Hence, it emerges that the primary audience identified by Negri was the Italian readership.

In his book, Negri arranged the material he collected while in Fennoscandinavia in eight letters, without limiting himself to the chronological order of his journey. This narrative device allowed him to describe his voyage, dividing his material into thematic sections. Such an arrangement of the literary corpus distinguishes Negri's book from travelogue structure, rather approaching the Epistolary genre. The epistolary form Negri gave to the book also originates from the documentary material Negri resorted to when compiling the book. He himself wrote many letters while travelling.

In the opening section of '*Viaggio Settentrionale*', Negri states that, despite having spent almost 30 years working on his text, the origins of the book can be traced back to the letters he sent from Scandinavia between 1663 and 1666 to his superiors and friends in Italy and other European countries. According to Negri (1700 XIV), those letters constituted the bulk of the book itself.

Even though '*Viaggio Settentrionale*' was only published one year after Negri's death, various letters describing his voyage circulated throughout Europe during and after Negri's journey and a text entitled '*Relazione della Lapponia avuta dal signor Francesco Negri di Ravenna, il quale penetrò in quelle parti*' had circulated since 1691. Published in Parma, this text was based on oral reports Negri made in 1675 in Rome and in 1676 in Ravenna and Bologna. This report was included in a collection of geographic texts entitled: '*Il genio vagante, Biblioteca curiosa di cento e più viaggi stranieri de' nostri tempi. Raccolta dal signor Conte Aurelio degli Anzi*'¹⁶³. Interestingly enough, Schefferus's '*Laponia*' is reviewed the same volume. These are the only two texts among the one hundred included or referred to in the volume - which is presented as a kind of index of far-away lands and the journeys thither undertaken - devoted to Sápmi. This is a most significant fact because: first, it testifies to the interest in Sápmi and Sámi peoples on the part of the Italian public; second, Schefferus's '*Laponia*' was reviewed before the work had been translated into Italian (in 1676, the only editions available were in Latin - 1673- in English - 1674 -and in German -1675-). Hence, Schefferus's could be enjoyed only by those educated Italians who read one of these languages whereas the language of the transcription of Negri's was Italian, allowing a wider - albeit only Italian - readership. Third, the two texts are considered equally important notwithstanding the fact that Negri's contribution was only a transcription of an oral report whereas Schefferus's was a monograph in its definitive form; fourth, Negri's report was based on first-hand experience whereas Schefferus

¹⁶³ «The wandering intellect, the curious library of a hundred and more travels abroad in our times, collected by Mr Count Aurelio degli Anzi» (my translation).

wrote '*Lapponia*' elaborating on second and even third-hand information he received from priests stationed across Sápmi.

Francesco Negri is considered the first continental European to have reached North Cape as a tourist in 1664 (Paulgaard 2008). As Paulgaard notes in his reflections upon the concepts of centre and periphery in northern Finnmark, Negri's words have become powerful tools in the process of brandization of Honningsvåg and of North Cape. The following line, so often quoted in tourist brochures, enshrines Negri's understanding of his journey:

Here I am now at North Cape, at the far tip of Finnmarken, at the very end of the world. Here, where the world ends my curiosity ends too, and I return happily, if God wishes so.

From the vivid image these words evoke, North Cape emerges as the edge of the world. Even if it was a seventeenth century Italian traveller and clergyman who wrote these lines, the narrative they convey is still dominant in discourses about the North of Fennoscandinavia. The strength of Negri's description lies in the author's ability to describe North Cape not as a place but as a symbol: as the edge of the world. The same symbology employed by Negri is currently fostered by the tourist industry which attracts visitors to North Cape by resorting to the supposed uniqueness of his geographical position and the symbolic meaning this location has in people's collective imagination. This very image is the result of centuries of layered projections about the North as a physical representation of the limits of human possibilities. Taking into account not only North Cape but the region as a whole, the perception of Northern Fennoscandinavia as a peripheral area has a long and complex history.

Before leaving Italy for the North of Europe, Negri had studied all the sources available to him concerning the Lands of the Sámi. Negri's erudite background is apparent in '*Viaggio Settentrionale*', which is rich in quotations from classical, medieval and modern authors. Negri had studied their accounts prior to his stay in Sweden and Norway since, once there, he is surprised by the incongruences between these accounts and his own experience. While there, he resorted to sight as a primary and objective sense to understand and describe both his experiences and his reflections upon them – features characteristic of the Galilean theory of science as inductive and based on experience (Hester 2006)-. Convinced of his opinions, in '*Viaggio Settentrionale*', Negri is not afraid to contradict the *auctoritas* of classical authors using his own experience and the importance of direct observation as validation for his statements. In particular, '*Viaggio Settentrionale*' opens with a foreword and a 10-page-long section entitled '*Annotazioni sopra l'Opera di Olao Magno*', in which

Negri points out all the mistakes he has encountered in Olaus Magnus's account. He also remarked that, although other works had been published about Sápmi after his return from Northern Fennoscandia, he was the first to have composed a comprehensive account of the Sámi. With this remark, he is probably referring to Schefferus, whose monography had already enjoyed considerable circulation accompanied by success. By virtue of his work, Negri seems to be claiming that he was the first to write comprehensively about Sámi peoples and cultures even though his work had not thitherto been published. This highlights the not indifferent distinction between writing and publishing, which is of extreme relevance especially in a period when copyright as we know it did not exist and handwritten drafts widely circulated among the educated members of the Republic of Letters. Today it is difficult to fully grasp the complexity of Negri's journey. Travel in 17th century-Europe was dangerous, and the unexpected could always be expected, with these unforeseeable events informing travellers' experiences. In the case of travellers being either clergymen themselves or associated with them, the religious rift which had split Europe fuelled suspicions and mistrust against them when they were crossing or residing in those countries that embraced one branch of Christianity rather their own.

It is apparent that Negri had powerful connections that enabled him, a catholic priest from a small province in the Papal States, to travel to a Lutheran country. Francesco Negri was not the only one in his milieu to have travelled North. Among his friends, Francesco Magalotti had visited the Nordic Countries¹⁶⁴, following what De Anna calls the "Boreal itineraries" (1978)¹⁶⁵. De Anna has extensively studied the connections between 17th century Nordic Countries and Italian States – Florence in particular – highlighting that Italian curiosity about the North were often interwoven with (not always declared) political and economic interests. Nevertheless, Italian ambassadors usually did not venture beyond the cities on the northern coasts of continental Europe, also because of the difficulties a journey northwards would have had. For this reason, Negri's experience proves to be unique. Negri corresponded with other educated men of his time and there is evidence that he even was in contact with Schefferus, the author of '*Lapponia*', one of the most influential early accounts of Sápmi. There are at least two surviving letters from Negri to Schefferus, both undated and without a statement of place (Andreas Klein 2021)

¹⁶⁴ There is a surviving letter that Magalotti sent Negri concerning his journey to Fennoscandia (cfr Wis 1994).

¹⁶⁵ Magalotti travelled to Fennoscandia to fulfil his master's desire to increase the knowledge about the Nordic countries. Cosimo De Medici. The ruler of Florence, had developed an interest in these cultural and geographic areas when on a journey to Amburg, when he was 26 years of age in 1667. Hence, Negri's journey dates from before Cosimo De Medici's fascination for the North.

The journey and direct experience of alterity emerges in Negri as an ennobling experience at the personal level, guaranteeing, in Negri's view, the objectivity and the truthfulness of the material presented in his book.

2.12.2 Negri's Journey through Sápmi

Negri left Italy in 1663 and embarked on a three-year journey across Fennoscandinavia. He reached North Cape in and returned to Italy in 1666. While travelling, he recorded his experiences in a journal and, once back in Ravenna, he worked on his notes to produce a book divided into eight chapters that have been organized as letters and are indeed based on the epistolary Negri had exchanged with friends and patrons during his time in Scandinavia. The letters accompany the readers across Fennoscandinavia and slowly guide them to the northernmost tip of Europe. As mentioned above, the section he devoted to his time in Sápmi is the '*Lettera prima*'. In these 45 pages, Negri seldom refers to his own experience as he focuses more on providing an account of the Sámi, their costumes and lifestyles as well as their attitudes. He does so inspired by the emerging importance given to first-hand experience. Unlike previous authors, who reported stories and legends they could not prove, Negri openly states that he would only write about what he has personally witnessed or learnt from reliable sources. He refers to himself as a "*testimonio oculare*" (eye witness). An in-depth analysis of '*Viaggio Settentrionale*' has led modern researchers to consider Negri not to as a navigator but as a scholar, whose interests lay beyond the journey itself. Piludi and Partnanen (2009) as well as Brevini (2009) have observed that Negri's attitude and approach to the journey fall within what today we considered the scientific method based on experiential knowledge.

In the attempt to give the readers the impression of objectivity, the author's subjectivity is almost completely erased from the text. As Negri stated in the book's preface, his ultimate aim was to write a "*relazione veridica*" (a truthful account) of what he had witnessed. In this kind of account, there was no place for Negri's own thoughts and emotion.

Despite this strong scientific and encyclopaedic approach, baroque elements are widely present in Negri's account. Brevini (2009) points at Negri's search for the extraordinary and the marvellous, noting that these are typical features of the baroque cultural movement. The sense of awe at natural phenomena such as the midnight sun, the polar night and the northern lights are expression of this sensibility: on his journey, Negri collected curiosities, amazing stories and witnessed natural wonders which he reported in the text. Brevini though draws to our attention another feature of Negri's attitude which distances him from the baroque: his relativistic approach. The Ravenna priest did indeed acknowledge the differences between the Sámi ways of living and that of the Europeans.

Nevertheless, he also pointed out that, if it was strange to him how the Sámi lived, so it must conversely have appeared strange to them what he and other Europeans lived. Negri developed this realization by building his argument against the then most widespread preconceptions towards the Sámi: that they were barbarians.

Sò, che molti danno titolo di Barbari ai Lapponi per la privazione, che anno di tutte le scienze, e virtù; ma non meritano tal titolo per malizia dell'animo, ò per la fierezza, ò stranezza de' costumi. Anch'essi se sapessero, che per un puntiglio creduto d'onore, per una parola anche mal interpretata si stimano obligati i nostri Cavalieri a sfidarli a duello, nel quale spesse volte uno di essi resta morto, e l'altro ferito, e ciò, benché ambidue sappiano, essere il Duello proibito dalle leggi Divina, ed umana [...] Se sapessero quello, dico, i Lapponi, chi non dirà, che avrebbero fondamento di tener noi altri in concetto di Barbari? [...] Riderebbero i medesimi Lapponi, se vedessero le nostre Dame nel più crudo inverno farsi martiri della Vanità, mentre espongono ai maggiori rigori dell'aria nudo il petto, il dorso, e le spalle. Altrettanto riderebbero, se vedessero i Cavalieri nella più coccente stagione di giorni canicolari vestiti con due abiti, uno sopra l'altro per mantener la moda corrente. Mentre che ritornati a casa subito si spogliano [...] E le Dame nel inverno, subito ritornate a casa, se ne vanno alla camera del fuoco, e si coprono per non patir freddo. Chi dunque osserva la vera Legge naturale, i Lapponi, o gli altri? (1700:28)

In addition to general considerations, he describes the Sámi he encountered, their way of living and their customs and dwelt upon their use of instruments such as skis. Reflecting upon their way of living, he emphasizes Sámi simplicity, portraying them as natural people. They are, in Negri's own words, those who observe "the natural law". Brevini (2009) notes that this remark places Negri's understanding of Sámi people within the macro-category of the natural men archetype. Henceforth, Negri's account emerges as a precursor of the "natural Lapp" myth and therefore Negri's work constitutes an *ante litteram* description of the Sámi as noble savages.

Similarly, Piludu and Partnanen (2009) reflect upon the positive impression Negri had of the Sámi. In their view, this favourable idea emerges in the qualities Negri bestowed upon the Sámi: Negri describes the Sámi as humble people, who know neither pride nor futility, who fight little and commit very few murders, they are not jealous, and they do not they seek fame or wealth. This last remark is of particular relevance since Negri, by praising the Sámi simplicity of life and by describing Sámi cultures as a model of virtue, offers a penetrating critique of the corruption of 17th-century Italy.

The comparison between his own society and that of the Sámi led Negri to exalt the Sámi way of living, a lifestyle that, in Negri's view, was to be taken as a model. Despite their flaws, the Sámi lived according to the laws of Nature. Laws that, according to Negri, were also the commandments ordained by God. Hence, the Sámi – understood by Fennoscandinavian clergymen as heathens and devil worshippers – emerge in Negri's understanding models of Christian values. These reflections echoes Querini's attitude towards the people of Rost.

Negri defines the North is defined not so much by what it is as by what it is not. Absence is the heart of many of Negri's descriptions of the North:

Un grande paese si trova di circuito di più di mille miglia Italiane, il quale è privo totalmente di qualunque specie di pane, sia proprio, sia forestiero, non vi potendo crescere alcuna sorte di biade, e d'ogni sorte de frutti, tanto d'alberi, che d'erbaggi, che nascono dalla terra; Non vi possono allevare Animali domestici, che si ritrovano nel restante del Mondo, perché servano per cibo degli Uomini, poiché non v'ha di che non drirli, non vi crescendo né pur l'erba: Quei latticini, e ova, che da essi potrebbero provenire, è superfluo il dire che non ci sono. [...] Questi sono i mali, che consistono nella privazione, e i positivi ancora non minori

[...] Dunque quel Paese né men dalle Fiere è abitato; dunque è un deserto; e pure in fatti esso è abitato, e altro non è, Illustrissimo Signore, che il Paese di Lapponia, del quale si parla¹⁶⁶ (P2).

In Negri's account, the land of the Sámi resemble a paradise (P3)

[...] all'udir questo, stimo, ch'egli sorridendo direbbe, che un tal Paese è formato nell'idea di chi ne fa il racconto, perché ben si sa, che il Paradiso terrestre à cui solo convengono simili qualità, ò è distrutto, ò non se n'ha notizia¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁶ «A great country lies more than one thousands Italian miles, that is completely lacking any kind of bread, either their own or foreigner, since there could not grow any kind of fodder, and any kind of fruit, or trees, or grass, which are born from the ground; there cannot be bred cattle that exists in the rest of the World, so that they can be used as food for humans, since there is nothing that they can be fed with as not even grass grows there: Dairy products, eggs that could come from them, it is redundant to say that do not exist there [...] These are the disadvantages and sufferings which consist of privation, but the positive features [of the lands of the Sámi] are not inferior [to these disadvantages] [...] So that country is not inhabited by wild beasts; so it is a desert; and yet indeed it is inhabited, and nothing is, illustrious reader, than the Country of Lapland that I speak about». (My translation)

¹⁶⁷ «[...]in hearing this, I am confident that he would say with a smile, that such a Country exists only in the mind of the person who thells the story, because it is well-known, that the Paradise on Earth , to which exclusively such qualities can pertain, either is destroyed or is unknown».

The land of the Sámi as paradise on earth is an oxymoron based upon the absence of all the things pertain to daily life judging by standards. Negri's aforementioned association between the Sámi and a State of Nature fosters an understanding of Sápmi as a land whose inhabitants do not toil, but gain sustenance effortlessly from nature. What some accounts regard as barbaric here is heavenly, allocating the Sámi to a position of privilege within Christendom, regardless of their pagan beliefs. Nevertheless, Negri fails to grasp that what seems like effortless nurturing on the part of nature is the result of centuries-old relationship with the territory and is by no means effortless.

Furthermore, from a passage in the text, it can be observed that Negri held the Sámi in high consideration not only as individuals but also as a group « *Pare in un certo modo, che goda delle qualità del secolo d'oro questa nazione, che poco o nulla ha notizia dell'oro* » (p 80). Notably, he is to be remarked that he described the Sámi peoples as a Nation: In the seventeenth century, the term Nation had specific connotations and its meaning was closer to our notion of People rather than State. From a geographical perspective, the *nazione* of the Sámi is European even though, according to Negri, Sámi peoples are in their appearance more similar to non-Europeans as they are small in size and have a dark complexion. In particular, he compares Sámi to Ethiopians as to skin color and to Pygmies in size, through what Hester defines a "logic of analogy" (2006).

Negri then explains that « *Queste, e l'altre buone qualità di sopra motivate fanno apparire la Nazione de' Lapponi per la miglior del Mondo; e pare, che anche il Cielo ciò confermi* ¹⁶⁸ ». Remarking that the Sámi are the best peoples on Earth, Negri points out that this intrinsic characteristic is validated by the environment in which they live:

*E pare, che anche il Cielo ciò confermi buone con esentarla da i trè più acuti suoi fulmini Peste, Fame, e Guerra; Con tutto ciò un difetto solo, che devo dire, anche la farà apparire la peggiore; almeno secondo diversi soggetti; [...] sono amici del Diavolo costoro, attendono non pochi à sortilegi, non per uccider fanciulli, come in altri Paesi si fà, mà qualche volta per danneggiar, chi gli hà offesi; spesso per proprio interesse, per aver, com'essi dicono, la scienza di ben governare, e far crescer i Rangiferi, aver facilità nella Caccia, e nella Pesca, e per ritrovar cose perdute, ò altro*¹⁶⁹ (P 81).

¹⁶⁸ «[...]These and the other good qualities explained above make the Nation of the Lapps appear the best of the World, and it seems the Sky confirms this».

¹⁶⁹ «[...]and it seems, that also the Sky [ie for extension God] confirms this by exempting it from the its three most severe lighting Pest, Famine and War; with all of this, only one defect, that I have to say, make it seems the worst; at least according to different subjects; [...] these people are friends to the Devil, they perform many enchantments, not to kill children, as it is done in other Countries, but sometimes to damage those who offended them, for their own interests, to

The confirmation of the goodness of Sámi people comes from the absence, to his knowledge, of the three afflictions that affect humankind: plague, famine and war. Nevertheless, he points out that the Sámi people do not actually live in a state of bliss. There is a specific characteristic that makes their way of life seem the worst of all worlds: despite living in a sort of earthly paradise, the Sámi are described as “friends of the Devil” who perform witchcraft. However, almost defending them, Negri remarks that they resort to their wizardly skills to only provide for their families (with the reindeer for instance), not to commit evil (as others do) except when dealing with petty issues. It is clear this supposed affinity with the Devil deeply troubles Negri who, though, chooses not to dwell upon this topic, as he openly states that: *«Tralascio per buoni rispetti di descrivere, e di spiegare quì li modi, che adoprano nell’esercizio di questa superstizione »*¹⁷⁰ (p 81).

In line with the common understanding of the time, Negri does not recognize Sámi indigenous worldviews as autonomous beliefs systems but he views and interprets them through a Christian lens, associating their practices with Devil worship.

2.12.3 The meanings of Negri’s Journey: motivations, ramifications, implications and unexpected results

From these extracts, it emerges the ambiguity of Negri’s attitude towards Sámi peoples. His manifold - and often conflicting - discourses are reminiscent of classical literary *topoi* as well as of old and contemporary accounts of indigenous peoples in faraway lands. Anticipating the later explorer-ethnographer model, Negri describes his journey as an adventure, constructing Sápmi as remote and mostly unknown territories, which are simultaneously a paradise and a wasteland. In this respect, Hester (2006) has highlighted the multiple and contradictory narratives that Negri employed not only in the ‘Lettera’ describing Sápmi but also in the book as a whole. Throughout the letters, Negri employed different models to convey specific notions to the readers. Hester has identified four characteristics that help better understand Negri’s work and his descriptions of the Sámi and the Swedes (and to an extent, the Norwegians) and the relation between these peoples and Italians:

1) Sápmi, a remote and unknown region, is inhabited by “primitive people” but, nevertheless, this region is still Europe and their inhabitants are a European nation.

2) The Swedish and the Italian people share common ancestry thanks to their shared gothic heritage.

have, as they say, the knowledge about the good management, and to breed the reindeer, have an easy hunt, fish and to find lost items or other things .

¹⁷⁰«[...]I overlook, for good reasons to describe, and explain here the ways they employ in practicing these superstitions».

3) Experimental science is given a role of prominence among the methods to collect data. Consequentially, up-to-date and direct analysis are also considered essential in research.

4) Despite the importance given to evidence-based knowledge, climate theory¹⁷¹ is the ultimate theoretical framework employed by Negri to explain human societies. Combined with the theory of the gothic origin of Italians, the climate theory's function is, ultimately, to place Italy in a position of prominence in the World.

Henceforth, climate theory – based upon the idea that the geographic location influences and shapes a people's attitude – emerges as the ultimate interpretative framework of the letters. According to Hester (2006), Negri's textual translation of his experiences of Sápmi, Sweden, and Norway served specific functions. These functions are most likely an a posteriori construction and were probably not at the origin of the journey itself. Through the description of his voyage, which he wished to publish in the form of epistolary, Negri hoped to symbolically reverse and overturn the already-established new trajectories of European travel: from North to south, along a route that, in a few years would have brought the elites of countries like England and Germany to France and, ultimately, Italy. Negri's account was, in Hester's view, an attempt at re-centring Italy in the wider European cultural landscape. In the symbolic geography of 17th-century Europe, the Italian peninsula –fragmented into many states, most of them under foreign rule – had lost its role of prominence as a producer culture while northern Nation-States had acquired a growing importance. Among these states, Sweden was becoming one of the major European powers. Negri though tries to deconstruct the image of Scandinavia as a powerful country, by describing it as definitely European but yet exotic. Scandinavia's intrinsic alterity is accentuated by the lexicon Negri chooses to employ and that conveyed an idea of the North of Scandinavia as a *terra incognita*. Furthermore, Negri's narrative places Sweden, which is at the physical and geographical edges of Europe, at the symbolic margins of the continent by making it “both inside and outside of Europe” (Hester 2006:109),

Hester remarks that Negri lacked a colonial perspective over Scandinavia and the Sámi since, in her view, he was an independent travel on a solitary journey and without a specific task from economic, political or religious institutions.

¹⁷¹ This theory, originating in ancient Greek culture and further developed during the classical antiquity, enjoyed a long-lasting success and was still very popular until the twentieth century (De Anna 1994). Its success derives from its flexibility and easy applicability. Negri's texts show the importance and persistence of Climate Theory. As mentioned earlier, this theory links the character of a people to the geographic position of its Land. The weather and environment are supposed to shape the character of its inhabitants consequently; this theory roots the destiny of a people in the land they inhabit.

The evidence mentioned above contrast with Hester's understanding of Negri as an independent traveller and would instead – in my opinion – hide a colonial attitude, at least from a religious perspective. Regardless, '*Viaggio Settentrionale*', through which Negri wanted to give an image of himself as a traveller who decided to leave Ravenna for Scandinavia out of thirst for knowledge, does not reproduce colonial attitudes as this specific text—unlike '*Carta Marina*' and '*De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*' – was not composed to foster the interest of national powers towards the Scandinavian peninsula. Furthermore, Hester herself points out that the resort to a specific lexicon and *topoi* reflects a colonial gaze. By projecting himself as a fearless adventurer that ventures into unexplored lands – that are inhabited by peoples that live between a state of blissfulness and damnation – Negri bestow his public image with all the characteristics proper of the fifteen and sixteen discoverers of new lands.

An accurate reading of the '*Lettera Prima*' shows that Negri approaches Sampi and its inhabitants by resorting to a dichotomist framework based on opposite theoretical categories: Hester (2006) has identified various rhetoric and ideologic oppositions, framed as extremes binary dichotomies, that permeate and traverse Negri's account: the opposition between frigid and torrid, calm and fierce, corrupt and uncorrupted. These oppositions contribute in shaping the readers' perception of Sámi peoples. a further dichotomy emerges as central in Negri's construction of Sámi peoples: the contraposition between Barbarism and Civilization. The concept of barbarism though has lost here its former bellicose character – that had – and, instead, as De Anna (1994) and Piludu and Partanen (2014) had highlighted, it has become a synonym with paganism, while civilization stands for and overlap with being good Christians. This conceptual shift is also connected with a new notion of “the other” which has emerged in the sixteenth century and that would have become an important concept in the European understanding of “the other”: the Noble Savage. A further dichotomy pertains to the Sámi: the peaceable and simplicity characterise them as Noble Savage living in a frozen world. On the other hand, they are also superstitious peoples who have not embraced the Gospel, a feature casting a dark shade on them. Regardless of these characterisations, for Negri the Sámi epitomize the *aura mediocritas* of a simple life «without excessive virtue or vice» (Hester 2006:107) is, according to Negri, an intrinsic quality of the Sámi but, at the same time, a consequence of their geographic position. Resorting to the climate theory to explain this feature, Sámi people inhabit the lands just beyond the extremities of the known world, at the centre of which stands Italy. Placing Italians at the centre of this geography, Sápmi is bestowed with a further element of alterity that originates from its on geographic position. According to Hester, this argument help supporting Negri's attempt to reaffirm the centrality of Italy in Europe and its role as a cultural *umbilicus mundi*.

Reading between the lines, Negri's text is more informative about Italy's position in seventeenth century Europe than about Sámi and Nordic cultures. Through the resort to climate theory as a framework of analysis, Negri hopes to simultaneously explain the Italians' accomplishments and failures and the Sámi's supposed placidity – a feature highlighted also by Schefferus 1674 'Lapponia' - and un-exceptionality as a people who lives in peace but has not accomplished any particular cultural achievement. Negri's 'Lettera Prima' has an intrinsic value as a piece of odeporic literature but, since it complies with the seventeenth century codified travel literature, it is important to distinguish between factual information and literary *topoi*. Even though it contains ethnographic materials based on Negri's personal experience, the accounts he had read and the information provided to him by local clergymen, the text's value lies in Negri's use of it to convey political messages concerning Italy. Furthermore, 'Lettera Prima' as well as the whole books enable the readers to peek into Negri's understanding of the position of Italy in Europe.

2.12.4 Negri, Tornaeus, Schefferus and Duortnus/Torne Lappmark.

'Viaggio Settentrionale' is a complex piece of literature where different - and often contrasting - narratives coexist. During his journey, Negri met peoples of different walks of life who would have remembered this peculiar man travelling alone in a land he had no (apparent) connection with and of which he did not speak nor understand.

In her analysis of Negri's work, Raunio questions the common belief that Negri gave up on reaching North Cape on foot through Sweden and Northern Norway because of the conditions of the terrain. In order to prove this theory wrong, Raunio proposes to take into account not only the physical difficulties posed by the environment and the communication system but also the linguistic barrier, which would have made the last tract of Negri's journey more difficult.

Nevertheless, in her view, more than language another element emerges as decisive in Negri's decision to renounce his plan of reaching North Cape by foot. Raunio discusses a recently discovered text that «[...] suggests that Negri felt discouraged after reaching a Sámi village and witnessing his host family 'worship the devil' » (Raunio 633-634). In Raunio's view, the distress and frustration the Ravenna priest felt in witnessing a Sámi ritual may have contributed to his decision to return to the South of Sweden. To Negri, a Sámi ritual was not a pagan act but an act of sorcery related to the devil ('Lettera Prima' p43-45)¹⁷².

¹⁷² It is interesting to note that, when Negri undertook his journey among the Sámi, the first witch trials were taking place in Finnmark. Unlike the Norwegian women and men accused of witchcraft who acknowledged themselves as Christian, The Sámi accused of witchcraft were persecuted because they did not adhere to Christianity and their own systems of beliefs were regarded as act of Devil worship. (See Hagen 1999,2006, 2014)

Details from Negri's journey across the shores of nowadays Troms and Finnmark counties make the linguistic barrier less likely to have been a deterrent to Negri¹⁷³.

As Raunio (2019) observes, in the sparsely populated regions of Northern Scandinavia, it was difficult to find accommodations where they could spend the night, and the difficulty grew the further they went. Local members of the clergy usually offered a place to stay to important travellers. Hosted in the priests' households, these travellers usually had only sporadic contacts with the local population. Along his journey across Sweden and Finland Francesco Negri, was among those travellers who found shelter at the local priests' house. When he was in the Duortnus/Torne Sámi area, this tradition of hospitality led Negri to the house of the local vicar: Johannes Tornaes (c.1605–1681) (Raunio 2019). The area where Tornaes lived in 1663 was part of the seasonal route of the so called Duortnus/Torne Sámi communities. The Sámi individuals Negri met while in Tonrelappmark most likely had blood-ties with the ancestors of the Sámi people living in the Márka.

As we have addressed earlier in this chapter, Tornaes had a deep knowledge of the Duortnus/Torne area and its Sámi population. He had helped Schefferus, providing him with important first-hand information about Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and it is likely that Tornaes shared his knowledge about the locals with this traveller with very powerful connections and good reference letters from Christiana. Tornaes, provided Schefferus not only with information but also with sketches depicting scenes from the everyday life of his Sámi parishioners. Given the similarities between Negri's and Schefferus's illustrations, it may possibly be that both copied them from their common source rather than one copying it from the other. The common source shared by Negri and Schefferus may further explain the similarities between the two texts. Until now it was commonly believed that Negri relied on Schefferus in compiling those sections devoted to the factual knowledge about Sámi peoples and their customs. Nevertheless, it may possibly be that the information contained in Schefferus's and Negri's volumes actually come from the same source rather than being the result of plagiarism. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that in the 17th century Europe the concept of intellectual property was much different from our own and many texts and volumes often contained translations from other texts without an open quotation or a clear reference to the author. This phenomenon shall not be considered as an act of plagiarism (as, in doing so, we would project a contemporary concept

¹⁷³ In order to reach North Cape, Negri travelled by boat following the shoreline of Northern Troms and Finnmark. Travelling alone, he was at the mercy of local seamen who usually transported him from their settlement to the next. There, Negri would literally knock on people's doors, asking for food, shelter and a lift to the next inhabited settlement along the coast.

in a context into which such act was not perceived as illicit) but rather as an expression of the 17th century knowledge-production dynamics.

As a further point towards the originality of Negri's work, it shall be acknowledged that Negri's text had circulated for many years as a manuscript before it was published posthumously in 1700, as Negri himself specifies in the introduction to his book. Negri claims to have sent manuscript copies of his work to Ravenna, Tuscany and Rome. Consequently, the draft of the '*Lettere*' may have circulated across Europe, contributing in shaping a specific imagination about Sámi peoples. It is possible that Schefferus himself had the chance of reading Negri's work - or at least sections of it - in its manuscript form while compiling his own '*Laponia*'. Furthermore, as Klein (2021) notices, Schefferus and Negri not only shared the same sources (Tornæus) but also were actually in direct contact with each other and the two aforementioned surviving letters are evidence of this epistolary connection.

This exchange of information between different actors demonstrated the circularity of the process of the production of knowledge in 17th century Europe. The works of Negri and Schefferus have contributed to spreading knowledge about Sámi peoples outside of Fennoscandinavia. Given that many were the data about Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and they gathered thanks to Tornæus and, in the case of Negri, thanks to his own first-hand experience, it is accurate to say that the Duortnus/Torne Sámi culture was among the Sámi cultures which functioned as a model for European understanding of Sámi cultures as a whole. With all the precautions already mentioned with reference to the use of travelogues as sources of ethnographic materials, Negri's '*Viaggio Settentrionale*' may contribute in shedding light into 17th century Duortnus/Torne-Sámi culture, in a time when part of the Torne-Sámi population still seasonally travelled to the western coast during Summer, before the border dividing Sweden and Norway was established upon this community, dividing and fragmenting it. A passage from Schefferus is exemplary of this ethnographic value, while it also supports Raino's claim that Negri might have witnessed a Sámi ritual while in the area.

The rudeness of these Images gave *Tornæus* occasion to deny that they had any shape at all, only made rough and hollow by the falling of water upon them, tho their hallowness without doubt occasioned the *Laplanders* fancy of their likeness to something: but he confesses that in an Island made by a Cataract of the River *Tornatrask* called *Darra*, there are found *Seitæ*, just in the shape of a man, one of them very tall, and hard by 4 others something lower, with a kind of Cap on their heads. But because the passage into the Island is dangerous by reason of the Cataract,

the *Laplanders* are forc't to desist from going to that place, so that it is impossible now to know how those stones are worshipped, or how they came there. These stones are not set up by themselves, but lie 3 or 4 together, according as they find them; the first of which they honor with the title of *Storjunkar*, the second they call *Acte*, or *Storjunkars* wife; the third his Son or Daughter, and the rest his Servants. And this they do because they would not have their *Storjunkar*, who is *Thors* Viceroy, in a worse condition then other Roial Prefects, whom they usually see thus accompanied by their Wives and Children, and Attendants (1674: chapter X).

2.13 Grand Tours, private letters and visitors' books: On Vidua's journey to Sápmi

In this section I shall focus on Count Carlo Vidua even if he was by no means the first Italian to embark on a grand tour in the North. The first man to do so in Italy was the well-known traveller Giuseppe Acerbi, an eminent figure of late 18th century Italian cultural landscape. Between 1798 and 1799 he travelled across Fennoscandinavia and came into contact with local populations. He was the first continental traveller to have reached North cape *via terra*. He is also remembered for being the first foreigner to record a joik (Sámi chant) (Graff 2004; Ramnarine 2009; see also Gaski 2020) I have decided to only mention Acerbi not because I do not acknowledge his importance in the development of an imagery about Sápmi in Italy – with this regard, his epistolary-form travelogue, available in English, French and later Italian, was indeed very influential - but because there is an extensive literature on his journey, mostly in Italian but also in other languages (see among others Barton 1996; De Caprio 1997; Boero 2010; Hilder 2010; Tuominen 2011; Ahlbäck et al. 2017). On the other hand, very little has been written about Vidua's experience in Fennoscandinavia and, more specifically, in Sápmi.

A few years after Acerbi reached North Cape in 1799, another Italian traveller decided to embark on a journey to and through Sápmi. Count Carlo Vidua left Italy with his friend Ciriè Doria on June 1818 for a three-year long journey, which brought them to Northern Europe (where Vidua visited Denmark, Sweden, Sápmi and Finland). On the way back home, they travelled across Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Greece before returning to Turin in 1821. This was the first of a number of journeys Vidua made around the world¹⁷⁴ (Surdich 2020). Acerbi and Vidua's experiences diverged from those of many travellers of their time: albeit taking place in the late 18th

¹⁷⁴ On his second journey (1825-1827) Vidua visited the United States and Mexico. His third and last voyage (1827-1830), led him to India, Singapore, Macao, the Philippines, Java, New Guinea, the Moluccas and Celebes (Surdich 2020).

and early 19th century and, despite the apparent similarities between their expeditions and the journeys so many young noblemen took across Europe during the same time-span, Acerbi and Vidua's travels to Northern Europe cannot be inscribed into the cultural coordinated of the grand tour.¹⁷⁵

2.13.1 The Grand Tour reversed

Literature Scholar Brodsky-Porges (1981) defines the Grand Tour as a «... formal and ritualized process by which the rich and near rich sons of England embarked on a prescribed trip to finish their education». Not only young British elites but also central European young aristocrats travelled across Europe as part of their upbringing.

As Brodsky-Porges points out, despite some core features of the grand tour did not change across the century, this cultural phenomenon was not static but characterised by a dynamic change in «[...] purposes, motivations, routes, and [in] the students themselves» before evolving into a today widespread practice known as “tourism”. During the 17th- and 18th-century it was common practice and a custom for boys belonging to the upper-class to embark on a voyage through Europe upon coming of age. These young men usually did not travel alone by were accompanied by an older friend or mentor trusted by their family. The usual final destination of this formative journey was Italy. During and thanks to the journey, the young travellers were supposed to acquire a set of skills and qualities that would have enabled them to become educated adult, able to interact with other members of the upper-society.

The grand tour represents an important modern practice that contributed to the circulation of peoples and ideas across the continent during the ancient regime and well into the 19th and early 20th century. Such a journey, for those who set out to it, was a dangerous, tiring and challenging experience. For the families who invested money and emotions in their heirs' journey across Europe, the stakes were high as the loss of a male grown up and educated son was a potential threat to the family's own survival. Nevertheless, they were willing to send their sons abroad since the experience young men could gain from such a journey were considered valuable and necessary for developing the right qualities gentleman were supposed to master. In those cultural contexts, travel was considered a didactic device essential to complete a young man education (Brodsky-Porges 1981).

Upon returning home, a number of travellers wrote their memoirs and published them as travel accounts, contributing in popularizing this phenomenon

There was no set itinerary but some cities in France and Italy had soon emerged as cultural hubs, attracting young men from all over continental Europe and the British Isles. Usually, the young

travellers and their entourage travelled southwards, visiting town and cities on the way to Rome. This kind of journey was designed to expose the younger generations to the cultural legacy Italian cities embodied: classical antiquity and the renaissance. It is clear that, Acerbi's and Vidua's journey differed from those of young members of the European Elite. Unlike the young men who used to undertake a long a formative journey across Europe, both Acerbi and Vidua were already in their adult age when they left their hometowns¹⁷⁶, heading towards Fennoscandinavia. Most importantly though, the very destination of Acerbi and Vidua set their journeys apart from the grand Tour. The canonical rout of the grand Tour traversed France and the Italian states following a North-South orientation. Acerbi and Vidua instead from the south headed northwards

For Acerbi, northern Europe was the destination he had long longed for, and that he yearned once he came back to Italy. For Vidua instead, Fennoscandinavia was only one of the numerous places he would visit throughout his life. Unlike Acerbi, who left Italy with the intention of carrying out a classic research journey, Vidua's interest in the North was driven by scientific curiosity about the local mines and, as Brevini points out, ultimately by the history and conditions of Nordic peoples (2009). Despite his interest in productive activities such as mining, Vidua's letters reveal the real reason that led this Piedmont man to Kiruna Municipality: he wanted to "see"¹⁷⁷ the Sámi. Calling them *Lapps*, he defines them according to the categories of his time: they were regarded as «the only nomadic nation in Europe» or «the last savage people in Europe». With a hint of amazement, Vidua reports that the most difficult thing in his journey was to see the Sámi people. It is interesting to notice Vidua's choice of words that encapsulate the ethnographic character of Vidua's accounts. To his sisters, he wrote that the Sámi are «the only savage people left in Europe»¹⁷⁸ while, in a letter to his friend the Marchese del Carretto, he explains that he reached Duortnus/Torne to «[...] see the only nomadic Nation that still exists in Europe »¹⁷⁹.

From a letter to his step-mother (Petersburg 19/10/1818) it emerges that he had read the then available literature concerning Sámi peoples and their lands but that his experience proved much of what he had read inaccurate, also because it was probably outdated. It is likely that Vidua had access to both the volumes by both Schefferus and Acerbi and maybe also '*Viaggio Settentrionale*' by Negri.

Vidua's accounts of '*Laponia*' (Lapland) are extremely interesting and helpful in understanding early 19th century Italian perception of Sápmi and Sámi peoples. As Brevini highlights (2009), Vidua

¹⁷⁶ Mantua and Turin respectively,

¹⁷⁷ In the guise of his time, "to see" it actually meant "to meet" even though the action implicit to the idea of seeing relegates "the other" to a passive object and the traveller envisioned a detached interaction with the local Sámi population.

¹⁷⁸ «*Il solo popolo selvaggio che resti in Europa*».

¹⁷⁹ «[...] *vedere la sola nazione nomada, che esista ancora in Europa*».

and his works are today almost forgotten and only a handful of scholars have devoted their attention to this young man who lived in a time when Italy as a state was just coming into being. Born in 1785, Carlo Vidua lived to see the dawn of the ancient regime and the rise of modern Italy, witnessing the end of enlightenment and the beginning of Romanticism. One of the last representatives of Classicism, Vidua had been one of the most prominent travellers of 19th century northern Italian cultural milieu. Prompt by curiosity about foreign cultures, and inspired by a sense of adventure, the young aristocrat travelled through Europe, northern Africa, Northern and Central America before reaching South-East Asia and Indonesia, where he died in 1830.

2.13.2 Vidua: an Italian “nomad”

When he visited Sápmi, in 1818, Carlo Vidua was a 33-year-old well-educated Piedmont man with good connections across Europe and beyond. He was a close friend of Cesare Balbo and von Humboldt. From a wealthy but strict family, since a young age, Vidua had a long for adventures and a strong desire to learn about foreign peoples and their ways of life. He had a privileged upbringing and the economic means that enabled him to pursue his dream of travelling the world. His family belonged to the 19th century Piedmont's upper class and his father was even appointed interior minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1814.

Despite his father's wish to see his son following into his steps, Carlo Vidua spent his life not engaging into State affairs but in travelling and writing. His background shaped his interests and his attitudes towards his interlocutors. During his teenage years, Vidua lived through the Napoleonic occupation of Northern Italy. As Rossi (1961) noticed, his family did not align with the Napoleon supporters and, instead, retired from the public sphere, sheltering young Carlo Vidua from external political contacts. His family's political orientations and their life-choices had a long lasting effect on Carlo Vidua: since the city of Torino and its institutions were under the influence of the French occupiers, his father forbade Vidua from enrolling at the University of Torino and, in doing so, he prevented his son from receiving further education. In Rossi (1961)'s view, the extensive travels Vidua undertook may have been a way to compensate the lack of formal education he so much longed for. Vidua had a deep interest in history, politics and regarded the act of travelling to foreigner lands as a formative experience. In his view, the public utility of his expeditions around the world lied in the possibility expand the knowledge about different cultures and acquire new expertise. According to Balbo (1834), in Vidua's opinion¹⁸⁰ this encounter with other cultures would foster new ideas,

¹⁸⁰ C. Vidua, *Dello stato delle cognizioni in Italia*, Torino, 1834 access at https://books.google.it/books?id=34UpAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=carlo+vidua&hl=it&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjO3ObmzqTrAhUD_KQKHeHjDgUQ6AEwA3oECAyQA#v=onepage&q=carlo%20vidua&f=false.

enriching the traveller's personal and political profile. Reflecting upon Vidua's experience, Balbo did not regard him as a tourist or a simple traveller but as a researcher whose interests spanned across different disciplines. Even the choice of the destinations reflect Vidua's eclectic attitude. He decided on northern Europe because, in Vidua's own view, travelling to the most secluded and inaccessible areas of the world was an ennobling experience that would show the traveller's nobility of character (Brevini 2009). Young Carlo Vidua was a man of many interests. He devoted his time to the study of politics, history, literature, mineralogy and agronomy but his curiosity led him to study other subjects such as, for instance, legislation or natural history. He was proud of the hundreds of books and objects acquired during his journeys. For instance, while visiting Mexico he collected a substantial number of pamphlets, leaflets and articles and shipped them to Italy (Surdich 2020).

Vidua was not only a keen observer but also a diligent writer who took extensive notes on his travels, on the people he met and on the events he witnessed. He recorded his thoughts and impressions in a series of diaries, notes, and journals. He intended to rearrange this material into travel books but sudden death took him before he could accomplish this task (Brevini 2009). Not only did he never manage to write his travel accounts but also all his private documents are now lost, making it hard to reconstruct Vidua's journeys and thoughts. Following Vidua's own wills, the majority of his papers were burnt after his death (Rossi 1961). The only accounts of Vidua's travels that still exist are the missives he sent to his acquaintances, family members, and friends. Vidua's epistolary was indeed edited and published posthumously by Vidua's friend Cesare Balbo (1834). Among the surviving letters, some refers to Vidua's 1818 journey through Fennoscandinavia. These papers contain interesting information relevant for my analysis of the imaginary of Sápmi in modern Italy. For this reason, my analysis will focus on those documents and, in particular, to the one Vidua sent from Petersburg to his stepmother, in mid-September 1818. In the missives he sent to his relatives and acquaintances, Vidua recounted his whereabouts updating them on his journey and describing his experiences, while conveying the emotions he felt in those faraway lands. In doing so, he enabled his readers to participate in his journeys, albeit only through words inscribed in paper. If, as Bödeker says (2004:201), letters have the power to «bridge spatial distances» they sometimes also bridge the temporal ones. Reading letters written hundreds of years ago may evoke in the reader a sense of connection with the writer. The impression is that of an im-mediate dialogue with the long gone author of the missive. This feeling is only an illusion though as the distance between a 19th century author and a 21st century reader is incommensurable temporally and culturally wise.

The modern reader is unable to grasp the references hidden between the lines, and often reads the letters for purposes much different from the ones the author wrote them for. In order to understand

the real meaning and value of a letter, it is necessary to have some knowledge about the author, the recipient and the context into which the letter was first written. Furthermore, the feelings a letter evokes in us today are completely different from the emotions those words induces in the original receiver of the letter. Accustomed as we are to almost immediate forms of communication and to vivid visual counterparts to the written and oral text (for instance, photos or videos) it is almost impossible for us to understand the emotions a letter could provoke in the receiver and in the writer. When these letters described adventures in distant lands, the impression those words had on the receivers must have been vivid and overwhelming. Similarly, it is beyond our comprehension the marvel people experienced when seeing a print or a drawing reproducing elements of faraway countries they were probably never to see by themselves. Cards, drawings and letters kept families and friends connected at enabled those who stayed behind to experience distant realities, albeit by proxy. Similarly, small objects travellers brought home once back from a journey constituted both a proof and a token of the voyage itself, enabling those who saw or touched it to get a glimpse of the culture to which the object belonged. On the other hand, the images produced by souvenirs were far from the reality these objects came to embody. Souvenirs contributed in constructing an imagined reality of faraway places and the people who lived there.

In Vidua's case, during his journeys the piedmont man not only gathered information about foreign agriculture techniques, languages, literature, military arts, natural history, mineralogy, trade, local costumes and demography but he also collected books, documents and objects as souvenirs and evidence of his perilous journeys. Vidua's letter were not meant to be made public and it was only thanks to Balbo that they were collected and printed in a set of three volumes. The way this collection came into being draws our attention to another important element to address when examining epistolaries as sources: as it often happens with dichotomies, when it comes to the distinction between public and private letters the boundaries between these two categories are blurred.

Private letters are often exchanged among people who share some level of intimacy and may contain details that neither the addressee nor the addressed may have wanted to disclose. These texts were not written with a public audience in mind and they may contain reflections and ideas or information deemed to be too sensitive to be shared with a third party. Nevertheless, as researches, it is too easy to approach letters as historical documents and take into little considerations the emotional context into which they were exchanged. The epistolaries are a peculiar form of writing, especially when examined as a form of travel literature. They fall between the travel book and the travel notes being neither of them. Unlike memoirs and travel accounts, letters still belong with the journey. As Halldórsdóttir (2007) reminds us, once mailed, their contents cannot be changed. In other words, the

author has no more authorship on his words, which, once inscribed in the paper and sent to the receivers, become, to an extent, potentially public. With respect to this aspect, letters resemble books and other public writings. Nevertheless, from a contents' point of view, the material they discuss is often private in nature and has undergone only preliminary adjustments. The intrinsic hybridity of letters, characterised by a level of material revision but also spontaneity and desire to inform family and friends about one owns whereabouts, has made letters extremely interesting sources of information on the authors' understanding of the phenomena they described, and on their contemporary cultural milieu. When critically approached, letters may reveal relevant information on contemporary dominant conceptions concerning the topic addressed. In the case of Vidua's epistolary from his 1818 voyage, it is possible to extrapolate interesting details on how he envisioned and

perceived the North and Sámi people. He poured his impressions and considerations in the letters he sent to his family and friends and, among Vidua's thoughts, there are some interesting remarks concerning his encounters with the Sámi people of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark, a cultural area that has a strong connection with the region where I carried out fieldwork.

2.13.3 Vidua's journey at the edges of (his) world

Vidua's journey to Sápmi started in the south of Sweden: in 1818 he reached Stockholm and from there he travelled to Uppsala. Tracing Acerbis's footsteps, his aim was to reach North Cape but his journey came to an end in the mountains between Norway and Sweden, in today Norrbotten County. He later recounted that the expedition through Sápmi (*Laponia*) «had been the most difficult of [his] journeys». One of the motives behind Vidua's journey was his interest in productive activities and mineralogy. During his stay in the Uppsala region, Vidua visited the local mines and so he did once he was in the north. For this reason, during his time in the Kiruna municipality, he mostly interacted with the mine inspector and the local priests. Both were usually exponents of the hegemonic Swedish society. It is then not surprising that, in his letters, he mentions that priests and inspectors were «the only civilized people in those lands», juxtaposing them and their qualities, such as hospitality and good manners, to that of the local Sámi inhabitants. He also notes that these state officials are usually from the south and the people originally from the area are the Finns (*Finesí*) and the Sámi (*Lapponi*). Even though he did not reach Sápmi to «see the Sámi», he was extremely interested in their customs. Although Vidua interacted with members of the local Sámi communities, as it emerges from his notes, he did not tried to satisfy his curiosity by asking them questions. Following the fashion of the time, he rather consult with the local authorities. He hence chose to interview the local priests to obtain information about the customs of the local Sámi people.

As he wrote in his letters, Vidua was proud to be the first man from Piedmont to have reached these northern lands. This remark echoes Acerbi's satisfaction for being the first continental European to have reached North Cape by foot. The spirit of competitiveness that animated Acerbi resonates with Vidua's own understanding of his journey, even though Vidua expresses pride in relation to his own native country, Piedmont. The relevance of Vidua's remark emerges only if we bear in mind that the early 19th century was a time of political unrest in the Italian peninsula. In 1818, Italy as a state not yet existed and the Savoy family was ruling on Piedmont and Sardinia (the Kingdom of Sardinia). A number of independent states and coexisted in what, more or less, is now the Italian territory. Despite the political fragmentation in the peninsula, the local elites shared to an extent a sense of common identity, which paved the way for the later unification of Italy in 1861

When Vidua reached Sweden, he travelled north and, resorting to the local postal system, he reached the remote – from the Swedish perspective – village of *Čohkkirasjávri* /Jukkasjärvi, in the Duortnus/Torne area, on the 17th of August 1818. Vidua's Journey stopped in the same region where Negri's one did. He did not manage to reach his long-yearned destination but he stopped where the road literally ended.

In his letters to his family and friends, Vidua describes the landscape around him and mentions his stay at Ofver Tornea, nowadays Övertorneå (Ylitornio in Finnish). This small village, situated on the border between Sweden and Finland, had a symbolic role in Vidua's understanding of northern Sweden. It was the northernmost settlement reached by the Swedish road system. Beyond Ofver Tornea, thick woods prevented travellers from proceeding northwards. It was a border made of woods, separating, in the view of Vidua and his contemporaries, civilization from the impenetrable lands of the Sámi. In this regard, it would be useful to visualize the Swedish (as well as the Norwegian and Russian) presence in the Sámi territories not like a capillary presence of the Swedish state over Sámi lands. Rather, the towns and villages inhabited by members of the hegemonic society (as well as by Sámi and Kven¹⁸¹ peoples) were like dots scattered along the coast and in some key areas of the inland. Swedish control over the Sámi was implemented through this web of settlements connected by roads. This net though was loose enough for the Sámi to be able, until the late 19th century, to carry out their life and only sporadically interact with the authorities during specific times of the year like fairs in February, when taxes were paid, censuses compiled, weddings celebrated. In

¹⁸¹ The Kven people are an ethnic minority living in the Northern regions of Norway. The Kven people are the descendants of Finnish peasants and fishermen who, in the 18th and 19th centuries, emigrated to Northern Norway from the northern parts of Finland and Sweden to escape poverty and famine. The Kvens were granted the status of minority group in 1996, and Kven language was recognized as a minority language in Norway in 2005 (Lane 2010).

this context, to non-Sámi everything that lied beyond the borders of the settlements' territories and was far off the road system must have seemed like an «uncharted territory». In a way, it was an uncharted territory since charts reproducing the geomorphological features of the area were still limited. Accurate maps of the northern areas had started appearing in the 17th century – cfr Buerus's map 10, image 17 – but these were maps encompassing wide regions and were mostly focused on the water systems since those were the only accessible ways to reach the otherwise isolated inland areas. From Over Torne, and once he abandoned the idea of reaching North Cape by travelling across northern Sweden and Norway, Vidua decided to reach the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk, the source of the river Duortnus/Torne. Since there was no road and the woods were too thick to be crossed, he and his crew travelled by boat, moving upstream. The rapids made the journey between Čohkkirasjávri /Jukkasjärvi and Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk extremely difficult. Vidua describes the dangers he encountered with a sort of pride and excitement. Comparing it to the explorations he had previously undertook, he defined this experience as «the most difficult of my journeys».



Image 17a: Buerus's 1626 map, detail, the Sámi settlement of Jáhkâmâhkke (LS) also known in Swedish and Norwegian as Jokkmokk (here written Iokomuka). A *lavvu* (Sámi tent) or *goahti* (turf hut) symbolize this Sámi winter settlement.



Image 17b: Buerus's 1626 map, detail, the town of Duortnus/Torneå (here written Torne).



Image 17c Buerus's 1626 map, detail of the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and its water system. The lake Torne Trask (Torne Tresk in the map) is visible in the right left corner. From the lake, the river Duortnus/Torne Flode descend till it reaches the Gulf of Bothia, where the town of Duortnus/Torneå (here written Torne, at the centre of map n20) is represented with a church and other buildings (in contrast with the representation of the *goahti* (turf huts) symbolising Sámi settlements).

2.13.4 Man does not live by bread alone

As the extracts selected and reported in this section show, in his letters, Vidua devotes part of his attention to bread and roads. In Vidua's experience of Sápmi, these two elements appear as his parameters to define the (perceived) remoteness area as well as the level of civilization of his interlocutors

Ma giungendo ad Ofver Tornea finiscono le strade, finiscono i sentieri, più non si può andare né in vettura né a cavallo, e quasi nemmeno a piedi; perché le selve sono tanto folte, e piene di steppi, di mousse, d'alberi caduti, d'arbusti, di paludi, che riesce sempre penoso, e talor impossibile il potervi penetrare¹⁸².

Bread, cornerstone of European food culture, was then not part of the Sámi diet. Vidua notes:

Non è una esagerazione il dire che in Laponia, a riserva delle case di due o tre parrochi, non si trova pane. Due popoli abitano le vaste regioni a nord di Tornea, i Finesi ed i Laponi. I Laponi vivono ne' boschi con latte e carne di que' loro cervi domestici detti in francese Rennes. I Finesi, che sono coloni venuti dalla Finlandia e sono dati all'agricoltura, non raccolgono da pochi sterili campi altro che orzo; e quest'orzo è così poco, che mescolano colla farina gran quantità di paglia sminuzzata, il che rende il pane tanto amaro e tanto cattivo, che non si può assolutamente mangiare. Anzi, un giorno, che ci mancò il nostro pane, avendo io molto appetito, feci ogni sforzo per mandar giù un poco di quel pane di paglia, ma non ci potei riuscire, tanto che vissi di latte fin che potessi aver altro pane. Questo le basti per darle un'idea del paese, che siamo andati a visitare¹⁸³.

By discussing bread and roads and by using them as reference points through which culture can be measured, in Vidua's account the Sámi peoples emerged as the epitome of primitiveness. Unable to recognize the complexity of seasonal travel-routes, Vidua –as many before and after him- saw in the Sámi way of life an endless wandering.

¹⁸² « But once one reaches Ofver Tornea there are no more roads and no more paths, so that one can no longer proceed in a carriage or on horseback, or hardly even on foot; because the woods are so thick, so full of wilderness, of steppes, mousse [mousse?], fallen trees, shrubs and swamps that it is always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to go through it » (my translation).

¹⁸³ « It is no exaggeration to say that in 'Laponia', with the exception of the houses of two or three parish priests, there is no bread. Two peoples inhabit the vast regions north of Duortnus/Tornea, the Finesi and the Lapps. The Lapps live in the woods thanks to the milk and meat of their domestic deer, called Rennes in French. The Finesi, who are settlers from Finland and working agriculture, but all they can harvest from those sterile fields is barley, so little barley that they mix the flour with a great deal of chopped straw, which makes the bread both bitter and evil-tasting so that it is absolutely inedible. On the contrary, one day when we didn't have our bread I was so hungry that I made every effort to swallow their bread, but I could not, with the result that I lived on milk until other bread became available. This should suffice to give you an idea of the country we went to visit » (my translation).

Vidua's journey represents an important piece in the complex jigsaw that is the Italians' experiences and imageries of Sápmi. His letters reproduce as well as dismantle older stereotypes, offering us an insight into the representations of the North of Vidua's and his contemporaries.

2.13.5 A border-bounded borderless world

In 1818, when Vidua reached lake Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk, the border between Norway and Sweden had officially been drawn for more than 65 years. This official state-border was only one of the cultural lines that defined this region as "marginal" despite its centrality in the Swedish 17th century economy,

Vidua's narrative localises the edge of civilisation in the lands inhabited by the Sámi. As Brevini (2008)'s highlights, this attitude is reminiscent of a frontier myth and resonates with how the local Swedish/Norwegian members of society perceived the area. In Vidua's mind, the village of *Čohkkirasjávri* /Jukkasjärvi –a few kilometres from Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk Lake - represented the last outpost of civilisation into the arctic. The village and its church had indeed represented an garrison of both Christianity and the Swedish State into the Arctic Circle., at since at least the time of the church foundation in 1607.

This cultural border was not the only boundary in the region. The border between Norway and Sweden lies just a stone-throw from the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk Lake. The transhumance routes cut across it, connecting what is today the Swedish side of Sápmi with the Norwegian one. It would be more appropriate though to examine this last element from a perspective informed by the Sámi understanding of space. From the Sámi point of view, it is the border that cuts across the transhumance routes, and not the other way round.

This border region, longitudinally stretching across the whole of central and northern Scandinavia, runs along the long mountain rift, which is one of the most famous characteristic of the Norwegian landscape, before slowly dissolving in the arctic tundra. This border is relatively recent, having being established in 1781. As Paasi efficaciously notes, from the perspective of the central nation states – in this case epitomized by three capitals all situated on the shores of the Baltic sea, in the southernmost edges of Fennoscandinavia – border areas are commonly regarded as peripheral (1999). The high and steep mountains surrounded by thick woods in the remoteness of the North were probably considered by the Swedish and Norwegian states as extremely remote. It was indeed perceived as the ultimate periphery from a geographical and cultural point of view. This perspective is reflected in Vidua's own perception of the area. This perspective though clashes with the Sámi understanding of those lands they had inhabited for millennia. In particular, the border area dividing Norway from

Sweden besides the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk Lake was at the core of the Duortnus/Torne-Sámi culture, which stretched from the shores of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark on the Bothnian gulf to the fjords of today Sor-Troms and Nord-Norland. For a long time, the Duortnus/Torne-Sámi had crossed the mountains around the lake every year, along with their reindeer, on the seasonal migration from the winter to the summer grazing lands. What the settlers partitioned, dividing it into Norway and Sweden were, in the eyes and experiences of the Duortnus/Torne-Sámi, *mearrariika* (the lands by the sea) and the *badjeriikka* (the upper lands).

Borders, even when they initially appear as natural (as Vidua for instance perceived the woods and the mountains of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark) are indeed cultural. An insuperable obstacle for some, a connecting route for others. These were the conflicting Sámi and Scandinavian perception of the environment in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark. Borders are, as Lantto remarks, social constructions. As such, they reflect the values and the worldviews of the society, which established them. In 1751, the formalization of the Stromstad Treaty established the border between Norway (then Norway Denmark) and Sweden (then still controlling also Finland). This line on the map, drawn in the South, had long-term consequences for the Sámi population as a whole and, more specifically, for those communities engaging in reindeer tending. Nation states borders across Fennoscandinavia and Russia divided and fragmented the Sámi territories, enforcing citizenship (either Norwegian or Swedish), upon the local populations, The border posed immense challenges for the Sámi communities who had to develop tactics to maintain the cultural unity in spite of the borders (cfr Lantto 2010). On the other hand though, during the time of war, Sámi communities as well as Kvens and members of the hegemonic societies were able to exert their agency by resorting to borders as a means to reach safety from the Nazi or help others finding it¹⁸⁴. When the border was formally established, a paragraph was written to ensure the rights of the Sámi peoples who lived on both sides of it. This section is formally defined «*Første Codicil og Tillæg Til Grendse-Tractaten imellem Kongerigerne Norge og Sverrig Lapperne betræffende*»¹⁸⁵ and is known under the name *Lappekodisillen* or «*Samenes Magna Charta*»¹⁸⁶. It owes its name to the fact that it acknowledges and recognizes Sámi rights over the land they inhabit, and such rights are, according to the codicil, protected and guaranteed. Nevertheless, this protection had often been only nominal and the border had dire consequences for the Sámi communities.

¹⁸⁴ Cfr Chapter 3,

¹⁸⁵ «First Codicil and Supplement to the Border Treaty between the Kingdoms of Norway and Sweden concerning the Lapps» (my translation)

¹⁸⁶ Lapp codicil, Sámi Magna Charta.

The *Tidsreise Sápmi* (timetravel Sápmi) application, developed as an educational aid poignantly addresses the partitioning of Sápmi by describing the bordering activity to children as: *Grensedelingen av norden i 1852 skilte et folk med en strek i et støvete kart*¹⁸⁷.

2.13.6 Vicar Pehr Palmgren's hospitality and Vidua's stay at Čohkkirasjávri

At Čohkkirasjávri /Jukkasjärvi, where the local priest hosted Vidua and his crew¹⁸⁸, Vidua had the opportunity to learn more about the local way of life and the customs of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark. Praising the priest's hospitality, Vidua described the clergyman as an educated man who, after 14 years among the Sámi, had almost lost contact with the cultural developments of the south. The Čohkkirasjávri /Jukkasjärvi priest played a central role in Vidua's time in the Duortnus/Torne area. Echoing the encounter between Tornaeus and Negri, It was the priest who provided the Italian man with hospitality, food and first-hand information concerning the local Sámi communities.

*[...]mai non ci uscirà di memoria la bontà, con cui ci ricevette il pastore di Jukkasjervi. Questo buon parroco alloggiò e nutrì non solamente ni sue, ma il nostro domestico svedese, l'interprete finese, quattro baraciuli, e due piloti, co' quali giungemmo al suo paese. La mattina ci faceva portare caffè mentre ravamo ancor in letto; poi quando ci eravamo alzati ci serviva un dèjeunè. Al suo pranzo ci facea bere del vino di Malaga, e ancor la sera ci imbandiva un'ottima cena. Immagini che lusso per chi era avvezzato a viver di pane e di latte. Le assicuro, che non ci potevamo contenere dalla meraviglia ritrovando nell'ultimo villaggio della Lapponia tutte le comodità della vita, e in quel buon parroco un uomo istrutitissimo, che sapeva otto lingue, sebbene per mancanza di esercizio non sapesse più esprimersi che in svedese ed in Finese. Egli si prestò a dare soddisfazione ad ogni mia curiosità, ed a rispondere ad una quantità di quesiti, ch'io gli feci su Laponi, intorno a costumi ed alla maniera di vivere di qual popolo ho preso minute informazioni, ed alquanto diverse da quelle, che si leggono ne' viaggi, che se ne sono stampati (Vidua 1818, lettera alla Contessa Vidua in Balbo 1834:36 vol II).*¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ «The border division of the north in 1852 separated a people with a line in a dusty map» (my translation).

¹⁸⁸ Vidua, his friend Ciriè, a Swedish servant, a finnish interpreter and 6 men (whose task was to row and carry the luggage)

¹⁸⁹ «[...] I shall never forget the kindness with which the Iukkasjervi pastor received us. This good-hearted parish priest gave room and board not only to his own but also to our Swedish housekeeper, Finnish interpreter, four porters, and two pilots with which we had arrived in his village hamlet. In the morning he had us served coffee in bed; then we were given breakfast as soon as we had got up. At lunch he had us drink Malaga wine, and again in the evening we partook of an excellent dinner. Think of what luxury that meant to someone who was accustomed to living on bread and milk. I swear that we could not hide our amazement at finding all the comforts of modern living in the last village of Lapland, and in the pastor a most educated man who spoke eight languages, although for want of practice he was by now fluent only in Swedish and Finnish. He tried to satisfy every point of my curiosity, and answer a multitude of questions which I asked him about the Lapps. I gained most detailed information about their customs and way of life – somewhat different from what one finds published in travellers' tale » (my translation).

In spite of the praises Vidua had for this clergyman, and even though clearly holding him in much esteem and speaking highly of him in his letters, he never mentioned his name. By examining the church records dated around the time of Vidua's stay as well as earlier works on the region¹⁹⁰, it emerges that the priest that so warmly hosted Vidua was Pehr Palmgren, who was also the local schoolmaster. Even though Vidua and Doria did not mention Pehr Palmgren, they were impressed by his hospitality and left a greeting in the church. The note reads: «*Felix Italia naturae donis sed tu felicior in paupertate, o Laponia, quae exterarum gentium rapacitati atque superbiae non servis. Comes Carolus Vidua Italus 1818 9 September* »¹⁹¹

Below, in French, Doria wrote: «the Marquise Alessandro Doria followed on the 9 september 1818»

In *Čohkkirasjávri* /Jukkasjärvi, Vidua visited the local church and not only did he leave his own signatures, he also took note of the signatures and memoirs left by those who, before him, had visited the village. In a letter to his sister, dated 9 September 1818, he mentions that, in more than 150 years, only a dozen of foreigners had reached the *Čohkkirasjávri* /Jukkasjärvi village and it is apparent Vidua consider this fact a proof he had reached one of the most inaccessible places on earth. According to Vidua's note, the signatures in the church books attested the visit of some French and English men, but no Russian nor Danish or German travellers. It is likely that Danish and Russians – possibly on working missions - visited the area, which is positioned between then Norway-Denmark and Russia-Finland. If they did venture in those lands, they left no record in that specific local church book though. Maybe because, from their point of view, it was not a remarkable event. Scrolling through the records, a name caught Vidua's attention. He wrote to his stepmother:

*A Jakkasjervi abbiamo ritrovato l'iscrizione, che vi lasciò il poeta francese Regnad, il più antico fra tutti i viaggiatori di Laponia. I viaggiatori che veenero dipoi lasciarono tutti qualche iscrizione, che si conservano nella chiesa. In un secolo e mezzo il loro numero non passa la dozzina. Vi era un solo italiano, un marchese Arconati di Milano, alcuni Inglesi e Francesi, nessun Russo né Danese né Tedesco. Seguendo il costume dei nostri predecessori, abbiamo anche noi lasciato una memoria.*¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Pehr Palmgren (1812-31), skolmästare i Jukkasjärvi sedan 1804, utn. tillika som pastor härst. 1812; erhöill i mars 1831 fullmakt ss. khde i Lycksele, tilltr. 1 maj s. å., se Lycksele. Skolmästarbefattningen jämte skolan indrogs 1820. Cfr Bygdén (1923) and the website <http://runeberg.org/hernosandh/2/0051.html>.

¹⁹¹ « Italy is happy thanks to the gifts of nature; but you, Lapland, are even happier in your poverty, since you are not subservient to the rapacity and pride of foreign peoples. Carlo Vidua the Italian, 9 of September, 1818» (translation by Lidia Luisa Zanetti Domingues).

¹⁹² « In Jukkasjervi we found the inscription that the French poet Regnard, the most ancient among the travellers of Lapland, left there. In century and a half, their [the travellers'] number is no more than a dozen, there was only one Italian, the Marchese Arconati from Milano, some British and some French, no Russian nor Danish nor German traveller. Following our predecessors' tradition, we too have left a memoir » (my translation).

Arconati's name is recorded in the church *besøksboken* (visit book) where he wrote: « *Il marchese Paolo Arconati-Visconti*¹⁹³ visitò questo luogo. Al 5 di luglio 1793 »¹⁹⁴.

This episode shows how the common practice of leaving a mark of their own passage by writing their names in the visit books, was not only already common in the 17th century but that, such a tradition, constitute today an interesting historical source that helps tracking the foreign presence in lands often perceived and portrayed by outsiders as remote, dangerous, and unreachable. The very existence of these dedications proves these lands may have been off the beaten track and difficult to reach but that they were also inserted into an international web of relations and part of a wider European context.

Vidua's accounts are built upon comparisons as a conceptual tool that helps him constructing Lapland as a land of opposites, a recurrent feature in the accounts on Sápmi. For instance, he addresses the difference between inland towards the mountains and, following the example of those who, before him, had written about Sámi and their cultures, Vidua tried to make sense of what he was experiencing by comparing the environment, the people, the animals and the local customs to what was familiar to him. For instance, Reindeer were to him tamed deer.

He mentioned the food available to the people of *Čohkkirasjávri/Jukkasjärvi*, while also providing information about reindeers – in particular, their diet-. He also recorded demographic information about the area, stating that, according to his sources – most likely the priest, who had also access to the parish registers - there were some 650 souls in Tornea. Many of them were Swedes even though also some Finns lived there. The “lapps” instead were not living in the settlement but, according to Vidua, inhabited the surrounding areas.

Tornea è una città, la cui popolazione non eguaglia quella di Conzano. Ha solamente 650 anime. Nelle sue strade deserte si taglia il fieno. Pure vi trovammo un buon albergo, e vi ci fermammo due giorni al dine di prepararci alla corsa di Laponia. Avevamo lettere per le autorità Svedesi e per le Russe, non che per due negozianti di Tornea. Ci procurammo lettere per li parrochi e per due ispettori delle mine (abbandonate), che sono le sole persone civili che vivano in Laponia; prendemmo un interprete che sapesse parlare Lapone e Finese, e finalmente ci occupammo delle provvisioni di vettovaglia. Comprammo del tè, del riso, dell'acquavite. E

¹⁹³ Bruxelles Paolo Arconati Visconti (1754-1821) was a prominent member of the Arconati Visconti family. He moved to Bruxelles in 1797. In 1800, while Belgium was under Napoleon rule, he served as major of the city. (Gola 2001); Gola S., (2001) Scrittura e immagini. L'Italia e gli italiani nella cultura belga dal 1820 al 1880

Italia e Belgio nell'Ottocento europeo. *Nuovi percorsi di ricerca, Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, p. 92-108

¹⁹⁴ «The marquise Arconati-Visconti visited this place. On the 5th of July 1793» I *besøksboken*

<https://nordland.fylkesbibl.no/Italia/Verso%20Lestrema%20Thule.pdf>

*specialmente una buona quantità di pane; una specie di Ramina per fa la minestra, delle coppe di legno inverniciato a guisa di piatti; io m'era provvisto di un bicchiere di corno, d'un altro di corame, di una forchetta e di un coltello*¹⁹⁵.

From Vidua's letters it can be inferred that he actually interacted with local Sámi peoples. He wrote about the amaze Sámi felt when they saw that people from so far lands (Piedmont) had come to see them¹⁹⁶. He also reported having spent one night «in the hut of a Lapp» which probably means he visited a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut).

According to Coaloa (in Brevini 2009: 183), Vidua actually recorded detailed information about the Sámi but, since he never published his memoirs, his insights have never been studied and still lie in the archives of Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. In the letters, he only briefly mentions some details like the dwelling site such as the following remark: «They lived in lonely areas and often change their abode».

2.13.7 Duortnus/Torne and Italy, an unlikely connection that transcends the centuries

Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk and the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark area have been visited by Negri in 1663, by Acerbi in 1799, and by Vidua in 1818. In 1932, Guido Puccio visited the same area, retracing the steps of his famous predecessors. In his 1932 reportage he specifically mentioned that it was Negri's book that susciated his curiosity and led hit to the «land of Lapp». He documented his journey in a series of notes and reportages. His memoirs of Sápmi were later edited and printed in a book in which some of the photographs he took while in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark are also reproduced. In one of such photos, Puccio is depicted along with four local Sámi (two men and two young boys). The position of the individuals depicted in the photograph is constructed in such a way that resembles earlier colonial images. The caption itself evokes the paternalistic attitude of Puccio: «Guido Puccio con in suoi "amici" Sámi¹⁹⁷»

¹⁹⁵ «Tornea is a city with a lower population than Conzano, only 650 souls. Hay is cut in its deserted streets. Yet we found a good hotel where we stayed for two days in order to prepare our Lappland trip. We had letters of introduction to the Swedish and Russian authorities as well as two shopkeepers in Tornea. We procured letters for the parish priest and two inspectors of (abandoned) wines, the only civilized people living in Lappland. We got hold of an interpreter who spoke both Lappish and Finnish. Finally we got busy with provisions of food: we bought tea, rice and brandy, a great quantity of bread, a kind of Ramina for making soup, winterised wooden cups to serve as plates. I already had a horn cup and one of dressed leather, a fork and a knife» (my translation).

«The sky was extraordinary calm, the air clear and healthy, as a result of the strong winds which blow in continuation.

¹⁹⁶ I though wonder whether this amazement was actual surprise or boredom, originating from the increasing awareness people wanted to "see" them because of their lifestyle, perceived as peculiar » (my translation).

¹⁹⁷ «Guido Puccio and his Sámi "friends" ».



Image 18a: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed along with two Sámi men and two Sámi Children. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads « *Guido Puccio con in suoi "amici" Sámi*» (Guido Puccio with his Sámi friends)



Image 18b: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi settlement. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads: « *Campo di nomadi Lapponi*» (nomadic Lapps' camp).



Image 18c: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi settlement. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads: « *La tipica capanna dei Lapponi* » (*Lapps's typic tent*). In the text, Puccio refers to this “hut” with the epithet “the Doria palace of the Tundra” (*Il palazzo Doria della Tundra*).

Despite the strong colonial overtones that characterise Puccio’s account and his pictures, these are interesting documents bearing witness to daily life in Duortnus/Torne Lappmark in the early 20th century (images 18a, 18b, 18c). Similarly, interesting are Puccio’s accounts of his journey. Puccio’s account is of particular interest for a few crucial details which I shall briefly outline here. First though it is important to outline the cultural context into which Puccio’s journey took place and which shaped his experiences and his expectations. Puccio’s notes – and the thoughts her expressed in them – reflect the colonial gaze that characterised early 20th century attitude towards Sámi as well as non-European peoples and cultures. It shall also be born in mind that, in those years, Italy was under fascist rule and fascist ideology permeated discoursed over “race and cultures”. In this cultural context, Puccio’s racist overtones in describing the Sámi comes as no surprise. On the other hand, the rhetoric and narratives employed by Puccio are also inspired by both local Swedish attituded towards the Sámi – since Puccio’s Swedish guides instructed him about Sámi peoples – as well as previous accounts such as those of Negri’s and Acerbi which Puccio read and often quotes in his notes. Despite these colonial and patronizing overtones Puccio also shows cultural sensitivity and, while interacting with Sámi people, clumsily tried to show them respect, for instance by offering coffe, tobacco and liquor. He also acknowledges the derogatory nature of the term “Lapp”, endorsing the view that sees this term

as originally meaning “covered in rags” (*straccione*). He specifies that he would use this term meaning no harm and with no negative overtones, since it is the customary name of these peoples. Puccio though points out that the Sámi call themselves *Sambek* which he translates as “*gli abitanti della palude*” “the swamp dwellers” and it is with this Italian epithet that he often refers to them in his account.

In his notes, Puccio openly states that he “ventured” (*avventurarsi*) in «[...]those extreme regions of the [Swedish] country» (2003:35). In the reportage he notes that, upon reaching Stockholm, he tried to gather information on where he «[...]could find the lapps» but seemingly no one was able to provide him with satisfactory answers. The “nomadic nature” of the Sámi made them elusive, a feature that intrigued Puccio as much as it did intrigue many curious travellers before – and after – him. In the end, Puccio found help from a fellow Italian, a man from Lucca who had moved to Northern Sweden and there worked, selling clay objects to Sámi people¹⁹⁸. The perceived intrinsic diversity of these wandering people, free from the constraints of “civilized life” drove many travellers to Sápmi, and Puccio left Stockholm, heading North, with the hope of meeting these “lapps” that, in his view, were almost like a reflection of humanity’s long gone past. Puccio, following his fellow Italian’s advice, headed towards Abisko and, from there, to Kiruna, on his way towards the eastern shores of Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk. There, the man from Lucca had assured him, he would find the Sámi.

In Kiruna Puccio had his first encounter with a Sámi person, a woman dressed in a *gakti*, a garment that Puccio describes as *Pacchiano* as the Calabrian or Tyrol costumes of Italy. He wanted to take a photograph of this woman, hoping she would not notice him but she did and escaped Puccio’s camera, much to his disdain. He later managed to trick two women and take a picture of them, pretending to be interested in the berries they were selling. His joy in having managed to capture the image of two “Lappish girls” nevertheless was short lived as he later learned that one of them was “half breed”, one of her parents being Finnish. He wrote in his reportage: «Beware of the 50% lapps! », a comment reminiscent of blood quantum discourses. From Kiruna, he reached Chokkiras/Jukkasjarvi, where he visited the old church where – he was told – «the annual nomads’ gathering took place in spring » and where the Sámi «[...] celebrate their weddings, baptisms and funerals » (2003:45). There he also found the inscriptions left by the three Italian travellers who had visited that church in the two centuries

¹⁹⁸ Puccio reports his utter surprise in discovering that an Italian man was living in Northern Sweden. During my research on Italian travellers in Sápmi, I came across to at least two men who had settled in Sápmi – the man mentioned in 1932 by Puccio and the man mentioned by Salvini in the 1920s – and of which no record seems to exist. Further research in situ – in Tromsø and in Torne – may provide more information on the lives and whereabouts of these two individuals, both engaged in trade with local Sámi groups.

since it was established: these «three italians of other times » (tre italiani d'altri tempi) as Puccio describes them, were travellers belonging to the Piedmontis¹⁹⁹ and Lombard²⁰⁰ cultural and political elites. Had there been in Sápmi other Italians from lower social classes is not known. One can only assume someone from one of Italian modern states had moved in the lands of the Sámi following other emigrants like the Germans who settled in the North as labour force working in the mines. Given the interconnected network of trade in which both Sápmi and Italy were integrated Italian peddlers may have reached these areas since, at least according to the available sources, Italians belonging to humble social classes living in Sápmi are attested at least since the early 20th century. The Naples man selling objects to tourists in the Troms area – pretending to be Sámi – met by Giulia Kapp Salvini and the Lucca seller of clay objects who traded with Sámi people bear testimony to a history of contacts and exchanges between Sámi and Italians that has not gone down in history, their stories – unlike those of the powerful men who visited Sápmi driven by a taste for adventure and the exotic I described in these pages – being forgotten²⁰¹.

Chokkiras/Jukkasjarvi he then proceeded to Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk, reaching an area he identifies as Laimolahati, and there he found what he so longed to see... an “authentic Lappish camp”.

Puccio reports his surprise in verifying that the Sámi did not have the Mongolic facial traits he expected them to have. He associates them to the “Gypsy” people (Zingari), identifying in the mobility on the territory of both people the ultimate sign of alterity that in his view, and despite the deep cultural differences between Sámi and Romani, made them similar.

Pucci also acknowledges though that the Sámi are, after all, not so different for “us” Italian when he explains that it is considered unpolite to ask a “Lapp” how many reindeer s/he owns as such a question would put the person in the difficult position of disclosing her/his wealth. It is interesting here to note that it is true that asking a reindeer tender about the number of her/his animals was considered an indiscrete question but that reindeer tenders’ reticence in discussing this issue derives from cultural practices and worldviews and was/is also grounded in the asymmetric power relations deeply embedded in colonial dynamics that oppressed the Sámi. On one hand, boasting one owns wealth was and still is considered as a form of *hybris* that may fire back²⁰². The wealth and beauty

¹⁹⁹ The Marquis Alessandro D’Oria was from Ciriè, near Torino and Carlo Vidua was from Casale Monferrato.

²⁰⁰ Giuseppe Acerbi was from Mantua.

²⁰¹ This is a topic very dear to me since – until the beginning of the 20th century – members of own family, on my mother’s side, engaged in long-distance trade, their specialization being small objects and printings. The economy of the village where my family is from greatly depended on the money earned by the street vendors – known in the local language as “*perteganti*” who travelled far and wide selling goods. My relatives travelled across Northern Europe (as far as today Poland, Czech republic and Saint Petersburg as well as to South America).

²⁰² A similar attitude is attested with reference to the number of fish fished (fish luck) or that of games during a hunting.

Sámi associated to their herd was and still based on their own indigenous epistemology – epitomised by the Sámi concept of “reindeer luck” (see Oskal 2000) which differ from the one at the basis of the Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish cultures. On the other hand, counting reindeer has been a way employed by centralized States to impose taxation on the Sámi. Furthermore, the Nordic states quantified (and still quantify) the value of reindeer according to a set of variables and such value is used to determine and regulate for instance compensations when a reindeer is killed by a train – a compensation that Puccio, as early as the 1930s, already notices to be much lower than the actual market value of a reindeer.

In the reportage he wrote for the La Tribuna newspaper, Puccio describes the encounter with a man he defines as the “old man of Lapland” (il vegliardo della Lapponia). In retrospect, one of the most interesting elements of Puccio's work is his description of his encounter with this individual, Johan Turi, whom he met in a place he identifies as Lattilahati, not far from

Puccio went to that region of Lapland in the hope of being able to meet Turi, of whom he had heard a lot and of whom he had read the text of 1910 through the edition edited by Emilie Demant-Hatt. Together with Acerbi's travelogue and Negri's *Viaggio Settentrionale*, Turi's work had inspired Puccio's journey to the lands of the Sámi and the encounter with Turi – who invited Puccio into his own *goahhti* (Sámi turf-hut) deeply impressed Puccio. The Italian Journalist describes in details his interaction with this strong elderly man who, in his words, was exceptional

L'incisiva nobiltà di lineamenti splendeva di una nuova luce. Miti, storie, leggende della sua gente gli aleggiavano intorno con suggestiva potenza nel Silenzio assoluto che ci circondava. Ampia la fronte solcata da due rughe orizzontali. Vividissimi e penetranti gli occhi azzurri. L'epidermide del viso era conciata dalla pioggia e dal gelo, come la pelle di una renna. Fermi i lineamenti da cui traspariva un'interiore bontà. Indossava il solito giubbotto lappone. Era a testa scoperta, senza il caratteristico e un po' ridicolo berretto lappone, il che conferiva al suo aspetto e gravità e solennità. Questo per grandi linee Turi, l'uomo-Pescatore, l'uomo-Cacciatore l'uomo-Marinaio, l'artista, lo scrittore, quest'uomo che è in grado superlativo e con qualità e risorse eccezionali, possiamo perfino dire geniale, era espressione della tundra di sempre²⁰³ (Puccio 2003:83).

²⁰³ «The incisive nobility of features shone with a new light. Myths, stories, legends of his people hovered around him with suggestive power in the absolute silence that surrounded us. Broad forehead furrowed by two horizontal wrinkles. The blue eyes very vivid and penetrating. The skin of his face was tanned by rain and cold, like the skin of a reindeer. Still the features which showed an inner goodness. He wore the usual Lapp jacket. He was bare-headed, without the characteristic and somewhat ridiculous Lappish hat, which gave his appearance and gravity and solemnity. This broadly speaking Turi, the man-Fisherman, the man-Hunter, the man-Sailor, the artist, the writer, this man who is superlative and

In an almost deferential tone, Puccio reports Turi's movements and actions – such as measuring the oil for the boat -. The Italian journalist recalls in his notes that, when Turi died, such was his fame that the news was reported by newspapers through the world (2003).



Image 19a: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi man posing with a few copies of *La Tribuna Illustrata*, the newspaper Puccio worked for and in which he published the reportages from Sápmi. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads «*Anche in Lapponia si legge... La tribuna!*» (In Lapland too they read *La Tribuna!*)

with exceptional qualities and resources, we can even say brilliant, it was an expression of the tundra of all time» (my translation).

2.14 The Forgotten

In this paragraph, I shall provide an analysis of a short document that I found on an international scholarly web-library where hundreds of scanned eighteenth and nineteenth century documents. As it often happens when one discovers something new or long lost, I was not looking for this booklet but I came across it by chance, while looking for nineteenth century documents – in particular, letters - addressing Sápmi and Italy.

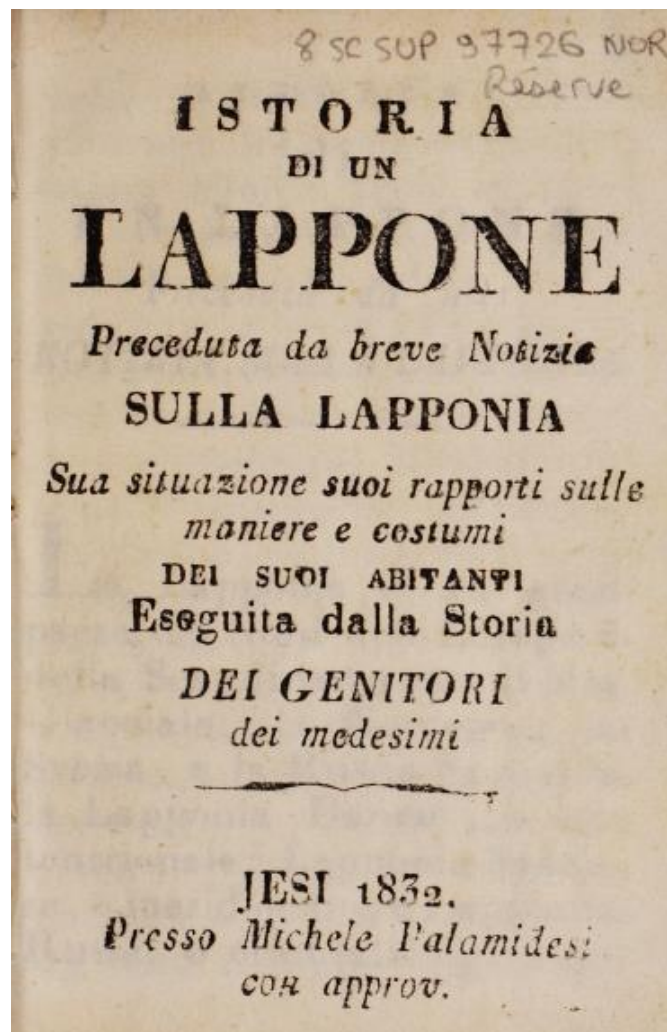


Image 20: *Istoria di un Lappone*, 1832 frontispiece.

2.14.1 The booklet

At first sight, this document seems like a pamphlet but, on closer examination, one can see, from the signs of sawing, that it formed part of a larger volume. It was extracted at an unknown date and the original copy of the document is currently in the Saint Genevieve library in Paris. The scanned version of the pamphlet is available online on a web archive called Internet Archive, and it is in public domain. I have no idea when the document ended up in the library and the only handwritten manual notation appears on the frontispiece and is a cataloguing reference. The document was uploaded

online on 22 March 2012. The document measures 12 centimetres. The length and the breadth roughly 12 to 8. Of the 12 pages that constitute the document at the Saint Genevieve Library, the first two are the frontispiece and a blank page followed by 10 pages of text. At the moment, there is no way of knowing whether the original document was longer than 12 pages.

Although small in size, the document has great intrinsic value because of the information it enshrines. I have not been able to dig up any information about the booklet, which nobody seems to have examined previously. Hence, in the subsequent paragraphs, I shall provide a preliminary analysis in the hope I will be able, in the future, to carry out research in the Jesi and Naples archive as well as in the Spanish ones. From the size of the pamphlet and its appearance, it would appear to have belonged to a more extended volume and the Paris copy extracted from the original one. The document appears to be clean, without any glosses. There are no references or any bibliographical information. The title translates as: « (Hi)story of a male Lapp preceded by brief information about Lapland, its location, and an account of its' inhabitants manners and costumes, followed by the history of the parents [of the Lapp] himself ». This title gives away some clues concerning the contents and the readers expect to read a story about a Sámi man preceded by context information. As it is often the case, the complexity of this booklet is more multifaceted than it may appear at first. We can assume that the data reported within the text are based on widely circulating accounts of Sápmi such as like Schefferus's *Laponia* or Francesco Negri's 'Viaggio Settentrionale'. The only information available concerning the origins of the pamphlets is on the frontispiece (image n20) which also gives some basic information about the contents.

The text was printed by Michele Palamidesi²⁰⁴, under imprimatur²⁰⁵ (with the approval), in 1832. As the frontispiece reads, the document was published in Jesi. When this booklet was published, the town of Jesi, in today's Marche County, was part of the Papal State. Jesi has a long and important typographic tradition. It was the first town in the region to have a typography and, in 1472, it was in Jesi that one of the earliest printed editions of the *Divina Commedia* were printed. The booklet was published by a small and short-lived publishing house owned and named after Michele Palamidesi. The house appeared to have been active between 1826 and 1835. The fact that this short booklet was printed in Jesi raises many questions. As we shall see later in this section, this booklet has strong connections with Naples. By 1832, Jesi belonged with the Papal State while Naples was the capital

²⁰⁴ Other publications by Michele Palamidesi were: *VM Marini di Ancona, Combattimento seguito in Navarino tra le Flotte riunite Anglo-Francese-Russa, e la Turco-Egizia il giorno 20. October 1827* (Jesi, Litografia Palamidesi, d. 1830). *Matilde di Shabran / (melodramma Giocoso in due Atti di Giacomo Ferretti; Musica di Gioachino Rossini; Jesi, Litografia Palamidesi, (date unspecified).*

²⁰⁵ This is a reference to the imprimatur (from Latin, "let it be printed"), a declaration authorizing publication of a book.

of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Hence, Jesi and Naples belonged to two different Italian States. In the early 1800s many were the publishing houses active in Naples. In a private conversation I had with professor Salvatore Marino, expert in the medieval archival sources on and in Naples, professor Marino suggested that the proximity of Jesi to Fabriano, might have been a factor that led the author to choose Palamidesi from Jesi as his publisher. Since the thirteenth century, Fabriano is renowned for its production of high-quality paper on a relatively industrial scale. The close distance between Fabriano and Jesi guaranteed little shipping costs, keeping the prices of paper low for publishing houses set in Jesi and making publishing affordable. This might have been the reason why a publisher apparently living in Naples decided to print his manuscript in Jesi.

The author is not named but we see that the year of publication is 1832. This date may not correspond to the date the document was composed but, along with a date mention in the text, it constitutes an approximate date of reference from which it is possible to build a provisional chronology of the events described in the document. The term “Lappone” dominates the frontispiece because of its bold type and large font. The aim was clearly to draw attention to the ethnicity of the protagonist of the story presented in the booklet. Following the fashion of the time, the author refers to Sápmi as Lapponia, in English Lapland. Consistently, the original inhabitants are called Lapps²⁰⁶.

2.14.2 *La Lapponia, un gran paese (Lapland, a big country)*

The text was written with an Italian readership in mind. According to the author’s political-geographical views, Sápmi is remote geographically and culturally wise. Hence, the text opens by identifying the location of Lapland, which is defined as a big country (*gran paese*) of Northern Europe and of Scandinavia, situated «between the Glacial Sea, Norway, Sweden and Russia²⁰⁷». The second sentence divides Lapland among political entities: Danish or Northern Lapland; Swedish or Southern Lapland; and Russian or Eastern Lapland. At first sight, these two sentences may seem to contradict each other but, adopting the perspective of an educated nineteenth-century educated Italian author, the concept of a nation (e.g. Sámi or the Italians), with a perceived shared identity but divided territories (Lapland across the Nordic States and the Italian peninsula fragmented by a plethora foreign and local political units) seemed coherent. There follows a description of the climate based on popular preconception rather than first-hand experience: extreme cold, three-month-long night in winter and in summer a three-month-long day. The author states that Lapland has neither spring nor autumn, perplexing in the light of the fact that the Sámi themselves divided their year in eight seasons.

²⁰⁶ Henceforward, I shall use the term Lapp/Lapland when discussing the texts using this exonym and Sámi/Sápmi otherwise.

²⁰⁷ When the pamphlet was composed, Finland was part of the Russian Empire.

To an outsider, such as an Italian with an extremely contrasting climatic background, it must have seemed that an area with three months of light and three months of darkness and up to ten months of snow, that there were only two seasons: winter and summer.

This perspective reveals a lack of emic Sámi perception concerning the complex, nuanced and nature-based division of seasons in Sápmi, the result of centuries if not millennia of observation and experience of the different kinds of snow, ice and wind. To an outsider though, the only visible difference between seasons was the contrast between darkness and light and the presence or absence of snow. The paragraph subsequent to this meteorological information describes the morphology of Lapland, described here as a land of mountains and rocks, even though much of Sápmi is levelled tundra. The term tundra (which is such a fundamental aspect of Sápmi environment) is one of the few loanwords from Sámi (a branch of the Finno-Ugrian language family) to Indo-European languages.

2.14.3 ...a blowing in the wind

The abovementioned considerations about Sápmi are followed a remark about the salubrious and clean air thanks to the continuous winds blowing.

« Il Cielo è straordinariamente sereno, l'aria netta e sana, a causa dei gran venti che di continuo vi soffiano²⁰⁸ ».

These winds emerge as a characterizing feature of Sápmi, contributing to the longevity of its peoples. This remark is particularly interesting because it is in stark contrast with late medieval and early modern Christian demonological tradition, which had long associated the wind with evil spirits. The positive description of the air currents blowing across Sápmi are indicators of a change in perspective and are inspired by the eighteenth century scientific approach. The connection between the North and Evil is a cultural product deeply rooted in ancient Aristotelian cosmology and Old Testament traditions. In the ancient Greek culture, winds were believed to carry demons, which could be the good, evil or even neutral. In the Middle Ages, there was a paradigm shift in the cosmological understanding: neutral or positive demons found no place in the Christian interpretative framework and as a result, the wind became associated exclusively with evil spirits. During the 16th and 17th century witch-hunts for instance, women accused of witchcraft were often blamed for adverse atmospheric phenomena, among them the wind. The Modern Europe demonological tradition codified these popular beliefs into a coherent system which was confirmed and reinforced through witch-trials and manuals such as the ‘Malleus Maleficarum’ by Kramer and Sprenger.

²⁰⁸ «The sky is extraordinarily serene, the air clean and healthy, due to the great winds that continually blow there » (My translation).

During those times, it was believed that witches and diseases could travel by riding the wind. For instance, James VI of Scotland, later James I of England, on the occasion of his marriage to Anne of Denmark, incurred in a devastating storm with strong winds blowing southwards. This episode led to the trial and execution of Scottish women accused not only of witchcraft but also treason against the crown. There was a strong association between coldness and witchcraft and there was also an association between the North with the cold (Gardenour Wacter 2016). In Christian worldviews, the cold wind was believed to be the result of the Devil spreading his wings in the frozen bottom of Hell. Hence, the north, from which cold winds blows, was necessarily believed to be intrinsically evil. Such association had terrible consequences for many communities, also in Sápmi. Sápmi witness a number of trials and executions throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which have been extensively studied by Professor Hagen (2005, 2006, 2006b, 2014, 2017) who has highlighted the ethnic variable in these trials. One of such trials followed a devastating storm, which caused the death of the majority of the men of a small fishing village on the northern shore of Finnmark. The events that unfolded have recently been brought to the wider public by Kiran Millwood Hargrave's 2020 novel "The Mercies", set before and during the 120 witch-trials in Vardø. In those times, Finnmark witnessed one of the most systematic European witch-hunts. These witch-hunts and consequent trials were connected with the 1617 decree, *Om troldfolk og deres medvidere* ("About Witches and their Accomplices"). As Kruse and Willumsen highlight, this decree incorporated demonological ideas into the legal definition of witches, with secular consequences for those accused of witchcraft (2020).

According to Johannsen (2010), during the 1660 trials Isaiah's mount of congregation²⁰⁹ was identified with the hill of Domen, a mountain close to Várlegg/Vardø. There, according to biblical traditions, lied the entrance to hell. This mountain was indeed considered the Hell's Entry. It was regarded as a place that belonged with Satan, a witches meeting place and a place of debauchery (Näkkäljärvi and Kauppala 2017). Furthermore, the entrance to Hell was localized in the far North, at the borders of civilization itself. According to Olaus Magnus, in that area demons roamed free, spreading evil (Sjoholm 2004). In that land though, many Sámi people still practiced their non-Christian indigenous practices²¹⁰. During the seventeenth century witch trials, Christian Norwegian women were accused of witchcraft and persecuted while Sámi individuals, mostly men, were put on

²⁰⁹ The Mount of Congregation quoted by the prophet Isaiah place has been interpreted as the place God chose for meeting with his people at the end of days.

Isaiah 14:13 « You said in your heart, «I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon».

²¹⁰ The issue of terminology concerning non-/Indigenous Sámi religion will be addressed in Chapter 4.

trial because they practiced their indigenous worldviews. All these connections led to long lasting associations between Sámi, the people dwelling in the North *par excellence* - and evil²¹¹.

In the booklet, the mention of the wind as a positive element precedes other notes concerning the local fauna in Lapland with a list of the animals inhabiting the lands of the Sámi such as bears, wolves, beavers and ermine. Then a longer remark about reindeer, which in the text are associated to the deer, echoing Negris' 1700 description. These remarks are followed by a description of the functions that the reindeer have among the Sámi and that may have arisen the curiosity of the readers. There is also an interesting remark about the mosquitoes, which are a very important feature of Sápmi in summertime.

2.14.4 The Sámi peoples and convergence of imageries, commonplaces and ancient myths

After this discussion, focused on a description of the environment of Sápmi that resembles both Schefferus and Negri's accounts, the text follows into these authors' steps and shifts from the landscape to the people. The author describes the physical features of Sámi people here designated as the Laponi. In line with contemporary understandings of the Sámi, they are described as small in size and with dark complexion despite the pallid face. A description of the body and its proportions follows, with a remarkable observation about how fast the Sámi are at running « *e proprj al corso che qualche volta sorpassano i lupi e renni stessi* »²¹². From this analysis of the Sámi people's general physical features, the author moves on to describe the customs of these peoples. In particular, the author states that many of them are very superstitious; in this case though, superstitious stands for paganism. This passage is emblematic of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century European understanding of Sámi peoples informed by texts like Schefferus's one - where it is stated that many are the Sámi who are still practicing paganism - and by the long-lasting image of the Sámi as sorceress, reinforced in the common opinion during the Thirty Years War. Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that many Sámi - Lapps in the text - have converted to Christianity. The next element the author addressed was the supposed extreme -almost mythological - longevity of the Sámi: women are believed to be fertile until the age of 70 while Sámi people are believed to live up to the age of 130 years. This exaggeration may be a sign that the Sámi were believed to be people with an

²¹¹ Andersson Burnett (2010:70) has retraced the connection between Sámi people and witchcraft in European literary culture and has identified the following modern times accounts referring to Lapland witches: Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (1594), in which 'Lapland Sorcerers' are mentioned, Marlowe's 'Lapland Giants' (in *Faustus*.1604), Milton's 'Lapland Witches' (*Paradise Lost*-1667); David Mallet's *The Excursion* (1728). These accounts fostered an imaginary in which Lapland was the site of witches' Sabbath.

²¹² «And so versed into the runs that sometimes they even overrun wolves and reindeer themselves» (My translation).

exceptionally good health as the following quotations from the document seems to show: «*Eglino vivono lungamente, sino all'eta di 120 ed anco di 130 anni, ed i loro capelli non imbianchiscono mai, né hanno mai bisogno di medicina, nè la vecchiezza impedisce di correre nei boschi, e nelle montagne [...]*»²¹³

These elements, along with the mention of the abundance offered by this land is not reflecting actual ethnographic information but are based on long lasting notions that, as a red thread, has traversed European intellectual history and had shaped and fostered a specific imaginary of the North: the myth of the Golden Age and the myth of the Hyperborea. In classical Greek mythology, Hyperboreans were a race of people who inhabited a distant land (from the Greek point of view) located somewhere north of the Greek peninsula since, in Greek cosmologies, Greece was the geographic and cultural reference point. Their very name indicates that: “hyper” literally means beyond while “Borea” was the name of the wind of the north. Their land was not only beyond the wind of the north but, consequently, it was beyond the reach of mortals like the Greeks. According to Greek cosmology, the Hyperboreans were regarded as fortunate and it took them no effort to carry out tasks that meant hard work for the Greeks. Along with fortune, longevity and supernatural qualities characterised the life of the Hyperboreans. They were associated with Apollo and hence with fine arts (Votsis 2016). Their exceptionality and their association with an unspecified and relational North became inscribed in the Greek and later Latin and medieval worldviews, fostering imageries about peoples inhabiting a semi-mythological land that, slowly but steadily with the expansion of the Medieval Christianhood, was relegated further and further North.

The myth of a Golden Age is complex and deeply intertwined with early western intellectual history. In the European context, the Golden Age originally indicated a mythological time of peace, prosperity, stability and harmony. During this time of blissfulness, Earth provided food in abundance and people did not have to work to survive and thrive. Life was not only easy but also exceptionally long and people knew neither sickness nor disease and did not grow older with the passing of time. The myth of the Golden Age originating in Greek mythology, was epitomized by Hesiod in his masterpiece “Works and Days”²¹⁴. This concept was not exclusive to European Classical antiquity and has a similar counterpart in other cultural traditions, the most influential of which for the

²¹³ «They live long, until the age of 120 and even 130 years, and their hair never turn white, nor do they ever need medicine, nor the old age prevents them from running in the woods and on the mountains» (my translation).

²¹⁴ Ryberg (1958) stresses that, even if Hesiod’s work is the first example of a systematic use of this narrative in the Greek antiquity, it is reasonable to assume that, rather than inventing this myth, Hesiod was developing a common narrative derived from earlier sources, using it to explain the origins of labour and misery.

European culture is the Biblical story of humankind's fall from the garden of Eden and hence innocence and the consequent necessity of work and labour.

The popularity of this *topos* is attested by its longevity. In its numerous variation, it appears and reappears throughout European history, in literature and philosophy. In the Roman culture, the *aurea aetas* becomes central in the work of poets like Virgil and Ovid or Catullus. This theme is recurrent throughout European history as the image of Sápmi as a land of abundance, health and simplicity – which at times resembles barbarity, at times blissfulness – shows. Rather than describing a historical period when humankind lived an innocent and carefree life, perceived as having actually existed in a distant past, the concept of the golden age constituted an idealization of the past as well as a projection into the past of best qualities of society and mankind. In this time of happiness. Hence, this myth constitutes a moralistic approach to the present, considered as a time of moral decline and degrade. It is not surprising that, previously in the text, the author does indeed mentions that: «*Eglino sono molto paurosi ed onestissimi: appena si conosce appresso di loro il furto, e l'assassini*»²¹⁵. Such an annotation is in line with both the narratives provided by the authoritative texts about Sápmi and the idea of the *aurea aetas* as a time without either sorrow or crime.

2.14.5 Clothes, bread and Christianity: the symbolism that fostered the idea of Sámi barbarity

The remarks concerning the supposed Sámi longevity and good health are followed by a throughout and the relatively accurate description of their dwelling structures as well as Sámi clothes, the clothes become here an indicator of Sámi level of culture. The relative accuracy in describing clothes and dwelling structures suggests these remarks are evidence-inspired, hence based on a text produced by someone with a thoughtful knowledge of this topic.

«*Eglino non portano nè camicia nè altra biancheria, ma il loro vestito sono le pelli di animali, di cui si adornano in modo assai singolare* ». Clothing, as mentioned earlier in this chapter (note) were considered important characteristics that defined the nature of people who wear them. In particular, simple clothes made of fur and untreated leather such as those worn by the Sámi were considered a symbol of barbarity. Another indicator of barbarity as intrinsic to Sámi cultures mentioned in the text and other important works (Schefferus) and also reported by people who actually travelled in Sápmi (Negri and Vidua), that the author highlights is the absence of bread, and flour, among the Sámi. the author stresses that the Sámi, instead of flour, used dried fish: «*In luogo di pane e farino, si servono*

²¹⁵ «They are very fearful and extremely honest, among them theft and murder are barely known [crimes]» (my transl.).

di pesce secco, che fanno in polvere». At first sight it is difficult to grasp the relevance and the layers of meanings encapsulated in such a seemingly neutral information.

This remark that we already encountered in the Account of Negri and Vidua, has emerged as extremely important in Italian perception of Sámi peoples and their cultures. Bread, as the quintessential food product of civilisation, became its ultimate symbol and is often used as a metonym for food in its wider meaning. Bread is a central element in Christianity as well as in the other Religions of the Book as it recurs often in the Old and New Testament. In these religions, bread came to embody a celestial gift²¹⁶ but it has also become a symbol of some of the Christian cornerstones: generosity and sharing²¹⁷ as well as sacrifice²¹⁸. The centrality of bread, as physical and spiritual nourishment, is also enshrined in the Lord's Prayer. From the perspective of an Italian person writing in the early nineteenth century, bread represents civilization at its highest since through bread –made corpus Christi- it is possible to enter in communion with God²¹⁹. Hence, lack of bread, can be regarded as a symbol of barbarity²²⁰. Nevertheless, bread is also a symbol of the fall from the Garden of Eden as God, upon banishing Adam and Eve from Eden, warns them: «By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread» (Genesis 3, 18-19). Going back to the text, after the mention of the (lack of) bread in Sápmi, the author moves on describing the seasonal movement across Sápmi performed by Sámi families with their reindeer. In so far, the notions provided by this pamphlet can be considered as a brief summary of the information available in texts circulating in Italy, in the 18th and 17th century. The peculiarity of the pamphlet though manifests itself in the last four pages of this short volume where the account takes an unexpected turn.

2.14.6 The unexpected story of an unpredictable journey

At this point in the text, the information insofar given to the readers acquire a new dimension. They are not just for the sake of knowledge about a faraway land but they delineate the contour of background information that would enable the readers to fully appreciate the contents of the following pages. As the title suggests, the reader expects to read about a Sámi man and his life. Nevertheless,

²¹⁶ In Exodus 16, Moses fed the Israelites in the desert with a special bread, which fell from heaven and went under the name of Manna. According to the Exodus, God proclaimed: «I will rain down bread from Heaven for you»,

²¹⁷For instance, when Jesus multiplied the bread to feed the crowd in the episodes known as «the feeding of the 5000», also known as the «miracle of the five loaves and two fish» Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14, and «the feeding of the 4000», Matthew 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-9.

²¹⁸As during the Last Supper, when bread became the body of Christ. This event is re-enacted through the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, during Catholic mass. Eucharist comes from εὐχαριστία, Greek for “gratitude”, “giving of thanks”. Paulus, 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

²¹⁹ In Catholicism, in the form of the Ostia, has a mystical role during the Christian Catholic mass.

we are presented here with an unexpected development. An untold story about a Sámi family from an unknown location in Sápmi. This story becomes the focus of the author's attention and it is apparent the whole booklet had been composed in function of the account about this family. The author introduces the Sámi family by tickling the readers' attention, suggesting that the following lines would capture the interest of those who find curiosity amusing.

The readers are warned that those who love the peculiarities of human nature were particularly satisfied with their encounter with two people born in "Lapland" and raised in Italy. The stark divergence between the "uncivilised" Sápmi and Italy, considered by the author as the acme of civilisation makes this contrast even more meaningful.

Gli amatori dei casi singolari, che offre dappertutto la natura umana, hanno veduto con piacere due Individui nati in Lapponia ed allevati in Italia. Egli è certo che la veduta di un uomo, e di una femmina la di cui misura è quella di un fanciullo di tre o quattro anni, e che sono perfettamente proporzionati in tutte le loro parti non può che interessare le persone che le più indifferenti. La loro testa è ben fatta con folti capelli neri. L'uomo ha il naso aquilino, l'occhio vivo, lunghi i postacci, e gran facilità nei suoi movimenti.

This passage states that the Sámi man quoted in the title is not the protagonist of a "story", a novel or a piece born out of the fantasy of the author but, rather, he and his family were persons in flesh and blood who lived extraordinary experiences that led them from Sápmi to Naples.

Questi due Lapponi, che non hanno il più piccolo difetto di proporzione, nè la più piccola difformità, sono certamente i più interessanti, che fin'ora si siano veduti nelle nostre contrade

As the paragraph suggests, the most remarkable feature and intrinsic singularity of these siblings lies in their petite size, regarded as extraordinary and making them the most interesting of all the people who were ever seen in Naples. Such amazement shall be traced back to imageries and imaginaries concerning dwarves and pygmies to which the Sámi are here both compared and put in contrast with. Unlike dwarves (as people who suffered from a variety of genetic diseases that today fall under the umbrella term "dwarfism"), these two siblings were indeed small in size but had harmonious features and presented no deformity in their bodies. Both people affected by dwarfism and these two petite individuals attracted curiosity because of their petite figures. The immediate assimilation between small size and dwarfism is highlighted by the connection the author suggests: these two Sámi siblings are even more interesting than the famous Bebé who lived at the court of Stanislav I Leszczyński king of Poland during the first half of the eighteenth century.

[...]ed a più riguardi, egli si può affermare, che sorpassano ancora il famoso Bèbè del Re Stanislao, che avea il dorso storto, una spalla più alta, che l'altra, e che, secondo la descrizione inserita nella Enciclopedia, era quasi imbecille[...].

Unlike the Sámi siblings, whose petite size was a feature that caused them no problem besides the people's curiosity, Bèbè suffered from a severe congenital disease that involved deformities and developmental problems, which also affected his speech and cognitive abilities. The author here makes the only open reference to an authoritative text he used as bibliographical source, stating that what he knows about Bèbè comes from the *Enciclopedia*. From this remark, as well as other scattered references and the comments the author makes, it can be inferred that the author had a first-hand knowledge of the facts s/he is narrating concerning Antonio and Maddalena, having at least seen in person the two siblings.

References to personal routines that suggest a personal knowledge of these fact and hence, perhaps, that the author and these Sámi siblings were acquaintances. According to the text, they did not eat more than seven ounces a day and they favoured salted meat. The text reports that they a glass of wine is all drink in a day. This is in contrast with later accounts of Sámi people describe them as heavy drinkers. As Lakomäki, Kylli and Ylimaunu (2017) have demonstrated, the consumption of alcohol in Sámi contexts is intrinsically linked with colonial practices and similar phenomena are reported and attested among other indigenous groups who suffered colonization processes and who are today plagued by alcoholism.

2.14.7 A long lost family and their unconventional journey “home”

Their journey across Europe, probably one of the most important events in their lives, is described through just a handful of words: «*Questi due Lapponi furono condotti, col loro Padre, in Ispagna dai viaggiatori, che erano stati nella Lapponia a far cambio di pelli di animali del paese, col grano da essi portato*»²²¹. The Sámi sibling, still children, were conducted with the father to Spain by merchants who were travelling through Sápmi to exchange furs with flour. The use of the passive form concerning the Sámi children and the active form used to describe the actions of the merchants seems to suggest these circumstances were beyond the Sámi family's control. The father, who by the time the booklet was written was long dead, his here represented as a marginal figure. Nevertheless, the following statement introduces the readers to further details concerning the Family whereabouts in Sápmi and here the figure of the father acquires a growing importance in the family's history.

²²¹ «These two Lapps were led, along with their father, in Spain by travellers who had come to Lapland to exchange animal furs with the grain they brought» (my translation).

Tragedy struck his household repeatedly: the mother died in childbirth²²²: «*La loro madre morì in parto all' età di 70 anni*²²³ [...]» and the two parents had previously lost other children to death. The description of the events concerning this Sámi family takes here an unexpected turn as the agency previously bestowed to the merchant is now attributed to the father. It's his choice to leave Sápmi behind and look for a new place for him and his children. Unlike Italian and European travellers who visited Sápmi, his decision was not driven by curiosity or the desire to increase his knowledge of a distant land, furthermore, his journey did not entail a return. The decision to move being a permanent one, driven by grief over the loss of his beloved wife. He was inconsolable and could not bear to live there without her.

«Il loro Padre inconsolabile della perdita di sua Moglie e di più Figli, che teneramente amava, si determinò a partire dalla sua patria con i detti Viaggiatori, conducendo seco questi due suoi Figliuoli, 'che gli erano restati; il maschio dei quali alla partenza dalla patria avea due anni, e dodici la femmina»²²⁴.

They reached Spain even though the text suggest it was not out of their own choice: «*eglino furono condotti in Ispagna, presentati al Re, che ne fu pienamente sodisfatto*»²²⁵. They were conducted there and presented to the king who, according to the text, was “very pleased with them”. Without any mention of whether they were already Christian or not, the text reports they were baptised in Spain, almost certainly as Catholics. Upon their baptism they received their Christian names: «[...] *il Padre ebbe nome Antonio, il figlio Giuseppe, e la figlia Maddalena*»²²⁶. There is no mention of their Sámi names but the document stated they receive their Christian names: the father became known as Antonio, the son Giuseppe and the daughter Maddalena. These three names are quite common among catholics. According to the author, the family then moved from Spain to Naples but no explanation is given as to why they chose Naples and no further detail is made with respect to this life-changing event. Despite apparently a strange place for a Sámi family to move, the choice of Naples shall not surprise us. In late eighteenth century, the city of Naples had deep connections with Spain as it was then ruled by exponents of the cadet branch of the Spanish Bourbons: The House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies. The connections between Naples and Spain meant that there were merchants, bureaucrats,

²²² It is though stated that she died at the age of seventy and it is specified that women in Lapland are fertile until the age of 73. This remark is connected with the previously addressed myth of the golden age (*giacche in Lapponia le donne sono feconde fino all' età di 73 in anni*).

²²³ Their mother died in childbirth at the age of 70.

²²⁴ Their father, inconsolable because of the loss of his wife and many children who he deeply loved, he was determined to leave his home country with the aforementioned travellers, bringing with him the two children whom he still had; a boy who, when they left their home country was about two, and the girl who was twelve.

²²⁵ They were led to Spain, presented to the King who was extremely satisfied (with them)

²²⁶ The father was given the name of Antonio, the son Giuseppe and the daughter Maddalena.

scholars and other persons who travelled between Iberian cities and southern Italy. Once in Naples, the family apparently settled down but, as the unknown author reports that, unfortunately, Antonio dies in the capital of the Kingdom of the two Sicilies at the venerable age of 98, in 1810 (23 years before the text was written). The text reads: *«il loro Padre è morto nell'anno 1810 nell'età di 98 anni nella Città di Napoli»*. In early nineteenth century Naples, such age (regardless of whether or not Antonio actually reached it) would have been regarded as extremely remarkable. Nevertheless, the association between “Lapps” and longevity made a death at 98 unnatural. Hence, the need on the part of the author (and probably the community in which this Sámi man lived) to give a reasonable explanation for a death perceived as premature: *non potendo accostumarsi al cangiamenti del clima*²²⁷. It is the weather, so different from the one in Sápmi, and Antonio’s inability to adjust and adapt to it that led the old Sámi man to his death in a foreigner land. Furthermore, this remark offers some hints about the authors understanding of the world. Here there is a reference to the supposed strong connection believed to exist between a people and their land. The elder man could not cope away from it and this, along as the long lasting and debilitating consequences of his journey, led Antonio to death.

2.14.8 From *Sápmelaččat*²²⁸ to *u’ Lappone*²²⁹

The two Sámi siblings become the protagonists around whom the story is centred. The structure of the sentences may enshrine further details concerning this family.

²²⁷ Not managing to get accustomed to the changes in climate

²²⁸ In North Sámi, *Sápmelaččat* means “Sámi person”

²²⁹ The expression *u’ Lappone* is a Neapolitan translation of “a Lapp”, I encountered this expression in a curious episode reported by Kapp Salvini during her journey in Troms county:

«un bel lappone dal naso dubbio mi offerse, per otto corone –segnando otto con le dita e pronunziando gutturalmente “kroner” - una pupazzetta di pelo di renna brutta e sporca certo più di lui. “Otto korone? Sei pazzo?” – io feci parlando a me stessa – cinquantasei lire questa roba? Ma non ti Incontri 225 do nemmeno una korona, anche perché mi riempirebbe di pulci la cabina. “Signuri, facite cumme vulite” mi rispose il lappone sottovoce con occhi furbi, pentito subito dello scatto improvviso”. Ed al mio sguardo sbalordito ed alla mia bocca che stava per gridare al miracolo, egli contrappose un gesto disperato ed efficace per impormi il silenzio. Stavamo un poco appartati ed io potei chiedergli un poco incredula: “che fai costi?”

“Faccio u lappone” e mi raccontò una storia piuttosto triste, l’isolamento in quel paesello ove facendo il pescatore aveva raggiunto un discreto gruzzolo e il desiderio di andar via. “in quest occasioni sono costretto, con molti norvegesi, a fare il lappone, perchè le navi turistiche continuano a fermarsi a Lyngseidet. Con l’arrivo delle navi giù al paese noi vendiamo pelli e pellicce, perchè lungi dall’essere abbandonato il nostro paesino ha un certo movimento. [...] di Lapponi autentici ce ne sono pochi e non vivono in questo campo disabitato, ma vengono da più lontano. È una razza che si perde, signuri, ma pei forestieri bisogna mantenerla cumme a Napule s’abballa ancora a tarantella n’anza ai furastiere”» (Klapp Salvini 1928: 79,80). The Neapolitan man pretending to be a Sámi to sell souvenirs to the growing stream of tourists visiting the Norwegian fjords represent a further connection between Sápmi and Naples. Among many interesting things enshrined in this episode, I deem it relevant to highlight how pervasive was, in the early 20th century, the notion that Sámi people were bound to disappear. It was such a common knowledge that even a Neapolitan fished, albeit based in Lyngenfjord, was aware and supportive of this theory.

From the verb tenses, it appears the two siblings were still alive by the time the document was composed as it reports that, by the time the booklet was written, the daughter was 62 years of age. The text then reads: «*egli ha 50 anni, come lo dice bene l'aria del suo volto*». The value of this passage is manifold: first, by suggesting that the face of Giuseppe gives away his age, it hints at signs of age on the Sámi man's face. This remark is in contrast with what previously stated about the Sámi not growing old at least in appearance and shape. Secondly, it implies that the author had actually met or seen Giuseppe or met someone who actually had met him. Thirdly, this statement is to be examined bearing in mind the previous comment about the Sámi petite body size. If in stature they resemble children, a more mature face, marked with wrinkles, may have appeared remarkable and, at the same time, may have helped people accepting them as grownups and not as eternal children despite the appearance, as instead the previous remark suggested²³⁰.

The document states that at least the man was proficient in Italian, and also knew some French and English²³¹. It does not mention whether they still spoke Sámi between the two of them or if they still used their Sámi names when talking to each other and, as far as this document is concerned, there is no way of knowing. There follows a remark about his personality, strengthening the possibly of a personal connection between the man and the author: *e le sue maniere sono franche, il suo naturale è allegro*; As we can notice, this section of the booklet is constructed around Giuseppe and he is taken as reference in describing both him and his sister.

Even though there is no other information concerning the siblings' past, the text provides the readers with some further details about their whereabouts: they were both trained in a craft and were working in Naples, he was trained as a tailor (*Giuseppe imparò l'arte di sartore, nella quale è molto riuscito*²³²), she as a skilled seamstress specialised in embroidery (*sua sorella Maddalena imparò a ricamare*²³³).

*Alla sorella Madallena convene al suo fratello di metterla in un conservatorio di Napoli, per la sua indisposizione di salute, cagionata per il lungo e disastroso viaggio*²³⁴.

²³⁰ *Egli ha 50 anni, come bene lo dice l'aria del suo volto*. He is 50 years old, as his face tells.

²³¹ «*Egli parla bene l'italiano, ed un poco il Francese, e l'Inglese*», «He speaks good Italian, and a little French and English» (my translation).

²³² «Giuseppe learnt the craft of tailor in which he manages well » (my translation).

²³³ «His sister Maddalena learnt how to embroider» (my translation).

²³⁴ With regards to his sister Maddalena. The brother decided to put her in a *conservatorio* in Naples, because of her health condition, which was poor because of the long and perilous journey.

In these concluding lines, it is specified that Antonio decided to put Maddalena to a *conservatorio*²³⁵ because she was weak and in poor health. It is stated that such condition was caused by the long and difficult journey she undertook when she was twelve – this journey though took place many years prior to her retirement in the *conservatorio*. Nevertheless, this is, to the author, the only possible reason to explain why an individual belonging to such a longeve ethnic group could feel weak and in need of help. The text concludes without providing us with any more specific information concerning which institution she might have joined nor which age she was when she joined it. The booklet held at the Saint Genevieve library concludes with the aforementioned line about Maddalena but, at the moment, I am unable to say whether this was the original conclusion of the booklet. Further exam of the archival material both at Saint Genevieve and in Jesi is needed. A survey of the Jesi Palamnidesi publishing house documents would help shed light over the author, the original length of the document and possibly other relevant information that could help reconstruct the life of this Sámi family.

**2.14.9 Giuseppe, Maddalena and Antonio:
a normal family, an exceptional journey, an untold story that shall not
be forgotten**

In my opinion, this previously untold and forgotten story is extremely relevant in the study of modern Sápmi and its indigenous population as it not only reverse many stereotypes and colonial narratives but also tells about alternative Sámi stories. Unlike the majority of the nineteenth century accounts about Sámi people, this document tells of Sámi individuals who consciously decided to leave Sápmi for good and explore the world. Furthermore, even though we unfortunately have no mention of these people's Sámi names, we came to know them as individuals through the names they were known under for the majority of their life.

Giuseppe, Maddalena and Antonio's story is about individual choices and agency, it is about Sámi peoples moving around Europe out of will and without any patron and not in order to join the human exhibitions that were so popular from the early nineteenth century onwards²³⁶. It is a story about mobility, independence and resilience. They embarked on their journey before many Sámi left Sápmi for North America and their journey followed a very atypical direction for the time. Taking the years

²³⁵ In Naples, conservatories were initially charitable institutions that helped abandoned children and other destitute individuals, offering them shelter, food and education. In the case of adult poor people, their stay was repaid through work. The name “conservatorio”, which is today connected with the teaching and practice of music derives from these Neapolitan institutions were, among the teachings, music became prominent (Marino 2014).

²³⁶ Cfr Catherine's Baglo analysis of Sámi agency exerted by the Sámi individuals who took part in living exhibitions across Europe and North America (Baglo 2014)

1810 and 1832 as starting points for calculating when the major events in this Sámi family took place, it is possible to estimate their departure from an unknown location in Sápmi around the year 1770, placing their travelling experience way before that of those Sámi who took part to the human exhibitions around Europe.

This short booklet proved to be extremely relevant for me, first and foremost because of its intrinsic value as an invaluable historical source on events otherwise probably lost to history. On a more personal level, it offered not only an intriguing challenge but also an opportunity that provided me with a starting point for reflections upon the stratification of layers in the European imaginary about Sámi peoples and Sápmi. By analysing the content, and by connecting the document and my reflections upon it with a wider literature about the perception and the imagination about Sápmi, I was able to delineate a research line that helped put different elements from my fieldwork into a wider perspective.

2.14.10 On the significance of *Istoria di un Lappone*

This booklet offered numerous suggestions and material for thought and the analysis of these few pages offered me an opportunity to examine a set of narratives that, by the early 19th century had already become standardized.

This short booklet condenses long and diverse, often ambiguous and contradictory, literary traditions and collective representations about the North. Northern regions hold a polisemous position in western imageries. These imageries are often characterised by mystification, exoticisation and simplification of lands perceived as distant and remote. The North is a complex concept and, in the European hegemonic understanding of this concept, the North is depicted and understood as a place at the fringes of civilization. It is a land where Nature is absolute and uncivilised and as such are also the people that there dwell. The ambivalence of the North lies in the imaginary that considers it remote and uncivilised but also marvellous. It is simultaneously close, as it is within Europe, and distant, since it is at Europe's margins. The contradictory imageries and narratives of the North are the result of an intertwining of stories, first-hand accounts, myths, tales, but also of fears and hopes all projected into the geographic regions north of those who elaborated such long-lasting imageries, making the North itself an imaginative region, as Ridanpaa (2019) states. The North, thanks to the tension between hostility and allure, exerts an undoubted fascination over the European medieval, modern and contemporary readership.

It is relevant to mention that, before the 1932 booklet published by Palamidesi, Sápmi to people living in modern Italy was mostly a mythical land. Negri's account, along with that of Acerbi

(1832)²³⁷ and Vidua (1818) contributed in expanding the knowledge about this land as so did foreign publications that enjoyed wide circulation years after they were published, such as Schefferus (1673) and, before him, Olaus Magnus (1535, 1555). Even costume books such as Jan Luyken's²³⁸ contributed in fostering a specific imaginary of Sápmi. Before the scientific journeys undertaken by scholars such as Mantegazza and Sommier, who travelled to Sápmi with the specific intent of studying Sámi peoples, it was through the text of travellers like Negri and Acerbi or Vidua that first-hand knowledge based on personal experience reached the Italian public. All these Italian men who travelled to Sápmi and came back to tell – and write – their stories brought to Italy their own memories of their time in the land of the Sámi. They also brought home their reflections upon their experiences in Sápmi. It is also known that they brought with them objects that functioned as symbols and proof of their time in Sápmi. Everything they saw, tasted, felt, experienced while in Sápmi was filtered through their own lenses and senses. This document though bears witness to a different kind of experience-based knowledge of Lapland. In the case of Antonio, Maddalena and Giuseppe, it was not “other” who went to Sápmi but it was a Sámi family who travelled all the way to Naples, inverting the path of the journeys undertaken by Negri, Acerbi and Vidua. They brought Sápmi to Italy, simultaneously arising people's curiosity in the exotic and satisfying their need for alterity, even though they did not do so intentionally. Their experience helped demystifying Lapland and offered glimpses into life in Sápmi. The author of the booklet had to come to terms with conflicting truths: the written accounts of Sámi's longevity and barbarity and the evidence of normal individuals living ordinary lives.

2.15 A missed chance: on forgotten sliding compasses and skeletons in the cupboards

Fifty years after ‘*Istoria di un Lappone*’ had been published, Paolo Mantegazza and Stephen Sommier decided to travel to “Lapland” to carry out anthropological fieldwork. Mantegazza though was a son of his times and, in the late 19th century, the discipline of anthropology entailed a set of practices and theories that are foreign to the discipline as it is now, in the early 21st century. Mantegazza and his colleagues engaged in practices that today would be considered unethical and without any scientific basis but that, in the late 19th century were considered scientific and ethical. For me, it has been both disturbing and fascinating to read his travel account (1881) and it has been unsettling to review the anthropometric data he collected in his stay in 1879. From a methodological

²³⁷ Acerbi's travel account was first published in 1802 in English under the title *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape in the years 1798 and 1799* (London, Joseph Mawman, 1802). It was only in 1832, the same year the booklet *Historia di un Lappone* was published, that *Travels* was translated into Italian.

²³⁸ Cfr note 142.

perspective, it is relevant to note here that Mantegazza's work, deeply rooted in the late 19th century anthropological practices, showed me the extents to which people can get to reach their goals, disregarding of their interlocutors' emotions. I am aware he was following the then latest anthropological practices and that he was probably not fully aware of the power dynamics at play when he encountered Sámi people. Furthermore, the discipline of anthropology has changed methods and aims in the last 140 years. Nevertheless, as a young female researcher, I found some passages of Mantegazza's diary disturbing. By reading his thoughts, it is apparent that he, as a male middle age man from a southern country, took advantage of his position and positionality and exerted power over the people he met; in one case even a young girl. Nevertheless, reading between Mantegazza's lines, acts of resistance and defiance emerge powerfully, showing that the Sámi were not passive victims but that they actually tried to counteract the colonial power imposed upon them, albeit within the opportunities available through the limited means they had.

Mantegazza's anthropologic approach was deeply rooted in positivistic attitudes and shaped by social Darwinism (Puccini 2003). His "scientific data", acquired through "scientific means" were craniometrics measurements based on the Broca scale. Albeit developed in a Nordic cultural context, this today controversial theory soon reached Italy and had in Paolo Mantegazza, a medical doctor and the first professo to hold a chair in Anthropologist in Italy, one of its most important experts and proponents. Mantegazza was also one of the first exponents of visual sciences. He resorted to the nascent field of photography as a medium for capturing the features of races, especially those of "moribund" people. Mantegazza's aim was to preserve the memory of their uniqueness and their diversity for future generations (Welch 2016:91). He collected and examined human remains. He also noted the characteristics of his living human subjects: he wrote down the size of the head, the height, and any special feature. Nowadays, these practices are no longer acceptable and are openly deprecated.

Mantegazza's work embodies the late 19th century Social Darwinism theories and racial theories according to which many indigenous cultures were regarded as primitive and indeed doomed (Brantlinger 2015). The "lapps" were indeed among the vanishing peoples whose very uniqueness he wanted to document before they were absorbed into the local majority society (Cocq 2008).²³⁹ Along with his friend Sommier, in 1878 Mantegazza visited Norway and reached the town of Tromsø where he carried out anthropometric measurements on Sámi people. Mantegazza's detailed diary of his three months fieldtrip was published in 1881 it under the title "Un viaggio in Lapponia". From Tromsø,

²³⁹ The idea the Sámi were vanishing was a longlasting commonplace that characterize both academic studies and political actions well inot the 20th century. Cfr DuBois (2013).

Sommier travelled to Guovdageaidnu where he measured and photographed members of the local Sámi community. Mantegazza also examined 16 Sámi skulls and later published the results in a book titled 'Studii antropologici sui lapponi' (1881). Mantegazza and Sommier systematized their findings in a series of tables organized in columns and reporting the name, the age, the sex, nationality of the subjects/objects. After this basic information, they listed the data obtained through body measurements: height, head circumference, length of the head, width of the head, encephalic index, length of the face, width of the face, index of the face, color of the eyes, color of the hair, strength, comparison between index and ring fingers plus further notes.

'Studii antropologici sui lapponi' presents an appendix with 69 pictures of 50 people, 6 of them depicting 4 naked men in frontal lateral and posterior position. There is also 1 picture of a Sámi wedding and 24 pictures of six skulls of Sámi, five from Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and one from Mazé/Masi.

These seemingly innocent photographic portraits are a rather institutionalized expression of the exercise of power. These «visual forms of representation are [...] structured so as to decontextualize and objectify» (Lundstrom 2008: 95). Mantegazza's pictures of his Sámi interlocutors resemble one another since they were taken following Huxely's photometric instructions, the same method followed by the researchers in the film *Sámi Blood*. According to Huxely, the subjects are to be undressed and are taken frontally and en-face. Most of Mantegazza's pictures bear strong resemblance to studio photography and show dressed men, women and children. Nevertheless, Mantegazza's subjects all have the same posture and they often show their hand on their chest, showing the length of their fingers. This anthropometric portfolio is one of many produced in the second half of the 19th century for the same purpose as Mantegazza's one: to document the intrinsic alterity of members of soon-to vanish-indigenous cultures. Scholars from different disciplines devoted their expertise in documenting these supposedly vanishing cultures and today we have a rich photographic documentation as well as written accounts describing indigenous cultures at the turn of the last century.

In this chapter, I have addressed both contemporary and historical Italian works concerning Sápmi. In the first section, I provided a literature review of the contemporary Italian academic works devoted to Sámi people. I also addressed the different media (books, film) that contribute in shaping a specific narrative concerning Sámi peoples in popular culture. After this preliminary analysis, I devoted my attention to the travelogues and ethnographic images, which had been instrumental in mediating knowledge about Sámi peoples in early modern and Modern Europe. Nevertheless, the images and

narratives these media conveyed were often biased and ethnocentric, resulting in often derogatory or idealized depictions of Sámi peoples, which inevitably failed to acknowledge the complexity intrinsic to the Sámi cultures. In the last section of the chapter, I examined an insofar unknown document which constitute an important historical source about a Sámi family who lived in Naples. This document is of extreme importance since it sheds light on the mobility of Sámi peoples in the late 18th century. At the same time, it embodies a series of layered narratives concerning Sápmi and Sámi peoples. Hence, the booklet constitutes a valuable testimony of early 19th century Italian perception of Sápmi.

I have chose to address these issues because they are part of my cultural heritage as and Italian scholar and because they can help shed some lights on contemporary processes whose premises can be traced back to centuries-old representations of the Sámi . The ethnographic image - the visual reproduction of a people's appearance and cultural environment - has enjoyed a growing popularity since the 16th century, when the encounters between European travellers and “the others” became more and more frequent. Resulting in a growing number of images being produced to document the “discoveries” of “new worlds” and “new peoples”. These lithographic ethnographic images, reproduced on leaflets, travelogues, travel books, maps and atlantes, played an important role as a mediator of knowledge. The images of faraway peoples in exotic costumes –if not semi-naked – communicated to the readership visual information that fostered specific notions of distant peoples and their environments through a symbolism that, once established, lasted for centuries. Despite their importance in spreading knowledge about “the others”, these images contributed in creating stereotypes that are still very much alive.

Olaus Magnus, with his richly decorated *Carta Marina* and the volume ‘De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus’, established the first iconography of the Sámi which was later borrowed, reproduced and expanded by other authors, cartographers and –later- artists, shaping the etic’s perception of the Sámi as a people. In both Olaus Magnus’s works, the Sámi are described and depicted as skilled archers, hunters, fishers and even warriors. They travel on sledges pulled by reindeer or on skies. Nevertheless, they are also pagans who worship idols. This latter image will enjoy a wide fortune in the centuries to come. After Olaus Magnus, Bureus (cfr paragraph 2.10.2) as well as the German pamphlets discussed in the same paragraph, contributed to spread the iconography of Sámi peoples as skilled skiers and bowmen. With Schefferus (in both the original Latin edition and it translations) and Negri, other images of Sámi peoples started circulating in Europe. As Klein stresses, «the impact of Schefferus’ drawings on the imagination of the North » is remarkable and long-lasting, and « formed our understanding of where the Sámi live and what they are like until today

» (2020:287-288). With Schefferus's *Lapponia*, the iconography of the Sámi drum started to gain prominence, soon becoming, along with the reindeer, one of the most important elements symbolizing Sámi cultures. These symbols not only exemplify Sámi peoples to outsiders but they also became internal symbols. This last aspect is of extreme relevance for my research because of the complexity of the iconography that, throughout the centuries, has come to represent Sámi cultures, reducing their internal complexity and contributing to the stigmatization of individuals and communities.

The association between Sámi cultures and “paganism” proved to be extremely painful in the colonial context of Northern Fennoscandinavia, where, by the early 20th century, the vast majority of Sámi identified themselves as either Lutherans or Orthodox. Similarly, the equation between Sámi cultures and reindeer deprived all those Sámi who were no longer dependent upon this animal to a subaltern position since they did not conform to the standardized ideal of Sámi.

This chapter offers an insight into how a specific imagery of Sápmi and Sámi people developed and was strengthened through a circular process based on the exchange of information between different actors in early modern, modern as well as contemporary Europe. The case under exam in the chapter has been the politically and culturally fragmented Italian peninsula. The reasons why I selected Italian accounts are manifold: first, being myself Italian, this analysis enabled me to examine the sources in their original language, giving me access to the linguistic nuances that would have otherwise been lost to me. Secondly, these sources helped creating a specific imagery of Sápmi that influenced my own perception of this land since my early childhood. By addressing them, I was able to deconstruct and contextualize the different accounts concerning Sámi peoples, highlighting the historical reasons behind the different imageries surrounding them. On the other hand, this very imagery had, through the centuries, become paradigmatic of how Sámi peoples are perceived by outsiders, hence, and, thirdly, if we look at the Italian case as one case study within a wider European context, it is possible to understand how such imageries played an important role in the reification of Sámi cultures. This aspect is of particular relevance when addressing events such as Sámi festivals: these celebrations can be understood only if we take into account the complex context into which they emerged. These public celebrations of Sámi identity have been an active response to the stigmatization and marginalization²⁴⁰, which, for decades, had relegated Sámi cultures to the private sphere. Conversely,

²⁴⁰ Marginalization indicates both a process and a condition individuals and groups may endure due to a multiplicity of often intersecting factors: geography, ethnicity, religion, conflict, displacement, sexual orientation, gender, disability and poverty - both a consequence and a cause of marginalization processes - are among the factors that may lead to marginalization. The condition of marginalization prevents groups or individuals from fully - or even partially - actively participate in the social, political and economic activities in which the wider - and in the case of marginalized ethnic groups the majority - society engage. Marginalization emerges as a multidimensional phenomenon in which social, political, and economic dimensions are entangled, each being caused, contributing and reinforcing marginalization in a

stigmatization and marginalization were the result of historical processes deeply rooted in practises of othering that were reflected and fostered by narratives such as those exemplified in the accounts I addressed here. For decades, generations of Sámi activists have fought against degrading stereotypes and Sámi festivals such as Riddu Ridđu and Márkomeannu are just two of the many events that embody these re-evaluation efforts. A further element that makes the analysis of Querini's, Negri and Vidua's accounts relevant for this thesis is the focus such accounts have on the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark area. This region of today northern Sweden has strong cultural ties with the Márka area and its peoples. All the aforementioned elements make the examined accounts relevant in the study of Márkomeannu festival.

Similarly, the sources addressed in this chapter offer an opportunity to examine how Sápmi, the land of the Sámi had been bestowed with different meanings, coming to embody different projections of southern people's fears and hopes. Through the lenses of mythology, religion and science, Sápmi has been the site of European symbolic reimagination of the self. Many of these imageries are still exerting their fascination over the wider European and western imagery of the North, with actual consequences for those dwelling in Sápmi. Tourism, a growing industry in Northern Fennoscandinavia until the outburst of Covid-19 infection in 2020, is often playing with preconceptions about the Arctic that are deeply rooted in European intellectual history. Through a set of performative practices, the tourist industry is reinforcing and reiterating narratives and rhetorics often based on harmful stereotypes about the Sámi who, hence, have to confront them on a daily basis. For this reason, an accurate and thorough analysis of the historical sources may help deconstruct such stereotypes, demonstrating how they actually constitute cultural constructs rather than unlikely essential truths.

vicious circle that is difficult to interrupt unless all factors are problematized and addressed. Broadly speaking, peoples or groups who are in a condition of marginalization physically and symbolically live at the "margin" of wider society. The physical marginalization is often a consequence of the symbolic one even if these two dimensions may be independent. From an etymological perspective, "marginalization", "marginalized" and "to marginalize", derive from the term marginal and the suffix -ize, conveying the idea "of force" or "being forced" into a condition of powerlessness. According to the etymological dictionary (www.etymonline.com) marginalization as the "act or fact of making marginal" constitute a semantic extension of the meanings embedded in the term "marginal", meaning "of little importance". Since all these terms are based upon the word "marginal", it is important to note this word's own etymological meaning: it originally referred to what was "written or printed on the margin of a page". The origins of this word shall be traced back to the Medieval Latin "*marginalis*", in turn from Classic Latin "*margo*" "edge, brink, border, margin". The meaning "of little effect or importance", is relatively recent since it was first recorded 1887 (www.etymonline.com). For the analysis of the stem "marg" in relation to the cultural Sámi region of the Marka and on its revelatory character in relation to local historical dynamics, see chapter 4, section 1.1)

As I mentioned earlier in this paragraph, my interest in the Italian authors who travelled to Sápmi and recounted their journeys in travelogues and diaries lies in the ethnographic material their works contain as well as in the information they enshrine concerning the ideas and imageries of Sápmi and Sámi people they constructed and reinforced. I deemed it important to examine these texts, as, through them, it is possible to get a glimpse of how Italians perceived and constructed an idea of Sámi peoples in the past. Additionally though, I acknowledge that the study of these documents, and in particular Mantegazza's *Bozzetti Lapponici* and his travelogue, calls for a necessary reflection upon the practice of past anthropology and its colonial overtones. These reflections force us as researchers to address our positionality as well as the importance of ethics in research, especially when working with indigenous communities. In this respects, Manegazza's works, which I read while I was in Sápmi, forced me to confront my own preconceptions and my approach towards my own work. In a way, analysing Manegazza's works gave me a new purpose. Acknowledging the fact that he lived in a different time when ethnics in research was not an issue and that he mostly acted in good faith and for the sake of knowledge as he understood it, I still felt uncomfortable with some of his actions. I decided I not only wanted to be different from him but also that I needed to counteract some of his wrongdoings, as much as it is in my power. I took this decision while I was consulting the photographs in 'Bozzetti Lapponici'. One of these images is a picture of a young woman, Ella. She stares at the camera with an almost defiant gaze, keeping her right hand on her chest. She was only 20 years old when she was photographed by Mantegazza and there is no information about her besides the name of the village where she was born. In the book, she is marked with the number 57, as she was the 57th person whose photograph appeared in the "Bozzetti". Her whole life was reduced to a number, her name and her place of origin. I was intrigued by her and her name resonated with me for a while, until I realized I knew at least two people with the same surname, who also came from the same village as Ella's one. I contacted these persons, forwarding them the images of Ella and of another woman with the same surname and place of origin depicted in the portfolio. Aa few days later, one of my two acquaintances came back at me with the life stories of these two women, whose memory had been passed down in the family from generation to generation. This episode gave me a new purpose, and I decided that, upon completing the PhD, I would have started to track back the relatives of the people photographed by Mantegazza, to return their photographs to their families in a form of restitution that, for many, will also mean to look at the face their ancestors for the first time. A similar analysis suits Puccio's photographs. Even though these images are less entangled in a colonial project and are closer to souvenirs, they still depict men and women who accept to be photographed (probably under a small payment but with a limited room for refusing). These people have descendants that still walk the earth and would deserve to, at least see the images of their grandparents and great-grandparents

and these snapshots of their daily interactions with foreign tourists. It is hence my plan to translate relevant sections of Puccio's account as well as parts of Mantegazza's diary and try and trace back the descendants or at least the communities of the people described and photographed by both Mantegazza and Puccio. It is not unlikely that, at least in the case of Puccio's photographs, people today may recognize either the persons in the photos or the landscape –or both-, contributing in retracing the names of those depicted in such photographs²⁴¹.

²⁴¹ A Facebook page (Color your past) is extremely active and engaged in tracing the descendant of Sámi individuals depicted in old photos as well as identifying these long-gone peoples' names and stories. This activity is an act of empowerment that gives new life to old photographs - often taken with little acknowledgment of the subject's will, raise awareness about the Sámi people and the difficulties they had to face at the hands of the nation states while also reconnecting Sámi individuals to their own family's past as well as to that of the community as a whole. Per Ivar Somby, the person managing the website, also colours many of these images and has published the book *Folket under nordlyset/ People under the northern lights/Álbmot guovsahasa vuolde* whose contents are in Norwegian, English and Sámi. (2019). As Per Ivar Somby states on the website page of the book, he decided to work on this project because «The pictures presented here are my own selection of coloured images from Sophus Tromholt's picture collection. As a Northern Lights researcher, Tromholt travelled to Finnmark and stayed in Kautokeino through the winter of 1882-1883 while measuring the Northern Lights. He also hoped to capture the Northern Lights by photography, but realized that the camera could not take such pictures. Instead, he used the camera to photograph the people he met. With the colourising, I wanted the people to become more alive, and that they are experienced as more real. They would then appear more timeless and feel closer in a way that we can relate to».

Chapter 3

Wars of Ice and Fire

3.1 Wars of Ice and Fire

War and warfare influenced, directly and indirectly, Sámi societies on multiple levels. Inter/national conflicts affected single individuals, families and entire communities. Characterized by destruction, human losses, and emotional traumas, recent and ancient wars have shaped contemporary Sámi and Nordic societies. While the devastations, despair and sufferance they caused, wars have brought communities together in the strife for survival. These situations resulted in shared experiences and fostered a sense of national unity. Given the short and long-term consequences on Sámi communities and cultures of the events connected with war, I decided to devote this chapter to the impact of War in the areas where I carried out fieldwork. I also resorted to the war-memories passed down from those who lived through it to my own interlocutors to contextualise the experience of War in the Márka.

With the formation of the Nordic Nation States during the 19th century, Sámi peoples had been exempted from compulsory military service. The supplement to the 1751 Strömstad border treaty²⁴², known as the ‘Lapp Codicil’ clearly stated that the Sámi were not to be involved in military actions, that their activity were not to be disrupted by warfare and that they were not to be conscripted (Evjen & Lehtola 2019). In Soviet Russia, northern minorities were exempted from conscription into the Red Army until 1939. Gorter-Gronvik and Suprun affirm that these indigenous minorities were spared from conscription because of their poor mastery of the Russian language and because of the protection provided by law and by the Constitution, including a decree specifically exempting northern minorities from compulsory military service. According to these scholars, the underlying reason for the implementation of these regulations was the attempt to preserve, rather than further weaken, these minorities’ cultures (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000). Despite the protection provided by various sets of law in different national contexts, the development of national policies and the outbreak of international conflicts meant that Sámi people became more and more affected by and involved in warfare. Even today, for many young Sámi, war is symbolically and temporally part of their daily life, through conscription and military service. During the twentieth century, the impact of war and warfare on Sámi communities was critical in shaping the development of local and national policies

²⁴² As Sámi history demonstrates, this treaty, which settled the border between Norway and Sweden–Finland, had significant consequences for Sámi peoples (Lantto 2010).

concerning Sámi issues²⁴³. The acme of this process was Second World War (1940-1945). WWII was a turning point in recent Sámi history because of the consequences this prolonged conflict had on individuals and communities. This large-scale conflict had in Sapmi a divisive potential, both literally and physically. WWII led to fractures that run through political lines of thought as well as along the national borders that already – albeit in many cases only nominally – divided Sámi families and communities. The fragmentation suffered by Skolt Sámi communities as a result of Nation States’s military activities is unfortunately paradigmatic of the long-term consequences of conflict on the civil – and in the case of the Sámi, marginalized – populations.

3.1.1 Beahcán

During the First World War (1914-1918), the Grand Duchy of Finland declared its independence from the Russian Empire. In 1917, Finland became an independent republic and this new status came with a price for the Eastern Sámi people who witnessed their territory, formerly divided by internal boundaries, being now cut across by State borders. The new international situation had long-lasting repercussions. Upon the end of WWI, the Beahcán/Pechenga/Petsamo area, the core of Skolt Sámi culture, was Finnish territory but disputes over Finland’s eastern territories led to tensions. Ultimately, War between the URSS and Finland erupted in 1939. After WWII, the victorious USSR claimed Eastern Finnish territories as Soviet lands and Beahcán/Pechenga/Petsamo became Russian territory. Five hundred Skolt Sámi, evacuated in 1944 from the then-Finnish Beahcán/Pechenga/Petsamo region, relocated in the Aanar area²⁴⁴. This painful relocation implied cultural disorientation and emotional distress for those involved. As Sami historian Veli-Pekka Lehtola demonstrates (2018), the relocation of the Skolt Sámi has been only one, albeit poignantly dramatic, episode in the long history of Sami sufferance at the hands of external powers²⁴⁵.

²⁴³ Even if during WWI (1914 – 18), no military action took place in northern Finnish territory, this major conflict along with the subsequent Finnish Civil War (1918) had serious ramifications for Sámi peoples and for the practice of reindeer tending. The ongoing conflict, combined with bad weather conditions, led to a decrease of reindeer. Once the war was finally over, economic depression fuelled by a crisis in food production, struck the new Finnish republic. This economic and alimentary emergency had major consequences on reindeer tending since many animals were lost to poaching. Nevertheless, after a few years, and despite having lost the majority of their animals, reindeer tenders managed to bring their hers back to the pre-war sizes (Turunen et al 2018).

²⁴⁴ Among the consequences of WWII Sámi communities living in the proximity of the Russian/Norwegian/Finnish borders had to endure, there was the loss of herds and reindeer pastures because of the cession of Sámi territories to the Soviet Union. For instance, the Pechenga herding community lost all of its reindeer and pastures. Salla lost 92%, Kuusamo, 85%, and Kainuu, 89% of their reindeer, while Enontekiö lost 30% of its reindeer (Alaruikka, 1947 in Turunen et al 2018).

²⁴⁵ Once resettled in northeastern Finland, Skolt Sámi had no other choice but giving up their way of life based on reindeer tending, now made impossible by the loss of the winter and summer settlements and grazing lands. In finalnd, they had to move in permanent settlements provided (and hence reconstructed) by the Finnish State between 1949 and 1952. After a few years, Skolt Sámi resumed reindeer thanks to state funds and private donations. Nevertheless, Skolt Sámi had to

The localised war between Finland and the Soviet Union was just the beginning of a wider conflict: in the 1940s, a new war of unprecedented scale brought destruction and devastation to Sápmi. As a consequence of the fragmentation of Sápmi across four national States, Sámi people found themselves in very different positions depending on their own citizenship. Locally specific situations characterized the interactions among Sámi communities, state institutions, foreign soldiers (both occupiers and allied) as well as the majority population. The geopolitical situation of Sápmi – and hence Beahcán/Pechenga/Petsamo – during WWII shifted constantly, reflecting major and minor developments of the war occurring both in continental Europe and in Fennoscandinavia as well as in the Kola Peninsula. The civil population had to endure hardship and suffering that, in the case of the Sámi, were further sharpened by the implications of the implementation of racialized ideologies.



Map 7: Finnish territorial losses in 1944. (Map by Alfred Colpaert 2019 in Lähtenmäki, M., & Colpaert, A. 2020)

both adapt to the Finnish reindeer herding regulations and the local environment and its peculiarities, which differed, from that of their areas of origin (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000).



Image 21: Monument to the Skolt Sámi and the Finnish people who were forced to leave the Beahcán/Petsamo region after WWII and fled as refugees in Ivalo. The Sámi identity is conveyed by the typical Sámi cradle, the Sámi shoes and the *gákti* (Sámi garment) worn by the woman. Avveel/Ivalo (photo by the author, 2016).

3.1.2 A swastika in the snow

In Norway, the territorial entity where my fieldwork is situated, during wartime the Sámi had to face specific challenges connected to Nazi ideology and its complex connection with eugenic theories as well as Nazi plans to conquer the North of Europe. In occupied Norway, Sámi were regarded as

inferior to the Norwegian Aryan race and were not granted the same treatment as that received by Norwegians (Stratigakos 2020). There are only a few works on Nazi perceptions of Sámi peoples. Emeritus Professor Bjorg Evjen (formerly professor of history at Tromsø University) has analyzed this issue from a historic perspective and has discussed it in a collection of essays published to celebrate the 70-year anniversary of the Russian liberation of Finnmark. According to her analysis, upon the invasion and occupation of Norway, Nazi ideology became one of the leading forces behind many of the activities that deeply affected local inhabitants. Norwegians were regarded as the purest among all Aryan peoples thanks to their untainted blood and healthy (physically and ideologically wise) lifestyle. This was especially true for the people who lived in small Norwegian fishing and agricultural communities far from ‘Americanized’ and ‘corrupt’ cities like Oslo (Stratigakos 2020). Norwegian Nazi authorities deemed the Sámi inferior to other Fennoscandinavian peoples. Their view was influenced by early 20th century eugenic ideology that endowed structural discrimination of the Sámi peoples with scientific legitimacy. Nazi researchers working on race considered the Sámi to be a discrete ethnic group and Heinrich Himmler, the SS Reichsführer of the Nazi regime, regarded them as a non-Germanic group that had managed to preserve, to different degrees, the purity of their blood. Despite believing that the Sami did not belong to the ‘Nordic Race’, and ranking them as belonging to a low step on the human evolutionary ladder, Himmler did not consider them to be posing a threat to the purity of the Third Reich. On these grounds, Himmler expressed the desire to establish a separate Sámi state in Finnmark. This apartheid-state, whose name would have been ‘Der Lappentum’, had the specific aim of preserving Sámi blood, by preventing Sámi peoples from mixing with Scandinavian and other peoples²⁴⁶ (Evjen 2015). In Himmler’s view, the Sámi were allowed to live in the greater German Empire, into which Norway was to be integrated, but as a separate people living an isolated life in a secluded area.

In the eyes of Nazi authorities, coastal Sámi peoples did not enjoy the much consideration and were regarded as degenerate. On the other hand, the reindeer tending Sámi were those who had managed to preserve their blood and traditions across the centuries. German Nazi authorities not only admired the reindeer tending Sámi sets of skills and knowledge that enabled them survive and thrive in the Arctic, but were also aware that, if they wanted to survive and succeed in the harsh Arctic regions, they needed Sámi skill sets. Throughout the war, the Nazi army officials learnt to appreciate reindeer tending, and the economic system that was behind this Sámi activity. It is reported that the German soldiers stationed in Norway admired the Sámi for their skills and their ability to survive in a climate

²⁴⁶ Himmler’s understanding of how to preserve the Sámi culture, understood as a kind of testimony of ancient cultures and adaptation to the Arctic environment, bears striking similarities with the ‘*Lapp Skal Vara Lapp*’ Swedish policy

that proved to be extremely harsh for the continental troops. Nevertheless, as Evjen and Lehtola (2019) show, Nazi appreciation of Sámi skills had more to do with a utilitarian understanding of the Sámi than respect growing from esteem. Himmler in particular was fascinated by Sámi experience-based knowledge of the Arctic. Furthermore, Not only did the Germans want Sámi peoples to preserve their distinctive ‘racial features’ but also, upon Nazi victory, the Sámi were supposed to help the German army in the (re)colonization of the northern territories of the Soviet Union. Thanks to their skills in moving and surviving in difficult and ever-changing Arctic contexts, Sámi were considered to be especially suitable for the task.

In Nazi ideology, the Sámi came to represent a people who, regardless of their apparently primitive lifestyle, differed from other ‘primitive peoples’ and were considered an exotic minority to the extent that they raised German ethnological interests. If the German Nazi exhibited a relatively positive attitude towards the Sámi, Evjen and Lehtola (2019) highlight how, conversely, Norwegian Nazi supporters’ demeanor was symptomatic of the deeply negative attitudes expressed by early 20th century Norwegian society towards ethnic Sámi. Norwegian Nazi attitudes are epitomized by the then Norwegian Minister of occupied Norway, who considered the Sámi as ‘worthless human beings’, the Scandinavian equivalent of ethnic Jews living in Germany. His view, according to which the Sámi were a threat to ethnic Norwegians because of their culture and their blood, is indicative of the deep racism that, by the 1940s, ran through Norwegian society.

3.1.3 War as a factor accentuating the Fragmentation of Sápmi

WWII in northern Fennoscandinavia was characterized by acts of extreme violence as well as of immense kindness among Germans, Sámi, Norwegians, Russians (first as POWs – prisoners of war – and then liberators) Finns and Swedes. During World War II, Sámi peoples were actively involved in warfare as soldiers on the front or as supply-providers in the rear of battlefields. Furthermore, Sami civilians had to endure the hardships of war as all other non-combatants. Sami involvement in conflicts connected with WWII though preceded the outbreak of War. Before 1944, the only Sámi civilians directly affected by military operations were the Skolt communities living in the Beahcán/Petsamo/Pechenga Area (Evjen & Lehtola 2019). At the end of the War, Northern Finland and Finnmark, as well as the northern parts of Troms County, were tragically affected by the conflict. During WWII, Finland was involved in three major conflicts that took place on its soil: the defensive Winter War (1939 – 40), the Continuation War (1941 – 44), and the Lapland War (1944 – 45). Until 1943, the Finnish and the German soldiers were brothers in arms against the common Bolshevik threat. As cobelligerents, Finnish and Nazi troops were on good terms. Sámi people living in Finland were relatively safe during this part of the conflict and traded with German soldiers while also

interacting with the prisoners of war²⁴⁷ (Seitsonen & Koskinen-Koivisto 2018). The situation changed for the worse when the Russian federation forced Finland to switch sides and the Nazi army overnight became an occupying force.

Sweden, which maintained neutrality throughout the war even though it allowed the Nazi establishment to take advantage of its resources²⁴⁸, became an important hub for refugees fleeing from nearby occupied or belligerent states. In Finland, given the proximity of the Finnish province of Lapland to both Russia and Sweden, German troops were for many years stationed in the Sámi areas. In Northern Norway, Finnmark was especially strategic for the Nazi troops because its ice-free ports guaranteed relatively easy connections with other areas under the Third Reich's control (the southern Norwegian coast included). Furthermore, the border Finnmark shared with Russia made this region strategic for Nazi geopolitical war operations. Hence, this area, where the majority of the population – especially in the inland – was Sámi, became crucial during the war. For similar reasons – the strategic position of the Kola Peninsula – the Sámi living in the Soviet Union territories found themselves in one of the most heavily militarized zones of Europe. A feature that persists today. The fragmentation of Sápmi meant the fragmentation of Sámi communities once united in language and customs. War brought further divisions. Distributed across four nations, some of which at war at with each other, Sámi peoples had to fight other Sámi. Furthermore Sámi individuals, both civilians and soldiers belonging to their states' respective armies, were perceived in different ways according to political dynamics beyond their control. Suspicion run deep across state borders and Sami people were required to put state affiliation above the ethnic one. The shifting alliances contributed to the complexity of intra- and inter-ethnic relations in a multi-ethnic context such as the European Arctic. During WWII, the borders that divided Sápmi acquired a new dimension, and Sámi peoples found themselves on four different sides of the conflict: prior to WWII the Nordic national borders were political institutions mainly aiming at controlling taxation and land ownership. Between 1939 and 1945, they not only delimited sovereign unities but they also marked the difference among occupied, neutral, allied, and at war. Hence, the consequences these borders had for the Sámi peoples during the War were charged with a new layer: they contributed to shaping new experiences and perceptions of fellow Sámi as “others”. Political affiliations, circumstances and contingencies divided

²⁴⁷ A similar episode has been reported in Norway, where refugee children from an orphanage from Vårsol were evacuated in Oppland and, once there, tried to help the Soviet prisoners of war by smuggling food through the camp's fences (Watts 2016).

²⁴⁸ These resources were then sent via train to Narvik – one of the most important Norwegian harbours – from which they were shipped to Germany. The same transport network was also employed by the German authorities to transport prisoners (political prisoners, people of Jewish background and PoWs to the concentration camps in Germany and in the occupied territories in mainland Europe.

communities as the 2017 film 'Boom Boom' directed by Per Josef Idivuoma illustrates: set in 1944, when Norway is under Nazi occupation, this short film tells the story of two Sámi reindeer tenders who are involved in a resistance operation, their mission being to blow up a bridge. A man wearing a Nazi uniform though guards their target. This man is a Sámi. The situation described in this film offers glimpses of the dilemmas faced by Sámi – but shared by thousands of people also outside of Sápmi – in the difficult and highly divided/divisive context of WWII. State alliances determined local interactions and contributed to further fragmentation, to the extent that Sámi belonging to the same linguistic-cultural area, but divided by national borders, had different opinions and experiences of the same ethnic or political group. For instance, among the Sámi living in Finland the Russians were feared and despised because of Russian/Soviet raids which killed many civilians, and for having undermined the Finnish/Sámi relations (Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivisto 2015). Similarly, the Nazi-approved Norwegian minister in charge of the evacuation of Finnmark, Jonas Lie, tried to intimidate the population by encouraging the circulation of horrific stories about what would happen had the Russians crossed the border and walked on the Norwegian soil: terror, murder and rape (Watts 2016). On the other hand, among those living in Southern Regions of Varanger, Russians are today remembered as the liberators who expelled the Nazi troops. The memory of the interactions with Soviet soldiers are cherished still today. During an interview, Isalill, a young Sámi teacher in her early 30s born and raised in Sor Varanger, explained to me how Russians troops were perceived in the region where she grew up:

I: it's definitely a subject [of discussion], like... now we, my family, live in one of the few houses that wasn't burned down. So... but I didn't grow up there. And yeah, and my grandmother's or my grandfather's house, the house where he was born and raised, they [the withdrawing German army and the Russian air force bombing the town] didn't burn that either. And I think that's just a coincidence, because I think they [the Germans] just didn't have the time. And my grandfather, he was like, 12-13, during the war. So he had a lot of memories from it. He didn't talk a lot about it when he was alive. But my... my grandmother has told me a lot of stories about, about him during the war, so it's quite, it's a very, it's an important part of... like... our family's history.

E: He didn't have to move away from Finnmark?

I: No, they weren't evacuated, as far as I know. And I think that was because they had the farm. And a lot of my grandfather's brothers worked on the on the sea as on these big ships all around the world. So a lot of them weren't even based in Finnmark during the war and after the war. In the 50s and 60s, my grandfather worked on the sea as well. So he was traveling a lot. So they weren't evacuated, like, but I think a lot of things like... kinda survived in Kirkenes. I

don't think a lot of people were evacuated, because we were on the Russian border. And the Russians were kind of in control right after the war, and they provided food and help. So I think Kirkenes was... that part [of Finnmark] was kind of ...

E: you were so close to the battlefield.

I: Yeah, it saved us. It really did. Like, we say that Norway was freed from the Germans in '45. But Kirkenes was freed half, like half a year before, in '44, the fall of '44, the Russians came and liberated Kirkenes and Sor Varanger. So, and they brought a lot of infrastructure and was able to like build... the build the town making it a functioning society again. And they brought food and supplies from Russia. So I think I actually think that was part of the reason that my family wasn't evacuated.

E: the way you talk to about the Russian army... it seems like a different way of looking at it, compared to other stories, like in Finland or today...

I: yeah, really different. Totally. They are [to us] saviours, our friends and neighbours. So I've never grown up with Russia as a menace. It was just, it was just a hard place to get to, but it wasn't really like they were strangers. The only reason we weren't visiting because it was because it was expensive and difficult to get the visa. But my little sister She lives there now in Kirkenes and she's traveling, she has this this border visa. So she goes there like every other month, sometimes just for a day and sometimes just for shopping. (Isallil, interview, 17/9/2019)

This interview is of particular interest because of the fresh look it gives on the articulated relations taking place along the Russian-Norwegian border. It also sheds light onto personal family memories of such interactions while providing an account of how a young Sami tries to make sense of the unexplainable disaster, devastation and uncertainty that characterised life in time of war. The location where these family memories were once the daily reality for Isallil's family is remarkable, as Isallil herself recounts in the interview. Kirkenes, located only a few kilometres west of the border with Russia, has a peculiar history that perfectly enshrines the complexity of the region. The area that would have become the village of Kirkenes had been a common Norwegian–Russian district until the present border was settled, in 1826. In 1862, a Church was built on an isthmus and the area was named after it: Kirkenes (in North Sámi Girkonjárga) literally means 'the peninsula of the Church'. Before 1826, the area was known as Piselvnes, after the river Pis. Kirkenes was the first Norwegian settlement to be liberated from Nazi occupying forces and some 30,000 Nazi Germany troops were originally stationed in the village. For this reason, as Stratigakos highlights, during the war the town was among the most heavily bombed in Norway, reduced to rubble by foreign air strikes (2020).

On the 9th of October, in the Finnish side of Sápmi, Russian forces started a counter-offensive against the Wehrmacht. On October 18, 1944, eleven days after the beginning of the Petsamo-Kirkenes Offensive Soviet troops crossed the border into Norway, liberating Kirkenes and the Sør-Varanger municipality, an event that led to a dramatic domino-effect: on October 28, Adolf Hitler ordered the evacuation of the local population and people living in Finnmark and northern Troms County were forced to relocate southwards. Around 75000 people were urged to leave Northern Sápmi. Nevertheless, at least one-third of the local population chose to stay. They refused to obey the orders and went into hiding in the *goahhti* they had previously built in the hills and mountains of inner Finnmark and Northern Troms. While the Nazi army retreated, Soviet troops advanced, stopping only when they reached the settlement in Tana (cfr Gebhardt, J. F. 1989)²⁴⁹. There Norwegian troops, transferred from Scotland and Sweden, replaced them and moved westward into Finnmark.

3.1.4 Σίβυλλα τί Θέλεις;²⁵⁰

As Isallil remarked, Kirkenes was the first Norwegian settlement to be freed from the occupying Nazi forces, six months prior to the formal end of the Second World War in Norway and in Europe. But the capitulation of Nazi and German troops in Eastern Finnmark came at a high price for the local population as it led to a catastrophic and destructive chain of events: retreating Wehrmacht troops, following Hitler's orders, carried out scorched earth tactics during the evacuation of the region. They had already employed the same vicious tactic in northern Finland²⁵¹. Such destruction massively affected Sámi communities. Villages such as Eanodat (Enontekiö) and Aanaar (Inari), where the majority of the population was Sámi, were completely destroyed. Settlements off the beaten track and away from (often German-made) roads, such as the Sámi village of Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), suffered destruction to a less degree. The Nazi withdrawal from Northern Norway (Finnmark and Northern Troms) along with its total destruction and the enforced evacuation of the local population was a strategy the German occupiers implemented with the hope of maintaining control over the rest of Norway. Furthermore, the evacuees were considered potential workforce and, according to Nazi ideology, in the case of ethnic Norwegians of pure Aryan blood²⁵².

²⁴⁹ Gebhardt, J. F. (1989). Petsamo-Kirkenes operation (7–30 October 1944): A Soviet joint and combined arms operation in arctic terrain. *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, 2(1), 49-86.

²⁵⁰ Literally, “Sibylla, what do you want?”, from Thomas Elliot’s “The waste land”.

²⁵¹ Cultural historian Pekka Lehtonen writes that on average 40-47% of the settlement in Finnish Lapland were destroyed (2010).

²⁵² The evacuation of Northern Finland and Norway had many ramifications and has been addressed from different perspectives in numerous publications such as monographies (cfr Watts 2016), articles (cfr Lehtola 2015) and masters theses (cfr Elstad 2016).

The Nazi aim was to destroy everything that could be of use to enemy armies. To avoid this occurrence, they left a wasteland behind them. By devastating the region, Nazi authorities intended to make the area useless to the Soviet Union army or other (Western) powers. The Nazi authorities feared the Allies could occupy the area, and maybe (re)-install the Norwegian government in exile. It has been argued that the forced evacuation of Northern Norway had the characteristics of a mass deportation (Elstad 2016). The Reichskommissar Terboven, who ruled Norway under Nazi occupation, feared partisans' attacks and industrial sabotages in the North. Terboven's Norwegian Nazi government had little power as major decisions regarding Norway were taken in Berlin. This is also true with regards to the evacuation of Finnmark. The Government had little sympathy for the Sámi section of the population and, as Elstad (2016) points out, the minister of Terboven's puppet government Jonas Lie tried to prevent the Sámi from being led south. Lie's actions shall be traced back to his racist attitudes towards the Sámi²⁵³. He wanted, and officially proposed, to leave the Sami population behind, abandoning them to die in a wasteland ravaged by fire, at the mercy of the oncoming troops. Lie's view was not shared by Himmler who, instead, was intrigued by the Sámi and wanted to implement a segregation policy to keep this "primitive" and "isolated" people "protected from modernity" and did not want to leave them in territories about to fall in Soviet hands²⁵⁴. Furthermore, reindeer tenders were highly valued by the Nazi establishment because the reindeer herds were able to provide food resources to the soldiers. Despite the Nazi plans though, the tenders' activity was strictly bounded to the territory. Hence, reindeer tenders and their herds could only be evacuated by forcing the herds towards the Tromsø area, forcing the tenders to lead the herds for long distances. Despite Himmler's commands, not everybody complied with the orders and many were the acts of passive resistance and resilience, enhanced by exerting individual and collective agency in difficult circumstances, as an episode examined by Watts (2016) illustrated: a group of reindeer tenders was intimidated to flee the area where their *siida* (Sami social unit) was located. The tenders though not only ignored German orders but also fooled the soldier by pretending to follow the Nazi injunctions while leading their reindeer to Anárjohka valley, on the border with Finland, instead of the location selected by the authorities (Helligskogen in Skibotn – Troms).

²⁵³ Views on the Sámi varied both among Nazi Norwegians and among Nazi Germans. Among the Nazi, some considered the Sámi as a distinctive culture worth of protection. Others instead despised the Sámi and some even suggested forced sterilization. Forced sterilization had been practice in Norway from 1934 to the 1970s on Tatar, Gypsies women and the mentally ill Norwegians. Furthermore, Nazi authorities planned on sending ethnic Tatar and Gypsy Norwegians to concentration camps in German-occupied regions of continental Europe. This plan was never implemented. (2016).

²⁵⁴ This attitude applied to the "pure Sámi" who engaged in reindeer tending. Mixed population and Sea-Sámi were considered degenerate and, in Himmler's view, were not to be included in the "der Lapperentum".

Ethnic segregation and discrimination was implemented during the evacuation of the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Elstad (2016: 73) reports an episode that evokes grim events in continental Europe: Norwegian police officers on the quay in Mosjøen shouted: «Civilians on the right, Sámi on the left». Dividing the refugees in two groups according to the ethnic background. The words of the police officers mirror and embody centuries of devaluation towards Sámi cultures and Sámi people, relegating them to one end of the civilization/culture-barbarity/nature dichotomy. The local civil population was evacuated southwards and had to leave behind everything except what they could carry with them. What was left behind was destroyed by the wrath of retreating battalions. Were the fire of hearth was no longer kindled, the fires of destruction ravaged. Dogs, cattle, tools, objects, clothing, barns, houses, but also entire villages were wiped out, leaving only ashes where once life thrived. People left, heading south, not knowing exactly where they would end up. The destination was southern and western Norway. Some stayed, hiding for months at a time in *goahti* (turf huts) up in the mountains, far from the roads and inaccessible to motorized vehicles. Of those who left – mainly mothers with their children, orphans and elderly people – some stopped along the way without even knowing they would have spent the rest of their lives in that specific place. Babies conceived in the North were born far away from their ancestors' land. Family ties were cut, some never to be sewed again. Children were lost, others died. Many never came back home where they once belonged.

Evacuation was implemented through buses, boats, ships, and trucks. Poor planning though meant that many refugee camps were totally unsuitable for hosting sick and exhausted evacuees. In these transition-posts food and drink were scarce and babies, elderly and sick people were particularly exposed to diseases and infections, accentuated by the miserable sanitary conditions of the camps. These traumatic experiences deeply scarred many but the complexity of these refugees' experiences cannot be reduced to a dichotomous approach that divides and reduced events into bad and good. This approach would erase the different interpretations the people involved gave of the events as well as the emotions they felt. In many cases, such emotions were buried deep down in the memory, left asleep in a corner of the mind, seemingly fading away just to be reawakened decades later. Good memories as well as nightmares became impressed in the minds of those who lived through the enforced evacuation of the North-western side of Sápmi. The evacuation – proposed to the civilians as voluntary but actually enforced by the authorities – was extremely traumatic for many of those who had to flee.

Sámi author John Gustavsen put these emotions on paper, providing an example of Sámi literature dealing with the aftermaths not of war as such but of the shock brought about by enforced evacuation. The book, 'Lille Chicago' was published in 1978, describes the difficulties in the post-War years in

the town of Honningsvåg, where local society must be rebuilt from scratch in a multicultural context where Sámi, Kvens and Norwegians, fishermen and traders have to find a way to cope with the trauma of war and the hope for a better future.

The potential ambivalences intrinsic to the fleeing from Northern Norway shall not be underestimated. If, for some people, the evacuation meant trauma and distress, and in some cases death, for others it meant hope. Some had relatives and friends in the south who could provide food and shelter. Others were left with none but themselves. The civilians moving towards Troms, Nordland and further south in the country were often met with suspect, especially in the case of women²⁵⁵ who had relationships – and in many cases children – with German and Austrian soldiers²⁵⁶. These tensions often resulted in conflict-filled relationship between the refugees and the host community. As in the case of Tromsø, which had access to limited resources in terms of both space and food, the fleeing refugees meant a growing pressure over the city and its inhabitants. Problems with supplies and overcrowding arose in many of the areas where the refugees were relocated, contributing in aggravating the situation. The forced contact between northern and southern segments of Norwegian society led to frictions due to cultural differences. The linguistic barrier contributed in making the situation worse. Many Sámi had little proficiency in Norwegian and the vast majority of southern Norwegians had no knowledge of Sámi languages. Not everyone complied with German orders and many stayed behind despite the forced evacuation, in the regions now abandoned by the Nazi army. Most of them spent the winter in *goahhti* (Sámi turf hut) in the mountains but the life-conditions were harsh. Those who were caught were arrested and sent to the Krøkebørsletta prison camp in Tromsø or Vollan prison in Trondheim. The forced evacuation and concomitant burning of Finnmark and North Troms constituted a major abuse of the local population, with devastating effects on the people as individuals as well as on communities. The cultural loss was immense, with items belonging to the daily life disappeared in the flames of war. Nevertheless, the expertise that enabled

²⁵⁵ As in many war contexts, relationships between local women and foreign/occupying soldiers occurred in Sápmi/northern Norway/Sweden. In 1995 - as part of the celebration of 50 years after the 1945 peace – NRK aired a radio-documentary describing the experience of girls who moved to Germany after the war. The name of the program was: «All my life I was a refugee». In the program, a woman, Asbjørg, described how her life turned out – and the difficulties she faced - because of her relation with a German soldier. She was from Evenes (on the coast of Skånland peninsula) and went to Germany with a German soldier. By then she had had at least one child.

²⁵⁶ After the war, life for these women, and their half-German children, - as well as for all the women and children that were part of the lebensborn program -was extremely difficult as they were stigmatized for their relations with German soldiers. They were considered traitors and, at the same time, mentally unfitted and so were their children. In 1994, the Norwegian State publically apologised for the systematic stigmatization inflicted upon these children of war and their mothers. For further analysis see among others: Olsen, K. (2005) and Mochmann, I. C., & Larsen, S. U. (2008).

the transmission of the know-how was preserved in the memory and in the abilities of those who survived.

The feelings experienced by refugees from the Northern Calotte can today be reconstructed through their own memories as well as through the stories they shared – or in many cases refused to share – with their descendants. Silences are, in some cases, as eloquent as words. I was so privileged to hear the story of a refugee who fled eastern Finnmark never to come back. I heard her story through the words of her son, through the few memories she managed and decided to share with him. The Experiences of this brave young woman and her children inspired me, and led me to investigate this aspect of the recent history of Sápmi. I chose not to describe the story of this Sámi woman, as she was dead by the time I met her son. She did not want her story to be told, especially by a stranger, and she didn't share it with her son until she was in her final days, when she stopped speaking the language imposed upon her as a girl and switched back to the language of her childhood, north Sámi. The pain she suffered, the opportunities she created for herself and her children belong to the private sphere of family memories but are also part of a collective and shared – albeit individual – experience that shall not be forgotten, for it tells of human sufferance and human strength endured by civilians – in most cases female – in war contexts.

The consequences of the scorched earth tactics for the fabric of Finnmark and North Troms, the chaos that prevailed during the forced evacuation and the victims' desire to forget all the evil that had happened lasted long in the hearts of the Finnmark population.

3.2 Arctic militarization today

As mentioned earlier, despite the historical evidence of intermittent conflictual events, systematic militarization of the Arctic and Subarctic regions of Europe began in the early twentieth century²⁵⁷. During WWII, Arctic and Subarctic areas of the continent, for a long time the object of expansionistic policies, were transformed into battlefields while becoming physical and symbolic sites of conflicts between enemy countries. Once the war was over, and throughout the Cold War, the Norwegian Eastern border with USRR and the Barents Sea were heavily militarized: their crucial position between NATO and the Russian Federation made the region a key area in international geopolitics. The situation in the Barents Sea and on the arctic European and Russian mainland changed after Gorbachev delivered the famous 1987 Murmansk speech which decreed the end of the Cold War in

²⁵⁷ Even though the militarization of the Arctic is a relatively recent phenomenon, the presence of military or state outposts in the Arctic can be traced back to the time of colonization in the 17th century, when nation states started building military headquarters such as Várggát/Vardø in the North of the Fennoscandinavian peninsula. Similarly, in a time when religious and political powers were not separated, religious institutions such as churches and monasteries had similar functions, signalling the presence in – and the ownership of – the State over the region.

the Arctic. After Gorbachev, the Yeltsin era was characterised by a progressive desecuritization of the Arctic region and hence the Barents Sea but, since the early 2000s, in Russia resecuritization has gained new life thanks to Putin's efforts. Similar militarization phenomena are taking place in other arctic regions, and scholars seem to agree on the fact that the militarization of the Arctic is linked with emerging environmental, societal and human security challenges (Atland 2020) and have as their goal the maintenance of regional stability rather than potential aggressive military action (Bennet 2016, Atland 2020, Boulègue 2019).

3.2.1 A changing context

As is the case with other borders in the region, the 196km land-border between Norway and Russia not only delimits the boundary between a NATO member and the Russian Federation. It also cuts across Sámi lands and communities. The restrictions on cross-border movements, especially during the Cold War era, further fragmented local Sámi communities.

In the years to come, a more accessible Arctic will have many countries and multinationals watering at the mouth. With the melting of the Arctic ice and easier access to northern resources, there will be a need for improved border patrols as well as stricter control over maritime traffic, to prevent illicit activities (resource exploitation as well as goods smuggling). The potential military consequences of this race for resources cannot be ignored. The geo-strategic significance of the Arctic is expected to increase and infrastructures devoted to the protection of states' interests will proliferate in the region. A process of progressive militarisation is currently taking place in the Arctic, with a steady increase in military facilities and activities. The premises of this process can be traced back to the Cold War era, when the arctic regions of the World were regarded as strategic buffer zones. A turning point in the recent history of the Arctic has been Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk speech. The Soviet leader's discourse was a watershed event that put an end to decades of tension in the area, paving the way for the desecuritization of interstate relations in the Arctic (Atland 2020), and contributing to the development of the Arctic as a low-tension region (Boulègue 2019). Sergunin and Konyshev (2017) have addressed the (ir)relevance of the Arctic in the period between the end of the Cold War and the new millennium. In their view, the lifting of the Iron Curtain and the unlikelihood of a conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO or the US profoundly transformed the perception of the Arctic, which was no longer seen as a potential battle zone: between 1987 and the early 2000s Russian leaders did not devote attention or economic resources to the Arctic areas of the country. This approach left the Russian North in a *de facto* state of abandonment and led to an underestimation of the economic potential of the area, to the extent that the whole region has long been considered a source of socio-economic problems and hence a burden for the national economy. The situation has

now changed. The Russian Federation has acknowledged the economic potential of its northernmost areas and plans to improve industries and infrastructure in the region are developed at both the federal and the national level as well as by private investors. This “Arctic Revival” is epitomized by investments in communications, transport, energy and mining. These are the driving forces of the developing Russian Arctic economy. The melting of the Arctic ice will allow the transport of goods across the Northern Sea Route (often referred to with the acronym NSR). Those who will control this route will benefit from it in ways currently difficult to foresee. Russian institutions are well aware of the importance of these arctic developments and, in order to maintain control over the arctic territories of Russia, are establishing, for example, two new Arctic coast defence divisions that will be likely stationed at the two poles of Russian Arctic territories: the eastern Arctic and the Kola Peninsula. As a consequence, as Sergunin and Konyshev note, the Murmansk region, which is already heavily militarized, will see an increase in infrastructures and military personnel whose tasks will include hosting training centres for the special Arctic Brigade (Sergunin and Konyshev 2017). At the moment, increased submarine presence²⁵⁸ in the Barents Sea, along with the presence of specialised armed forces in the area, is contributing to a further militarisation of the Murmansk region and work as ‘nuclear deterrence’ (Altland 2020).

3.2.2 Playing war games

Since the mid-2010s, the Russian Federation has invested money and resources in the development of specific Arctic military units. In 2019 a section of Russian armed forces, among them the Arctic Brigade, developed theories and procedures designed to operate in the Arctic environment (Boulenge 2019). The 80th Brigade is based in southern Murmansk, close to the village of Alakurtti and only some 60km from Finland. This is only one of the numerous Russian military bases strategically located in the proximity of neighbouring states. Another Russian contingent deployed in the vicinity of the Russian European borders is the 200th Separate Motor-rifle Brigade, located in Pechenga, at the Sputnik base. This base is distant only 15km from the Norwegian border and about 65km from the Finnish one.

The Russian Federation is not the only sovereign entity developing military infrastructures in the Arctic. The USA and European countries are devoting funding and state budgets to this specific purpose. At the moment, Arctic states frame the current militarization process through the lens of ‘defence’ discourses, stressing the importance of maintaining control over their own territories and

²⁵⁸ Boulenge (2019) notes that the receding ice is going to change the rules of Arctic warfare also with regard to submarines: they will no longer be able to hide beneath the ice during covert operations and their visibility, including through satellite observation, will make them vulnerable to anti-submarine warfare operations.

territorial waters. Protection of the *status quo* emerges as a key narrative in this international space. Strategic interests in the Arctic have led to the development of policies designed to avoid conflict (rather than to ensure lasting peace in the region). Patrolling and protecting exclusive economic zones and undisputed national territories is currently at the core of the new military developments in the Arctic, based on the deterrent potential of militarization. An anthropogenic-led easier access to the Arctic regions may indeed facilitate illegal activities such as plundering, smuggling, and unregulated migration (Sergunin and Konyshev 2017) that pose a threat to the stability in the Arctic. Among the effect of Climate Change, it should indeed be addressed the shift in security perceptions among the Arctic powers should indeed be addressed; and this includes the Russian Federation, which is currently examining and developing strategies based on ‘what-if’ scenarios in order to be ready for different possible climate change outcomes. Nevertheless, Arctic powers are preparing themselves for the eventuality of war, as the development of military technologies specifically designed for arctic conditions demonstrates (Boulègue 2019). War in the Arctic would require not only special equipment but also specific training: extremely cold temperatures and the Arctic environment would exert pressure on both logistic supply chains and actual military operations. For these reasons, specific training centres have been developed in the region. In Alaska, northern warfare training centres prepare young soldiers to face the challenges posed by the harshness of Arctic landscapes in the event of armed conflict. Norway has specific bases devoted to the training of domestic and international troops. Being part of NATO, Norway hosts NATO soldiers training for military operations in the Far North. Given the fact that Norway is a NATO member, Northern Norway emerges as a key site in international Arctic warfare. As a consequence, army bases occupy a special position in the international military arena. Many of these bases are in Sápmi, as the Evenes and Bardufoss examples illustrate. International ‘War Games’ had been taking place in Northern Norway for years and participation in such military exercises demonstrates the strategic interest exerted by the Arctic. Exercise ‘Cold Response’ took place in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2012. During the 2012 edition, fifteen nations and a total of 16000 military personnel took part in the exercises. Scholars interpreted these War Games as answers to Norway’s growing concerns about Russian investment in the militarization of the Arctic (Deplenge & Dodds 2012).

3.2.3 Enduring the game

Arctic indigenous peoples have (had) to learn how to cope with the militarization of the Arctic despite the effects military activities have on daily life and on practices such as reindeer tending. In

the Kola Peninsula, Sámi and Komi have had to face a slow but steady Soviet encroachment that has had terrible consequences for the local communities²⁵⁹.

Not only has the militarization of this area deeply affected local indigenous communities but it has also led to specific forms of exploitation of indigenous peoples. Militarization can take many forms and, in some cases, may entail resorting to indigenous expertise as in the case of the Russian 80th Brigade, which employs dogs and reindeer sledges as well as snowmobiles as a means of transportation and rapid deployment (Boulègue 2019). In order to acquire the skills necessary to handle reindeer sledges, soldiers had to rely on Sámi knowledge. Soldiers' training entailed the use of reindeer as draught animals. Local Sámi reindeer tenders from the Lovozorevo area taught soldiers how to manage reindeer and how to navigate the Arctic environment. Thanks to these training sessions, according to the Russian Ministry of Defence website (2016)²⁶⁰, now «[s]ervicemen of the Arctic Brigade of the Northern Fleet master the transport of the indigenous peoples of the Far North». The implications of these practices hint at the exploitation of indigenous knowledge systems for military purposes²⁶¹. Furthermore, it poses questions related to forms of consent or coercion local Sámi may have faced when recruited for this Arctic training.

3.3 Indigenous expertise: Arctic peoples fighting other peoples' wars

The employment of indigenous peoples and the resort to indigenous expertise in warfare is neither limited to the 80th Brigade's activities nor a recent phenomenon. This practice has been brought to a wide public by films such as the 2002 "Windtalkers" (John Woo, USA). Despite its biases, the film has the merit of having brought the sacrifice of Indigenous Native Americans under the spotlights of Hollywood, providing a platform for discussions of the role of the Navajo²⁶² and other Native Americans (for instance the Comanche) code talkers during World War II²⁶³. As Cherokee Muskogee scholar Tom Holm explains (2009:16), Native Americans had been enlisting into US army since at least the early 19th century and, in many cases, «[...] Native Americans served with the U.S. military as allies in several wars against other Native Americans». Even if national armies had long recruited

²⁵⁹ By the end of the 19th century, Komi and Nenets reindeer tenders had settled in the Kola Peninsula. This relocation caused massive disruption for the local Sámi small-scale reindeer tenders who had their grazing lands in the Peninsula. Competition for resources led to conflict between these indigenous communities. (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000).

²⁶⁰ https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12075782@egNews

²⁶¹ Russian troops resorted to *lavvu* (Sami tents) as shelters during military exercises.

²⁶² The Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary has been declassified under the US Department of Defence directive 5200-9 and it is currently available at <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/n/navajo-code-talker-dictionary.html>

²⁶³ Native Americans also took part in WWI as code-talkers (Holm 2009). Similarly, the British used Irish speakers to confuse the Germans.

indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledge had been useful in tactics and military operations, code-talkers were enrolled specifically because their knowledge of little-known indigenous languages provided the army with a safe way to transmit secret tactical messages²⁶⁴. Indigenous languages became undecipherable codes that played a crucial role in USA military strategy (Holm 2009).

Despite having received limited media attention, Sámi peoples too have been recruited during past wars because of their skills and expertise, the same ones Russian military forces are resorting to today: during WWII, both Soviet and Nazi armies fighting in the Arctic employed local Sámi reindeer tenders as transport brigades. On the Arctic Front, Sámi peoples served and died along with other indigenous peoples and their reindeers. Indigenous soldiers in the Soviet Army fought in the Pechenga-Kirkenes operation during the liberation of Finnmark, taking Kirkenes on the 25th of October 1944²⁶⁵. The Soviet Army utilised Sámi and other indigenous peoples in the so-called reindeer-skiing battalions (in Russian *оленьи лыжные батальоны*). Sámi, Nenets, and Komi reindeer tenders were sent to the Finno-Russian front with their trained animals. Between 1939 and 1940, at least 1000 Sámi, Komi, Nenets and other indigenous Russian Arctic groups were mobilized, the majority of them being Sámi from Kola. They fought in the Pechenga region from early 1942 until 1944 (Gorter-Gronvik and Suprun, 2000).

According to the Russian Ministry of Defence website (2016), during the war in the Kola Peninsula, reindeer were used to transport military equipment, evacuate wounded personnel, send scouts beyond the enemy lines, and even move wrecked aircrafts and their crews. Using reindeer-pulled sledges, more than 10000 injured soldiers were evacuated from front line, thousands of tons of ammunition and other military equipment were delivered to the front, 160 aircraft were evacuated from the tundra. During WWII (the Great Patriotic War as it is referred to in Russian), reindeer tenders of Sámi, Nenets, and Komi background served with their reindeer. In total, more than 10000 reindeer were mobilized. (Russian Ministry of Defence 2016)²⁶⁶. These units were employed in a wide range of operations and their expertise was useful especially in the supply chain.

²⁶⁴ As the Native Americans were recruited for their language skills, which made them crucial to the US Army, the Soviet conscripted Sámi and other northern indigenous peoples such as because of their survival skills in the Arctic and their reindeer. Nevertheless, once the war on the Arctic Front was over, these soldiers were not released from the Red Army but were sent to fight on fronts in continental Europe, such as in Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000).

²⁶⁵ They belonged to the Reindeer Brigades and Battalions of the 14th and 19th Armies, later the 31st Brigade (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000).

²⁶⁶ In 2012, on February 23 – the Defender of the Fatherland’s Day – in the Russian Arctic town of Naryan-Mar, local authorities unveiled a War memorial to honour WWII reindeer battalions. Representatives from indigenous communities whose members fought in the reindeer battalions attended the ceremonies (Pedersen 2012).

November 1941 marked the formal conscription of Sámi people into the Soviet Army: in that month, the Military Council of the 14th Army of the Karelian Front recommended the establishment of three army reindeer transport units from the Kola Peninsula. According to Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000), each of these reindeer transports would have consisted of 1015 reindeer, 15 dogs, and more than 300 reindeer sledges as well as 154 soldiers and officers. Among the 154 soldiers, 77 were to be in charge of the reindeer; hence, they ought to be either Sámi, Komi or Nenet.

At the beginning, the task was assigned to at least 300 Sámi recruits from Lovozero and other Sámi areas of Murmansk District (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000). Conversely, the German army employed reindeer in some of their military operations in the Arctic and so did the Finnish government. In the case of the Nazi deployment of reindeer units, their use in the supply chain never became prominent (Evjen & Lehtola 2019). Soviet authorities soon realized that, thanks to their adaptation to the Arctic environment, reindeer could be employed in numerous tasks: besides direct military actions, they were patrolling and were assigned mobile duties, usually the transport of supplies. Reindeer were used to transfer ammunition and munitions to the front, carry soldiers beyond enemy lines and rescue wounded soldiers. By using reindeer as means of transport, it was possible to save resources (fuel and food) while, at the same time, ensuring mobility without having to invest money in the building of roads and infrastructures (Turunen et al. 2018). Furthermore, reindeer meat provided nourishing food while these animals' skins saved many from certain death, being the arctic freezing temperatures almost unbearable.

Nazi and Soviet, as well as Finnish armies employed Sámi, Nenet and Komi conscripts because they acknowledged their expertise: they were aware of the mastery these indigenous peoples possessed in managing dogs and reindeer in the tundra. Indigenous soldiers were able to survive in what the Nazi, Finnish and Soviet officials considered uttermost wilderness. Being able to orient themselves in the tundra, they had an advantage over their fellow soldiers. In the case of Sámi soldiers, they had their previous knowledge of the terrain on their side of the border. For this reason, they often worked as guides during missions. They were even 'borrowed' by different battalions in times of need. Furthermore, soldiers of indigenous arctic background were excellent hunters used to the wilderness. This ability made them good snipers, often better than professionally trained Russian soldiers. They were also able to cast the lasso, which was on some occasions used to capture German soldiers alive. Indigenous Arctic people were especially suited for military missions in the Arctic for a number of reasons besides those already mentioned: they were usually in good physical shape, a fact that ensured their physical resistance, they were able to move around the arctic terrain because of their previous knowledge of the area, they were able to cope with the weather and harsh climate

conditions and they were not affected by natural phenomena such as the polar night or the midnight sun. (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000). As mentioned, the Soviet Army was the first to employ reindeer contingents in the war. The Red Army had already grasped the value of both reindeer tenders and reindeer herds for warfare already in the winter of 1939-1940, during the Winter War with Finland. Not only were the tenders equipped to endure the harsh conditions and were able to navigate the tundra, but also reindeers were able to carry weights and pull sledges in the frozen winter. Soviet and Finnish armies soon understood that neither tanks nor horses could perform better than these animals on the Arctic front (Turunen et al. 2018). Reindeer, which can carry up to 50kg in winter and 35kg in summer, and can travel during both seasons, could transport food supply, ammunitions, urgent orders, post, wounded soldiers and were even able to reach otherwise inaccessible locations and rescue pilots from crashed aircrafts. They could also be used during missions and reconnaissance patrols as well as partisan raids behind the enemy lines. Reindeer could work up to 8 hours per day and rest for one day every four (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000). Furthermore, unlike horses – which needed food – and tanks – which needed oil – reindeer did not need to be fed (and hence to have food transported to their location) since they fed themselves off the liches they would find in the tundra. All these features contributed in making reindeer the perfect Arctic war animal. It comes as no surprise that Russian soldiers and officials referred to reindeer as their ‘Arctic tank’ (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000)..



image 22, 23: Reindeer and a soldier near an aircraft. (<https://ww2aircraft.net/>)



Image 24: A Soldier and a reindeer on a frozen lake near Nautsi village, on the Finnish side of Sápmi. The man may be Sámi or might have purchased the leather shoes from a Sámi (source SA-kuva)



Image 25: A reindeer is kept at lead by a Sámi man. Another Sámi man is talking with soldiers in arctic camouflage suits (source SA-kuva).

3.3.1 Demons run when a good reindeer goes to war – Human-Animal relations at the front

The issues touched upon in the last paragraph introduce us to reflection upon the exploitation of animals in warfare contexts, and constitutes part of a broader topic: human-animal relations. Animals have often been seen and variously used in war, as it will soon be explained. As the case in point demonstrates, this is also true in the Arctic. This field of study has not yet been the subject of in-depth investigation and only a handful of academic studies have been devoted to this specific type of human-animal relationship. This is a relatively recent line of studies even though animals have been used in military actions since ancient times. War contexts are not only extremely complex to study but also, if the object of investigation refers to recent or contemporary contexts, the research may require access to classified information. So far, there have been few studies specifically devoted to the analysis of the involvement of animals in war contexts but the growing interest in this field is reflected in recent publications of collections of essays revolving around the multiplicitous impacts of war on animals as well as the use of animals in warfare²⁶⁷. With reference to the sub/arctic context, this topic is sometimes touched upon in scientific literature addressing the impact of war on arctic communities and further information can be extrapolated from extracts of interviews quoted in such articles. There are some mentions about reindeer in war in Russian, Finnish and Norwegian contemporary literature. Furthermore, there are numerous websites focusing on the history of war in Fennoscandinavia and arctic Russia that have published in-depth articles on this topic. With reference to scholarly works, as Turunen et al. (2018) show, the history of reindeer herding during WWII has been a topic of academic enquiry in the Soviet Union/Russian Federation (see Gorter- Gronvik and Suprun, 2000; Dudeck 2018) as well as in Finland (see Lehtola, 1994, 2003; Kortessalmi, 2007; Turunen et al., 2017) but, as these authors remark, there are still very few scientific articles on the topic. Nevertheless, there is no specific scientific study that has investigated the forced involvement of reindeer (and their Sámi tenders) in arctic warfare and human-animal relations on the arctic front. Such analysis would, in my opinion, shed some light on the inequalities suffered both by Sámi and by reindeer in times of war and, in doing so, would bring to public attention a form of exploitation that is seldom acknowledged. This kind of investigation requires an intersectional approach that takes into account the different forces at play in relation among indigenous Sámi, foreign indigenous conscripts (Komi, Nenet),

²⁶⁷ Collections of essays focusing on this topic include: Hediger (2012) and Smith et al. (2013).

In 2017 Lucinda Moore published an informative monography based on archival photographic material from WWI. With reference to arctic context, no specific work has insofar focused on reindeer and war. Nevertheless, paragraphs devoted to this topic see can be found in Dudek (2018) Gorter-Gronvik and Suprun, (2000); Gorter et al., (2005), Seitsonen & Koskinen-Koivisto, (2018). Furthermore, during wartime, Finnish scholar Alaruikka – who, throughout his life, published a number of articles on reindeer tending in northern Finland in the specialised journal *Poromies* – wrote two articles specifically dealing with war and reindeer (1939, 1941).

soldiers belonging to the ethnic majority, and military authorities. Hence both new structures of inequality and pre-existent intertwined systems of power should be taken into account.

For millennia, animals have been exploited in human warfare – as happens with most human-centred activities – forced to play a vast array of roles. They came to fulfil many roles during wartime: they were mascots (like Unsinkable Sam in WWII or Peggy the Bulldog in WWI)²⁶⁸, aid providers, mounts, labour-force, and friends. Animals proved crucial in warfare especially as transporters of supplies (horses, donkeys, mules, camels, elephants, reindeer), as messengers (pigeons and dogs), and objects of weapons testing as well as for detecting explosive such as land- and sea-mines²⁶⁹. Throughout the centuries, animals underwent a process of commodification which finds in warfare one of its most striking examples. The involvement of animals in human-led activities – especially war – carries implications connected with ideologies of dominionism, implicitly relying on the notion of human superiority over animals. As Salter (2014) points out, this approach fosters systematic violence – both direct and structural – against animals. This is especially true in war contexts. War is a dehumanizing practice that relies on the construction of the enemy as “other” through a long-established process of othering that has also been the cornerstone of colonial and imperial enterprises. With reference to the human-animal relation, the process of othering, already implemented with humans, was even more accentuated. Animals were often equated with and treated as tools, regardless of their physical pain and emotional suffering, as is the case with elephants, camels²⁷⁰, donkeys, horses, and reindeer. Historical sources demonstrate the widespread exploitation of animals as replaceable and dischargeable weapons²⁷¹.

²⁶⁸ Cats and dogs were the most common mascots among soldiers. They were adopted by single soldiers or by a battalion. It was not unusual for troops stationed around the world to adopt a local animal as a mascot. That’s why, in old photos as well as in written records it is possible to find monkeys as well as bears, reindeer, foxes, gazelles, and chameleons as mascots.

²⁶⁹ For instance, throughout the 1980s the US Navy captured and trained sea mammals as part of the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program. Dolphins, belugas, orcas and pilot whales were trained to locate sea mines. The use in warfare of animals employed for different reasons and tasks is still a widespread, albeit often little known - practice. Recently, Norwegian authorities have identified a beluga rescued swimming in Norwegian waters as a ‘whale spy’. The beluga was carrying an empty camera harness with Cyrillic writing saying Saint Petersburg. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidnikel/2019/05/02/a-white-russian-spy-whale-is-charming-locals-in-northern-norway/#100d379f2184>

²⁷⁰ Camels for instance played an essential role in the history of Eritrea and, especially, in the Eritrean nationalist movement. Upon independence, Eritrea selected the camel as an emblem, incorporating it into the country’s coat of arms. Camels were essential in desert-covered areas such as the Eritrean ones and, for this reason, in November 1935, the invading Italian forces first captured the caravan town of Makale – a crucial crossroads for camel caravans – and purposely machine-gunned and bombed a camel caravan carrying ammunition and other supplies (Sorenson 2014).

²⁷¹ Among the many examples of the use of animals as weapons, I shall mention just the “tank-dogs” – dogs trained (through painstaking exercises and, ultimately, starvation to reach enemy lines and run under their tanks –. Such dogs were attached to remotely controlled bombs that were exploded once the dog had reached the enemy’s tank. Similar techniques were designed for cats to be dropped on the enemy’s navy. This practice though was soon abandoned because it proved ineffective.

Animals were simultaneously constructed as the ultimate other, deprived of rights and treated as objects while, simultaneously, being equated to humans through a process of anthropomorphization through the endowment of human qualities such as bravery. Dogs, pigeons and other animals were regarded as a full member of the battalion. They were awarded medals and military awards, as well as being entitled to ceremonial dress and other privileges. Animals were constructed as friends but also as potential foes. The rendering of animals as adversaries of soldiers does not apply to those animals employed by the enemy as mount or as a weapon. Rather, it referred to animals that shared their life with soldiers on a daily basis, and to the great torment of the latter: fly and a rat were two great – albeit small – menaces that made life in the trenches unbearable in general at the front. Throughout the last century, resorting to animals, from dolphins to seals, from camels to reindeer, (and even mice and ferrets), was marked by the growing use of technology imposed upon these animals, that, through such technologies, were transformed into weapons. In the past, animals were crucial in transporting supplies and as messengers but the technological revolution occurred in the last century (after WWI) has led to a mechanization in warfare that contributed to the spare of many animals in warfare. Nowadays, the use of animals in military contexts has become extremely specialized (for instance, the Military Working Dogs trained to perform specific tasks such as rescue operation) and has been characterised by an increasing resort to genetic engineering.

During wartime, animals previously employed in civilian contexts were forcedly recruited to perform war-related tasks. Even though Armed Forces usually resorted to either horses or donkeys to reach those areas that were not accessible by mechanized transport, creatures employed for specific tasks or adopted as pets often reflected the local wildlife. That's why not only horses but also camels and elephants have been widely used as mounts also in war contexts and also by soldiers with little or no previous first-hand knowledge about these animals. The remarkable physical strength and endurance of the aforementioned animals attracted the interest of both civilians and soldiers who used them as beasts of burden. This is the case of elephants in Burma. Both the British and Japanese armies resorted to these massive animals, putting them to work building bridges and transporting supplies or wounded soldiers to and from troops stationed in areas inaccessible to motorized vehicles or even to horses and mules (Sorenson 2014); Animals on the battlefields had to face the same dangers endured by soldiers (sniper fire, mines, poison gas, artillery attacks, lack of food, lack of clean water, acoustic pollution), forced to toil in terrifying conditions they were not able to understand (unlike humans), resulting in extremely traumatizing experiences. Furthermore, they were – and still are – also facing risks that can be considered “species-specific”: these animals were (and are) often purposely shot or

targeted by enemy forces precisely because of their crucial role in battle²⁷². For instance, since horses were vital to military operations and, ultimately, during WWII were considered more important than common soldiers were, each side deliberately targeted the other's animals in order to reduce their opponent's mobility (Sorenson 2014). There was the deliberate will to kill animals that could represent a resource for the enemy: animals used to transport supplies, animals that could provide food or that could carry messages (allowing communication among the enemy) were purposely slaughtered.

During WWII, groups representing the hegemonic/occupying society (the Russians or the Nazi-Norwegian Germans) not only exerted power over arctic indigenous peoples (Sámi, Nenets, Komi), but they also transformed the human-animal relationship. They did so by removing it from the context in which it had developed over the centuries, and by forcibly readjusting it to a new context characterized by violence at both the internal (the military elites towards indigenous subjects) and the external (the “enemy” army) levels. Whereas camels have been used for military purposes in arid and rugged environments, the arctic animal par excellence, the reindeer, soon attracted the attention of Soviet, Finnish and Nazi Norwegian generals. The arctic climate and the tundra's natural landscape posed a major challenge to the belligerent armies. During the short summer months, amidst mosquitoes-infested swamps and marshes, soldiers had to march and fight over bare rocky ground, and to wade across thousands of rivers and lakes that made the terrain especially difficult in summer. The long and dark winter with snowstorms and blizzards, but also heavy snowfalls that could last for days at a time, proved to be equally challenging to foreign soldiers. Reindeer were the key to survival and – as the generals hoped – to victory for the soldiers deployed in the vast regions where war was fought in seemingly perennial nights brightened only by the stars and the northern lights. Reindeer's millennia-long adaptation to the arctic environment, in which they naturally thrive, buzzled and amazed the foreign fighters. Soldiers, unwittingly, had to share with these animals the harshness of

²⁷² Animals were also collateral damage in numerous operations but they were invisible victims that are seldom even mentioned in history books. Uncounted millions of animals have been killed either through direct bombing or because of the destruction of their habitat, a factor that contributes to the anthropogenic depletion of the world's biodiversity. A striking example of animals as casualties is that of whales: from the air, the whale's silhouette could easily be mistaken for a submarine sailing just beneath the surface of the water. According to Sorenson (2014), British and Allied forces adopted the policy of ‘when in doubt, bomb’, contributing to the death of many whales. In some cases, intra-human conflict led to the extinction of entire species. A remarkable example of this anthropogenic phenomenon dates to 1915, when the majestic European bison (*Bos bonasus*) – known also as wisent – was hunted to extinction by the German troops stationed in Poland. The occupying force in the last haven for this animal hunted the bison for food but also for sport. This already endangered animal had previously been granted protection by the Tsar and, in 1915, when rumours spread of the massacre, the famous author W.P. Pyecraft wrote in his weekly column in *The Illustrated London News* against the unregulated hunting of the bison. As it was customary for illustrated magazines of the time, the *Illustrated London News* also published an accompanying illustration depicting a herd of bison running away from a blast in the ancient Polish forest of Białowieża (Moore 2017).

arctic winters. Already during the winter war (1939) Finnish, German and Soviet armies resorted to reindeer and to indigenous (Sámi, Nenets and Komi) soldiers for a vast array of tasks that would otherwise be almost impossible to accomplish without the indigenous expertise and the reindeer strength and adaptability.

Nevertheless, upon their retreat from Finnish Lapland and Finnmark-Troms, Nazi officials ordered German battalions to kill all the animals, reindeer included, to prevent the Soviet Army to get them. Reindeer, dogs, cows, goats that fleeing refugees did not manage to bring with them were slaughtered on the spot, leaving (almost) nothing behind and hence depriving the Soviet troops of local means of transport as well as food sources they could have used to feed themselves upon their arrival. The abovementioned Soviet remark, reported by Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000), that reindeer were their ‘Arctic tanks’ has deep implications which shows the incapability on the Russian side of acknowledging and respecting indigenous knowledge systems while recognizing that reindeer were, despite their adaptation to the Arctic, still animals and as such have needs.



Image 26 Kárášjohka/Karasjok, 1945. Sámi women and some cattle share the living space where once the family house used to stand. Only the chimney survived the Nazi fire (<https://www.kvinnehistorie.no/artikkel/t-5966>).

As Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun’s analysis (2000) of the war experiences of indigenous veterans shows, Soviet officers were unable to understand the indigenous values system as well as Sami tenders’ relationship with reindeer. For instance, in their study it emerges that non-indigenous

reindeer tenders-soldiers became outraged when, upon reaching the front with thousands of reindeer, they found them weakened by a journey reindeer would have never attempted under normal circumstances. Apparently, officials paid little attention to the wellbeing of reindeer despite the fact that they had acknowledged their importance on and behind the frontlines. Another example, also drawn from Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun's 2000 work, shows the disregard that marked Soviet's management of confiscated reindeer: according to Nikolay I. Taleev, a Nenets veteran, Russian officers made fools of themselves when they failed to grasp that reindeer need to rest and sleep, that they must eat on a regular basis and that a single animal cannot stand for three or more days in succession without food. On the other hand, when interviewed by researchers, veterans still remembered with a strong feeling of grief the accidents involving their reindeer. For one such veteran, «The worst was that our reindeer got shot. It was terrible. When German planes came we hid and were not seen but our reindeer kept standing and were bombed and shot» (Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun 2000:133). The complete ignorance of animal needs and the dismissive attitudes demonstrated by Soviet officials led to avoidable losses among reindeer. It also shows the incompatibility between an indigenous (Sámi but also Nenets and Komi) human-animal relationship and the exploitation wanted and imposed by officials with little or no knowledge of these animals' needs. The officials' understanding of reindeer was based on a worldview completely different from that of the arctic indigenous peoples who, with reindeer, had established a mutual relation. Such relationship, of course, entailed forms of exploitation (for instance, the production of meat) but that was carried out within specific frameworks and were based on respect and the will to protect the herd on the long term. Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000) had collected memoirs of Soviet veterans of ethnic background and documented the pain these soldiers suffered when their animals suffered or died on the battlefield. The hardship Soviet officials made reindeer endure is indicative of the disregard they demonstrated towards the indigenous economic and social system as well as values and feelings.

3.3.2 The “War at the fringes of the World”: the arctic front through the lenses of Italian war-time magazines

The presence – and employment – of animals at the front attracted the public interest as is evidenced by the publications of articles and reportages in illustrated newspapers and popular magazines. From the late eighteenth century, writers and artists gathered, filtered and provided information about what was happening close as well as far from home. Artists (as well as authors) were mediators who communicated information that otherwise would have been unknown to the general public. Authors worked with words while artists employed visual tools. Both reproduced and adapted the information by representing it. The Broadsheet news magazines – the first of which was the London illustrated

news, first published in 1842 – were extremely popular among the public and contained an eclectic and rich collection of world news enriched by articles on technological advancements, science, recent discoveries, literature, celebratory policy, art and culture, and advertisement. Illustrations – and later photographs – not only embellished but also significantly functioned as media. The aim of these magazines was to attract readers while also being informative. Nevertheless, propaganda permeated both the texts and the illustrations, reconstructing war scenes with an illusion of truthfulness that was actually highly constructed. In Italy, the most famous weekly magazines were ‘La Domenica del Corriere’ (The Courier’s Sunday)²⁷³ first published in 1899. Other important weekly magazines were the Turin-based ‘la Gazzetta del Popolo della Domenica’ (‘The Sunday People’s Gazette’, 1883-1915) followed by ‘L’Illustrazione del Popolo’ (the People’s Illustration, 1921-1943) first published in Turin 1921²⁷⁴.

Setting aside the ambiguous role of the press during the war, these publications elaborated upon the challenges faced by troops stationed in “exotic” locations, blending the marvel of industrial and technological development with the charm of the environment seen and pittoresquely portrayed as natural. One might wonder why ‘La Domenica del Corriere’ – an Italian magazine – chose to report on arctic warfare. The public was fascinated by all aspects of war, a feeling fostered by Fascism, which was notoriously militaristic. An examination of the drawings from ‘*La Domenica del Corriere*’ (images n31,32,33,34) reveals a taste for the exotic, embedded here by both location and animals²⁷⁵. The famous – albeit today rather controversial – Italian journalist and writer Indro Montanelli was a foreign correspondent and front reporter who signed many articles from the front. This fact testifies both to the importance given to this war-front and to why this specific war-line attracted the public’s interest. The battles fought in the North were far away from the minds and thoughts of Italian families since their own fathers, sons, brothers or husbands were not deployed there as Italian troops did not carry out direct military operations in the Arctic. Despite the physical and emotional distance, the arctic battlefields featured in at least 12 illustrations in just as many issues²⁷⁶ plus a number of articles,

²⁷³ ‘Il Corriere della Sera’ (the afternoon courier) – often shortened in ‘Il Corriere’ is one of the most famous and ancient Italian newspapers. Based in Milan, it has been running since 1876.

²⁷⁴ ‘La Gazzetta del Popolo della Domenica’ and ‘L’Illustrazione del Popolo’ were weekly supplements to the Turin based daily newspaper ‘La Gazzetta del Popolo’, published from 1848 to 1983.

²⁷⁵ Invece i Fiat G.50, comprati dall’Italia e spediti a mezzo ferrovia, vennero bloccati e rispediti indietro dalla Germania, in rispetto del trattato con l’Unione Sovietica; due esemplari del caccia italiano raggiunsero comunque la Finlandia nel dicembre 1939 e altri trenta via mare prima della fine della guerra

²⁷⁶ 10 of the 12 illustrations (10-16 December 1939; 1-6 January 1940; 14-20 February 1940; 28 Jan – 3 February 1940; 4-10 February 1940; 11-17 February 1940; 18-24 February 1940; 25 February – 2 March 1940; 24-30 March 1940; 18 April 1943) focused on the Finnish side of the border and date between 1939 and 1943 – when the Finnish government sided with the Soviet Union, disavowing the alliance with Nazi Germany –. 2 illustrations (14-20 April 1940; 21-27 April 1940) focused on the German army’s occupation of Norway.

either long (two out of a eight pages-issue) or short (only a few lines)²⁷⁷. I have decided here to focus on the illustrations or articles from ‘La Domenica del Corriere’ dealing specifically with the Sámi, the reindeer, or both and published between 1939 and 1945. I was able to identify four illustrations and two articles either touching upon or focusing on the role of reindeer during the war in the Arctic and/or on the Sámi cultures. I also examined the ‘l’Illustrazione del Popolo’ to try and see if there was any consistent pattern in the visual narratives and in the contents of the illustrations and eventual articles. The illustrations – three by the famous artist Beltrame and one by Molino – may have referred to specific operations but were designed to be emblematic of the war in the Arctic rather than portraying specific historical events, as distinct from most drawings concerning Italian troops stationed abroad. The visual language employed in war-time magazines is representative of the war-like spirit of the age. It also offers clues to how war was presented to the public.



Image 27: Italian Newspaper’s article ‘La Finlandia Guerriera’ (the fighting Finland) ‘La Domenica del Corriere’ vol 4:42, 21-27/1/1940

²⁷⁷ 10 of the 12 illustrations (10-16 December 1939; 1-6 January 1940; 14-20 february 1940; 28 Jan – 3 Febr 1940; 4-10 february 1940; 11-17 February 1940; 18-24 february 1940; 25 feb – 2 Marc 1940; 24-30 March 1940; 18 April 1943) focused on the Finnish side of the border and date between 1939 and 1943 – when the finnish government sided with the Soviet Union, disavowing the alliance with Nazi Germany –. 2 illustrations (14-20 April 1940; 21-27 Apli 1940) focused on the german army’s occupation of Norway.

²⁷⁷Image 27 Finalndia Guerriera (Warrior Finland) ‘La Domenica del Corriere’ vol 4:42, 21-27/1/1940.

The first illustration I address here (image n28) is “beacon-man” and refers to the difficulties posed by the arctic winter to war-operations and how Finnish soldiers dealt with such difficulties. In this case, the focus is on a white-clothed soldier – referred to as beacon-man – using a lamp to illuminate and confound the enemies while his companions advance in the darkness toward the Soviet troops. Here the image is dominated by contrast between light – reflected by the Snow – and darkness – that blends in with the woods –. The silhouette of the soldiers in the background almost merges with the snow while, at the centre of the composition, stands the man carrying the lamp, his skies half buried in the snow. At his side, a reindeer meekly looks at him while resting. The image conveys a sense of peace, order and control despite the war context into which readers know it was set. Nevertheless, the text accompanying the illustration offers important clues over the dramatic ramifications of the beacon-man actions. The caption reads:

*L'uomo faro in guerra. Nei boschi della Finlandia settentrionale, dove regna la notte artica, la luce è necessaria solo quando si debba far fuoco. In ogni plotone ci sono due o tre uomini-faro con un potente riflettore pendulo sul petto. Questi uomini, scelti fra i più valorosi (così che il faro è una specie di onorificenza) sono i predestinati alla morte. Quando si è preso contatto con il nemico, l'uomo faro viene isolato; tutto il resto della truppa si scosta, riparando alle ali dietro i tronchi di abete. L'uomo faro accende, fruga la tenebra antistante. Per lui sono i primi colpi avversari. Ma i compagni scivolando rapidamente, con le fedeli renne, nella zona d'ombra che bordeggia il canale di luce del riflettente, si portano a poca distanza dal nemico abbagliato e con le pistole -mitragliatrici, falciano...*²⁷⁸

Even if, in the caption, death is described as almost certain for the beacon-man, it is not conveyed by the image. The illustration fuses together different temporal dimensions of the war-operation: the advance of the Finnish soldier and the beacon-man attracting the enemies' attention towards himself while blinding them with light. The illustration interprets the events, providing readers with a sugared, highly constructed version of the war actions. The aim was not to provide a photography-like report of the events but, rather, to convey politically charged interpretations of warfare by employing a highly standardized symbolic visual idiom. The reindeer close to the beacon-man stands here as a visual representation of the reindeer employed by Finnish troops during operations in the North and

²⁷⁸ The beacon-man in war. In the forests of northern Finland, where the arctic night reigns, light is only needed when firing is on. In each platoon, there are two or three beacon-men with a powerful reflector as a pendulous on their chest. These men, chosen from among the most valiant (so that the lighthouse is a kind of honour), are the ones predestined for death. Upon contact with the enemy, the beacon-man is isolated; all the rest of the troop moves away, sheltering in the wings behind the fir threes. The beacon-man lights up, searches the darkness in front of him. Towards him are the first enemy shots. But the companions glide in quickly, with their faithful reindeer, in the shadow area bordering the reflector's light-channel, bringing themselves to a short distance from the dazzled enemy and with the pistols-machine guns, they mow... (my translation), image n28.

here mentioned as loyal companions to the Finnish soldiers. There is no mention of the region besides a vague reference to the “woods of northern Finland” (*i boschi della Finlandia settentrionale*) and no direct mention is made with regards to who may have tamed, guided or managed the reindeer. It shall be mentioned that, at least in Finland, reindeer tending can be practiced also by non-Sámi. Nevertheless, the majority of tenders, especially before the 1950s, were mainly Sámi.



Image 28: The beacon-man Cover of 'Domenica del Corriere' 17-23 December 1939; Text by War correspondent Indro Montanelli; illustration: Beltrame.

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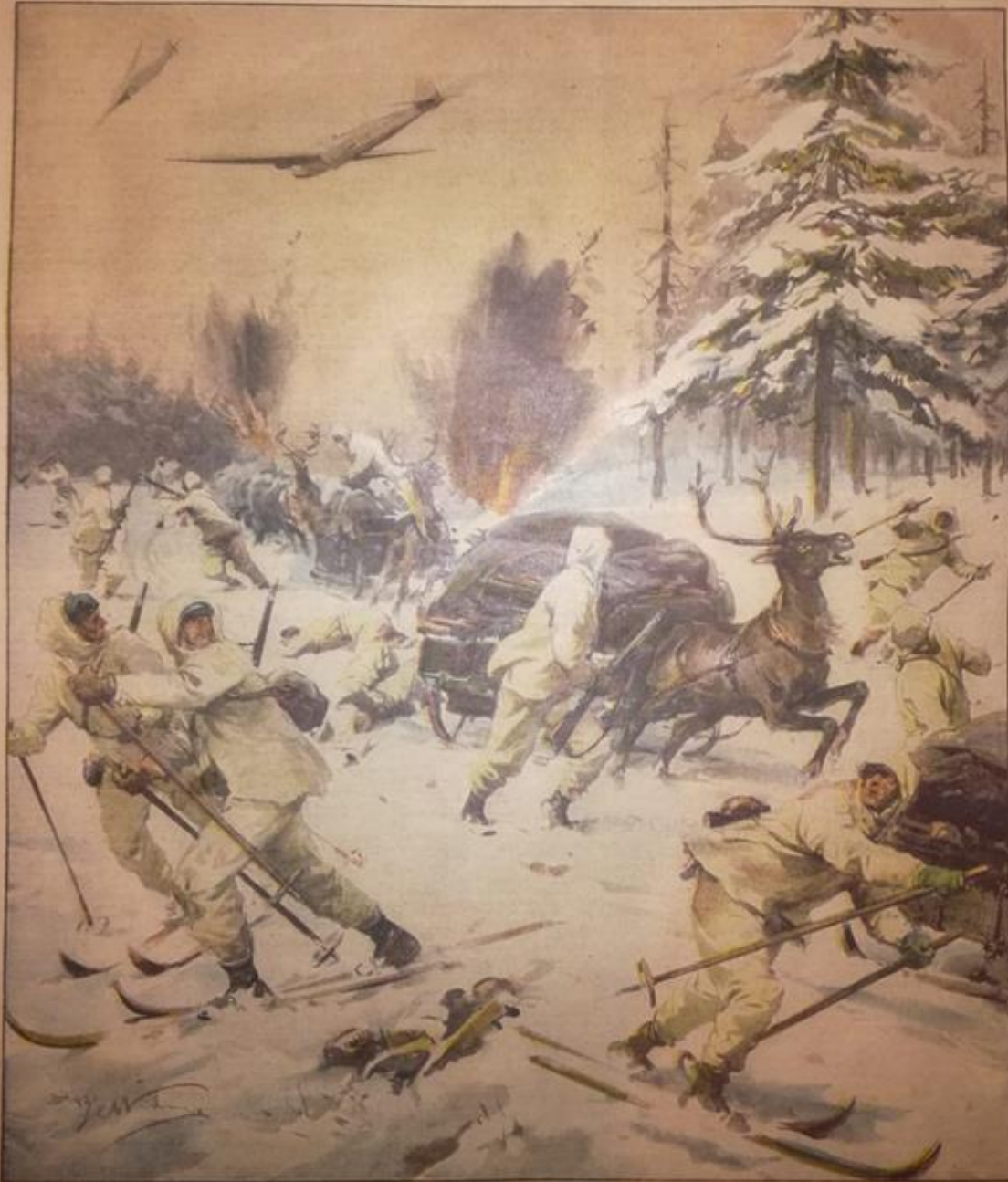
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Scene della guerra in Finlandia. Una colonna finlandese di rifornimenti trainata da renne attaccata di sorpresa da aviatori sovietici.

(Disegno di A. Beltrame)

Image 29: War Scenes from Finland, Cover of 'Domenica del Corriere' 21-27 January 1940. Finalnd War Scenes, a reindeer-drawn finnish supply column, during a surprise attack by Soviet aircraft. (illustration A. Beltrame).

A sense of order and control permeates also the second illustration here analyzed, 'War Scenes from Finland' (image n29). The composition reflects order, self-control, and discipline despite the chaos brought by bombing. Death is not represented and nor is pain or suffering. The reindeer, albeit scared, follow the orders of their masters and the ski-equipped Finnish soldiers – in their white arctic camouflage – blend in with the virgin snow. Not even a drop of blood is visible even though at least a reindeer is shown as it is hit by a bomb-shred. This illustration featured in an issue where the two central pages were devoted entirely to the war in the Arctic as seen from the point of view of Finland. This then young nation²⁷⁹ with a small population and a scarcely populated vast territory is praised for its bravery and so are its soldiers, fighting against the odds, i.e. its massive superpower nation, the USSR. In the other Beltrame sketch, explosions were targeting an Italian enemy, whereas in this sketch, the enemy are the aggressors. This inversion of roles is detectable in both the effects of the bombs and the cruel aftermath of the explosion. Here dark columns of smoke and fire stand for the aggressiveness of the enemy while, in the previous image, bombs appeared distant and less damaging to the environment. Here the reindeer are central, pointing out their crucial role of these animals. The fact that Finnish soldiers managed to save the reindeer from a gruesome fate is also indicative of their skill and their military worth as allies of the Germans (and hence of the Italians). This image bears little similarities to the other Beltrame drawing (image n30) despite the similarity of the subject. Both illustrations deal with bombing, surprise attack, and the effect on the soldiers. Nevertheless, in this latter image, a sense of desperation, anguish and death is transmitted by the body language of both reindeer and troops. Here, animals and men share the same fate, a destiny with no hope for survival. There is a political dimension to this depiction, since the attacking planes belong to the Italy's allies: the Nazi German Army. For this reason, the artist did indulge in gruesome details in portraying fear and pain in contrast to the – propaganda-informed – drawings reproducing Italian troops. The reindeer are the focal point of both pictures, based on the crude contrast between an animal traditionally perceived as peaceful and the harsh realities of war, here represented by airplanes dropping bombs and killing reindeer and soldiers alike. Overturned sledges represent the confusion and chaos that characterise war but do not fit with the popular image of Lapland as a quiet and timeless place. This drawing (image n29) also evokes the acoustic effect of airplanes' engines, a sound not reproducible on paper but well-known to the readers. This acoustic dimension of war is in stark contrast with the traditional image of Lapland as a place of pure snow-white silence. The whiteness of the snow has hence multiple meanings: it conveys a temporal dimension, placing the events in

²⁷⁹ Finland gained independence from Soviet Russia in 1917.

winter; it represents the cruelty of war in an otherwise peaceful environment; it connotes death by being stained by bright-red blood.

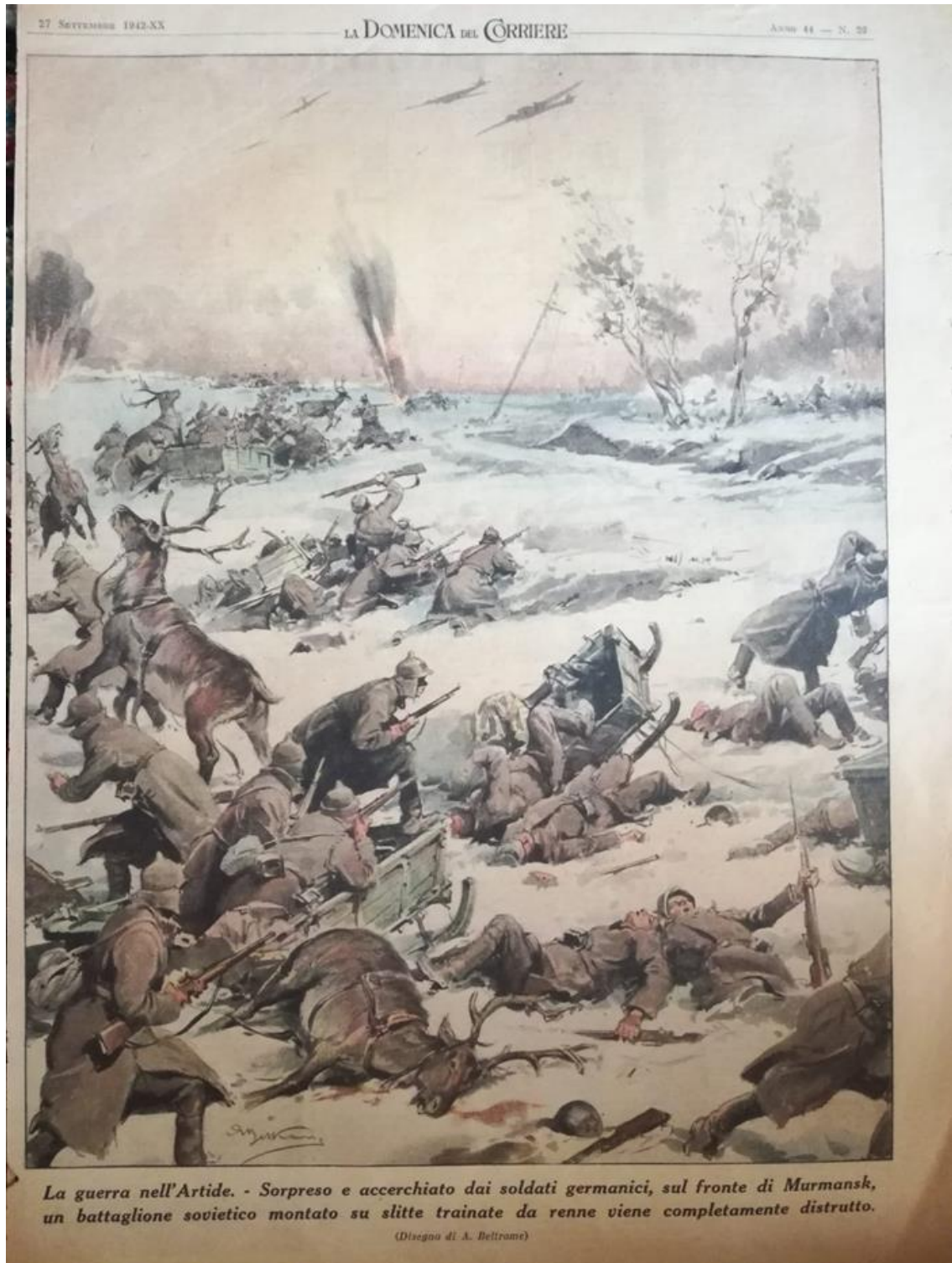
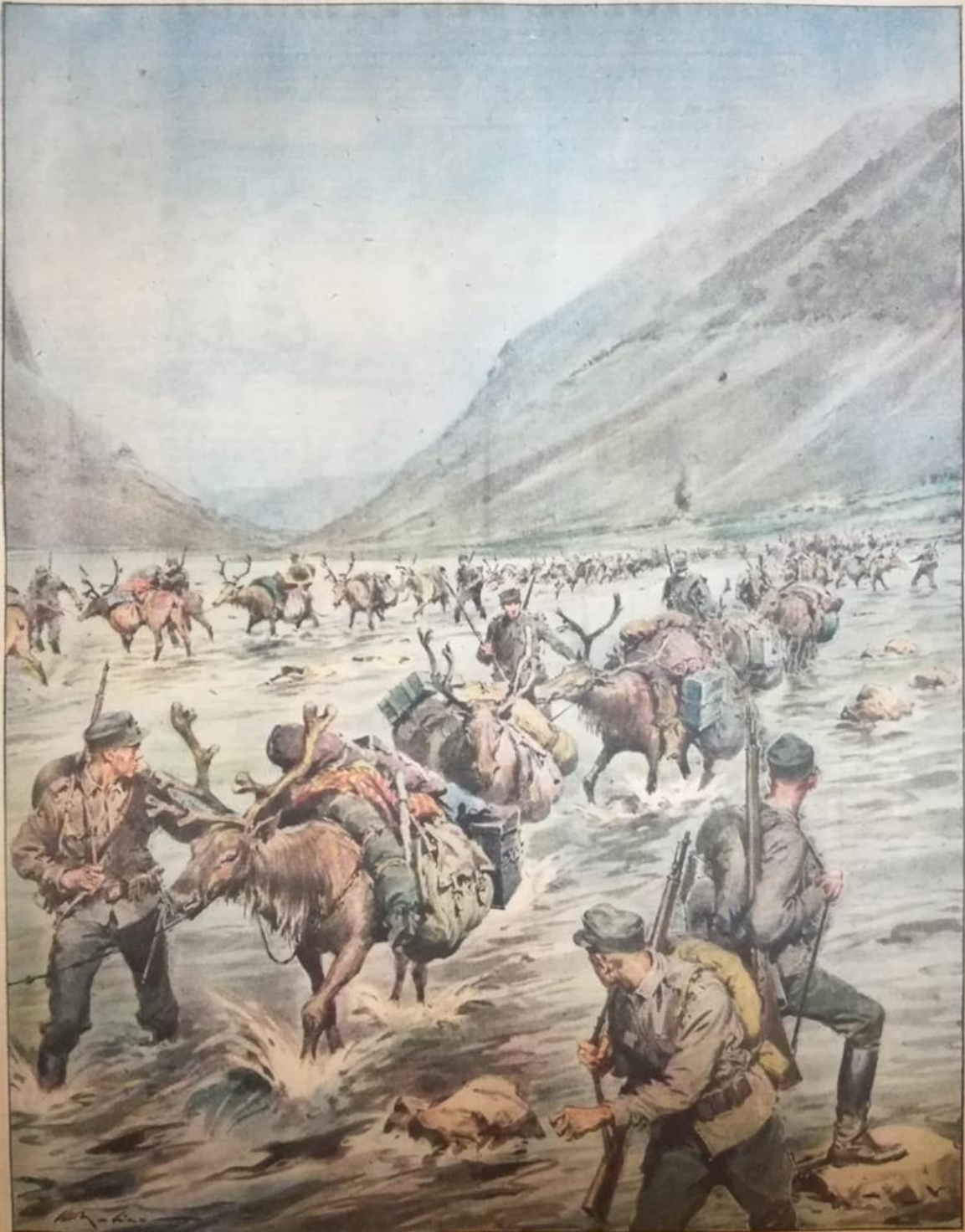


Image 30, The war in the Arctic, 'La Domenica del Corriere', 27 September 1942 (Illustration A. Beltrame) The war in the Arctic - surrounded and taken by surprise by German soldier on the Murmansk front, a reindeer-drawn Soviet-sledge battalion is completely annihilated.



Il convoglio delle renne. - Nelle più settentrionali contrade della Finlandia le docili renne sostituiscono spesso cavalli e motori nei servizi di rifornimento delle truppe. Attraverso pianure e corsi d'acqua, i pittoreschi convogli arrivano rapidamente sino alle prime linee.

(Disegno di W. Molino)

Image 31, Cover of the July 1943 edition of 'La Domenica del Corriere', the reindeer convoy.

The fourth illustration, the reindeer convoy (image 31), is remarkable for the amount of information it conveys through visual means. In the caption²⁸⁰ there no mention of the nationality of the soldiers but readers of the time were well aware that the troops are wearing German uniforms, and therefore are Italian allies.

Although the drawing portrays a challenging military operation, the tones are markedly brighter than the image from 1940. Here too though, the reindeer are symbolically and graphically central to action. The composition draws attention to the animals carrying equipment across a river nestling between mountains.

The implicit messages conveyed by the composition can be better appreciated when the drawing is contrasted to image 29 (1942). In image 30 the soldiers appear in full control of the situation, they are calm and well-organized in contrast with the chaos of Beltrame's one. Another obvious contrast is the cleanliness of the image, foreground, middle-ground and background when compared with the messy composition of Beltrame's . Nature here is gentle and ordered. The sky is bright and clear, free of earth-dealing bombers. As mentioned earlier in this paragraph, *La Domenica del Corriere* was not the only illustrated magazine active in Italy during WWII and reporting on War in the Arctic. The *L'Illustrazione del Popolo* published a number of issues featuring illustrations or articles on this specific front. Image 31 was published in the issue of the *Illustrazione del Popolo* magazine that appeared on January 24th 1943. The gruesome scene depicts Soviet soldiers and reindeer attacked by aircrafts. The Soviets, enemies of the Germans and the Italians, are depicted as confused, surprised, helpless, and ultimately defeated. The soldiers do not manage to keep the reindeer under control and the frightened animals rebel against their masters. Soldiers and reindeer alike die hit by exploding bombs or drowning in the frozen lake. The image conveys a sense of chaos, disorder, and fear.

La Domenica del Corriere was a popular culture supplement that not only featured drawings but also articles. The one below (image 32) was published in the same issue (21-27 April 1940) as Beltrame's drawing (image 31). This short article gives an in-depth description of the reindeer and its characteristics. The title *Animali alla guerra, la mobilitazione delle renne* (Animals in War. Recruiting reindeer) is evocative.

²⁸⁰ The reindeer convoy – in the Northernmost districts of Finland, the tame reindeer often replace horses and motorized machines in supply services. Across plateaus and watercourses, the picturesque convoys reaches the front lines. 11 July 1943 (author W. Molino).

LA MOBILITAZIONE DELLE RENNE

Alle fulgide vittorie riportate dalle valorose truppe finlandesi contro le massicce Divisioni bolsceviche, un contributo non insignificante — come appare anche dalla pagina a colori di A. Beltrame che pubblichiamo in questo numero — ha portato un modesto quadrupede: la renna. Questo bravo animale è un prezioso aiuto per i combattenti delle regioni che si trovano entro il circolo polare, come il mulo per le truppe operanti in zone più temperate.

Superflua sarebbe la descrizione di una renna, che tutti sappiamo della sua statura quasi pari a quella di un cervo d'Europa, del capo largo e un poco simile a quello del bue, e delle sue gambe sottili, che terminano con piedi robusti. Ma alcune particolari qualità di questo quadrupede meritano di essere conosciute.

Pur appartenendo alla famiglia dei cervi, nei quali soltanto il maschio ha le corna, le renne non osservano questa prerogativa maschile, e perciò entrambi i sessi portano sul capo il caratteristico ornamento. I piedi della renna, inoltre, sono

ricoperti completamente di duri e ispidi peli, ciò che agevola singolarmente l'andatura dell'animale sulla neve e sul ghiaccio. Ma, più d'ogni altra particolarità, quella degli occhi merita di essere nota.

Infatti l'occhio della renna è dotato di una terza palpebra nititante, che può essere abbassata a volontà dall'animale, per proteggersi dall'abbagliante candidezza delle nevi.

Sopra un terreno piano una buona renna può percorrere per diverse ore fino a dieci chilometri all'ora, trainando una slitta carica da centoventi a centoquaranta chili. Si vede nel palazzo reale di Svezia l'immagine di una renna che riuscì a condurre un ufficiale, incaricato di recare un dispaccio urgente, alla distanza di trecentoventi leghe in quarantott'ore, ciò che rappresenta una velocità costante di sei leghe e mezzo all'ora! Il bravo animale pagò con la vita il grande sforzo, giacché cadde morto all'arrivo.

Verso l'età di quattro anni la renna raggiunge il suo completo sviluppo, ed è in questo periodo che viene addomesticata, per essere aggiogata alla slitta. E la sua preziosa fatica dura una decina di anni che di circa tre lustri è la durata della vita di una renna in domesticità.

Giramondo



Image 32: Article entitled The reindeer mobilization, appeared in 'La Domenica del Corriere' on 11 July 1943.

The article praises the contribution reindeer made to the war effort but then focuses on the animal and its biological characteristics. There is no mention of the Sámi or of their war contribution. The reindeer here appear as wild yet tamed animals and the Sámi are given no credit for taming and training them. The Sámi simply do not feature in the article. This attitude reinforces Sámi invisibility and fosters a biased understanding of reindeer and the relation these animals have with humans. While simultaneously praising the strength, endurance and, ultimately, the usefulness of reindeer, this article — as well as the illustration — portrays them as tamed enough to be used but seemingly without any master or owner, and, even less so, a tender who trained them. The removal of Sámi from the war context, constitutes a negation of the importance of their expertise in managing the challenges posed by the arctic environment and landscape, and their crucial role in handling reindeer, even on behalf of foreign troops. The last extract here examined was published in *La Domenica del Corriere* in 1942. Here the Sámi are described as the *Piccolo popolo ai margini della guerra* (The little people on the fringes of War) and they seem detached from modernity and isolated from war.



Image 33: Newspaper's A little people at the fringes of war. Do you know the Lapps? 'La Domenica del Corriere' 1942.

By reading the short informative article, it is soon clear that it functions as an extension of themes which had already been dealt with in the magazine. In particular, the war in the Arctic, here defined as “*per noi tanto remoto*”, so far distant for us. The article draws the reader’s attention to how the local population (the Sámi) actually lives in those regions so far removed from both the author and the readers. Here the Sámi are defined as the only European people which still lives in a nomadic state (*i soli europei che [...] vivono allo stato di nomadismo*). Their “nomadic” lifestyle is described as dependent upon reindeer, to whom the Sámi are guardians – i.e. tenders – but it is also portrayed as inherent to Sámi and, ultimately, unescapable – the patronizing tones suggesting that this lifestyle is in between a blessing and a curse. It is interesting to note the lexicon employed. The reindeer are defined as wild (*stato selvatico*) and a Sámi «is obliged to follow them» (*deve seguirle*) drawn by his own herd (*trascinato dalla sua stessa mandria*). Implicitly, the Sámi as a people and as individuals are here deprived of their agency, and are described as at the mercy of their reindeer. The consequences of such implications are the supposed semi-wild nature of the Sámi and their inability to survive without reindeer.

As already mentioned, the strong reliance (reindeer-tenders) Sámi had upon reindeer is remarked upon. Nevertheless, Sámi-reindeer relation is here reduced to an economic terms and revolves around a utilitarianistic understanding of such a relationship.

The article goes on to enumerate some of the characteristics of Sámi cultures (here reduced to a singular static and homogenous entity) and those of Sápmi. From details in the photographs and from incidental references within the text, it is clear the people depicted in the photographs belonged to different Sámi communities such as the Duortnus/Torne Sámi culture – that their grazing lands on the Swedish side of Sápmi – or the Oachjoka North Sámi culture. The Sámi are photographed while performing actions like lasso-throwing, turning them into typified entities standing for the whole people. What in the article is defined as state-led “attempts at modernizing the Sámi” was actually the implementation of colonial policies. The *darfegoahti* (Sámi turf hut) like school from the Swedish side of Sápmi reproduced in the lower register is one such example.

Most remarkably, the title of this article explained that the Sámi were “at the fringes of War” (*ai margini della guerra*) but readers found no reference to the conflict in this article. Albeit on its fringes, WWII seems not to be part of Sámi daily life. But this is true only the literary reality imagined by writers who often had little or no up-to-date and first-hand knowledge of Sámi cultures. The reportage fails to address the impact of war on Sámi communities and Sámi cultures, depicting them as static, immutable and untouched by War, leaving in a state of peace that existed only on paper. A striking contradiction if we take into account the Beltrame’s front-page of the same issue as well as other front or rear one-page drawings reproducing reindeer in scenes of war in the Arctic.

In popular culture, the Sámi are portrayed by means of two images: costume and reindeer. These two elements have become easily recognizable attributes of Sámi identity, perversely forcing the Sámi into a specific set of performative characteristics. When the Sámi did not fit with either characteristics they were not considered as Sámi by cultural outsiders. Language too was – and is – a fundamental marked of identity and ethnic affiliation. Nevertheless, language is obviously not suitable as a Sámi-identity marker especially when it comes to visual representations, even more so in the Italian context.

The absence of Sámi from the war imagery by means of their absence in the illustrations is a visual deficiency that may conceal the actual presence of Sámi individuals forcibly recruited by both Soviet and German/Finnish Armies. As hitherto demonstrated, the Sámi were fighting at the war-front on both its sides, and were in charge of the requisitioned reindeer. Henceforth, paradoxically, the

drawings analysed here necessary depicted scenes were Sámi are not visible although, in reality, they were very much present, actively involved in – as well as deeply affected by – War.

Uniforms are a homogenising tool that obliterates individual and ethnic identity. In the illustrations analysed above, the uniforms cover bodies that are typifications of the German, the Finn or the Soviet man. No space is allowed for ethnic minorities which, in the real war, suffered and perished in disproportional numbers.

Even if in the theatre of war reindeer had been trained and were guided by Sámi and whole reindeer battalions were composed solely of indigenous peoples, in those images the Sámi were excluded. the exotic borealism of the reindeer captured the imagination of the artists and the readers, but No Sámi is visible in these illustrated war reportages. Hence their presence – and sufferance – was silenced and, ultimately, denied to the public and excluded from the collective memory.

3.3.3 *Lopari*

Despite relying heavily on Sámi and other indigenous soldiers for the success and even survival of troops deployed in the Arctic, neither Soviet nor Nazi establishments adopted positive approaches towards their indigenous troops. They demonstrated patronizing and condescending attitudes. Military officers acknowledged superior indigenous understanding of the arctic environment. They also admitted indigenous expertise was vital for their success. Nonetheless, they were not able to acknowledge indigenous rights and they often failed to protect them or openly disregarded their safety in action. Indigenous soldiers were not considered to be at the same level as their Russian or Nazi counterparts. This was a direct consequence of institutionalised racism.

Incommunicability between Soviet officials and indigenous soldiers shaped relations between these two entities of the Red Army. Furthermore, officials often disregarded indigenous needs, ignoring their cultural background and imposing orders their subordinates did not understand. This attitude can be exemplified by the ethnographic example reported by Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000:131). According to the two scholars, Nenets soldiers «considered the Russian officers fools when they forbade them to eat killed reindeer. However, they ate meals by drawing out the heart of such reindeer with a wire through the throat, so that they had in their opinion a very tasty and delicious meal without the Russian officers noticing anything at all». When critically addressed, these episodes show not only the shortcomings of Soviet officers but also how indigenous soldiers defied their superiors through acts of resistance. Despite the conflicts arising among indigenous members of Soviet troops, Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000:129) show that, on the battlefield, the indigenous soldiers soon « [...] found a common language with each other. Different indigenous groups tended even to

supplement each other as far as abilities were concerned. The tendency was like this: the Russians commanded, the Sámi showed the road, the Nenets were best at hiding and shooting and the Komi were best at organizing reindeer transports». This form of organization reflects the will these soldiers had to survive despite the circumstances. By resorting each to their specialised skills, they were able to cooperate for the advantage of all. Furthermore, this episode illustrates a form of agency exerted by circumventing officers' orders and establishing relations among indigenous groups without regards to of their superiors.

According to Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000), Soviet military authorities' awareness of the potential problems close collaboration between indigenous soldiers might cause, led them to implement specific measures in order to avoid possible complications and conflicts between indigenous and Soviet soldiers. In their view, the best solution was to divide indigenous soldiers, preventing them from fraternizing by forming small units that were to be kept isolated from one another and under close Russian control and command. A further element of violence against indigenous soldiers was the threat of execution. Soviet officials allegedly intimidated their indigenous subordinates by saying they would shoot them in the event of attempted escape or if they did not comply with orders. These are just some examples of the conflicts permeating the officials-indigenous soldiers' relations and the strains between members of indigenous groups – forced to go to war – and soldiers belonging to the ethnic majority. The aftermath of these tensions persists today. According to Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun (2000), among indigenous veterans and communities, Soviet officers were regarded as betrayers for having sent Sámi, Komi, Nenets, and members of other indigenous groups to certain death on the front. Besides, this is also an example of the exploitation suffered by indigenous communities during wartime and is illustrative of the uneven power relations between officials belonging to the hegemonic ethnic group and culture and the indigenous minoritized communities.

Even though the above shows the cooperation and support among indigenous communities drawn to war and cooperating to survive, it is important to bear in mind that conflicts and tension also occurred at the front. Gorter-Gronvik & Suprun shed light on the tensions that sometimes arose among soldiers belonging to different indigenous ethnic groups. In particular, they draw our attention to the animosity and resentment that arose among Sámi and other soldiers who were themselves indigenous. These soldiers «...would call them [the Sámi] 'Lopari'. According to Nenets and Komi

informants the Sámi were irritated by this and asked to be called 'Saami'» (2000:129). 'Lopari' was the exonym under which Sámi were known in Russian²⁸¹.

These examples are based on the experience of Sámi and other indigenous peoples enlisted in the Red Army. Similarly, on the German side of the conflict, Sámi peoples had to endure hardship and suffering at the hands of military officials, as the examples examined by Pavall (2016) in relation to the Norland region of Norway demonstrate. Nonetheless, Pavall also brings to our attention that some German soldiers, most likely conscripts, sympathized with local communities and performed acts of kindness out of compassion. Likewise, Finnish researchers conducting fieldworks and interviews in the Vuotso territory have recorded that the elderly Sámi who lived through the war in the area had good memories of the time “their Germans” were in Vuotso. Under some circumstances during wartime, close relations developed between civilians and soldiers, both POWs and members of the occupying forces. These soldiers were, after all, individuals with whom civilians interacted on a daily basis for a prolonged time. In Finland, Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivo (2017) have recorded memories of people who remember German and Austrian soldiers playing with the local kids. In Northern Finland as well as in Finnmark, these interactions often developed into friendship and, in some cases, this bond even outlived war. Some of these friendships even evolved into love-relations, resulting also in marriages and out-of-wedlock children.



Image 34: Monument to the soldiers who fell at the front. Reindeer are commemorated alongside soldiers. Murmansk (www.sva.no/).

²⁸¹ In Finnish though, a homophone term – *loppari* – means “quitter” i.e. from a job.

3.4 The toll of war

Today, walking across Finnmark, Lapland and Troms County it is difficult to imagine how these beautiful lands could possibly have been the sites of major military operations, death and despair.

From an economic point of view, the first years of War brought a certain degree of prosperity to Northern Finland and in Norway. However, this economic bubble though would implode with the unfolding of the conflict. On the Finnish side of Sápmi, for instance, the village of Vuotso, which at the outbreak of WWII had only eight households, hosted a major German supply base and a “resting house” (*Rasthaus Vuotso*), a military airport, and an anti-aircraft artillery base. The villagers of Vuotso interacted closely with the German and Finnish military and troops operating in the area, working for them, offering them accommodation, and trading everyday supplies. Toward the end of the war in 1944, the former friends became enemies, which resulted in destruction that affected the lives of local people in profound ways for years to come.

When they retreated, crushed by the overwhelming Soviet army, the Germans destroyed everything in their path. The destruction of Lapland had terrible consequences for the local population, especially for the Sámi. Similarly, during their retreat across Northern Norway, German troops left a wasteland behind them. The destruction war brought to Northern Fennoscandinavia became known as the “burning of Lapland”. The mass-scale devastation Nazi troops left behind during their retreat across Finnmark resulted in long-lasting scars on the local communities. Applying the scorched-earth tactic, they destroyed all the towns and villages they encountered while fleeing south. Material losses were massive. While retreating from Northern Finland, German troops destroyed not only their former camps and military bases, but they also burned down each and every settlement they were encountered, According to Seitsonen and Herva (2011), in Northern Finland only a total of some 16000 buildings were burnt to the ground. Nazi troops also destroyed the infrastructures, blowing up over 1000 road bridges, some 100-railroad bridges and 40 ferries. They also destroyed 170km of railroad and 9500 km of road; similarly, they cut down the majority of electricity poles. The destruction though was not limited to these crucial infrastructures. The soldiers slaughtered tens of thousands of reindeer, sheep and cows. Furthermore, they planted over 130,000 landmines and other explosives, making the landscape deadly. After the war was over, these mines would still bring death and despair, killing about 2,000 people and constantly reminding the local population of the terror and pain brought by war as unexploded ordnances are still found in the region.

On the Norwegian side of Sápmi, the devastation stopped at Olmmáivággi/Mann dalen, in Troms County. This was the last settlement to be burnt to the ground. Despite its massive effect on the Arctic

communities and their lives, the annihilation of entire settlements was only one of the manifolds, intertwined consequences of war people endured. Today, to an untrained eye, traces of this recent past are almost invisible, and many are oblivious of the confusion and upheaval that, just 80 years ago, raged through these lands. The majority of German military and civil installations had long been demolished and lay in ruins, often hidden by nature but still very much alive in the memories of the local communities. War memorials and informative plaques mark the spots where major events occurred, bearing witness to individual and collective experiences of many soldiers and civilians. In some cases, the material remains merged with the landscape and, as Seitsonen and Koskinen (2017) have examined with reference to the Finnish context, they had been regarded as either rubbish spoiling Lapland's "pristine nature" or as tourist attractions and visited by WWII enthusiasts looking for war memorabilia. These sites, which belong to a difficult and dark heritage, are scattered around Northern Norway and Finland and are important parts of the local cultural heritage and hold potential for development through tourism. In other cases, these elements are difficult either to distinguish or understand for those who are not familiar with the local history, as is the case with the "dragon's teeth" I was shown along the road from Unjárga/Varangerbotn to Várggát /Vardø. These rocks were actually put in place by German troops – fleeing from Unjárga/Varanger – to slow down Soviet Contingents. Similarly, approaching Rahkka/Bjerkvik Bay from Tromsø, informative panels describe military operations that, on those spots and in the nearby fields and mountains, took place in 1941. Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivo (2019) have documented that, among the Sámi living in Vuotso, significant military sites are still well-known, even by the younger generations. Furthermore, the elderly recount the events connected to these sites through storytelling, hence connecting events to landscape and transmitting knowledge to the youngsters.

Across Sápmi, war memories became part of the shared understanding of communities and nations but, as Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivisto (2018) demonstrate with reference to the Finnish context, the experience of people living in the country's 'peripheries' were marginalized and seldom included in the 'national narrative'. This is especially true in the case of Sámi experiences of war. Sámi historian Veli Pekka Lehtola (2015) has studied the impact the Lapland War (1944–45) and the subsequent reconstruction period (1945–52) had on Sámi societies living on the Finnish side of Sápmi. Lehtola highlights the profound damages and deep traumas war inflicted upon Sámi societies economically and culturally wise. He examines the traumatic effect war and evacuation had on the civil Sámi population, but his nuanced analysis takes into account not only the negative consequences war had on the Sámi population but also the physical and cultural resources Sámi were able to mobilize in times of crisis. Lehtola stresses the agency of the local populations that, far from being

merely passive victims, managed not only to survive but also to overcome the hardship of the war and its aftermath. Through Lehtola's analysis, WWII emerged as a turning point in Sámi societies and, to an extent, as a premise to later ethno-political mobilization²⁸². . On the other hand, during the evacuation Sámi were forced to learn Norwegian and often retained a preference for this language upon their return (Trosterud, 2008). The approach employed by Lethola, who addresses the multifaceted nature of historical events and does not paint complex situations in black and white, provides the readers with a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in periods of war and peace. In a recent article Lehtola co-authored with Sámi historian Bjorg Evjen, a similar approach highlights the agency of Sámi individuals in Northern Norway during WWII. The article '*mo birget soadis*/how to cope with war, adaptation and resistance in Sámi relations with Germans in wartime Sápmi, Norway and Finland' (Evjen & Lehtola 2019) is of particular relevance for this thesis for a number of reasons. In this article, the authors address wartime from a Sámi perspective; they employ the concept of agency and double agency to examine the relations between Sámi and Germans while, at the same time, introducing the notion of resilience through the indigenous concept *birget* (to cope/coping). The scorched earth policy had massive consequences for the local communities that, once back home after the end of the war, had to rebuild everything from scratch, and they had to do so following state guidelines, using materials and conforming to standards pertaining to the majority population but foreign to Sámi cultures. By literally erasing the local cultural expressions, through its aftermath, war emerged as a driving force of assimilation. Finlandization and Norwegianization became the cornerstones of the reconstruction of both Finnmark and Lapland, with dire consequences for the local populations and their specific cultural identities.

3.4.1 Memories of war

Initiatives to promote and preserve the war heritage have been carried out by institutions and history enthusiasts. While taking part in a small local festival, I had the opportunity to experience the importance the War still holds for older generations. In Grovfjord, in August 2019, members of the local community organized an event called Grovfjorddagen (the day of Grovfjord). This local festival was part of a three-days of cultural events, among which the kulturvandring, a "cultural hike" along the culturally and historically significant places of the area (image n36). The aim of this kind of initiatives is to improve peoples' knowledge of local history through direct experience and via explanations from local cultural bearers who guide both residents and visitor to walk across fields and old farms, stopping for coffee and tea at selected location where they are to listen to local stories.

²⁸² Scholars across different disciplines have highlighted the impact WWII had on Sámi cultures throughout Fennoscandinavia. Sociolinguists have identified in the period between 1940 and 1944 as when Sámi parents stopped speaking in their own languages to their children.

These walks offer an opportunity to gain an appreciation and a broader insight into the rich cultural heritage of the area while also developing a more nuanced understanding of the history of the area in relation to the history of the region.

Held at the old school, the main event of Grovfjorddagen was a get-together where members of the local community, living in the area, in nearby towns like Harstad and Tromsø, or in far-away cities like Oslo assembled to spend time together. At dinnertime, *bido* (a reindeer stews dish) and other Sámi delicacies were served along with coffee and cake. The evening programme included speeches by the Truth and Conciliation commission (image n38), a *joik* (Sami chant) performance by a famous and renowned artist and a talk on WWII in the area (image n39). All these speeches were delivered in person and were supported by PowerPoints and pictures.

Working in the kitchen with a couple of young girls in their early twenties, the granddaughters of a local Sámi elderly, I had the opportunity to discuss with them how interested the public (constituted mostly by elderly people) was in the WWII speech. Even if the girls were not particularly interested in the topic, they also listened to the presentation and, at some point, one of them whispered to me « They are really crazy about war, aren't they? » (see image n37). It was indeed apparent that the speech focusing on war enjoyed particular success and was followed by questions and discussions, with the public engaging in active conversations characterized by the expression of the multi-voicedness of past experiences (personal and those of the parents/grandparents). This event constituted a site of shared construction of memories through the recollections of the community's past experience.

In the 1940s near the town of Harstad, on the isthmus of Trondenes – where the secular church of the same name stands²⁸³ – stood an important camp where German prisoners of war (mostly Russians) were held captive. Today the blue of the fjord shines quietly, reflecting the mountains in the distance. The placid crystal clear waters are cut effortlessly through by the boats and ships that reach and leave from Harstad harbour. In summer, flowers and manicured lawns roll out to the woods. In Winter, thick snow covers everything. Regardless of the season, one's gaze is lost in the tangles of calm and beauty. These delicate fields, which have seen the horrible suffering of hundreds of inmates, today are a cultural path open to the public (images n40, n41, n42, n43, n44, n45, n46). This informative itinerary is equipped with explanatory panels explaining the historical dimension of the local landscape and reproducing photographs of the war camp as it appeared in the early 1940s.

²⁸³ Trondenes kirke is the oldest stone church in Northern Norway (dating back to 1200 in its original layout) and is the northernmost ancient stone building in the world.



Image 37: Panel-board set up at Grovfjord old school during Grovfjorddagen 2019.

The event organizers hung reproductions of posters, documents, images, and proclamations dating back to the Second World War (photo by the author).



Image 38: Marit Myrvoll presents the project of the Truth and Conciliation commission during Grofjordagen 2019 (photo by the author).

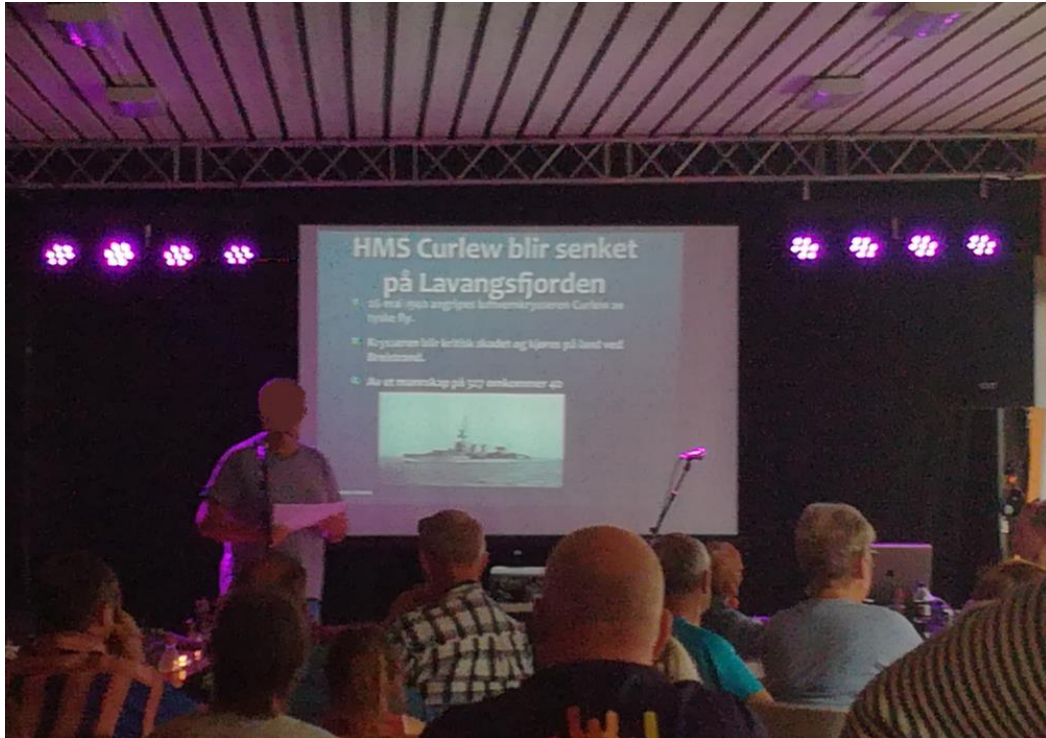


Image 39: Presentation on military actions in the area of Astafjorden during WWII in 2019 Grofjordagen (photo by the author).

Today, at a walking distance from Tronden Church, there is a museum that collects fragments of local history. Part of the museum is dedicated to the church of Tronden and to daily life in the area in past centuries. another section of the museum is entirely dedicated to the war period, with reproductions of war-time photos of Harstad, dioramas and sonic installations that imitate the explosion of the bombs that devastated the region. The museum also collects and display documents and objects belonging to Russian soldiers imprisoned in the Tronden barracks-camp, located a few hundred meters to the north. Today, only faint traces remain of this prison camp, scars on the walls that once delimited the space in which the prisoners were confined. In this area, another remnant of war testifies to the hard days of the German occupation: Tronden Fort is situated on the Tronden peninsula, some 2.5 kilometres north of the town of Harstad and was built in 1943 as a part of the Atlantic Wall. The fort is still in use, having been since 2002 the main base for the Norwegian Coastal Ranger Command.



Image 40: the road to the prisoners of war camp (seen from the isthmus). The shape of the ruins of some barracks is visible on the right of the road. (photo by the author).



Image 41: The memorial for the Russian soldiers perished in Trondenes war camp, Trondenes (Photo of the author)



Image 42: The fields where the camp used to stand. The basement of the barracks are still visible among the grass. Beyond the fjord, the mountains of Rolla, the island in front of Stuornjåga. (photo by the author).



Image 43: The fields behind Trondenes Kirke, the shape of the barracks' walls are barely visible, half covered by the grass. (photo by the author).



(Image 44: Trondenes Kirke and, in the background, Trondenes Isthmus, where the war camp and the fort are located. (photo by the author).



Image 45: Russian prisoners of war in Trondenes prison camp. The photo was taken in the late summer of 1941, inside the camp. (Photo: NTB Scanpix).



Image 46: Soviet prisoners of war in Trondenes prison camp near Harstad in the late summer of 1941. (Photo: NTB scanpix).

3.4.2 Wartide in the Márka

For many of the local elders, the events of the war were part of their early childhood and the stories from family and relatives probably emphasized specific events in the family's history from the war years. The stories passed down from one generation to the next testify to at times very tense situations and, in the areas along the national borders, to the dangerous life of border-pilots and their families. Many Sámi were engaged in this activity and their stories had, for a long time, not been told or told only within family circles. In some cases, it was kept secret from family and friends and there was no knowledge among the descendants. To be involved in the resistance or to act against the German occupying force was extremely dangerous. People suspected of being smugglers or border-pilots were arrested by the Gestapo. For instance, a woman from Kvernmo, who belonged to the homonymous family, was arrested while walking in Narvik. She was accused of having helped German deserters to hide on her home-farm in Kvernmo. After the deserters had been captured, they confessed and reported her name. She was stopped by the Gestapo and the local police in Narvik but was let go. On that night, one of her relatives, a border pilot²⁸⁴, accompanied her to Sweden. When the next day the Nazi soldiers came back for her, she was nowhere to be found. Both Sámi and Norwegians engaged in this activity that was illegal and sanctioned by the authorities. The border pilots were local people who knew the terrain. They developed this expertise by walking the areas during hunting and fishing trips and they usually had no military training. Sneaking refugees on the other side of the border was an important activity linked to the Norwegian resistance, which also engaged in illegal printing of news and posters, in sabotage operations as well as acts of civil disturbance. Civilians were engaged in these acts as they opposed the Nazi occupation by clandestine means, resistance and non-cooperation. The importance of the underground resistance is epitomized by the role of the underground resistance network. Local peoples lived in constant fear that their border pilots relatives could get caught, with consequences for both the border-pilots and their family. Older generations, those who were young children during the war, may have dim memories of wartime and many of the stories they know they heard them from their own parents. Similarly, those who were born right after the war have heard stories from their relatives, keeping the memory of war alive.

Sara, a young woman in her early twenties, describes the immediate consequences the scorched earth tactic had on her home community of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord:

²⁸⁴ “Border pilot” is the English translation of the Norwegian expression *grenselos*. This term literally means “boundless” and it can be also translated as “border guide” but also as “people’s smuggler”. In this work, I decided to use “border pilot” since this was the expression my interlocutors resorted to during our conversations. It is also the terminology employed by the authors of the academic literature and newspaper articles I examined as part of the research process. Furthermore, border pilot has a more neutral tone than smuggler, the latter carrying a slightly derogatory connotation which I wanted to avoid.

[at the end of WWII] almost all of Kåfjord was burnt down. And, and that was very bad too, because the end all of our customs, the national costumes and the duodji and everything was burned down (Sara, interview, 13/10/2019 Tromsø).

Through Sara's words we can catch a glimpse of the toll war took on local communities who, once back in their home village, found them destroyed. With nothing to hang on, they had to start rebuilding their villages and their lives from scratches and, often, their Sámi identity was left behind, as if it belonged to the time before the war. Since material elements associated with Sámi cultures had now disappeared among the ashes of the past, people were able to sever ties with an ethnic background that had often become a burden and a source of stigma. Some forty years after the end of the conflict, when younger generations were rediscovering their roots and were eager to claim back the pride of being Sámi, they had to face up to with the long-term consequences of a war that had not only destroyed their region but also obliterated its ethnic and cultural dimension. Sara²⁸⁵ explains that, when her relatives decided to work towards a positive revaluation of the local Sámi identity, they had to deal with difficulties that were rooted in the wartime.

So when we, when my parents, and then yeah, my uncles and everyone started to realize that they were Sámi. Mm hmm. It was so hard for them to find, like an old gassy they could go from to make a new one. Yeah. So they didn't know how anything looked. And they just tried to reconstruct as good as they could. But it was very hard. They didn't have any material. And also, even things that didn't get burned down the Sámi themselves were not making because they didn't want to be... well, Sámi... yeah (Sara, interview, 13/10/2019 Tromsø).

The disappearance of material and visible symbols of Sámi identity from the area made it more difficult for people to re-embrace their ethnic background. As in other regions of Norway, to show Sámi ethnic affiliation meant incurring mockery and bullying but, in areas that had endured war and norwegianization, the stigma was even stronger. In communities such as Gáivuotna, where for decades nobody openly showed their ethnic identity and objects associating people with Sámi identity had long since disappeared in the flames, to wear a Sámi garment was considered a politically charged act which brought consequences for the wearer such as isolation and estrangement and, ultimately, social ostracism. Local Sámi people who have renounced their ethnic identity to embrace a Norwegian one instead – in the hope to leave behind the feeling of inadequacy they experienced in their youth because of their Sámi background – felt threatened by the return of Sámi language and

²⁸⁵ Members of Sara's immediate and extended family are cultural activists who have been involved in the founding of Riddu Riđđu, a local Sámi gathering that later developed into one of the most important Sámi festivals, recognized also at a national level.

customs to the area. they feared that, ultimately, people outside the community would understand that them too were Sámi and, hence, consider them inferior. The anxiety over the possibly of losing the social status they gained when their renounced their ancestors' heritage was too painful for many to bear. For others, the introjected feeling of disgust towards Sámi cultures – consequence of assimilation and prolonged stigmatization – was so strong they had come to hate anything Sámi and hence did not want Sámi identity to be embraced in the area.

« My mother told me a story that one of her friends started wearing *gákti*. And she was taking it on her child also. And that was in the 1990s. And a lot of people in Kafjord were asking: do you really want to put the *gákti* on your child? Are you sure about that. Because she could easily get mocked, and it can be really bad for her. But luckily, she took it on her [wore] anyways, and really showed that this is our identity, the *gákti*. But it's so sad that they have to go through all of this from their own [people] (Sara, interview, 13/10/2019 Tromsø).

During the interview, it was clear that the thought of pain and sorrow her relatives had endure caused distress to Sara. She was perfectly aware that, in order for her to be safely wearing a *gákti* with pride during events such as Riddu Riddu or in her daily life in the streets of Tromsø²⁸⁶, the generations before her own had had to face discrimination. During interviews such as this one, emotions often channel the conversation, either openly – with the interlocutor referring to her own emotion as in the case of Sara, who expresses her sadness at the thought of her mother's generation's struggle and personal pain – or through gestures, body movements and other bodily expressions. During the interview, Sara expresses her personal sadness when describing how events such as war and processes such as Norwegianization had created a gap between her and her ancestors and her living relatives.

I think it's so sad because I have also been speaking to my cousins about it. And it's very hard to explain, but when I was hearing Sámi before I knew how to speak it and understand it I felt like I belonged, with that language. It's very hard to explain, but I felt so sad that I didn't know how to speak my great grandmother's language, I felt like I lost a part of my identity. So therefore, also, it was so important for me to take it back and learn [teach] it to my children when they will come (Sara, interview, 13/10/2019 Tromsø).

Not being able to speak or understand Sámi, Sara felt disconnected from her culture and from her own foremothers. Nevertheless, she felt she still had a connection with them. Here language emerges as a key factor in Sara's own understanding of her personal identity and that of her own family.

²⁸⁶ Even today, there are many cases of racism against the Sámi. Such events most often occur when the Sámi person is wearing a *gákti*, which is immediately identifiable as Sámi.

Similarly, in the Márka-Sámi area of Stuornjárga, during the war a language shift occurred and parents stopped speaking Sámi to their children. Emma, whose mother was born in 1946 – just after the war had ended – explains that:

It was mainly during the war and in the afterwards. They did not teach the language to my mother. She wasn't alone... in other families it was the same. And for the same reason as them. Her identity and value as a person... (Emma Skåden, interview 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

She connects this to the assimilation process with the stigma it fostered, stating that her grandparents, even though never accepted to renounce their Sámi identity, stopped actively teaching Sámi to their children, who then developed only a passive knowledge of the Sámi language:

The *fornorsking*, the Norwegian assimilation, deeply affected people, the generation of [our] great-grandparents. My grandfather and grandmother though... they were never in the closet, they had no shame on who they are. But they did not speak Sámi to my mother, my uncle and aunts. They learnt the “kitchen Sámi”, the Sámi spoken with the elders, with the visitors and also when they didn't want kids to understand. And the kids did not let their parents know they understand [the Sámi language]. It was the heart's language (Emma Skåden, interview 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

The scorched earth tactic led to the destruction of almost every building in the County of Finnmark and in Northern Troms. The Márka, on the border between Troms and Nordland counties, was spared and the majority of ancient buildings managed to survive the war and so did many objects emblematic of the Sámi identity of their owner. Forgotten in attics or in abandoned farms, many of these items were recovered decades later, becoming a source of pride, meaning and identity for individual families and entire communities. Some of the oldest and most meaningful buildings, such as the farmhouse at Gállogieddi, were later transformed into museums, which would have not been possible had the fires of war reached these areas. Even when the area was not subjected to systematic destruction during the Germans' retreat, war had terrible consequences also for the people living in southern areas of Troms County.

Elaborating on the consequences of war on the Márka, Emma explains her family's experience:

It wasn't like that [evacuation and destruction]. You had the Germans, with all the war. The war was there but we didn't have the burning, no. I think that stopped, in the north of the county. So... but even though, you know, they still felt the war, of course, but... not to that extent. Our places and our things were not burnt. We didn't have that. Or... they [small laugh], they didn't have that. My grandpas' generation (Emma Skåden, interview 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

The Márka was, as it emerges from this extract, spared from the physical destruction brought by war upon so many other parts of Sápmi. During private conversations I had with Professor Geir Grenersen,²⁸⁷ who had carried out fieldwork in the Márka Areas where I too have worked, Grenersen told me that local Sámi people have often pointed out how the mountains surrounding their villages have physically protected them from Norwegian influence. According to the local Márka-Sámi people, by isolating the Márka-Sámi from the seaside Norwegian communities, these mountains had enabled the Márka culture to survive through the hardship of the assimilation process and the difficult relations with the people living along the coast – and who identified themselves as Norwegian. During the War, the mountains not only kept the Norwegians away but also the Germans who were stationed in the coastal settlements and inspected the Márka only sporadically. Nevertheless, it was a traumatic experience for those who lived through it either as soldiers or as civilians, many of whom had relatives who were in the army.

In the context of the Márka, the memory of war is still very much alive and is passed down from the older generations to the younger ones. Discussing the life condition in the Márka during the War time with Sigbjørn, he shared with me some of the memories and impressions his own grandmother, who was a young woman during WWII, shared with him:

In the Márka I know there are some horror stories but, you know, it wasn't like... soldiers didn't really settle up in the Márka but rather down by sea . there were so much soldiers by the sea... and I did a project once where I interviewed my grandmother about the war and she... I don't know, she had an idea [of the war] you know... but it didn't seem to affect them especially. They were poor before the war, or... not poor but they didn't have much. I mean they were self sufficient kind of farms. They didn't have [much]. Anyway so that sort of big difference... I mean the difference wasn't that huge so yeah, it didn't seem to affect them [too much] (Sigbjørn, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

Sigbjørn's grandmother's recollections not only provide information about the difficult living condition in the rural Sámi settlements during the war, they also offer hint at something that, through my fieldwork has emerged as a key element in the social relations in Stuornjárga: the coastal community and the rural settlements of the inner regions of the peninsula were worlds far removed from each other, despite the close geographical proximity. The striking physical and symbolic separation between the villages by the coast – where the soldiers were stationed – and the relatively

²⁸⁷ Professor Geir Grenersen holds a PhD in Pedagogy from UiT the Arctic University of Tromsø. He currently holds a position as Professor in Media- and Documentation Science at the Department of Language and Culture at UiT university of Tromsø.

quiet Márka hamlets was an important element of the local identities, with both communities seeing in the other a sort of cultural foreigner. This reciprocal diffidence and perceived difference was expressed through derogatory exonyms – some of them no longer in use – that reflected the respective fears and commonplaces. The idea that the Márka was somehow, for better or for worse, secluded from the outside world – the communities along the coast – was a founding element of the local identity which, even though not built in opposition to the coastal one²⁸⁸, relied also upon the cultural distance from the coastal communities.

The relative quietness of the Márka and the absence of soldiers stationed there was an element that emerged also during an interview with Mathias (2019), a young man working as a guide at the Gállogieddi museum. He shared with me his family's memories of the wartime, acknowledging that these differed from the experiences of those Sámi who lived in Finnmark:

I, obviously, wasn't alive during World War II, I only have to rely on stories from my family about the World War here. In Finnmark, the Second World War had crushing consequences for the Sámis there, with them forced to move south. And by doing that, we're able to kind of norwegianize themselves. But in this area, you didn't really have the same thing. You didn't have the Germans there. They never burnt down this part of Norway (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

The traumatic evacuation of the Finnmark and Northern Troms population became emblematic of the immediate consequences of war. Since these areas had a high concentration of individuals identifying themselves as Sámi, the evacuation became a shared experience that is often associated with the Sámi struggle to maintain their identity. For those Sámi communities who did not have to leave their villages, their memory of war often does not correspond with this shared past. Nevertheless, especially during the first two months of the war, the Márka was remarkably close to the battles that were taking place only a few kilometres away. As is often the case, the memory of war became embedded in the places where the events occurred. Neerland Soleim et al. (2019) have recorded the account of a member of the Kvernmo family who stated that, after the war, when he went hunting and fishing with his father²⁸⁹, who had been a border pilot, he showed him the places and the routes he had used to bring people to safety in Sweden. Not far from the Márka, war was raging in Gratangsfjellet and at Applagin. In the early phases of the war, upon the Nazi invasion of

²⁸⁸ Such an understanding would reduce the complexity and cultural autonomy of the Márka identity to a simple opposition against the coastal norwegian(ized) culture.

²⁸⁹ This man called Agnar realized that the family was related to these Swedish Sámi from Jukkasjärvi (Talma, a Sámi village). He reported that his father spoke Sámi and so probably did his mother even though less than his father. Agnar reported that his mother was from Stuornjårga (Neerland Soleim et al. 2019).

Norway, Norwegian soldiers were able to drive the German troops back to Bjørnefjell. Nevertheless, the Allies soon withdrew and in June 1940, the war in the area was over. After these two months, the area became relatively quiet and, during the occupation, the local civil population managed to survive despite the hardship of the war. In 1945, the Germans settled in the nearby village of Spansdalen and their presence was as visible as ever.

Recalling the events that marked his grandmother's early life, Mathias explains that:

[...] my grandmother was six. And the war ended when she was 11. So her early childhood... most of early childhood was Second World War. But you know, I know another from uncle my from my father's side, his family, they were obviously they were a lot older than the grandmother because they were their 20s and 30s already, and they kind. And they forcibly the source said they can't just move on with their lives. I mean, some sometimes a bombed plane would crash. But that was just how it was no. Though a lot of people, a lot of people from my family actually escaped to Sweden and quite often travelled through Áravuopmi²⁹⁰ in Rahkka/Bjerkvik (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

Besides the information concerning intra-family transmission of knowledge, this passage introduces us to a further, central aspect of wartime in the Márka: the fact that young men were conscripted for war or forced into labour, working and fighting for the German occupying forces.²⁹¹ In 1942, the occupying German institutions began to conscript people into labour but, as Mathias explains, young men had to join the German Army or face persecution.

My grandfather on my father's side, he was forced. He was forced into military force [service]. I mean, forced not exactly forced but, you know... conscription was back then... [it] was confusing, [being] conscripted into military. He didn't work locally but he went south, but I can't recall those details... I believe it was Sweden. When he was conscripted. I'm getting a little bit lost in the details. But I mean, the reality was that he didn't, even though he was conscripted into the military, [he] didn't really fight the war here. He kind of fought it south in some place in southern Scandinavia instead (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

²⁹⁰ Also spelled Aravuobma, in Norwegian Vassdalen.

²⁹¹ For further details on forced labour in Norway under Nazi occupation, see Stratigakos (2020).

3.5 Crossing the line

In the past few years, the border between Norway and Russia has acquired a new dimension, becoming an entry point of privilege into Europe for refugee asylum seekers who, from Syria, reach Russia and from there try to enter Europe riding a bike across the border (Boe & Horsti 2019).²⁹² The movement of refugees across Arctic borders has a long history and, if today, it attracts people fleeing from geographically remote conflicts, during WWII, they were Norwegian and Finnish civilians who embarked on this perilous journey. They tried to reach Sweden to escape from the German occupation and the Nazi forces deployed in Norway.

In the area where I carried out fieldwork, many young men who were at the age of military enlistment left their home villages and joined the lines of those who, for different reasons, had fled the country. Crossing the border into Sweden constituted, for the people of the village, a form of resistance through avoidance that also put their own lives at risk.



Map 8: Map of the border area between Narvik (Norway) and Abisko (Sweden) (adapted from google maps)

²⁹² Boe, C. S., & Horsti, K. (2019). Anti-Racism from the Margins: Welcoming Refugees at Schengen's Northernmost Border. In *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries* (pp. 183-201). Palgrave Macmillan, Camden, London.



Map 9a: Map showing the location the valley of Áravuopmi/Vassdalen connecting the Rahkka/Bjerkvik area to Sweden (adapted from google maps)



Map 9b: map showing today borders between Northern Norway, Northern Sweden, Northern Finland and Russia. In 1943 a separate reception station and Sámi camp was established in Jokkmokk (adapted from google maps).

3.5.1 Fleeing Márka

In recent years, the fleeing of Sámi and Norwegian civilian from Northern Norway to Sweden has attracted a growing scholarly interest. In 2019, Marianne Neerland Soleim, Jens-Ivar Nergård and Oddmund Andersen have published the monography ‘Grenselos i grenseland Sámiisk og norsk losvirksomhet i Nordre-Nordland og Sør-Troms 1940–1945’.

In 2020, Evjen and Lehtola published an article in English with an eloquent title: ‘Mo birget soadis’ (How to cope with war) Adaptation and resistance in Sámi relations to Germans in wartime Sápmi, Norway and Finland’. There is also a Masters thesis in English dealing with this topic: ‘Journeys to the Free World. Sámi and Norwegian border pilots during World War II in Nordland County’ written by Pavall in 2016. Pavall is himself the grandchild of a border pilot who, during the war, helped people cross the border between occupied Norway and neutral Sweden.

The passage through Áravuopmi was one of the most important access routes from Northern Norway to Sweden. Áravuopmi is a long valley that, from Rahkka/Bjerkvik reaches the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area on the Swedish side of the mountain range. The region is known for being a Sámi archaeological site attesting the Sámi presence in the region since at least the 11th century²⁹³. More specifically, the Sámi culture of Áravuopmi (Vassdalen) is that defined by scholars as Márka-Sámi. As Mathias explains:

You have Rahkka/Bjerkvik here, up the ocean here, to Gratangen coming from there. And then there's a valley. Okay, in the mountains there is Áravuopmi. And that's a Márka-Sámi... Márka-Sámi live there. I mean, Márka-Sámi, in the sense that they are Márka-Sámi, not that they belong to Márka

Even if they “did not belong to the Márka”, the ties between these two communities were strong and often based on family relations. During the war, such relations constituted a safety network that enabled many to escape to Sweden:

And also, a lot of people had relatives in Áravuopmi, so quite often you could just escape through Áravuopmi to get to Sweden because it's... you know that, the valley kinda goes right into Sweden, you can just travel to Sweden by just moving through the valley. And once you get over the mountains you are in Sweden, it's like your way through to them.

²⁹³ Archaeological remains such as graves and Stallo (Sámi dwelling structures) sites have been identified in Áravuopmi. Among these archaeological sites, scholars have identified burials dating to the Viking Age/Early Middle Ages. These graves contain a striking wealth. Chemical analysis of the skeletal remains of a woman has shown that she was moving between today's inner Sweden and the coast of Norway (Olsen & Hansen 2014).

It was through this underground passage that Mathias's relative managed to escape, as he recounts:

I had a great-uncle who was forced to work... the Germans wanted him to be to be forced to work at an airstrip. I think. I can't recall exactly what he was talking about. But anyway, he was they wanted him to participate in forced labour, at least some of my grandmother told me that he escaped to Sweden. And in Sweden, he was forced to participate in lumbering I believe it was okay. So, so my grandmother said that instead of being... instead of participating in forced work, to just move to Sweden sort of forced work there instead. Now that again, that's a story in the family.

Talking about his grandfather on his father's side, Mathias reckons that:

And his brother also... sort of... his brother was supposed to be conscripted into the military. But he, I think he escaped (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

I have first-hand knowledge of at least another young local man who fled from the area – more specifically, Gratangen – through Áravuopmi. Close to the Márka of Skanland, the communities living in Lavangen and Gratangen had indeed witnessed a large deployment of soldiers during April 1940 and the civilian population had to pay the consequences of having the war on their doorstep. Once he had reached Sweden, the man I heard about travelled to the UK where he joined the armed forces and fought against the Nazis as part of the Norwegian force. From London, he reached Scotland. There, the Norwegian authorities had a base where they trained Norwegian soldiers. Upon completing the training, he joined the army.

Similarly, Soleim, Nergård and Andersen (2019) have identified the story of another young man who, from Gratangen, reached Sweden during the War: John Nymo. At the age of 19 young John witnessed war breaking out in his country and, in May 1943, he fled to Sweden. Along with him, eleven other local men left for the neighbouring neutral country. Some of these men were from Lavangen and some from Spansdalen. According to Soleim, Nergård and Andersen, John's escape was well planned and organized and they went from Fossbakken up to Rødalen and from there up to Bjørnefjell, from which they reached Sweden. They left their home villages in the dead of night, reaching Fossbakken and, while it was still dark, they skied up to the mountain, from where they proceeded by climbing. Despite the careful planning, the danger was great and in Bjørnefjell, they spotted a German campsite. In order to avoid it, they detoured and, in 24 hours, they had reached the Swedish side of the border. The twelve refugees were well equipped for the trip and wore the so called white "disappearance suits" over thick, warm clothes. Even though they were advised to carry weapons, no one did. According to John, on the Swedish side of the border, they were met by Swedish

border patrols and from them they received food and were registered as refugees before being sent to Kiruna. Upon their arrival, refugee seekers were questioned about where they had come from and officials recorded the following information concerning both refugees and border-pilots: personal data, personal circumstances before the war, personal circumstances at the outbreak of war, personal circumstances during the occupation, information regarding the journey to Sweden and references in Sweden.

During summer, it takes about five hours to travel from Áravuopmi to Sweden. German troops had set up camps in the valley. Soleim, Nergård and Andersen report that for a man named John, who was 14 years old in 1940, life in Áravuopmi during the war often meant daily interaction with the foreign soldiers. For local children, this interaction was often amicable and they even played with them by lining up with the soldiers. Furthermore, the Germans often had film screenings in one of the barracks and, in the village, this barrack went by the name *kinobrakka* (cinema barracks). The local children gathered there to watch films. All the children went there and watched films. According to the authors, people's lives went on almost as usual in the village during the whole war. People lived their lives as normally as possible and did not allow themselves to be influenced so much by the German presence. Nevertheless, they also point out that life was not as normal as it appeared. The scholars report an episode that is revelatory of the harsh conditions endured by people in Áravuopmi during the war: The Germans had set up a food store beneath the floor of the barn. There they had hung up bacons sausages and all kinds of food good. One night someone sneaked into the barn, cut some holes in the wooden floor and stole some food, causing an upheaval in the camp that led to arrests. Given the fact that the settlement in Áravuopmi was such a small society, it was easy for people to keep track of what others were doing, and this is true also for the German troops stationed there (2019). In the authors' opinion, already in 1943-1944 German soldiers must have been aware that people were fleeing to Sweden but they chose to pretend they did not. It should be borne in mind that many of the young German soldiers were conscripts and, as the war dragged on, and their morale decreased, many may have secretly sided with the local population. Furthermore, many deserted. It is not unlikely that, at least some of those on duty at the checkpoints occasionally closed an eye, enabling people to escape to safety in Sweden.

3.5.2 The road to freedom

In the Áravuopmi valley, the majority of the local population was and still is of Sámi background. During WWII this valley had become a crucial junction in the underground network of border pilots. Besides its geographic position –and because of it – many of those living in Áravuopmi had relatives in Sweden and henceforth a long tradition of trans-border contacts and exchange was part of everyday

life in spite of the border. Even long before the war broke out, it was quite common for people on both sides of the border to visit each other's villages. The border does indeed cut through the Sámi territory and, prior to and after its establishment, local Sámi peoples often almost disregarded its existence, carrying out cross-border activities. Traffic across the border had been a common and accepted practice but, during the war, it took on a different meaning. Local people were able to take advantage of this arbitrary line that, almost overnight, had acquired a new set of meanings. The refugee traffic in Áravuopmi could not have taken place to the extent it actually did without the safety network constituted by the strong family ties that connected people and families on both sides of the border. Soleim, Nergård and Andersen identify the contacts between relatives on both sides of the border, and the German soldiers' easy-going control of border traffic as two key factors in the escape of many people from Norway to Sweden across Áravuopmi. Similarly, they have also identified as of central importance the route that went from Gratangen over Kvernmo. This route went southeast, between Lægastinden and Britatinden, past Britavatn and, from there, the route went to Bukkedalen. According to the scholars, at Grasvannet there must have been a German guard post and hence extra care was needed. From Bukkedalen there were two further possibilities. Either towards the south at Næverfjellet and up to Njuorajaure on the Swedish side, or up Bukkedalen, between Nævertinden and Istinden, then past Isvatnet and over to Njuorajaure. From Lavangen there was a smugglers' path up Salangsdalen, over Stordalen and up to Njuorajaure. The first route was the most used one while the second one was less safe as it was quite easy for the Germans to control it. The German army had established a sentinel station in Gressdalen, a passage road located between Lapphaugen and Áravuopmi. Refugee seekers and border pilots had to avoid the area, even though it was the easiest and quickest route over to Sweden, and had to opt for safer, albeit rougher and more difficult, terrains. This was also an area where there used to be an extensive German presence even after the battles between Germans and Norwegians-allied Forces in 1940.

The Kvernmo farm in Gratangen emerged as a central location for the Germans stationed in the area during WWII. Close to Kvernmo, the skirmishes and battles in April 1940 unfolded. The Kvernmo family suffered a great deal during the war and two of its members, John Olai Kvernmo, and his brother, actually played important roles during the conflict. One of its members was an acquaintance of the Alta Battalion²⁹⁴, and he knew the local terrain thoroughly, a skill that proved of extreme importance: he helped the Alta Battalion manage the terrain, contributing to saving many soldiers' lives (2019). When the Germans had occupied Narvik, they quickly came to Gratangen where the

²⁹⁴ The Alta Battalion was on the front line during the battles around Narvik, in 1940.

Trønder Battalion suffered major losses. The Nazi army took many civilians as prisoners, using them as human shields during open confrontations with the Norwegian Army. Neerland Soleim, Nergård and Andersen (2019) report a curious episode that is temporally situated when the German soldiers took Narvik and reached Gratangen. According to the authors, German soldiers broke into the Kvernmo family house with the intention of arresting the father of the household. The man, though, managed to trick the soldiers by pretending to be sick with tuberculosis, with a racking cough in bed and around the house. Scared by the idea of catching the disease, the soldiers quickly left the farm, leaving the family alone for the moment. After the April war was over, and with Germany as an occupying force, the Kvernmo family decided to leave Norway for Sweden, to escape from the German army. The only member of the family who stayed in Kvernmo to look after the cattle was an elderly lady. Kværnmoen, where the Kvernmo farm stood, became a major site during the War. On the farm's premises the German army established a large camp, building barracks and blasting tunnels through the rock, as a bomb shelter. According to Soleim et al., there were 1000 German soldiers at Kvernmo and soon after the establishment of the camp, many locals sought refuge in Sweden. Kvernmo is not far from the border and, in summertime, it takes around five to six hours to reach it. During winter, if refuge seekers went by ski, it took them even less to reach Sweden. In the camp at Kværnmoen, there resided not only resided German soldiers but also POWs (Prisoners of War) – mostly Soviet soldiers – were also detained there. Soleim et al. report that, according to one of their interlocutors who was still a child during wartime, the children's parents used to give them food for the POWs and, when the local children passed by on their way to school, they dropped the food right down outside the fences in the camp so that the prisoners could feed themselves (2019). Similarly, on the Finnish side of Sápmi, scholars have recorded stories about civilians' acts of kindness towards POWs by elderly people who were children during the war (Seitsonen 2017).

3.5.3 Of Polish deserters and old skirts: war in the local collective memory

The stories from the war became part of the oral tradition within families and the community. Among these stories, one stands out because of the peculiarity of the events it evokes: during the last winter of the war, a Czech national who presented himself as a fugitive from the German army came and hid in Markebygda. There were many stories about him after the war. People wondered how he was hidden, and how he always managed to escape the massive investigations that the Germans did in the village to find him. Some said he had a guardian angel looking over him. In a way, he had a whole community of guardian angels. During his time in the Márka, local Smái people hid him, fed him and protected him. Unfortunately, his name was not known as he was just called “the Czech”.

Thanks to the help and protection he received from the locals, he stayed in Markabygda under disguise until May 8, when peace was declared. He then disappeared, never to be heard of again.

As Sigbjørn told me, this story is still being told in the area:

There are some war stories about this prisoner who escaped into Márka and the Márka people would hide, hide this Czech This check war prisoner escaped from the Germans. This person was always... he was sitting in different barns around the Márka. These are materials that are good for study! there's one rumour that he saved himself barely because, guess what! He was sitting there when they [the germen soldiers] came upon this farm [where he was staying]. He was to disappear. These people who hide him warned him when the Germans were in the area so that he could take them off. But that time... the only place when German came and were unexpected, there was not enough time to hide him. So their grandmother, the grandmother of the people who were living there, she acted senile or acted like she was seeing things. and she had these huge skirts that they used to have back then, very long skirts. So he hid under her, well, her skirt, between her legs you see, and she sit there, pretending to be senile now while they wanted to search the house. Oh yeah, and he was just there²⁹⁵ (Sigbjørn, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

Years after the war was over, the people of the Márka still wondered who this man actually was. People in the villages had different views of him and wonder if he was a real refugee and how was it possible that he never got caught. The locals wondered whether he was really a refugee or rather a decoy sent by the German authorities to spy on the community. Some even thought he was a charlatan. Questions also arose on what happened to him and where he went once the war was over. Regardless of who he was and what he was doing in the Márka, the memory of this Czech and his time in the Márka lives on today. The story even found its way to the printed media thanks to the work of the local Sámi publishing house: Skániid Girjie²⁹⁶. Asbjørg Skåden, the founder and manager of Skániid Girjie, embarked in this project in 2003 and, in 2004, it published a short booklet about the czech soldier, describing the rumours that arose in the wake of his arrival, by reproducing the experiences and angles of various local informants: 'Sigbjørn further explained that, on the other side of the family, the experience was different: « So on my father's side of the family», it's more like the system itself was kind of different stories. Being in a war fighting».

Ciehkkar: duiskka soalddák Márkkun (Skåden E M, Skåden A, Fjellaksel Pedersen S 2004). The booklet is written in the Márka North Sámi dialect and is available also in Norwegian under the title: *Tsjekkarn: tysk soldat i Markebygda* (both titles translate as the Czech, a German soldier in the Márka). It was launched in 2005 during the local Sámi youth festival Márkomeannu. 2005 was a

²⁹⁵Sigbjørn further explained that, on the other side of the family, the experience was different: « So on my father's side of the family», it's more like the system itself was kind of different stories. Being in a war fighting».

²⁹⁶ Girjie is North Sámi for publishing house while Skaniid is the genitive of Skaniit, North Sámi for Skånland. Skaniid Girjie focuses on increasing the awareness of MárkaSámi culture by promoting local authors as well as publications focused on the area and its language and traditions.

significant date for the book to be launched since it marked the 60th anniversary of the 1945 treaty that ratified the end of WWII (images n47a, n47b).

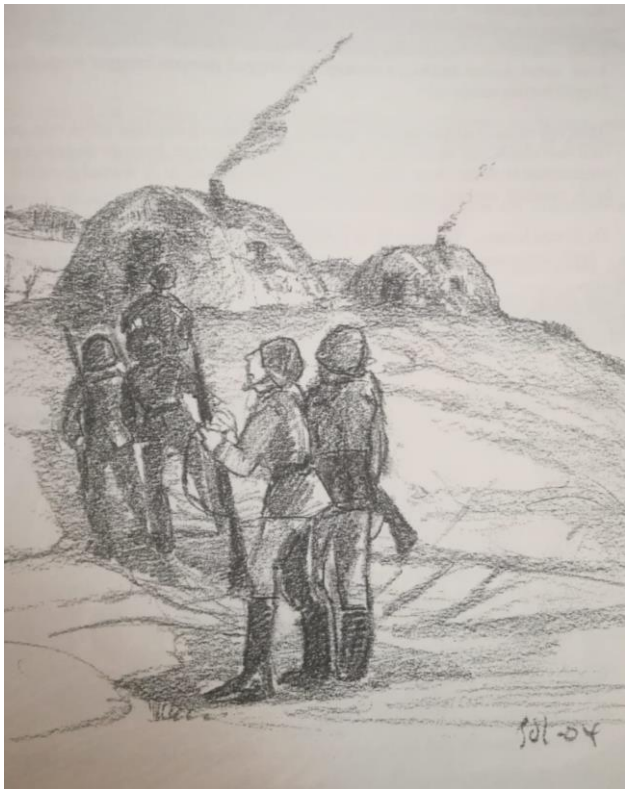


Image 47a and 47b: drawings for the book *Ciehkkar: duiskka soalddák Márkkun* by local Sámi artist Solfrid Fjellaksen Pedersen. These scenes depict German soldiers searching two *goahti* (turf hut) in the Márka and a local Sámi woman hiding the Czech soldier by dressing him with a local *gákti* (Sámi clothing). From *Ciehkkar: duiskka soalddák Márkkun* (2004)

For the people of the Márka, and of Sápmi on a broader level, WWII brought great changes that shaped the life of many generations to come. During an interview with Emma, she pointed out that War was a temporal watershed in the history of the Márka. There was a before, and an after. And the after spoke Norwegian.

And also the fact that after the war, you were supposed to, then, you know... we [the Norwegian State] built up this sort of national level thing. And everybody was supposed to be given a chance. And, you know, so was a lot of focus on that. On being all the same [i.e. Norwegian]. And also, prior to that, of course, was the assimilation process, which was really, really strong and hard. on, you know, our grandparents and great grandparents generation, so that sort of, of course, that stayed with them as well. And that follows a follows many generations (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

Even though Emma specified that assimilation processes were in action long before the war, she also pointed out how it was during and especially after the war that a strong homogenizing process

overcame Sámi communities. She further explained that her grandparents stopped talking to her mother in Sámi during the War years.

The reason for them choosing not to speak Sámi to, to Mum, you know, it's just because both just the way it was supposed to be. I don't know, they didn't really well. I don't know. It was just after the war, they were supposed to be good Norwegians. And also, maybe they thought, well, it'd be better for them to learn Norwegian properly. I don't know. So they did that instead (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

This episode is explicatory of the linguistic choices made by many Sámi parents to ensure their children would have a Norwegian future without having to endure the stigma and social pressure that Sámi people had to deal with on a daily basis when interacting with the hegemonic society. Emma's family experience resonates with that of many others in the Márka, as professor Grenersen explained to me during an interview. World War II was a devastating event that changed the lives of millions of peoples. As such, it also represents a watershed in the life of many, especially those who were children during those difficult year. It is not unusual to hear elderly people using the wartime as a reference point in their life, as it is usual with all the landmark events, either good or bad.

3.6 *Skyggeland* (shadow land)

In 2018, during a visit to the area, a friend brought me to Skoaberjávri for a hike. It was raining heavenly and we found shelter under the roof of a small red wooden house in an area where a Kven family settled at the end of the 18th century. From that spot, a bit up from the untarmacked road, we enjoyed a beautiful view over both the woods at the east and the mountains at the west. Out of the blue, my friend pointed at the mountain behind me and told me that, in a cave deep into the mountain there was a deposit of *ammunisjon*. When i tried and ask more about this, my friend changed the subject.

I forgot about this “war things” in the mountain until, a few months later and while in Italy, I was having lunch with an Italian man who as a young soldier was stationed in Bardufoss as part of his military training. We came across the topic of warfare in the arctic by chance, as he asked me where I was doing my fieldwork. When I answered “near Tromsø” I expected him to ask me where on earth is Tromsø, since that is the usual reaction I get when I tell people about my fieldwork. The look on his face was surprised, but not in the way I expected it to be. He smiled and told me: “really?” and when I said: «yes, why? Do you know the place? » he immediately replied: «very well indeed! I did part of my military service in a UN military base not far from it, some 20 years ago! ». When I asked him more about it, he explained that he spent some months (in winter) in a military location some

two hours south of Tromsø, in a place “as cold as hell”. At that point, I felt confident the location was Bardufoss, and I was right. We spent a few minutes talking about his memories and he asked me about my work before moving on to talk about the weather in the Arctic, a topic dear to both of us. In my case, because of my fieldwork and, in his case, because he is a renowned professional meteorologist and also an important advocate for actions to mitigate climate change. The conversation we had sparked my interest on the consequences of military activities and military infrastructures on the area where I carried out fieldwork. I distinctly remembered passing through Bardufoss on a bus (the line 100, connecting Tromsø and Narvik) and being impressed by the groups of young soldiers walking across the streets of the village of Setermoen. Similarly, on one of the car drives from Stuornjårga to Tromsø, I remember my friend slowing down in correspondence to military bases for me to see them. These unrelated episodes all of a sudden came together as pieces of a bigger picture which made me revise my fieldwork material (notes, interviews, photos, fieldnotes) looking for hints or references I initially overlooked since the impact of military activities on the territory was not among my initial research questions. I soon realized that this was not only a difficult but extremely important topic because of its ramifications (cultural, ecological, political) but that it was also connected with my research on Márkomeannu 2118. War was indeed part of the imagined past of the future staged at Márkomeannu2118. Even though it was projected in a time yet to come, the conflict hinted at in the festival plot was a not only a vague reference to warfare as a human self-destructing practice but also to the armed conflicts - past and present – that have taken place in Sápmi, with daring consequences for Sámi communities and individuals.

3.6.1 The Skoaberjávri case: the warehouse that stimulated public discussions about Sámi identity in Stuornjårga

In 1989, the National Heritage Board in the cultural landscape department received an expropriation notice for an area known as Skoaberjávri/Skoddebergvann. The area is located in the centre of Stuornjårga and falls within the jurisdiction of Grovfjord. The Ministry had identified this location the most favourable alternative for locating a large military ammunition depot. Stuornjårga already hosted a civilian and military airport at Evenes that was, at the time, under development but when this proposal became known locally, it immediately aroused great opposition. For the ministry, such a reaction was of course not unexpected; it is the rule rather than the exception. What was surprising, however, were the strong reactions with which this decision was met by the local Sámi community (through the local Sámi associations IBSS) and by Sámi institutions (Sámediggi/Sámi Parliament, Sámi Council).

SKOABERJÁRVI – SKODDEBERGVANN



Kart over Skoddebergområdet som viser gammel ferdsselsvei og flyttevei.

Image 48: map of the Skoaberjávri/Skoddebergvann area in Carl Schøyen's 1918 book 'Tre stammers møte: av Skoulik-Andaras beretninger'.



Map 10: location of Skoaberjavri/Skoddebergvann lake in Stornjårga (adapted from google maps).



Image 49: A bilingual road-sign (Norwegian and North Sámi) at Skoaberjavri/Skoddebergvann (photo by the author).

The local population did not approve of this project and the local Grovfjord landowners' association filed an appeal and so did IBSS Sámi association and other local stakeholders. The Sámi parliament showed a marked interest in the issue and was opposed to the construction of the warehouse. As the 1990 Sámediggi records (møtebok 1/90) show, since its very institution, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament was concerned with the military rearmament in the north of Norway, the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Both the Sámi Parliament, and the Norwegian Sámi Council expressed their concern about developments and encroachments in Sápmi. Fears that the development of military installations and infrastructures – among them the warehouse in Skoaberjávri/Skoddebergvann – would restrict and be detrimental to Sámi practice were accompanied by concerns over the consequence of an increasing presence of the Armed Forces' activities on the area (the potential consequences on the civil society such as a potential depopulation of small and already vulnerable local settlements). Further problems identified by the Sámediggi arose from the impact that military infrastructures would have had on the Márka-Sámi economy as well as reindeer tending²⁹⁷ but also on the local landscape and its local cultural and historical heritage. The construction of military infrastructures implied the demolition of cultural monuments and hence the destruction of the traces of previous generations, depriving the population of important fragments of the community's shared past. This warehouse was part of a wider comprehensive project that interested South Troms and the North Nordland, for a total of around 60 construction projects

The Sámediggi stated that:

The planned location of an ammunition facility at Skoddebergvann will affect reindeer husbandry, cultural heritage and cultural landscape interests in the area. In addition, the area has great conservation value (Møtebok 1990)

In particular, the Sámediggi expressed concerns over the long-term consequences on the local natural environment, on the impact on recreation and outdoor activities but, especially, on reindeer husbandry, pointing out that the military facility would negatively affect this activity in the Grovfjord reindeer grazing district. The military infrastructures would cut the region into two, severing the eastern and western parts of the district, posing obstacles to the reindeer's seasonal migration so great that may even cause the end to local reindeer husbandry. The relevance of the involvement of the Sámediggi can be appreciated only if we take into account that not everyone agreed the region was a

²⁹⁷ Local reindeer tenders had their grazing lands in the area and their activities, according to the Sámediggi, were already heavily burdened by previous military interventions in the area. (Sámediggi møtebok 1/90).

Sámi area, denying the Sámi centuries-long relation with the landscape²⁹⁸. In this area there are numerous important Márka-Sámi heritage sites (for instance Gállogieddi, Vilgesvarri, Borri²⁹⁹) and many are the families with a Sámi background in the area. Furthermore, many Sámi politicians, scholars, activists and artists were born and grew up in the Márka. Nevertheless, in 1989, there were still many who did not want to discuss their ethnic background in public and some of those who had embraced a Norwegian affiliation refused to even acknowledge their connection with Sámi cultures. Sámi identity – and the way it was publicly acknowledged or actively concealed, was a source of friction within the community.

The proposed construction of military infrastructures – opposed by the locals – called into question the ethnic dimension of the area, triggering a series of reports drawing attention to the Sámi – and Kven – past and present of Stuornjárga. The acknowledgment of the multi-ethnic composition of the local population has ethno-political ramifications: laws have been adopted to ensure that Sámi rights are respected but they can be enforced only in areas that enjoy the status of Sámi areas. Hence, military operations in Sámi areas need further approval. If the area was formally acknowledged as Sámi, the process would require the approval of specific offices. In 1981, an *ad hoc* committee defined the inner regions of Stuornjárga as the “Tjeldsund field” (Tjeldsundfeltet). As Minde points out, the definition itself does not sound very Sámi. Furthermore, the area did not look Sámi to Armed Forces representatives carrying out surveys in the area. As Minde - who himself is from the area - explains, the ethnic configuration of the area was a source of discomfort for many in the Márka fields. The Sámi scholar explains that, If people living in the “field settlements” a few kilometres up from the sea were asked about the ethnic composition of the area, they would provide conflicting answers. Some would have denied that the Sámi had played any role throughout history. According to Minde, such views were often kept private but, if asked about it:

The occasional local *dačča* (local Sámi exonym for “Norwegian”) might have reacted either with eloquent silence or with a slightly aggressive utterance about the peculiarities of the Márka-settlements (Márkabygdene); “that they need to learn to be like other peoples” (*det dem træng å lære e å bli som andre folk*) (2000:45; my translation).

This last remark is of extreme interest since it encompasses a series of attitudes and commonplaces the norwegian(ized) people living along the coast as well as the norwegian(ized) household far from the sea held towards the people living in the interior of the peninsula. During the conversation I had

²⁹⁸ A picture further complicated by the presence of Kven people (descendants of Finnish farmers who migrated in the region in the 18th and 19th century).

²⁹⁹ Krokely

with my interlocutors, many told me of episodes involving their grandparents who, as children, were mobbed by children living along the coast. Their “sin”: being not good enough, being different. Ultimately, being Sámi. My interlocutors were either not born yet or young children when the armed forces selected Stuornjárga as a site for military actions and warehouse. Nevertheless, they learnt about it through the memories of their parents and older relatives. Similarly, they learnt about stigmatization both from their relatives words and from direct experience. Furthermore, they also had first-hand experience of resentment against the Sámi culture not only by *dačča* but also by people with distinct and well-known Sámi background. This form of intra-ethnic self-loath is clearly delineated by Minde in the second section of the 2000 report’s introduction:

Even if the people of the military had met a Sámi-born person, it was not at all certain that the person in question would have made his ethnic background known, especially if he belonged to the generation that had grown up just after the Second World War. It is said of them that their Sáminess only existed in a “shadow land” (*skyggeland*). Even though they know that they are of Sámi descent, they are not even sure if they feel like Sámi. It can also be argued with a certain degree of certainty that today [in the 1990s when Minde, a Sámi himself, composed the report] there are no visible differences between the Sámi and Norwegian ways of life (Minde 2000:27; my translation).

According to Minde, the perception that, by the end of the 20th century, Sámi and Norwegian customs and livelihoods did not differ to a significant degree found confirmation in the 1990 national population and housing census³⁰⁰. In this census, according to Minde, there was no registered difference between the Sámi and the Norwegian population in Skånland municipality. Nevertheless, Minde reminds us, the situation was much different just one hundred years ago, as the late 19th censuses show. In 19th century, and before that time, there was little doubt that the fjord and inland villages around of Stuornjárga were inhabited by people who identify themselves as Sámi and that it was the Sámi who exploited the high mountains.

Minde quotes extracts of an interview with Axel Hagemann, an elderly local who reported that the area around the lake was densely populated by Sámi people who lived in their *goahti* turf huts.

³⁰⁰ Censuses have been useful tools in the historical exam of the ethnic composition of Northern Norway. The data recorded in these institutionally-produced documents shall be addressed with a critical perspective. On the surface, they may seem to indicate an ethnic shift in many settlements. Historians have demonstrated that censuses, rather than showing changes in the ethnic composition of the settlements they refer to, they show a change in the perception and self-ascription of identity. At least when dialoguing with State-institutions (by answering the censuses) people decided to embrace an ethnic affiliation that may have differed from that with which their own parents identified with, especially in case of mixed ethnic heritage. To choose to identify themselves with the hegemonic ethnic majority of the national population was, in many cases, a pondered choice, taken for the sake of their descendants, so that they would be spared from stigma and discrimination. Scholars have examined these data and put them in relation to the process of assimilation and norwegianization of Sámi and Kven communities (cfr Evjen 2009; 2011).

Torvgammer in the text) and that it was only in 1853 that the first *dačča* (non-Sámi/Norwegian) settled in the area. According to Minde, the military warehouse was to be built on a site that belonged to one of such families that had owned it since 1906, when Peter Hansa and his wife Beirit Eriksdatter had obtained it through a royal deed the family cleared the woods where later built their farm. Peter and Beirit were recorded as Norwegian in the documents but, as Minde points out, both of them had mixed ancestry. Both Peter and Berit were descendants of those children the reindeer tender Sámi had carried with them from Tornedalen in the early 1800s³⁰¹. In Minde's view, Berit's parents were most likely Sámi while Peter was of Kven descent. Both of them though had grown up in Norwegian settlers' homes along the coast (Minde 2000). Ultimately, the Armed Forces' proposal stimulate a discussion – also in academic arenas – on the Sámi identity in Stuornjárga as well as an analysis of the connections between past and present through the landscape. This was only one of the numerous episodes that marked the discussion over and the public negotiation of Sámi ethnic identity in the area of Stuornjárga

Already in 1990, the Sámediggi expressed concerns over the consequences of eventual military exercises in the area: pollution and destruction of the natural environment and of its cultural features. The Sámediggi warned, would affect also the nearby seascape, the navy's use of deep-water bombs in the fjords affecting negatively on the fish stock. As early as 1990, the Sámediggi managed to have the area put under a temporary protection so that the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment could better assess the impact on the protected Sámi cultural monuments in the area³⁰². In 2005, Fifteen years after the debates over the Skoaberjávri/Skoddebergvann warehouse and the announcement of military exercises in the area, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence (2005) announced that, between 2006 and 2008, 18 of the Armed Forces' locations were to be disposed and cleaned up. In 2007, a further document issued by the Ministry of Defence (2007) acknowledged the deposition, dispersal and leakage of pollution to land and sea caused by the Armed Forces' activities. The clean-up came following orders from the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority issued the order to implement monitoring plans in a number of localities connected with military activities.

³⁰¹ In the 18th century, when famine and family crisis prevented poor families from feeding their children, many settlers' families (Swedish and Finnish) entrusted Sámi reindeer tender families with their own sons and daughters. These sort of foster care agreements were common practice and, upon reaching the summer grazing lands, many local settlers' families took custody of some of these children (who worked for them in exchange for food and shelter) while others stayed with their new Sámi families. These historically documented migrations of underage impoverished children gave rise to a myth according to which Sámi were kidnapping and enslaving Swedish children. As Minde highlights, his practice is still today known as “Slafhandel på Scandnavien” or “slave trade in Scaninavia” peculiar form of child migration. Life for the Tornedaling of ancient times was often, as mentioned, extremely worrying.

³⁰² According to the Law on Cultural Heritage should a thorough fieldwork is carried out that both documents and ensures cultural-historical traces in ethnographic and archaeological contexts. It is important to regulate the defence activities so that it reduces conflicts with cultural landscape and rural environments.

3.6.2 Claymore Clamour

As we have seen, warfare (also in time of peace) means investments in defence facilities such as the warehouse in Skoaberjávri/Skoddebergvann, it also means pollution and it brings a degree of risk. In June 2011, a thunder-like roar suddenly resonated in thick woods covering the valley of Grovfjord. The echoing noise of an explosion was not unusual since the population was used to the hustle and bustle of the military exercises that regularly take place in the area. That time though the blast was not like those people from Grovfjord were used to. More than 60 years had passed since anyone in the area had experienced anything similar. The detonation casted hundreds of shards in all directions. Tiny fragments ripped through the forest at an unimaginable speed, cutting through anything on their way. A woman in her late 50s was sitting on the stairs in front of her cottage when, all of a sudden, the quietness of her summer afternoon was shattered by a blast, immediately followed by a hail of bullets. Amidst the chaos, fragments of a bomb smashed the glass of her window, plunged into the wooden walls of the cabin and into her chest. When the blast hit the cabin, the husband was present at the scene along with a third person, a UN veteran who immediately understood what was happening around them. A mine with steel bullets had exploded. He even told the newspapers that the mine was a claymore. The Armed Forces, through their spokesperson, were initially cautious about the incident and only later, when both the police and the army investigations were concluded, it was disclosed that a mistake had occurred in handling the military equipment and someone used an actual claymore mine instead of an exercise mine. The incident, which led to the suspension of military exercise with mines all over Norway and to the implementation of new, stricter security measures, shows how war and warfare are not relegated to the past and their influence its multiple manifestations have over the locals extends well into the future.

War and its ramifications had profound implications for Sámi peoples living on all sides of Sápmi. For some – especially those who lived within the borders of Sweden – war was on their doorstep and they welcomed family and friends fleeing the conflict. For others, home as they knew was gone, either destroyed or no longer reachable, beyond impenetrable international borders. Yet others saw destruction coming but despite the hardship, their villages were spared, and so their material culture. For everyone, the war years were a traumatic experience whose memory was impressed in the bodies, in the souls as well as in the landscape.

3.7 Mirrors

I have no family relation with the people who endured the evacuation and the aftermath of the scorched heart tactic in the Northern Calotte. Nevertheless, I have friends whose immediate relatives (usually grandparents but also parents) were deeply affected by the war and by forcibly having to leave their home, seeing everything they knew literally burn to ashes behind them. The stories they shared with me were private and, as such, I did not include them in this section. I was told these stories while I was on fieldwork but, in those moments, I was listening as a friend, not as a researcher. Hence, I did not include anything of what was said under those circumstances even though those conversations gave me the strength to look both into this topic and, to an extent, into the mirror. My relatives were not, as I said, part of the story I tried to delineate here. Nevertheless, this story is very familiar to me as my own family suffered the pain of being forcibly evacuated, of seeing their identity reduced to what they could carry with them. The evacuees from Trentino and Sud Tyrol were no longer individuals. They were – to the others – refugees, i.e. more mouths to feed. Mouths who spoke in a strange, foreign language. They often were seen with suspicion. Not Italian enough to be trusted, no Austrian enough to be hated. In 1916, the village where my family lived was destroyed and burned to the grounds by Italian soldiers. My village was the first settlement on the Austrian side of the border. It was the first enemy outpost. Before the village fell in the hands of the Italians, my great-grandmother, just 12 at the time, used to herd cows trying to escape the glance of soldiers walking towards the battlefield. Trenches still cut across the fields just a few hundred metres from my *maso* (alpine cottage). Still today people find war-related objects, in places where I used to play with my cousins as a child and I remember having played hide and seek in the trenches now hidden by woods, just to realize, one day, that those beautiful trees grow strong of the blood once spilled there. Where I saw peace and nature, one hundred years before, boys just a little older than me tried to escape death on a daily basis, sleeping in the mud and sharing their life with bugs, rats and the smell of rotten bodies. Today, a stone marks the old border and a few meters away a catholic cross stands, carrying on the shoulders of a wooden Jesus the weight of thousands young souls lost forever in one of the most beautiful spots I have ever been to. I think of them every time I walk back home from that place, *i masi di celeste* (Celeste's – a male name – cottages). I go back home. They stay behind, watching forever over the faded border for which their lives were offered.

When the village was taken by the Italian army, 400 elderly, women, children and sick people were sent away – my relatives among them –. They were sent southwards, among people who despised them, who mistreated them. On that day, they lost everything. Their animals, their clothes, their Sunday costumes, their cattle, their animals. They lost their small treasures, golden rings, earrings,

laced scarves... stolen by the people from the nearby village, on the Italian side of the border. The *tal'giani* (local derogatory ethnonym for Italians) came during the night, and took everything they could with them. The village was soon destroyed and its inhabitants “rescued” by Italian authorities. The journey was hard. Babies were born in refugee camps, elderly died there and there their bones have become dust, merging with the earth of a foreign land. People got sick with diarrhoea because the food they ate was foreign to them and the water was polluted. Children became ill and many died. The community was forcibly divided. My closest family was sent somewhere in a southern region of Italy, perhaps nearby Naples. That, when the war ended, they were allowed to go back. Nobody talked about it in details. It was the way it was. Someone may have mentioned, every now and then, but few wanted to dwell into the thought. The memory soon was lost in time. The pain hidden and repressed. I know almost nothing of the years my family was at the mercy of the country that had destroyed their home. The only thing I know is that they suffered, and that my great-grandmother said she was not going to die Italian. She was born Austrian and so she would die, no matter what the documents now say. She, they suffered immensely. But they also coped, and found new strength in the relations they established with fellow refugees and, in many cases with the hosting communities. I know of some families who still visit the place their ancestors were sent to, the once hosting families being to them like blood relatives. My great-grandfather and his own father were both enrolled as Austrian soldiers. When my grandfather, just 20, was coming back from war, he was taken prisoners by the Italians. Upon returning home once the war was over, he went out of the woods when he was just 5 kilometres away from the village. He was so close he could see it, the village, nestled in the valley. He was still wearing the Austrian uniform. But that was Austria no more. He was sent into a labour camp where he spent three years. The railway in Friuli is tainted with his slave sweat and blood. This is not to say that I can understand the pain and sufferings Sámi people endured during the war. The contexts are different, the people are different. Nevertheless, I think it was worth telling my story. It has enabled me to be able to relate. By listening to the stories I heard in Sápmi, i was able to appreciate more the strength of my own ancestors. Of that, I am very grateful.



Image 50: Castello Tesino, 1918. View from today Via Venezia, at the 'Baon', Until 1918 part of the Austrian territories, was one of the border villages destroyed during WWI. (Author's private archive).



Image 51 and 52: Castello Tesino, 1918. Until 1918 part of the Austrian territories, was one of the border villages destroyed during WWI. Image 51a: A soldier is posing while fire destroy the village of Castello Tesino. View of Castello Tesino from Cinte Tesino; Image 51b: View of the San Giorgio Parish Church and of the village's main square (Author's private archive).

Chapter 4

History of the Márka

4.1 Marking the Márka

The Márka (an inland area in northern Nordland and southern Troms, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi) is a borderland region long regarded as peripheral and liminal both in Norwegian and in Sámi milieux. Márka and its specific landscape are central to the identity of the local Márkasámi people. The relationships the Márkasámi have with the Márka are deeply rooted in Sámi non-Christian worldviews and are bestowed with multiple layers of meaning. The impact of military infrastructures on the Márka risks severing the ties between the community and the area in which it dwells and hence it has long been a topic of discussion in the area. Along with the development of industrial facilities, military institutions were to bring new job opportunities in the area. Nevertheless, such new positions were by no means intended and designed for the locals and the benefits for the local population were often questioned and countered with potential risks and were often carried out to the detriment of the local population and their specific needs, as the following statement demonstrates:

Det å være merksame har aldri vært noen dans på roser; det er å oppleve stigmatisering og konstant negative sanksjoner på identitet. Situasjonen forverres ytterligere i dag ved at både Skånland og Evenes er i sterk ekspansjon: Forsvaret utvider på Evenes flyplass og oljevirksomheten i Harstad fører til stor innflytting til Skånland. Som følge av det harde fornorskningsspillet er også det Sámiske språket utsatt. Det er dermed fare for at en del av identitetsgrunnlaget skal forsvinne samtidig med at oppvekstvilkårene for samebarn som samebarn svekkes. (Skåden & Eriksen 1986 in Grenersen 2002: 37)³⁰³.

³⁰³ Being Márkasame has never been a dance on roses; it is experiencing stigma and constant negative sanctions on identity. The situation is further aggravated today by both Skånland and Evenes being in strong expansion: the Armed Forces is expanding at Evenes Airport and the oil business in Harstad is leading to a large influx of people to Skånland. As a result of the hard Norwegianization pressure, the Sámi language is also exposed. There is thus a danger that part of the identity basis will disappear at the same time as the conditions of upbringing for Sámi children as Sámi children are weakened. (A. Skåden & A. Ronte Eriksen: Søknad om støtte fra tiltak for Sámiske barn; Planterhaugen 21.02. 1986 in Grenersen 2002:37). My translation.

Asbjørg Skåden and Ardis Ronte Eriksen – two activists sisters who worked as teachers, and politicians – wrote these lines in 1986 as part of a longer application submitted in relation to the establishment of a Sámi Kindergarten in the Márka.

These few and incisive sentences constitute an important testimony of how, in the mid-1980s, the expansion of military infrastructures (in Evenes) and of the oil extraction industry (in Harstad) represented – or were perceived as such by members of the local community – potential threats to the preservation of the local Sámi culture and identity. Local cultural activists feared the expanding Norwegian institutions and economic activities would pose yet again endanger the local culture and language. Asbjørg Skåden and Ardis Ronte Eriksen stress how the condition of Sámi people in the Márka had never been easy but that the new circumstances, shaped by pressure from Norwegian institutions expanding into the culturally-Sámi territories, posed unprecedented challenges for the local Sámi culture. The authors focus attention on the deleterious consequences of the possible ramifications of the Norwegian expansion (military and industrial) with consequent settlement of a predominantly culturally-Norwegian population in the area and an increased pressure on the already fragile and minority(zed) local Sámi population, relating these phenomena with the already difficult conditions of the Sámi in the region. These reflections connects the past to the present, offering the opportunity to address not only the impact but also the origins of forced assimilation processes on the Márka cultural region. Such processes were systematically implemented in all of Sápmi and it is important to highlight that this phenomenon was neither homogeneous nor straightforward. Many are variables that contributed to making each case special and unique. It is important to underline how this process has characterized the national policy towards (or against) the Sámi for more than a century, with different levels of awareness and planning on the part of the authorities as well as different levels of awareness and responses on the part of the Sámi involved and affected by such initiatives. The temporal extension of the assimilation policies inevitably constitutes an important premise for the analysis of their consequences. Furthermore, the formal assimilation was preceded by hundreds of years of asymmetric power relations, exploitation and assimilation (mainly through – enforced – conversion and formal education in Church/State-led institutions. Although assimilation imposed from above (ultimately by the Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish or Russian states) were relatively uniform, they were implemented in particular ways depending on who was in charge of overseeing it. Not only were the people in charge of assimilation policies different, but the communities and individuals at which these policies were directed were also different. Each community – and each family and individual within it – reacting in a unique way, based on their background and the circumstances in which they found themselves.

As it has been highlighted in the previous chapters, systematic assimilation was preceded by centuries of contact and mutual influence. Religion was among the most important arenas where colonization unfolded. Here I shall examine how, in the region of Ofoten – the area where I carried out fieldwork – missionary activity led to the Christianisation of the region. As in the rest of Sápmi, this shift in worldviews that marked a significant change in the life of the local population, with consequences on the physical and symbolic dimension of Sámi identity. The complex history of this region has not been written down in books and records until clergymen started recording demographic data concerning the local population and missionaries started documenting their proselytizing activity and of the daily interactions with the local population, albeit from their point of view.

Before addressing this phenomenon, I would like to delineate the Márka as a socio-historical context. To do so, I have decided outline the concept of Márka through an etymological and historical analysis of the term. I shall then proceed to address one of its numerous farms that, unlike other abandoned local farmsteads, in the last 30 years has undergone a unique process of heritagization.

4.1.1 On the origins of the Márka: how etymologies can shed light upon social relations

The Márka (Norwegian side of Sápmi) is a borderland area long regarded as peripheral and liminal both in Norwegian and in Sámi milieux. Nevertheless, the Márka and its specific landscape are central to the identity of the local Sámi people (henceforth Márka-Sámi). The relationships the Márka-Sámi have with the Márka are deeply rooted in Sámi history, in the relationship with past generations and, ultimately, in both non-Christian worldviews and Christianity. The relations between individuals and the Márka are difficult to investigate and I shall draw my conclusions being aware that the people I had conversations or interviews with cannot and shall not be taken as representatives and spokespersons for the whole community, acknowledging that their thoughts and emotions are at the convergence of individual emotional and contextual experiences and represent a very specific, time-limited perspective. consequently, they can only be accounted for by what they decided to share; on the other hand, a collective understanding of the relationship between Márka-Sámi and the Márka is detectable during small, medium and large-scale events such as local gatherings or festivals, Márkomeannu above all – and its preparations – where and when people from different walks of life gather because they share, and wish to share, something very important to them during Márkomeannu. The public is offered different means through which both oriundos and foreigners can become (re)acquainted with the Márka as a cultural area and as landscape of memory where the connection between individuals, the collectivity and the land is annually re-established and reshaped.

Many are the landmarks – cultural, historical and spiritual, tangible and intangible, ancient and contemporary in origins – dotting the Márka, and several are bestowed with multiple layers of meaning. Of such landmarks, some stand out as being especially relevant to younger generations and their establishment constituted a turning point in the cultural landscape of the Márka.

In this section, I shall examine the origin of the concept of Márka, the premises upon which such a concept developed and the ramifications embedded in the relational character of the concept itself. Subsequently, I shall investigate the relationships between Márka-Sámi and the Márka area, a topic which, while I was on fieldwork, led to me to a different and more nuanced understanding of Márkomeannu. The ‘Márka’, as my interlocutors understand it, refers to the inland territories of the Stuornjárga peninsula, between Skánit/Skånland-Tjelsund (in Troms-Finnmark) and Evenássi/Evenes (Nordland). This area is located in the Ofoten region, some 300 km north of the Arctic Circle. Through interviews and private conversations, I soon came to realize that the Márka is a dense term that refers to a roughly delimited geographical area but, most importantly, that acquires the contours of a complex and -at times- elusive concept. I shall start my analysis of the geo-cultural area known as Márka by examining how the concept of Márka came into being, how the etymological analysis of this term – and its cognates – may shed some light on the etic understandings people had about the area and its inhabitants, and ultimately how its meaning has slowly shifted since the 1950s and what the characteristics of the concept are as of today. A brief analysis of the history of the Márka concept as well as an examination of the historical development of this word and its evolving meanings provide useful insights into the relationships between people living in the inland of the Stuornjárga peninsula and those living along its coast.

The ‘Márka’ as a concept encompasses a variety of characteristics and, in the area where I carried out fieldwork, it is today commonly used by the locals to define the area where they are from and, by extension, their own identity as Márka people or, more specifically, Márka-Sámi. The Márka has become an important source of identity for many of those who were either born there or can trace their family ties to the area. The concept examined by Dikka Storm – Assistant Professor Section for Cultural Sciences at UiT Tromsø University – (1993) is usually translated as “outlying fields” or “outfield”. Even though it is has not been further problematized in the literature, the use of this term in the public arena has grown and has been accepted by the locals. Despite the strong pejorative connotations this term was originally charged with, it has been appropriated by the people it once was deemed to refer to: stripped of its derogatory significance, its original meaning was overturned to the extent that now it has become an endonym charged with a wide array of positive overtones. Even if

today it is both an ethnonym and a toponym referring to a specific area and group, originally *Márka* was a general term and an interesting – almost descriptive – toponym which described the characteristics of the area: the presence of outlying fields in the area it referred to and intrinsically it described.

As the Norsk Ordbok specifies, the outfields are usually characterized by the presence of forests. Such an association is not casual but, as we shall see, is actually deeply rooted in the origin of the term “*Márka*”. A term with a Germanic root, it has been acquired *via* Norwegian by the North Sámi language with the spelling “*Márku*”. The etymology of the term *Márka*

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is connected with the Old Norse word *mörk*. In Old Norse languages, *mörk* meant forest. The modern and contemporary term “*Márka*” that is so recurrent in European toponyms is connected with the Old High German term “*Márka*”, which derived from Proto-Germanic **markō* (meaning “boundary” or “boundary-marker”). This Proto-Germanic reconstructed word derived from a reconstructed Proto-Indo-European **marǵ-* (“edge, boundary, border”). This Proto-Indo-European root is connected with a great number of words in many Indo-European languages. The Old English term *mearc* (meaning sign or line of division, boundary, term, defined area, district or even province) is among these words and is cognate with *mark*, *merk* (Dutch “*mark*, brand”), *mark* (German, “*mark*; borderland”), *marque* (“French, *mark*; brand”), *mark* (Swedish/Norwegian “*mark*, land, territory”), *mark* (Icelandic, “*mark*, sign”). Similarly, the Latin word *margo* (“edge, margin”) originates from the same root. The colloquial term *Márka/Mark* used in the area overlapping with the border region between Nordland and Troms originates from the suffix –*mark/a*, which is commonly used in toponyms across Europe and it is widely attested throughout Norway. For instance, in the south of the country, we find the toponym *Oslomarka*. There are three counties in Norway that carry the suffix –*marka* in their names: Hedmark, Telemark and Finnmark. On a more local level, also the following toponyms are constructed upon the term *Marka*: *Nordmarka*, *Østmarka*, *Vestmarka*, *Bymarka*, *Bærumsmarka*, *Finnemarka*³⁰⁵

Outside Norway, many are the places that include ‘*Márka*’ as either a suffix or as a term in their names, or that used to be referred to as *Marka/Marcha/Marc*. In all these cases, the presence of -*mark* offers hints about the original functions, natural features and symbolic collocation of the places themselves in relation to the groups who had the right or power to name the places themselves. This

³⁰⁴ (Definite singular *marka* or *marken*, indefinite plural marker, definite plural *marken*).
(Definite singular *marka* or *marken*, indefinite plural marker, definite plural *marken*).
middle of the 17th century.

is the case of places like the Marche³⁰⁶ County in Italy, or the Carolingian *Marca Hispanica*, but also the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia – in the midlands of England –³⁰⁷. But no other place reminds us of the pervasiveness of the suffix -mark more than one of the Scandinavian states themselves: Denmark. All the names so far mentioned, being toponyms or referring to counties or countries share a common origin and, correspondingly, share a core characteristic: all of them were considered as peripheral -or rather marginal – when they acquired the name they are known by today.

In this case, marginal refers to the geographical and symbolic position these places enjoyed, with the consequences such positions entailed. As a relational term, marginality presupposes centrality. As aforementioned, the –mark element recurrent in all the aforementioned place-names can be traced back to the Germanic suffix –*marka*, derived from the Old High German term “*marka*” meaning specifically border, border area or border country. This term was used to describe border areas (or border countries) in the German-Roman Empire. In the Frankish Empire, the term “*marka*” was used to define the newly conquered border countries that were subjected to particular military regulations. These lands were wide areas administered by a representative of the centralized power. Such a person was originally appointed by the emperor and ruled with relative independence and freedom. The Margraviate of Austria (originally called *Marcha Orientalis* or *Ostmark*³⁰⁸) is representative of the development into independent principalities these vast areas may have encountered. The Margraviate of Austria originated in 956, becoming the Duchy of Austria (1156-1453), and then the Republic of Austria.³⁰⁹ The very title Margraviate (*Markgraf* i.e. “march count”) derives from the term “*marka*”, the areas upon which the Margraviate exerted her/his control³¹⁰. The border nature of the Marchas is epitomized by two such marcher counties: Portugal and Castile, which later developed into independent countries, were originally meant to be political border units with a specific buffer function. Their scope was to protect the Galician Kingdom from the Emirate of Cordoba.

In Norway, “*marka*” has slowly acquired a specific meaning connected with and derived from its original significance. Analysis of the development of this concept is useful in understanding how the contemporary “*marka*” term came into being and sheds light on the hidden meanings it conceals and conveys. Today, “*marka*” usually denotes the forests surrounding Norwegian cities, towns, and

³⁰⁶ From the Carolingian period onwards the name *marca* begins to appear in Italy, first the *Marca Fermana* for the mountainous part of Picenum, the *Marca Camerinese* for the district farther north, including a part of Umbria, and the *Marca Anconitana* for the former Pentapolis (Ancona). In 1080, the *marca Anconitana* was given in investiture to Robert Guiscard by Pope Gregory VII, to whom the Countess Matilda ceded the marches of Camerino and Fermo.

³⁰⁷ The name “Mercia” comes from the Old English “boundary folk”.

³⁰⁸ Today, the Austrian name of Austria is Österreich/Ésterreich.

³⁰⁹ https://snl.no/mark_-_grense

³¹⁰ Interestingly, the only two times this title was used in Norway-Denmark, it was given to two Italian men: Hugo Octavio Accoramboni of Florence, appointed “Margrave of Lister” (a former name for Lista) in 1709. Francisco de Ratta of Bologna was appointed “Margrave of Mandal” in 1710.

villages. The aforementioned toponyms Nordmarka, Østmarka and Vestmarka do indeed refer to a wooded, hilly area surrounding the capital, Oslo.³¹¹ The topography of the Oslomarka does offer some hints about the nature and origin of the toponym itself: this toponym refers to a wooded area at the outskirts of the Norwegian capital. The Norwegian Mark and the *-marka* suffix can be translated into the English term woodland. In the old times, the term “*marka*” used to refer to the small border fields/woods between farms throughout the country, standing as landmarks signaling borders. Woods, thick and impenetrable, had long have the function of borders. Woods were borders or, rather, they were conceptually understood as such. This understanding of trees and woods is not exclusive to the Northern European cultures. In the rural areas of Italy, it is quite common to use trees to mark the border between fields. In maps representing early modern Fennoscandinavia, borders did not take the shapes of lines –as we are today used to seeing in cartography – but were usually symbolized by woods or trees, reinforcing the original connection between the woods and their function as “natural borders”. Later dots became the standard symbol of borders, then developing into lines. In the 1935 *Carta Marina* by Olaus Magnus we can observe the presence of dots signalling the border between states but, at the same time, lines of trees, rather than representing actual woods stand as borders between regions (image 53). Today, the suffix *-mark* recurs in a number of Norwegian words centered around the concept of field/area/land and pertain to the rural world semantic field, among these derived terms the following: *utmark*-outfield, *innmark*³¹²-infield, *ødemark/villmark*³¹³-wilderness, *bymark*³¹⁴-urban land, *dyrkamark*- cultivated/arable land, *slåttemark*³¹⁵- hayfield,

³¹¹The definition of the Oslomarka can be traced back to the Land Act (markaloven/ Lov om naturområder i Oslo og nærliggende kommuner)(Lovdata) <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2009-06-05-35> *attenzione al carattere delle note*

³¹² *Innmark* refers to all cultivated land, such as fields, meadows, cultivated pastures, gardens. *Innmark* is also a courtyard, house plot or an industrial area. In modern agriculture, new terms have been introduced such as “near outfield”, “overgrowth area” and “grazing landscape”. These terms are new terms for infields that make it easier to describe changes in the cultural landscapes as a result of the changes in operation and use in the accelerating centralization process that characterizes large parts of agricultural activity.

³¹³ *Villmark* and *ødemark*: these are terms used for wilderness areas that are not affected by recent technological and physical interventions (such as roads, power development), also called non-invasive nature areas and “untouched nature”. Wilderness is therefore not “untouched” in the narrow sense, for both cultural traces from previous use, hunting and hunting and the like as well as traditional harvesting in the form of grazing and mowing can be an important dimension in these areas, and there may be localities here that are historically connected. For example, a harvest area – ie a cultural landscape – could also be wilderness-like and “untouched”, because it is not affected by recent technical interventions.

³¹⁴ *Bymark* is a field area (*mark*) wholly or partly forested, that is connected to a city/town/settlement (*by*), to such an extent that the land either borders or is close to the settlement. Urban lands are often considered as outdoor areas for the general public.

³¹⁵ *Slåttemark* are a limited landscape areas where grass grows mainly to be used as winter fodder for grazing animals. The term can thus to a large extent be compared with grassland, but the grass is here produced for the purpose of storage.

jaktmark-hunting ground, *beitemark*³¹⁶-pasture, *gressmark*-grassland³¹⁷, *våtmark*-wetland, *Brakkmark*-formerly used land³¹⁸, *Flommark*- land that is regularly flooded;



Image 53: detail from Carta Marina – Olaus Magnus 1535 – borders are here represented through dots and threes. (source: <http://www.npm.ac.uk/>).



Image 54: detail from Carta Marina – Olaus Magnus 1535 – in this section of the Map, in the upper right corner, we can see the toponym “Finmarchia”, next to the name, we find people whom, thanks to the specific iconography, we can identify as Sámi. The town of Tromsø is marked here as Troms and its church is taken here as a symbol of the town.

³¹⁶ *Beitemark* refers to outfields and infields from which grazing animals (usually domestic animals) can freely eat grass and herbs. A pasture that is ditched, cultivated and fertilized is called a *beitemark*. The area can be delimited, either naturally or with fences. Grazing in open country has – in Norway – for many farms long traditions, which today are often linked to land ownership or common law. Outfield grazing has also been absolutely necessary for many, to have enough food for the animals through the winters, because the infield pastures are too small. In such cases, the infield pastures are usually harvested as winter fodder.

³¹⁷ *Gressmark*: a grassland is thus an area that is larger than a meadow, but smaller than a grassland. The grass here produced is used as animal feed for grazing animals.

³¹⁸ *Brakkmark* is a limited area that is no longer in use, but which previously was. It can, for example, be a former hayfield or an infield area that is no longer in use.

Similarly, Trondenes church (near today's Harstad) is marked here as Trodanes (near the Lofoten Island, on the left of this map section). In the inland between the Norwegian coast and the mountains Sámi *lavvu* (tents) and *goahti* (turf huts) signal the presence of Sámi dwelling sites. The big lake near the mountains and next to the Sámi settlements most likely represents Tornetrask lake. The area where Sámi dwelling sites are located covers roughly the area of the Márka-Sámi settlements in the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Interestingly, a demon sweeping the floor of a stable is depicted next to the Sámi dwelling sites and it – also given the fact that Olaus Magnus was a catholic bishop – may represent the perceived “pagan nature” of Sámi ritual practices (source: <http://www.npm.ac.uk/>).

The name of the geo-cultural area known as Márka being examined here has a complex history. It derives from *markebygd*, a generic Norwegian term that refers to outlying settlements. This compound word, combining the term ‘*mark*’ with the noun ‘*bygd*’, refers to small, scattered farms and their pertaining fields in the Norwegian inlands. *Bygd* (from the Norse *bygð*) refers to an inhabited area with farms or settlement more or less scattered and constituting a natural or administrative unit. For this reason, *bygd* is often translated into English as village. The Germanic term Markabygd has an intrinsic relational origin: it reveals the perception of the area denominated Markabygd as peripheral – geographically, symbolically and from a settler perspective – compared to the perceived central position of the Norwegian(ized) locations along the coast, the cultural and economic hubs inhabited by the culturally Norwegian fishers.

4.1.2 The Stuornjárga Márka

In Stuornjárga, rural areas known as Márka have developed since the 1700s, when Sámi people who used those areas as summer grazing lands decided to settle there, where they already had strong connections with the local nearby Sea-Sámi communities.

Professor Dikka Storm uses *markebygd* as a technical term and I rely on her reflections and her uses of this term. Storm employs *markebygd* “as a concept” based on the localization of the areas it defines. These settlements are generally located in the outlying fields and are rural in nature. Professor Storm studied the local censuses and, in the male census of 1701, she found a definition which refers to Sámi individuals as those « who are staying in the woodlands up country from the farms » or « are living out in the woods and most of them in the mountains during the summer » . As Storm points out, here we have a clear reference to the main characteristics of the concept of the Márka, an area defined as the « woodlands up above from the [settlers] farms [then mostly along the coast] » (Storm 1993:51,53).

The localization of the Márka is hence one of its defining features and it is based on the coast as its main point of reference. These fields are outlying if compared with the seashore where first Sea-Sámi and later Norwegians had their own settlements. According to Dikka Storm, these rural settlements have always been orientated towards the coast and the economy of the coastal settlements. The centrality of the coast is, in Storm's view, reflected in the way these settlements were first established.

Consequently, they constituted an adaptation connected with the coastal culture as enshrined in the name *markebygd*. (1993)

In Norway the 'Márka' was indeed originally a *grenseområde* (a border area) or a *grensemark* (border Marka). In line with the European notion derived from the Frankish *mark* concept and geopolitical units, in Norwegian *grensemark* denotes the marka, in particular in its compound form *utmark* (as opposed to *inmark*/infield, a cultivated area that is often fenced), referring to rangelands and outlying fields. It also has a specific legal significance when it refers to an area used in common by the community and encompassing lakes, beaches, bogs, forests and mountains. Today, the term is used in the Outdoor Activities Act (Friluftsloven³¹⁹) and defines those areas where every individual has extensive rights and is allowed to carry out activities such as fishing or mushroom and berry-picking. The law is built on the opposition between *utmark* and *innmark* and, in the latter, the public's rights are severely limited by the Friluftsloven.

During an interview with Sigbjørn Skåden, we addressed the various dimensions that contribute to the notion of Márka.

I asked Sigbjørn how he would describe the Márka and its most important distinctive features.

Sigbjørn Skåden: [...] its... Secluded up in the woods. There was no proper road [running through the Márka and connecting the area with the coast] until the 1950s. The bad roads saved the Sámi identity. The Márka was really discriminated in those times. The Márka was a bit inaccessible to others, there were few and bad roads. There was no proper road because people in the *commune* did not want to spend money in the Márka [...³²¹]. It was woods and hills. It was secluded.

E: Where is the Márka exactly?

S: How to explain? the Márka is the area between the airport and the school. Márka as such is more like a general term. Márka means "up in the outside forest".

³¹⁹ This law concerning the outdoor activities allowed on private lands is emblematic of the Norwegian relation with the Norwegian landscape and it regulates the relationship between landowner and the public, concerning fenced and outlying fields. Among other issues, this law deals with what is popularly called the "right of public access", granting individuals the right to set up a tent in the open fields, at least 150 mts from houses and other buildings and up to 2 days. this law was designed «å verne friluftslivets naturgrunnlag og sikre almenhetens rett til ferdsel, opphold m.v. i naturen, slik at muligheten til å utøve friluftsliv som en helsefremmende, trivselskapende og miljøvennlig fritidsaktivitet bevares og fremmes» «to protect the natural basis of outdoor life and ensure the public's right to traffic, residence, etc. in nature, so that the opportunity to exercise outdoor life as a health-promoting, well-being-creating and environmentally friendly leisure activity is preserved and promoted»

<https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1957-06-28-16>

³²¹ [A Márka person had never been nominated to be high enough in the kommune's political positions. My grandfather founded a Márka Party. My grandfather was the first Sámi to be elected in the *kommune* board. In the same *kommune* there were people who were earlier connected to Sámi cultures and lost their [Sámi] identity sooner].

E: But is Márka a Sámi word?

S: Not as such but Márku has become a Sámi name. There are though many Sámi names in the area. For instance, Lantdievva or Planterhaug. This is an interesting place-name. Back in the old days, people from the Márka used to get vaccinated on that hill. A doctor would come on that hill on a given day and people had to be there on that day and time to receive the vaccine. It was on that hill that the doctor would “plant” a vaccine (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

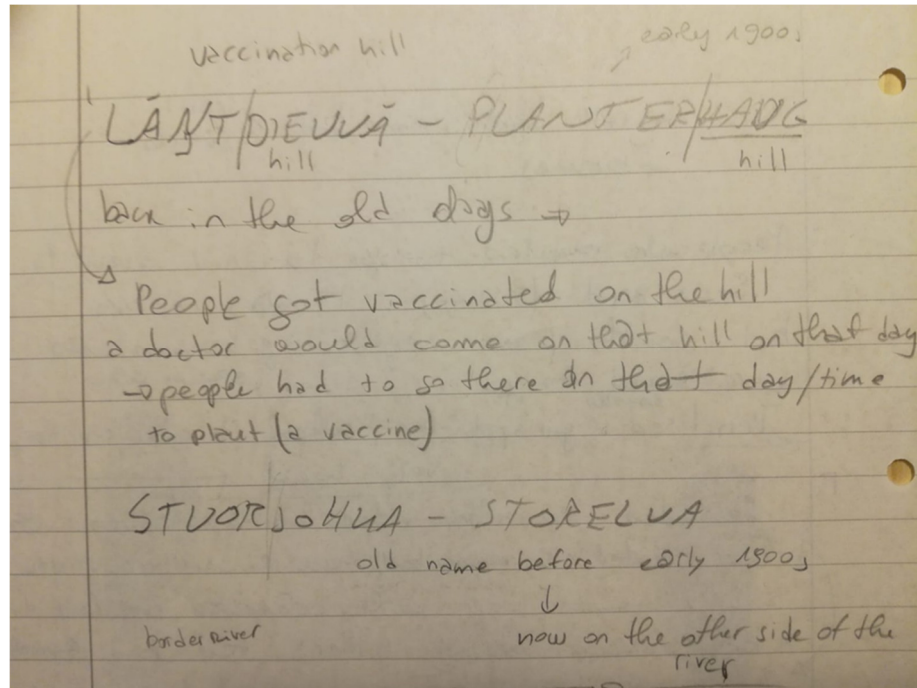


Image 55: Sample from my field notes: notes about Márka-Sámi place-names and their etymologies.

This dialogue is dense with meanings and reveals many interesting features of the Márka, understood not only as a geographical entity but also as a cultural enclave protected by its own remoteness.

S. Skåden’s reflections offer numerous points to ponder: the Márka’s geographical location emerges as a defining element in the local history and culture. Expressions like «secluded up in the woods» or «up in the outside forest» conveys the idea of a perceived remoteness grounded in the natural environment and based on a relational approach towards the nearby communities. It is secluded and hence protected from those who do not live «up in the woods» but down at the sea. The absence of a modern road system until after World War II – a recurrent topic I identified numerous times in the interviews and conversations with locals – reveals of an area that has been kept at the fringes of the (Norwegian) development. This form of neglect on the part of state institutions has at the same time guaranteed a degree of autonomy to communities living at a distance from culturally-Norwegian settlements like the Márka, distance that was more symbolic than geographical: the coast-inland

dichotomy fostered the perception of the Márka as inaccessible, albeit physically close to the Norwegian settlements. High in the mountains, the Márka-Sámi settlements were a world away from the coastal Norwegian cultural. Expressions such as «up in the woods», «up in the Márka», «down by the sea» are not just geographical indications but also conceptually different understandings of intrinsically different ways of life and enshrine the tensions which defined relations between the Márka-Sámi and coastal norwegian(ized) people.

Sigbjørn Skåden's understanding of the Márka – which reflects that of many other people I interviewed – is deeply rooted in the territory and its landmarks: local historical or notable sites – the school or the airport – are the reference points around which locals organize the contemporary Márka geography. Not only what is visible but also ancient sites or places associated with long-gone people have become important coordinates in the area. Local place-names bear testimony to buildings that no longer stand or to activities that have long ceased to be practiced but the relevance of these buildings or activities or events have been incorporated into the local history through the landscape. The name of the village form where Sigbjørn Skåden's own family is from tells one of such stories: decades have passed since a doctor gathered the locals for a vaccine at Lantdievva/Planterhaug. Nevertheless, the memory of the function that place used to have lives on in the name itself, becoming a defining element of the village and a point of reference in the local geography. Furthermore, the name Lantdievva/Planterhaug offers some interesting clues about the position of the Márka in the past: on a set date, the people who lived in the area gathered at set spot, on a central hill visible from many areas of the Márka. A doctor from the coast would reach this location and inoculate vaccines. It was a big event for the locals and a moment of contact – a contact zone, to use Pratt's expression (1991) – between two worlds and one of the very few occasions a member of the hegemonic Norwegian society visited the Márka.

I interviewed Sigbjørn Skåden's younger sister Emma Margarete Skåden – a woman in her late 30s – and I asked her some of the same questions I had already posed to her brother. The following dialogue was part of a wider conversation in which Emma was relating to me the story of her years in the Márka as a teenager. By way of explanation, Emma guided the conversation towards the geographical definition of the Márka and, at my request, she defined the very concept of Márka which transcends its geographical dimension while also being grounded in local relevant landmarks:

Emma: yes, and Márka is small growing up there sort of. At the same it is not. It is quite big. You know You don't always meet everybody from the other side of the border. You know, we have the municipality and the county border as well. If you want, you can actually like never meet the people from the other side[...]

Erika: [the Márka is something] that I find sometimes difficult to frame, with people... they talk about Evenesmárka, and then the Márka [...]. Is it like... two different entities?

Emma: it is. Márka is the general sort of thing. Like, it's from Evenesmárka to... Nipen? Evenesmárka is one of the... because you have... Evenesmárka, Kvitfjos, Myrnes, Storelva, Snotta, Trossemark, husfjor, Planterhaug, [...inaudible], Eirikjura... all of those are Márka.

Erika: mhm

Emma: and Evenesmárka is one of them. It's the name of like one of sort of places In Márka.

Erika: but that side of the river [indicating the Norland side of the river on a poorly hand-made map I made on a piece of paper] is all Evenesmárka or...

Emma: No no no... no no... is Evenesmárka, Storelva, Myrnes, Gállogieddi... it depends, it depends on whom you ask how much you sort of... cut it up.

Erika: ok, so I can go and look for them on the map. It is much easier...

Emma.... Yeah, yes. Evenesmárka is like a huge pileup for a lots of... like... south of Myrnes... or south of, well, I don't know... I don't really know what they call them, in general term. I have small like... so someone can say, but it's more like...

Erika: an umbrella term?

Emma: nooo, it is more the farm's names... the old farms name you know... where you have the houses over there so there are loads of them... I do not know all of them, to be fair.

Erika: and on this side you said Kvitfirs?

Emma: Kvitfors. Yeah.

Erika: Planterhaugen which is the farm where you grew up...

Emma: Yeha, or where we are from.

Erika: And the farm was... Lillegarden

Emma: yeah, lillegarden. And then, I don't know... it's lots... Trossemark, Eirikyura, you can find them on the map, to be fair... I think if you just find the sort of Planterhaugen, you ll see... cus it's lot... and I know that side better because, you know... I turned on that side, because that's the municipality where you are from and you know, the schools are, because when I went to school I went on that side and we had the school... and that's why I know that [side] better than the other side (Emma Skåden, interview 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

In the course of another interview with Emma we addressed the notion of Márka as a concept.

Erika: Márka is quite a very popular concept. Yeah. And people don't really agree over data.

Emma: of course! [laughing] borders? or how long it is? just where it is? when I think, when I say Márka, I mean, the small villages or whatever you can call it but the small places that stretch from one point to another, is that in the... well, up there were sort of where, where where the valley. Yeah, on the hills. Yeah, you have to drive it.

Erika: Yeah. But like, What does Márka mean to you?

Emma What do you mean? What it's like?

Erika: Is it a way of living, a kind of community? Like, is it geographical? Is it...

Emma: it's both it's well, it's, it's what this is a geographical thing. But it's also. Yeah, it's a it's a community. And it's an identity to be fair (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

This last remark suggests that the geographical, cultural and social dimensions merge in the concept that the toponyms Márka has come to incorporate even though this term may have entered the local jargon relatively recently. The locution “Márka-Sámi” has become the expression employed by the local Sámi to define themselves, to define Sámi people from the area whose families once engaged in reindeer tending and later settled in the region switching to an agricultural society.

After Emma stated that the Márka is not only a geographical location but also a community and a form of Sámi identity, I asked her a question similar to that that I previously posed to her brother, and her answer was similar yet different from that of the sibling, offering me a new, albeit complementary, insight into what Márka means to the people who have their roots in it. In the course of the same interview, I later asked:

Erika: But you have always used this word, Márka. Yeah. to define the area.

Emma: We might have used bygda like, you know, village like, but still Márka is. Yeah. But still, Márka is more specific. Because Yeah. And also, it has been really, it's earlier, it's been really negative thing, you know, like being a Márka, a Márka Same or Márkalapper has been really like a negative. Oh, yeah. Oh, you're from Márka. You know, because that's always like, sort of where the Sámi have been, if that's been living Sámi in the area, it's always in there. It's never been, you know, by the coast or by, you know, the municipalities. You know, the main center, and it was like, well, you've been there... (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

Both Sigbjørn's and Emma's perspectives offer important insights into what today Márka means to those who can trace their family background there. One of the most important aspects that emerge from the interviews – and especially from the last extract – and that I would like to highlight is the fact that “Márka” as an adjective used to define local Sámi people was – until not long ago – a

derogatory term. Its negative connotations are remarked by the expressions reported by Emma: ‘Márka-Sámi’ or ‘Márka-lapper’ were degrading expressions through which a double form of stigmatization was implemented. Not only were they Lapps or Sámi — and hence intrinsically inferior as stereotypes recited and social Darwinism affirmed – but they were also from the Márka, from the outskirts of civilization, at the border with the woods where society ends and the wilderness begins. Liminal people in a liminal land, close and yet far from the coast and its (Norwegian-ized) culture that was in the past used as a reference.

There is awareness, at least among some local people, that from a linguistic perspective Márka has not a Sámi origin. In the previously mentioned interview with Sigbjørn Skåden, this element was discussed when I asked him whether Márka was a Sámi word or not. By replying: «Not as such but Márku has become a Sámi name» (see interview with Sigbjørn Skåden) Sigbjørn Skåden showed that the term Márka has become Sámi through a loanword process that is also a form of empowerment by means of appropriation and risemantization. A once derogatory Norwegian term has been turned into a positive Sámi concept today embraced by the local Sámi as an expression of their unique culture and position within Sápmi. The interviewees’ accounts are imbued with references to a complex, multifaceted history. In order to understand the allusions, the references, and the historical facts within which the recent history of the Márka is collocated, in the following sections I shall analyze the various elements which, like threads, seem autonomous and independent but which, when braided together form a design in a tapestry.

I shall begin by analysing the history of one of the numerous farms that dot the Márka. This farm, which once was one of many, has undergone a process of heritagization that rendered it a unique testimony to the fairly recent past of the Márka-Sámi farming culture.

4.1.3 Gállogieddi, a Márka-Sámi farm

Gállogieddi is a historic farm situated on a hill, at the foot of a mountain towering the fields around the farm’s main house. The toponym Gállogieddi has a clear Sámi origin, encapsulating local worldviews while also conveying information about the location it defines and describes: in Márka-Sámi, Gállogieddi translates as «meadow by the great stone». The toponym consists of two words, *gallo*, which refers to the big erratic rock standing in what today are the fields of the farm, and *gieddi*, which means meadow. As it is often the case with Sámi toponyms, the name *Gállogieddi* mirrors local natural elements and represents an oral map in itself. An alternative toponym attested in the sources and still part of the oral knowledge passed down across generations through storytelling is *Gallogoahti*: the *goahti* (turf hut) by the boulder. At the same time, the toponym – and the natural elements to which the name refers to – is interwoven with Sámi worldviews: local tales tell about an

uldda living beneath the boulder³²². Often called “the little people” or “the (little) people from the underground, the *Ulddat* (pl of *Uldda*) are also referred to as «the little people of the underground» (fieldnotes Skanik, 25/8/18) or as *Gufihtar*, *Ganeš* and *Háldi* (Solbak 2000). They are mythological beings belonging to the vast and complex non-Christian Sámi folklore³²³ and as such they are important creatures that populate the environment where the Sámi themselves dwell.

Solbak defined the *Ulddat* as guardian spirits. He also explain that among the various names attested *Háldi*, *Uldda* and *Gufihtar* are most likely loanwords (*Haldi* is a Finnish loanword from *haltija*; *Ulda* and *Gufihtar* originate from the Scandinavian *hulder* – mischievous or wicked wood nymphs – and *govetter* good, kind spirits who lived underground – while the original Sámi word was, in Solbak’s understanding *Ganeš* (Solbak 2000). These subterranean/invisible beings often recur in Sámi storytelling, both in the past and today³²⁴. *Ulddat* can only be seen by humans on rare occasions and they can be dangerous as well as kind and, to ensure their benevolence, they are to be treated with respect.

The *Gállogieddi* farm and its premises constitute today a historical complex, which has been preserved *in situ*: the surviving ancient buildings are today part of the open air museum. They stand where they were once built, with the exception of the *goahhti* (turf hut) and *lavvu* (Sámi tent), that had been built from scratch when the preservation works were completed and the museum was about to

³²² There are many local stories that recount the encounter between Márka-Sámi people and the *Ulda*. Among these tales, one tells of a beautiful girl who was seen on the front of the Gallo but mysteriously disappeared under it without anyone being able to find her.

³²³ According to Turi ([1910] 2010) the *Uldda* and the Sámi resemble each others: they dress like the Sámi, and they have reindeer as the Sámi do. They also do the same things as the Sámi and so do their animals, their dogs barking and their animals’ bells clanging. And even if they may be heard, people cannot see them. In their appearance they are similar to the Sámi, even though they are considered more handsome. The *Ulddat* girls in particular are beautiful, seductive and irresistible, hence posing a treath to Sámi young men who may fall in love with them. A woman named Ellen Utsi told to Qvigstad a story about a marriage between a boy and an *Uldda*-girl, showing that relations between Sámi and *Ulddat* could develop into marriage. The *Uldda* are also civilizing beings since it was thank to them that the Sámi learnt those skills which, after all, made them Sámi. As Cocq (2000) shows, Turi explained how Sámi people learned how to joik (chant) from the *Uldda*, tracing the Joik to superhuman origins. Similarly, the *Ulddat* gave the Sámi not only the joik but also the crafts of the *noaide*. As Cocq has highlighted, both Turi and Qvigstad’s collections show how Sámi elements blended together with Christian ones. In *Muitalus Sámiid Birra*, Turi describes the *Ulddat* as follows: *ja dat leat dan sogas, maid vuosttaš váhnemat leat bidjan eatnama vuollái* /«they are descended from the race that our first forefathers bound under the earth» (both the original text and the translation are in Cocq 2009:123).

In his 1928 wok, Qvigstad provides his readers with his own interlocutors’ views about the origin of these beings. He reports stories from Ellen Utsi and Per Bær and such stories bear many similarities. Ellen Utsi: « Adam and Eve had many children, and then god came to visit them, and Eve hurries washing the children, but did not get all finished. she hides the children she had not washed, and god punishes her by declaring that the children who are hidden will remain invisible». The tales ends with the short sentence « *ja das dat læt šad’dan ulddat* » « and from this, the *Uldda* came to be». A man named Per Bær told Qvigstad a similar story about the origin of the *Halde* (*Uldda*) that he himself had heard from another man who told him that he read in the bible how Adam and Eve were ashamed for having so many children and hid some of them. As a consequence, God declared that the ones who were hidden would remain hidden. (in Cocq 2009: 124). Both stories explain the origin of *Ulddat* basing them within a Christian framework and tracing them to the very origin of people (and hence, the Sámi), to whom they are ultimately related since they all are children of Eve and Adam.

³²⁴ Turi ([1910]2010) and Qvigstad (1928), who collected Sámi stories, often mention or tell stories about the *Ulddat*, bearing witness to the centrality of these beings in Sámi folklore. Today stories about these beings are still told.

open. Not only the buildings but also the surrounding fields and woods constitute an integral part of the museum, which is embedded in – and enshrines – a centuries-old cultural landscape where the anthropic action has shaped and is still shaping the relation between humans and non-humans. In summertime, from Gállogieddi, the view over the surrounding farmland is stunning. The sight gets lost in the contours of the hills and the various Márka houses, barns and hayloft appear as distant dots that can be barely distinguished from one another, scattered among green fields and dark woods. From afar, the serpentine roads running on the side of the hills look like silk threads of a fine embroidery. The lake, down at the bottom of the valley, reflects the sunbeams like a silver mirror and, early in the morning, it sparkles in the haze. In winter, a thick layer of snow covers everything, leaving visitors to guess the shape of trees or that of human-made structures. Only the smoking chimneys give away the presence of farmhouses. Each farm in the Márka has its own history that has been passed down within the family who owns the farm itself. All households share a similar history rooted in the gradual transition from seasonal transhumance to settled life.

The first Sámi settlers who made Gállogieddi their permanent home - in the late 18th century - were Jon Nils and his family. Registered in the Jukkasjärvi parish (on the Swedish side of Sápmi), Nils and his family, as well their ancestors, had used the area as summer grazing land for their reindeer. They knew the Gállogieddi fields as the family had a summer *goahti* (Sámi hut) in the area. When Nils and his wife, along with their children, decided to settle there permanently, they built a new *goahti*. It was the 1790s and the growing complexity of the Sápmi geopolitical situation was posing new challenges for Sámi peoples³²⁵. Concurrent difficult years for reindeer tending aggravated the situation and many, in order to deal with these changes – and also out of personal desire – decided to settle permanently in the summer grazing lands on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. There they were to engage in small-scale farming, fishing and hunting. These were activities they already carried out during summer while in the area with the reindeer prior to the 1790s. These activities constituted the economy backbone of local seas-Sámi communities, to which many tenders were related by blood or marriage. For some decades, the economy of the Márka-Sámi settlement was characterised by an integration between the two subsistence strategies, with small herds of reindeer still kept by local settled Sámi up to the mid-twentieth century. Its combination gave rise to a peculiar Márka-Sámi integrated economy characterised by the *sytingsrein*, a custodial system based on mutual relations of trust between settled Márka-Sámi and pastoral reindeer tenders who kept following reindeer's seasonal route across the Scandinavian border. According to this custodial system, studied by history

³²⁵ In 1771 the border between Sweden and Norway was formally established (see Lantto 2010).

professor Evjen, Márka-Sámi people were to care of reindeer herders' goats while reindeer tenders were to keep the Márka-Sámi reindeers under their custody (Evjen 2007).

It is important to highlight that, until at least the 1950s, the subsistence strategies of the Stuornjárga peninsula followed the differentiation of the local resources' exploitation which were also charged with ethnic features: along the coast, groups who identified themselves as Norwegians engaged primarily in fishing while, in the inlands, small-scale farming were the bulk of the local Sámi economy. During winter, to implement their income, the men of the Sámi families from the interior were often engaged in some forms of paid work or went fishing in Lofoten and/or along the coasts of Finnmark (Storm 1993; Nielssen 2005; Hansen 2006). Many of these seasonal fishermen had their own boats. While the men were away, the women were left in charge of the farms, ensuring their freedom to make their own decision with regard to the management of the farms.

Written records show that the family living at Gállogieddi had its own reindeer mark and owned reindeer until after World War II. Registers show the family also kept cows, goats and sheep, as well as horses for heavy workloads (Myrvoll 1995). The structure of the Gállogieddi farm mirrors the different phases of its construction and through the buildings it is possible to trace the history of both the farm and the families who owned it. This history, albeit bound to the farm, reflect similar developments occurring across the Márka and hence stand as a memory for the whole community. Written sources³²⁶ report that, in 1840, at Gállogieddi there were two barns, a hayloft and a shed besides the *goahti* used by the family. At the end of the nineteenth century, in 1883, the brothers Ole and Nils, descendants of Jon Nils inherited the farmstead: they divided Gállogieddi into two separate but interdependent farms sharing some of the facilities such as the fire-building (a sort of oven) . Their contributions to the development of the farm included the first running-water system in the area. The first farmhouse was erected in 1890 and it was followed by a second one in 1895. The latter is the one which today stands at the centre of the farmyard and hosts the museum's central building (Myrvoll 1995). Ole and Nils time at Gállogieddi marked not only the division of the land between the two of them but also more structural changes occurring in then-Norway that were to have a massive impact of Sámi communities. Such structural changes were indeed designed to prevent Sámi cultures from appearing in the public arenas and constituted early assimilations efforts at the hand of the state. When the farm was divided between the two brothers, a change occurred in public documents: being partitioned between the two brothers, Gállogieddi was now divided into two different farmsteads: Myrnes Søndre and Myrnes Nordre. Myrnes is a Norwegian compound toponym

³²⁶ Records concerning the farm, censuses, wills. (Myrnes et al 2006).

composed by two fairly common components: *myr*, meaning swamp or marsh, and *nes*³²⁷, a generic term meaning headland or promontory. This change in names is the consequence of the implementation of by new regulations demanding that all farmsteads should be registered under Norwegian names³²⁸. It also conceals an active policy of assimilation through the elimination of all sort of evidence of Sámi presence in Norway. Given their cultural relevance and their connections with history, practices and worldviews, place-names were a primal target of these eradication policies, as we shall see (cfr chapter 5).

The family continued to live in Gállogieddi, even if its name was now Myrnes (Søndre and Norde) until the mid-1960s, when a new road was built lower down the hill. New regulations required farms to be close to the road and, consequently, many farms were abandoned and relocated closer to the roads. Gállogieddi original site was hence abandoned. Later the buildings at Myrnes Nordre were demolished, and today only some ruins are still visible. Myrnes Søndre was left empty for a few decades, until the 1980s, when – as it will be explained at the end of this chapter – it was selected as the site of a local open-air museum, designed to tell the stories of ordinary Márka people and to stand as a testimony of the history of the Márka. Gállogieddi farm is only one of a series of buildings typical of a rural Márka-Sámi way of life of a now bygone era. Even though, unlike Gállogieddi farm, the majority of these buildings has not undergone a process of heritagization, many of such constructions have become important cultural landmarks, embodying and representing a legacy that creates and preserves cultural and historical meanings. As cultural landmarks, these buildings have become the visual manifestations of the local history. One of such landmark building is the white chapel of Kvitfors. This religious building, located at the geographical centre of Stuornjårga peninsula testifies to the role of prominence Lutheranism – in it Læstadian expression – played in the community. The area had been the site of intense, at times violent, proselytizing efforts which, across few generations resulted in the conversion of the local population to the Christian faith. Nevertheless, elements originating in the old non-Christian worldview persisted and manifested themselves as pillars of the local systems of knowledge even centuries after Christianity had imposed itself in the region.

³²⁷ Many are the Norwegian toponyms that include *-nes* in their name (Sandnes 2010). To name a few: Kirkenes, Nesseby, Sandnes, Fagernes, Finnsnes, Åknes, Lekness, Skudeneshavn, Sandnessjøen, Åndalsnes, Veblungsnes. Similarly, there is plenty of place-names that include *-myr/myra*, *myrene* – meaning marsh, swamp – for example: Grasmyrskogen, Myrlandshaugen, Myrvoll.

³²⁸ Research on local Sámi place-names (carried out through interviews and archival research) resulted in important publications (Skåden & Skåden 2002, Myrnes Olsen 2010) that provide evidence and documentation concerning local Sámi toponomastic while ensuring its preservation.

4.2 Proselytizing in the Márka

According to Pulkkinen (2005a), on the Norwegian side of Sápmi many Sámi communities did not convert to Lutheranism until the 18th century even though they had long been in contact with this branch of Christianity for a long time and despite many formally were part of the Church. The process of Christianisation in these areas of Sápmi was zealously carried out by the pietistic missionary Thomas Von Westen. In Pulkkinen's view, the success of von Westen's proselytizing activity shall be ascribed to von Westen's innovative approach towards evangelisation.

Sámi were only one of the many indigenous peoples who, at the beginning of the 18th century, were at least nominally under the rule of the King of Denmark-Norway. In order to provide a more comprehensive account of the proselytization of the Márka, it is necessary to first outline the main features of Sámi non-Christian worldviews.

4.2.1 Sámi non-Christian religion, an excursus

Historical sources on Sámi indigenous worldviews³²⁹ abound but, as they were usually compiled by cultural outsiders such accounts are often intrinsically biased. For this reason, very little is known about the rituality and system of non-Christian Sámi knowledge and worldviews. Interesting

³²⁹ Konsta Kaikkonen, a Finnish researcher expert in Sámi Religions, examined the existing literature on indigenous practices considered expressions of what many authors call "the ancient Sámi religion". Kaikkonen compared various terms used over time, highlighting the critical issues and the positive aspects related to each term. Through his work, Kaikkonen has shown how difficult it is to select a suitable, culturally sensitive terminology that does not make implicit references to categories foreign to Sámi cultures, and that does not attribute characteristics to indigenous spiritual, ritual, and esoteric phenomena that were extraneous to them. For instance, and in contrast to what he proposed in 2018, Kaikkonen rather avoid the use of the expression "non-Christian" when referring to indigenous Sámi worldviews and rituals practiced when Christianity was already spreading among the Sámi. Unlike the widely used "pre-Christian" locution, this expression has the advantage of accounting for indigenous practices that were coeval with Christianity in Sámi communities (a phenomenon sometimes described as a "double belief system). As Kaikkonen points out in his 2021 article, it has also a major shortcoming: it has a "negative" approach in that it defines Sámi indigenous worldviews in light of what they are not, i.e.: not Christian. In light of this reasoning, and following Sámi indigenous scholar Rauna Kuokkanen, Kaikkonen proposes the use of Sámi terminology, a choice that gives visibility to Sámi indigenous understanding of specific phenomena and practices. It is important though to mention that scholar of Religion Jelena Porsanger has been working towards the development of a North Sámi terminology for discussing Indigenous Sámi worldviews in academic contexts. Porsanger, in her doctoral thesis, developed the expression *sámi eamioskkoldat* to describe "Sámi indigenous religion". In Porsanger's view, this expression offers a concept emphasising «[...] the continuity of Sámi lands and the Sámi people, the central meaning of elders and ancestors as bearers and teachers of Sámi traditions, and the inseparable reciprocity of people and the natural environment» (in Kaikkonen 2021:9). It is this expression that Kaikkonen proposes as a potential standard broad term to describe "Sámi religion" while, he also suggests the use of *sámi vuoiŋgalaš árbevierru* (Sámi spiritual tradition) first proposed by Kuokkanen when addressing the pre-contact Sámi indigenous worldviews. In this dissertation, albeit acknowledging the importance of indigenous terminologies and their role in conveying culturally specific values and notion, I decided to employ the expression "non-Christian Sámi worldviews". My choice shall be traced back to the use of indigenous terminology concerning Sámi ritual practices and worldviews in English academic works. In this corpus, the use of indigenous Sámi terminology has been insofar limited to the use of the terms *noaide* (the Sámi ritual specialist), *noaidevuohta* (the crafts of the *noaide*) and to refer to specific kinds of spirits and non-human entities.

information has been identified in Norse texts (see Ligi 2019). These though are etic sources that very often only hint at what were the most visible external manifestations of Sámi rituals, such as the so-called shamanic trance. Most of the information available today comes from reports by missionaries active in the evangelization of the Sámi, engaged in a war against “idolatry” and who, therefore, had as their ultimate goal the eradication of indigenous ritual cultures (see Rydving 1991). The very few testimonies available to us from milieu Sámi were produced in contexts of extreme difficulty experienced by the Sámi bearer of knowledge. This is the case of Anders Paulsen, an elderly Sámi who was forced to testify in the trial brought against him in a lawsuit in which he was accused of witchcraft. Paulsen tried to pledge his innocence by explaining to the judges and the Norwegian officers present at his trial of the symbols on his drum³³⁰. In the description, Paulsen integrated elements belonging to the Christian universe (the church, Jesus) but it is not known whether this explanation really reflected the meaning that Paulsen attributed to the symbols or if it was Paulsen’s desperate attempt to save himself by demonstrating the goodness and Christianity of his actions. For this reason, his testimony is indeed of great value as it is one of the very few examples in which a drum-owner explained the symbols of his own drum but, at the same time, it also reminds us of the asymmetric power relation when Anders Paulsen was forced to give an account of his own drum³³¹.

The theme of Indigenous Sámi worldviews has been widely discussed by various scholars from different disciplines. In particular, it is important to recall Rydving's work on the study of the transition period from Indigenous Sámi worldviews to Christianity in the Lule Sámi areas (1987, 1991, 1995, 2004, 2004b, 2008, 2010). Rydving works provide important perspectives on what he evocatively calls “the End of the Drum time”, an expression that originates in Sámi contexts. Through an anthropological perspective, Ligi examines so-called magic in the Sámi context using historical sources and proposing a perspective based on the profound knowledge that the Sámi had of their surrounding environment. In particular, Ligi uses the example of the Sámi’s deep understanding of their surrounding environment and its phenomena – such as the winds – to show how indigenous Sámi practices were intrinsically linked with the knowledge of Sápmi’s environment, resulting in what Ligi defines as “ecological knowledge”, attested among other things by Norse sources.

Since the medieval times, Sámi people had been known for their skills as fortune tellers and their fame was so great that kings of neighbouring countries sought their help, often welcoming *noiaidi* in their courts as advisors and fortune-tellers (Kusmenko 2007). Unlike Christianity, Indigenous Sámi worldviews – which varied according to the different cultural regions of Sápmi – had a marked focus

³³⁰ Anders Paulsen’s drum was requisitioned from him and is now kept in the Karasjok museum.

³³¹ Paulsen died in custody, killed by one of the officers before the sentence was issued.

on the spatial dimension rather than on the temporal one (see Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 2007; Ligi 2019), a feature also characteristic of Sámi history as passed down across generations through oral storytelling. According to Sámi indigenous cosmologies, nature and its multiple manifestations were imbued with energy and life which revealed itself to humans in specific locations such as the holy mountains, lakes, springs and the *sieidi* (a Sámi term broadly translated as “altar”). In this context, Sámi ritual specialists - among whom the *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist) was probably only one typology – hold a central position in mediating between the visible and the invisible worlds and between perceptible and imperceptible dimensions.

As mentioned, Sámi people did not constitute a homogenous community nor did they share standardised worldviews, rather, Sámi indigenous worldviews were highly localised (Loeffler 2015; Äikäs and Spangen 2016). Significant cultural variations occurred among different cultural groups and among single *siidas* (Sámi communities) and even families. Nevertheless, scholars have identified a number of features common to all Sámi spiritual and ritual practices. Unlike Christianity, Islam or other so called World Religions, Sámi indigenous worldviews had no single founder nor any scriptural authority of reference. The absence of codified doctrines or fixed written creeds ensured the fluid and adaptable character of Sámi worldviews, which were hence able to adapt and incorporate socio-cultural changes and external stimuli (Äikäs & Salmi 2013). As expressions of oral cultures, Sámi indigenous worldviews have been constantly modified upon being received and transmitted, according to the teller, the receiver and the circumstances. When Christianity first reached them, such features enabled Sámi people to absorb elements of Christianity into their worldview: as they had already integrated Gods and elements from Norse traditions (Kusmenko 2007), so they were able to incorporate to an extent the God of the Christians.

In Sámi practices and worldviews, sacred authority did not lie in institutions but was endowed by spirits through revelations in dreams and during states of altered consciousness. Scholars (See among al Huggert 2000; Loeffler 2015, Ligi 2019) consider Sámi indigenous worldviews as polytheistic and animistic and the sacred was perceived as something immanent in nature.

The *noaidi*³³², the Sámi ritual specialist, had a highly important social function in Sámi non-Christian societies. He (but historical sources confirm the presence of female *noaidi*) was a culture bearer who had a deep knowledge of Sámi cosmology and mastered various skills and techniques such as the cure of psycho-physical ailments, divination, the performing of collective rituals. He was

³³² South Sámi, *nåejttie*; Lule Sámi, *noajdde*; Kildin Sámi, *noojjd*, *nuojjd* (Hansen and Olsen 2013, p.343).

able to travel in other dimensions with the help of his guardian spirits and had the power to summon the spirits of the dead (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978).

According to Rydving, the *noaidi*'s (Sámi ritual specialist) drums used to play a central role in Sámi non-Christian ritual practices. The drums' importance is demonstrated by a Lule Sámi expression of time. In Lule Sámi language, the period before the advent of Christianity is defined *goabdesajgge* which Rydving translated into English as "drum-time". Similarly, «[...] the period of religious encounter and confrontation is referred to as 'the time when one had to hide the drums'» (Rydving 1993:1). The drums were divination's tool used by the *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialists) as well as by lay men and women: an object was placed on the drum-skin, painted with significant Sámi symbols, and the drum-skin was beaten with a Y-shaped stick made of reindeer antler. By interpreting the movements of the small objects, the *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist) was able to foresee the future (Rydving 2005). As Pentikäinen (2010) has argued, ritual drums were just one of the various elements of a wider ritual repertoire. Since they often the only material token of Sámi non-Christian worldviews that survived until now, ritual drums have come to epitomise the non-Christian Sámi practices and worldviews to the extent that other indigenous spiritual and ritual expressions or practices had been completely overlooked. Ligi points out some of the main aspects of the Sámi ritual drums: for instance, ritual drums had to be obtained from the wood of trees grown far from inhabited areas, and the three had to be shed from light. The trunk was to be cut clockwise and the skin with which the drum membrane was to be made had to come from a young reindeer. all these were ritual prescriptions that made the drum suitable for use as a ritual instrument. Ligi though highlights an interesting aspect concerning the *noaide* (Sámi ritual specialist): in the case of the Sámi ritual specialists, sources seem to assert that there was no costume, and element of the ritual paraphernalia characteristic of "shamans" in many other cultures (Ligi 2019).

Another key element of non-Christian Sámi worldviews and practices were the *sieidi*: The *Seidi* (sacrificial sites) - usually stone circles or wooden artefacts- dotted the Sápmi's landscape. As early as the first half of the 18th century, Hostrom (1747, in Huggert 2000:61) had hypothesized that the Sámi identified a sacred area on the spot where the spirits revealed themselves. The *Siedi* were central elements in Sámi relationship with the invisible world but historical sources – based on information often collected by missionaries reports conflicting accounts concerning the nature and the rules regarding the use of the *siedi*. According to some sources, only men (or even only the father of the family) were allowed to petition to the *Sieidi* while other sources seem to suggest that both men and women; only adults, adults and children or only those chosen by the *Noaidi* could approach the *Seidi*. According to Äikäs and Spangen (2016), and Rydving (1999), the discrepancies in the sources depend

on the existence of at least three different typologies of offering sites: some sites were attended only by a family or by an individual, one type was used by the whole local community and another type of sacred site had a wider influence and had a regional importance. The *seite* not only were probably central to Indigenous Sámi relations with the landscape and its invisible but perceptible dwellers, they also constitute one of the few expressions of Sámi Indigenous worldviews that have left archaeological (i.e. tangible) traces. Hence, the study of the *seite* can provide experts with a unique insight into the Sámi indigenous worldviews through the exam of what is left of practices and rituals. Sámi offerings at *sieidis* were characterised by spatial and temporal variations. Nevertheless, they were connected to the Sámi means of livelihood and usually consisted of animals crucial for the subsistence of the offering community. On some sites, objects made of silver and other metals have also been found (Äikäs & Salmi 2013). Hence, by examining the data collected during archaeological excavations (the analysis of the deposits, of the C14-dated bones and so on), it is possible to trace religious change among Sámi communities using specific *sieidi* as ritual sites. It is important to notice that archaeological excavations have demonstrated that specific *sieidi* had been in use for centuries after the Sámi formally converted to Christianity (Huggert 2000, Äikäs and Salmi 2013, Loeffler 2015, Äikäs & Spangen 2016). Loeffler has studied the use of a *seite* in the Vasternorrland region, in Sweden, to determine whether this specific *sieidi* functioned as a site of religious resistance against enforced assimilation into mainstream society. He then compared the data he collected to the data concerning other altars in order to draw a wider theory concerning Sámi stone-circles. In Loeffler's view, the analysis of the stone circles demonstrates that, for over 300 years (from the 16th to the 19th century), the Sámi tried and resisted the pressure and repression at the hands of the dominant society by resorting to «[...] clandestine ritual and religious activities that facilitate the transmission and preservation of their distinctive culture between generations» (Loeffler 2015:77). Huggert's analysis of a sacrificial site in Altaberget corroborates this view (2000). Huggert demonstrates that this *siedi* was still in use as far as in the middle of the 18th century, when the Sámi were already – at least officially - Christians. According to Huggert, the fact that this *sieidi* was still petitioned in the 18th century constitutes a proof that some Sámi people had maintained a double set of beliefs long after they officially converted to Christianity. Even if the *sieidi* at Altaberget has only recently been brought to the attentions of archaeologists, its location was known for having been a holy place for the Sámi of the Ume Lappmark region (Swedish side of Sápmi). Oral traditions still alive in the 21st century associate this place with a Sámi holy site.

A further elements that deserves attention is the relation between Churches and Sámi *sieidi*. Äikäs and Salmi have highlighted a pattern in the construction of Christian in the same location as some *siedi*, showing that some Christian churches have been erected in correspondence with *sieidi*, creating

a correspondence between Christian and non-Christian Sámi ritual geographies. In light of these findings, Äikäs and Salmi pointed out that many are the churches in Sámi regions built «either directly at Sámi offering places or in location from which an old sacred place could be seen» (Äikäs & Salmi 2013:71). By building churches over or next to indigenous ritual sites may represent an integration of Indigenous elements into Christianity – henceforth representing an act of resilience - or, on the contrary, a forced appropriation and Christianisation of a sacred site - an act of violence – at the hands of the Church. Archaeological evidence, as well as oral stories, suggests that the new religion (Christianity) did not completely replace Sámi Indigenous worldviews (2013) in what Äikäs and Salmi scholars define the «[...] dual religious participation», implicitly suggesting that Sámi people turned to both ancient non-Christian deities and to the new Christian ones, according to the context. In Äikäs and Salmi’s view, Sámi attitudes towards Christianity spanned « [...] from complete assimilation to dual religious participation» (2013:72). By resorting to historical sources (Turi 1910 and Aima 1903), Äikäs and Salmi examined how offering practices shifted from *sieidi* to churches: from the 18th up to the 20th century, Sámi from Aanar/Inari and Ohcejohka/Utsioki «gave presents to the churches in connection with sickness, travelling, hunting trips or reindeer slaughter». They also report the following account from the second half of the 19th century: «[...]even during communion, the Sámi were praying to their old Gods» . According to Kylli « in many cases, people thought that the new God might be good in other ways, but when one needed help in matters related to livelihood, it was best to turn to the old gods» (Kylli 2005 in Äikäs and Salmi 2013:72). Äikäs and Salmi (2013) report an interesting example of an early integration of Christian elements into Sámi indigenous worldviews. The Sámi goddess Sáráhká was identified with the Virgin Mary. Sáráhká is one of the three daughters of Máttaráhkká and the four of them form the ‘Ak’ka group’. Qvigstad (1903 in Kleppe 2013) considers the name Sáráhká as the abbreviation of Sarak-akka, meaning midwife or birth-helper. Ahka in North Sámi language stands for ‘old woman’. Máttaráhkká the mother (the old mother) and her three daughters Sáráhká (the midwife or creative woman), Juoksáhká (the old woman with the bow) and Uksáhká (the old woman of the door) were goddesses that pertained mostly to the female sphere, they were worshipped by women and they were associated with procreation (Pulkkinen and Pentikäinen 2005). As Irvonen (2008) points out though, sources mentioning all the goddesses derive from South Sámi areas and hence there is no certainty that in other Sámi communities these goddesses were honoured and endowed with the Same function as among the South Sámi ones. According to Sámi non-Christian worldviews, Sáráhká feels the pain of the delivery along with the mother and she also gives unborn children a body. To Sáráhká, who dwells in the fireplace, was offered a share of food and drinks by pouring them in the fire: a practice still observed by many in Sápmi. Jouksahkka determines the biological sex of the unborn child, while

Uksahkka is the goddess that takes care of children during their early years of life (Kleppe 2013). The study of Sámi calendars (carved in bone plaques) has shown that the cult of saint Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was widespread among the Sámi. A cross-checked exam of the Sámi and the Nordic liturgical calendars has shown that among some Sámi groups, the cult of saint Anna began at least in the 15th century. In Kleppe's view, both Anna and Mary were particularly venerated among the Sámi (2013) and, according to Äikäs and Salmi such devotion to Anna and Maria shall be traced back with the rold Máttaráhkká and Sáráhká had in Sámi non-Christian worldviews (2013). Given the original function of these goddesses, it comes as no surprise that Sáráhká, who protected deliveries, was associated to Mary.

Prior to the enforced conversion to Lutheranism in the 17th and 18th century, Sámi people had long been in contact with systems of knowledge and religions different from their own. Even if Norse people had come into contact with Christianity since before the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, Christianisation of Scandinavia only began in the 8th Century. Vikings, merchants, hostages and envoys travelled throughout Europe, bringing back from their journeys the first notions about Christ and the Christian faith. The earliest attempts of Christianization in Scandinavia were met with a failure. It was only in the 820s that the first missionaries were able to successfully preach the gospel among Norse people. The Conversion to Christianity of southern Scandinavia was a gradual process (Sawyer, 1993). By the 12th century, Catholicism had spread throughout southern Fennoscandinavia. By that time, penetration of Christianity in the Sámi territories had already begun. The conversion of the Eastern Sámi to the Orthodox faith has begun in the first half of the 16th century even if the earliest contacts with Orthodoxy probably date back to the 11th century. Orthodox missionaries worked also among western Sámi groups, especially among the coastal Sámi of Finnmark. Orthodox missionary activity in the west was particularly strong during the reign of King Haakon V (1270 - 1319). These eastern monks had to compete against the catholic influences that were reaching the Sámi from south (Pulkkinen 2005)

Archaeological findings revealed that Sámi people had already come into contact with Christianity around the 13th century as the first Sámi burial sites associated with crosses – or with symbols identified as such – date from this period (Fonneland & Kraft 2014:133). During these early phases, incorporation of Christian elements was probably the outcome of more or less peaceful contacts: in the same fashion as for the Norsemen's first contacts with Christianity (Melnikova 2013)³³³, scholars (Pulkkinen 2005, Porsanger 2004, 2005) have traced the origins of the first

³³³ The analysis of the Norse peoples' conversion to Christianity may shed some light on the evangelisation of the Sámi and on why, among the Sámi, conversion was a long and fragmented process. The diffusion of Christianity among the 'Vikings' was determined by the fact that a process of familiarisation had already taken place during the long period

Christian influences over the Sámi back to the traders and merchants who travelled through the Sámi territories in the Middle Ages. These early contacts acquainted the Sámi with Christianity, paving the way for the later conversion. Furthermore, while the Nordic nations still embraced Roman Catholicism, numerous churches were built in the Sámi territories. In the 13th century, a missionary church was built in Lenvik, near Tromsø. This Church was the northernmost catholic building in Norway. Similarly in Sweden a church was erected close to the modern city of Umeå. Later other churches were established along the coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia and Finnmark. During the Middle Ages, an ethnically Sámi woman known as Margareta worked as a missionary among her own people, on the Swedish side of Sápmi. Her missionary experience was unique as she was both a woman and a Sámi (Liedgren n.a.). In Fennoscandinavia, as early as the 1600s, southerners' encroachment led to active persecution of Sámi knowledge systems. The persecution was intertwined with major witch-hunts taking place in the northernmost regions of Fennoscandinavia. These northern witch-hunts were part of a wider early modern European-North American phenomenon which led to the persecution and execution of many women and men accused of witchcraft. In the Fennoscandinavian context trial awaited men and women regardless of their faith. People believed to be practicing witchcraft were put in front a judge and many were executed (Hagen 2014). Those who practiced Lutheran faith as well as those who lived according to indigenous Sámi worldviews shared

between the Vikings' first contacts with the new faith and the Norsemen's full conversion to Christianity. According to Melnikova, «[...] during the 'pre-conversion period' the seeds of the new faith were spread among individuals of different social standing; hundreds or perhaps even thousands of Vikings came across various manifestations of Christianity while raiding and trading in the West and East from the late eighth century onwards. They saw magnificent churches and cathedrals, observed Christian rites, came into possession of splendid church artefacts, captured monks and clergymen, dealt with traders from Christian countries and were in contact with local governors of various positions, as high up as Frankish emperors and Anglo-Saxon kings » (Melnikova 2013:92). Unlike the Norsemen, Sámi people did not travel to continental Europe and had relatively limited contact with the Christian faith through merchants and traders who ventured into Sápmi. Melnikova has further explained that there are «[...] three main features (which) seem to be typical of descriptions in the chronicles of how Christianity was brought to the Vikings and most probably these features were also key in the process itself. First, [...], the initiative for the conversion lay with Christian rulers or church authorities, especially in the ninth century». «Second, the baptism of a leader of a Viking band was in most cases a precondition for his submission to, or for the establishment of peaceful and long-lasting relations with, a Christian ruler. Third, the baptism of a leader was not usually an individual act: his family (if present) and his followers, at least his closest retinue, were baptized at the same time, making the whole procedure a public occasion. Even if it were only a small number of individual Vikings who had been baptized, their total number was already large enough in the ninth century that certain notions of Christianity could be transmitted to Scandinavia» (Melnikova 2013:93). What happened to the Norsemen was impossible in the Sámi social context as the Sámi lacked a hierarchic organisation. If we consider the social organization of Sámi people during the Middle Ages, it emerges that during the medieval time no ruler nor Church authority attempted to evangelise the Sámi. Hence, they had no common chief or leader whose conversion could encourage the population to embrace the new religion. The Sámi people during the middle age were prevalently organised in groups with no designated and supreme leader. The factors Melnikova has identified as the premises of the Christian conversion of the Norsemen are specific to that society. Conversely, the Sámi had a completely different social organisation which prevented similar phenomena from occurring. Moreover, their means of livelihood (high mobility on the territory and seasonal migrations) protected the Sámi from strong external influences. By comparing the religious shift among the Norsemen and the Sámi it emerges how important the social structure had been in determining the spread and the entrenchment of Christianity in Fennoscandinavia. The comparison between these two different responses to Christianity offers some clues on why Sámi peoples managed for centuries to maintain their indigenous non-Christian worldviews and rituals despite the strong external pressure towards conversion.

the same destiny, being jailed and burnt at the stake. The European and North American witch-hunts were the consequences of complex historical socio-cultural dynamics; coerced confessions gave rise to a chain of accusations that quickly spread within the communities, giving rise to a collective panic as well as further investigations and, consequently, further trials. The accusation was carried out within a Christian interpretative framework as witches were considered to hold certain real supernatural powers obtained through the collaboration with the Devil. Practicing Christian women and men were judged regardless of their adherence to Christianity. In the case of the Sámi though, their persecution was based on the interpretation of their indigenous worldviews and practices as devil-worshipping (Hagen 2014). The demonization of Sámi systems of knowledge brought death and upheaval in Sámi communities: many Sámi ritual specialists were killed, and hundreds of Sámi drums were seized³³⁴. Many of these drums were burnt or shipped to southern capitals, reaching different European institutions. These drums often constituted the bulk of later ethnographic collections.

As illustrated in chapter 2 (section 10), in western imageries, Sámi had long been associated with magic. As Kaikkonen outlines, Sámi indigenous worldviews before the 18th century were labelled – mainly by missionaries active in the conversion of the Sámi – as “witchcraft”, “sorcery”, or “idolatry” while during the period of European Enlightenment the term of choice was mainly “superstition”. In the 19th and early 20th centuries; and “nature religion”, “primitive religion”, or “shamanism” have come into use (Kaikkonen 2019). Each of these etic terms is loaded with specific meanings and reflects contemporary perception of Sámi worldviews as “other” from those who wrote about them. Kaikkonen, following Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkanen, advises against resorting to terms such as “shaman” when referring to Sámi indigenous ritual practitioner since this specific terminology may foster exoticizing tendencies. Rather, this term in his opinion better suits contemporary Sámi shamanic practitioners³³⁵. Kaikkonen (2021) suggests using Sámi indigenous term *noaidi* when referring to Sámi non-Christian ritual specialists and to *noaidevuohta* when addressing the crafts of Sámi ritual specialist. When approaching non-Christian Sámi sets of knowledge it is important to bear in mind that, prior to conversion to Christianity, among Sámi people the spiritual sphere was not

³³⁴ The seizure of these ritual objects from their owners epitomizes another process linked with colonization: the imposition of Christianity upon Sámi communities. Even if Sámi had long been in contact with first Catholic and Orthodox and later Lutheran Christianity, it was only in the 18th century that formal missionary activity was initiated in Sápmi. The development of State Churches was a premise to the conquest through conversion. By claiming the souls of Sámi people, States could claim ownership over Sámi peoples’ lands. Christianization constituted an important tool in the slow but constant assimilation process that developed from early contact and spontaneous merging to a structured and enforced assimilation which entailed coercion and violence.

³³⁵ For this reason, in this thesis I use local, indigenous Sámi concepts as often as possible, being though aware that such terms are not immediately recognizable for people who are not already familiar with them. For this reason, I also report in brackets the more common – albeit biased as Kaikkonen demonstrates – English term shaman and shamanism when referring to Sámi ritual practitioners and Sámi indigenous ritual practices.

separated from other spheres of life. Sámi peoples did not have a dichotomised understanding of the world as divided into spiritual and material the world and the universe were regarded as a whole and not as divided into distinctive and separate parts. In western terminology, this understanding is usually defined as holistic. Throughout the centuries, in the western countries, the sacred and the profane differentiated themselves becoming different domains in people's lives. These are the reasons why it is difficult to apply our western conceptual categories to the Sámi indigenous worldviews³³⁶.

4.2.2 Von Westen

Von Westen was a key figure in the process of assimilation – through religion – of Sámi peoples into Norwegian society. Von Westen belonged to the Pietistic movement³³⁷ and he had a role of prominence in 18th century Norwegian Sámi religious shift. The 18th century evangelisation of the Sámi living on the Norwegian side of Sápmi has to be contextualised within the aforementioned pietistic religious context as it was carried out by pietistic clergymen. It is also relevant to take into account the political dimension of the conversion of the Sámi within the wider Danish religious policy. Such a policy had the secular purpose of reinforcing the Danish-Norwegian rule over Finnmark. Von Westen, as we have already hinted, was one of the principal characters responsible for the colonisation and proselytization in the northernmost regions of Denmark-Norway, and made the greatest contribution to strengthening the missionary activity among the Sámi in the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Thomas von Westen was a Norwegian Lutheran pietistic preacher, born in 1682 in the county of Sør-Trøndelag, Trondheim, - Norway -. His father, Arnoldus von Westen, was a Danish pharmacist. Thomas von Westen graduated in theology from the University of Copenhagen when he was only seventeen years old, and during his studies he affiliated himself to Pietism. His later studies included Sámi languages, to which he had been introduced while he was a private tutor to the family

³³⁶ Indigenous religion is a rather new category employed by scholars of religions and was developed within the world religion paradigm, a problematic analytical concept which has been criticised by many scholars (Fitzgerald: 1997; Cox: 2003; Mazusawa: 2005; Owen: 2011; Ramey: 2015). Nevertheless, it is particularly popular in the pedagogical context despite of its subjective and unempirical character (Owen 2011) deeply embedded in a Christian framework (Masuzawa 2005). Tiele in 1876 defined the “World Religions” as those that have expanded outside their original cultural context (in Smith 1998). Tiele divided Religions into natural and ethical, the former corresponding to the religious expressions of the “primitive cultures”. While the latter were divided into “national” and “universal” (or world) religions. According to Tiele, there were three World Religions: Christianity, Buddhism and Islam (in Segal 2005). Throughout the last century, this model has been expanded to include first Judaism and Hinduism (all together known as the “big five”) and later other traditions have been granted the right to be part of this restricted group of religions. The criteria according to which a religion is included or exclude from the group of World Religion are subjective, varying upon the circumstances, and have changed since this paradigm has been first established. This change in both the perception and the description of religions is reflected in the structure and the contexts of both informational and didactic materials.

³³⁷ Pietism refers to an influential revivalist movement originated in Germany in the late 17th century and developed within Lutheranism. The inspirational source of this movement was constituted by the writings of the German Lutheran Theologian Philipp Jakob Spener (Lindberg 2008). Pietism merged Lutheran attention to Biblical doctrine with the Calvinist emphasis on individual piety (revolving around personal faith and one own's spiritual life). Another cornerstone of Pietism was the exhortation on living an intense Christian life. Pietism soon divided itself into numerous branches. The more moderate ones regarded themselves as integral parts of Lutheranism even if they consider the pietists' community to be «the true church within the church as a whole» i.e. an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. The more radical branches rejected the Lutheran Church, its establishment and its doctrine. According to this stricter understanding of Pietism, the main emphasis was to be put on the « interior experience of religious faith» (Pulkkinen 2005: 271)

of Jakob Dass, a circuit court judge in Helgeland in what is now the county of Nordland (Steen 1954: 153 in Storm 2012). He was minister of the Parish of Veøy in Romsdalen from 1709 and was later a missionary among the Sámi. He died at the age of 45 in 1727. His interest in Pietism encouraged him and some colleagues to set up a study group – later called the Seven Stars (Ward 1999)– within the state church in 1713, consisting of young Norwegian clergymen and aiming to reform the Church from within. His academic qualifications and pietistic beliefs led King Frederik IV to choose him to organize lasting missionary activity among the Sámi in 1716. Glorifying in royal approval, von Westen founded the *Seminarium Scholasticum*, subordinate to the Missionary Collegium – responsible for running missions among the Sámi in the realm – in Trondheim in 1717.

The Seminarium's aim was to train missionaries, school principals and teachers, who were taught how to educate and convert the Sámi. They studied Sámi languages, considered by von Westen necessary for effective communication with the population, as well as to theology (Storm 2012).

Von Westen also established and financed the *Seminarium Domesticum* in order to train young Sámi boys to assist teachers and missionaries in their labours the Sámi territories. The curriculum was profoundly imbued with Lutheran propaganda; the missionaries usually conducted the classes whereas the teachers imposed discipline over children (Isnardi 2015). According to Seven Stars members, the most northerly parish residents in Norway accepted the gospel selectively. For example, many Finnmark practicing Christian Sámi were baptised and took part in the county's religious life, but according to the clergymen their ancient beliefs survived in practice, the Sámi being perceived as the most heathen of all the inhabitants. Therefore, von Westen applied for permission to set up a Finnmark mission, which was granted by the government. Finnmark, von Westen's proposed destination, was claimed by the kingdoms of Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland. Following then common practices used by Swedish and Russian among others, Denmark aspired to consolidate exclusive jurisdiction over the land by exerting religious control over region's inhabitants (Ward 1999).

But it was not long before von Westen became aware that the affiliation of inhabitants of the southern parts of Finnmark, Troms and Northern Nordland to the Lutheran Church was simply a façade so that they too had to be included in the conversion process. Consequently, the missionaries dedicated themselves to announcing the Gospel in those territories perceived as problematic (Storm, 2012) and, in little over a decade, they succeeded in planning and setting up missions from Trondheim to Unjarga/Varanger. This vast territory was split into 13 missionary sub-districts where school principals, teachers and missionaries went not only to carry out missionary activities but to teach literacy to the people: Innherred Snasa, Overhalla, Vefsn, Gildeskal, Rana, Saltdalen, Lodingen, Tysfjord and Ofoten, Senja and Vesteralen, Lyngen and Ullsfjord, Karlsoy, Skjervoy and Kvaenangen, Vest—Finnmark, Porsanger and Laksefjord, Varanger and Tana (Hansen and Olsen

2014). When the Sámi began to adhere to Christianity, von Westen felt his efforts had been vindicated (Storm 2012).

In a few decades, Danish-Norwegian mission led to the effective evangelisation of the Sámi living in Norwegian territories. The success of von Westen missionary strategy lays in the clergyman's innovative and pragmatic approach: firstly, he resorted to the native language of the Sámi to better communicate with them. Thomas von Westen was among the firsts to grasp the importance of mastering and commanding the language of the people who were the target of conversion³³⁸. He realised Sámi languages were the key factor in making contact with the Sámi population. In accordance with this line of thought, many of the missionaries trained in the Seminarium Scholasticum were able to speak one or more Sámi language and hence this language skill enabled them to efficaciously engaging with the Sámi (Storm 2017).

Secondly, pietistic principles shaped the behaviour of the members of the Seven Stars: von Westen's and his colleagues' actions were motivated by a genuine interest in the Sámi spiritual, physical and social wellbeing. The Seven Stars' efforts resulted in an improvement in the living condition of their parishioners. Storm points out that Von Westen managed to have the «[...] death penalty imposed for pagan acts» abolished (2009:268). This achievement is extremely remarkable if we think that less than 20 years before von Westen was appointed by the king, Sámi people still faced the death penalty if found guilty of witchcraft. The last witch-trial in Norway was in 1693 and, in 1691 Anders Paulsen was arrested for having performed indigenous rituals –perceived by the authorities as devil worship. Paulsen died in prison in Čáhcesuolu/Vadsø awaiting the verdict. His fate, given the complexity of his case, was to be decided in Copenhagen but he was killed by a guard before being sentenced.

Anders Paulsen was among the last Sámi men to be accused of witchcraft. Historical sources examined by Rune Blix Hage – Professor of History of Religion at Tromsø Arctic University – show that

Thanks to the many initiatives aiming at bettering Sámi daily life, von Westen managed to win the trust of his Sámi parishioners.

Nevertheless, his strong adherence to the Christian moral code led to a friction with the Danish liquor traders (Ward 1999). In line with his strong pietistic principles, von Westen advocated the ban of spirits. His requests met with partial success and selling alcohol «outside the churches in connection with services was forbidden » (Storm 2009:268). The strained relations between von Westen and the merchants of spirits recall the similar situation faced by Læstadius some 100 years

³³⁸ Before von Westen, other clergymen had learnt Sámi languages to better spread the Gospel among the Sámi people. these early missionaries belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church and worked among the eastern Sámi. Their translations into Sámi of religious texts constitute the earliest known texts written in Sámi. According to Russian Orthodox hagiographic sources, already in the 14th century Lazar had started proselytising among the Sámi in their language. 15th century monks Trifon and Feodorit are also known for their missionary activity among the Sámi. The two “Enlighters of the Lopari” preached in eastern Sámi languages. After Von Westen, other clergymen learnt their parishioners' language. Knud Leem (1696–1774) was another important missionary and clergyman who worked in Finnmark and studied the Sámi languages to better communicate with the Sámi.

later. In the same fashion as von Westen, in the 1840s and 1850s the founder of the Læstadian movement came into contrast with liquor merchants selling alcohol to the Sámi living in northern Sweden (Hultkrantz 1987). Both clergymen were moved by religious ideals when they tried to prevent the spread of alcoholism among their parishioners. In both cases their actions met with the opposition of the liquor traders.

A third reason why von Westen's missionary activity was so successful lied in von Westen's respect of the Sámi and in his active engagement with the Sámi people. Von Westen and his missionaries were not scared by the idea of working and living among the Sámi. As Storm (2017) has shown, von Westen established the headquarters of the mission on the fjords. Up to that time, pastors and preachers had resided in the inlands and only rarely had they ventured in the narrow bays of the coast. Hence, the coastal Sámi were seldom visited by clergymen and had only a superficial knowledge of the gospel. By choosing to live in the coastal settlements, von Westen and his colleagues managed to successfully proselytise among the Sámi communities.

Von Westen's evangelisation of the Sámi proved itself effective also because von Westen's religious organization encouraged both the local Sámi people and the missionaries to erect churches and chapels across the landscape. The Sámi and the clergymen were also assisted in building schools where the Sámi could learn how to read. The teaching of reading and writing in Sámi language was directed towards children and adults alike. von Westen highly valued reading and writing skills as they enabled youngsters and adults to autonomously study the Bible and confirm their Christian faith. Missionaries and the schoolteachers endorsed von Westen approach and worked to spread literacy among the Sámi.

Pietism determined von Westen's approach towards Sámi people. Despite his active engagement in the destruction of the drums and the ancient sacred *sieidi*, von Westen respected the Sámi and he strived to involve the Sámi in the missionary activity. In accordance with pietistic ideals, he focused on the individuals' religious and personal development (Isnardi 2015)

Hence, in conformity with pietistic ideas and tradition, von Westen emphasised the importance of the person. He placed great emphasis on individual education. This approach explains why von Westen and the other pietistic members of the clergy devoted their efforts in building schools and teaching basic literacy skills. In the 1720s, these efforts were mainly aiming at the Christianisation of the Sámi population. Storm (2017) draws a connection between von Westen's successful project and the establishment, in 1736, of a basic education system for the Norwegian population as a whole. In Storm's view, von Westen's achievements inspired the central government to extend the education system. Orfield (1956:193) though relates the growth of educational institutions to the introduction of the confirmation rite in 1736. Confirmation required the individual to be able to read and understand religious texts. Hence, literacy became a skill all the Norwegians had to master regardless of the literacy rate of a peripheral population.

Von Westen's work had a significant impact not only on the Sámi as a people but also on the Danish-Swedish authorities' understanding of the Sámi population. Storm (2017:271) specifies that « another important result, especially from the governmental point of view, was a considerable enhancement and deepening of knowledge about the Sámi settlement areas in general – and especially concerning the inner parts and mountain areas. Earlier this kind of knowledge had been quite superficial. The reports of the missionaries' travels, their visits, and other accomplishments which were returned to the *Missionary Collegium* in Copenhagen, laid ground for further studies of the northern areas during the later part of the 18th century »

Von Westen missionary activity is of extreme relevance for Sápmi as a whole and the Norwegian side of Sápmi in particular. Furthermore, this clergyman emerged as a key figure during my own fieldwork. While I was a guest at a friend's house in the Gratangen area, my host remarked that those were the very areas von Westen had visited, pointing at the mountains and the lakes, towards the Fjord.

The legacy of von Westen in the area was long-lasting as not only did he visit the region where Márkomeannu takes place but also because, thanks to his efforts, his pupils became actively engaged in the missionary activity in the local missionary district of Lodingen and Ofoten.

4.2.3 Shattered *Siedi* and hidden drums

As part of their missionary activity, missionaries engaged in a crusade against the Sámi understanding of the world. Visible and concrete elements of this worldviews were among their main targets: missionaries worked strenuously to locate and register *sieidi* (“altars”) as well as other holy sites. Once these places were identified, often with help of converted Sámi, the missionaries either destroyed *siedis* and other ritual elements or forced the local Sámi to so. By destroying the *sieidis*, missionaries not only were actively preventing the Sámi from performing sacrifices but were also shattering sacred places that were at the core of the Sámi indigenous relation with their environment. Physically imposing the power of Christianity by shattering the *sieidis* was a means through which the missionaries hoped to annihilate Sámi spiritual connection with the beings that populated Sámi indigenous cosmologies, sawing the ties that, for generations, had connected the people with the land.

This process took place all over Sápmi but not all *siedi* were destroyed. Some still stand even though their original meaning is now lost to most. In the area around the Márka many were the *sieidi* that represented points of contact between different entities of the local Sámi cosmology. The early 1720 represented a time of great religious upheaval and, according to Hansen and Olsen, in less than a month, in 1722, the missionary Jens Kildal managed to destroy forty sacrificial sites in Ofoten. Furthermore, while on a missionary journey in Pite Lappmark, between 1726–27, he destroyed seventeen more *sieidi*. In 1722 Thomas von Westen reached Karlsoy (Rottangen, Nordland county) and he made the Sámi guide him to five *sieidi*. At that point, he forced them to destroy such *sieidis*

while, simultaneously making them swear they would no longer make sacrifices to their old gods. (Hansen and Olsen 2014). This large-scale destruction of *Sieidi* sacred sites in the area in exam constituted a traumatic loss for the local population who still performed its indigenous practices. Nevertheless, as Sámi scholar Marit Myrvoll demonstrates (2017) memories of sacred sites in the area lasted centuries after the missionaries in the area

Despite the apparent missionaries' exertion of power, Hansen and Olsen (2013) as well as Storm (2012) remind us that it is important to bear in mind that, albeit often asymmetrical, the power relations between Sámi and missionaries were not as clear-cut as they may seem. Hansen and Olsen remind us that the missionaries often acted in lands and cultures that were not only foreign to them but that also appeared strange and dangerous. In some cases, they were at the mercy of their interlocutors and their survival depended upon their ability to successfully communicate with the local populations. Hansen and Olsen report the experience of Gabriel Tuderus, a Swedish missionary who worked among the Sámi in the winters of 1669 and 1670. Tuderus's frustration emerges from his own reports where he records his attempts to persuade local Sámi of various *siidas* in the area of Kemi Lammпарк to embrace Christianity and abandon their own indigenous practices and worldviews. During his time in this region of Sápmi, Tuderus's path was not only paved with disappointment and obstacles but also perils as he felt he was in « mortal danger » (Tuderus in Hansen and Olsen 2014 p 326)

Tuderus's experience, thoughts and fears in Kemi Lappmark in 1669-1670 resonates with those of Francesco Negri who, just 6 years before Tuderus, visited the bordering region of Duortnus/Torne Lappmark. As examined in chapter two (section 12), in 1663 Francesco Negri visited the Duortnus/Torne area and there he probably witnesses a Sámi ritual. He also reported similar emotional states, being alone in a "remote wilderness".

In 1724, only thirty years after Negri's journey across Sápmi, the Danish-Norwegian missionary system was fully developed. And the Dano-Norwegian side of Sápmi was divided in 13 mission districts. The Márka was under the jurisdiction of the mission working in Lodingen, Tysfjord and Ofoten. Even if von Westen's second journey in Sápmi led him primarily to Finnmark, he also stayed in Troms and Nordland. He later visited Nordland and Trondelag. On this last journey he met Jens Kildal (1683–1767). By the time he met von Westen in Nordland, Kildal was a missionary in the district of Lodingen and Ofoten. Kildal's work is of extreme importance for those interested in the history of Ofoten, and hence, that of the Márka.

Jens Kildal was from Salten, and his wife was from Ofoten. Kildal had a deep comprehension of local Sámi worldviews and customs which he acquired through his daily interaction with Sámi cultures, primarily thanks his wife, Karen Arnesdatter. Karen was of Sámi origin and helped his husband by working with Sámi women, a task for which she received a salary (Storm 2017). The family connection with Sámi culture and language gave Jens Kilden the opportunity to gain unique

insights into Sámi worldviews which he then to von Westen. Kildal's understanding of Sámi cultures though was well-known long before he started his missionary activity: until 1721 – when moved to Ofoten to work as a missionary – he worked in Trondheim at the Seminarium Scholasticum where he a lecturer in Sámi (Storm 2016). Jens Kildal made the materials he had collected (through first-hand observation as well as through correspondence with pastors working on the Swedish side of Sápmi) available to a wider missionary community by handing them down to von Westen.

Around 1730, after von Westen's death in 1727, Kildal compiled the text titled *Afguderiets dempelse* (the Suppression of Idolatry). This monograph was intended as a textbook for those who were appointed as schoolmasters in Sápmi schools (Hansen and Olsen 2014).

According to Hansen and Olsen, Kildal's understanding and comprehension of Sámi cosmography became the prototype of von Westen's studies. In the following years, von Westen though focused his missionary efforts on South Sámi communities. For this reason, as Hansen and Olsen point out, the majority of von Westen's reflections concern the South Sámi worldviews and practices. Von Westen collected these materials because he intended to write a description of the mission's work as complete as possible. Nevertheless, death prevented him from completing this task (Hansen and Olsen 2014).

Sigvard Kildal (1704-1771) was a missionary in Ofoten from 1729. His older brother was Jens Kildal. The two brothers were key figures in the missionary system implemented in a region that corresponds to the today's Nord-Nordland and South Troms area. Around 1730, Jens Kildal (1683-1767) – a vicar and missionary in Ofoten, not far from Trondenes, where one of the most ancient stone churches of Northern Fennoscandinavia – wrote 'Afguderiets Dempelse og den sande Lærdoms Fremgang' (The Attenuation of Idolatry and the Progress of True Doctrine) while, around the same time, Sigvard Kildal compiled 'Efterretning om Finners og Lappers hedenske Religion' (Reflections on the Pagan Religion of Finns and Lapps), a text that extensively documents his observations on the spiritual and ritual activity in the areas where he lived. According to Rydving, Kildal's original materials were based upon his experience in Salten, while the sections based upon von Westen's material reveal the northern Trøndelag's religious milieu. Kildal predominantly dwells upon the uses of the *goavvdis/runebomme* (the Sámi drum) and Sámi cosmological notions.

Dikka Storm has extensively studied the original 18th-century documents concerning missionary activities in Ofoten and related secondary sources. She has examined the traces of the manifestation of the missionary effort in the area, documenting the presence of eleven missionaries, plus teachers and their assistants, working contemporaneously within the sixth missionary district of Senja and

Vesterålen³³⁹ (2012). The strong presence of the Church on the territory demonstrates the importance this institution – and the State – attributed to the proselytization among the Sámi and in the region.

4.2.4 *Goavddis*, cultural tracks and a landscape of hidden memories

As Professor Trude Fonneland – a specialist in folklore studies who holds a position at Tromsø university Museum – explains, in the early 1990s two brothers casually came across a strange object while hiking in the woods on the mountain slope of Hillsá/Hilleshamn, Rivtaain/Gatangen municipality, in an area the family used to collect grass for hay back in the days.

The attention of one of the brothers was caught by a strange formation covered by layers of moss, in a secluded spot protected from bad weather by a boulder. On investigating further, the man removed the moss and found a wooden object roughly bowl-shaped. Taking that object home, they left it in the barn where it was abandoned and almost forgotten for years until their discovery was brought to the attention of a team engaged in the preservation of ancient local objects (Trude Fonneland, private conversation and unpublished material). The item was recognized as the carved wooden structure of a *goavddis*, a bowl-shaped Sámi drum. The membrane that once covered the wood, as well as the objects and threads hanging from the wood, had long since deteriorated and disintegrated, leaving only slight traces behind. Consequently, there is no way of knowing which symbols were once depicted on the leather or how they were organized. The wooden structure presents carvings and signs of wear where the pendants used to be located. The wood is hollowed in places and is broken in others, hinting at the original form of the lower, wooden structure of the drum. We can only imagine what functions such carved shapes fulfilled. In the course of a conference held in Bergen in 2018, while Professor Trude Fonneland was delivering a paper introducing the drum to academic community, a member of the public, experienced in historical reconstruction, suggested that such carved hollowed shapes may have been utilized to determine different notes and their resonant. She based this observation on her knowledge of the use of musical instruments comparable with the Hillsa drum. In order to grasp how *noadi*'s (Sámi ritual specialist) drum worked, we have to modify our contemporary conception of drums, which we usually see only as musical instruments.

In ancient times, Sámi perceived their drums as ritual objects imbued with their energy. *Noaidi* and other ritual practitioners not only beat the drums but used their whole bodies to produce and regulate the sound. Furthermore, the pendants amplified the sound by producing tinkling.

³³⁹ The sixth missionary district corresponded to an administrative area that – from north to south – went from Malangenfjord to Ofotenfjord and – from west to east – covered the islands of Vesterålen and Hinnøya to the inner regions deep into the fjords reaching Grovfjord, Salangen, Lavangen and Sørreisa (Storm 2012).

Professors Fonneland and Storm visited the brothers who found the drum-frame, interviewing them on the circumstances of the discovery. The brother who found the drum explained that for years he tried to locate the exact spot where he found the object but was unable to identify it. The location remained unknown until 2016, when the man accompanied the researchers in a survey of the area and the location was finally identified. The two professors have highlighted that the object was conserved and remained undiscovered for centuries as result of its secluded location. Furthermore, according to the two professors, its position suggests the drum was originally either deliberately hidden or ritually abandoned but not inadvertently lost. Given the relevance of the drum, the news made it to local newspapers (Harstادتiden, Itroms). The drum is ought to be brought back to the area where it was originally used, most likely hidden and later found. It will be kept at the Várdobáiki centre which is the most important local cultural institution in the area.

According to tests carried out by Beta Analytic in the US, the drum – made of pine burl – most probably dates from between 1680 and 1765. By that time the witch-hunts (cfr section 4.2.1) had already ceased. It is safe to assume that drums made before the witch-hunt were still in use, passed down from one generation to the next, but the novelty here is that a drum constructed after the persecution was used. Therefore, the knowledge and skills required not only to use the drum but also to construct it were still alive, bearing witness to the resilience and adaptability of Sámi cultures even when it was not visible and openly displayed. The cognizance that a drum was made after the active persecution of indigenous worldviews and rituals testifies to their vitality even after the supposed Christianization of the Sámi.

The Hillsá drum enshrines the Sámi dimension of local history, being as it is material proof of an otherwise immaterial practice, proving beyond any doubt the presence of Sámi in the area not as recent immigrants from Sweden – as many Norwegian claim – but as indigenous to the area at a time when the diffusion of Norwegian culture was in its infancy.

There has been a long-running and futile debate in Norway – and Fennoscandinavia as a whole – about who the indigenous population consisted of. Sámi or Fennoscandinavians. The debate is rooted in late-18th-century Romantic understanding of nation states. This rhetoric has caused great pain and much social fragmentation, leading to discriminatory state-implemented assimilation policies against Sámi. The discovery of the Hillsá drum testifies not only to the already-mentioned vitality of Sámi worldviews and practices but also to the very presence of the Sámi in the area. When I discussed how the drum may constitute proof of Sámi presence in the area with Sigbjørn Skåden, he immediately and with a hint of irritation cut the argument short by firmly stating that it didn't take a drum to prove that the Márka-Sámi people were indigenous to the Márka.

Sigbjørn Skåden's statement is charged with meaning because it encompasses the various dimensions of the Sámi side of the argument concerning indigeneity.



Image 56: Reproduction of the *Goavddis* retrieved at Hillsá, (artwork by Olga De Vivo)

During the conversion process initiated by von Westen and continued by those who followed in his steps, the drums became a focus of confrontation between the Sámi and the Nordic States. Therefore, and in adopting a Lule Sámi-based viewpoint, historian of religion Håkan Rydving defines the era of religious meeting and opposition as « the time when one had to hide the drums » (Rydving 1995). Throughout Sápmi, drums's use was heterogeneous but central to Sámi indigenous ritual practices. Pastors and Christian proselytizers perceived them as emblems of a pagan way of life and/or devil worship. The authorities openly exerted their domination of the Sámi by confiscating their drums. For these reasons, for the Sámi the drums became symbolic of resistance to religious colonization and its political ramifications. There is an abundance of evidence from the 17th and 18th centuries to the resistance symbolically represented by the drums. To the Sámi, the drums embodied their culture which was under pressure, and their opposition to the monotheistic exclusivity of Christianity as well as their struggle to maintain ancient Sámi ways of life. On the other hand, the Church experienced the drums as the core of Sámi paganism, the malignant force which had to be wiped out by means of forced conversion and active destruction of Sámi holy and sacred objects and places. Therefore, the value of the Sámi ritual drums was both symbolic and material, constituting today a past-present link, uniting people half-hidden heritage.

When pastors and preachers organized confiscation missions, many Sámi refused to surrender their tools which had often handed down from one generation to another, thereby connecting their owners with their ancestors and descendants. Instead of conceding the drums to the authorities, some preferred to bury them in the waters of local lakes or hide them in the woods. When environmental conditions were favourable, such hidden drums could be preserved over time, to the extent that they can be discovered in their original hiding places even today. A few of them were later found, to be housed in museum or private collections. The *Goavddis* (bowl drum cfr 4.3) retrieved in Hillsá is one of such finds. One of the most northerly discoveries of its kind.

Even when such discoveries are made, the objects found are often in a state of advance deterioration. The leather is often totally decomposed and only traces of it are still detectable on the frame. At the same time, the tendons fastening the leather to the frame have likewise disappeared, the only evidence of their past existence being fade traces on the frame, where they once fastened the leather to the frame. When the Hillsa *Goavddis* was first found in the woods, only the frame remained. therefore, it is impossible to know what symbols may have been represented on the skin.

The area where this *Goavddis* was recovered lays at the earth of the Stuornjárga peninsula, in an area of where the water from the fjord and the woods covering the mountains meet and merge. In August 2018, a local association organized a cultural and naturalistic hike in the area for locals and tourists alike. People who wanted to take part to this event had to sign up at the local *radhus* (the old school of Grovfjord). Upon registering, visitors were invited to begin their hike by walking along a path that started just behind the old school. This path crosses the mountain, connecting the local settlement to the village of Foldvik, on the other side of the mountain. Today a road walks along the sea, and in less than 30 minutes it is possible to reach Foldvik from Grovfjord. The path across the mountain though is an ancient road once used by reindeer tenders during seasonal reindeer migrations.

Today, local organizations are trying to bring people back to this mountain road making a hiking trail out of the old mountain-trail system to celebrate the past and to literally walk in the footsteps of the local's ancestors who used it through the ages. In the past there used to be several paths and roads that were used for different errands, and led to Gratangen or – on the opposite direction – to Grovfjord but also Olderdalen and Segeldalen. Traces of old roads and paths which once were an intricate route-network are still visible today even though of difficult access due to overgrown and landslides of both soil and trees. The hiking team has plans to recreate two old roads, one on each side of the river. The association is working to recreate two of the old roads, so that there will be three alternative paths. As far as 2018 far, only one hiking trail – called "Market Road" – was marked with red paint and made available to hikers. This cultural initiative aiming at the preservation of the immaterial cultural

and historical heritage is just one among the growing number of similar projects designed to preserve the historical memory of the community as well as foster a sense of belonging among the locals.

The im/-material cultural-historical heritage of the Márka-Sámi community is inscribed in the local landscape, in the paths cleared by past generations and faded away with the passing of time. These paths are now resurfacing from the dust that covered them, paving the way for current and future generations to walk along them again. These aspirations towards the future are deeply rooted in the past, even though only few, selected elements of this past have been chosen and valorised while others are set aside through a process of patrimonialisation and selective preservation that is in line with similar processes that are occurring across the world. The past is a core element of individuals' and communities' present while also playing a central role in shaping their future. Nevertheless, the past – distant and recent – that people rely upon in crafting their sense of identity and community, is always just partial as the geographer, historian and initiator of heritage studies as a discipline Lowenthal has efficaciously demonstrated in his studies (1979, 1996, 2015). When talking about heritage and processes of heritagization – such as those occurring in the Márka, such processes constitute a means of re-experiencing the past, which, however, has been selectively adapted to address contemporary needs (Lowenthal 2015). In the case being examined, such needs are those of a community that has undergone a process of modernization and emigration as well as cultural renaissance.

As Lowenthal points out, in processes of patrimonialization, distant – and also recent – past are rendered more vivid than they actually were at the time (Lowenthal 2015:535). They are cultural constructions that help foster a sense of pride in the community by selecting specific elements while concealing what people would rather forget. In the case of the Márka-Sámi people, the community relied on the farming character of the local economy, which so deeply shaped the Márka-Sámi culture.

This history is peculiar to the Márka-Sámi people and differentiated them from other Sámi cultures which were instead relying predominantly on reindeer tending or fishing and were located either on the coast or in the inner regions of Fennoscandinavia. The intergenerational sharing of history – or at least some of its selected elements – has proved central in the perpetuation of Márka-Sámi cultures from one generation to the next.

4.2.5 Bealjehis Jovdna, *Goavddis* and family relations

Stories enshrining the past of the Márka are vital elements of the Márka as a social context. These stories, if addressed and examined with appropriate tools, can reveal important features of Márka-Sámi present and past as it is understood by the locals. Stories can also provide current members of the community with a sense of connection with the land and the past generations whose tales are told

therein. In some cases, tales and other oral documents testify to important or critical moments in the history of the community, for instance in times of social or religious tensions. Social anthropologist and history expert Dikka Storm, has examined episodes connected with indigenous practices in the Troms-Nordland border area – Stuornjárga – at the time of enforced Christianisation (2017). One such episode revolves around a man known as Bealjehis Jovdna (John the Earless) also called John Olsen Øreløs who used to live above the farm at Renså, in today's Skaniik/Skånland municipality, between the late-17th and the early-18th century. His memory still lives on in the oral tradition of the peoples of Stuornjárga. Bealjehis Jovdna was born in 1667 in Duodurek/Balteskardskogen between Altevann and Tornetresk, in what was then the kingdom Denmark-Norway. At the age of 23, he married a girl three years his junior from Geavdnjajavri in Målselv (Troms County), Kirsten Allás-Gihhte (Kitti).



Map 11: The position of Renså in Stuornjárga (adapted from google maps).

The couple had four sons and Bealjehis Jovdna died in 1740, at the age of 73. Bealjehis Jovdna lived in an age when people who did not identify themselves as Sámi had settled along the coast of the Stuornjárga/Skånland peninsula. These settlers, often identifying themselves as ethnic Norwegians, even though many were of Sámi descent, did not share local Sámi worldviews and, as

Storm highlights, were hostile to those who still performed indigenous Sámi rites. In those times, drumbeats still came from the mountain, audible as far as to the inhabitants of the coastal settlements. This sound must have been a constant reminder that “pagan” rituals were still practised in the area. Bealjehis Jovdna was apparently one of those still performing indigenous rituals regardless of the settlers’ disapproval. Some of these settlers complained to the local bailiff about this man, considered by the locals to be a *noaidi*, demanding this state official to force Bealjehis Jovdna to either cease his activity or leave the area. According to the sources analysed by Storm, the bailiff decided to pay an official visit to Bealjehis Jovdna and, upon that occasion, he managed not only to see the drum but also to touch it. The sources further report the conversation between these two exponents of colliding worlds and tell of the amazement felt by the bailiff upon striking the drum and of a prediction made by Bealjehis Jovdna concerning the stranding of a whale. Besides its intrinsic value as a historical source, the relevance of this episode resides in the acknowledgment of the coexistence of Indigenous and Christian worldviews in the Stuornjárga region in the late 17th century. Memories of the events reported in written sources are still today part of the region’s intangible heritage. Storm reports that oral traditions – passed down through the generations and written down by the University Museum in Tromsø in the 1950s – had kept alive the memory of the shape of Bealjehis Jovdna’s drum. Similarly, a description of the images depicted on the drum-skin, of the pendants attached to the rear of the drum and of other tools employed by Bealjehis Jovdna, have survived. Long after these tools were gone, their existence was still vivid more than 200 years after the death of their original owner.

Storm puts forward an interesting argument when she states that Bealjehis Jovdna’s reputation as a strong and powerful *noaidi* angered the settlers living in the coastal farms (Storm 2017). In her view, this reaction is indicative of the complex power dynamics between Christian and Indigenous worldviews, which coexisted in the region and, to an extent, intermingled. The very acknowledgment of the presence of a powerful Sámi *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist), and the potential malignant threat this phenomenon posed to an area which was supposed to have been Christianized, consolidates the notion that Christianisation was a long and gradual process. It also bears testimony to the fact that Indigenous and Christian frameworks were the reference points in the lives of peoples who lived side-by-side and who often interacted on both economic and social levels, but whose worldviews were not only foreign to each other but also contradictory. As demonstrated, the episode analysed by Storm is dense with meanings. Furthermore, it is of extreme relevance because it constitutes an early example of the tense relationships between different ethnic groups in the peninsula of Stuornjárga. During numerous conversations I had with my interlocutors, it emerged that uneasy relationships existed in the past, and still exist today, between interior Sámi communities and coastal Norwegian(-ized) dwellers. These were recurrent dynamics that are attested in the area, which is characterised by a

succession of fjords and alternating peninsulas and islands. Cultural barriers, understood as ethnic, divided the people living along the coast (known in Norwegian as *bufolk* – meaning settled people – and as *dacca* – Norwegian – in North Sámi) and the Sámi who dwelled in the interiors, far from the culturally-Norwegian(ized) coast. To understand this ethnic mosaic, it is necessary to bear in mind the geomorphological composition that has come to render location within the territory a prime source of identification in the articulation of individual and collective identity from both emic and etic perspectives. Besides the written sources concerning the above episode analysed by Storm, scattered memories of Bealjhes Jovdna and his reputation as a ritual expert survive in the local oral tradition. While I was visiting the Grovfjord area, I heard stories about a « Sámi shaman » who once lived « on the other side of the mountain and that annoyed the Norwegians with his drum » (private conversation with a local person 2018). Since this person pointed towards Rensa, I later concluded she was referring to Bealjhes Jovdna even though she did not mention his name. Conversely, another interlocutor told me stories about Bealjehehis Jovna in a completely different context. The name of this Sámi man who lived in the 17th century cropped up in conversation with Sigbjørn Skåden – one of my key interlocutors, from whom I gained a great deal of insights – who is from the same area, albeit on the other side of the mountain. For instance, he explained to me that Bealjehehis Jovna was a key figure in the area and an ancestor of many local Sámi. The conversation arose from a question I asked him:

E: is there any oral memory of the time when your ancestors settled in the Márka?
Did anybody go down in history?

S: mhm... I do not know, I do not think so. Well, there are a couple of people... Like Dundor Heikka and then, well, there is Bealjehehis Jovna. You know, he was like, a sort of ancestor to all of us. With his children all over the place. He was like a forefather for the people of the Márka

E: mhm, was he a real person or more like a mythic one?

S: no no! he was real! He lived a few centuries ago. I think... at the end of the 18th century. And also Dundor-Heikka, was a famous bear-hunter³⁴⁰, and he too also had,

³⁴⁰ In agricultural societies such as that of 19th century Márka, where a few heads of cattle and a small number of sheep were at the basis of a subsistence economy, bears were a threat to survival and social stability since they often ventured away from the woods in the Sámi settlements, killing sheep and hence threatening entire families' survival.

like, a lot of kids, many children in the Márka. And most of us are related to him, through him (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).³⁴¹

Sigbjørn, during our numerous conversations, never referred to Bealjehis Jovna as being a *Noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist) but he stressed the latter's role as the forefather of the Márka-Sámi people. In a further conversation on the subject months later, I asked him why he did not indicate to me that Bealjehis Jovna was a *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist). With a hint of surprise, he replied that he was not aware of the fact and that he knew only as a great prolific community progenitor. These exchanges demonstrate how selective and fragmented by time collective memories may be and how some feature may be passed down in one context (for instance in a family) and set aside in others so that, in the course of a few generations, stories and accounts may diverge. In recent and current Sámi milieux, the heritage connected with Sámi non-Christian indigenous worldviews has been for some problematic due to the specific religious profile of the region that, since the late 19th century, has been characterized by a growing adherence among the people of the Márka to the principles of Læstadianism.

³⁴¹ The Norwegian author Inga Bjørnson, who travelled in the area at the beginning of the 20th century, wrote down in the local Márka Norwegian dialect several local stories collected in a volume that bears the name of the bear-hunter: "Dundor-Heikka and several Lapp stories told by themselves" (Dundor-Heikka og flere lappers historier fortalt av dem selv) (Bjørnson 1916). Nevertheless, as Lysaker points out in the Trondenes annals (in Skåden A. and Skåden S 2001): «Inga Bjørnson has drawn an untrue and unappealing picture of him in her book. The features she describes do not match what Lensmann Strøm wrote in his report about Dundor-Heikka to the ministry in 1872. Strøm describes him as a sensible and reliable Lapp and bases most of his living on the reindeer grazing land on his where he also settled» (in Skåden A and Skåden S 2001:14) (my translation from the original Norwegian).

Dundor-Heikka was famous for his bravery and he was known for having shot 55 bears during his lifetime. He was also an interpreter between the Sámi and King Oscar II upon the latter's visit to Sandtorgholmen on his journey in northern Norway in 1873. The memory of Dundor Heikka has survived among the local people of the Márka, to whom Dundor is related through his many children as well as through other family relations.

During an interview about the Skanik *gákti* (Sámi costume) for a local newspaper one of his greatdaughters, Nina Johanne Nupuk Johansen, recounted her experience of self-rediscovery as a Sámi and her efforts to bring the memory of past generations to the attention of today's Márka peoples. She explained the role the *gákti* (Sámi costume) played in this process and how she lent some of her family's private objects for an exhibition. Her grandfather's *gákti* was among such objects along with a photograph that was taken for his grandfather's confirmation in the late 19th century. The photo shows a young Dundor Heikka and his mother on the day of Dundor's confirmation (Bente-Lill Dankertsen 2021 iHarshtad). In Bjørnson's book, the author included some pictures she took while in the Márka as well as drawings made by Elise Danielsen. One of these drawings (image 57) depicts Dundor Heikka, defined as a settled Sámi (*bufinn*) from Husjord in Ofoten. According to the author, these drawings are quite accurate, as she stated in the book introduction: «Bildene er tegnet av Elise Danielsen fra Ballangen. De er efter min mening sande og gode» (the pictures are drawn by Elise Danielsen from Ballangen. They are, in my opinion, true and good).

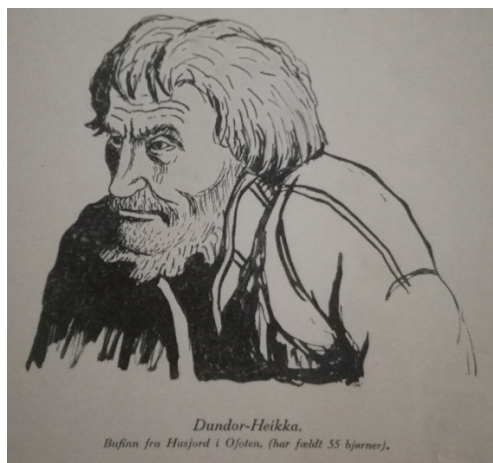


Image 57: Dunder Heikka as portrayed by Elise Danielsen in Bjørnson's 1916 book.

4.3 Læstadianism, an outline of a pietistic movement in Sámi contexts

In the late 1840s a religious revival – Læstadianism³⁴² – took place in Gárasavvon/Karesuando. This religious movement bears the name of its founder and first leader: Dean Lars Levi Læstadius, a theologian, botanist, and ethnographer. Gárasavvon/Karesuando is a small village on the river Muonájohka/Muonio, which constitutes the Swedish-Finnish border; during Læstadius' lifetime, on the other hand, the river divided Russian and Swedish territories.

Sámi were the majority in this village, and therefore most of Læstadius early followers came from this ethnic Sámi. While living in Gárasavvon/Karesuando, Læstadius principally used the local Sámi language to preach. Læstadius could speak Pite Sámi which he knew from childhood, later – when living in the northernmost regions of Sweden – adding Lule and North Sámi. After moving to Pajala, he came into contact with a new linguistic context which included Finnish. Bájil gielda/Pajala, in the Deartnu/Torneo River Valley, is some 150 km south of Gárasavvon/Karesuando. The population was predominantly Finnish-speaking (Pentikäinen 2000, 2002, 2005b). Gárasavvon/Karesuando in the extreme north of Sweden is close to the border with both Norway (North Troms) and Finland (Eanodat/Enontekiö). The village itself developed on both sides of the river, being therefore split between these two nations. The river – a communication route for the Sámi – became a border according to Scandinavian customs, resulting in the fragmentation of the local community. At that time of Læstadius three-quarters of the population were Sámi who spoke Finnish as a second, working, language in their dealing with their dealings with their Finnish neighbours.

³⁴² Today this movement is widespread in the northern regions of Fennoscandinavia and in the USA (Pentikäinen 2005a). Læstadian congregations are also active in Africa (Edho 2013). Even if today most of Læstadian congregations operate independently of the state church, they usually act within the framework of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Nevertheless, some of its branches act out of the National Churches' structure. For a long time the clergy had sceptically looked down at the movement which was regarded as potentially dangerous. Relationships between the state Church and Læstadianism improved towards the end of the nineteenth century (Thorkildsen, & Hallgeir 2010). As Jarlert (2012:295) explains, «[...] the 'Læstadian-Christians' were criticised by the ecclesiastical authorities» Nevertheless, Læstadians were allowed to practice «their ecstatic faith in separate church services in the evening. This formed their special position as both separate and in harmony with ordinary congregational life».

Immediately south of Gárasavvon/Karesuando is the Čohkkiras/Jukkasjärvi parish and this proximity led to the early conversion of Jukkasjärvi population to Læstadianism.

Due to historical circumstances, the Sámi of *Stuoranjårga* had an incessant contact with the people of Jukkasjärvi, because of family connections established through marriage between families from both communities. These ties were maintained because the latter seasonally travelled across the mountain rift separating Sweden and Norway, following the herds reaching the summer grazing lands along the coast (Minde 2000). As early as 1850, the Læstadian movement was already spreading in two areas where the majority of the population was Sámi: North Troms and southern Finnmark – as far as Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino – and the inland area of inner Ofoten, including *Stuoranjårga* and Áravuopmi/Vassdal. Both areas were part of the seasonal routes of the Gárasavvon/Karesuando and Čohkkiras/Jukkasjärvi reindeer tenders.

4.3.1 Arctic Grace

In the early years of Læstadianism, this branch of Lutheranism was embraced by the Sámi to the extent that some modern commentators consider this first phase as a Sámi ethnic religion. Soon Kvens converted to Læstadianism, followed not long afterwards by Swedes, Norwegians and Finns. Therefore Læstadianism has never been an exclusively Sámi movement (Kraft 2015). Læstadianism, mainly in its earlier phases, was contained many features typical charismatic and pietistic movements: the primacy of the bible, the stress on the Lutheran doctrine of justification, visions, uncontrolled body motions inspired by divine Grace, revelations, trance preaching, glossolalia, and other ecstatic phenomena (Ruohomäki 2009)³⁴³.

These ecstatic episodes resembled phenomena typical of other, earlier Nordic revivalist movements such as the Shouters and Viklundists³⁴⁴ (Pulkkinen 2005e; 2005h).

³⁴³ Ruohomäki states that these kinds of these phenomena can be found in the early phases of many revivalist movements so we should not be surprised to see them in early Læstadianism. As early as 1845 evidence can be observed of the first cases of “movements” – uncontrolled corporeal movements – among Læstadius’ parishioners. As time passed and the congregation increased, these phenomena became less emphatic and less widespread (Pentikäinen 2005b). These body movements were also known as *lihkadusat* (Pulkkinen 2005d:197) and were powerful, semi-ecstatic expression of physical and emotional spiritual experiences. They were especially perceived as physical manifestations of the “sensations of Grace”.

People who experienced these states of Grace often wailed and cried. Other characteristics of these religious experiences were involuntary gesticulations, dances and convulse movements.

³⁴⁴ Læstadianism did not developed in a cultural-religious *vacuum*. It was preceded by numerous minor revivalist movements and Læstadianism itself was, at first, only one among the numerous small congregations blossoming in the region. The pre-Læstadian religious unrest in Fennoscandinavia paved the way to the quick spread of Læstadianism. Moreover, these movements often had, at least in their first stages, a Sámi ethnic base. The most important of these movements was that of the “Shouters” (*Čuorvut* in north Sámi and *Huutajat* Finnish). As Pulkkinen (2005e) illustrates, the Shouters constituted a religious movement which was active in Finnmark – Norwegian side of Sápmi –, in the 1760s and 1770s. It was particularly popular in the region of Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and its adherents were mostly North Sámi. The movement was led by lay Sámi preachers. The Shouters based their preaching on the idea of repentance (Pulkkinen 2005e). The Shouters’ movement was characterised by ecstatic features which later emerged also among the first members of the Læstadian congregation. This common features led some scholar to suggest a connection between the Shouters and Læstadianism. Pulkkinen (2005e) highlights how these phenomena were much stronger and more common among the Shouters than among Læstadians. Pulkkinen (2005e:60) juxtaposes these ecstatic experiences to the

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, these phenomena as well as forms of trance connected with indigenous practices – what scholars started calling shamanic trance – have often been traced back to what scholars used to call “Arctic Hysteria” (Christensen 2015, Jonsson 2016). The expression “arctic hysteria” was coined by early ethnographers who relied on the information provided by arctic explorers such as Admiral Robert E. Peary. Arctic hysteria was first documented in 1892 in Inughuit communities in Greenland. The nature of this syndrome is highly controversial and so its implicit understanding of shamanism as the consequence of a mental imbalance springing from the combination of various factors associated with life in the extreme north: darkness and cold aggravated by supposedly inadequate nutrition. To these environmental factors, were to be added what were then perceived to be characteristics of indigenous Nordic peoples: a passive nature and weakness of the ego. These supposedly innate negative qualities were understood to cause emotional outbursts which (classified as arctic hysterical phenomena) would lead people to experience hysterical phenomena. In this line of thought, Northern people had hysteria-like reaction to unexpected events³⁴⁵.

The association between Sámi people and this supposed predisposition not only concerns the ecstatic features of Læstadianism (or previous charismatic movements popular in the region) but also indigenous Sámi ritual practices. Christensen (2015) reminds us that Sámi *Noaidevuohta* “Shamanic Trance” too was traced back to the “arctic hysteria”.

These supposed correlations gave rise and reinforced derogatory characterizations of Sámi people as naturally unstable and particularly inclined to hysteria and obsession.

Since ecstatic phenomena were an integral part of indigenous Sámi non-Christian cultures and the *Noaide* – the Sámi ritual practitioner – engaged in them since it was part of his/her spiritual expertise. For this reason, scholars have traced the origins of the Lastadian ecstatic movements to these indigenous Sámi spiritual experiences. Such understanding fails to take into account the charismatic nature of the Læstadian movements whereas the indigenous Sámi ritual practitioners’ practices was based on a completely different cosmology. Hence the premises of two seemingly similar phenomena are completely different and erroneously juxtaposed. This understanding is endorsed by Marit Myrvoll, who discusses it in her 2011 PhD dissertation on Læstadianism in the Tysfjord Sámi communities.

noaidi’s trances. He even suggests that the Shouters’ movement «incorporated some elements of Sámi shamanism which had been strenuously suppressed in the Sámi regions of Norway a few decades earlier» (2005e:60). In doing so, he partially endorses the “preservation thesis” according to which Læstadianism (in this case through the mediation of the Shouters) actually constituted a means for protecting the Sámi non-Christian religion. Pulkkinen endorses the preservation thesis but he also suggests a further, and not conflicting, possible political interpretation of the *Ĉuorvut*/Shouters’ movement. In his opinion, the religious exhortations of the Sámi lay preachers were often directed against the exponents of the Lutheran Church. Since the clergy was an expression of the State Church and hence of the central national institutions, such a resistance against these state administrators embodied a resistance against the hegemonic culture.

³⁴⁵ This understanding was later criticized by many scholars. As early as 1914, the polish anthropologist Maria Czaplica, who worked with arctic communities in Siberia, provides an account of previous studies on this analytical category criticising it and proposing to address these symptoms through the lens of indigenous cultures’ own analytical categories (Skowron-Markowska 2014).

Læstadians sharply divide members of the congregation and those outside. Such division is linguistically marked by expression used to define outsiders: «non-believers, faithless, the people of the world». Similarly, greetings among members of the congregation emphasise their shared Læstadian identity through standardised expressions such as “they are in faith”, “God’s greetings” “God’s peace” (Pasala 2004). Ethnic divisions fade away among members of the congregation since their Christian identity take precedents above any other.

A characteristic shared by all branches of Læstadianism is the “order of grace”, also known as the “sacral succession”. According to this doctrine, there is an uninterrupted chain of sacral inspiration from the Holy Ghost linking all the holy people on earth: after St. Peter’s martyrdom, true Christianity was transmitted through persecuted underground churches up to the arrival of Luther and his Reformation. But even Luther message had been distorted in Swede – as elsewhere – turning what Læstadius condemned as a “dead doctrine”. It was only when Læstadius met a Sámi girl he later called the Mary of Lapland that true Christianity gleamed bright again. Like the thinking of other pietistic doctrines, Læstadianism – in the person of its founder – consider itself to be the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, a true Church part of the wider Lutheran Church.

According to Læstadian doctrine, this *ecclesiola* was as ancient as the first disciples of Jesus and had survived throughout the centuries, emerging at times in the preaching of eminent yet persecuted clergy. Among them, Læstadius identified Luther, Niklaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf of the Moravian Church and other “awakened Christians”. The *ecclesiola* was now, according to Læstadius, embodied in his own movement and hence he emerges as the latest representative of the uninterrupted – yet thereto concealed – line of sacral succession which, since the times of the apostle Peter, had preached the Word of God (Pentikäinen 2005a). Læstadius resorted broadly to Sámi mythology and worldviews to explain his doctrine to his Sámi parishioners so that they would understand it better. Læstadius included elements of Sámi cultures in his sermons and even in some aspects of the services themselves: he makes use of Sámi cultural point of reference to illustrate Christianity because otherwise his flock might find it difficult to follow his teaching. For example, he cites birch rather than palm, *gállohat* (Sámi winter shoes) rather than sandals, and *gufithar/uldatt* (the little people of the underground) rather than devils. In so doing he may have preserve elements of the indigenous Sámi non-Christian mythology albeit distorting them. He also condemns practices such as traditional Sámi figures for instance by assimilating underground creatures to devils (Pentikainen 2000). Drawing upon Sámi myths and everyday experiences,

The 12 articles written by Læstadius for his doctoral thesis in theology are the central pillars upon which his doctrine rests. The first ten of these articles are in Latin, the 11th in Finnish, and the last in North Sámi. It is important to address the linguistic composition of these 12 articles since they offer clues to Læstadius’ understanding of social relations as well as the status of Sámi in the wider Scandinavian context in the 1850s. Latin was the lingua franca among educated Europeans at the

time. Læstadius employed the language of the church to discuss theological issues and to condemn the rationalism of the enlightenment. The choice of Finnish in relation to the 11th article is rooted in the contents of the article itself as it concerned the “temperance”³⁴⁶. The thesis was purposely composed in Finnish as the liquor trade in the area was organised and managed by Finns. At the time, alcoholism was a grave affliction in Sámi communities and Læstadius vehemently preached against it to the extent that he referred to alcohol as the “the devil’s piss”³⁴⁷.

The last article, also known as the twelfth thesis is written in North Sámi and it says: «a Lapp is a person of better quality than one who lives a settled life or [is] non-Lapp». This article is of extreme relevance and interest because of the view it propagates of the Sámi people, considering them as nomads in total contrast with settled communities. In this way, it reinforces the perception of Sámi as exclusively nomadic regardless of the type of life they really led – and still lead – thereby implicitly excluding settled Sámi from the community. Here again we observe the dichotomy between settlers and so-called nomads, typical of early social studies according to which settlers enjoyed a higher level of social complexity while nomads epitomize a primitive culture. Here though we see a reversal of such paradigm since the Sámi (here considered as exclusively nomadic) are regarded as “better” than the settled non-Sámi whereas the Sámi in the mid 1800 century are usually considered inferior to settlers. This reversal epitomised by Læstadius’ thesis resonates with the Christian understanding that the last will be first since the Sámi were considered the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low in 19th century Sweden.

In Læstadius’ view the Sámi were better than other people because of the socio-cultural circumstances they had to endure: the Sámi way of life – or at least the one Læstadius believed the Sámi led before the contact with the corruptive and abusive settlers – was considered to be the life God chose for his godly children. Hence, by comparing the supposedly traditional “simple” life of reindeer tender against the dissolute life of the urban dwellers, Læstadius considered the Sámi as illuminated by Grace, regardless of their recent pagan past.

³⁴⁶ The “Temperance” Læstadius appeals for refers to abstention from the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In 18th and 19th century Europe, many social movements inspired by religious ideals advocated qualities such as self control, abnegation and abstemiousness. These groups were known as temperance movements

³⁴⁷ Majority society and the Nordic Churches had regarded the Sámi as drunken and staggering (Mebius 2000 in Christensen 2015). Altered states of mind have frequently been attributed to trance states as well as other expressions of Sámi non-Christian worldviews and practices such as the joik (Sámi chant). The commonplace that the Sámi peoples are often victim of alcohol abuse has its roots in specific difficult socioeconomic conditions often fostered by the majority society itself.

It is true that alcohol-related problems were and are relatively frequent in the Nordic Countries among people with Sámi ethnic background – as also among the ethnic Norwegians – but the real, deep causes of such phenomenon has to be traced back to structural violence, depression and difficult socioeconomic conditions rather than to a supposed ethnic predisposition as it had often been suggested in the past.

The eleventh and twelfth theses address the difficult conditions many Sámi were experiencing in the 19th century, incurring into addiction and contracting debts in order to pay for the alcohol bought from the Finnish merchants³⁴⁸ (Hallencreutz 1987).

It is clear that Sámi culture(s) was important to Læstadius and the value he attributed to the way of life and cosmology of the Sámi was grounded in a number of factors. Pite Sámi and culture were Læstadius' cultural idiom as they were his family heritage on his mother's side. In 1827 Læstadius married Brita Kajsa Alstadius, a girl of Sámi descent. The Sámi ethnic background of Brita Kajsa Alstadius is relevant because, as Pentikäinen explains Læstadius desire for a «[...] bride from the milder ecstatic movement» i.e. a woman belonging to the moderate branch of the “Readers movement” – the same movement Milla Clemensdotter/Mary of Lapland belonged to – (2005a:167). This short extract shifts the focus from the ethnic to the religious background of his wife-to-be.

According to Pentikäinen, Mary of Lapland – Milla Clementsdotter, a poor and humble Sámi girl – embodied, in Læstadius's, view the Sámi link between the unbroken “chain of grace” and Læstadius himself. The encounter between Læstadius and Milla led to the preacher's personal conversion: spiritual awakening came to Læstadius through the poverty and the destitution of the Sámi in the person of Milla Clemensdotter. This specific event in the religious life of Læstadius became particularly important for the Sámi people who adhered to Læstadianism. Milla Clemensdotter – an uneducated simple Sámi woman – represented for many the spiritual mother their religious leader.

Pentikäinen hypothesizes that Milla may symbolize a mythical prototype encompassing four important Christian female figures: the Virgin Mary, Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene and the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her teardrops.

4.3.2 A theory of faith: understandings of Læstadianism suspended between curtailment and preservation

Læstadianism was not a uniform movement and it showed wide variations across time and space. Soon after the death of its founder, the movement divided itself in a number of branches, led by preachers with their own specific backgrounds and agendas. As Læstadianism is a complex and multifaceted, so are the theories that have approached and studied it. Læstadianism has attracted the interest of scholars belonging to different academic fields who have investigated the social, cultural and political implications of this Lutheran pietistic movement. Structural and functionalist readings of Læstadianism have characterised the socio-cultural anthropology of Læstadianism. Some scholars have developed a theory – considered by many controversial – according to which Læstadianism helped preserving Indigenous Sámi values.

³⁴⁸ Absence of regulation fuelled alcohol abuse in Sámi communities. Traders made large profits while their Sámi customers developed addictions that led to poverty and socio-cultural problems.

This thesis, which has today in Professor Jens Ivar Nergård (University of Tromsø, department of education), one of its most prominent exponent, takes into account the use Læstadius himself – who had a distinct Sámi background and heritage inherited from his Sámi mother – made of Sámi indigenous elements in his own preaching. According to this line of thought, Læstadianism would not only constitute a Sámi understanding of Christianity but would also represent a preservation of Sámi worldviews³⁴⁹. Johs. Falkenberg was the first to see in Læstadianism a reaction against the economic and cultural disintegration of Sámi society. Falkenberg's works led to the development of the so-called "cultural preservation thesis" (Minde 1988). In the 1950s and 1960s, the prominent anthropologist Robert Paine proposed an interpretation of Læstadianism that fits within the coordinated of what Minde defines the "preservation theory". Basing his theories about Læstadianism upon Falkenberg's theories, Paine reflected upon the role of Læstadianism in the community in exam, stressing its role and function as a means of cultural preservation through recodification.

In his 1965 work on Læstadianism in a Sámi coastal settlement in Finnmark, Paine suggested Læstadianism had a "therapeutic" function in structurally-discriminated Sámi milieux. Paine's analysis is based on the idea that the « Læstadian teaching fitted the Sámi situation like a glove since they equated their material poverty with spiritual riches» (Paine in Minde, 1998: 9). This interpretation considers Læstadianism as a faith characterized by values that would have given Sámi people hope, providing them with a godly reason to endure their difficult situation. Paine remarked that Læstadianic teaching «fitted the Sámi situation like a glove» because Læstadianism associates "material poverty" – a harsh daily reality for the majority of Sámi families – with spiritual riches» (Paine 1965:67). As Larsen (2020) highlights, Paine's theory was in line with earlier researchers such as not only those of Falkenberg, but also other scholars such as Whitaker and Gjessing. In more recent times, other scholars such as Bjorklund have stressed the role Læstadianism had – in both Sámi and Kven communities – in allowing forms of social organization that helped counterbalance the impact of assimilation policies³⁵⁰.

Hallencreutz, a Finnish scholar who studied Indigenous arctic worldviews, suggests that Læstadianism represented a means in preserving Sámi traditional religion. In Hallencreutz's view, Læstadius' use of a symbolism so deeply relying on a mother-like figure, along with metaphors

³⁴⁹ Among Læstadian Sámi, many are those who dismiss this thesis refusing to acknowledge any link between Læstadianism and Sámi non-Christian knowledge systems. The "recodification theory" implicitly suggests that Læstadianism carries an implicit pagan message. Jernsletten (2010) considers the joik an emblematic example of this attitude: this traditional Sámi chant was considered heathen by early Christian missionaries and it still carries this stigma. The performance of this chant, along with the use of traditional drums, is becoming more and more common during Christian liturgies or in official ceremonies but this new cultural expression (which blends Christian tradition with non-Christian indigenous Sámi elements) is highly controversial in Læstadian circles. Many Læstadians do not want to be associated to this form of Sámi singing which is strongly connected to Sámi non-Christian past and is negatively connoted due to its association with drunkenness.

³⁵⁰ For an exhaustive analysis of the connections between Læstadianism and Sámi cultures see: Minde 1988; Nergård, Jens Eirik: 'The two faces of Læstadianism: understanding religious conversion from Saami pre-Christian religion into Læstadianism' (Polar Studies, University of Cambridge, 2007

borrowing from Sámi worldviews, are part of a conscious use of Sámi mythology. In when addressing a Sámi audience. Hallencreutz does not go any further in his reflections upon a possible clear connection – or even borrowing or adoption of indigenous element – between indigenous Sámi Worldviews and Læstadianism. Nevertheless, he states that, « though a structural analysis of Læstadius’ theology and language » could help casting some light on why Læstadianism became « the religion of the Sámi » and a « locally adapted Sámi interpretation of Christianity » (1987:182).

As Paine before him, Professor Bjorklund – social anthropologist currently holding a professorship at Tromsø University Museum – has devoted his attention to the social dimension of this religious movement (1988).

Pentikäinen (2000:143) has stated that Læstadianism constituted the mergence and « intermingling of traditional northern mentality and Christian teachings ». In his view, Sámi pagan beliefs had survived despite the evangelising activity of the missionaries. According to Pentikäinen, these heathen practices were maintained beneath a Christian façade «well into our own times». Moreover, he states that many Sámi shamans added Christian symbols to the drum illustrations and that « the Sámi used a kind of flexible, yet obstinate delaying tactic in holding on to their ethnic beliefs ». In all these cases, Læstadianism is described as a channel through which Sámi old religion would have survived the oppressive institutions of Church and State.

Among the many authors who have address the conservative function of Læstadianism, the Sámi theologian Tore Johnsen, states that, even if « there are reasons to be critical of many traditions of the past, there is still reason to see a continuity in the way Sámi have expressed their spirituality » (in Jernsletten, 2010: 382).

There is a further important characteristic of this religious movement which in a certain sense has guaranteed the maintenance of the local Sámi identity, in relation to other communities as well. As local political leader Idar Reinås explained during a church-organized meeting in 2009 (Norgga Girku – Den Norske Kirke Sámi girkoráddi 2009), Læstadianism ensured the maintenance of cross-border relations between the congregation of the Márka and the congregations located in other areas of Sápmi thanks to the importance this movement attributes to preaching and maintaining relations between the various congregations. Minde, addressing the “preservation theory” from both a broad and a more locale perspective, highlights its shortcoming while also acknowledging its contextual and chronological validity. Læstadianism may have had a “preservation function” and might have functioned as an identity marker but, among the Laestedian Sámi, many find this thesis almost insulting, refusing to acknowledge any link between Læstadianism and Sámi non-Christian knowledge system. The preservation and the recodification theories are based on Laestedianism’s deep ties with pagan religions. If in some communities Læstadianism may have helped preserving

Sámi ways of living, in others it it even had an opposite homogenising and repressive effect, levelling ethnic differences and erasing ethnic boundaries by making all believers equal (Kiil 2015)

Læstadianism has been addressed and examined for its potential negative impact on Sámi cultures and on the potential hindrance, it may have posed to the intergenerational transmission of forms of Sámi cultural heritage. Scholars have focused on the negative impact this pietistic understanding of Lutheranism had on Sámi indigenous worldviews and practices: According to Læstadians, everything associated with the Sámi non-Christian practices of systems of knowledge was sinful. Henceforth, practices like *joiking* (Sámi chant), culturally charged elements of the landscape such as the *sieidi*, the use or even the possession of Sámi ritual drums, and any form of *noaidevuohta* were considered depreciable and were slowly abandoned by the majority of the members of Sámi communities upon the spread and embrace of Læstadianism.

Since this pietistic movement condemns all supposedly extravagancies and worldly pleasures, Læstadians, and especially lay preachers and their wives, used to wear coarse wool *gákti* and decorations were reduced. The preacher and his family had to be models for all society, and all the members of the community had to follow their example (Koslin 2010)

Given the association between Sámi cultural elements and sin in Læstadian teachings, for many Læstadians the connection between Sámi identity and Sámi non-Christian worldviews was and still is a source of unease. For others though there is no contradictions in being both Sámi and Læstadians as Sámi identity was seen as a privileged position from which to receive the Grace of God. A further element against the preservation and the recodification can be traced back to in the idea that Læstadianism provided Sámi – as well as Kvens – with a tool against state-led assimilation. Nevertheless, as Torp (in Minde, 1998) has highlighted these theses clashes with Laestadius' exhortation to all become children of God by embracing him and receive his grace, an appeal which transcended ethnic attachment.

In some contexts, Læstadianism actually meant a curtailment of Sámi identity and a reduction of individual agency, especially in the case of women: the Sámi women interviewed by Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo belong to Newborns-Læstadians – the most conservative of the various Læstadian branches – and their testimony partially contradicts the “preservation theories”. To them, Læstadianism meant a great social control over their bodies. Newborns-Læstadians have a very strict and ascetic view over the world and its mundane pleasures. Women, more than men, are seen as sinners who have to be humble and repentant. Since there is a strong condemnation of material excesses, social pressure forces Sámi women who belong with this branch to give up traditional clothes and pieces of jewellery as well as other items that are though central in Sámi cultures. In this sense, Læstadianism contributed to the weakening of Sámi Culture. Moreover, these women felt Newborns-Læstadianism, through its strong condemnation of female sexuality and the association it draws between female body and sins, deprived them of them the position women used to have among

Sámi (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo: 2015). These scholars though have also claimed that some features of the Sámi worldview (for instance the importance given to nature) persisted despite – in spite of and not thanks too – the movement’s pervasive influence. In particular, Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo refer to the practice of baptism to demonstrate how ancient Sámi religious elements survived thanks to their affinity with and integration into a Christian framework. According to their informants, some children were baptised during Church ceremonies but using water from a Sámi holy spring. This testimony, along with the aforementioned informants’ experiences, seem to corroborate Minde’s (1998) claim that Sámi Culture survived the 20th century not because of, but in spite of Læstadianism. Moreover Minde’s, criticism of the “conservative theory” reminds us how the insurgence of Læstadianism, as that of other contemporary revivalist movements that took place in Africa and Americas in the same period, should be contextualised within – and as a reaction against – a more general and widespread process of modernisation, rooted in the French revolution. Even if there were many references to the everyday life of the people he was preaching among, Laestadius draw heavily upon European pietistic spiritual tradition. It can be said that Læstadianism was born at the intersection between the local milieu and the global socio-cultural context.

Furthermore, it is important bear in mind that Læstadianism, as any other religious movement, is deeply geographically and temporally determined. Being aware of these issues reminds us that it is not really possible to generalise and propose a one-fits-all model.

Changes may occur within a relatively short amount of time: what might have helped preserving Sámi identity in the late 19th century could have been no longer acceptable in the 1920s, as it’s the case of the Sermons held in Sámi.

These reflections reveal the complexity of Læstadianism both in a transnational context and also when its local ramifications are analysed. An example of the latter, is the following examination of the interactions between Læstadianism and the Márka-Sámi community which led, among other things, to historical developments that collocated the community at the centre of theological and socio-cultural tensions.

4.3.3 Læstadianism in the Márka

Given the family bonds between the Márka people and the Sámi from the Gárasavvon/Karesuando area – a region where Laestadius spread as early as the 1860s – the people of the Márka were not only Lutherans but also faithful to its Pietistic reading as formulated by Læstadius. There is a tradition that is alive still in Stuornjårga that «Christianity came with the reindeer herders» ('Christianity'

is, amongst the Læstadians often synonymous with Læstadianism) (Minde 1988:16). The history of Læstadianism in Stuornjårga has been investigated by Kristiansen, who examined the theological as well as historical dimension of this movement and also by Minde, who worked on this topic from a

socio-historical perspective, publishing a number of articles on the socio-cultural dimension of Læstadianism in the Márka and the surrounding areas. He also wrote extensively about this topic in the report he published in 2000 in the Sámi scientific journal *Dieđut*.

The first contact between the people of Stuornjárga and Læstadianism dates to 1848, when a Sámi girl, Jerpe Gaddja Karen from Gratangen visited her family in Gárasavvon/Karesuando for her confirmation. When she returned to Gratagnen, she had been “awakened”. Not only had she received the Grace but she also introduced her fellow village people to Læstadianism (Kristiansen 2009) (Myrnes Olsen Balto 2015). The network of contacts established over the years by the reindeer tending Sámi in the course of their annual migrations provided a channel for disseminating the revivalist movement from the pulpit of Læstadius in Gárasavvon/Karasuando to the meeting house in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and the turf huts at the head of the north Norwegian fjords and in the inland settlements such as the Márka (Bjørklund 1985).

According to Kristiansen, from the 1850s to the 1870s, Læstadianism in the Márka had the majority of its followers in the Sámi community, but already from the end of the 1860s more and more Norwegians chose to embrace Læstadianism.

The growing presence of ethnic Norwegians had, in Kristiansen’s view, led to a radicalization the movement in the whole Ofoten area (Stuornjárga and the nearby areas) and has probably also laid the foundation for the revival to become more visible in the public space.

According to the sources (such as church registers and private collections) examined by various scholars, many in the Márka lived an active Christian life following the norms imposed by their strict interpretation of Læstadianism and quite a few of them became preachers, some of whom travelled far and wide to teach the principles of their faith.

It was in this area that the important Læstadian preacher Thomas Paave (1827-1912) had decided to settle in his old age. Paave belonged to Pajala's East-Læstadian milieu, but upon moving to the Márka he also enjoyed great trust among the Western branches of Læstadianism.

Læstadianism had a long-lasting impact on the communities living in the Stuornjárga area and, as scholars have demonstrated, it both fostered and curtailed Sámi individual and collective identity.

At a local level, in Stuornjárga – as well as in North Troms – Læstadianism is considered to have had the effect of “conserving” Sámi language and culture until the early 20th century (Svebak 1983 in Minde 1998). This line of thought is based upon a circular process that supposedly ensured the survival of Sámi languages as long as Sámi speakers were either the majority of the members of local Læstadian congregations or held positions of power within them. The predominance of ethnic Sámi – which is to say those speaking a Sámi idiom as their mother tongue and the main language of their daily interactions – in the early phases of the Læstadian movement positively influenced the

perception of Sámi languages among their speakers. Being the sacred language used for preaching the Word of God, Sámi was perceived to be a holy language and therefore worthy of respect. This understanding probably fostered the positive attitude towards Sámi language in the area.

The division between Læstadians and non-Læstadian is often interpreted as one between Sámi and non-Sámi. Perhaps this distinction was valid in the early years of the movement but it was no longer the case a few decades later, and this is rarely the case in Stuornjárga. In this peninsula the division between Læstadianism and not-Læstadianism did not necessarily follow ethnic lines since such connections were time- and space-specific.

Yet it has been asserted that such a division was an important reason why Læstadianism retained the Sámi identity of its followers (Steinlien 1984 in Minde 2000). Læstadianism was held in high regard and preachers were very respected members of the community, their influence was such that it transcended ethnic barriers and – as I learned during my fieldwork – when first Læstadianism spread in the area ethnic Norwegians even learnt Sámi in order to attend and understand Læstadian ceremonies which, at that time, were still held in the local variety of North Sámi. This fact is a source of immense pride to many of those Læstadians who identify themselves as Sámi, in the light of the active repression and stigmatization targeting Sámi cultures, including languages. According to Minde, though, this phenomenon is attested only in the first decades of Læstadianism in the community and there is little evidence to support the actual preservation role of Læstadianism, at least during the inter-war period.

According to the studies he conducted in the area, both inspired and confirmed by his personal experience, Minde highlights that, at least from the 1920s, in the Márka, ethnic affiliation within Læstadian circles was often repressed. Within the Læstadian congregations the people tried to downplay their Sámi ethnic background through a language shift – from Sámi to Norwegian – and by abandoning the use of objects and colours that could be interpreted as ethnic identity markers.

Even colourful items of clothing that recalled Sámi *gáktis* (costumes) were not considered appropriate. In particular, Minde reports the experience of a girl who grew up in the 1940s and who recalled that, within the congregations, anything hinting at Sámi identity, such as items of clothing that were red, yellow or green, was frowned upon, and that was especially the case with the highly visible *gákti*. (Minde 2000 see also Balto's childhood memories at <https://digitaltmuseum.no/>)

These observations may give the impression that Læstadianism was opposed the Sámi identity qua Sámi. But I deem this view as unfounded for it is based on shaky premises. Reflection on the nature of pietistic movements may reveal more accurate tools to decode the negative attitudes expressed by Læstadians towards manifestations of Sámi identity. By employing such an approach can help resolve

the seeming contradictions between the use of Sámi as a liturgical language and sanctioning the use of everyday items which by their design embodied Sámi identity.

The problem was not so much Sámi identity in itself but the fact that it belonged to this world rather than to the kingdom of God.

This theological assertion had very wordy consequences: within the Læstadian movement, ethnic and local characteristics were often suppressed, and in this process, what was visibly Sámi was implicitly suppressed with detrimental consequences for Sámi identity *per se*³⁵¹.

According to Minde, there is no evidence in either contemporary Læstadian texts or in the surviving source material to suggest that the conflict between those then called “the World” – people who did not belong to the congregation – and “God's Children” – Læstadians – was of an ethnic nature *per se*. In *Stuornjårga* Laestadianism was able to attract converts from all the three local ethnic groups: Sámi, Kven and Norwegians. The conflict was, rather, over religious belief and over the interpretation of the Scriptures.

How can we investigate the religion-politics relationship in the light of the above? Not only did theological principles inform individuals in conducting their of their lives but also divisions internal to the Læstadian movements influenced the lives of the movement's followers, resulting in community fragmentation and internal strife, with consequences which can still be appreciated today.

Læstadianism influenced the social life of local Sámi beyond the private or the local sphere. As early as the early 20th century, when the first Sámi ethno-political mobilisations began – the Læstadian leadership opposed to it.

In 1912, a dispute about whether or not to participate in political elections among the First Born Læstadian (a branch developed within Læstadianism) led to an intensification of Læstadian antagonism against those Sámi who worked to raise awareness and assert Sámi identity in the Márka. At this stage, a polarization emerged, with the first born Læstadians wishing to keep the Sámi identity private and willing keep a low profile by abstain for politics, while other in the community favoured active participation in the election and fighting for the acknowledgment and the valorisation of Sámi identity in the public sphere. This tense dichotomous approach to Sámi identity and political activism persisted in the Márka, with consequences that influenced the community for decades, characterizing local Sámi politics as well as the life of the community. In Minde's view and experience – he is from the village of Grovfjord – in the area Laestadian religious leaders opposed the Sámi ethno-political mobilisation as far as in the late 1980s. The Sámi scholar ventures to claim that in the 1980s Sámi

³⁵¹ Given the marked aversion Christian preachers – especially Læstadian – expressed against *joik*, the strong adherence of the local community to Læstadianism may have lead fo the loss of Joik as a cultural practice . Such view seems to be substantiated by the ethnomusicology professor's Ola Graf, currently honorary professor at UiT university museum in Tromsø, who, despite his efforts, was not able to locate and document a single *joik* from the area.

politics and Læstadianism were “almost exclusive”. According to my interlocutors, the consequences of the Læstadian-inspired privatization of Sámi ethnic identity – reinforced by state-led stigmatization – and consequence disregard for political activism were still perceivable in the early 2000s, when the Festival Márkomeannu was starting to establish itself amidst the opposition of part of the community. Those who were strict Læstadians were not eager to see Sámi identity publicly displayed and Sámi issues brought forward in political and politicised arenas.

With reference to the relation between politics and Læstadianism, Minde has addressed the work and legacy of Henrik Kvandahl (1865-1951), a Sámi teacher and writer who worked in the area. In that period (1915-ca. 1940) the First Born branch of Læstadianism came to occupy a dominant position amongst the Læstadians in the *Stuornjárga* region. Kvandahl was a devote Læstadian believer who, though, had fallen out with the leadership of the First-Born congregations because of internal strives connected with authority issues. Kvandahl accused the Læstadian leadership – which was based on the Swedish side of the border — of undermining the authority of the famous Læstadian preacher and leader, Mikkalo-Jouvna (John Mikkelsen 1837-1916)³⁵² during the norwegian parliamentary election of 1912. Between the 1920s and th 1940s, Kvandahl made strenuous attempts to establish in *Stuornjárga* a Sámi political movement partially based on Læstadian ideas. Even though the program of Kvandahl’s Sámi association was deeply influenced by Læstadian principles, Kvandahl did not accept the ban on electoral activity set in place by the Læstadian leadership (Minde 2000).

The movement enjoyed continuous expansion in the regions of Ofoten and Vestfjorden and even as far as Lofoten. Such expansion is striking since these are areas where ethnic Norwegians – or at least those identifying themselves as such – are the majority. Nevertheless, Sámi adherence to the movements was still considerable especially further inland along the fjords, in those areas where the Márka-Sámi settlements are located and where people self-identify as Sámi.

In the communities where the Sámi culture – in its local form – was still that of the majority of population, local Sámi preachers ministered to the people’s spiritual needs, but seldom assumed a leadership role. Among the few exceptions was Mikal-Mikkel (NS) (Mikkel Mikkelsen -N-, d. 1939) from Áravuopmi/Vassdalen. Although he was proficient in both Norwegian and North Sámi, as his

³⁵² In the famous book *Tre stammers møte*, Carl Schøyen reported about a sermon given by Mikkelsen who criticize the Evenes preacher when he addresses his audience with the following Sámi statement: "*Spiritist dat leat noaide!*" (a spiritist is a *noaide*). Such a strong statement made by a Læstadian preacher was meant as a critique to the Church as an institution was disgraced as it tolerated false teachers among their own priests. Although the spiritist’s identity was not mentioned by Mikkelsen, it is most likely that his audience immediately understood the reference and, according to Kristiansen, agreed that the prost Jacob Anderssen (1850-1921, a Norwegian priest who studied Sámi languages with Friis.) was certainly was a *noaide* (Kristiansen 2009). What is remarkable about such statment is Mikkelsen’s resort to the indigenous concept of *noaide* – loaded with negative meanings in Læstadian milieux – to accuse a member of the State Church’s clergy

role as an interpreter indicates, there no historical evidence – either written or oral – that he ever employed the Sámi language in Læstadian religious gatherings (Minde 2000)

There is a further relevant element that scholars from different fields have highlighted in relation to religion and identity: the language dimension of the Márka. As it emerged during my fieldwork³⁵³, during World War II Sámi parents suddenly stopped talking in Sámi with their children to save them from discrimination. This linguistic choice, which led to a linguistic shift in formerly Sámi speaking communities, shows that the local Sámi language – which by then had been under the pressure of assimilation policies and stigmatization for at least 80 years – suddenly lost the prestige it had insofar enjoyed among Sámi speakers. This domestic language shift was preceded by a more institutional one: Minde notices that the Sámi preachers stopped using the Sámi language between the 1920s and the 1940s.

Nevertheless, Minde also reports that, at least on the borders of *Stuornjárga*, in Spansdalen and Inner Tysfjord – where the Sámi constituted the overwhelming majority of the local population – Sámi language was preserved possibly because of the strong position enjoyed by Læstadianism among the locals. Hence, in Minde's view, the preservation hypothesis, has some explanatory power at least under certain conditions and in specific circumstance. All the above elements combined show the complex and multidimensional aspects of religious and ethnic affiliation among the people of *Stuornjárga*, being as they are both Sámi and Norwegians.

Læstadianism had become, for many Márka-Sámi, an essential element of their identity as well as a source of pride while for others it belongs to their own family background even though it is no longer practiced.

Still today many in the area self-identify as Læstadians and a Læstadian chapel rises at Snoalta/Kvitfors, not far from Gállogieddi. the family who lived in what is now the Gállogieddi museum was, as most Márka-Sámi families, affiliated to Læstadianism and some of its members were influential local preachers. Already in the 1860s, Gállogieddi became a centre of local Læstadianism thanks to the active Christian life of Johan Olsen and his two sons: Ole Andreas and Nils Peder. Johan Olsen was a respected bearer of the message of Læstadianism who preached in Evenes and, following in his steps, Ole became a preacher who travelled beyond *Stuornjárga*, spreading the gospel from 1880s until his death in the 1930s. The house itself became a meeting point for travelling Læstadian preachers who were hosted there when visiting the Márka (Myrnes, Olsen, Balto 2016).

³⁵³ This topic emerged during numerous private conversations with members of the local community as well as with professor Geir Grenersen and other scholars such as Professor Else Grete Broderstad (UiT Centre for Sámi Studies).



Image 58: Gállogieddi friluft museum, religious books displayed in the main house (Photo by the author).

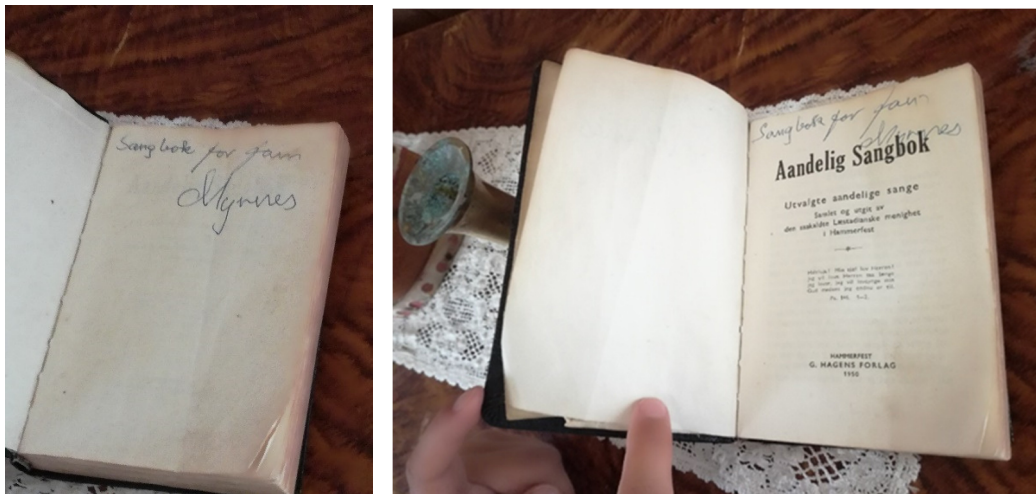


Image 59a and 59b: Gállogieddi friluft museum, religious books displayed in the main house, detail. (Photo by the author).

In order to underline the connection between the community – represented by the family who lived in Gállogieddi – this Læstadianism, Læstadian religious books that once belonged to member of the family are today on display in a corner of one of the first-floor rooms of the house-museum.

Not far from Gállogieddi, where the road toward Evenskjer intersect the river Storjohca/Storelva, stands a wooden chapel painted in white. In winter, when thick layers of snow cover everything, only the dark roof is easily visible.

4.3.4 For Whom the Bell Tolls: Kvitfors chapel

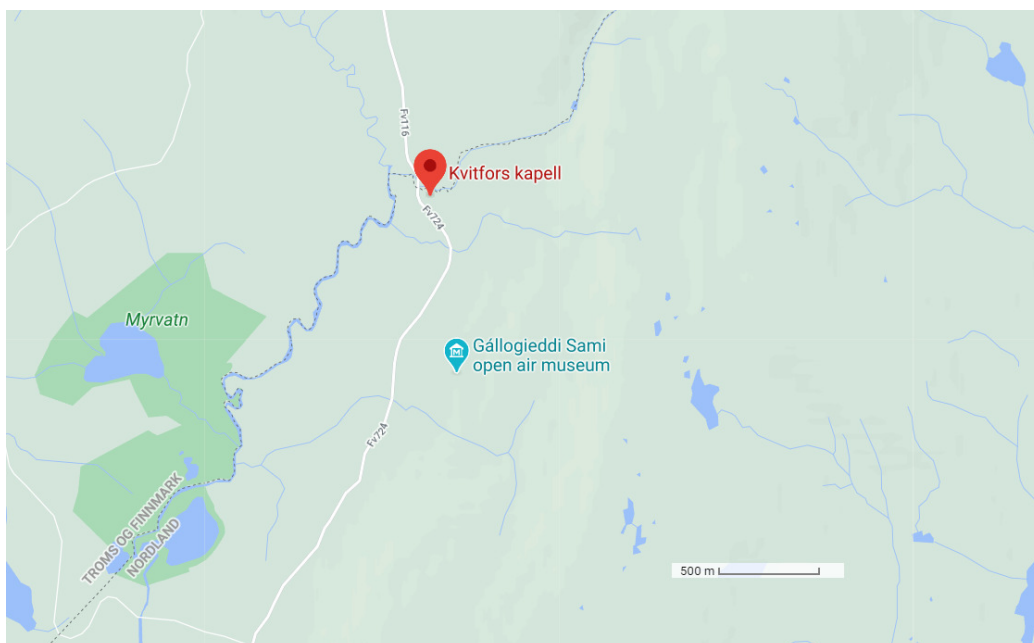
Kvitfjors chapel has, since its founding in the 1950s, been the material and spiritual centre of the local Læstadian congregation since it is in this chapel that Læstadian assembly gathers. Kvitfjors Chapel is the only Sámi church building in the municipality and, at as 2009, it was under financial

strain since the financial support it once received from both Evenes and Skånland municipalities had been suspended. The origins of Kvitfjor's chapel shall be traced back to the funds collected in the late 19th century to erect a house of prayers in the Márka. In the early days, people used to gather in *goahiti* (turf hut) but the congregation grew bigger and bigger and in 1883 the community built Lavangseidet³⁵⁴ bedehuskapell, a Læstadian assembly hall and so the first local prayer house was established. In the 1950s, it was replaced by a newly erected chapel in Snoalta/kvitfjors: Kvitfios Kappel. The construction of Kvitfios chapel began in 1957 and the building was completed and consecrated on September 17, 1959 (Myrnes, Olsen, Balto 2006). Lavangseidet bedehuskapell is located few hundred metres west of Kvitfios chapel, along the road uphill towards the mountain.



Image 60: Kvitfios chapel in winter, Stuornjårga, (photo by the author).

³⁵⁴ Lavangseidet is the Norwegian name of the Stuornjårga peninsula. The fact that the prayer house was called Lavangseidet bedehuskapell testifies to the importance this prayer house had for the community as a whole.



Map 12: Detail of Stuornjårga, reporting the location of Kvitfors chapel, (adapted from google maps).

The location is highly significant in the symbolic and physical spatial organization of the Márka since it is located just a few metres from the river marking the border between Troms and Nordland – a fact that would make it an intrinsically liminal building in the Norwegian organization of space – but also at the core of Stuornjårga as a Sámi peninsula.

The chapel even became a place of theological discussions, attracting preachers from beyond the borders of Stuornjårga as it happened in 1904, where preachers from different areas of Sápmi met at Kvitfors and discussed the principles of their faith³⁵⁵.

The Kvitfors chapel and the Læstadian heritage in the Márka have been the object of discussions and meetings in the area. In 2009, the Sámi Church Council – an office belonging with the Church of Norway – organized an open meeting named “Sámi church life in Skånland – challenges and

³⁵⁵ At the beginning of 1904, the preacher Erik Johnsen visited Snoalta/Kvitfors and met with the preacher Thomas Paave (1827-1912) who had moved there and there spent his last years in his older days (Kristiansen 2016). Erik Johnsen was from Gáivuotna/Kåfjord in North Troms and was an important member of the local Læstadian community. As a preacher he was kept in high regards. It was under his leadership that Læstadian movement developed a closer relationship to the Norwegian State Church. Læstadianism is the faith that has had the greatest influence on the people and culture in large areas of the region (<https://nordligefolk.no/hjem-2/kultur-og-historie/Læstadianismen-tro-samfunn/?lang=en>). Erik Johnsen announced a meeting at Snoalta/Kvitfors where he challenged the assembly to take a position on his preaching. According to professor of religion Kristiansen, the premises to this rift was probably a large gathering in Kabelvåg in Lofoten where, in 1901, the preachers Fjelldal and Eriksen had discussed the same text interpreting it differently. At the Kvitfors meeting, the Sámi teacher and preacher Thomas Johnsen (1844–1923) gave his full support for Erik Johnsen's scriptural interpretation. Johnsen then continued his journey and came just after New Year 1904 to Gratangen where he held some gatherings. The rumors about the meeting at Snoalta/Kvitfors had reached the preacher John Mikkelsen who came to investigate the situation and his presence led to two separate meetings in Gratangen. There was an attempt to mediate between Erik Johnsen and Peder Olsen Fjelldal, but without result. These meetings led to a division internal to Læstadianism between those who followed Erik Johnsen (Erikians) and those who followed Peder Olsen Fjelldal (Perians) (Kristiansen 2016). This episode shows the importance the Chapel had acquired not only in the Márka but also in the Læstadian Milieux.

opportunities”. At the event took part important members of the local community such as Idar Reinås – political leader affiliated with SLF³⁵⁶ -, Randi Nymo – then a psychiatric nurse and PhD student –.

The meeting focused on the use of Sámi language and culture enrich church life in Skånland. A topic still controversial in the area. Research conducted at the end of 2000s by the local offices of the Sámi Church Council shows that the priests in Skånland and Evenes have learned Sámi and can conduct Sámi-language services. As stated in the report that followed the meeting, Reinås proposed the use of Sámi language during functions such as confirmation, baptisms, text readings, communion and the blessing. Also, the singing of sacred hymns in Sámi has been proposed as a way to include Sámi in Church-life. In Reinås’ words, Sámi is [to be] used when it is natural to use it. According to the 2009 Sámi Church Council ‘s report, in Skånland at the end of 2000s, there were two ordained Sámi-Norwegian services a year, one of them is in the main church in Evenskjer (image n61), the other in Vilgesvarri/Blåfjell.

Læstadianism is acknowledged as an important part of the Christian life in the parish and Reinås, during his speech, asked the participants to reflect on how to create cohesion and a good atmosphere so that both Læstadian and non-Læstadian parishioners can participate in, proposing that Læstadian participants are to be allowed to be speakers during the Church of Norway services when usually only members of the clergy deliver speeches. In Reinås’ view, such an initiative on one hand would allow the Sámi language to grow stronger thanks to its use in church life – through which it would enjoy a respected position in society – and, on the other hand, it would ensure a greater diversity while also fostering a sense of tradition in the church. In line with this implicit connection between Sámi language and culture, Reinås also brought into the discussion the need for courses in Sámi culture and traditions, the need for more frequent text reading in Sámi – an issue connected with the use of

³⁵⁶ The most conservative of the Sámi political organizations, Samenes Landsforbund (the Sámi National Association – SLF), was founded in 1979. This was a protest movement against what some perceived as too radical Sámi demands from NSR *Norske Samer Riksforbund* – the Norwegian Sámi association – which they thought would lead to possible friction between the various population groups in the north. The organization also opposed the establishment of a separate, directly-elected Sámi parliament and was against the ratification of official rights for the Sámi people, focusing rather on Sámi identity as a private issue. SLF no longer exist as a political entity. However, a breakaway organization from SLF, the Sámi People's Union, took its place. This organization mainly mobilizes the Sámi in the coastal and fjord areas (Gaski H., Berg-Nordlie M., 2021 *Norske Store Lexicon* https://snl.no/Sámisk_organisering_i_Norge).

Sámi language – as well as the need for an awareness concerning the different Christian traditions within the community.



Image 61: Skaniik/Skanland's main church in Evenskjer, by the sea (photo by the author).

According to Reinås, the Læstadian movement is closer to the biblical teachings and preserves the old ways. Furthermore, it provides a counterweight against what he perceived as the constant new changes in the Church of Norway. The movement, in Reinås' view, is deeply intertwined with Sámi language and culture and ensures contact across borders, to Sweden and Finland and especially with relatives and other Sámi communities on the Swedish side. During the meeting's concluding remarks it was highlighted that, at least those attending the meeting stressed the importance of continuing with Sámi services in the church, regardless of whether the Sámi come to the service or not.

Even though the open conversation that took place after the two speakers delivered their presentations showed that there was the will to use the main church in Evenskjer for Sámi services, it also emerged that it was still deemed important to have a specific designated place where Sámi religious culture is granted the physical space to thrive. Such a space had been for a long time been identified in Snoalta/Kvitfjos, where now the chapel stands and once used to be a Læstadian gathering house.

4.4 Of streams, bottomless lakes, marshes and ponds: the Márka's watershed

Although Læstadianism may appear as a niche topic, somewhat unrelated to the contemporary issues this thesis aims to address, is it important to consider the recent religious background of the Márka – and therefore of Sápmi – because religion is a fundamental factor influencing local societies. If we wish to analyse the ethno-political environment of the late 20th-early 21st centuries, it is necessary to take into account the confluence various interdependent but autonomous elements which have given rise to the ethno-political efflorescence in the Márka. The only way one can hope to understand local dynamics – autonomous but together offering a more complete picture – is by analysing case by case, community by community and even village by village. It is risky to generalize despite the fact that case-based reflections may provide interesting frameworks suitable for understanding wider – yet culturally akin – contexts, with the *proviso* that local factors should always inform the study of specific contexts.

Not far from the chapel runs a 8.9 km long creek known as Duolbá/Kvitforselva, a clear mountain creek born out of the confluence of various smaller creeks and streams originating from the west side of Rismålstinden. From the lake Store Langvatnet runs the first stretch of the creek, bearing the name of Stillelva. Stillelva runs further south over Flatlandsmyran picking up more water from a short stream and becoming the proper Duolbá/Kvitforselva. After the waterfall, 180 meters after intersecting the road Fv724 Duolbá/Kvitforselva flows together with Dundorajohka it becomes known as the 10.9 km river long Stojohka/Storelva (big river, i.e. *stor-johka* in the local dialect of North Sámi).

The description of the watercourse system in the area of the Márka near Kvitfios chapel introduces us to two very interesting and important but also difficult topics:

- that of the non-animal creatures that inhabit the Márka (as well as other regions of Sápmi) according to indigenous cosmography and systems of knowledge, and of knowledge.
- that of borders in the Márka.

I shall first address this latter aspect, and the ramifications borders had for the local community and then I shall proceed with an analysis of the role of non human agents in the Márka, their relations with the landscape and with the local community, their role in indigenous Sámi society as well as their connection with Sámi non-Christian worldviews.

4.4.1 Lines in the water

For roughly 4.5 km, from 1200 meters east of Langvatnet – at the southern end of the bogs – down to Sommervatnet, the local rivercourse serves as a border between the two counties that share jurisdiction over Stuornjárga. When the Norwegian authorities divided the territory into municipalities, they decided to draw part of the border along Stojohka/Storelva and, with time

passing, in this stream has been associated with border that runs along it. The border embodied by Duolbá/Kvitfjorselva and Storjohka/Storelva not only divided the area into the jurisdictions of two municipalities (Evenes and Skånland) but also between the two counties of which these municipalities constitute the northernmost (Evenes in Nordland) and southernmost (Skånland in Troms) respectively.

Since it falls on the southern bank of Storjohka/Storelva, Kvitfjors – and the nearby old prayer house – belongs to Evenes parish and to Evenes municipality, in Nordland.

When I was on fieldwork, I asked many times where the border was and most of the times I received the same answer, albeit framed in various ways: either “down the river” or “by the river”. A few told me just «Storelva, that’s the border».

In an interview, while explaining the features of the Márka, Sigbjørn Skåden focused on the local place-names and, through them, he mentioned the border-river:

S: Another Sámi place-name in the area is Stuorjohka – Storelva. Stuorjohka was the old name, before, in the early 1900s. Now it is on the other side of the river. It is the border river!

Later during the interview, I asked Sigbjørn Skåden about the relation between the border and the river:

E: This one river which is like the border area, what is it called?

S: Storelva. that's what it's called. Storelva, is the border river (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

Similarly, during a private conversation with Dikka Storm, who has studied the Márka history for years, she discussed the border in the following terms:

So Evenes Marku. I think the border goes between the places where people live. Okay. There is... there's a river there. Yes. So the river is the border.

The underlying concept that emerges from both conversation is that the narrow river came to embody the border, to be identified with it. With this regard, I consider Emma Skåden’s remarks of extreme interest. When I asked Emma whether this border was fragmenting the Márka area, Emma clearly stated that:

It did and it still does! it fragment the Márka. it's... a it's an unnatural border... You know, it cuts Márka straight in half (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

The border that cuts through this region has triggered dynamics that have led to the fragmentation of the community of Stuornjárga. This border reproduces at the local level dynamics that have affected Sápmi by dividing its population, partitioning it among different states. The study of what

the establishment of a border has brought – or taken away from – those who live in this small strip of land, suspended between the ocean and the mountains, offers the tools to understand what happened along – or around – to all the borders drawn by the authorities representing the state power, and imposed on the Sámi communities.

Inspired mostly by Lantto (2019), Paasi (1996, 1999, 2003), and McManus, I look at borders from a dynamic and historical perspective³⁵⁷.

Despite being the fringe of countries, borders are at the core of the political process that enables the nations to exist as separate entities. The location and purpose of borders is inherently political. As Paasi (1999, p. 670) and McManus (2008, p. 41) argue, nations ‘are made and unmade at their borders’. Borders mark differences, as they are walls, both physical and symbolic, that separate “us” from “them”. Borders emerge as crucial elements in nation building processes and are expressions of power relations. State borders are complex political entities. Even if they may follow or correspond to natural barriers such as watercourses or mountain rifts, they often constitute « [...] arbitrary man-made political structures established to separate territories, and in the process partitioning populations» (Lantto 2010: 543) making people living on each side of the border a citizen of the respective nation State. Paasi (2003, p. 464) explains how borders «[...] give expression to power relations since they inevitably order and shape the social relations of the peoples affected by them». Borders though are not static or permanently given: as social constructions, they reflect and embody social changes brought by wars, treaties, negotiations. Borders can hence be understood as processes (Anderson 1996, 2–3) that are simultaneously subject to and agents of change. Borders embody the state, and therefore the dominant society; attempt to define its physical limits, implementing a division between what is comprised within the borders and what falls out of them. As Lantto (2010: 542) has demonstrated this «[...] state perspective does not cover how non-dominant peoples are affected by borders». Members of ethnic groups whose regions have been partitioned by state borders often become minorities within that Nation State and the borders affect the internal cohesion of these ethnic groups. As Lantto highlights (2010: 542), being divided by nation borders poses a double challenge for the peoples affected: while they often have to fight to carve a space for themselves in the majority society, they also have to preserve «[...] cultural unity across state borders»³⁵⁸.

³⁵⁷ My considerations on borders as social and politic constructions are the result of the dialogue between the literature on this topic and the perspective of my interlocutors as well as my personal experience. My family on my mother’s side lives in a border region and, through stories and tales, borders have marked and shaped my childhood experience of the landscape and of relations.

³⁵⁸ With reference to this aspect, the local publishing house Skaniid Gjjirje has published at least two books focusing on Sámi families disrupted by state borders and on their descendants on both sides of the border. One of these volumes is entitled *Det grenseløse folket. Bd. 2 slekten Partapuoli: The boundless people* The “genus” Partapuoli the volume, edited by Anna Huuva Dynesius, Asbjørg Skåden and Aslaug Olsen. The volume provides an alphabetical list of the descendants of Olof Larsson Partapuoli, and reports a list of relevant sources and literature. The book deals with the family Partapuoli on both sides of the current Norway/Sweden state border. In Sweden the family is followed until 1890, in Norway until 1920.

Despite the economic and political key role of the northernmost regions of Fennoscandinavia, borders made Sápmi a cultural, economic and geographic periphery for the nation states. (Paasi 1999). The borders that define the geographical limits of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia cut through Sápmi, dividing Sámi people and separating members from their community of origin.

These borders, which cut across Sámi cultural areas, are an inscription on the territory of the power of the colonial states. They have a tangible effect on the local population (in the Márka as elsewhere). The territory of the Márka is divided between two different counties. The local (Sámi) community has been formally divided along the line of this border: people living on the two sides of the border have to refer to different services provided and guaranteed by the county and by the “Kommune”. For instance, children have to attend the school, the sport and cultural activities provided by their “Kommune” even if these may be far from their actual residence. Moreover, children are separated by their peers/relatives (mostly cousins) who belong to the same cultural area but who live on the other side of the border. This phenomenon has also further implications when it comes to language: by fragmenting the local society at the level of the children, the possibilities future generations will have to speak Sámi reduce, constituting an hindrance to the preservation and evolution of the language.

During the same interview, Emma explained that the Márka-Sámi community of Stuornjárga is spread across a relatively vast territory and the border cutting cross the area has been a factor that contributed in loosening the intra-community ties:

The Márka is quite big and you know, you don't always meet everybody from the other side of the border you know, you have the municipality border and the county border as well. If you want to you, you can actually like never meet the people on the other side because you know, when you go to school you have your friends there (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

Depending on where in relation to the border, a household resided the members of that family had to refer to the institutions responsible for that part of the territory: each side of the border had their kindergarten, Schools, facilities, healthcare, administrative offices and everything connected with the County. The invisible line of the county border separated families, friends and neighbours. The most evident of the consequences of the border on the community has been its effects on children: friends and cousins living just a few kilometres from each other attended schools at the two extremes of the peninsula, spending most of their time separated in those years that are crucial in the development of individual and shared identity. By dividing the youngest in a community, preventing them from spending time together playing and talking among themselves – in Sámi -, the future of the community itself is endangered. In this case, the border marked a double division: the one between two municipalities and that between two counties. The division between Troms and the Norldand side grew sharper with the years and, in a few generations, the two sides developed more and more

independently from each other. Nevertheless, and despite the administrative obstacles, ties were never severed, as Emma's words suggest:

I definitely know better my side of the Márka [the area falling within the borders of Troms County]. I went to school on that side. And the people I went to school with and I interacted more with were from that side. I do know the other side as well. I often went to visit those places.

I would like to return to an aspect that emerged during the conversation with Emma. Referring to the border along the river, she stated: « [...] it's an unnatural border... You know, it cuts Márka straight in half » (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

Here Emma relied on the notion of natural borders – a concept that has been widely address in border studies³⁵⁹ – reversing it: despite it's seemingly natural nature, this borer is perceived as unnatural. Even though rivers, as well as mountains, have often been used as borders in the attempt to find physical – natural – counterparts to border-lines of maps, in the Márka-Sámi area this river had been removed from its original central position in Stuornjárga and transformed into an expression of the bureaucratic power to decide over the Sámi land from faraway centres of power³⁶⁰, both depriving the locals of their agency and braking their community right in the middle, causing a formal division with very practical consequences.

It emerges that, from an administrative perspective, the river – at least along part of its course – divides the Márka. This border, as Emma vehemently pointed out, « cut the Márka straight in half ». In the indigenous Sámi perception of the local environment, the area where the river Storjohka/Storelva flows is at the centre of the Márka. A proof of the centrality of this area is the fact that this location was selected already in the 1880s as the place where to build the Læstadian gathering house. In the 1950s, when new transports were available – and hence other, less central, location were

³⁵⁹ The notion of borders as natural when ricalcare geophysical elements such as mountain chains or rivers or lakes has been questioned by social geographers such as... and, as Fall (2010) has efficaciously framed it, «the enduring geographical myth of natural borders» is still very much radicated in people's understanding of borders.

³⁶⁰ These reflections introduce a concept that has emerged numerous times during the analysis of the information I collected while on fieldwork: the centre-periphery relations. I have decided not to employ this analytic framework as a primary tool in my analysis even though I acknowledge its potentials in the exam of Sámi and State relations. Furthermore, the centre-periphery dichotomy has proved very useful in the analysis of the ideological grounds of Márkomeannu. This analytical framework has been employed by various scholars to address numerous aspects of both the colonial past of the Nordic Stated in their relation to Sápmi and the contemporary perception of Sápmi and Sámi peoples in Fennoscandinavia. In particular, cultural historian and socio-linguists as well as scholars in the field of tourism studies have devoted attention to this interpretative framework, highlighting bot hits potentials and its shortcomings while also addressing its origins in modern Western though (Müller & Jansson 2007) (Pietikäinen 2013) (Tuori 2015) (Pietikäinen, et al. 2016). The application of this framework in specific context has also been criticized by indigenous scholars like Kuokkanen (1999) who identified in it a colonial approach aimed at categorizing and hence controlling Indigenous peoples like the Sámi. Today a growing body of literature is being produced by researchers – inspired by post-colonial scholarship – working on Transcending the centre/periphery dichotomy as a category imposed upon indigenous peoples. In my opinion, such framework can be a useful interpretative tool when used in the appropriate contexts and within the cultures which produced it. Furthermore, it can also help shedding light on the ideological premises which led to current situations.

easily reachable by the local – the not only physical but also symbolic centrality of Kvitfjøs was reaffirmed as the Læstadian community chose to build the chapel just a few hundred metres westwards from the prayer house. Since its erection, Kvitfjøs Chapel stands as a central landmark in Stuornjårga and since its establishment, the border divides the Márka right along one of its veins.

Where the road and the river intersect, two different conceptions of space – based on divergent understandings of space and of the world – converge: If Kvitfjøs and Storelva mark the border between Nordland and Troms, Snoalta and Storjohka stand at the centre of Stuornjårga.

4.4.2 Čuoppomáddu: The Great Mother of Frogs

Storjohka/Storelva originates in the forested slopes southwest of Butoppen, north of Trøssemárka in Tjeldsund. It flows in a southerly direction through Trøssemárka and, at Kvitfjøs it receives the two eastern tributaries Dundorajohka/Øverelva and Duolbá/Kvitforselva.

It then continues to the southwest forming first a small waterfall and then flowing into Sommervatnet, a lake to which Storjohka/Storelva is the major tributary. The creek then becomes tributary to Nordvatnet lake, from which the stream Bovelajávri/Nordelva/Pålvatnet originates and, after a short, becomes tributary to Veanskajávri/Svenskevatnet/Kjerkhaugvatnet lake. Both lakes are at 25 masl.

In this area of lowland watercourses, rivers, streams and creeks as well as marshes and ponds but also lakes are important features of the landscape. They also contribute in making the area attractive to a wide range of animals.. This is, according to the NVE³⁶¹, a varied and cohesive wetland system characterized by great biological diversity despite its proximity to a major – and polluting – infrastructure such as Evenes airport. The airport is located between the two largest lakes of the peninsula: Lavangsvatnet and Langvatnet. From Lavangsvatnet, the main river flows southwards across a marshy terrain to an outlet in Ofotfjorden.

The calcareous bedrock fosters a rich aquatic vegetation: many lime-dependent plant-species flourish along the streams as many are the animal species thriving in the fresh waters. The species of birds who visit the area each year – and that are especially associated with water and wetlands which are their nestling environment – are numerous and have great conservation value despite the area's proximity to the airport.

According to NVE, the numerous lakes and marshes form a complex and interdependent wetland system that has the peculiarity of being one of the most varied and rich in the counties of Nordland

³⁶¹ NVE is the acronym of the Norwegian Norges vassdrags- og energidirektorat (Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate), a Norwegian government agency under the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. It's function is the regulation the country's water resources and energy supply.

and Troms (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130315074203/http://www.nve.no/no/Vann-og-vassdrag/verneplan/Verneplanarkiv/Nordland-arkiv/1752-Kvitforsvassdraget/>).

It comes as no surprise that this area, with its rich biodiversity, is today a nature reservation officially known as Myrvatn Naturreservat.

The peculiar morphology of this territory makes it unique, and it is not surprising to find numerous stories about swamps and marshes – and about the beings³⁶² that inhabit them – in the local folklore. In Sámi worldviews, humans share the world with other entities that transcend human perception and may show themselves only when they decide or are forced to. Such entities shall not only be respected but also consulted when humans plan to act upon the environment in which these beings live and of which they are guardians. Underground beings known as Ulddatt, Gufihtar or Katniha and often called “the little people” or “the little people from the underground”. These chthonic entities watched over the land they inhabited, observing and interacting with the humans. They are nice and kind towards those who respect them but can also be mean, depending on the circumstances and if the humans disrespected them. For this reason, it is important to always self-behave and use an appropriate language and respect the rules of hospitality towards strangers who may actually belong to the underground people. It is also important to negotiate with the entities in order to get permission to use the land. Negotiation was based on exchange through offerings. Beings such as the Ulddat inspiring both respect and fear (these beings could switch members of their community with Sámi children. In these cases, the Ulddat/Gufihtar represent an expression of what is known as changeling in folklore studies) and are considered as civilizing entities who taught the Sámi joking (a Sámi singing technique), *noaidevuohta* (the practices of ritual experts) and healing practices. They also have helped the Sámi in times of need offering advice, giving warnings, protecting and comforting them. Relationship between Sámi and Ulddat can also express itself through marriage.

In the Márka, there are numerous stories that tell of the encounter and interaction between humans and non-humans and many of these stories revolve around a specific figure, Čuoppomáddu, the Mother of Frogs who lives in swamps and creeks, watching over her progeny, ready to punish anyone who may bother her children. The figure of Čuoppomáddu is deeply rooted in the Márka and such is

³⁶² I decided to use the term entity instead of creatures because of the implicit meanings carried by these words: creature is a term entered English in the 14th century. The term comes from the Latin *creātūra* through Old French *criature*, meaning “created being”. The Late Latin *creātūra* comes from *creatus*, past participle of Latin *creare*, meaning “to beget”, “to give existence to”. *Creātūra*, and hence the English “creature” means “a created thing”. The term, which originated within a Christian framework, has deep religious implications since it refers to the living beings as creations of God. Since the Sámi non-Christian worldviews – within which the Maddu first originated – were not based on a cosmogonic myth of divine creation, I decided not to employ this term and I opted for a more neutral noun, “entity”. Entity comes from the Late Latin term *entitas*, *entitatis*, a term based on the constructed present participle *ens*, *entis* of the verb *esse* (to be). The literal translation of *entitas* is “a thing that exists”. The term was developed to render the Greek philosophical term *τὸ ὄν* (*to on*) “that which is” (neuter of present participle of εἶναι – *einai* – meaning to be). Entity than is the Latin-based counterpart of the English term of Germanic origin “being”.

the importance this creature has in the local folklore that a local author and editor, Asbjørg Skåden, published a collection of old stories about Čuoppomáddu.

The figure of the Máddu is widespread throughout Sámi and it is attested to by multiple sources both ancient and written and recent and oral. Máddu stories are still passed on to younger generations and they bear witness to a rich oral tradition deeply rooted in Sámi non-Christian systems of knowledge. A reflection over the *Máddu* and their role in Sámi cosmography is necessary in order to understand the importance of Čuoppomáddu in the Márka and the significance the volume edited by A. Skåden has in relation to the efforts to preserve cultural and linguistic features specific to the area. In North Sámi language, *máddu* means origin, root. These creatures, the Mothers of animals, are protective of their progeny. In fear of repercussion but also as a sign of respect towards other living beings, Sámi people respected all animals and tried to teach the value of respect to their children since a very young age. This is part of the indigenous Sámi approach towards nature understood as the local environment and incarnated through all its multifaceted manifestations. Boerkaard has examined these features of Sámi non-Christian worldviews. In the study, she has examined the Máddu stories in light of the Sámi notion of equilibrium based on respect and good relations between humans and other creatures, beings and entities. In her view, this reading of the Máddu stories is consistent with the Sámi non-Christian understanding of the good life, which is maintained through the establishment and the preservation of good relations with all the entities populating the world, whether visible and invisible, material or immaterial (Boerkaard 2016). The good life corresponds to the Sámi indigenous concept of *ráfi*³⁶³.

In Sámi non-Christian worldviews, each animal species used to have – and still has – its own ancestor, its “mother”, its *Máddu*, a primordial Mother, bigger and stronger than the being itself, who functions as a protector of the species over which she presides. The *Máddu* cares for all her descendants: an animal may be small and defenceless – like a mosquito or a squid – but it is protected by a *Máddu*, its primordial mother who is strong and powerful. The Mother is stronger than any human person who may bother or endanger her offspring. The *Máddu* are powerful beings who presiding over their offspring. They populate the landscape, functioning as a species’ spirit.

In the 2001 report on animal welfare in Sámi culture(s) (*dyrevelferd i Sámsk kultur*) composed by Magga, Oskal and Sara, the authors highlight the protective and regulatory functions embodied by

³⁶³ Translated as peace (*fred* in Norwegian), this concept actually is actually thick with meanings and embodies a vast array of values. As Helander-Renvall points out *Ráfi*’s peace « mean[s] absence of sicknesses, absence of predators, life without troublesome events, existence of favourable herding and weather conditions, healthy lands, good social relations, and so on » (Helander- Renvall 2010:49). The good social relations Helander-Renvall refers to are those among humans but also between humans and all the other beings.

the Máddu. Relying on Qvigstad's 1920s studies³⁶⁴, they address the context into which Máddu³⁶⁵ stories acquire meaning and the functions such stories may have had in children's upbringing and education. As they notice, it is common for children to come in contact with many different species of tiny animals and small insects while playing. Children, driven by curiosity and other impulses (such as experimenting pushing boundaries), may torment and abuse harmless and vulnerable animals. In the scholars' view, Máddu stories were often among the first ones to be told to children and through these stories children would learn that one must not subject any animal, regardless of its dimension, to abuse. Furthermore in Magga, Oskal and Sara's understanding, Máddu stories foster ethical considerations also in hunting and fishing, preventing people from overfishing, overhunting or damaging the fish or game population by depleting it or damaging it for its own sake and not for suppling food³⁶⁶.

These scholars interpretations of the role of the Máddu is mirrored in Broodekart's 2016 study in which she hypothesizes that Sámi worldviews and the adherence to Sámi values, conveyed through stories like those about Čuoppomáddu, fosters humans-environment equilibrium. Helander-Renvall (2010) has examined the role of legends and folktales originated in Sámi pre-industrial societies and has come to the conclusion that, among other functions, they were used to convey notions, ideas, concepts and values at the basis of Sámi way of life, which were essential in establishing meaningful relationships³⁶⁷ with what all the entities that surrounded them as well as with the environment in

³⁶⁴ Just Qvigstad has written down many Máddu stories from various Sámi areas (1927, I: 417, II: 475-479, IV: 329-331)

³⁶⁵ The spelling varies depending on the dialect of North Sámi spoken in the region, in Inner Finnmark for instance, the spelling is Máddo, and the same spelling is found in Turi's 1910 work

³⁶⁶ In their view, this function is epitomized in stories such as the following one reported by Qvigstad and referring to the Máddu of fish: «I remember once when I was still a child; then my father and I were out fishing, and so it was very sorry that it was nothing more than to bend and throw into the boat. Then we saw that it was burning under the boat like fire. Then my father says, «Now we must flee. Now the akarmora comes up, and then we go for it». We immediately withdrew; but we did not see if it came up on the sea; for it was dark. On Ingøy it is said that also must have fetched in the old days, that when they caught many fish in the same place, the old callers realized that now the fish mother was rising, and they had to row away. A little later, it is said, it came up on the sea as a large high crow». (Talvik 1924, Qvigstad II: 476-478 (Talvik 1924, Qvigstad II:476-478 in Magga Oskal and Sara 2010). The original text reads: *Jeg minnes en gang da jeg enda var barn; da var jeg og min far ute og fisket akkar, og så blev det så meget akkar at det var ikke annet enn å krøke og kaste inn i båten. Da så vi at det brente under båten likersom ild. Da sier min far: "Nu skal vi rømme. Nu kommer akkarmora op, og da går vi for det." Vi drog straks bort; men vi så ikke om den kom op på sjøen; for det var mørkt. På Ingøy fortelles det at det også skal ha hent i gamle dager, at da de drog mange fisk på samme sted, skjønte de gamle kallene at nu holder fiskemora på å stige opp, og de måtte ro bort. Litt efter, fortelles det, kom den op på sjøen som en stor høikrake*

³⁶⁷ There are linguistic and behavioural rules that have to be followed and historical documents show that reciprocity was at the core of all relationships Sámi acknowledged animals and other entities' agency and will and communication between them and humans was not only possible but was at the basis of daily life.

There are testimonies of dialogues between humans and the land in Turi's account of the Sámi life (Turi [1910] 2010). Dialogue took – and take – many forms and is identifiable in prayers, ceremonies, dreaming, talking and listening through songs, place-names stories and memories. Ritual exchanges were and are also performed, constituting the material manifestation of the dialogue between Sámi and non-human entities. Ritual exchange occurs as part of permission ceremonies, activities that once were probably extremely complex but that today most often take the form of acts and gestures that, to an untrained eye, may go unnoticed. These offerings, and the exchange between humans and non-humans

which they lived. The telling of stories guaranteed the intergenerational communication and transmission of worldviews, and set of values

Magga, Oskal and Sara report one of the numerous Máddu stories collected by Qvigstad in 1927. The story they chose is that of Čuoppomáddu:

The children tormented frogs, and they threw them and stabbed them, and the frogs screamed. Once they tortured the frogs again. then came the Máddu, a big frog; it had its mouth open, and it came upon the children and took and scratched them, so they fled. The Máddu does not allow young people to bother them. But it is also medicine³⁶⁸, the frog (Qvigstad 1924 in Magga, Oskal and Sara 2001:7-8).³⁶⁹

The famous Sámi Joahn Turi author provides an account of this understanding in the following section of his 1910 masterpiece *Muitalus sámiiid birra* (An Account of the Sámi) entitled “another Account of the Frog”:

Once when a woman was crossing a marsh, she caught sight of a rock in the water and stepped on it. But it was not a rock at all but rather the mother of the frogs. It was as large as a person’s head. And that frog attached itself to the woman’s leg, so that the woman could not get it off her except by dislodging it with her staff. And that leg began to hurt in the area where the frog had grabbed her. She went to the doctors in Luleå, but she died just the same. And as a child she had made fun of frogs and then she became afflicted only when she stepped on their ancestor. This happened to Lunta-Ándaras’s wife, on the shore of the lake Vuoskkojávri. (Turi [1910] 2010: 90)

This account told by Turi can be collocated in the Lule Sámi area (near Kiruna, in Norrbotten County, Sweden), where the lake Vuoskkojávri³⁷⁰ - a large inland body of standing water – is located. Turi’s account has the same narrative structure and implicit message as the stories about

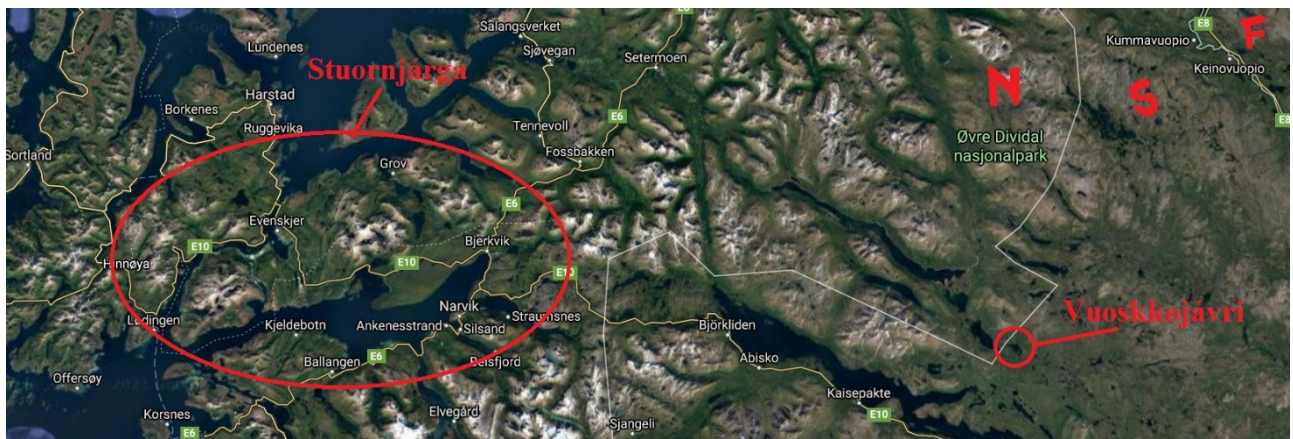
take place within a reciprocity framework where all participants are on equal terms. For this reason, exchange and permission are marked by negotiation between the various social actors (Helander-Renvall 2014)

³⁶⁸ the remark that frogs can be medicine is a reference to the healing qualities attributed to frogs in Sámi medical tradition. Frogs were used to cure children’s throat infections. As Turi explains: «And if a child contracts thrush—a condition in which a child’s tongue turns white—the frog is again a remedy. One presses it to the child’s tongue, and that is the best medicine for this ailment. And it is also a good remedy for stomach ailments: it must be cooked in milk and then taken and swallowed» (Turi [1910] 2010:90).

³⁶⁹ «Barna plaget frosker, og de slengte dem og stakk dem, og de skrek. Engang pinte de igjen froskene. Da kom máddu, en stor frosk; den hadde munnen åpen, og den kom på barna og tok og klorte dem, så de tok flukten. Den tillater ikke at friske folk plager dem. Men den er også lægedom, frosken nemlig».

³⁷⁰ I believe the lake mentioned by Turi There are two lakes known as Vuoskkojávri. One is in Norrbotten and the other is located in Finnmark County, in the Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino Kommune. I believe the lake mentioned in Turi’s account is the Norrbotten Vuoskkojávri. Turi was born in Guodvoegeidnu region and hence he may have heard this story as a child, Nevertheless, both Turi’s mention of the town of Lulea and the fact that he spent his adult life on the Swedish side of Sápmi, dying in Kiruna, bring me to believe this story recounts events occurred in Lule Sápmi. Interestingly, the Norrbotten Vuoskkojávri is relatively close to the Márka-Sámi area and the geo-morphology of the area where Vuoskkojávri is located is characterised by numerous water basins. See map n8.

Čuoppomáddu I heard while I was visiting a friend who grew up in the area as well as those I heard about her while in Tromsø, during interviews and private conversations. Such stories are extremely important since not only they provide outsiders with clues on the relations between the local community and its landscape but also – and more importantly – they constitute an intangible cultural heritage as well as a historical oral document on how life for Márka-Sámi people used to be in the past. These stories had long been at the core of the Márka-Sámi storytelling and, in the last few decades, they have been transcribed to ensure their preservation in the new Sámi cultural context, where written literature is becoming prominent.



Map 13: Map of the Norway/Sweden border region at the level of the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk lake (S) and Ofoten area (N). the the map illustrates the position of the Norrbotten Vuoskkojávri lake in relation to Stuernjárša peninsula. The letters N, S and F indicate the Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish sides of Sápmi respectively. (adapted from googlemaps).

In 1994, a short volume in North Sámi, entitled Čuoppomáddu, was published by Asbjorg Skåden for Skániid Girjie. The volume was enriched by illustrations by the local artist Solfrid Fjellaksel Pedersen, who has collaborated with A. Skåden in a number of editorial projects. The volume was published again, this time in Norwegian, in 1998, under the title Froskemora, Čuoppomáddu. Both titles translate into English as “The Mother Of Frogs”. The editor explains the various possible translations of the North Sámi name Čuoppomádu in Norwegian: The original stories are in Sámi. Sometimes Čuoppomádu was translated into Norwegian expressions Storfrasken (Great Frog) or Froskemora (Mother Frog). In the text though, even in its Norwegian edition, the editor chose to employ the original North Sámi term: Čuoppomádu³⁷¹.

³⁷¹ As it emerged during fieldwork, even when Čuoppomáddu stories were told in Norwegian, the name of the Mother of Frogs was not translated into the hegemonic language.

A Skåden employed a similar approach towards place names, which she held in high regard since she was aware of the importance of place-names in the local cultural landscape, given their association with stories³⁷².

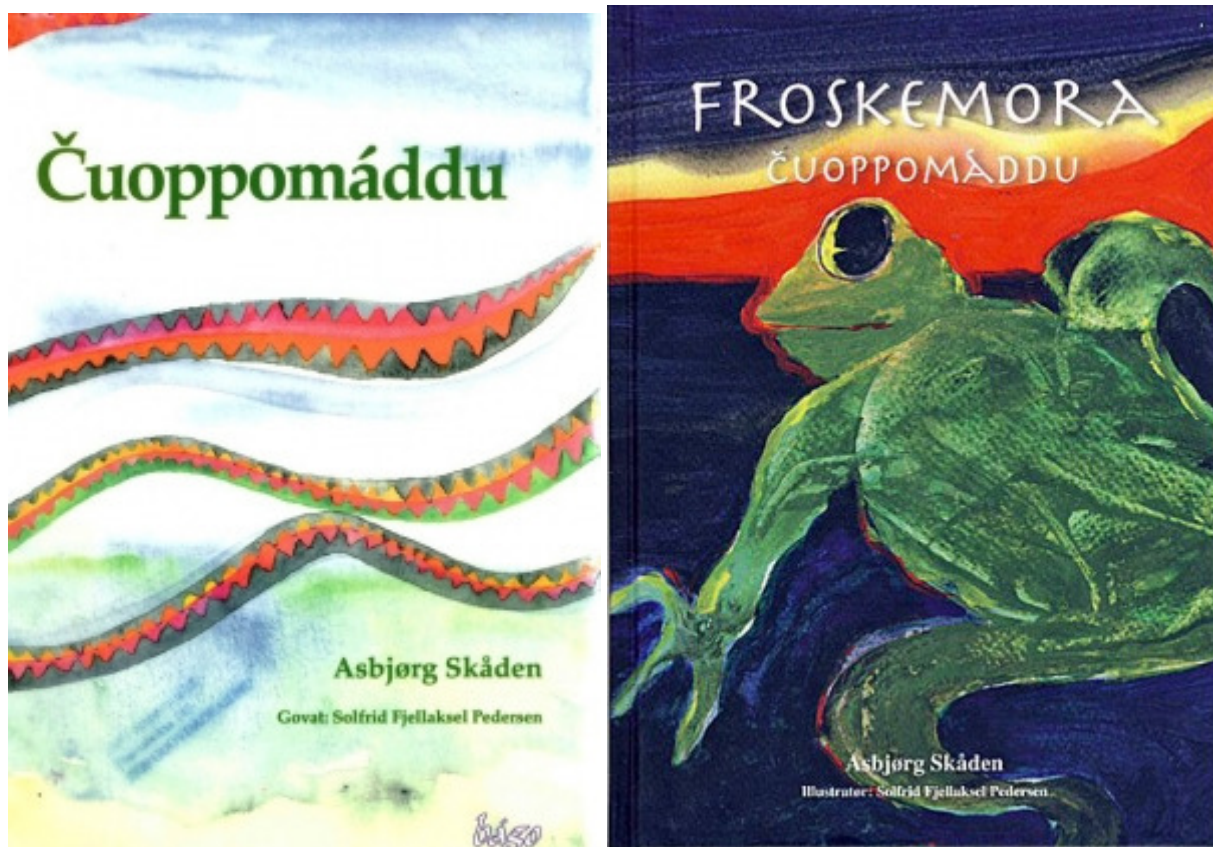


Image 62a: Original cover of the 1994 volume *Čuoppomáddu*; Image 62b: Original cover of the 1998 ed. *Čuoppomáddu Froskemora* (photo by the author).

The geographical origin of stories reported in this volume can be traced back to the Markebygde in Skánik and Evenášši, as well as in Áravuopmi in Áhkkojára. In the foreword to the Norwegian edition, the editor Asbjørg Skåden explains that this project, a book about *Čuoppomáddu* had been in the making for many years, starting as early as 1988. It was first printed in 1994 in the Duortnus/Torne dialect of North Sámi. The volume was based on information gathered through interviews in the local Sámi language carried out since 1987, when the editor was working as a co-educator in the community. As Asbjørg Skåden explains, the collection was enriched by memories from her own childhood. Furthermore, local students were also involved in the project: they were to ask parents, grandparents and other members of their extended families and acquaintances what they knew about *Čuoppomáddu*. In a snowflake effect, those interviewed asked their own acquaintances, with the result that numerous stories were collected. Asbjørg Skåden explains that, while she was working on

³⁷² The importance the editor attributed to Sámi place-names was shared by many members of the Márka-Sámi community but was also contrasted by others. Cfr chapter 5.

the project, she received «nice phone calls» asking if she «had heard it, had experienced it, and if she had had an encounter with Čuoppomáddu» (2008:7)³⁷³. But, as she points out, in the old days in the Márka, there was always someone who had either seen or had an encounter with Čuoppomáddu. Reflecting on the role the Mother of Frogs had in her own childhood, Asbjørg Skåden explains that, to her, Čuoppomáddu was like a guide thanks to whom children could move confidently in nature.

A remarkable testimony collected by Asbjørg Skåden refers to the experience of an elderly woman from the community, a very serious, religious and devout Christian for whom the editor felt deep respect. According to A. Skåden, this elderly woman reported that she had seen Čuoppomáddu herself but wanted to relate this encounter as an anonymous informant. This testimony led Asbjørg Skåden to reflect upon the role of Čuoppomáddu in the community and on the possible existence of toads and frogs in the area, which may have inspired stories and have affected children deeply. In her own words, the elderly lady's account «shook [her] perception of Čuoppomáddu» and she investigated the possible presence of toads in the Márka but, apparently, the experts from Tromsø University Museum whom she had consulted were not able to give a definite answer. A. Skåden then reported how she wondered whether the presence of a toad may have penetrated Sámi folklore, influencing stories about the great ancestor of the frogs (A. Skåden 2008:6-7).

The Máddu lives a secluded life, as she likes peace and quiet. She looks like a frog, just bigger. She inhabits deep puddles, streams, creeks, and the depths of rivers. She also inhabits wet and open bogs and marshes as well as bottomless lakes. She appears to humans only when disturbed or when someone bothers her offspring, her “little ones” (*hennes små*), as Asbjørg Skåden calls them on the book's back cover. If she feels threatened or if anyone threatens her offspring, she jumps on the persecutor killing, menomating or scaring her/him. If none bothers her, that is if she is left in peace and also so is her offspring, she would not attack anyone.

This is the story of Čuoppomáddu as adults tell it to children. The editor wonders whether this story used to convey a Sámi-specific tradition or was solely intended to keep children away from dangerous places. The editor recalls her own childhood memories sharing them to the readership, confiding that she does not remember being advised to stay away from rivers, bogs, lakes and ponds. She explains to her readers how she used to wander freely in the Márka with her siblings and other local children. They walked confidently through local forests and fields, knowing each and every feature of the local environment. She also explains that, since a very early age, she had a detailed understanding of where Čuoppomáddu lived: she dwells in bogs, rivers, ponds and lakes. As a child, she waded and splashed

³⁷³ «Om jeg hadde hørt den, og den opplevelsen den, og den hadde hatt i møte med Čuoppomáddu» (A. Skåden 2008:6).

in the Storjohka/Storelva creek, it never happened in the buck-leaf-covered pool below the bathing place. That was Čuoppomáddu's territory. She as a child and Čuoppomáddu respectfully shared the river.

Upon writing the book, she reflected on the figure of Čuoppomáddu. She considers the places Čuoppomáddu lived, frequented and used as places where children should not travel because of the dangers they posed to them: one could drown, have an accident, be injured or perish. She recalls that, when she was still a child, she saw how adults used Čuoppomáddu to keep the children away from places considered as dangerous for children. She also explains that she avoided using or visiting those places not out of fear but out of respect and in order to honour the division of space between humans and non-humans.

The stories collected in the volume tell of when people came across this non-human being. Stories tell of meetings and accidents in which the Mother of Frogs played an active role. According to old stories, in Áravuopmi/Vassdalen Čuoppomáddu came ashore, taking a cow and dragging it into the water. Another example reported by the editor is located in Stálojávri, where two people reported to have seen Čuoppomáddu.

4.4.3 Čuoppomáddu between past and future

A. Skåden then explains that stories about the Mother of Frogs are valuable since they enshrine the nature of relations between humans and non-humans in local Sámi worldviews. The editor brings to the readers' attention the fact that such stories and such relations belong to a bygone time. Hence, they constitute a historical source on the past of the Márka. A. Skåden explains that people no longer travel to the places where Čuoppomáddu can be met. People no longer fish along the very small creeks that are the dominion of the Mother of Frog. This is because there are no more fish there. Change in the local socio-economical context led to change in the way people deal with their environment. Old practices have been abandoned since they were no longer useful or necessary. This is the case of Sennegrass³⁷⁴, a kind of sedge that grows in circumpolar regions and that was used by Sámi for insulating footwear. This grass – that had to be cut and picked at a specific time of the year and had to be dried before being employed in daily use – is no longer used for insulating the *nuvttot* or *gállohat* (Sámi winter boots) or the *komager* (Sámi summer shoes). By remembering and transmitting stories about Čuoppomáddu – whether orally or by resorting to media, performances or the written text, Sámi values are transmitted to younger generations while preserving knowledge about local culturally-specific practices and tasks. This specific kind of knowledge falls within what

³⁷⁴ The scientific name of this perennial plant is *Carex vesicaria*.

Ingold and Kurttila define «traditional knowledge as generated in the practices of locality» (2000:184), hence an intimate and precise knowledge that is rooted in the act of inhabiting – dwelling in – a area and is today understood as traditional by members of the local community.

The volume represented a concrete token of the deep respect Asbjørg Skåden had towards local Sámi culture, language and history. She transmitted this passion to her three children but she also told them the same stories she wrote about in the book when they were just children. During an interview, I tried to contextualise Asbjørg's work by asking Sigbjørn – Asbjørg's eldest son who is now in his early 40s – if he remembered any of the stories he was told as a child and, through his answers and my questions, Čuoppomáddu became the centre of our conversation.

Sigbjørn: I guess the most prominent story, that kind of story, in my childhood was about the Big Frog. It is just a common story that every child in the Márka was told, even though... even though they weren't supposed to be Sámi they were told about this creature with a Sámi name Čuoppo, Čuoppomáddu which is the Mother of Frogs. That's what's called in the Márka. It is like this... like the Finnmark North Sámi in a slightly different way. We pronounce it like this. In our local dialect

E: Did your mum tell you these stories in North Sámi or in Norwegian?

S: Well I normally heard it most in Norwegian I think. But the name was in Sámi, the name was in Sámi, it was always in Sámi in every family. Everybody knew [Čuoppomáddu stories] even though they weren't supposed to be Sámi. Now I do not know if people tell Máddu stories anyway, any more...

E: Do you tell these stories to your child?

S: yeah. Yeah, of course. These stories... when you start telling these stories, parents kind of start when... when you're old enough to be walking on your own and stuff like that. So they say Čuoppomáddu lives in that up here and you start telling Čuoppomáddu stories because you're, you do not want your child to go down to the river on its own or down to the to the and of course water and they can drown

E: to keep kids away!

S: i guess... So Čuoppomáddu is like a big frog, like in between half a meter and the meter. She is huge. She chases people. If they if they if it gets you to take and I just strangle you because it's got strong arm so it goes for your neck. And it also has poisons which could spit poison. So we used to be quite afraid of her³⁷⁵ (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

³⁷⁵ On another occasion he told me: «I grew up being afraid of that great frog».

Sigbjørn's interpretation of the role and meaning of the *Máddu* – here represented by the Mother of Frogs Čuoppomáddu – reflects both Magga et al (2001) and Boekraad's (2016) understanding of Sámi indigenous beliefs and practices as factors that enabled the maintenance of an intra-species equilibrium. Boekraad in particular examined such practices and beliefs by analysing myths and rituals related to animals and maintained and transformed across generations. Closeness between humans and animal species - through the daily interaction humans have with individual animals – along with mutual respect and reciprocity are at the basis of Sámi understanding of relations.

In Boekraad's view, frogs had also a crucial role in keeping water sources clear of unsavoury plants and insects. A connection that must have not gone unnoticed to the Sámi, given their intimate and experience-based knowledge of the natural environment in which they lived (2016).

In some stories, the relationships may involve guardian spirits of food species having fragile populations; these animals may themselves be small, yet important symbolically as well as medicinally and in the diet – the frog figures here, as it does in so many other cultures around the globe. Here and elsewhere, she also brings attention to how children's play and practical activities interact with the environment, in this case with frogs, keeping alive ethno-ecological beliefs and knowledge in dynamical ways. In any society, children actively construct their culture as naturally as they inherit the wisdom of their elders – these dynamics remain under-appreciated socially and culturally, and consequently also ethnologically, though not obscured in this book. Following Boekraad, it seems that familiar animals without obvious utility, but with sensitive populations, are also endowed with guardian spirits, while the main food species, such as reindeer and salt-water fish, and the predators of the reindeer, do not. This observation does argue for a protective function of the guardian spirits of delicate species, whether these animals are of direct utility or not, relating to the notional of sustainability in Boekraad's title. The regulation of everyday activities of reindeer-management and fishing appears to be more pragmatic than spiritual.

Returning to Sigbjørn's interview, he continued by relating that stories about Čuoppomáddu, albeit the most common stories during his childhood, were not the only ones he was told. Also the other stories were deeply rooted in the territory, providing points of reference for historical events as well as explanations for specific features of the local landscape³⁷⁶.

Later in the same interview, I asked Sigbjørn about the role of water in the stories he remembered from his childhood:

³⁷⁶ Among these stories, Sigbjørn Skåden recounted those about the Epparaš, See pag. 338 in this work.

E: I'm curious about like maybe springs or pieces that are to be respected in a certain way. Or not.

S: Not like Yeah, not like I mean no, when you mean religiously or like spiritually

E: yeah, some sort of sacred ritual they must be chanting sacred. Well,

S: at least not outspoken. I mean, I mean, we knew that we knew about this space and you would, you were told not not to be fucking with the water sources and water But the best one wasn't was not like specifically this is a holy place. no we were told not to not to mess with not to throw stones and stuff.

E: So you think it's more related to the fact that you shall not pollute source of water?

S: it might be. that's speculation but yeah, it's fair to, fair to say I guess that that's the reason that wouldn't be the same so how does the sacred holy, just say that you're not supposed to be I'm not supposed to throw stones or mess with waters (Sigbjørn, interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø).

These remarks are interesting as they show the importance which the local Sámi community attributed to maintaining an equilibrium with the environment and the emphasis the community placed on respecting water, one of the vital elements in daily life especially in a community which engaged in small-scale farming, Sigbjørn does not trace back the respect for water to symbolic or sacred frameworks but to more practical functions: Polluting the water would cause disease and have consequences on the habitability of the place. Parents discouraged their children from playing around water sources so that they would not contaminate them. This understanding is shared by Broodekart (2016) who notices that frogs had a crucial role in keeping water sources clear of unsavoury plants and insects, a connection that did not go unnoticed to the Sámi, given their intimate and experience-based knowledge of the natural environment in which they lived. A Further element that emerged in the interview with Sigbjørn and on which Boekraad reflected is the fact that water can be dangerous and accidents may occur while messing around as children often do in their games. Drowning was and still is a major death risk, especially among young children and its not surprising that parents wanted to keep their children safe by warning them.

I asked my interlocutors from Stuornjårga and the nearby areas whether had they heard, during their childhood or later in life, about other *Máddu* and all of them told me they could not recall any other *Máddu* besides Čuoppomáddu. Nevertheless, other people's experiences as well as academic works concerning other areas of Sápmi – carried out by people with both Sámi and non-Sámi backgrounds) show that other *Máddu* exist, at least in other Sámi communities³⁷⁷. Just Qvigstadg for instance

³⁷⁷ I had the chance of discussing the *Máddu* of squids with a person who heard about it in his youth.

collected numerous tales traceable back to the *Máddu* stories. Today, the *Máddu* are not necessarily known in all Sámi communities and a *Máddu* may be known in some areas and unknown in others. The acknowledged presence of a Mother of a specific species reveals a great deal about the community in which such Mother is part of the local folklore: the species upon which she presides is either held in high regard, or it has, or used to have a role of prominence in the local environment. In particular, Boekraade investigates the role animals with a *Máddu* had in Sámi pre-industrial cultures. She notices that both food animals – like fish or birds but not reindeer – and animals with no immediate function material – like mosquitoes and frogs – historically had, and many still have, a *Máddu*, a guardian spirits. Ultimately the *Máddu* seem to pertain to those animals, usually but not exclusively small that were important in term of diet, were relevant in Sámi medical practices or had an important symbolic role connected with the equilibrium between species and the local environment (Boekraade 2016)

During the interview, the conversation focused on the integrational transmission of folktales and stories. I asked him again if he was telling these stories to his own child who, at the time, was about 2 years old. His answer was adamant: « Of course I am!» . As it turned out, these stories have been endowed with a new function: through adaptation, these stories have been able to absorb change (epitomized by life in a city rather than in the village or – previously – as semi-“nomadic”) as well as to build a connection between the new generations and the *Márka*.

Since the 1960s, the *Márka* area has been characterised by migration flows from the countryside towards major cities both nearby and faraway. For many, the *Márka* is no longer the site of a permanent residency but it is still a place connected with their own roots and which defines identity. The importance attributed to this connection is evident in the efforts done to foster a sense of belonging also among those children that are born and raised away from the *Márka*. The connection – and hence the local Sámi identity – is maintained through the use of the local *gákti* (Sámi costume), through frequent visits to relatives in the *Márka*, but also through storytelling and the reading of books collecting *Márka*-Sámi stories like A. Skåden’s 1994 *Čuoppomáddu*. During an informal conversation, Sigbjørn Skåden told me that not only did he tell *Čuoppomáddu* stories to his toddler son but also that, given the fact that they live in the city of Tromsø, he had adapted it to make it credible and instructive also in an urban context: since there are no swamps and marshes, in Tromsø, Sigbjørn told me, he may adopt the sewer system as his reference point. In his view, the *Čuoppomáddu* stories, had a pervasive educational purpose and were designed to demotivate children from both upsetting the animals – and hence break the human-environment equilibrium – and prevent children from endangering themselves by playing close to the waters. By setting *Čuoppomáddu*

stories in the sewers rather than in the swamps Sigbjørn hopes to prevent his child from playing with dangerous waters and to transmit him the cultural knowledge conveyed through stories about the Mother of Frogs. In doing so, he hopes to be fostering in his son a sense of belonging to the Márka, from which both these stories, and his families come from. This is an important process of risemantization where stories – once told perhaps to protect children – deeply entangled with the local landscape and which guaranteed the equilibrium among different social actors – humans and non-humans – are now told not just for these purposes, but also to maintain and keep alive ties between members of a community, which now mostly leave removed from the original context into which the stories first arose. Through this form of adaptation, the stories change and, at the same time, maintain their core features while also reinforcing the bond between younger generations and the cultural landscape of their ancestors.



Image 63: Photo by Gavrilov Media / @somasmun (2015) [a woman from the Márka interpreting Čuoppomáddu](https://www.picuki.com/) posted by @Márkomeannu on <https://www.picuki.com/>

In the image 63, we can see an actor – a local woman – impersonating Čuoppomáddu. The picture was taken at Gállogieddi in autumn 2015. The original and the original caption reads: «Do you have a horror story you want to tell? A story about #Čuoppomáddu? This coming Saturday, we will arrange the scary evening Márkomeannu #RÁIMMAS at #Gállogieddi after Vardemarsjen, from approx. at 18.00 Welcome! #Sápmi #scary #muitalusat #autumn #čakča»³⁷⁸. The event referred to in the caption is connected with the “scary nights” events arranged at Gállogieddi museum. Here we can see that Čuoppomáddu no longer dwells in the landscape through stories but also through physical

³⁷⁸ *Har du en skrømt historie du vil fortelle? En historie om #Čuoppomáddu? Førstkommende lørdag arrangerer vi skrømtkvelden márkomeannu #RÁIMMAS på #Gállogieddi etter Vardemarsjen, fra ca. kl. 18.00. Velkommen! #Sápmi #skrømt #muitalusat #høst #čakča*

representations like theatrical performances that re-enactment of the Márka folklore, bearing testimony to the relevance that these figures still enjoy in the local culture.

The scary nights were special evenings dedicated to local children. They were occasions where members of the community belonging to different generations could meet with elderly people sharing with children scary stories connected with the area. These evenings were called *Skrømtkveld* (the evening of scare). One of my interlocutors, Lemet Máhtte – who used to work as a guide at Gállogieddi and was working at the museum when the interview took place – shared with me some of his childhood memories about *Skrømtkveld*:

I used to participate in this children's group that was an activity group for children. And we spent two nights here. Not to sleep. But we were here two nights with fire food made in the oven (Lemet Máhtte, Interview, 27/7/2019, Gállogieddi).

Similarly, during an interview, Emma Skåden explained how these “scary nights” contributed in fostering a sense of community as well as nurturing a connection between the younger generations and the Márka, a connection that frequent visits from local schools helped establishing:

Youth schools would go for school trip, the kindergarten would go out there and you know, cook some sausages or other food. Yeah, in the in the fall, when it got dark, we'd have something called “story night” or “scary night”, where you actually just went up and then sit and listen to the old days or you know, the elders talking about scary stories, and then you'd be really fucking scared.

Now... it's not anymore. But you know, I think that's also why we all had a really good relationship with that area (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019, Tromsø).

4.4.4 Of Where the mother of Frogs lives: place-names and the stories of places

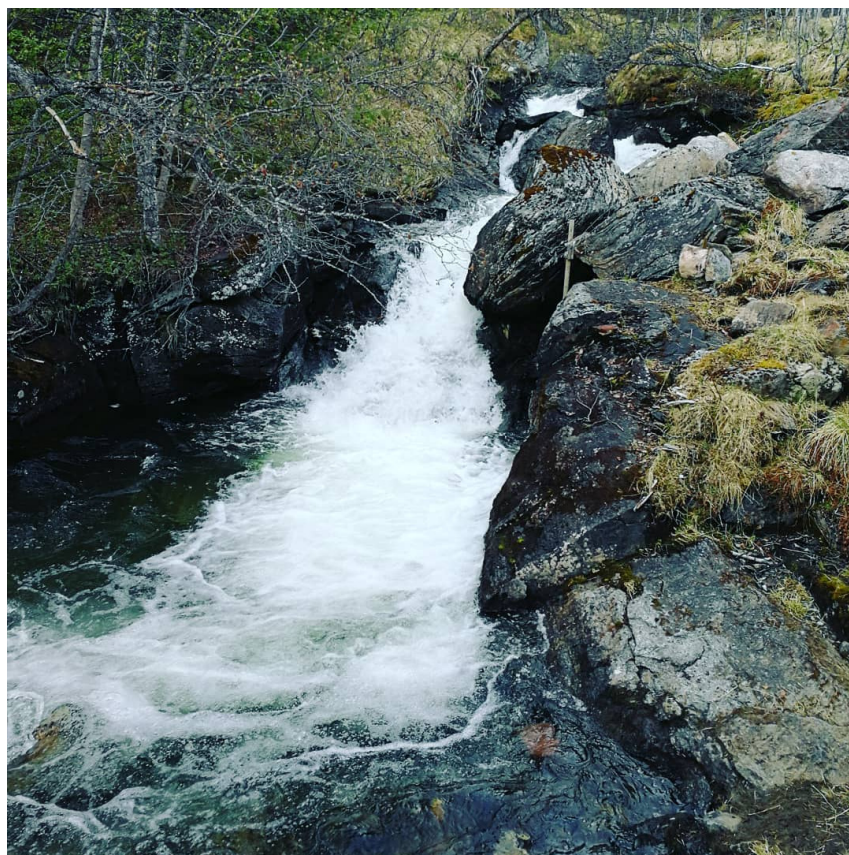


Image 64: Photo of a stream on Stuornjårga. Picture by [@emmargret](#) (2020) posted by [@emmargret](#) on <https://www.picuki.com/> The original caption to the image 4.14 reads: Think about čuoppomáddu living here ... (*Tru om čuoppomáddu bor her...*) followed by the hashtags #čuoppomáddu #froskemora #skániidgirjie.

It worth mentioning the important documentary role fulfilled by the 1994 North Sámi edition of this volume since, being it written the local Duortnus/Torne North Sámi dialect, represents a form of linguistic preservation. This short richly-illustrated 63-page volume provides its readers with stories that represent a testimony to non-Christian Sámi worldviews while also documenting the relationship between the Márka-Sámi – a Sámi farming community – and the Márka landscape. Such relationships as those Márkasámi have with the Márka have developed through centuries-long contact between the Márka-Sámi ancestors and the territory, a contact deeply rooted in local history and in Sámi non-Christian worldviews. For this reason, the cultural landscape of the Márka is embedded with meanings, history and stories. Ancestors and non-human beings populate the landscape, and their existence is transmitted through the generations by means of oral stories and place-names which evoke such stories. Čuoppomáddu looks after her own “little ones” who live in swamps and watercourses across the Márka, for instance at Čuoppoláddu, (literally, the frog pond) where these amphibious

gather in early spring. Place-names bears the name of creatures that were significant for the Sámi of the Márka. Other local place-names associated with frogs are and hence having Čuoppu as part of their names are:

Čuoppodievvá (*dievvá* is a hill or a round mound); Čuoppojávri (jávri is water, lake. The Norwegian name is Froskevatnet, a little lake behind Čuoppodievvá. In that lake, animals have been seen clasping their hands together); Čuoppojeaggi (*jeaggi* is bog); Čuopponjunnji (*njunnji* is nose or protruding element); Čuopporápma (*rápma* is forested mountain side or forest slope). There is though at least one local place that, in its name, bears witness to the Mother of Frogs: Čuoppomáddojorbmi. Čuoppomáddojorbmi is a place-name referring to deep hull, in either a river or a bog, which was connected with Čuoppomáddu. According to Asbjørg and Sigbjørn Skåden numerous are the stories about the Mother of Frogs associated with this place (2001)³⁷⁹.

During an interview, Sigbjørn Skåden outlined the descriptive character of Sámi toponyms. When he explained to me the revelatory character of Sámi toponyms he stressed that place-names are also charged with further meanings through stories:

S: Yes, [...] They are descriptive over the landscape, which is very, very common. But there are some very different stories about “this is why. Why that? we have a small waterfall just... at the river and not so far from where I grew up is called the six finger waterfall because one of the women who fell into it came from the six Finger Family which was a family which had a tendency of getting children with six fingers so it was called the six fingers river, for instance, that's one story. Just close to that recess. The story of something is called... ah, what's the English...? but it is like, like the “revisiting children meadow”.

E: revisiting?

S: yes... children, unwanted children are set out... to... put out to die. Because they're not they're not... [they are] born out of wedlock and will be, in Sámi mythology, around. In Sámi tradition they may return because they are not baptized return and they cry so... also in some places you would hear children crying³⁸⁰.

E: These places have a name?

³⁷⁹ In the volume *Sámisk stedsnavn i Skánik/Skånland* (Sámi place-names in Skanik/Skanland) edited by Asbjørg and Sigbjørn Skåden and published 2011 for Skániid Girjje.

³⁸⁰ During a later interview (11/5/2020), Sigbjørn had touched upon this topic while discussing the stories from his childhood, stressing that, when he was young, Eahppar stories were not as common as when his own mother was a child:

S: For my generation, growing up, Čuoppomáddu was the big one. But you know, there are the kind of Eahppar [stories] which... [tell of] children [who] are left, left to hunt. As a child, I think my mother grew up with those stories more than I did. So, so as a child, I can't remember

S: Yeah, yeah. So one of the fields close to... or close to that waterfall has one of those names is called back in that Epparasjalga which means like the, the field of unwanted or, you know, children returning for instance, I mean, it's just some examples. Yeah. I mean, most examples aren't that interesting, but it's still it's still you know, it's it gives you It connects you to quite directly to the history of the whole old district.

E: But it was like... these places got these names because there they used to hear the children crying or because it was the place where they used to put out the children?

S: I guess I guess maybe it was going to go back to that reference. But but that's that's like a place where you can hear They will come and you will have to be aware because they're dangerous. Those capes are danger to you if you don't treat them [in the right way] rather than... you know... (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 21/2/2019, Tromsø).

Sigbjørn Skåden refers here to the Epparaš, the ghosts of dead children left to die in the woods, without receiving a proper burial. These dangerous restless spirits hunted the earth where once they were abandoned and died³⁸¹. The Skåden's work – who carried out research in tandem with other local cultural bearers – on place names resulted in a series of publications and shows that Sámi toponyms in the Márka are often referring to non-human creatures that characterize Sámi folklore:

Ulddaraigi (the Hulda hole) – one of the deepest pits at the Raigegieddi/Nyheim's mill – openly refers to the Hulda and their underground nature. Similarly, Stalogorsa (literally the deep river valley of the Stallu) refers to a valley were a stallu – an ogre-like creature recurrent in Sámi folktales – either lived or was seen by someone in that valley.

Besides connections with Sámi non-Christian mythology, Sámi cultural elements are at the core of the local indigenous toponomastic. Among the most easily recognizable elements are *lavvo*³⁸² (Sámi tent), *goahti* (turf hut)³⁸³. Another element common in Sámi toponyms is *boažo*, reindeer. In the Márka, a place-name bears this term in its name: *Boažogárddik*, the reindeer fence (*gárdi* means fence). Terms connected with important elements of the landscape are often used in Sámi toponyms in the function of suffixes. Among these terms, some of the most common are: *jávri* (lake), *várri* (hill or mountain), *johka* (river), *dievvá* (hill or round mound), *gieddi* (meadow), *gallo* (boulder), *vuopmi* (forest). *Huldatt* (the little people of the underground), *Stallo* (ogre-like creatures), unwanted children

³⁸¹ In the words of Sigbjørn Skåden emerges once again one of the most important features of contemporary Sámi relation with their surrounding environment. Behavioral rules have to be followed when dealing with the ghosts of murdered children to ensure that they would not hurt the living.

³⁸² *Lávvodievvá* (the hill or round mound of the Lavvu). Asbjørg Skåden recounts one of her interlocutors saying that, according to tradition, the Sámi « set up a *lavvo* on this hill » but as Asbjørg Skåden points out, there is no further mention of when the episode occurred who were the people involved.

³⁸³ *Bedjegoahti*, *Vuollegoahti* (the turf hut – or settlement – below; Vuolli is below) *Goahtegasjávri*.

but also Čuoppomáddu/Froskemora populate the Márka through its landscape: place-names and tales, often interdependent – the tale explains the place-name and the place-name evokes the tale – making the landscape is a repository of meaning, through place-names and stories, a phenomenon that is widely attested across the world and that has been investigated in numerous indigenous communities, as Oliveira shows with reference to the Hawaiian context (2009).³⁸⁴

Not only non-human creatures are remembered and re-evoked but so are those members of the community who left a mark in the collective memory of the community. While discussing the figure of Dundor Heikka, I asked Sigbjørn Skåden whether there is any trace of Dundor Heikka in the local memory and Sigbjørn replied that there are some place-names associated to him and, in particular, the local oral tradition reports of boulders (*gallo*) that are associated to Dundor Heikka and the bear hunt. He also told me there was a river with his family name not far from Gállogieddi. The river he referred to is Dundorajohka: literally, the Dundor family river (*johka*). The river Dundorajohka comes from Husmaroggi/Husjorda, at the core of the area of where the Dundor family settled. As mentioned earlier, the river is an affluent of Duolbá/Kvitforselva. The Dundor family has a long history in the area. In 1770 Ole Nilsen Dundor came to Husmaroggi/Husjorda with over 1000 reindeer. There he settled and with Anna Larsdatter he had six of her children. Her son Anders Olsen took over the farm after his father passed away and his own son, who lived in nearby Elvebakken, was Henrik Andersen, the famous bear hunter nicknamed Dundor-Heika.

Place-names enshrine Sámi history and histories as well as elements of Sámi indigenous cosmologies bearing witness to the encounter between humans and non-humans in their own names. But this is not the only function of these place-names. Sámi toponyms are often descriptive of the tasks once performed in the location they refer to and hence they work as historical sources accounting for the daily life of past generations both also describing exceptional events that left a strong impression among the people who witnessed such events. This is the case of Galmmadasrudni, literally translating as “the cooling well”. This toponym refers to the practice of using a local well to cool the milk in summertime. Similarly, the toponym Dáktebákti has a extremely relevant documentary value: it describes local practices, the tasks performed in that place and it also offers insights into the ancient spiritual landscape of the Márka: *dáktei* is straight, *bákti* is rock. In the past, this was a sacrificial site and the skeleton of a bear shot in Čuoppodievvá was brought there and animal bones are still today easy to spot in the area nearby the rock (A. & S. Skåden 2010).

³⁸⁴ Oliveira, K. A. R. K. A. N. (2009). Wahi a kahiko: Place names as vehicles of ancestral memory. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 5(2), 100-115.

Chapter 5

The Road so far

5.1 The power of place-names

In the previous chapter, I delineated the role of indigenous Sámi toponyms as culturally relevant elements that play a crucial role in the preservation and transmission of intergenerational knowledge and worldviews. Throughout the centuries and across the world, place-names have had the capacity of connecting people to their environment and through it, to their ancestors (Oliveira 2009) through what Kearney and Bradley define an emotional engagement to the land (2009). Given their crucial role in symbolically organizing both space and memory-history, place-names have become a site of conflict where power relations become evident. In colonial contexts, place-names – and the right to decide them – have emerged as powerful colonial tools. Similarly, maps have also proved to have played an important role in colonial entrepreneurships across the globe. In the following sections I shall address the role of toponyms in Sápmi and their role as tools of oppression and emancipation. In the second part of the chapter, I shall examine some of the Sámi institutions that, since the 1980s, have characterized the cultural and education landscape of the Márka. The analysis of these institutions and of the wider context into which they were developed, offers important insights into the Márka-Sámi culture at the turn of the 21st century.

5.1.1 Toponyms as expressions of power

Kaisa Rautio Helander, Professor of Sámi onomastics at Sámi Allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, is an expert in Indigenous toponym and has devoted her career to the study of the cultural and political relevance of Sámi place-names. In her works³⁸⁵, she has examined the colonial policies enshrined in place-names and the importance of language in shaping the world in which we live. She remarks that language is «[...]used to construct and shape social and political reality [...]» and she further explains that «[...] power relations are also institutionalized in language, at the same time as [language] functions as a means of social contact and communication» (Helander 2014, p325).

As part of this wider theoretical context, toponyms emerge as not mere geographical references but as particularly powerful linguistic tools that encapsulate knowledge about the place they refer to. Place-names often convey information about cosmographies and worldviews, providing information

³⁸⁵ Her PhD thesis, in North Sámi, was devoted to the study of Sámi toponomastic cfr Helander, K. R. (2012). *Namat dan nammii*. Dieđut

about human and non-human agents active in the area (see Basso 1996). Toponyms also carry and specific meanings and are embedded in relations of power, which they also reflect.

In the case of Norway, colonial actions against Sámi communities was deeply intertwined with the mapping and naming process of the Norwegian sub-arctic region. The central colonial power, located in the southern regions of Norway – hundreds of kilometers removed from Sápmi – slowly but inexorably imposed itself in the North, carving its own space in the local landscape through names. Naming emerges here as an act of power and, as such, it is deeply embedded in the Western, Judeo-Christian worldview (Ramsey 1988). By naming, we define and exert power over the reality of the object we name. Naming is also a political act. In the Norwegian case, the practice of changing names had profound consequences on the local, the national and the international levels. The political and cultural implications of the colonial process of the erasure of local names are manifold and can be better understood by examining them as consequences of asymmetric power relations. By changing the local names from Sámi to Norwegian, the state authorities tried to claim cultural ownership of Sámi settlements. The imposition of Norwegian place-names in spite of the Sámi ones was a slow process that had long-lasting consequences. As a process, it formally started at the beginning of the 19th century, during a transitional time in the history of Norway. By the end of the 18th century, Norwegian authorities were pursuing an ideal uniformity in both language and practices in the attempt of shaping a homogenous nation. The linguistic and cultural autonomy of the Sámi population was perceived as a hindrance to the homogenous, Norwegian national identity. The need for a standardized and unified Norwegian culture left no room for Sámi customs, languages, rituals or naming practices. In this context Sámi place-names came to epitomize the intrinsic alterity of the Sámi regions and their inhabitants, hence posing a threat to the homogenizing policy and colonial claims forwarded by southern ruling elites. Imposing a Norwegian place-name over an area, a settlements or a topographical element was an administrative act with manifold cultural and political consequences and implications. Marit Myrvoll points out that «[...] the eradication of Sámi place-names from official maps was a part of policy of Norwegianization of Sámi landscapes» (2017:107). Similarly, Helander notes that «Naming a place anew is a widely documented act of political possession in settlement history. Equally, the taking away of a name is an act of dispossession » (2014).

Once shattered the physical manifestations of the sacred – the *siedi* – colonial authorities shifted their attention towards the annihilation of immaterial repositories of knowledge and meaning: Sámi place-name. Substituting Sámi toponyms with Norwegian ones constituted a way authorities claimed ownership over the places they had re-named.

Jünge (2005) examines this issue by providing an example of possible chain effects originating from the erasure of indigenous Sámi names: at the end of the 19th century, the archeologist Yngvar Nielsen (1843-1916) had developed an “invasion hypothesis” according to which South Sámi people living in the southern region of Sápmi had migrated in the area as late as the 17th century. His theory was later proved wrong but when it was proposed, in the 1890s, it was promptly accepted and endorsed. This hypothesis, known in Norwegian as *framrykkingdhypotesen* (the advance/invasion hypothesis) (Jünge 2005:69) was built on wrong premises. During his field trips, he was looking for traces of ancient Sámi activity in the area but the local Sámi refused to disclose sensitive cultural information with him. He could not gather any information on Sámi non-Christian burial or offering sites nor was he able to collect any Sámi place name. He then built an argument on his inability to collect reliable information: in his view, the lack of Sámi place-names and the lack of non-Christian religious sites was proof their presence in that territory was recent. South Sámi groups living in the region were portrayed and slowly believed to be foreigner invaders with no right over the lands they have inhabited for centuries. The implications this kind of statements carry are manifold and had a devastating impact on the perception of the Sámi among Norwegians and among the Sámi themselves.

The act of naming has important cultural implications and is often perceived as a civilizing act in its own merit. Such a process conveys the idea the newly named places had no name before and, hence, were a sort of *terra nullius*³⁸⁶, nobody’s land, free for civilized societies to conquest and conquer but also rule and, ultimately civilize. It is evident that such process is marked by strong colonial and paternalistic attitudes that, in the case here examined, is expressed by the Norwegian physical and ideological appropriation of the lands of the Sámi. Sápmi though, as all other indigenous lands, was neither empty nor untouched land. For centuries Sápmi had been the cradle of Sámi cultures and, before them, of their ancestors. These peoples had left profound traces in the landscape, both through material interaction with it and its inhabitants (visible and invisible, humans and other-than-humans) and through names and tales (see Ligi 2016). The colonial inclusion of Sápmi into the Nordic nation States led to a gradual erosion of Sámi place-names: indigenous toponyms first coexisted and then were wiped away from maps – but often not from the oral traditions – leading to a process of disowning of Sámi cultural ownership of ancient Sámi dwelling places. According to

³⁸⁶ *Terra nullius* is a Latin expression usually translated as nobody’s land (or, with the gender biased expression no man’s land) refers to a form of legal justification for claims of territorial acquisition.

The *Terra nullius* principle originally developed within the ancient Roman legal system but has counterparts geographically and temporally removed from it. An example is the 1320 Oxford English Dictionary entry *nonesmanneslond* (an ancient spelling of the expression “no man’s land”) referring to a disputed territory nearby the medieval London walls (Haque 2020)

Myrvoll, the «[...] inscription of Norwegian names as linguistic signs of landscape can be understood as a symbol of Norwegian occupancy» (2017, p108),

The practice of formal toponymic substitution can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when laws were issued stating that Norwegian names were to be used on maps. Myrvoll identifies the following variables in the Norwegian naming practices in relation to Sámi places between 1898 and 1905:

Norwegian names [were to] be used, with the Sámi name added in brackets. If there was no difference between the Sámi name and the Norwegian translation, the Sámi name was not used on the map at all. If no appropriate translation of the Sámi name could be found, the Sámi name should be used without Norwegian translation, with a major exception: Sámi place-names should not be included on maps if the place-names were in use in both languages (Sámi and Norwegian) (2017:107).

Similarly, Helander delineates the three strategies employed by Norwegian authorities when dealing with Sámi place-names:

(1) to replace [a Sámi name] with a Norwegian name created by the authorities; (2) to choose a Norwegian name already in parallel use as a part of oral tradition; (3) to leave a place in question without any official name even though there existed a Sámi name for it in local oral usage. (2009:257)

Given these premises, the locution “toponymic colonialism” – that Helander borrowed from Harley – sheds light on the power relations embedded in place-names (2014). This expression refers to colonial powers’ renaming practices aiming at disowning indigenous ownership by replacing the original indigenous names with new names in the language of the settlers. Not only such re-naming practice constitutes a violent act of silencing, but it also has further implications that hindrance the intergenerational transmission of Sámi cultural heritage: being deprived of its indigenous name, the place is bereaved of the wide set of histories, memories and meanings deeply connected with it. Similarly the knowledge embedded in the Sámi place-names was also put at risk of being lost forever. As an example of such process, Sommerseth – an archaeologist working on Sámi sites on the Norwegian Side of Sápmi – brings to our attention how the «[...] oral knowledge and narratives connected to the mountains disappeared as a result of renaming» (2012, cited in Myrvoll, 2017).³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ Other process which lead to the loss of cultural knowledge about places can be traced back for instance to the introduction of new technologies.

The information enshrined in Sámi toponyms are multifaceted and the information they convey may span from local environment, events or activities connected to a specific location (Conrad 2004) but also encompass the sacred dimension of areas and localities such as sacred mountains (Myrvoll, 2017). Henceforth, Sámi indigenous toponyms emerge as expressions of “situated knowledge”, interrelated with time, space, and culturally situated practices (Pettersen, 2011). As Cogos, Roué, and Roturier demonstrate, Sámi place-names organize an «[...] oral way of mapping, built around narratives and the designation of specific landmarks» and are «[...] forged into specific ontologies and express the indigenous ways of interacting with the landscape» (2017:43) and my interlocutors confirmed this understanding of Sámi place-names during numerous interviews³⁸⁸. They also implicitly endorsed the view that, by taking Sámi place-names away, government officials often prevented knowledge and history to be passed on to future generations though what Harley (2001:99) defines “toponymic silencing”: a powerful colonial strategy to which the dominant or hegemonic society resort in the attempt expunge from the records – and to erase from history – both the histories and the cultural practices of minorit(ized) groups while simultaneously invalidating indigenous epistemologies (see Hirvonen 2008).

5.1.2 19th century maps and 21st century databases.

In indigenous oral contexts knowledge is held by culture-bearers and is transmitted across generations through a variety of means and place-names are among them. Place-names not only have been transmitted within indigenous communities across generations through first-hand knowledge but also, since the 19th century, folklorists, linguists and early anthropologists but also State officials started collecting indigenous place-names across the world. Control of the land and its inhabitants, but also curiosity, linguistic as well as ethnographic and anthropological interest led to the compilation of maps or registers reporting indigenous place-names with different degrees of accuracy. The study of place-names has characterized anthropological enquire since its earliest beginnings (in a time when it was deeply entangled with colonial policies. Vogel 1991³⁸⁹). In the early years of the 20th century, Samuel Barrett (1908) and Alfred Kroeber (1916) worked on native place-names (Milliken 2009). As Barrett and Kroeber, other scholars embarked in projects connected with place-names, among them Franz Boas who devoted time and energy in the study of indigenous North American place-names. His 1934 “Geographical names of the Kwakiutl Indians” – in which Boas reported around some 2500 toponyms – reinforced the discipline’s interest in toponyms. Geographical

³⁸⁸ Indigenous cartographies have been examined by Tim Ingold (2000) who developed a theory distinguishing between mapping (as a universal process) and mapmaking (a culturally specific form of mapping, proper to cultures who have adopted writing systems).

³⁸⁹ In the 1840 for instance, the Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie Henry Rowe Schoolcraft published numerous works on indigenous North American place-names.

Names of the Kwakiutl Indians epitomizes Boas's approach to the study of culture. In the volume, he not only attempts to carry out a comprehensive survey of Kwakiutl place-names but also to explain their structure in relation to Kwakiutl culture, environment, and language.

According to Thornton, in recent decades, anthropological research in indigenous place-names have regained a role of prominence in the discipline, with Keith Bass at the forefront of the study of indigenous place-names and their cognitive and symbolic dimensions (1997). In Thornton's view, the fascination exerted by place-names, and their position as privileged topic of anthropological interest derives from their intrinsic characteristic of intersecting what Thornton defines «[...] the three fundamental domains of cultural analysis: language, thought, and the environment» (Thornton 1997:209).

As we have seen, the interest in place-names led many researchers across the world to collect them. In many cases, the toponymic research was accompanied and supported by maps into which place-names were collocated. Cartographic supports proved to be essential tools in mapping place-names, language and ethnic background. In the Nordic Countries, the work of Friis represent a clear example of the use of maps to systematize data concerning places and their ethnic dimension.



Image 65: Detail of Friis's 1861 map of Finnmark and Troms, available at <https://www.dokpro.uio.no/friiskartene/1861/1861oversikt.html>.

J. A. Friis (1821 – 1896) was a linguist, theologian and author who was educated as a priest and studied Sámi and Finnish under N. Stockfleth. He published Lappish Grammar (1856) and Dictionary of the Lappish Language (1887).

In 1861–62 Friis published three thematic map series of Norway north of the Ofotfjord under the title “Ethnographic Maps of Finnmark”. The map covered the northern regions of Norway (the county of Troms og Finnmark, from the Ofotfjord in Nordland to Unjárga/Varange). In these maps the ethnicity and standard of living in all households were plotted with symbols. With a light overview on the maps, one could see in which areas the population was Sámi, Kven or ethnic Norwegian, respectively. It was also marked whether the population lived in "earth huts" (ie *goaddit*) or timbered houses. In addition, the symbols were further finely divided according to whether one or more of the members of the household also mastered other languages. Friis's ethnographic maps provide a detailed, albeit limited and, to an extent biased, presentation of the ethnic population composition and linguistics conditions of the areas of Sápmi from Ofoten to Unjárga/Varanger. Friis later worked on two further maps. In 1888 the revised ethnographic map from 1861 was published. In this version, the region was divided into two macro-sections that roughly reflect the former counties of Troms and Finnmark, prior to the 2020 merging into one single county. In 1890, Friis published an Ethnographic maps of Tromsø county. Friis based his works on the material he collected during his extensive travels across Sápmi. He also relied of a network of contacts among the local ministers. Clergymen who, given their position, had access to information regarding their flocks shared with him important information concerning their parishes following a pattern that was common practice in Scandinavia (cfr Schefferus' web of informants among Swedish ministers).

Friis organized his material developing a comprehensive categorization system that followed a specific classification of households according to three criteria: language skills, type of housing and cultural (i.e. ethnic) affiliation. Friis used the terms Language and Nationality, because, as Hans Lindkjølen explains, the term ethnicity was first used in the post-war period (2009). Language skills emerge as prominent in Friis' categorization of households and language was the decisive element in Friis' understanding of ethnicity. In the legend (*tegnforklaring* image n66), Friis specified the meaning of the symbols employed in the map. These symbols enabled the representation on the map of the ethnic and linguistic composition of the population in the various settlements.

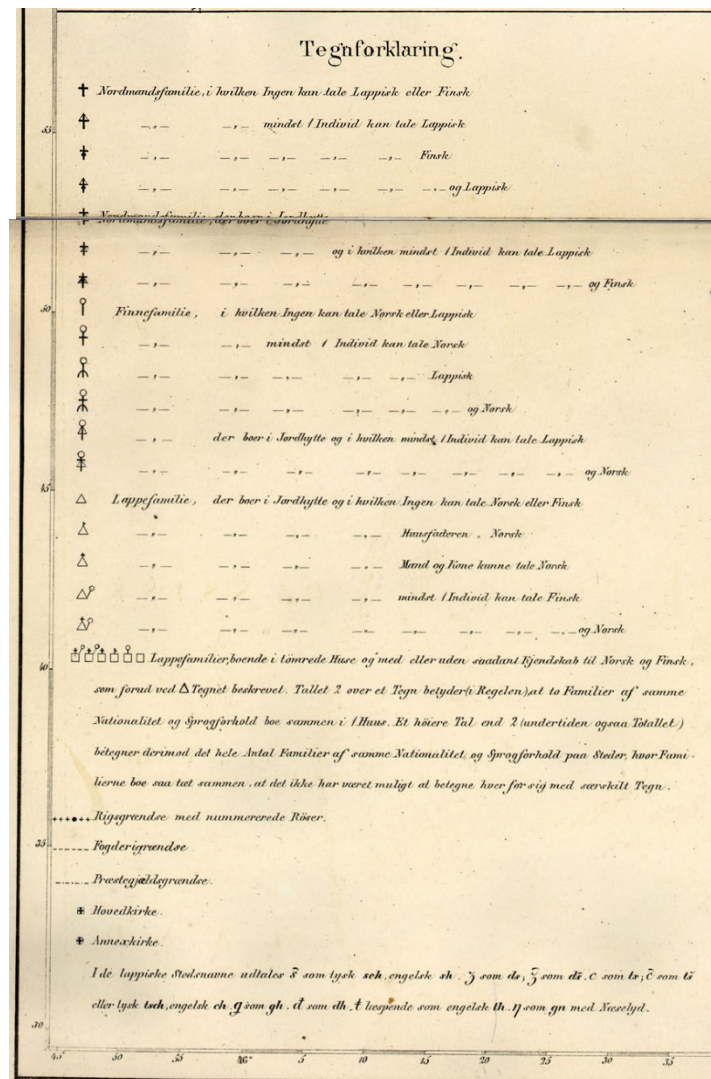


Image 66: Detail from Friis's 1861 map of Finnmark and North Troms: Tegnfolkklaring/Legend.

By combining these symbols, Friis was able to describe in great details the ethnic composition, the living conditions and the ethnicity of households across Northern Norway, through a cartographic representation of linguistic and ethnic affiliation of the local population. Friis' maps (both the 1861 and the 1888/1890 ones) provide historians and other scholars with comprehensive cultural-historical data concerning ethnic affiliation, language skills and living conditions in northern Norway prior to the implementation of the policy of assimilation/Norwegianisation in the decades after the maps were published. Friis map not only is an invaluable historical document but it can also be a precious tool in contemporary patrimonialization processes: Sámi buildings older than 100 years are automatically protected³⁹⁰ but, as Myrvoll, Holm-Olsen and Thuestad (2011) demonstrate, they are

³⁹⁰ During the revision of the Cultural Heritage Act of 1978, Sámi cultural monuments older than 100 years were granted automatic protection. the need for a comprehensive legal protection of Sámi cultural heritage that had no function – beside their symbolic and historic one – in contemporary Sámi culture and society arose because of the specific features of ancient Sámi cultures, in particular, its strong oral orientation which led to a lack of written indigenous sources on Sámi

underrepresented in Askeladden, the Norwegian national database for automatically protected cultural heritage sites.

The team worked to develop a method that would allow immediate localization of automatically protected Sámi buildings – as they become older than 100 years – by comparing data from the national database for older buildings SEFRAK and Friis 1861 ethnographical maps representing Northern Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. The project's ultimate goal is to improve Askeladden making it a tool for cultural heritage and local management authorities. In this context, Friis' maps proved crucial since SEFRAK register does not contain information about ethnic affiliation of the people who dwelt in the buildings it lists. The researchers hence relied on Friis' work to identify Sámi settlement, considering the information concerning the ethnic affiliation shown in the map valid up to around 1900-1910s/20s.

To ensure the workability of this method, the researchers have tested it on one municipality and their choice fell on Skániid Suohkan/Skånland Kommune. This preliminary study constituted an opportunity to bring into light buildings – or their ruins – in Skániid/Skanland that otherwise may have been forgotten or remembered only among a handful of people connected with them.

Thank to this comparative approach, they were able to identify in the selected municipality at least 87 buildings that are, according to the data reported in Friis' map, located in Sámi settlement areas. These buildings either already meet the criteria for being enlisted or are about to since 47 of them date to 1900-1924 and 40 are older than 1900. The researchers point out that in Askeladden the building listed as historical in Skániid/Skånland are only 6. Hence, at least 81 buildings had not been listed – and hence protected – despite their eligibility.

Myrvoll, Holm-Olsen and Thuestad, in their final report published in 2012, stress the importance of the methodology they developed, pointing out that the remarkable extension and accuracy of Friis' maps, once cross-checked with the data in SEFRAK are likely to provide researchers with an exponential number of automatically protected Sámi buildings listed in Askeladden and recommend this project is conducted in cooperation with cultural heritage authorities, such as the Sámediggi/Sámi Parliament and the norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage. Despite the invaluable data gathered and systematized by Friis, Myrvoll, Holm-Olsen and Thuestad in the NIKU Rapport 48 (2011) highlight the problematics that working with Friis' material pose. According to the NIKU report, despite the accuracy showed by Friis, his maps provide only a partial and biased reflection of the

history and past. Hence, material culture – and its maintenance – emerged as central in the protection of Sámi history and cultural heritage which is considered not only vulnerable but also underrepresented in State registers (Myrvoll, Holm-Olsen and Thuestad 2011)

actual characteristics of 1860s population composition of Northern Norway. As in the national censuses (from 1865, 1875, 1891 and 1900), Sámi and Kven (Finnish in the map) are most likely underrepresented in these documents. The focus on language as a decisive criterion in defining the ethnic affiliation in households means that marriages between people with different ethnic backgrounds are difficultly represented, shadowing the complexity of inter-ethnic relations on the Norwegian side of Sápmi in the second half of the 19th century. A further critical point highlighted by the NIKU report is the cultural milieu into which individual households made linguistic choices. When interviewed by state officials or by ministers, many families chose to state Norwegian as the language spoken at home if at least a member of the family understood and to some extent spoke it. This choice was driven by the prestige enjoyed by Norwegian language and by the possibilities that mastering the hegemonic language guaranteed to its speakers (Hansen 1998 in Myrvoll, Holm-Olsen and Thuestad 2011).

150 years after it was first drawn, Friis' map has become an empowering tool that may enable the preservation of ancient Sámi sites. As we shall see, to an extent this has already happened. Even if Friis's map was never intended as a tool for oppression, that's not true for many other maps of Sápmi drawn by exponents of the hegemonic society. Cartography is a way of representing (literally writing – from the Greek verb *grapho*) the world. Maps are tools and, as Wainwright and Bryan (2009) remind us, they are neutral reproductions of the landscape but they are produced through social processes and are open to multiple readings. They are highly formalized and abstracted representations that reduce the complexity of relations and experiences of a given landscape to a set of symbols on a support. Maps communicate information, some intentional such as the place-names reported on the map itself, others implicit like the power relations embedded in the choice of place-names (the language, the decision to include or exclude place-names). Maps are not neutral even if they may appear so. The illusion of objectivity conceals the cultural and political dimensions of cartography.

Cartography as a practice developed for different purposes and it is deeply intertwined with colonialism and place-names policies. There is a florid literature about this topic, which is examined from different perspectives and in different contexts, from Aetora to North America. It is beyond the scopes of this thesis to address the history of cartography(ies) and the multiple implications of this practice. Nevertheless, it is necessary to at least mention it because of the importance that cartography had in establishing and later maintaining colonial control over Sápmi. Surveying and mapping projects were at the core of Swedish and Dano-Norwegian strategies to expand into the Sámi

territories and secure their control over natural resources – and their exploitations – taxation, trade, and ultimate to integrate the Sámi population into the State and the Church.

Ojala and Nordin have studied these processes with reference to the connections between mapping, colonial power and resource extractions on the Swedish side of Sápmi between the 17th and the 19th centuries, demonstrating the role maps played as colonial tools in these contexts (2019). The presence of colonial maps, portraying the landscape in function of its resources testifies to a colonial context in which though other forms of mapping existed. For instance, Friis's maps were designed not for a political purpose but as a form of documentation. Maps though did not pertained exclusively to the colonial /hegemonic Nordic society but also to that of the indigenous Sámi, even though in the latter it was expressed not by writing but by the spoken word.

In recent decades, scholars have acknowledged the existence of indigenous cartographies, a subject that has cast light onto indigenous ways of organizing and encoding the landscape through various means, not necessarily those western cartography is used to. Wood (1993) and later Ingold (2000) developed this issue by drawing a distinction between the practice of mapping at that of mapmaking. In their view, mapping is universal, being carried out by every society while mapmaking is a technique grounded in cultures that employ writing as a system of recording. Even though we are used to thinking about maps as visual and graphical representations, they can also take other forms: for instance, many indigenous cultures resort to place-names as a way of defining and expressing landscape and hence functioning as tools essential for forming mental maps.

5.2 Shifting perspectives through art

In recent decades, maps have been transformed from tools of oppression into tools of emancipation through the practice of counter-mapping which, in Sápmi, has in Kevisiele / Hans Ragnar Mathisen a prominent exponent.

Kevisiele / Hans Ragnar Mathisen³⁹¹ is an eminent figure in the Sámi artistic landscape and his works enjoy a wide success also outside of Fennoscandinavia. Mathisen was born on 1st July 1945 in Narvik, not far from where multiple borders intersect: just a few kilometres to the east of Narvik town, lies the border between Norway and Sweden. Just a few kilometres north is that between the one between counties of Troms and Nordland. Its geopolitical position made Narvik an important node in Northern Fennoscandinavia, but it also meant further pressure on the local Sámi population, pressure that increased significantly during the War. Even though Mathisen was born once the war

³⁹¹ Mathisen's desire to pursue an artistic education brought him to Oslo, where he attended the Norwegian School of Crafts and Design (SHKS) between 1971–1973 and then, from 1973 to 1979, the Statens kunstakademi. He later studied at the University of Tromsø between 1985 and 1987 (Store Norsk Lexicon, Mathisen).

was over, the conflict, through its aftermath, deeply affected his life. The area where Mathisen's family was from, Vestertana in East Finnmark, had suffered greatly during the war and its inhabitants had been forced to leave their homes and travel southwards. His family had to leave the village of Searvegieddi. For the people of Deatnu/Vestertana, as for many in Sápmi, even once the war was over the living conditions were harsh: forced away from home, people suffered enormously; displacement, both in terms of space and culture, meant bewilderment and difficulties in daily life that were heightened by diseases which spread easily and quickly among the evacuees. Tuberculosis was rampant, afflicting especially children and elderly people. It was in this context that Mathisen was born in a land that, albeit still within Sápmi, was foreign to his own parents. In this same context he spent his early years and, when he was just one year and a half, he contracted the tuberculosis³⁹². He was transferred to various hospital before being sent to Tromsø, where he was admitted to the local sanatorium at the age of four. The sanatorium became Mathisen's home for almost seven years, leaving deep scars that would last forever. Mathisen expressed these wounds through art, in poems and in drawings.

Mathisen's illness had tragic consequences on his upbringing, keeping him away from his family and giving him a new home with a foster family in Tromsdalen. The family which welcomed in was that of one of the nurses who so lovingly looked after him during the "many days" he spent in hospital ([https://snl.no/Hans Ragnar Mathisen /](https://snl.no/Hans_Ragnar_Mathisen/)). The house where he grew up with his new family and where he later worked – having turned it into a studio– is just at the bottom of Sálašoavi, known in Norwegian as Tromsdalstinden. The mountain became an inspiration for him, an important basis and motive for his artistic expression and a source of meaning in a quest that was simultaneously cultural and spiritual. The time he spent away from his natural family and away from Deatnu/Tana, prevented Mathisen from growing up in the Sámi culture into which he was born. However through his political and artistic engagement, Mathisen embarked on a fight for the rights of the Sámi and other indigenous peoples. Since his early years, Mathisen has been a politically engaged artist. During his time as an

³⁹² Tuberculosis was an endemic in post-war Sápmi and was associated with poor living conditions that depended greatly on the effect of War. Sámi people suffered disproportionately for this disease and the disease itself came to be associated with the Sámi fostering a stereotype of the Sámi people as dirty and frail. The origin of tuberculosis were traced back not to environment but to ethnicity. In a vicious circular process, Sámi identity was associated with tuberculosis and tuberculosis was associated with Sámi identity. Poverty too became a third element of the equation, leaving the Sámi to endure a stigma that marked those who fell ill. there is a number of studies addressing TBC in Sámi contexts and, while on fieldwork, I met w few people who, upon sharing with me their Sámi background and the fact that their families used to live in Finnmark, readily told me that their grandparent and great grandparents «[...] were clean and had never contracted TBC». At the time I was taken aback by this statement as I didn't have sufficient knowledge to understand the implicit connection these girls made between TBC and Sámi settlements in Finnmark. So deep was the stigma associated with the disease that my interlocutors though it important to assure me that their family were spared. A fact that, in their view, implicitly guaranteed not only their cleanliness but also their high standard of living and their hygienic living conditions.

art student in Oslo, he came into contact with activists who gathered at the *Oslo Sámi Searvi* (the Sámi association in Oslo). He then became part of the Sámi Dáidujoavku (Sámi Artist Group) becoming one of the founders of the Mázejoavku/Maze art collective which was officially started in 1978 in Máze, a settlement halfway between the town of Alta and the village of Guovdageaidnu. The collective, with their artistic works, transformed the art scene in Sápmi. Máze was to become a symbolic centre of the Sámi ethno-political uprising since it was one of the settlements that would have been flooded with the water basin of a dam had it been completed according to the original plan. These artists, active in the late 1970s and the 1980s – in the wake of the Alta demonstrations – inspired later generations of Sámi artists and activists. The Alta demonstrations are often seen as a turning point in the Sámi-Norwegian – and in a domino effect Sweden and Finland – relations. In the course of just two decades, independent advisory organs were inaugurated across Sápmi and laws were passed to guarantee the rights of Sámi peoples, with a strong formal emphasis on self-determination.

Since 1974, Mathisen has been drawing 21 maps of Sápmi as a whole as well as of single regions within it. Mathisen's maps of Sápmi and its regions are visually strong and provide the observer with a multitude of fine details concerning Sámi place-names as well as elements of the landscape. In the case of Mathisen, maps and cartography are at the intersection between artistic practice and activism. In his website, Mathisen explains how a map from the second half of the 19th century changed his life, inspiring his art and shaping his political activism: the “discovery” of a map which not only gave place-names in Danish/Norwegian but also in Sámi, albeit often in brackets below the official Nordic name, awakened the then-young artist awareness:

I started to take a closer look at the bilingual situation in our own countries. Among the papers and maps in the house I found one that seemed very old, KART OVER TROMSØ AMT, from 1872(?). It was pasted on canvas in rectangular pieces, and obviously it had been in long use. On the front cover was the name “Tromsø” handwritten in very nice gothic letters, although this was a map of the whole country, not only the town. The most interesting part of this map was that apart from the Danish/Norwegian names, there were Sámi or Lapp place-names in parentheses under or behind. [...] (<http://www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/141466671>)

The Map he “discovered” and that inspired Mathisen on working on Sámi toponyms was one of the maps drawn by Friis and published in 1874 (image 4.17).

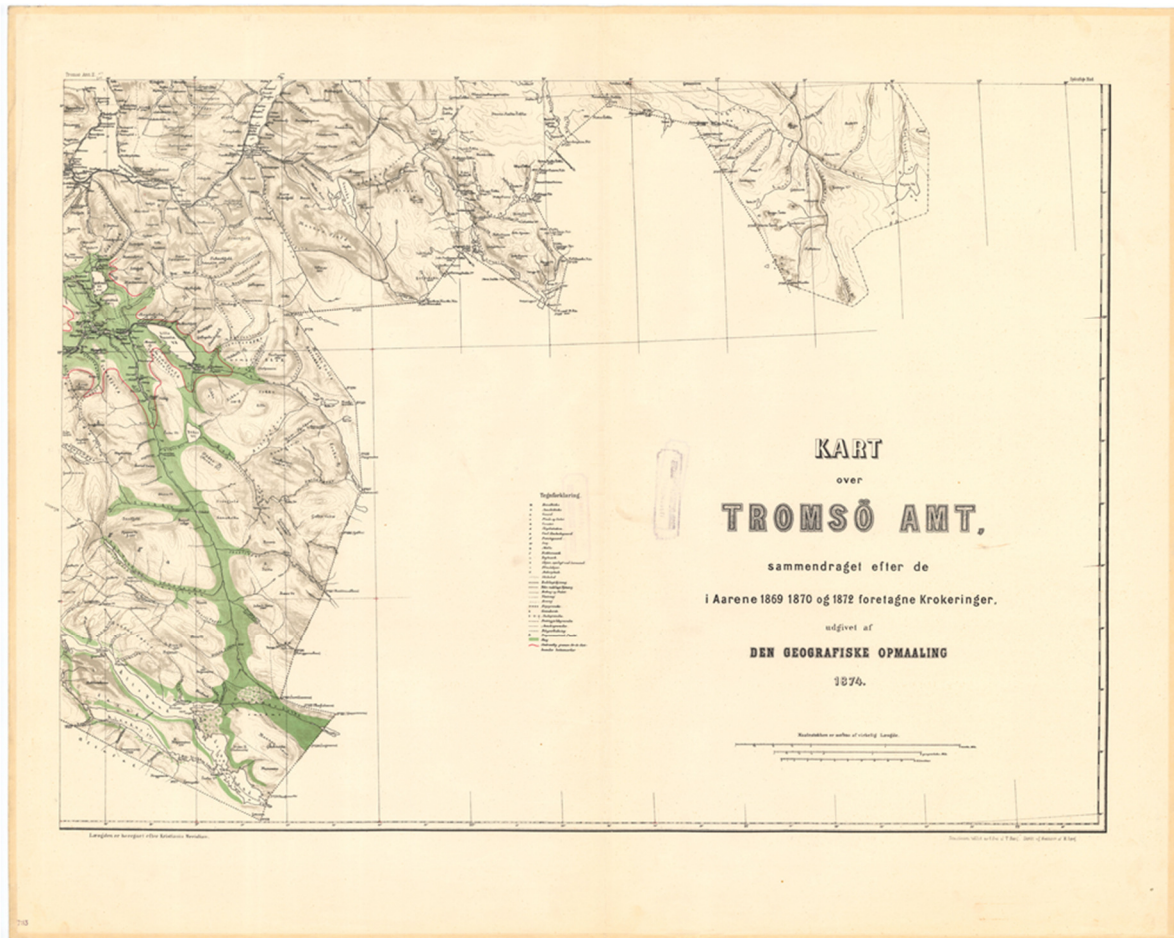


Image 67: Map of Tromsø 1974 (Friis Map, detail)

The existence of multilingual maps dating to the second half of the 19th century deeply inspired Mathisen to use western maps and cartography as empowerment tools. In his view, maps could be used to reclaim the Sámi people's past, their presence in the territory and their position in Fennoscandinavian and international in history.

The creative process that was to involve Mathisen for the rest of his life was inspired by the awakening triggered by this map.

[...] I made a small traces version by putting a thin paper over the map section I had chosen, drew the coastlines and put the names with pencil, my first map with Sámi place-names, probably from the late 1950ies or early 60ies, the very first step on a long laborious and challenging but rewarding path. This would be a way to recognize my own ethnicity in a creative way. (<http://www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/141466671>)

Mathisen relied on a variety of sources to pursue a project that would characterize his whole artistic career. He relied on Qvigstad's material and on other written sources but also on the help of culture-bearers as well as experts in the field. Thanks to the help of his interlocutors, Mathisen was also able to recover quite a few place-names, some of which had never been mapped before. A difficulty though

was the way in which these place-names were written down at a time when no official Sámi orthography existed³⁹³. Spelling was highly irregular and no standard writing system had yet been developed, leading to variant spellings for the same sounds. A factor that could increase confusion and misinterpretations. An example of this embryonic orthography structure is evident in Mathisen's 1975 map where Sápmi is spelt as Sabme as we shall later see (see image 4.18). Mathisen's experience underlines the importance which place-names may assume in processes of ethno-political vindications. The use of Sámi toponyms in the maps – simultaneously works of art – which Mathisen produced is a political statement that also serves a function as a form of documentation and preservation of indigenous Sámi place-names. Mathisen and his network of interlocutors collected over 970 place-names (Stephansen 2017) and by placing place-names in correspondence with their location, Mathisen contributed in demonstrating a connection between Sámi peoples and Sápmi by illustrating their presence in the area through toponyms that had for a long time been erased from official maps.

This approach though is not sufficient to restore ancient and recent Sámi toponyms as it is not enough to just report indigenous place-names on maps to make them Sámi maps. This reflection is inspired by a critique of the implementation of western cartographic tradition in Sámi contexts that has been put forward by Cogos et al. (2017): in their view, written maps cannot convey the ever-changing nature of Sámi place-names which develop and are endowed with new meanings as event unfold. Furthermore, maps cannot effectively express many geographical characteristics which not only make sense to the Sámi who dwell in the area but also define how the local community experience their landscape. Therefore, it is not enough to just apply Sámi place-names to maps to make them Sámi maps. Given the aforementioned reasons, maps do not succeed in transmitting Sámi toponymic knowledge in all its complexity but are limited to the preservation of the toponym as a name. Place-names lose their autonomy when they are transcribed onto maps where they function as mere indexical references. As Cogos et al. argue, in order to transmit toponymic knowledge such knowledge requires collocation in the context within which it was originally developed. In place-names different dimensions merge: the social, the emotional, the intuitive, the empirical and the cognitive aspects constitute the basis upon which place-names develop but these aspects are problematic to convey in written maps. In the light of Cogos et al.'s observations, it emerges that Mathisen's maps are not just a reproduction of hegemonic maps where place-names are in Sámi but proper decholonizing tools where the artist employed visual representations to make his maps multidimensional and capable of convening more than just place-names. In these respect, Mathisen's

³⁹³ In recent decades, standardized orthographies have been developed for six out of the ten Sámi languages, the latest being Ume Sámi in 2016 (Aikio-Puoskari 2018)

maps offer an interesting experiment where different dimensions find expression through a vast array of visual and symbolic representations. These maps, especially the first map of Sápmi, which Mathisen drew in 1975, became important symbols in the fight for indigenous Sámi rights. Mathisen developed the 1975 Sabmi map as part of his program in his fine-arts course at the Oslo Statens Kunstakademi.

As the artist states:

It [the map] made a sensation. This is one of the main objects that had an effect, I knew it would be touchy for Norwegians, so I decided to make it beautiful, and a cultural document as well as a political statement. (<http://www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/141466671>)

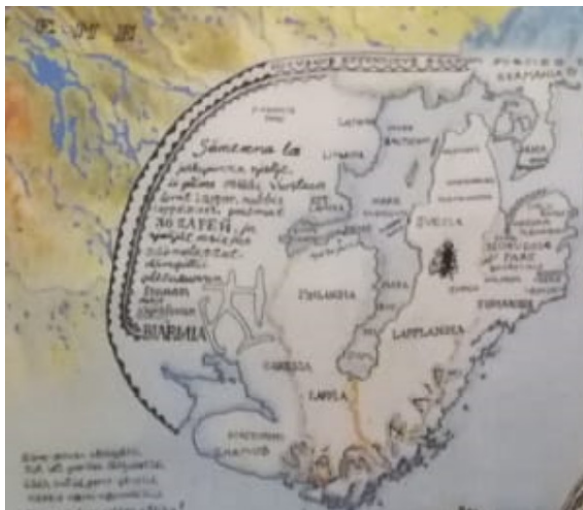


Image 68: Mathisen, 1975 Sápmi: a map of Sápmi with only Sámi place-names, signed by the artist. Photo by the author

The 1975 map shows Sápmi, there spelt Sabmi – image 68³⁹⁴- as a borderless region, containing over 900 Sámi place-names. This map is in color and enriched by a number of artistic illustrations. The 1975 Sabmi map has strong political undertones: by erasing borders, it highlights the impact their

³⁹⁴ Sabme is an old spelling that is an indicator of the then still evolving state of Sámi ethno-policy.

establishment has had on Sápmi and its people. This map gives exclusively Sámi names for cities, towns and villages as well as for rivers, mountains and lakes. Mathisen designed and drew these maps with the specific intention of taking control over the hegemonic narratives that described the areas of Sápmi not just as parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia but also as their northern peripheries, relegating the Sámi to a perpetual liminality. In Mathisen's works, this dialectic is reversed. Sápmi is in these maps a borderless entity Sámi cultures, both physically and symbolically, at its centre. Sámi place-names dominate the linguistic landscape of these representations while objects³⁹⁵, patterns (such as those used to adorn Sámi clothes or items) and symbols bring to the viewers' attention elements belonging to Sámi cultures, enhancing their importance and relevance as founding elements of the contemporary Sámi identity whose roots are deeply grounded in history and in Sápmi territory. These are illustrations that, in Mathisen's own words, «illuminate Sámi culture». Furthermore, the map challenges the image of Sápmi – or of the northern regions of Europe – as peripheral and liminal.



1285 *Image 69a:* Mathisen's 1975 map, detail of Fennoscandia, turned upside down;

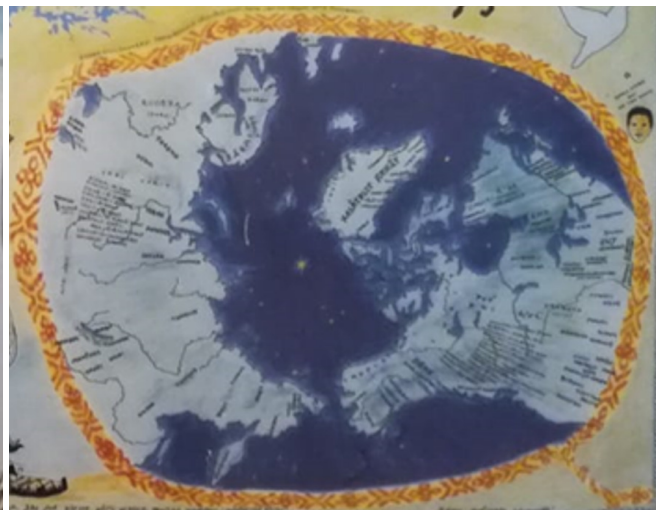


Image 69b: Mathisen's 1975 map, detail: the Arctic seen from the North Pole.

1290 Mathisen subverts these narratives through his art: in the lowest register of the drawing two cartographic works challenge how people are used to seeing the region. A map of Fennoscandia – image n69a – turned upside-down and with names in Sámi languages defies common perceptions of the region. In an interview Mathisen gave to a researcher called Giacomo Nerici, the artist told him to pay attention to the upside-down map. Mathisen drew Nerici's attention to the geopolitical features
 1295 of the map, telling him to look at the state borders which – in his map – are overrun and traversed by

³⁹⁵ (at the centre of the lowest register of the map of Sabmi – image 5.4 – we can identify a Sámi brooch, a carved antler spoon, a *gietkka*/cradle, rock carvings, a *goavvdis*/drum, two *goaddit*/turf huts, a leather bag full of cloudberries)

Sámi place-names. This is an overt political statement meant to emphasize the precedent of Sámi presence over that of Nordic Nation States as well as the existence of Sámi people also under the sovereignty of colonial states (Nerici 2020). By means of this interpretative framework, the symbolic meaning of the sketch of a fly resting upon Sweden becomes clear: in Mathisen's intention the fly was supposed to irritate the viewers who would attempt to swat it away. The fly thus represents the annoyance many Sámi feel toward the Nordic Nation States and it was deliberately drawn in correspondence with Sweden because, in Mathisen's view this country was the most anti-Sámi of all Nordic States. Near this Sápmi-Artic-centred map a Latin text can be observed, which reads 'De Bello Scandico'. This text is a clear reference to, and a reversal of, Giulio Cesar's 'De Bello Gallico', a work generated by the imperialistic colonial attitude that characterized Roman republican and imperial expansion. The incipit of the De Bello Gallico referring originally to Gaul is here applied to Fennoscandiavia. Mathisen adapted the Latin text to the Nordic context, rewriting it in order to reflect the Sámi presence in the territory. Mathisen's 'De bello Scandico' does not perfectly mirror the structure of the De Bello Gallico but adapts it to his aim to demonstrate the Sámi self-understanding as one people.

By appropriating one of the texts that best epitomizes the colonial policy of appropriation and incorporation of foreign territories, the artist subverted its meaning. Mathisen plays with the structure of the De Bello Gallico, using it to demonstrate Sámi indigenous position in the region. The language Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen employs provides subtle allusions to the colonial framework within which Sámi-Fennoscandinavian relations had grown asymmetrical.

De Bello Scandico

Scandiã est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Lappi, aliam Lappalaisi, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Sámi, nostra Finn appellantur¹⁹.

De Bello Gallico

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli appellantur²⁰

Mathisen positions himself as a cultural outsider – using the first person singular, he takes on the role of the author, and hence his position is ascribable to that of Ceaser who wrote the *De Bello Gallico*

³⁹⁶ All Scandinavia is divided into three parts, one of which the *Lappi* inhabit, the *Lappalaisi* another, those who in their own language are called Sámi, in our Finn, the third.

³⁹⁷ All Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the *Belgae* inhabit, the *Aquitani* another, those who in their own language call themselves Celts, in our Gauls, the third.

– pretending to look at Sápmi from an external perspective, highlighting that the local population is the Sámi people, albeit divided into three different subgroups. Nevertheless, unlike in the *De Bello Gallico*, where the populations belonged to different groups -ie *Belgae*, *Aquitani* and *Celtae* – in the “De Bello Scandico”, all the inhabitants of Scandia are Sámi just called by different exonyms. “Lappi” and “Lappalaisi” are indeed non-Sámi terms, the former being Germanic and the latter Finnic. “Finn” too is an exonym of probable Germanic origin. Mathisen denounces these exonyms as wrongful denominations by stating that, in their own language, these people call themselves Sámi: *qui ipsorum lingua Sámi[.] appellantur*.

By employing Latin, an educated foreign tongue to Northern Europe, Mathisen reinscribes Sápmi in a wider international context. Furthermore, the earliest known mention of Sámi people is found in a Latin work connected with the *De Bello Gallico*: Tacitus’s *Germania*. These two texts, produced at a distance of 100 years from one another, were both accounts of Romans’ neighbours way of life, neighbours that the Romans encountered during military expeditions and that were conquered by military means. The political overtones are apparent also in the lower left corner of the same map, where we find a map of the northern areas of the globe – image 69b -. Instead of a Eurocentric, Africa-centric, Asia-centric or America-centric map, the perspective here is different. An Arctic-centric map forces viewers to rethink the arbitrariness of cartographic expressions that have visually – and through the imagery, physically – relegated the Arctic to the periphery of the world. Here the North Pole stands at the centre of worlds and everything else is positioned around it³⁹⁸. In the image n70 Mathisen draw a borderless map of Southern Sápmi that, as it is customary with Mathisen’s works, is imbued with symbolism: symbols that belong with Sámi drums and once guided the *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist) in decoding the future now adorn the borders of the drawing, working as cultural reference points in a map that speaks Sámi through the visual language employed as well as through place-names solely reported in South Sámi.

³⁹⁸Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen has worked on numerous other maps and the following, inspired by his first map-work of art has strong political overtones: the map is an exact reproduction of the original one but here the border is represented through the use of newspapers’ titles, signalling the fragmentation of Sápmi. The title of this work is “Dixi Sic Transit Mundi Gloria” (Thus passes the glory of the world). The map is made of paper, cardboard and textile collage, 1978. This piece of art was displayed at the exhibition “Let the River Flow The Sovereign Will and the Making of a New Worldliness”. The exhibition was produced by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) and originally presented in Oslo in 2019.

1345



Image 70: Mathisen's map of south Sápmi (photo by the author).



Image 71: Mathisen's 1978 artwork is "Dixi Sic Transit Mundi Gloria" (photo by the author).

The shared history of Sámi peoples – the building blocks of Sámi present, is here conveyed not only by the reproduction of ancient ritual symbols but it is also embodied by the portraits of two important south Sámi figures whose image is highly recognizable: Elsa Laula Renberg and Andres (Thomasson) Fjellner. Their role in the community – she was a politician and an activist; he was a priest and a poet – is clarified by explicatory scenes upon which they preside: Fjellner is near to a scripture and a man performing a Christian baptism while Laula Renberg stands in front of numerous Sámi who, even though their faces are undistinguishable, are recognizable as coming from all of Sápmi thanks to their *gákti* (Sámi costumes) that indicate their wearers' region of origin. The image n72 reproduces the map of eastern Finnmark, the Deatnu/Tana and Unjárga/Varanger area. As other maps drawn by Mathisen, this map not only reports indigenous place-names but is plenty of references to Sámi non-Christian worldviews (the *goavvdis*/drum, symbols reproducing ancient Sámi goddesses) as well as allusions to colonization (for instance, in the lower right corner of the map, we can read the Latin words *rex usurpatorum* – the king of usurpers – on a seal just below a pair of open shackles and a key) and to important episodes in recent Sámi history and ethno-political activism as the image 4.21 shows.



Image 72: Map of Unjárga, Mathisen 1992 (photo by the author).



Image 73: Detail of the 1992 Map of Unjárga and Deatnu by Mathisen (photo by the author).

Image 73, a detail from the 1992 map of Unjárga, enshrines references to various episodes that occurred in Sápmi – in Unjárga and Deatnu in particular – and that marked Sámi peoples’ recent past. The temporal dimension collapses and different events in history appear simultaneously to the viewers. As with Sámi indigenous understanding of historical events, it is not time but space that orders them: war, survival, polluting industries, oppression and resistance are hidden in plain sight; an upside-down boat converted into a house – a sight once common in the coastal communities of Northern Sápmi -; the fires along the Finnmark coast tell of when the war was raging across the region with the Nazis retreating and the Soviets advancing; the damming of Sápmi rivers appears through a reference to the most famous of these infrastructures. Maze and the events that unfolded there are not

mentioned but are omnipresent: a dam, from which a long line of electric poles starts and blocks a river, forcing water to flow at a human pace, bent to a human will; a tire crushing the words carved in snow, interrupting the motto “*Elva Skal Leve*”, shortening it to *Elva Skal*, leaving open the question what the future of the river will be. Above all these images, two words carved in stone: *Ellos Sápmi*, this is a reference to a slogan originally reading *ellos eatnu*³⁹⁹, Let the river live. This motto has become emblematic of the strife for sovereignty in Sápmi as the *Ellos Deatnu* case in Northern Finland demonstrates (Holmberg 2020, Kuokkanen 2021, see also chapter 7). This is only one of the hundreds of details and symbols that Mathisen has incorporated in his artworks, evoking and challenging the present situation of Sápmi while also providing context to place-names. With his art Mathisen tries to attenuate the levelling effect of maps attempting to provide – and succeeding – multidimensionality, historical depth and a territory-grounding to the place-names he reports in the area he portrays.

Mathisen’s groundbreaking work inspired many artists and activists. An example of resorting to a shift in perspective is the Map “*Om Sápmi hade varit Sápmi*” by the Lule Sámi artist from the Swedish side of Sápmi Katarina Pirak Sikku. The map of Sápmi she drew – image 5.10 – portrays the Nordic countries from an Arctic-centred perspective and from a Sámi politically-informed perspective. The title of the work of art itself, which in English translates as “if Sápmi has been Sápmi” is programmatic. Not only is Sápmi here an independent Nation State, but it is also divided into various regions according to the local Sámi language and cultures. In the legends the artists report data pertaining to the population of Sápmi made of 4.5 million people; the language, Sámi; the capital, Tromsø; and the constitutional state, Egalitarian. This interestingly though is written in Swedish, a colonial language. In this map, which is inspired by a decolonial approach, the Nordic states occupy a peripheral position compared to Sápmi, and Norway doesn’t even exist, never having separated from Sweden (as in what actually happened in 1907). Finland and Sweden lack a point of reference like towns or natural features while these are reported in areas pertaining to Sápmi. Pirak Sikku offers a provocative perspective of what might have been and the impression such a map gives evokes Mathisen’s own thoughts: «[...] it would be touchy for Norwegians, so I decided to make it beautiful,

³⁹⁹ In 2012, at Márkomeannu a seminar around the Alta case and the subsequent ethno-political work of Sámi activists was held at Márkomeannu. The seminar was entitled *Ellos eatnu! La elva leve*. In 2015, a delegation from the Ellos Eatnu movement was also present at Márkomeannu.

and a cultural document as well as a political statement» (<http://www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/141466671>)

In Pirak Sikku's map though the aesthetic dimension is completely absent as she wanted to be provocative by means of a map that resembles schematic official document but destabilizing common perceptions by turning the traditional positioning of Fennoscandinavian countries upside-down.

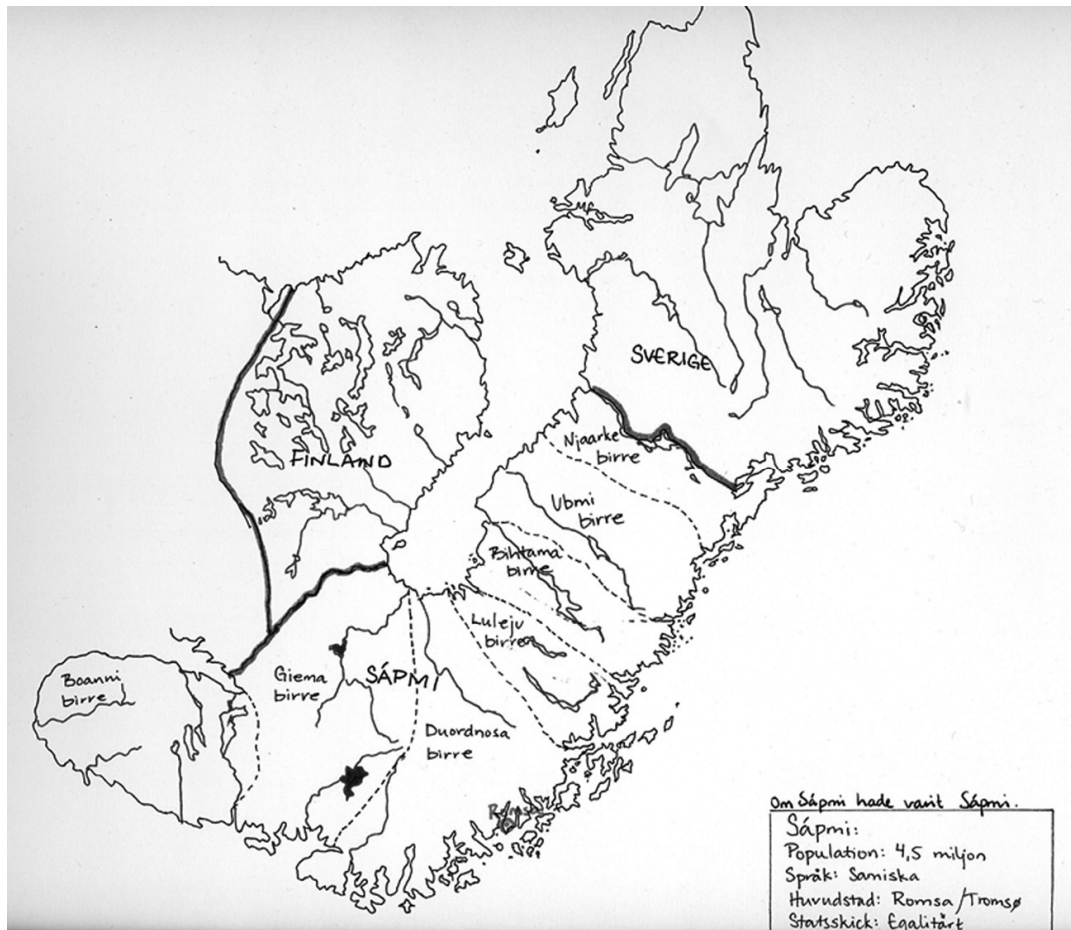


Image 74: Pirak Sikku decolonial Map of Sápmi (photo by the author).

The cartographic works of Mathisen and Pirak Sikku provide viewers with intellectual tools to perceive colonial dynamics where they are hidden through the normalizing power of maps and hegemonic place-name manipulation.

Their work, along with that of many other Sámi artists and activists, is inscribed in a decolonial framework which has inspired many to look at the Sámi heritage of a given location through place-names. Place-names are a difficult issue in Northern Norway and, as delineated above, is also

politically charged. By resorting to art to address these issues, artists have highlighted the political dimension art can have. The political engagement of many Sámi artists led to a perception of Sámi art as angry but such a perception fails to acknowledge the historical reasons for the resentment that Sámi art often expresses. Sámi art should not be considered exclusively as a form of protest even though many Sámi artists have resorted to their art to denounce oppression and stake their claim to self-determination. Such an understanding enshrines a colonial attitude in itself by denying the Sámi autonomous artistic expression independent from political positioning.

These elements emerged during an interview with Anne Henriette⁴⁰⁰, the festival leader of Márkomeannu2018. While we were discussing art installations at Márkomeannu2018, she pointed out that Sámi cultures have a rich history of protest art⁴⁰¹, but Sámi artistic expressions shall not be reduced to protest and that the focus of politically engaged and often provocative art shall be examined in light of the current socio-political circumstances. In her words:

[...] Sámi art has often been kind of by like, majority society Fine Arts experts, they set the Sámi art as kind of easy and always kind of reactive. And like protests art is kind of what all we have. So we, we were kind of, provoked by ... by that, and also talked about how would really Sámi society be if it didn't have to kind of fit into a majority of society? How would we govern ourselves? How would the art look if there wasn't kind of the constant need to protest? (Anne Henriette, Interview, 19/9/2020, via webex).

In contemporary society, Sámi people across Sápmi and beyond face new challenges but have also created new opportunities for themselves, carving a space within the complex political economic and social context of the Nordic states. The cultural dimension of place-names is epitomized by their bearing witness to the lives and works of past generations. Sámi toponyms work not only as maps made of words but also as oral historical documents that enshrine local collective cumulative knowledge which has been shaped by time and by the interaction of humans with the landscape and its inhabitants. Given the context marked by power asymmetries, and attempts to eradicate Sámi history by obliterating Sámi toponyms, it is not surprising that Sámi place-names, their existence and their presence in the oral and written history of Fennoscandinava have fostered heated debate and ultimately have constituted a controversial topic.

⁴⁰⁰ Anne Henriette Reinas Nilut is a young Sámi woman in her early 30s (at the time of writing). She is currently a member of the Sámi parliament for NSR.

⁴⁰¹ Sámi scholar Harald Gaski has highlighted how joik too have been a venue of resistance and opposition (See Gaski 1999, 2020)

5.3 The local place-names project

It was in this context of tension, denial and also cultural pride in Sámi toponyms that, in 1999, the local publishing house Skániid Gjirje embarked on an ambitious project: to collect materials concerning local Sámi place-names. According to the editors Skåden, by the time the place-name project was carried out, Norwegian speakers seemed to be unaware of the richness of the local Sámi toponyms. A possible explanation proposed by Skåden for this lack of awareness is to be traced back to the fact that Sámi place-names were mostly used by Sámi speakers while speaking Sámi (S. Skåden 2000).

The first local collection of Sámi place-names took place in 1980 in Skánik/Skånland and Evenášši/Evenes. During a cultural week organized in 1980, the Sámi association linna ja Biras Sámiid Searvi (IBSS) exhibited maps reporting Sámi names. That was the starting point of a process that, over the years, encouraged many to collect local Sámi toponyms. On the other hand, Sámi toponyms were the site of confrontation: not everyone was happy that Sámi place-names were becoming more and more accepted in the community and, once these place-names were given further visibility by being hung along with official Norwegian road-sign, opposition grew, resulting in open conflict with actions on both sides. For instance, when a fierce debate around Sámi toponyms raged in the area in 2000, a leaflet with local Sámi toponyms was distributed in various Márka-Sámi houses, to remark the Sámi identity of the area (see section 4.5.4)

With support of local Sámi institutions and organizations that Skániid Girjje enjoyed, this publishing house worked with the aim of publishing a place-names anthology. The then Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, the Ministry of Culture and the Sámi Parliament's Environment and Culture Protection Department supported the project and, one year later, the collected place-names were geographically checked by entering coordinates and through a description of the places being exam. Finally, the toponyms were organized into tables, making the search easier. Each collector's material was made visible in the final draft, and the informants' names were quoted in the book while also short pieces of information about the places to which toponyms referred were maintained. In this way stories connected to some of the place-names were reported enhancing the cultural value of these toponyms while also contributing to increasing the multidimensionality of place-names. This project posed multiple challenges, one of which was the spelling of Sámi place-names, an issue that also affected previous works such as that of Mathisen previously addressed. The process of transcription and inclusion in maps required a process of standardization that has never

occurred before in the area. The informants resorted to different pronunciations or spellings and the collected material had to be standardized before being published.

The dialogical process of the place-names project emerges in the relationship the collectors have/had with their interlocutors – in many cases elderly friends or family members – and in the dialogical and processual character that characterized the project from its inception to its final stage, the publication of the maps. The finished maps were exhibited in Skánik/Skanland and Evenášši/Evenes, and this exhibition was a form of restitution towards the local population who had contributed to the success of the project. On that occasion, new versions of old Sámi names were brought to the attention of the cultural workers, and with them came stories and anecdotes connected to toponyms. This long process culminated with the publication, in 2010, of a volume devoted to Sámi place-names in Evenes. According to the editors (Skåden) a total of 107 people took part in this work, which was recognized by the Sámediggi/Sámi parliament for its cultural value. The publishing of volumes devoted entirely to the documentation of place-names, their meanings, the location of the place they refer to as well as of stories connected with them was an important tessera in a wider process of valorisation of local cultural elements. Márka-Sámi activists and politicians worked not only to preserve local Sámi place-names from the oblivion by to make them visible in the landscape.

5.3.1 In the name of places

Since the Norwegian Place-Names Act⁴⁰² entered into force, the divisive potential of discussions concerning Sámi place-names in public arenas has increased. Debates sparked throughout Northern Fennoscandinavia, sharing a common core element: they revolved around the use of place-names in areas where many locals believed no Sámi connection ever existed or any longer linked the community to Sámi ethnic affiliation.

In Stuorniárge/Skanlandahalvayahese these debates were extremely heated and characterised by what Sigbjørn Skåden defined as «[...] a lack of knowledge about the abundance of Sámi place-names in the area». Active ignorance, in the sense of either wilful disregard of local history, or a «[...] lack of knowledge» as a consequence of toponymic colonialism led many in the area to believe there was no space for Sámi place-names in the area (Skåden S. 2011). According to Sigbjørn Skåden, who edited one of the volumes about local place-names, even though there may be a lack of historical written sources, there is an abundance of oral knowledge documenting indigenous Sámi toponyms.

⁴⁰² The Norwegian Place-names Act was ratified in 1990, becoming law on 1 July 1991. A revised text of the act became effective in 2006.

IBSS played a central role in forwarding the cause of Sámi place-names in the region and, in 1993, it proposed the juxtaposition of Sámi and Norwegian names in official maps and road-signs as prescribed by the Place-names Act. After three years marked by debates, commissions and deliberations, a committee recommended giving equal value to Sámi and Norwegian names. This recommendation was to be brought to public attention through a referendum organized by the concerned municipality. Even if the majority of voters supported the equation of Sámi and Norwegian place-names, an appeal was filed by its opponents leading to an administrative impasse lasting until 2020, when the municipality formally became part of the Sámi administrative area, with consequent immediate equal value of Sámi and Norwegians⁴⁰³. The debate over place-names did not desist with the commission's deliberations. On the contrary, it has grown attracting the interest of local and regional media, often figuring in newspapers and inflaming the local community polarized between those who fought for the recognition of Sámi place-names and those who wanted to keep the Sámi toponyms relegated to the private sphere.

Controversies related to multilingual road-signs resulted in acts of vandalism⁴⁰⁴. In the 1990s, Sámi place-names on road-signs were destroyed, painted over or used as shooting targets. This destructive practice was aimed at discouraging their installation and it constituted an act of protest against acknowledgment of local multiculturalism⁴⁰⁵. Given their historical and symbolic importance, many old vandalized signs are today displayed in local cultural institutions. One of these damaged road-signs from Gáivuotna / Kåfjord is exhibited in the nearby Olmmáivággi/Mannaldalen, at the Centre of Northern People, the polyfunctional centre where the Riddu Riđđu conferences take place. Another of such damaged road-signs is as of today at Tromsø University Museum, exhibited as part of the “new collection” (Eidheim et al., 2012). The reasons behind such strong opposition lie in the fact that, by using Sámi and Kven languages along with Norwegian, the authorities openly acknowledge the presence of these respectively indigenous and minority populations in the area, a fact that the detractors tried to obfuscate. The importance of road-signs derives from their power to show and shape a given linguistic landscape. All these signs are “textual entities” (Salo 2012) that transmit a

⁴⁰³ The Sámi act 1987.06.06. Nro 56 made the Sámi languages equivalent to Norwegian in six municipalities, considered the Sámi administrative area, with the addition of two further municipalities in 2007 and 2008 (Rasmussen Noaln 2011) and yet other later on, including the Tjelsund municipality of which part of the Márka belongs.

⁴⁰⁴ This phenomenon occurred not only in Olmmáivággi and in the Márka but also in numerous areas across Sápmi, in those contexts where similar issues were discussed

⁴⁰⁵ As consequence of state-led assimilation policies, many multicultural contexts were forced to conform and were transformed – at least on the surface – into monocultural societies homologated with hegemonic national cultures (Hirvonen 2008)

message beyond the one conveyed by the words themselves. They symbolize the effort put into decolonising the local linguistic landscape.



Image 75 Gáivuohta/Kåfjord vandalized bilingual road-sign (photo by the author).

In the autumn of 2001, at a time of marked ethno-political tension, a performative form of protest sparked a heated debate in the Márka. Handmade Sámi toponym banners appeared on road-signs in Skánik/Skanland. This episode was closely connected with the wider political debates revolving around the presence/absence of place-names from the public and institutional sphere. The socio-political premises that preceded the appearance of Sámi road-signs were marked by tensions and conflict over the acknowledgment of the Márka as a Sámi area. The debate about Sámi road signs in the Márka-Sámi villages in Skaniik/Skånland municipality characterized the last decade of the 20th century, not just at the administrative level (during sessions of the Municipal Council) but also the public arena through newspaper articles – such as those published in the local *Harstad Tidende* – as well as letters to the editor.

The community appeared divided into various factions: a small segment of the local Márka population opposed the use of Sámi place-names in institutional settings, claiming that the area was not Sámi or that Sámi identity belonged to the past; other members of the community – usually adherent to the SLF party – considered Sámi ethnic affiliation as a private issue that was not to be addressed publicly. Yet others – mostly belonging to the NSR *Norske Samer Riksforbund* – the Norwegian Sámi association⁴⁰⁶ political party – considered Sámi ethnic affiliation to be a core feature

⁴⁰⁶ Gaski H., Berg-Nordlie M., 2021 *Sámisk organisering i Norge* https://snl.no/Sámisk_organisering_i_Norge

of both past and present local identity and that, as such, it was to be addressed and acknowledged publicly⁴⁰⁷.

This climate of tension led to the organization of campaigns promoting the interests of various opponents. As Mathisen (2000) reports, a signature campaign was carried out in two of the villages described as Sámi by the Sámi association IBSS. In the villages Nipen/Hoanttas and Kjønna/Vuopmi, 50 signatures were collected by members of the local community who did not acknowledge the active use of Sámi languages in the area at the time of the campaign.

According to Mathisen, the document produced by the campaign proponents emphasized that the assimilation/Norwegianisation process in the village Kjønna/Nipen had occurred many generations prior to the campaign, making the Sámi memory of the area dim and no longer relevant. Similarly, it was pointed out that in the neighbouring villages of Vuopmegeahhtje/Trøssemark and Husmeoggi/Husjord, Norwegian was used as a daily spoken language and hence there was in their view no need for Sámi road-signs. This document is today exhibited at Tromsø University Museum, in a section devoted to Sámi indigenous place-names. A Sámi woman from another region of Sápmi who was visiting the museum with me told me that it was a shock for her the first time she read the names in the petition as she knew most of the surnames of the petitioners. Many among them are the parents and grandparents of people who today are active members of the Márkomeannu *Searvi*, the Márkomeannu festival organization.

This document, along with the testimony of my interlocutor, shows how the context has changed in just a few decades. In the course of one or two generations, the same family has completely divergent attitudes towards the public expression of Sámi identity⁴⁰⁸. Two important aspects emerge from these reflections concerning place-names in the Márka: the temporal dimension, which is the passing of time, expressed by the concept of generations and the linguistic dimension or, in other words, the

⁴⁰⁷ The first organized Sámi political movements – both at national and Pan-Sámi levels – date from the beginning of the 20th century, contemporaneously with the publication of the earliest – albeit short-lived – Sámi Language newspapers. In this period of both political and cultural ferment, there was a degree of collaboration between Sámi movement and the Labour Party in the county of Finnmark, leading to the election of the first Sámi member of the Norwegian parliament: the poet and politician Isak Saba. As a sign of the political awareness characterising early 20th century Sámi political landscape, at least three Sámi National and international meetings took place between 1917 and 1921. After a period of political stasis determined by the pressure of external factors such as World War II – which, however in its turn fostered pan-Sámi sentiments (Lehtola 2013), the Sámi political landscape developed quickly, resulting in the establishment of cultural-political parties.

⁴⁰⁸ This phenomenon, the result of the painstaking work of cultural activists, is mirrored also in other contexts: for instance, throughout the years, Sámi road-signs became more and more accepted but, even as late as 2018, the proposal of adopting multilingual road-signs in Tromsø still generates harsh political debates (iTromsø 22 August 2018, access on 13/02/19).

relevance attributed to the language spoken on a daily basis. Shortly after the debate on road-signs was held at local institutions and signatures opposing Sámi road-signs were, homemade Sámi signs began to appear in the Márka. In 1999, local politician Idar Reinås commented on the issue in an article entitled “The War over Sámi on Road Signs Continues in Skånland, Homemade Signs are set up” appeared in the newspaper Sagat, and which is quoted In Mathisen’s 2002 academic article:

Now some Sámi enthusiast have marked their position by creating wooden homemade sign and placing it on the road to Nipen [in Norwegian], or Hoantas [in Sámi] as it is actually called. This is probably done to show that the two initiators of the signature campaign and the signatories, as well as some others, are Sámi. Or do you just want to provoke? (Reinås, Sagat 17 June 1999 in Mathisen S. 2002:81)

During the summer, several such homemade signs appeared all over the Márka, and a few months later, another form of protest sparked in the Márka in October 2000 when a leaflet was distributed to numerous households in Skånland. The leaflet, signed S.A.G. Sámisk Aksjons Gruppe (Sámi Action Group) – an anonymous group of local Sámi activists – read: «This is just a small reminder of the villages in Skånland's actual place-names and identities⁴⁰⁹».

Below this statement, readers found over 40 local Sámi toponyms with their Norwegian counterparts. As S. Mathisen points out, the list of Sámi place-names included settlements located along the coast of Stuornjárga. Those settlements were usually considered by both the people of the Márka and the people of the coast as Norwegian. By including them in a list of Sámi place-names, the activists of the S.A.G (Sámi action group) made a point about the Sámi heritage of the coastal settlements while also claiming the right to have indigenous Sámi names for Norwegian villages. S. Mathisen reports that, at about the same time as the leaflet was distributed, Norwegian place-names on road-signs signalling Trøsse-mark, Evenesmark and Boltåsen were painted over with black paint while new homemade signs with Sámi names were erected in their place. This event aroused multiple reactions and people in the area speculated on the origin of these acts and their nature, wondering if it was a provocative political act or vandalism. The newspapers of the time took up the question and interviewed local Sámi politicians as well as members of the local youth association active on behalf of the recognition of the rights of the Sámi community. The attribution of this act to Sámi political activists or their opponents was based on diametrically divergent readings of the act itself: Sámi

⁴⁰⁹ *Detta er bare en liten påminnelse om bygdene i Skånland sine egentlige stedsnavn og identitet. Siste kapittel i s[a]kka om “Sámiske stedsnavn”’s sin likestilling med norsk er ikke skrevet. Aksjonene vil “fortsett” helt til komagtuppene stikker frem fra snøen.*

activists could have obscured Norwegian road signs to send a political message – a reference to how Sámi place-names were obliterated through forms of toponymic colonialism – while conservatives opposed to local Sámi place-names might have tried to discredit the Sámi cause by making the local population believe that the promoters of this cause were extremists ready to wipe out Norwegian culture in the region. In the statement, S. Skåden, at the time spokesperson for *Stuornjårgga Sámenuorat* (the Sámi youth association of Stuornjårga) condemned the act, highlighting how counterproductive it was to the Sámi cause. S. Mathisen's analysis of the concatenation of events that took place in the Márka over a few years highlights the tensions within the Márka community and the different perceptions that this population had regarding the use of road signs in the Sámi language. These road signs became a locus of confrontation due to their official and public character. Sigbjørn Skåden released a statement in the local newspaper Harstad Tidende⁴¹⁰



Image 76a: The first page from the 17/6/1999 Harstad Tidende with the article written by Idar Reinås and discussing the presence of handmade Sámi road-signs, in S.R. Mathisen (2002:82).

Detta er bare en liten påminnelse om bygdene i Skånland sine egentlige stedsnavn og identitet. Siste kapittel i saka om "samiske stedsnavn" 's sin likestilling med norsk er ikke skrevet. Aksjonene vil "fortsett" helt til komagruppene stikker frem fra snøen.

• Roahpa (voutna) =	Grov (Fjord)
• Roahpavuotna =	Grovfjord
• Badjegeacie =	Saltvatn
• Borrie =	Krokelv
• Gurra =	Kovan
• Vuollegoadek =	Hellerne
• Láduok =	Løen i Grov
• Roabadálluo =	Sentrum i Grov
• Mikkalfallie =	Myklevoll
• Skavlegaddie =	Skavlia
• Berskaride =	Balteskard
• Uhcaskaniek =	Lilleskånland
• Skániek/skearrie/Skánit =	Skånland/Evenskjer
• Bijak =	Bo
• Roassuo =	Trossen
• Vilgesbaktie =	Kvitberget
• Resanda =	Breistrand
• Rápmasunda =	Ramsund
• Durrak =	Tårstad
• Harsttak =	Harstad
• Ákkánjarga =	Narvik
• Vatnjevárrie =	Boltås
• Čappesjavrie =	Svartvann
• Stenorra/Geargeleddie =	Steinjord
• Lantdievá =	Planterhaug
• Husmeroggie =	Husjord
• Snoalta =	Kvitfors
• Vuopmeheacie =	Trossemark
• Roggie =	Erikjord
• Roassorapma =	Reinås
• Rámavuollie =	Under Reinåsen
• Vuopmie =	Kjøna
• Hoantas =	Nipen
• Stensladdie =	Steinsland
• Guitanassie =	Kvitnes
• Deanjaviika =	Tennevik
• Beahcenjarga/fornassie =	Furnesvik
• Sättiek =	Sandstrand
• Duvilka =	Tovik
• Sattiidvuopmie =	Sandmark
• Reansuk =	Renså
• Beacenjarga =	Fornes
• Dippaviika =	Dypvik
• Johkanjarga =	Elvenes

/Erbødige hilsener fra: S.A.G
Samisk Aksjons Gruppe.

Image 76b: the leaflet distributed in 2000 by the S.A.G. Sámiisk Aksjons Gruppe, in S.R. Mathisen (2002:82)

⁴¹⁰ The statement was published in the 31/10/2000 issue of the newspaper Harstad Tidende (Mathisen 2002)



Image 77: A group of young Márka Sámi posing in front of a homemade waymark with Márka- Sámi place-names written on it. The waymark is one of those that were illegally erected in the dead of the night by anonymous Sámi activists in the Márka. The museum later acquired it because of its ethno-political relevance. (Photo: early 2000s, courtesy of Sigbjorn Skåden).

I would like to draw attention towards an archive photo portraying a group of members of the Márka-Sámi youth association on a trip to Tromsø Museum. This photo has an intrinsic significance in that it portrays these young people in front of a homemade wooden waymark that was originally from the Márka, where it was illegally erected as part of the 2001 performative form of protest described above.

The context in which it was taken, Tromsø University museum and the fact that some of the people are wearing the Márka-Sámi *gákti* (Sámi costume) adds significance to the photograph. A homemade waymark contains only Sámi place-names from the Márka and was only one of many such waymarks set up in the dead of night throughout the Márka in 2001. It was deemed relevant as a cultural and political statement, and for this reason the museum decided to acquire it after it had been removed. This acquisition constitutes a process of heritagization, which implicitly acknowledges the cultural and political importance of the S.A.G. (Sámi Actsjon Group) activities.

About ten years later, the debated came to life again – although it had never really died out – when it was discussed whether or not to include the city of Tromsø in the Sámi administrative area. The

debate triggered forms of protest against such an initiative throughout the county. For instance, at Olmmáivággi local Sámi road-signs were shot at or otherwise damaged even though for years they had been accepted also thanks to the positive image which the local Riddu Riđđu festival casted upon the Sámi language (see image 5.12).

In an interview held at his office, Sigbjørn Skåden described the climate of tension as follows:

[...] back in 2011-2012 there was a big debate also even in Tromsø, So there was a big debate about some of the names and places. Some of these places that we've put here [pointing at the 2012 Márkomeannu poster, image 4.24] are towns that they were debating about. So that was what they did they also have same place-names. Of course not this case itself. In 2011. There was this big, political issue, you know, that was still the local *kommune* elections And Tromsø used to have the labour Party. I think just before the election they decided to include Tromsø in the Sámi language area officially, to apply to get to be part of the Sámi language area which also means that you're supposed to have road signs as they were supposed to say Romssa [Tromsø].

The right side [party], went to the election saying that “if you like us, if you vote for us, we're going to reverse it [the inclusion of Tromsø in the Sámi administrative area]”. It became a really nasty debate. I thought Tromsø would be... well, better than that. I think everyone was shocked... Including, the guy who did become the new mayor from the right party. He was shocked to hear what was said in those days (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

As mentioned, the 2001 controversies revolving around the road-signs – for instance at Bådåddjo/Bodø or Tromsø/Romssa – were part of wider phenomenon with a long history in Sápmi. In 1990, the growth in importance and visibility of Sámi cultures led to the introduction of the Stadnamnlova (Language Place Name Act). According to this act, in the “Sámi Language Administrative Area” Sámi languages were granted a prestige equal to that of the Norwegian language. To show the «[...] new acceptance of indigenous toponyms that were previously denied official status» (Puzey, 2009, p823), bilingual road signs replaced the old monolingual ones in selected areas. The change in status and visibility of Sámi languages was among the primary causes of conflict within multicultural communities in northern Norway. The Márka, as well as Tromsø, was among the communities where the debate grew ugly, and later in the same interview Sigbjørn Skåden stated that there was:

[...] a huge debate, a really nasty and huge debate before the election in 2011. [Pointing at a framed poster in his office] And this poster, of course, was the year we started working on the idea of it's to the opposite. We didn't know, it wasn't only Tromsø... it wasn't both of these places, they have this really nasty debates back in 2011. You know, those days... (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

From these extracts it emerges how the debate on the adoption of road signs in the Sámi language – and their consequent presence in the public sphere, so opposed by part of the Márka-Sámi people as well as by many other people of Sámi background throughout Sápmi – represented an opportunity for young local activists to reflect on strategies for countering the pervasive power of the introjected stigma against Sámi cultures, a point to which I shall return soon. First though, I shall examine another extract from the interview with Sigbjørn Skåden since his reflections help shed some light on a further aspect of the debate. During the same interview, while discussing the etymology of the name of Narvik, a town not far from Skánik/Skånland, Sigbjørn Skåden explained how conflicting understandings of place-names and their origins are contested spaces and how negotiation is an ongoing process.

I do not know about it [the etymology of the Sámi place-name Áhkánjárga -Narvik-] but you know, there are people who say that Sámi names like Hárstá are just like a Sámi-fication of the name, of the Norwegian name, Harstad. [...] but Áhkánjárga just is you know, Narvik is just a peninsula, so it is the name of the peninsula. so this one way you know, Narvik it is not really the name of the city itself. And, Narvik... some people say that Narvik has derived from Sámi⁴¹², from *njarga* (peninsula). And Áhkánjárga. It could be consistent with *njarga*, peninsula⁴¹³ [...] So that's Narvik okay. It's that's the normal interpretation of the Sámi name at least. Yeah. There are names that have actually been translated into Norwegian, that I think have been kind of translated into Norwegian. A local name for the place [Narvik] is Tattenes. Tatte is like north not Norwegian way of saying it's like a tough lady. Or like a lady who can make who can you can stand on her own feet or here. So look at the -nes, the peninsula. And you know, there are some mountain formations that there have got some features, the looks like [an elderly lady], that might look like one (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

⁴¹² Another possible etymology of Narvik traces the place-name to an old farm (“Narduigh” attested in 1567), on which ground the town today stands. Linguists have reconstructed another possible etymology based on the old Norse name *Knarravík a compound of which *knarr* (in the genitive plural form) means 'merchant ship' and *vik* is Norwegian for 'inlet'.

⁴¹³ The Sámi place-name Áhkánjárga derives from the Sámi word áhkká (old lady) and *njarga* (peninsula).

The question of whether or not a Sámi place-name is ancient or modern, and academic research supporting the Sámi claim that Sámi toponyms are ancient and may predate Norwegian ones – and hence are not just convenient translations of Norwegian place-names as some argue – touched a nerve for many people. The debate around place-names had reverberations in various contexts, becoming a topic of discussion in Sámi circles and sparking acts of political activism, as the 2012 edition of the festival Márkomeannu illustrates.

5.3.2 Gállogieddi Caput Sápmi

As aforementioned, the interview took place in Sigbjørn Skåden's Tromsø office, a room in a building that hosts many artists' studios. In Sigbjørn Skåden's office, a big, framed reproduction of the 2012 Márkomeannu poster was lying against a chest of drawers. The poster (Image 4.24) is dominated by a drawing of a white waymark on an orange background. I had already seen such waymark before, similar albeit different. The framed poster had attracted my attention and my curiosity was reinforced when Sigbjørn pointed at it earlier in the conversation. I quickly realized I had seen that image at Gállogieddi, during the festival Márkomeannu. I distinctly remembered that, in a corner next to the main stage, I noticed a poster portraying a wooden waymark which attracted my curiosity (Image 4.25). The waymark reported Sámi place-names of which I was then able to recognize only a handful. The wooden waymark was the exact reproduction of the drawing, or the drawing was the exact reproduction of the waymark. I asked Sigbjørn Skåden if he could explain the nature of the Márkomeannu poster and the connection with its material counterpart standing in the fields of Gállogieddi. Laughing, he pointed at the framed poster again and said:

Sigbjørn: Its like a famous icon of Narvik, so we sort of colonized... colonized the Narvik icon, there was a guy in the staff who has grown there in Narvik] and was being irritated... I guess about the Narvik mentality. Yeah, he suggested that we made a solid version of it because they one in Narvik shows the road to Moscow St. Petersburg, New York, Berlin, Tokyo. We made our Sámi version of it. just small Sámi villages from the point of view of the place [Gállogieddi] (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

The signpost erected at Gállogieddi is not just a reproduction of the famous symbol of the nearby town of Narvik – a yellow, metal signpost indicating major localities in Norway and around the world, along with their distance from Narvik (Image 78) – but it is a decolonial instrument that, by appropriating the colonial visual language, aims at overturning it. The Gállogieddi waymark bears the names of both the festival and the farm in the exact same spot where the Narvik waymark exhibits

the name of the town. Below, numerous arrows point in different directions. Each has the Sámi name of a village, town or city written on it, along with the distance from Gállogieddi in kilometers. These were not only Sámi toponyms of places that also had a Scandinavian, Finnish, or Russian name: most of the toponyms refer to small villages or areas that are seldom even mentioned in Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish or Russian maps. The seemingly decorative and homemade signpost might go unnoticed but it works as a geographical and symbolic point of reference. Furthermore, as Sigbjørn Skåden explained, it also carries a strong political message. He then explained how they came up with the idea of including the waymark in the poster, and in doing so, of making the political dimension of the festival public.

S: At the same time, we were working on the idea for that poster[pointing again towards the framed poster], of course. It was just after the election. Yeah, I felt like, like that was an issue, that it was interesting or important to address [it] somehow (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

The way to address it was to use it as the symbol of that year's Márkomeannu edition poster⁴¹⁴. Most of the settlements indicated on the Gállogieddi sign are either very close to the farm or are small, distant localities of great cultural relevance for Sámi people. Three exceptions to this pattern are Tromsø, Narvik and Bodø. All of them are relatively big towns, situated not far from Gállogieddi and mostly inhabited by Norwegians. On the Gállogieddi waymark, these Norwegian towns were indicated with their Sámi names. This signpost represented an act of protest and empowerment: One of the towns interested in the 2011-2012 debate was Bodø. In writing the name in Lule-Sámi, those who erected the waymark were expressing their political view about the issue. They chose to include Narvik because the original signpost was the symbol of that very town and the town is situated in a coastal area very close to many Márka-Sámi settlements. Many of the people living in Narvik have Sámi blood in their veins but the consideration the people of Narvik have towards Sámi cultures and Sámi people is marked by ambivalence and often open rejection. Using the Sámi name of the town was a way to subvert these dynamics and carve a Sámi dimension that, albeit rejected by many, is part of the town's own heritage. By that time, the Sámi names Áhkanjárga and Romssa (i.e.: Narvik and Tromsø, in the Northern Sámi language) and Bådåddjo (i.e. Bodø, in Lule-Sámi) were not yet officially recognized on maps and road signs. When this alter/native waymark was erected at

⁴¹⁴ These reflections offer some hints on the role of posters in the contest of the Márka: they were symbolic and visually impactful objects that conveyed specific ethno-political stances. For this reason they were torn apart during Márkomeannu's early years. They are the visual counterpart of loud voices speaking Sámi, since, as discussed in chapter 6, they signalled the Sámi profile of the area.

Gállogieddi, it visually and publicly inserted the festival into the debate. By appropriating that symbol, they availed themselves of a colonial tool to claim back the cultural and symbolical ownership of Gállogieddi. Moreover, this waymark made Gállogieddi a symbolic centre and point of reference for all Sámi out of a small and, according to Norwegian standards, peripheral settlement.

Sámi festivála Evenáššis ja Skániin

GÁLLOGIEDDI
26.-28.07.2012

52 ÁRAVUOPMI	618 GIEBMEGÁISI	291
863 GORGNETAK	BÁDÁDDJO	317
711 LÄÄKESE	MOSKI	1,4
431 JÄHKKÄMÄHKKE	ČE'VETJÄU'RR	795
1191 ЛУЯРБББР	SUORTA	123
802 SIRBMÁ	ŠUOŠŠJÁVRI	614
742 ÅANGHKERE	OLMMÁIVÁGGI	271
152 DARJJEVUODNA	GUHTTÁS	420
260 ROMSA	SVAHKE	1209
671 IKKALDAS	LÁHPPI	536
680 ANÁR	ÁHKKÁNJÁRGA	78

MÁRKOMEANNU

Sofia Jannok | Ann Jorid & Ámmun | Duolva Duottar
 Transjoik | Max Mackhé | Áγγελit | Ánnámáret Ensemble
 Lovisa Negga | Hanne Grieg Hermansen
 Mearkkalaš Mara & Dávástus | Gáfegohppu ja sálbmagirji
 Eirik André Skrede | Anna Kråik | Cecilia Persson
 Albmí Adventures | Liddno Adventures
 Ánte Mihkkal Gaup | STOORSTÁLKA | Skániid girjie
 KOLT Márkomeannu | Marion Palmer | Rawdna Carita Eira
 Ellos eatnu! | Anders Larsen 2012 | Niko Valkeapää

Image 78, Márkomeannu 2012 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

The Gállogieddi waymark overturns colonial organization of space and subverts the Norwegian – as well as Swedish, Finnish and Russian – understanding of what is worth being put on a waymark, what is worth being a destination and a reference point. The Márkomeannu staff showed that an alter/native geography does exist in Sápmi and that the hegemonic values are not shared by everyone. Small places that for the State barely fit into a map are crucial nodes for the Sámi peoples throughout Sápmi, and among them Gállogieddi – a Márka-Sámi farm abandoned because of new Norwegian regulations – has gained a role of prominence. Through Márkomeannu, as both Sigbjørn and Emma Skåden told me, they accomplished one of their goals: to make it a reference point in Sápmi or, in their other words, «to put the Márka on the map». The following extract from an interview with Sigbjørn Skåden provides further details about some locations which were selected for inclusion in the Gállogieddi waymark:

Sigbjørn: So Suortá... that's what Sortland⁴¹⁵ that's, in Vesterålen. They were similar to us...or just some history of... it's been, it's been, it's kind of not too far from us, you know, but it has been invisible. Sámi history has just been very invisible there. It has become more visible just the last five years. Sirbma is a small village in Tana. I think it's Sirma in Norwegian. Almost the same name. Šuoššjávri is close to Kautokeino or Karasjok. Šuoššjávri is a little bit... little bit on the border... between the Kautokeino and Karasjok Kommune's border. This is like yeah it's like a border in village... with the border... there is a half of Šuoššjávri in Kautokeino and half in Karasjok. [When we had to choose what to include, we decided that] instead of having one of the small villages we just picked this one where people are divided [by the border]... Åanghkere is not a village it's in the South Sámi area. It's an important gathering point, is like their [south Sámi] main gathering point, just like a church for the relational church gathering. This is like a huge cultural meeting point for the south Sámi. It is like the main event of the year and not everybody cares about the church party anymore but... as I say that's it, like a huge meeting point. The place, it is called Åanghkere in South Sámi. Olmmáivággi of course is, you know...[the place where Riddu Riđđu takes place] which is the tip of the cape to Riddu Riđđu. and we are related to Riddu Riđđu somehow.

[...] so Guhttas is a border place that is just both in Sweden and Finland so it's, it's the same. It's a variation two parts of the river outside of Karesuando. So that was to point to it, just the National Water being drawn into the middle of a village kind of

⁴¹⁵Suortá/Sortland is a municipality in Nordland County, Norway.

E: ... cut in half by the national border.

S: So one part is Finnish, one part is Swedish. the river, but this same version, both sides of the river used to be the road kind of but also so the focus somewhere (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø).

The waymark displays both Small Sámi settlements and big mainly-Norwegian town with, however, a strong Sámi community. It includes place-names from all over Sápmi, and each place-name is written in the language of its Sámi inhabitants. The names of places falling within the borders of Russia are written using in the Sámi-language adapted Cyrillic language employed to write eastern Sámi languages (Anaar Sámi excluded). Differently from the original Narvik waymark, those who built the Gállogieddi waymark did not display international reference points such as Rome, Moscow, New York but, by choosing Sámi settlements – especially small ones – they wanted to re-center the geography of Sápmi. In this contexts, Gállogieddi becomes a point of reference from which the distance from the places mentioned is measured, making it a Sámi *caput mundi*.

I would like to focus on the choice of Guhttas and Šuoššjávri, settlements, both – like the Márka – cut across by colonial borders. In one case, that of, the border is a municipal one, dividing the village between Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and Kárásjoga /Karasjok municipalities, in the case of Guhttas, the border divided the village between Sweden and Finland. The case of Guhttas reminds us of the Sámi settlement of Gárasavvon/Karesuando split between Sweden and Finland. The choice of the Márkomeannu organizers fell on Guhttas to bring to light situations similar to that of Gárasavvon/Karesuando but less well-known. Guhttas and Šuoššjávri are extremely relevant because, along with Gállogieddi itself, they show the divisive potential of colonial borders imposed upon the Sámi. They embody the divisive potential of borders at different institutional levels: Guhttas – like Gárasavvon/Karesuando – illustrates the condition of a settlement divided between two Nation States; Gállogieddi that of a settlement divided between two different counties – and therefore municipalities – and Šuoššjávri that between two municipalities. Such fragmentation causes complication for the local population. The complication becomes more serious the higher the institutional level of the border.



Image 79 Márkomeannu iconic waymark erected in 2012 (photo by the author).



Image 80: Narvik iconic waymark (photo by the author).

The analysis of the Gállogieddi signpost – and of the Márkomeannu 2012 poster – acquires significance when examined in the context of the previously-analyzed Norwegian linguistic assimilation policy of toponymic silencing. Signposts and road signs are inscriptions in the territory, marking places and measuring distances. Road-signs in particular are expressions of authority: they symbolize the presence of the state in the landscape and constitute «[...] a material object fixed in place, where the place-name itself meets the landscape» (Puzey, 2009: 1). By resorting to Sámi, the Gállogieddi waymark subverts Norwegian toponymic silencing by attributing authority to indigenous Sámi place-names by displaying in public. The same process applies to the handmade wooden road-signs set up in the dead of night throughout Márka 10 years earlier.

The Márka area falling within Tjelsund municipality officially became part of the Sámi administrative area in 2020 after decades of painstaking work on the part of local activists. The debates surrounding the public display of Sámi place-names also reverberate in activism-informed arts and its echoes can still be perceived today.

Márkomeannu is arranged at Gállogieddi, in the Márkasámi area, close to the border between Nordland and Troms on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Some events is taking place in the region around Gállogieddi. Gállogieddi is 5 miles from Harstad, 8 miles from Narvik, 22 miles from Kiruna and 26 miles from Tromsø. The easiest way to get there is by car. Take off from E10 1.3 km east of Evenes airport, towards Narvik. From there it's 4.5 km to the festival area. Follow the signs to Márkomeannu or Gállogieddi (www.Markomeannu.no)⁴¹⁶.

This text appears on the Márkomeannu Festival website, in the section “Map, how to get to Márkomeannu?”. The text is available also in Norwegian and North Sámi in the respective versions of the website.

This text, so simple in its clarity and spontaneity, represents the culmination of a long and troubled struggle and negotiation within the Márka community. The path that led to the acceptance – and not

⁴¹⁶ *Hvordan komme seg til Márkomeannu?*

Márkomeannu blir arrangert på Gállogieddi like ved grensen mellom Nordland og Troms på norsk side av Sápmi. Gállogieddi ligger 5 mil fra Harstad, 8 mil fra Narvik, 22 mil fra Kiruna og 26 mil fra Tromsø. Den enkleste måten å komme seg til Márkomeannu på er med bil. Kjør gjerne sammen med andre, det er triveligere, og både miljøet og pengeboka jubler! Om du kommer med bil til Márkomeannu, ta av fra E10 1,3 km øst for Evenes flyplass, i retning Narvik. Derfra er det 4,5 km til festivalområdet. Følg skilting til Márkomeannu eller til Gállogieddi.

Mo beassat márkomeannui?

Márkomeannu lágíduvvo Gállogiättis áiddo Nordlánda ja Romssa fylkkarájá alde Norgga bealde Sámis. Gállogiättis leat 5 miilla Hárstaide, 8 miilla Áhkánjárgga gávpogii, 22 miilla Gironii ja 26 miilla Romsii. Lea álkimus biillain boahtit Márkomennui. Vuojje áinnas ovttas earáiguin, lea guoibmát, ja sihke biras ja ruhtabursa liikojit dasa!

Jus boadát vuoji Márkomennui Harstak guovllus, mohkas E10:is 1,3 km Evenášši girdeselju nuorttabealde, gurut guvlui. Das lea 4,5 km festiválabáikái. Čuovo galbbaid mat čujuhit Márkomennui dahje Gállogieddi.

just tolerance – of Sámi toponyms, and which allowed a similar text to exist, was long and difficult. The relevance of this text can only be understood if framed within the linguistic landscape of the Márka and, more broadly, of Northern Norway.

Gállogieddi, at the same time a toponym and a cultural microcosm with which stories, events and emotions are associated, is used in this text as a reference point framed within geographical coordinates which, at least in the English and Norwegian versions of the text, otherwise employ a Norwegian terminology. The use of a Sámi toponym in this context is a decolonial act in itself, a political stance that emerges more clearly when comparing the Norwegian and Sámi geographical frames of reference.

According to Norwegian maps, the festival is held on Øvermyrnesveien, in Liland, but this street name is never mentioned on the Márkomeannu website. The Norwegian address was consciously omitted. It is important to reflect upon why the organizers have chosen to leave visitors to find out by themselves where, according to Norwegian toponymy, Gállogieddi is located. For many of the Sámi who attend the festival, there is no need to further specify where Gállogieddi is as the physical location of the Gállogieddi museum-area is part of common, local knowledge. For the people who are not familiar with the region, though, it can be a bit of a challenge to locate the festival site.

Gállogieddi is the original Sámi name of the farm known in Norwegian as Myrnes (Myrnes, Olsen, Myrnes Balto, 2006). As already mentioned, the Norwegian authorities consciously substituted the original Sámi toponym with a Norwegian name on maps and documents. Since the 1800s, depriving places of their original Sámi names has been a common practice in the northern regions of Fennoscandinavia. On the Norwegian side of Sápmi, Norwegian toponyms became the standard place-names on maps, road-signs and, in many cases, also in the local oral tradition.

By resorting exclusively to the Sámi place-name also in the English and Norwegian versions of the website, the staff of Márkomeannu openly challenged the Norwegian toponymic silence. Gállogieddi is not just a Sámi place-name with a Norwegian counterpart. The place-name Gállogieddi encapsulates a worldview and constitutes an oral map in itself by enshrining information on the location itself: The toponym Gállogieddi alludes to a big erratic rock (*gallo*), which stands in what today are the fields (*gieddi*) of the old farm.



Image 81a: Gállo (boulder) at Gállogieddi (photo by the author).



Image 81b: Gállo (boulder) at Gállogieddi (photo by the author).

The linguistic dimension of the toponym Gállogieddi is connected with the linguistic landscape of the Márka, an area that not only witnessed and endure toponimic silencing but also a pervasive assimilation policy contributing to a language shift from the local Duortnus/Torne variety of North Sámi to Standard Bokmal Norwegian.

5.3.3 *Mátta-Romssa ja Ofuohtá davvisámegiella*⁴¹⁷

I would now like to return to a specific element which emerged during an interview with Sigbjørn Skåden (11/5/2020, Tromsø, see chapter 4 section 4.3): his remark «those who were supposed not to be Sámi» reveals the linguistic dimension of the Márka in relation to its linguistically fragmented ethnic composition. Sigbjørn Skåden made this assertion while discussing the role of Čuoppomáddu's stories in his upbringing as a Márka-Sámi boy and the fact that stories about Čuoppomáddu were told also among Márka people who did not identify themselves as Sámi. His statement is of particular interest since it offers clues to the inter-ethnic dimension of the community, an unexpected subject revealed by details concerning how local folktales were told and transmitted.

Čuoppomáddu's stories transcend (recently-formed) ethnic divides. Even people who, in Sigbjørn Skåden's words, «were supposed not to be Sámi» – i.e. did not self-identify as Sámi – not only told stories about the Great Mother of Frogs to their children but also identified her by her Sámi name Čuoppomáddu rather than translating it into Froskemora (Mother of Frog).

This striking element demonstrates how deeply rooted the figure of Čuoppomáddu is in the collective imagery of Márka-Sámi folklore and how much it formed part of the Márka-Sámi cultural background, a cultural point of reference for old and young. Since the Čuoppomáddu stories interested mainly the world of childhood, it is likely that even those who did not want to be considered Sámi had heard Čuoppomáddu stories when they were children themselves and therefore passed them on to their own children. Čuoppomáddu pertained to the domestic –hence private – sphere of life. In the context of the Márka, as in that of many other Sámi communities, private and public dimensions culturally drifted apart with the private family-based dimension maintaining a Sámi profile and the public-community dimension becoming increasingly Norwegianized. The separation between public and private dimensions was a consequence of pressures external to the Márka-Sámi community: while the male-dominated public dimension had to align itself with the hegemonic cultural and linguistic landscape, the private female sphere lived within the protective bonds of the family, allowing many to maintain in private a Sámi identity which was shared among the members of the family, a phenomenon studied by Evjen in similar Sámi contexts (2007). It is within this framework that a language shift, which occurred parallel to the unfolding of World War II, can be addressed and understood: in those few years, something happened that had lasting consequences. As parents stopped talking in Sámi to their children, Sámi languages were spoken by adults as a secret language

⁴¹⁷ *Mátta-Romssa ja Ofuohtá davvisámegiella* (NS) translates as South Troms and Ofoten North Sámi language.

among themselves, children were cut out of the conversation. Nevertheless, children picked up fragments of the language which their parents and relatives were attempting to keep from them. These children grew up with a passive knowledge of the language that pertained to the private sphere, what they today call “kitchen Sámi”, This was to become a current theme in my fieldwork, where I was frequently told by people in their 60s that they could understand to an extent the Sámi language of their region since they had grown up listening to “kitchen Sámi”. Similarly, many of my younger interlocutors recounted how their own parents could speak and understand little Sámi, and more specifically the language pertaining to the private dimension, what they too called “kitchen Sámi”⁴¹⁸.

5.3.4 Of language shifts, linguistic choices and linguistic landscapes

“Kitchen Sámi” is a peculiar expression that is often quoted when describing the linguistic context into which the post-war generation grew up. This locution reveals the domestic environment in which the language was spoken. The kitchen was after all the ultimate private space where the family gathered and issues were discussed. Despite the parents’ best attempts to keep their children from the language, the basic knowledge of Márka-Sámi people who were children in the late 1940s and 1950s developed by overhearing the language spoken secretly by their parents at home. This passive knowledge of Sámi was to become the basis for their fight to “take the language back”, providing an underlying language level that facilitated later language acquisition.

Is it important to address why though Márka-Sámi parents had decided not to socialize their children into their own native language. While discussing this seemingly puzzling issue with professor Geir Grenersen – Professor of Documentation Science at the UiT Department of Language and Culture – he told me:

I have asked that question to many Sámi both in Aravuopmi-Vassdalen and Márkabygd. And they say it seems to be a sort of decision that and they always say you couldn't manage with Sámi. Sámi didn't help you the modern society. And this kind of collective decision that never was discussed explicitly, it happened during the war. [...]. And in Vassdalen, they say the same It was during the war and like, around 1942 people stopped talking Sámi to the children. And that brought a lot of

⁴¹⁸ Olmmáivággi’s author Gerd Mikalsen has written a novel based on her own family experiences in relation to language shift processes. Mikalsen examines the social dimension of “kitchen Sámi” or “the adults’ language”. The novel, evocatively entitled “father’s new mother tongue” in English (Farsmålet in Norwegian, 2016 – and Áhčigiella in North Sámi, 2017) does indeed examine the deep trauma and the scars caused by assimilation processes in a village where stigma and Laestadianism dominate peoples lives. The novel though address also the healing that comes from «taking back one own’s language» and cultural identity in the community where Riddu Riđđu takes place (Mikalsen 2019)(see chapter 6 section 4 in this thesis for the linguistic dimension of State-led assimilation processes in Olmmáivággi)

things to change then. And they started to learn Norwegian. But of course, a lot of these children learned Sámi, as a sort of passive language (Geir Grenersen, private conversation, February 2020).

The language shift occurred in the Márka, as well as in many other Sámi communities, was the result of the convergence of multiple factors grounded in at least 80 years of active assimilation policies⁴¹⁹ but determined by the new circumstances of post-bellum Norway. The war years represented the temporal watershed marking this phenomenon, as war itself had been one of the leading factors in determining the language shift. The conflict and its aftermath brought many changes in Norwegian and Sámi societies, one of which was language shift. Because of war, people lost their material culture, for example their houses, animals and boats where the German army had practice a scorched earth policy. Upon liberation, the Norwegian (and also the Finnish) government reconstructed such areas, at the same time changing the fabric of Northern Norwegian society so that Northern Norway should resemble the south with regard to living conditions and language.). One consequence of such process was that many village Sámi moved into faraway towns and cities, therefore, severing ties with their places of origin and often the local Sámi culture. the Sámi settlements which were not destroyed by the Germans were spared the sudden loss of their material culture but were not spared the sufferance of stigma and the slow but inexorable erosion brought about by post World War policies and attitudes that constitute the second factor playing a pivotal role in fostering language shift. National development, cultural and material modernization processes, a still ongoing state-led Norwegianisation policy that actively discriminated against everything Sámi and a Labor Party-promoted political ideology that prioritizes an egalitarian mentality. The latter enjoyed strong support in Sámi environment, where it was perceived as an opportunity to be valued as individuals without paying the price of the ethnic stigma associated with Sámi origins (Grenersen 2002).

A third element, highlighted by Minde (2000), is the institutional dimension of the language shift in the Márka: Sámi preachers stopped using the Sámi language in the inter-war years, reducing the

⁴¹⁹ This first phase falls within the frames of a linguistic phenomenon known as “gradual attrition”, a process that refers to the relatively slow erosion and consequent loss of a local language to the advantage of a language of wider use, being that a local dominant language, a national lingua franca or an imposed official idiom. In contexts of gradual attrition transitional bilingualism seems to characterize the speaker population during the language shift process. (Grenoble and Whaley 2006). Across Sápmi, bi- and tri-linguism were and are widely attested. If in recent years bi- and tri-linguism corresponded with language shift processes, it has not always been the case as people in the 18th, 19th and also early 20th century were able to switch to one language to the other according to the interlocutor. This multilingualism characterised a polyglot population in a time when, at least in the Northernmost regions of Fennoscandinavia, no language dominated in daily life (Grenoble and Whaley 2006).

social prestige of the language and negatively impacting upon the public expression of Sámi identity through language and visible items such as the *gákti* (Sámi costume). Læstadian leadership not only renounced the Sámi idiom as a liturgical language but had also been opposed to the ethno-political mobilisation since its very beginning. As mentioned early in this chapter (see section 4.4.3), the perceived problem with Sámi identity in Læstadian circles was not so much Sámi identity *per se* but the fact that it was an expression of this world rather than that of the kingdom of God. This theological stance had consequences that heavily impacted upon the daily life of Márka-Sámi people who adhered to Læstadianism: local visibly-Sámi ethnic characteristics were suppressed with detrimental consequences for Sámi identity.

In just a few years, many Sámi had to face changes in all aspects of their lives, from housing to employment, from subsistence to a money economy, from a life in small countryside or coastal villages to a life in an urban environment⁴²⁰. The linguistic dimension of daily life too was not immune to change under the pressure of modernization. Modernization was seen as incompatible with a openly Sámi way of life and everything pertaining to Sámi cultures, from material culture to language, was perceived as backward. All the factors highlighted above help drawing the wider picture into which individuals' and families' language choices were made as such choices were connected with the wider ethno-political climate. Furthermore, the shift from Sámi to Norwegian did not necessarily mean renouncing or denying Sámi identity. In many cases, the shift was a pragmatic decision, taken in a context of curtailed choices, but Sámi identity was not questioned when it came to other aspects of daily life (such as the *gákti*/Sámi costume)⁴²¹.

Geir Grenersen collected numerous accounts about how opting for Norwegian over Sámi had been for many elderly people – who were young during the wartime – a choice they not only do not regret but also find appropriate for the circumstances:

Geir: when I speak with the old women and men, with many, many people that, went through this period [...] they say, well, “we changed language, but that was the only way to manage. And that was modernization”. Because in the 1950s, and 60s, you got the machinery into the

⁴²⁰ A growing body of literature from a wide array of disciplines addresses urbanization processes among Sámi people. Most of the available studies focus on Sámi individuals' migration movements within Fennoscandinavia since WWII (see: Pedersen and Nyseth 2013; Nyseth and Pedersen 2014; Overud 2019; Melhus et al. 2020).

⁴²¹ Scholars like Stordahl (1993), Grenersen (2002), Lehtola (2010), and Rasmussen, & Nolan (2011) consider World War II as a turning point in Sámi cultures since he connects language shift with wartime, linking linguistic choices to wartime experiences. Nazi Germany's occupation of Norway and – in the latest stages of war, the scorched heart policy in Nord Troms and Finnmark, along with the concomitant forced evacuation of the local population – many of whom were Sámi – fostered a sense of solidarity in southern Norwegians for the people fleeing the North, among them the Sámi. (see chapter 3).

fishing fleet that had come earlier. But you've got the machinery into the parts, tractors, you know, horses were used up to 1950. And the text [of these new machineries] was in English, and maybe Norwegian, but it was not in Sámi. So they, they chose to change language for the children, hoping that their children would get education to get on the welfare-train. And of course, we know that there was Norwegianization period that the [Sámi] language was not taught in school. And that this policy, that was so sad, has had consequences. But this choice of teaching their children, which is often been said to be the absolute prove that an Norwegianization succeeded in – we lost the language -. That's good. But when you talk with people that is born in 1920, today, they say: “but we managed!” (Geir Grenersen, private conversation, February 2020).

It emerges that the linguistic choice of switching from Sámi to Norwegian, preventing children from acquiring their parents' own mother-tongue as their first language was a conscious decision taken in the hope that they would grow up Norwegian native speakers, a language skill that would make their lives easier in a Norwegian-dominated context. Members of a entire generation sacrificed their native language to give their children the same opportunity as the children who belonged to the hegemonic culture⁴²².

This explains also why, earlier in the conversation, Geir Grenersen said: «They always say you couldn't manage with Sámi. Sámi didn't help you the modern society». Since Norwegian promised upward social mobility through welfare and modernization, this was a linguistic choice deeply rooted in asymmetric power relations and highlighting the low status endured by the Sámi languages seen as a disadvantage rather than heritage. Being able to speak proficiently Norwegian, on the other hand, proved for many to be a way out of the poverty of the area and a means through which escape the stigma associated with being Sámi, as an elderly Márka-Sámi lady explained to Geir Grenersen:

This woman, you know, she was very old and her children did not speak Sámi. And she told me: “look at myself, look at my children: one became an officer in the army, the other went on with his education”, that I suppose means he is a teacher, “the third got a very good job in the bank. Every one of them has good jobs”. That's what she told me, and she's so proud of it. (Geir Grenersen, private conversation, February 2020).

Through these lenses, language shift emerges as an act of empowerment and an expression of agency within a difficult context marked by power asymmetries and structural violence. This reading reverses the paradigm that for a long time framed the Sámi as passive victims of assimilation policies. The accounts reported by Grenersen tell a different story, a story in which the Sámi are not a passive victims who lost their language under the pressure of the State. If it was so, they would have lost the

⁴²² During the same period similar choices were made also by the Kven people (see Lane 2010).

language long before the war and in all Sámi communities across Sápmi. This is in line with UNESCO's remarks concerning the perception of hegemonic language as the language of social and economic opportunity. Being kept in high regard by the population – even that section that does not speak the hegemonic language as mother-tongue – there is a strong pressures towards a shift to the hegemonic language, but not the other way round (2003 in Grenoble and Whaley 2006). History shows that in some areas the language seamless survived, passed down across the generations while in others it slowly faded away, and in yet others was spoken among elderly members of the community but consciously not passed down to younger generations to protect them and to guarantee a better future in a country that, in the name of equality and unity imposed uniformity.

Children born in the Márka after 1942, grew up in a world that spoke Norwegian to them but that kept Sámi as a private means of communication among adults in the safety of the domestic sphere. This was the first generation in the area to grew up with Norwegian as a first language. Nevertheless many from that generation, upon reaching adulthood, worked towards «[...] getting the language back», fighting for Sámi language education for their own children. It was these children who initiated the festival and, sharing and endorsing their parents' fight for Sámi rights, used it as a social platform for ethno-political activism of which the use of Sámi toponyms is an expression. In light of this, it is clear that the Festival organizers decided to use to the local Sámi name Gállogieddi throughout the website and especially in the section “How to get there”. It was an act of resistance and decolonisation. The name of the location is not the only Sámi element in the linguistic policy of the festival. According to the producer of Márkomeannu 2019 (M. S. private conversation. 6/2/2019), the organizers use Northern Sámi as often and in as many contexts as possible. This festival aims at becoming an event where Sámi from the local Márka, as well as from all of Sápmi, can easily access their own language, speak it with their friends and use it with reference to both daily and special activities. Sámi is used as a means of communication among peers and presentations in and about the language are offered to the public. This attitude makes Márkomeannu a site of “linguistic activism” (Salo 2012). One of the consequences of assimilation policies is that today many young Sámi have not learnt the language at home and do not speak Sámi as their first language. For those who live outside the Sámi core areas or who have not attended Sámi-language school, the festivals represent one of the very few opportunities to use Sámi in an informal context. The importance of indigenous words at Márkomeannu encompasses all aspects of the festival. Even if they do not speak the

language, many visitors name the Sámi tents in northern Sámi: *lávvu*. Sámi attenders also refer to their own sleeping tents using the same word.

At Márkomeannu, Sámi languages are not just spoken but they are also visually presented and used. They become part of the local “linguistic landscape” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). When possible, buildings, signs and objects are marked in Sámi along with the English or Norwegian translation. For instance, fountains are labelled *čáhci/Vann* (“water” in North Sámi and in Norwegian respectively). Interestingly, the semi-permanent building hosting the festival kitchen has been named *boaššu*. This word, painted on a big wooden sign, dominates the building. The use of the North Sámi term *boaššu* is a relevant detail since, in this context, the noun not only refers to the kitchen but works as a metaphor: it constitutes a transposition of the ancient Sámi daily life into contemporary Sámi cultural events. The *boaššu* is a delimited area within the *lávvu* or the *goathi*, opposite to the entrance and just behind the fireplace. The food was stored in the *boaššu* and this space used to have deep cultural and spiritual connotations since it was considered sacred and nobody – especially women – was allowed to step onto it. According to some accounts, it was in the *boaššu* that the sacred ritual drum was kept (Spangen, 2016). The *boaššu* was a sort of kitchen, even if the food was actually cooked on the fire. The North Sámi word for kitchen though is not *boaššu* but *kievkkan/gievkkan*. By referring to the festival kitchen with the ancient word *boaššu*, the festival organizers implemented a symbolic transference of the Sámi traditional spatial organization to the festival area. The Gállogieddi waymark (see section 5.1.4) is a further element which contributes to decolonising Gállogieddi and its linguistic landscape.

The linguistic language of the festival is further enriched by the use of Sámi language on the festival menu and Sámi is also used, along with Norwegian, to denote the various physical areas of the festival ground such as the temporary library, the youth, the volunteers’, the bar, and the staff area as well as the toilets, the parking lot and the ticket-office tent.

5.4 Peaks in the mist

In the Márka, various institutions arose from local enterprises, individual and family initiatives as well as programs, some of which were supported by international bodies. Many of these institutions predate the establishment of formal bodies like the Sámediggi/Sámi parliament.

Among them, some stand out as institutions which make the Sámi identity of the region publicly and proudly visible: the Sámi kindergarten Márkomának sámi mánáidgárdi, the Gállogieddi open-air museum and the Várdobáiki cultural centre.

These institutions rise like peaks in the mist with the sun glinting off them, but the bases of these mountains are lower down, invisible because hidden by the mist but nevertheless there, standing as the backbone which allows the peaks to soar. These bases correspond to the years of tireless ethno-political activism interwoven with internal Sámi resistance against this same political activism. The Márka-Sámi institutions, as we know them today, would not exist if it had not been for the activism and the resistance against it, interdependent insofar as one fuels the other.

The use of the Sámi language was beyond discussion in other communities where Sámi identity was equally complex but nevertheless public. In other areas where there was no activism in favour of using the language, it fell into disuse. In the Márka both attitudes – albeit incompatible – toward the Sámi language coexisted. It was from this opposition itself that ethno-political activists gained their strength, their pugnacity, their character and their will to make Sámi identity in the Márka respectable and familiar even outside the borders of the region.

The Márkomeannu festival too has risen to become one of the most important cultural institutions of the area while also occupying a position of pride among Sámpe events. The character and profile of Márkomeannu has been shaped by the individual and collective experiences of its founders and earliest organizers, children of political activists and they too activists by virtue of their cultural work.

5.4.1 Children of Sáráhká: raising a new generation of Sámi speakers Sáráhká Sámemánák

Kindergartens are places and spaces where children should experience a safe environment for play, development and learning. In the 1980s, mainstream Norwegian kindergartens – as well as schools – were not always able to guarantee such a positive environment for Sámi children.

In 1986 a group of determined and resourceful Márka-Sámi women, active in politics decided to open a Sámi language kindergarten for the local children. Despite a financial support from the Van Leer Foundation – an institution that worked towards strengthening minority groups' confidence and well-being through language education (Grensnes 2002) – the conditions in which these women had to operate were difficult. What to many then appeared as an unfeasible undertaking proved to be a pionieristic project which led to the establishment of a Sámi kindergarten that still exists today: the Márka children's Sámi kindergarten (Márkománák Sámi mánáidgárdi/Márkománák Sámi Barnehage), since 2003 managed by Várdobáiki Sámi centre. The mothers of the Márka who worked towards the establishment of a Sámi kindergarten for the local children – their own sons and daughters among them – had a solid background in education. They were aware that kindergartens are extremely

important in language revitalization processes and that these institutions are crucial in preserving and developing children's knowledge of, and confidence in, their culture. Language revitalization is a long-term process that requires long-term strategies which need to be constantly assessed and adapted to the changing context. In establishing a Sámi language kindergarten, these ethno-political pioneers focused on language socialization and intergenerational transmission over language teaching, an aspect that was maintained also in the language teaching education in primary and secondary school.

They wanted to change language attitudes by fostering Sámi language use. Their idea of an immersive education with Intergenerational language transmission at its core. For this reason, the elderly generations were actively involved in the children's kindergarten experience, with frequent visits of the latter to the former. During those intergenerational encounters, not only language but also culture was shared and transmitted, reconnecting a link broken by post-war linguistic choices.

The creation of a Sámi kindergarten⁴²³ in the Márka was a watershed event leaving a distinct mark in the community. This institution enshrines in its original name the educational and idealistic project that the women who founded the kindergarten endowed it with: *Sáráhká sámemánák*, the Sámi children of *Sáráhká*. This programmatic name is charged with a strong symbolism highlighting the centrality of the women's role in the upbringing of children – the future of the community – while also establishing a connection with the Sámi past: daughter of the goddess *Máttaráhkká* and sister to the goddesses *Juoksáhkká* og *Uksáhkká*. In Sámi non-Christian mythologies and worldviews, *Sarakka* (N)- also spelt *Sarahkka* or *Sáráhkká* (NS) – is the goddess of fertility, menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth as well as love and human sexuality. It is *Sáráhkká* the one who place the fetus in the womb, and it's her duty to protect women during pregnancy. As the goddess of fertility, she plays a central role in both conception and delivery and is considered as the goddess who, among the deities, was the closest to Sámi peoples' daily life. A position reinforced by the fact that she lives under the hearth in the *goathi* or *lavvu*. Sacrifices to this goddess are made by pouring a drink into the edge of the hearth.

When the founders chose to name the kindergarten after a Sámi non-Christian goddess,⁴²⁴ they implicitly made a programmatic statement for everyone to understand: not only they were carving a

⁴²³ In Norway, children attend kindergarten until they are six years old.

⁴²⁴ *Sáráhká* (spelt *Sarahkka*) is also the name of a Sámi organization founded by Sámi women in 1988. Sámi feminism can be dated back to 1910 and is inextricably linked to Elsa Laula Renberg (1877-1931) a trained midwife and politician who founded the first Sámi the Sámi women's association, the *Brurskanken* Sámi women's association in *Vefsn* in *Nordland* (Halsaa 2011), before calling for an international Sámi meeting, the now famous meeting which took place on

space for Sámi children in the Márka but they were also doing so by embracing the Sámi cultural heritage and Sámi values, having them as the basis of this pedagogical project. Not everyone though supported the project and the very idea of opening a Sámi kindergarten brought into light the conflict and tensions dividing the Márka-Sámi community between those who want Sámi identity to be a private matter and those who want it to return part of the public life of the community. Geir Grenersen – who worked along with the founders in establishing wrote *Sáráhká sámemánák* and on the analysis of this kindergarten devoted in PhD dissertation in pedagogical studies – describes a significant episode that exemplifies the subtle but pervasive stigmatization against Sámi identity even within the Márka. Grenersen reports of when a teacher in the local school – which at the time rented out an area to the Sámi kindergarten – removed a couple of posters with Sámi motifs from almost empty walls in a classroom. The teacher considered those posters as carriers of negative symbolic values. By removing the posters, the teacher was sending a message: they did not want a Sámi kindergarten there, as it was believed that such institution had nothing to add to the school. Furthermore, the teacher wanted to prevent students from getting wrong attitudes towards the Sámi. In the teacher's view, the posters would provide fertile ground for anti-Sámi sentiments. Grenersen highlights the paradox intrinsic to this situation: In a Sámi village and with Sámi students in the class, a teacher (perhaps with a Sámi background herself) removes posters with Sámi motifs to prevent wrong attitudes.

A further example shows how the kindergarten exposed the frictions running deep underneath the surface of Márka-Sámi society: a Sámi-speaking Márka-Sámi father of a young child put forward two arguments against the establishment of a Sámi kindergarten: First, the Márka-Sámi villages do not need their own Sámi kindergarten; a municipal – i.e. Norwegian – one was considered sufficient to meet the day care needs of the community. A second, less pragmatic but more revealing aspect lied in the concerns this father expressed: he feared what the Norwegians “down by the sea” – the Bumann – would say about a kindergarten “up in the hills”. The presence of a Sámi language kindergarten would reinforce the stereotype that sees the Sámi as an uncivilized people in the wilderness. Those down by the sea think we have become like them. When we start a Sámi kindergarten, we show to the seafront that we are still stuck in the “extinct and primitive” Sámi culture.

Anders was a member of one of the Sámi associations, and he had Sámi as his mother tongue. His opposition to the Sámi kindergarten was therefore situational. Part of the reluctance was the degree

6/2/1917 in Tråante/Trondheim, an event remembered every year and whose anniversary has become the Sámi national day.

of publicity surrounding the kindergarten. He and other Márka Sámi disliked the fact that the Sámi received attention in the press and radio. Part of the opposition may also be due to the kindergarten becoming a success, and the women succeeding in their efforts to create a Sámi kindergarten. It can be difficult to acknowledge that Sámi today can be a career path, and that a key to personal progress may lie in investing in Sámi (Greneren 2002).

In 1986-87, when Sáráhká Sámemánák was established, language shift in the Márka was threatening the survival of the local Márka- Sámi Duortnus/Torne variety of North Sámi. In contexts of language shift – determined by linguistic policies such as those endured by the Sámi and to which they adapted to on the Norwegian side of Sápmi – language nests⁴²⁵, as well as language revitalisation classes, have proved extremely effective in counterbalancing the effects of linguistic assimilation and consequent language shift. Language nests have proved efficacious in numerous contexts, for instance on the Finnish side of Sápmi, in Aanar/Inari (Pasanen, 2015) and this successful model is being replicated thanks to awareness that the early years are crucial in the development of language skills and that day-care centres and kindergartens, together with a child’s family and close networks, are extremely important in the strengthening and development of Sámi language skills (Øzerk, 2008 in Van Deer Voet 2019).

Such awareness is reflected in the first paragraph of the original Statutes of Sáráhká Sámemánák, which states:

A. Sáráhká Sámamáná aims to strengthen and promote Sámi culture, identity and self-image among Sámi preschool children in Njarga, Hoantas and Corru⁴²⁶.

B. This is sought to be achieved in the following way: Sáráhká Sámemánák shall be a preschool offer with emphasis on Sámi culture and language training.

C. The preschool offer is based on our Sámi local environment. Through exchanges and excursions, it will also give the children a picture of, and a sense of, community with other Sámi communities.

⁴²⁵ The expression “language nest” refers to a kind of day-care institution developed in multilingual contexts. In such day-cares children are socialised in the minority language which is also the only language spoken to and with the children attending the day-care.

⁴²⁶ The use of Sámi place-names in the 1980s and in an official document had strong political overtones and helps understanding the wider project into which a Sámi kindergarten like Sáráhká Samemanak was developed

The values enshrined in the statute were reflected in the kindergarten's pedagogy as well as in every aspect of the kindergarten itself, the first of which was the location: The kindergarten, first hosted in the school building in Boltås soon had to be moved and the choice fell to a culturally relevant location, a house known in the Márka-Sámi villages as Hildahuset, the house of Hilda. The location of the "Hilda house" was extremely well-suited for the purposes of the kindergarten. The building was located in an old Sámi settlement in the middle of the Márka-Sámi area. According to Grenersen, the staff emphasized the advantages of setting the Kindergarten in the Hilda house, a house that once belonged to old Sámi woman who was well-known in the community for her skills in *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts). Grenersen points out that, from a cultural perspective, the Hilda's house was especially suited for the purpose: The Hilda house was located in a Sámi cultural landscape, in a place where past generation had leaved and left traces of their own existence. Hilda was a beloved member of the community and people in the Márka remembered her and told stories about her. She was a Sámi culture bearer who spoke Sámi in a special way and used to invent her own Sámi words for the various new objects that came into the Márka from outside (2002). From a socio-linguistic perspective (see Grenoble & Whaley 2005) this element is of particular relevance. Hilda's mastering of the language and her ability to create a lexicon that could accommodate the cultural and material changes occurring in her community, her ability to expanding the language to use it in new domains, made her an exponent of the language vitality of Márka-Sámi language in the second-half of the 20th century. Since this was one of the reasons – among others – for which she was remembered, it can be inferred that she was among the few who did so, probably making her one of the last members of the community to master the language in way that preserved its vitality, at least until the wave of cultural-ethnic and linguistic activism that started in the 1970s and led to the creation of Sámi institutions in the area, expanding the use of Sámi language in the Márka and fostering it renewed vitality. The geographical location of the house was a further factor that contributed to the importance of Hilda's house: the building lies a couple of hundred meters above Kvitfors chapel, the religious gathering point in the countryside. Unfortunately, this building was not suitable for hosting a kindergarten and hence another location had to be found. The choice fell first on Lantdjevva/Planterhaug, where the kindergarten was hosted for a while in a private house before being moved to a building designed purposely for hosting a Sámi kindergarten.

The establishment of a Sámi speaking kindergarten in the Márka was a daunting challenge undertaken by mothers of pre-school age children who wanted a culturally sensitive education, where Sámi language and practices were the cornerstone of didactic principles, for their won sons and

daughters as well for all the children of the area. This aspiration is mirrored in many indigenous contexts and language nests as well as kindergartens have established in numerous indigenous communities throughout the world such as Canada (see Eisazadeh et al. 2017; Morcom & Roy 2019), New Zealand and Hawaii⁴²⁷ (Warner 2001). The reasoning behind the institution of such day care centres and kindergartens is awareness that, in order to counteract language shift and foster positive images of indigenous cultures among their youngest members, the earliest years of life are fundamental. In the context of the Márka the kindergarten proved to be an essential tool in developing a positive view of local Sámi language and culture.

During an interview with Emma Skåden, we discussed the reasons that, in her opinion, led her mother and the other local mothers to embark on such a challenging project.

Emma: I think the goal when they wanted to start this kindergarten was to, to let us kids grow up, or go into kindergarten and grow up with the Sámi culture, and language to an extent. But yeah, but just to feel safe, to have a safe space where we can do that without, you know, it being weird, or it being something else, or something different or something, as it maybe would have been in or not, maybe it wouldn't have been, and was in the kindergartens that were at that time, because where, where were the kindergartens at the seaside? And that, that goes for both, you know, Skånland and Evenes, for both the municipalities (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

The wellbeing of the children was, in Emma's view, at the core of this pedagogical project. The mothers wanted their children to be safe while also being Sámi. In a standard Norwegian kindergarten like those in the coastal settlement in Evenes and Evenskjer, it was impossible at the time – and to an extent still today, as recent episodes of racism in the local district school demonstrate⁴²⁸ – to be a

⁴²⁷ in 1984, In Hawaii, the Hawaiian language preschools Ponana Leo started an innovative programme to revitalize the Hawaiian language and culture through a Language Immersion Program Kula Kaiapuni, the success of this programme was soon endorsed by the State of Hawai'i Department of Education which started a Hawaiian Language Immersion Program in 1987.

⁴²⁸ In December 2020, more and more frequent acts of racism and episodes of bullying against Sámi pupils in the Skånland school not only caused great distress among the pupils and anger and frustration in their parents but also triggered an online campaign against such acts under the hashtag #doarváidál (NS) #noknu (No), “now enough”. Parents, relatives, young teenagers, young adults from all of Sápmi showed their support towards the Sámi pupils in Skånland via social media, the NRK (Norsk rikskringkasting, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) and newspapers, which discussed the case. soon the local council issued a statement in both Norwegian and Sámi – both are official languages in the municipality – condemning the acts and calling for dialogue and respect. The racism episodes occurred less than a year after the municipality had formally become part of the Sámi administrative area. in the official statement (available at <https://www.tjeldsund.kommune.no/doarvaidal-noknu-vi-sier-nei-til-mobbing-og-samehets.6352793-493254.html>) the municipality stated that, as of 2020, *Mange samer vegrer seg for å vise sin Samiske tilknytning i det offentlige rom, i frykt for hets eller latterliggjøring.* (Many Sámi refuse to show their Sámi connection in public space, for fear of incitement or ridicule, my translation). These episodes came to light a few weeks after a girl on a bus in Tromsø was harassed for

Sámi child. By establishing a kindergarten “up in the hills”, in the earth of the Márka, the “mothers” hoped not only to spare their children the hardship of stigma and bullying but also to provide them with a safe space where Sámi identity was not just accepted but shared and cherished.

The linguistic dimension was, in Emma’s view, important to, but not, at least at the initial stage, preponderant in the project. Inspiring confidence in children about their Sámi identity in its wider sense was the cornerstone of the project. Language was a central feature of another project carried out by the local Sámi groups activists and politicians of which the mothers who started Sarakka were members. On the other hand, language was the cornerstone of another project involving children in primary and secondary schools. According to Emma:

[when the kindergarten was established] it was at about the Same time that there was the starting of the actual education. or the Sámi language education. So that was also a same, almost the same point. Yeah (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

In the 1980, the first Sámi language classes were held in the district school attended also by Márka-Sámi children. This was a great achievement since once Sámi languages were explicitly forbidden in state institutions and schools were the primary locus of linguistic assimilation. The new position of Sámi as subject of study and as a language of instruction was possible only because of the changed context of post-bellum Norway where Sámi languages previously denied access to arenas such as mass media, local administration, and education were now allowed with Sámi not only being spoken but also taught in schools and kindergartens.⁴²⁹

The learning and maintaining of Sámi language and culture both individually and collectively is extremely important in order to participate fully in Sámi societies and in order to appreciate and later transmit Sámi cultural values, which is what those who established the Sámi kindergarten in the Márka wished for their children and future generations. These women put into practice a shared dream which was both far-seeing and visionary, their aim transcending the education of their own children, and being projected towards future generations long after they themselves have died.

wearing the *gákti*, an event that sparked numerous reactions and a chain of solidarity also thanks to the public attention and social media campaigns. (see for instance <https://www.nrk.no/tromsogfinnmark/opprop-mot-samehets-i-tromso-tar-av-pa-sosiale-medier-1.15280873>)

⁴²⁹ In both schools and kindergartens, despite implementation problems, Sámi can nevertheless be used as the and taught as a second or foreign language for non-Sámi speaking children. Intergenerational transmission of some of the Sámi languages is today carried out both by native Sámi speaking and non-Sámi speaking parents.

The establishing of a kindergarten in the Márka and of Sámi language classes in the local schools was a difficult task also because of opposition it encountered from members of the local Sámi community who did not want Sámi to enter schools. As Emma explains:

In my mom's generation when they when they fought for the rights, you know, they did really, you know, fought for rights, they fought for, like, you know, being able to give us an education in the Sámi language, being able to have Sámi kindergarten, it was it was basic rights, basically, it was more. Not, no, no, but you know, it was it was sort of well, yeah, should have been, but yeah. And so that was a hard it was hard political struggle. And so, the front's were really like, really hard. And so the discussion was also really, really bad. It was read as really a terrible, terrible discussion going on in both newspapers and you know, everything.

[...] in 1987, or something like that when my mom and some others actually started to claim and wanted to start, like the Sámi kindergarten at home, firstly, and also the education, the Sámi language education. And mom had met Mari Boine. Like, once, when I think it was them, they were students or something here in June. So like, they're both originally teachers. (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø)

Even if language education is at the core of Sámi language kindergartens, it is not only language that, in Sámi kindergartens, is transmitted to children but also Sámi culture and worldviews. Sámi language kindergartens are extremely important in strengthening Sámi language and culture.

At Sáráhká Sámemánák, children were encouraged to speak Sámi in a variety of contexts. The pedagogical use of Sámi in this kindergarten – which now bears the name of Márkománák – is conveyed through storytelling as well as other culturally situated activities such as building campfires, gathering berries, visiting the local elderly with whom they can converse in Sámi, and school trips to point of local historical and cultural – as well as natural – interest⁴³⁰. The Sáráhká Samemanak kindergarten was the forerunner of similar culturally sensitive institutions which would have been based on the same principles even if only realized later. Many things have changed since Sáráhká Samemanak was first established in the 1980s. Today in Norway all children residing within the Sámi

⁴³⁰ Even though children and young adults are usually the primary actors for whom language revitalization policies are designed, revitalisation is by no means limited to these age-groups and, even if language skills among younger generations are crucial for the survival of endangered languages, intergenerational language revitalisation is also essential for languages – and associated forms of knowledge– to be transmitted and preserved. In Sámi contexts, also individuals belonging to older generations who either did not learn the language or have forgotten it are today learning one of the various Sámi languages, similarly, people who have advanced language skills but only knew how to speak the language are learning how to write it (Sarivaara & Keskitalo 2016).

administrative area have the right to education in or through a Sámi language. Municipalities have the obligation to ensure that children receive kindergarten education that is linguistically and culturally oriented in Sámi (Albury 2015).

In 1999, the Norwegian parliament approved a new education act making education in Sámi an individual right for all Sámi children regardless of where they live in Norway. In the Sámi administrative area, Sámi children have an individual right to education of Sámi and with Sámi as the language of instruction from the first to the tenth grade with. Since 1995, when a new law regulating kindergartens was passed, in Sámi administrative area all kindergarten education in Sámi has been based on Sámi languages and culture (Rasmussen & Nolan 2011).

As of 2020⁴³¹, when a Sámi child⁴³² residing in the administrative area starts kindergarten, s/he has the right to a place in a Sámi kindergarten with Sámi-speaking staff. Outside the Sámi administrative area, Sámi children do not enjoy the right to Sámi kindergartens even though many Sámi parents would like their children to be enrolled in one and many kindergartens offer some forms of introduction to Sámi cultures and Sámi kindergartens have been established even outside the Sámi administrative area (Van der Voet 2019).

Even if excursion and activities such berry picking and campfires are still today central in Sámi kindergartens, the use of technology, for example GoPro cameras, has become part of the daily activities carried out in Sámi kindergartens, along with others designed to encourage the children's use of Sámi vocabulary while strengthening the grammar. Today, the Sámediggi offers funds and grants to support Sámi language kindergartens throughout Norway, acknowledging these institutions' role in the success of language revitalization projects. Kindergartens are crucial institutions in the promotion of the children's Sámi language skills by strengthening their Sámi identity while simultaneously promoting cultural specific values through the transmission and embodiment of their cultures and traditions.

Sámi kindergartens provide today Sámi communities with some of the most valid chances of reversing a language shift, a process that occurred after decade of linguistic erosion resulting from

⁴³¹ Van Deer Voet has examined statistics concerning Sámi children's' enrolment in Sámi kindergartens across Norway. The data she collected show that 716 children enrolled in Sámi kindergartens or analogous institutions during the school year 2017-2018. Further 109 children were enrolled in kindergartens which offered forms of Sámi education even though the kindergarten itself was not a Sámi speaking kindergarten (Van Der Voet 2019).

⁴³² Since in the case of such young children the principle of self-ascription is not applicable, the Kindergarten Act and the Education Act have established that Sámi children are the children of parents who can be registered in the Sámi Parliament electoral register (Van Deer Voet 2019)

formal, state-led assimilation policies in which the Norwegian had invested a conspicuous amount of money. Many Sámi activists and politicians demand that the State fund programmes designed to reverse the language shift it had fostered. These demands are based on awareness that a true reversal of the language shift can only be brought about by means of the introduction of widely shared, generously funded supportive macro-level policies. Such demands mirror scholars' claims that for language revitalization to work, it is necessary to counter-balance the forces that fostered language shift. (Grenoble and Whaley 2006)

5.4.2 Gállogieddi: from farm to local Friluftsmuseum

Gállogieddi open-air museum has gained a role of prominence in the cultural landscape of Stuornjárga and hence I shall address this museum and its features in order to present a more detailed account of the Márka-Sámi culture.

Once a farm, Gállogieddi has been transformed into a Sámi open-air museum. Gállogieddi Friluftsmuseum is one of the six Sámi museums currently active in Norway. Given the importance of Gállogieddi for both the local Sámi and society as a whole, I deem it relevant to address the museum's foundation, its development and its current role thorough an anthropological perspective. This institution summarizes and encapsulates the local Sámi history, while bearing testimony to the strenuous effort local political and cultural activists have devoted to the preservation and the valorization of Márka-Sámi culture and language.

Gállogieddi as an institution has a peculiar history, deeply intertwined with the cultural and political struggles carried out by the local Sámi community before and since the 1980s, when protests and political battles brought Sámi issues in the public arena. The analysis of this museum, and of the context from which it has emerged, enables a wider examination of the social processes taking place in the area. Such processes are connected to, derive from, and foster practices of re-evaluation of the local Sámi identity and culture.

The transformation of the farm into a museum was a project that involved not only local Sámi organizations but also the owners of the farm itself who, actually, were the ones who first proposed the idea of making a cultural heritage site out of Gállogieddi. Emma Margrete, One of my interlocutor, a young woman in her thirties from the Márka who was among the festival founders and whose family has long been involved in the cultural and political life of the area, explained to me:

I think it was due to the one that owned at the time, Martin Myrnes. he contacted IBBS⁴³³. He's Cato's [one of the founders of Márkomeannu festival] Grandad. So he was, you know, he was the owner of it. And then yeah, I think he had the idea of, yeah, he wanted to some maybe something too, and then he contacted IJBS. And then they sort of fell in the boat for it. So that's, I think, why it's just, it's always depends on the person's initiatives (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

The opening of the Gállogieddi Friluftsmueum represents one of the great achievements reached by the local Márka-Sámi cultural activists. Since the 1970s, thanks to the efforts of Márka-Sámi activists and politicians belonging to the IBBS association, a number of Sámi institutions were established in the area. Their members have worked to preserve the local Sámi heritage while strengthening the Sámi identity among different age groups.

Once transformed into a museum, Gállogieddi has acquired a new life and a new function within the community. This function is based upon the relation Gállogieddi museum bears to the rural Márka-Sámi community, to its members and to the wider Sámi society, with its multivocal and nuanced features.

In indigenous contexts, museums have long represented a symbol of oppression so it comes as no surprise that the relation between Sámi peoples and museums has been complex and troubled. Nevertheless, in later decades, museums have also come to embody opportunities for recognition and self-determination in Sámi contexts as well as in other indigenous communities. The earlier experiences Sámi had with museums were marked by the colonial approach endorsed by early collectors. As institutions originally characterized by colonial overtones and aims (Lien & Nielssen 2012), Nordic museums have contributed to the exoticization and state-led stigmatization of Sámi cultures. Museums have fostered performative stereotypes the most pervasive of which is the association between Sámi cultures and reindeer herding. As of today though, museums have become key elements in the process of public acknowledgement and re-evaluation of Sámi cultures⁴³⁴ (Kreps 2015). In recent years, new museology practices have ensured a growing dialogue between Sámi and states institutions. One of the most important consequences of this approach it the repatriation process

⁴³³ IBSS is the acronym of the local Sámi association Iinná ja biras sámiid searvi / Hinnøy og omegn sameforening

⁴³⁴ This is also true for other marginalized groups in the Nordic countries, such as the Roma.

that guarantees an active and autonomous management of the Sámi cultural heritage through the repatriation of Sámi items and body parts⁴³⁵.

The *Gállogieddi Sámiisk friluftsmuseum* belongs to the ‘Sámi Museums’ category. Described as a typical Márka-Sámi farm (Myrnes et al. 2006) Gállogieddi is characterised by permanent and semi-permanent structures and is open to the public from June to August. In line with other museums in Sápmi, Gállogieddi not only preserves important items of Sámi material culture but it also contributes to preserving and communicating intangible heritage such as oral traditions connected with the local landscape.

The farm stands in the centre of a meadow and dominates the hill. A flag of Sápmi hung from a nearby pole, signals the Sámi presence in the area and the ethnic dimension of the museum. The main building is a tiny yellow farmhouse surrounded by other, smaller buildings belonging to the old farm: a shed, a barn a storage house and a true-to-scale architectural reconstruction of a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut) and of a *lavvu* (Sámi tent).

In the woods at the edge of the farmyard starts a 2km long cultural trail that was once part of the old road to the mountain and that today allows visitors to hike while, at the same time, walk in the footsteps of those people who once lived there. Along the cultural trail, archaeologists and local members of the community have identified and valorised culturally relevant spots as well as archaeological sites.⁴³⁶ It is possible to book guided tours of a section of the cultural trail. Furthermore, at the museum, leaflets describing the cultural/archaeological landmarks along the cultural trail are available in North Sámi, Norwegian, English, and German. The itinerary was originally designed to allow visitors – both locals and foreigners – acquainted with the local landscape and its cultural and historical features⁴³⁷.

⁴³⁵ The 1983 Utsjoki convention dictated the criteria for museums to be recognized as Sámi museums (Mulk 2009). According to the convention, Sámi museums are those focused on Sámi issues, led by Sámi peoples, located in Sámi territories and managed by Sámi institutions. The 2012 Bååstede report (Bååstede translates as “return” in South Sámi language) highlights the uttermost importance of Sámi museums but stresses that, in Norway, Sámi history should be presented and communicated also by non-Sámi museums.

⁴³⁶ This cultural trail is called *Kultursti ved Gállogieddi* (kultural trail at Gállogieddi).

⁴³⁷ The first landmark encountered along the trail is the *Gallo*. At a short distance, the second of the cultural landmarks: the *goahti* (turf hut). From the *goahti*, the trail proceeds eastwards along a mountain path. Visitors leave behind the open fields of the farm and enter the woods covering the mountain slopes. Following the trail, they reach the old well and the location where once stood a Goahti (turf hut). Walking up the mountain, visitors then encounter the bears-catch pit, the old summer barn, and a meadow where once the family extracted peat extraction for the buildings’ roofs. Proceeding long the road towards the mountain one can find the trollholla, the gapahuk, a modern activity trail and the Stuorgálo (great boulder).

In the last decades, two more wooden buildings have constructed, becoming important landmarks of Gállogieddi and its premises: the festival stage and the semi-permanent kitchen. The festival stage was designed and built in the shape of a barn, while the big kitchen is a wooden structure painted in white and used during the Márkomeannu festival week.

In Sápmi *goađit* (Sámi turf huts) have not been used as dwelling places for decades. In Márka, the transition from *goađit* (Sámi turf huts) to ordinary houses was completed by the 1950s (2015) and some of one of my interlocutors – who is in his late 30s – told me that his grandfather was born in a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut) but was extremely proud to have built a “proper house” and that he did not want to ever set a foot in a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut) again. This remark shows that Sámi identity and change for better living conditions brought by modernity were not necessarily in contrast even in families that cherished Sámi identity – such as that of this interlocutor –. “Norwegian” style houses not only were status symbols but also provided better living conditions, like access to running water, and were not on exclusive terms with being Sámi. Despite the change from *goađit* to “Norwegian” houses, *goađit* have become a symbol of Sámi identity, their trace in the landscape have become proof of Sámi dwelling there in the past and today they have gained a role of prominence in Sámi cultures no longer are dwelling places, as cultural sites where knowledge is experienced and transmitted. Today many Sámi museums and museums with important Sámi collections have a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut) on their premises, as it is the case of the Tromsø University Museum, Gállogieddi *friluftmuseum* but also the Nordliske Folk Sentre in Olmmáivággi, where the Riddu Riddu festival takes place.

At Gállogieddi a *goahti* (Sámi turf hut) was built once the museum was already active and this structure was used as a gathering place during community events, such as *Skrømtkveld* (the evening of scare).

Reflecting on the uses of the *goahti* (Sámi turf hut), Lemet Máhtte explains that

«it's used for those kind of activities. But also just people that live in the area can use this. So it has a use. That's why it has furniture. Because it's just more efficient for today's standard».

From these remarks it can be inferred that, for at least some of the members of the local Márka-Sámi community, the *goahti* (Sámi turf-hut) has undergone a process of heritagization and has acquired new functions though its employed in a different range of contexts. For instance, during his visit of Gállogieddi, the crown-prince had dinner with members of the local community in this modern *goahti*, this same building is also at the core of transmission of locally embedded cultural knowledge and has become a new cultural landmark.

Today Gállogieddi is an important cultural institution, a tourist attraction, and a testimony of the past. Given its versatility, it also functions as an educational centre and its wide outdoors area can host large groups of people at special or institutional events and celebrations such as Márkomeannu or the 2017 visit of the Crown Prince. Gállogieddi also serves a significant role as a meeting place for the Márka population.

As a museum, it attracts visitors interested in Sámi cultures – either or not aware of the cultural specificity of this specific museum – as well as tourists who pass by on their way to North Cape. Unlike earlier museum collections, and in line with the other Sámi museums, Gállogieddi museum was not established for the primary benefit of cultural outsiders but for preserving the Márka cultural heritage for future Márka-Sámi generations even though many are the foreigners and Norwegians who visit Gállogieddi each summer. For locals though, Gállogieddi acquires a deep significance as they can identify themselves and their ancestors with the once owners of the farm. As Williams Davies points out (2009) open-air museums⁴³⁸ appeal to emotions and are sophisticated ways to present a specific cultural heritage while at the same time preserving historical items and fostering a shared sense of community.

Even though, like a snapshot, it focuses on a specific moment in history, Gállogieddi describes and encapsulates a long Sámi history in the area, enriching the present-day cultural landscape of the Márka. Traces of the diversified economy the Márka people engaged with are still visible in today's museum as well as throughout the cultural trail. In the barn, beside agricultural tools a boat implicitly communicates the stories of when the local men went fishing in the ocean. The cowshed and the bridle reveal which animals once grazed upon the nearby pastures. The Gállogieddi buildings' interior is partially original: except for the kitchen – which has been rearranged – the rooms reflect the original division of space. Furthermore, some of the objects displayed used to belong to the house while many more were collected from local households. By the end of the 1980s, after being empty for more than 20 years, the Gállogieddi farm was in a state of semi-neglect and had been stripped of many of its original objects and items. The museum's founder travelled across the Márka, literally knocking on people's doors, asking friends and family for donations of old objects no longer used in the household. Many of such objects had long been out of use, forgotten in people's attics or barns and hence relegated in a corner, physically and symbolically, as a consequence of the deep changes occurred in Márka-Sámi society. After World War II, modernization processes changed the lives of rural

⁴³⁸ For an analysis of the history of open-air museums see Williams Davies 2009.

communities across Europe. These processes affected Norway too and influenced the lives of hundreds of people across Sápmi, and hence in the Márka. Tools deemed old and no longer useful were often stored in old farms' lofts and, with time passing, they were often forgotten. Not only oblivion but also active forms of neglect relegated these objects – and what they represented – in a limbo. Many individuals and families decided to destroy or sell items easily identifiable as Sámi. The ethnic affiliation these objects symbolized was, for many, an unwelcomed burden to carry. The museum's founders engaged in a search across the Márka, looking for surviving objects that could represent the daily life of past generations. Had these objects not been collected and exhibited in the museum, they would most likely be completely forgotten and destroyed by time. Not only the establishment of a local museum has allowed the conservation of ancient objects of everyday life, offering visitors – locals as well as foreigners – a glimpse into the selected local past. However, this museum has also allowed a (re-)affirmation of the local farming heritage which has long been the object of ridicule and harassment for the local population.

By collecting and exhibiting items and tools collected all over the area, the Museum has been connected to the Márka to a deeper level. Not only does Gállogieddi bring back the history and stories of a single Márka-Sámi family but it also represents all Márka-Sámi families through the objects that used to belong to different local households. The museum hence represents, both symbolically and materially, all these families. Gállogieddi museum bears witness to the Márka-Sámi daily life. Furthermore, the social meanings of the artefacts⁴³⁹ today exhibited there is maintained by keeping the objects in the same contexts where they used to belong as they had not been removed and alienated from their own cultural context and shielded away behind a glass, untouchable and far removed from visitors (as it is the case in other museum) allowing guests to «[...] understand them within their original cultural and sensory context understand them within their original cultural and sensory context» (Classen & Howes 2006:212).

For those visitors who pay a modest sum (50 Nok, around 5 euros) for a guided tour of the farm, the visit starts in the main room of the farm. As the guide explains to those who ask, today this room is the centre of the farm even though it once used to be the second living room, where the family gathered only on special occasions. It is in this room that guide sits, waiting for visitors to come.

⁴³⁹ As Magnani and Magnani point out with reference to the Siida museum on the Finnish side of Sápmi, each object carries intangible knowledge that went into its crafting, not to mention knowledge about how to handle raw materials how to employ specific techniques. (Magnani et al. 2018).

From the front window, the guide has a perfect view over the southern side of the farmyard and on the track that, from the parking lot along the main road, leads to the farm.

The guide takes the visitors across the various rooms of the main house and of the nearby buildings. In doing so, s/he takes the guests on a journey across the different phases of the farm and retraces the events and the stories of the family. In my own experience, the tour is structured in a way that ensures a dialogue between the visitors, who are encouraged to ask questions, and the guides who act as culture-bearers. They help guests put the objects into their context, providing a nuanced understanding of Sámi societies, adding complexity to the visitors' experience not only by satisfying their curiosity but also by highlighting significant elements that, otherwise, material objects would not easily communicate to those who are not familiar with Sámi cultures, as in the case of the *gákti* (Sámi customs) hanging on the bedroom's wall. Through a range of colours combinations and designs, the *gákti* can communicate the origin of its owner through the meanings encoded and inscribed in a visual language characterised by patterns and colours. This detail, so self-evident to people with a Sámi background or previous knowledge about Sámi culture but completely lost to cultural outsiders, still enjoys great relevance in Sámi cultural milieus.

During the visit, an item may catch someone's attention and trigger a conversation on different aspects related to either the object itself or activities connected to it. Often objects become a window not only into local Sámi cultures but also into the personal lives of those who once lived there. This is the case of the fishing boat today hosted on the first floor of the barn. Visiting the farm upon an interview, the guide pointed at told me about events that overturned the local family life decades earlier:

there was actually an accident on one of the fishing trips. And one of the people from the farm, the father or the son fell out of the boat and drowned. And only by chance, he floated to the beach and were able to bury them. Because if people drowned, they often were not able to get the body. So, they have a very empty casket. He had this *beaska*, the winter coats, and it had some air inside of it. So, it just floated. Luckily, but fortunately, he died (Lemet Máhtte, interview 27/7/2019, Gállogieddi).

Through this short remark, Lemet Máhtte, the guide, brought back a family history providing the audience with meaningful insights into the hardship of long-gone days while also offering cultural-specific information through the reference to the *beaska* (Sámi winter coat) and its features.

Personal objects, clothing, costumes, pictures, tools and items epitomize daily life in the farm in its brightest days and fragile objects – such as those made of wood, leather, horn, silk, as well as paper such as Læstadian books – tell about the daily life of former inhabitants, their routines, their daily chores and their past-times.

Some of the exhibited items and pieces of furniture tell of the contacts this small and relatively isolated community had with the world beyond the borders of not only the Márka or Northern Norway but of the country itself. For instance, the water-pump and the oven are from Germany while the big wooden loom located in the loft was probably not made in the Márka, just like the yoke and the tractors. These meaningful details help guest understand that Gállogieddi was not situated in a socio-cultural vacuum but that its owners, as well as the people from the Márka, were part of a wide and far-reaching network of relations.

During the visit, the guides recount events that characterised the lives of members of the Nilsen family – the owners of the farm – as well as local tales and stories about the Uldatt and their connections to the local landscape. Once the tour of the house is concluded, the visit proceeds to the other buildings. Walking across the fields and by answering to the questions of the visitors, the guides explain different aspects of how daily-life used to be in the farm. Touching upon many topics, such as how local people used to forecast the weather by resorting to techniques connected to the knowledge of natural elements, the guides disseminate important information concerning the Márka-Sámi culture. Through this form of storytelling, the museum ensures the preservation and the transmission of local knowledge.

During fieldwork it became apparent to me that the farm represents an important cultural site where material and immaterial heritage merge through the relation between the farm and its surroundings, as well as its connection with the local memories, tales, traditions, values, and meanings embedded in the relationship itself.

Gállogieddi has an intrinsic value derived from its history and it has also gained relevance beyond the borders of the Márka through the meanings it acquired via the processes of valorisation that made an abandoned building like so many others in the area into a symbolic token of the local Márka-Sámi identity. The local cultural activists that embarked in this project wanted to show a way of being Sámi different from, but not less valid nor worthy than, reindeer herding. As Mathias, who worked at

Gállogieddi as a summer guide explained to me, this museum and the way it was designed is extremely important for the locals since now [they]:

have something to prove there are Sámi in the area, not just a showcase though, it was important to spread information about the Sámi living in the area (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

The information Mathias is referring to concerns the local agricultural culture that, for a long time, has been overshadowed by other expressions of Sámi cultures, more distinctively different from the Norwegian fishing and farming way of life than the Márka one. and the As a consequence of assimilation processes, and even though reindeer tending is practices all over Sápmi – even in the Márka, albeit only by a handful of families –, in Norway this livelihood is especially associated with Finnmark. During an interview, Emma Margrete Skåden explained the importance of having a museum that tells a Sámi hi/story that does not align with the hegemonic reindeer tender narrative. She stated:

[...] before the museum was started, it was sort of like...the only thing you saw was one thing in Finnmark, you know, but now, well... [thanks to the Gállogieddi museum] things are changing.

During another interview, Emma explained to me the frustration of having to confront with the stereotype of reindeer tending as the Sámi way of life and the impact this commonplace has on all those Sámi who do not practice this activity.

Emma: Yeah, it is [not our way of being Sámi]. So that's what I say to most of us. But to some, yes. The reindeer herding life is really rare. Especially to most of us, especially up in Márka. None of us doing it, except for my cousins. But they do it on the Swedish side of the border. That's from their dad. He is from a village on the Swedish side. So for them, they have like, one feet in each sort of boot, but they do also see the other way of being Sámi]. They've grown up in Márka, and also in their father's village where they have the reindeer on the Swedish side (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

the Márka-Sámi identity was subject to two different, albeit converging, forms of discrimination that deeply affected the people who belong(ed) to this community. Due to their settled farming culture, so different from “nomadic” reindeer tending, they were regarded as not Sámi enough by the hegemonic reindeer tending sector of Sámi society. Conversely, given their Sámi heritage, they were marginalized by the ethnic Norwegians who lived in the settlements along the coast. Exemplary of

this process of stigmatization is the semantic connotation of the term Márka-Sámi – or Márka-Lapp – which had acquired a derogative undertone and was used as an insult by the local Norwegians. Since the mid of the 20th century, Márka activists opposed these forms of stigmatization and, through a form of positive appropriation of the terminology, both the local culture and the terms used to define it underwent a process of re-evaluation, as Emma explains:

That's [the idea that Sámi have to have reindeer to really be Sámi] also a thing I think that our parents' generation wanted to change, you know, to change the meaning of Márka-Same the meaning of, you know, that it wasn't a negative thing, but you can't use that as a, you know, an insult anymore. You shouldn't do that. And then we, we took it further⁴⁴⁰, we were really proud of it [the Márka-Sámi culture]. We always, always would be like, well, what kind of Sámi are we then we're like, we're Márka-Same. We are Márka-Sámis. And everybody would be like, What the fuck is that? And we're like, and then we're sort of explained something? Well, you know, we don't have reindeers. But we are like, but, you know, we had in common was our grandparents' [way of living]. They had like, a combo thing, you know: they had farms with sheep and cows. And then in the winter, they'd go on Lofoten havn, fishing. It was a huge thing to actually do, then back in the days. So yeah, and we were really like, focused, on that. We're really focused on pointing out the fact that you can be a Sámi and not knowing upside down on a fucking reindeer but I know exactly how to do this and this, tend the cows over the calf. So with the sheep or, you know, stuff like that. I know how to use the tractor really fucking good. This is Sámi culture and this is also a Sámi identity and thing, it's not, you know, just what you see on TV or just, you know, just the reindeer (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

This passage is of extreme interest as Emma touches upon a number of issues that delineate the way Márka-Sámi identity has been defined by its own members. By examining it, it is also possible to glimpse the challenges Márka-Sámi activists had to face and the commonplaces they tried to dismantle. Pride in the ancestors' way of living also emerges as a key factor in the development of a Márka-based Sámi perception of community-identity. The focus on past generations' farming and cattle-tending, along with seasonal fishing, reinforces the notion of a community based on local practices, in the mastery of which Emma takes pride even though she does not live off the land – she works for the Sámediggi (Sámi parliament) and now lives in a town – where the interview took place – and no longer in the Márka.

⁴⁴⁰ Here Emma is referring to Márkomeannu, the Festival she and her older brother Sigbjørn contributed in establishing.

She further clarifies that reindeer play a role in her own identity and in that of many in the Márka since their forefathers engaged in reindeer tending but, nevertheless, was not what constituted, in her view, the core of Sámi identity as such.

Not that we meant that the reindeer is not very important because it is really important for, you know, for most Sámi, but and also for our great, great grandparents, they were, you know, they had reindeer, they were of real importance. But to us, it's what to most of us it's never been. And it was because that's not that's not what a Sámi (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

As it clearly emerges from Emma's explanation, the Márka-Sámi identity was not seen as opposed to the reindeer tending Sámi culture but as complementary to it. The intent of those Márka-Sámi who fought for the recognition of the Márka-Sámi identity was not to devalue reindeer herding as a Sámi activity but to show that Sámi identity cannot and shall not be reduce to that, since such approach would exclude all other expression of Sáminess, such as the farming culture of the Márka-Sámi or the sea culture of the Sea-Sámi.

By documenting traditions, folklore, tales, the Márka-Sámi dialect of North Sámi as well as the historical origins of the local families – and their ties with other areas of Sápmi – these activists made the Márka visible in the wider Sámi society, making the culture of this region, long relegated to the margins of both Norwegian and Sámi societies, a source of pride rather than stigma. Many of my interlocutors have explained this process via an interesting metaphor that sheds some light on the perception locals have of the – long failed – recognition of the Márka and its culture as a Sámi space and place. Has Emma stated:

[...] our parents, or our parents' generation, wanted to put us, well put Márka back on the map [...] (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).

This passage shows how, for at least a section of Márka-Sámi society, the Márka as a Sámi space – or the ethnic Sámi dimension of the Márka – was perceived as invisible in the wider geopolitics of Sápmi and Northern Norway.

By establishing a museum – which, as an institution has a marked colonial history – focused on the Márka-Sámi culture, the Márka-Sámi identity gained the respect other forms of Sámi identity had already achieved. The restoration of the Gállogieddi farmstead has allowed the preservation and promotion of all those cultural traits, based on small-scale farming, that have characterised the

peculiarities of the local Sámi culture while drawing attention to the connections and the relations with other Sámi communities.

5.4.3 Várdobáiki

The *Várdobáiki Sámi Guovddaš-Sámisk Senter* (Várdobáiki Sámi Centre) became an autonomous institution in 2002, when it had already been a centre dedicated to teaching the Sámi language – in its Márka Duortnus/Torne dialect – to people in the Márka for three years.

It is one of the most important Sámi cultural centres in the region, and has a catchment area that goes beyond Stuornjårga. In addition, it gives work to many cultural operators because it organizes numerous events, initiatives and various local-based projects, making Várdobáiki one of its main job-providers in the area with regards to the cultural sector. Várdobáiki boasts among its many projects *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) and language courses, activities for the elderly, and a youth club. Offices, a space for non-permanent exhibitions and a Library rich with Sámi-related material can be found in Várdobáiki headquarters. In 2004, a centre for the documentation of Márka-Sámi traditional practices was added. The goal of the centre is to keep alive the local immaterial heritage in its multifaceted manifestations: tales, stories, mythology, folklore, and knowledge about local food tradition as well as the use of herbs for therapeutic purposes, the know-how pertaining to building of Sámi structures (*lavvo*-tent, *goahhti*-turf hut), and farming techniques developed for the specificities of the local. Várdobáiki also supervises and manages local institutions such as the Sámi kindergarten *Márkománák barnehage*, a health centre specifically designed to meet the needs of the local elderly people. Further projects include mapping ancient local buildings and collecting period photographs and documents attesting to local reindeer tending and farming in the area (Elvebakk et al. 2010). Thus we can see the double nature of Várdobáiki, an institution that, in the vision of its founders, aimed at both preserving the memory of the past and fostering a positive Sámi identity in current and future generations. This double function of this institution, projected towards the future by building upon the past, makes Várdobáiki a stronghold of Sámi identity in the area.

Since its foundation, Várdobáiki has been working in conjunction with Márkomeannu festival. This collaboration results from a variety of factors: first of all, the festival takes place on the Gállogieddi museum's premises and the museum is managed by Várdobáiki. Another element is that the two institutions share the common purpose of preserving and fostering local Sámi identity and culture. A further factor uniting these institutions is blood relationships: family ties connect members of Várdobáiki (board members, cultural workers, Sámi-language teachers) with members of the

Márkomeannu team (founder, current board members, workers, volunteers, festivalgoers). Thus these inter-institutional relations exhibit a intergeneration aspect inherent the management of Márka-Sámi culture. The festival was brought into being in the 1990s by the local Sámi youth organization with the specific aim of targeting the younger members of the local society while Várdobáiki – and the institution preceding it and from which it developed – was founded by an older generation, that of the parents of the members of the youth organization.

In 2020, a new headquarters for Várdobáiki was inaugurated in the centre of Evenskjer. The need for greater spaces was determined by the expansion of the activities offered and managed by Várdobáiki and by the importance which Várdobáiki was assuming in the socio-cultural landscape of Sápmi and, on a local level, of the area. This new headquarters is more remarkable than it may first appear because of this location but such significance can be grasped only if one has a deep understanding of the area's socio-ethnic relation: Evenskjer is a town along the coast of Stuornjárga, coast that is predominantly Norwegian both linguistically and ethnically since the people its inhabits self-identify as Sámi. Here we can see the conflictual inter-ethnic dynamics which characterised the daily of both Sámi and Norwegians in Stuornjárga for centuries at play. The Sámi were unwelcomed in the past in Evenskjer, and the same was true for other Norwegian settlements along the coast.

Recollections of people who experienced this inter-ethnic tensions first-hand or heard of it from their own relatives – usually belonging to older generations – tell of discrimination and stigmatization against the Sámi in the coastal areas. In order to understand how these tensions evolved it is necessary to take into account the geo-morphological composition of the peninsula: along the entire coast of the peninsula, the land it's only a few meters above sea level. Hence the villages and settlement that were erected in this narrow strip of land are only slightly higher than the ocean. Moving inland the altitude at first rises gradually and then steeply, resulting in high hills surrounding a mountain dominating the centre of Stuornjárga. As it has been already mentioned, these geomorphological features have counterpart in the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of Stuornjárga: along the low coast live the Norwegians(ized) while up in the hills, in the Márka, the Sámi long tended their reindeer before settling down. This ethinc landscape was further complicated by the arrival of Kven people from either Finland or the Finnish speaking regions of today's Northern Sweden.



Map 14: Satellite map of the Stuernjårga (from google maps).

The continual stigmatization of the Sámi from the Márka at the hands of the people living along the coast took many forms as the following testimonies relate: the constant picking on the Sámi was a normalized action which was not sanctioned by the authorities and permeated every aspect and every site of the interaction between Sámi and Norwegians: schools, shops, pubs and even churches. Whenever possible, people from the Márka avoided going “down” to the coast in order to dodge unpleasant situations but nevertheless they had to visit the coastal settlements from time to time in order to run errands⁴⁴¹. On the contrary, people from the coast seldom had cause to venture into the hilly Márka-Sámi area. Despite the fact that the Sámi and the Norwegians had the same necessities, the asymmetry in power relations emerges clearly in the geographical distribution of essential services and facilities: if Norwegians were able to live their lives without ever setting foot in the Márka, for Sámi it was necessary to travel down to the coast to make use of essential services such as shops and schools as well basic health care.

⁴⁴¹ At Boltåskrysset – Lappetorget (the Sámi Square) – there used to be a fairly large building which, among other things, housed a shop. According to Asbjørg Skåden, who relied on her own interlocutors’ memories, this shop and coffee house was large and well-equipped by the standards of the time. Upon the death of Mrs Karlsen, the last shopkeeper, the shop eventually close and Lappetorget fell into disrepair. Given its privileged position on an intersection, the place became a meeting place for young people. Later, a woman named Anna Pettersen opened there a café, which, in A. Skåden’s words was “the Cafe”. A generation later came the next café in Markebygda, this time opened and managed by Ole Henriksen, Myrnes. Another important meeting place in the Márka was in Hoanttas/Nipen, where people used to gather at Hotell Feniks. (Skåden A and Skåden S 2001)



Image 81: Old Evenskjer, the town before the War, 1939 <https://www.evenskjer.net/evenskjer-56/evenskjer-4.html>

In the light of this, the opening of Várdobáiki headquarters in the very centre of the coastal hamlet of Evenskjer tells of the great achievements reached by the local Sámi community: now the Sámi can proudly walk the streets of Evenskjer not only without fear but also with a sense of belonging. Where their ancestors were persecuted, they now hold a position of pride. This cultural centre is hosted in one of the biggest building in town and dominates the local landscape along with other important cultural marks such as the church (images n61, n84), the supermarket and a building hosting offices, among them those of the Sámediggi/Sámi parliament (image n85). The Várdobáiki Centre is especially visible thanks to the decorations which adorn it, and which are inspired by the colours of the Sámi flag (see images n 82, n86). Yellow, blue, green, and red strips of colour run along the centre's façade, making it easily recognizable as the seat of a Sámi institution. For these reasons, the location of the new Várdobáiki centre at the earth of Evenskjer is regarded as a major achievement of the local cultural activists, endowing both visibility and recognition on local Márka-Sámi culture where in the past Sámi were unwelcome and regarded with contempt.



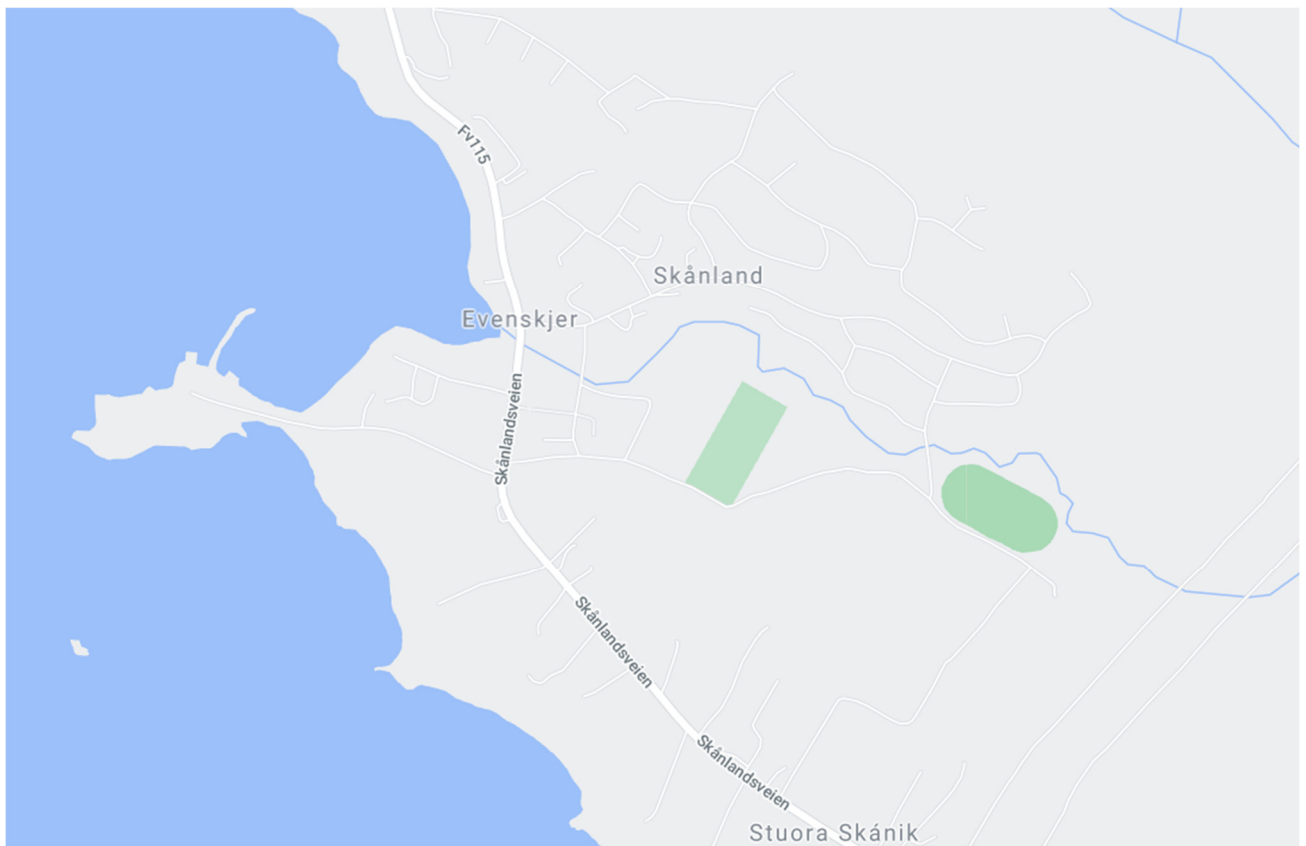
Image 82: the building that today hosts Várdobaíki as it appeared in 1988, when it was still a shop (Evenskjer) (Evenskjer-blog).



Image 83: The building that hosts Vardobaiki, on Evenskjer's main road, as of spring 2020 (Evenskjer) (photo by the author).



Map 15: Map of Evenskjer (from google maps).



Map 16: Map of Evenskjer village (adapted from google maps).



Image 84: Evenskjer, the building next to the new Várdobáiki headquarter on the main road of the village, view from the Coop (photo by the author).



Image 85: Evenskjer, the building hosting the local offices of the Sámediggi on the main road of the village, view from Várdobáiki (photo by the author).



*Image 86: Várdobáiki headquarter, closed because of Covid19.
The logo Várdobáiki – a lavvu (Sámi tent) – is highly visible on the door (photo by the author).*

the museum hosted in the Várdobáiki headquarters as well as the open air museum at Gállogieddi and Vilgesvárri are key institutions aiming to preserve and mediate local Sámi history and identity towards both the community itself as well as outsiders.

5.4.4 The meadow by the boulder: from museum premises to a temporary festival site

Gállogieddi is today known not only for its museum but because, since 2003, it hosts on its premises a cultural and music festival revolving around the local Márka-Sámi culture: Márkomeannu. The festival, founded in 1999 by the members of the local Sámi youth association *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak*, first took place in an area close to Evenes airport known as ‘gamle Dyrskueplassen’. The site was convenient with regards to transports and access to facilities and local farmers allowed the local association *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* – at the time the association organizing Márkomeannu (see chapter 6, section 5) – to put up a temporary stage and the festival goers had

access to local facilities such as toilets. Furthermore, the proximity to the airport and main road, with bus connection with both Tromsø/Narvik and Harstad made the location quite convenient for a festival still in becoming, even though the fact that the field were the festival was located were used during summer as grazing land for cows and sheep, as Sigbjørn Skåden explained during an informal conversation. While pointing at a picture (image n88) he said:

This is one is from before Márkomeannu... the first festival area we had, before the festival we had to clean up... they have cows there so we made a deal with the local farmer, that if he removed the calves on the festival weekend, because it wouldn't be good for the cows either to be around, we would put back everything as it was. But until the festival started here the cows were walking around! (Sigbjørn Skåden, private conversation, 13/9/2019 Tromsø).

These few lines reveal the struggles the first festival organizers encountered when they wanted to establish their own event. Nevertheless, they also show that this group of youngsters enjoyed the support of at least part of the community, like the farmer that allowed them to have their festival on his own property. If many were against Márkomeannu and what this festival stood for, many other showed support by offering help, their field, offering entertainment during the festival or just by attending it and paying the ticket. A further element that the celebration of Márkomeannu at Dyrskueplassen shows is the strong farming tradition in the area, symbolized by the calves roaming around the festival area until the very last moment before the festival opening. A connection renewed in the 2004 festival poster, where the symbol of the museum – representing Gállogieddi – and a cow are the only elements in the image (see image 87). The very name of the festival site, ‘gamle Dyrskueplassen’ evokes the small-scale farming dimension of the once local economy: the place-name can be translated as ‘the old place of the “show”’, where animals were once displayed during community gatherings. The importance of cows and of the farming dimension they epitomized had emerged also during an interview with Emma Skåden (see page 472)⁴⁴², when she defined the importance of cows in her upbringing as a Márka-Sámi girl and on the role that farming has in shaping the Márka way of being Sámi, in contrast with the hegemonizing power of reindeer-tending narratives. Similarly, Sigbjørn Skåden stressed the central role cows had during the first editions of Márkomeannu, when the festival was still held at ‘gamle Dyrskueplassen’ and they had to free the festival area from cows and their stool (see image 88).

⁴⁴² From the interview with Emma Skåden: «We're really focused on pointing out the fact that you can be a Sámi and not knowing upside down on a fucking reindeer but I know exactly how to do this and this, tend the cows over the calf. So with the sheep or, you know, stuff like that» (Emma Skåden, interview, 15/9/2019 Tromsø).



Image 87: Márkomeannu poster 2006 (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).



Image 88:., members of the Sámi youth association *Stuornjårgga Sámenuorak* at the festival site Dyrskueplassen next to Evenes airport, depicted here while shovelling cow's excrements away from the festival area in the days before the festival (photo: courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden)⁴⁴³.

⁴⁴³ While looking at this photo, Sigbjørn commented: «The festival people shovelled away cow shift from the place. It was one of the main jobs of the first editions. We had shovel it because the cows have been there for some time in the days before we rented the place» (Sigbjørn Skåden, private conversation 13/9/2019 Tromsø). The interview in which these pictures were addressed was conducted by resorting to the method of photo elicitation (Harper 2002): during the interview, Sigbjørn and I went through old photos of Márkomeannu's early years. The use of pictures as visual support



Image 89a; 89b members of the youth Sámi association *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorat* building the festival stage in Dyrskueplassen, early 2000s (photo: courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).



Image 90: The temporary stage at Dyrskueplassen early 2000s (photo: courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

gave me the opportunity to gather important information concerning the festival and enabled Sigbjørn to remember numerous details related to specific events that are significant in his life but that he would have probably not mentioned during the interview had we not have the pictures in front of us. Furthermore, having the pictures in front of me provided me with the opportunity to ask questions I would have not even imagined without these visual supports.

After a few years, the festival staff came to the conclusion that Dyrskueplassen was no longer a suitable location to host the festival and talks started on which place would suit the needs of a growing festival. According to my interlocutors, the choice soon fell on Gállogieddi and came almost naturally

The premises of Gállogieddi museum were selected as the permanent location of this cultural event because of the importance it had – and still has – in celebrating Márka-Sámi history. Gállogieddi is a cultural point of reference in the region and a place layered with meanings and histories. Further elements that contributed to selecting of Gállogieddi as the location of the festival are the strong ties between this very special place and the festival founders. The link between museum and festival is very strong and rooted in personal relationships and family connections, as the farm belonged to ancestors of many of the first festival organizers.

Many of the festival founders had either worked as guides or had relatives and friends working at Gállogieddi during summer and they were familiar with the place: many were the children of or related to people active in the preservation of the local culture who had a pivotal role in preserving the abandoned farm and in making a museum out of it. Furthermore, the old – once abandoned – farmyard was the site of many youth adventures and a sort of historical playground for local kids.

As Sigbjørn Skåden, one of the festival founders, stated:

At the beginning the Festival took place down at the airport, for practical reasons... there were already some infrastructures... it was easier. But after two years we moved to Gállogieddi. That's a place that is close to our identity. Even if it is a bit unpractical place for a festival.

As this extract shows, for at least some of the people of the Márka, Gállogieddi – and the history it epitomizes – holds an important place in the symbolic geography of the local landscape. The idea of moving the festival from an easily accessible and ready-to-use area to a more secluded and less accessible location may seem counterintuitive but, as Sigbjørn continued during the interview, the choice of moving the festival to Gállogieddi emerges as grounded in the cultural value of farm-museum:

But it was a way to introduce the festival guests into our local history. And also local peoples were able to feel connected [to the festival through its location] (Interview, 14/2/2019).

Gállogieddi is located in an area that is difficult to access, up on a hill and its position makes the transport of goods and instruments to the meadow not an easy task. Access is complicated also for visitors who have to walk from the parking lot down close to the main road up to the festival site. Moreover, there is no bus connecting Gállogieddi with the airport or the closest urban centre. Nevertheless, thanks to good organization and a lot of preparatory works in the weeks preceding the festival, everything is usually ready by the time Márkomeannu begins. Furthermore, there is system to ensure that people with mobility problems, special needs or disabilities can reach the festival area.

The location is now one of the main features of the festival and, as Sigbjørn Skåden (Sigbjørn Skåden, private conversation, 14/02/2018) has pointed out, Gállogieddi was chosen as the festival site for its intrinsic value in the local Sámi history. Moreover, many of those involved in the first phases of Márkomeannu had some connection with the museum, having worked there or having visited it in their school years. The open-air museum is an important cultural point of reference for the local people: its buildings and its collections provide historical evidence of a local way of being Sámi that does not correspond to the stereotypical and homogenizing image of the Sámi people as reindeer tenders (Mathisen, 2004).

The emotional attachment to Gállogieddi – developed through school trips and activities – and its role of prominence in the local Márka symbolic geography, came up as a topic of discussion in numerous conversations with Sigbjørn, with his sister Emma and with other former and current members of the Márkomeannu staff. For instance, Emma Skåden explained that Gállogieddi:

[H]as always been to us us that started it [Márkomeannu], [Gállogieddi] has been an important place, that meant something for us. It's the farm itself, it's a museum now, but the farm itself was originally... you see, the last persons that lived there was the grandfather of some of the guys that started the festival, you know, and everybody had like, some sort of relationship to it. And in the '80s, the Sámi organization, well, not not the youth organization, but you know, the, the one that started in the 70s or 80s, IBBS, they started to restore it together with the owner at the time, who was the granddad's of well, some of the crew and Runar⁴⁴⁴'s granddad's for example, to restore it to be like a museum. So so they did that and, and we've always sort of been there and like, a lot of us has been guides, as summer jobs up there, like and have been guides up there. And a lot of thing would happen up it's go look at Gállogieddi, when we were kids, they'd be like well, different sort of things happening. Like youth schools would go for

⁴⁴⁴ The Runar mentioned by Emma is Runar Myrnes Balto, currently

school trip, the kindergarten would go out there and you know, cook some sausages or Yeah, in the in the fall, when it got dark, we'd have something called story night, where you actually just went up and then just sit and listen to the old the old days or you know, the elders talking about scary stories, and then you'd be really fucking scared.

In Emma Skåden's view, the activities and the frequent visits to the old farm of Gállogieddi – when it was undergoing a patrimonialization process as well as after it had become a museum – had made it a reference point for the local people, especially those from her generation who were children and teenagers in the 1980s and 1990s. She framed this relationship as follows:

I think that's also why we all had a really good relationship with that area. And, and we wanted to, when we realize we had to move the festival from a different place [Dyrskueplassen] because it wasn't really practical anymore. It wasn't. If you wanted to grow, we couldn't have it, where we had it. So we started to think about options, and I, I can't remember whose idea it was. But we were, everybody agreed that Gállogieddi would be a really nice spot for it. Really, really nice.

What made Gállogieddi the perfect location for a festival aiming at celebrating the local culture and heritage made also the location of difficult access. Having Gállogieddi been transformed into a museum, a number of restrictions were in place regarding its use. Emma explained the dilemma with a kind smile, her eyes sparking with joy. Her voice was calm and her words echoed memories a hundreds of conversations and negotiations that took place almost 20 years before the interview:

Emma: But then the problem was, of course, that it's a it's a museum, and you know, you're gonna have to deal with that. But we still didn't manage to come to an agreement with the Evenes municipality, who are the ones that sort of managed the museum. But also, there's an owner who had a saying. So at that time, the museum had a board, which consisted of the municipality of course, but also some locals and the owner, So all we had to do really was to get the museum board on site. And that was a really huge problem, because, well, they were our parents [Laughing]

Erika: so it was all in the family?

Emma: or among relatives or, you know, because I think at the time, the board consisted of, well, someone from the municipality, obviously, and then there was the owners, or someone representing the owners of the museum, which was the old family who lived there... it was like, Cato's mom or uncle or something⁴⁴⁵. I think it was Cato's uncle, he is the one that sort of inherited the ownership from, from his dad. So yeah, and then it was someone from the Sámi organization [IBBS⁴⁴⁶] who were also like, “well, the kids want a festival. don't they?”. So, you

⁴⁴⁵ Cato was among the festival founders and member of the *Stuornjårgga Sámenuorak*.

⁴⁴⁶ At that time, many of the parents of the members of *Stuornjårgga Sámenuorak* belonged with this Sámi association.

know, it wasn't really a vote. But we, we promised to treat it with respect. And we really meant we really want to do it, because this wasn't a place that was, you know, just a place for us. As I said, we we all had a relationship to it, and a good one. And we, yeah, we didn't want to disrespect anyone living or the dead, or the, the ones living there, but you can't see, those especially we didn't want to, you know, piss them off. So, yeah, so we, I don't know, but that was our idea. And it worked. But, you know, we didn't have for the first couple of years, we didn't have like, the stage. The stage wasn't there. And the, you know, the tent where we had the food wasn't there. And the ones you know, where the sound people are, wasn't there. So what we did every year was ok. But we had to build it, build it, every year. We put the stage on the you know, you've been there so you know, where you stand and look at the stage and then you have on the on the right side, you have this sort of old platform where the crew usually stands. So yeah, that was the stage for. Yeah. So we just use to this sort of building things- (Emma Skåden, interview 2/3/2020 Tromsø)

Emma's words reveal the challenges and opportunities that characterized Márkomeannu's early years. Similarly, her feelings towards both Gállogieddi and the Festival, which is now held annually there, shone through her voice.

One element clearly emerges from this interview: picking the museum as a festival location was by no means a random nor obvious choice but, rather represented a conscious decision, aimed at strengthening the bond between the young people of the community and the history of the community itself. Transforming Gállogieddi, although for a few days a year, into a meeting point for young Sámi people – both local and from other regions – the members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* tried to maintain and strengthen the relationships between individuals and the local landscape, as well as the history the landscape enshrines.

Gaining access to the Gállogieddi museum's premises to host a festival was potentially difficult and the members of *Stuornjárgga Samenuorat* did not taken for granted that the museum would allow them to hold the festival on its premises. Nevertheless, they were confident they would have managed and so they did. The help and support of their parents proved to be crucial in obtaining access to the fields and meadow around the museum buildings and to the buildings themselves. Moreover, Emma's words also bring out a further detail: the profound sense of respect nurtured towards the place as such and the various entities – human and non-human – who live there or have once lived there. Promising to treat the place with respect, the members of the *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* association committed themselves to maintaining relations with all the entities of the place, following the moral principles of Sámi cultures, recognizing in Gállogieddi a place layered with history and meanings. The festival founders hoped and believed that a festival was a way to reconnect and strengthen the emotional connection with the Márka. They were aware that bonds are established by attending a place, learning

to know it and learning about those who have lived there. A festival was an opportunity to allow the community to maintain and enjoy its own culture.

Each of the phenomena addressed in this chapter constitute small – but important – pieces which, seen in their individuality, constitute responses by the community to specific needs but when taken into consideration through a more comprehensive diachronic perspective, they provide anchors in time and space of a legacy that still resonates in the cultural life of the Márka.

Events such as the establishment of the kindergarten, the fight for Sámi road-signs, the inclusion of Sámi language training in schools, the establishment of local museums, forms of active protest against discrimination, the creation of the Várdobáiki cultural centre – and initiatives by it carried forward -, the conception and development of a cultural-musical festival based on the exaltation, sharing and preservation of local culture – Márkomeannu – do not constitute isolated events that take place in a historical-cultural vacuum. they can only be truly understood if examined not as isolated events but as a chain of interconnected phenomena – even if to a degree independent – that have characterized the recent history of the Márka-Sámi community.

Chapter 6

Sámi Festivals

6.1 Festivals, an outline

Festivals and festive events as cultural phenomena have attracted the interest of scholars belonging to different fields of study and festival research is a well-established field dating back to the very origins of anthropology and sociology. Since then, many are the scholars who have approached festivals and the festive in their multiple manifestations.

Social disciplines such as comparative religion, anthropology, sociology, and folklore studies address festivals, expanding the understanding of such events thanks to discipline-specific approaches. In recent decades a new subfield, known as “festival and events studies” is emerging, thus contributing to further specialization in these areas. From a methodological perspective, “festival and events studies” employ quantitative/survey-based studies as well as ethnographic fieldwork. Nevertheless, as Frost highlights, it is anthropology that has played a prominent role in the study of festive events (2016).

6.1.1 Festivals as a topic of enquiry

The study of festivities as a total social fact (*'fait social total'*, according to Mauss's terminology) has highlighted the role of festivals as repository of values, standardized behaviours, collective and symbolic-ritual practices identifiable in all societies throughout history. Festivities have been understood as forms of break from the quotidian routine life, as moments of subversion but also – though subversion - reconfirmation of social rules, exaltation of specific identities, regeneration of time and reaffirming of relationships as well as means of forging and reshaping the values of the celebrating community. Festivity has also emerged as a privileged venue for rethinking the position of the past in the present towards the future. Festivals, holidays and more broadly speaking, the festive, have been addressed and examined as a collective experience as well as ways of articulating time. Already in late 18th century, Rousseau had grasped the importance of the festive, its role in fostering and strengthening a sense of community among its participants. This idea emerges also in Durkheim's understanding of the festive – which he frames through the lens of the sacred - as the basis of any community as it would represent the venue for the collective expression of social unity. Since then, a strong emphasis on the sacred and/or ritual dimension of festivals and festivities (framed within a dialectical opposition between sacred and profane) has characterised much of the academic literature on festivals until the second half of the second half of the 20th century, when festivities have

started to be addressed as autonomous phenomena which may, but also may not, be connected with the ritual sphere.

To delineate a history of the studies of festivals is beyond the scopes of this thesis but some key elements shall nevertheless be address in order to contextualise the reflections I will propose later in this chapter. Scholars such as Marx and Weber predicted that modernity would have slowly eroded festivities until it had ultimately annihilated it. History though has proven them wrong and, during the 20th century, festivities, holydays and festivals have proliferated. Academic conceptualizations about festivals and festivities can be categorized into two broad current, one which understands festivals and festivities as 'positive', and one which understands festivals and festivities as 'negative'. These two terms, however, must not be understood as form of judgment but, rather, as conceptualizations that place the accent on some characteristics intrinsic to the festive phenomenon, with the community at the centre in both cases. The current focusing on the 'positive' aspects understands celebrations as an experience of the community, through which the community itself confirms its borders and strengthens shared values and social relations. The line of studies that instead focuses on the 'negative' aspect understands festivities as moments of transgression and infringement, although also in this case the ultimate goal of the festivity is to strengthen and confirm the community that celebrated the festivity itself. In line with the 'negative' reading of festivals, a classical understanding of these events sees them events as occasions characterised by extreme behaviours that are otherwise normally regulated. Life during festivals appears to be turned upside down and people indulge in excesses but despite the seeming chaos and lack of regulation, rules apply during festivals even though they only loosely follow usual social norms. On the other hand, as 'positive' approaches stress, festivals are gatherings where – and when – people gather together, and the more people join in, the stronger the emotions people experience. Collective excitement and joy permeates – and strengthen – social interactions during the event, and as people share emotions, feelings and experiences, bonds are created and reinforced. We owe to Durkheim – author of 'Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie' (1912) – the notion of 'effervescence' and to Bataille that of 'excess', both key concepts in later reflections about festivals and the festive (Apolito 1994).

Lanternari, an, emerges as one of the most prominent scholars in the field and the value of his works was recognised also at the international level. His seminal work '*La grande festa*' (the great festivity) - first published in 1959 – is an encyclopaedic study on the celebration of the New Year in traditional

and archaic cultures throughout the world⁴⁴⁵. Lanternari - whose works are based not on fieldwork but mainly on philological and comparative approaches - understands the festive as an *a priori* cultural category, but he acknowledges that it can only express itself in specific, culturally and temporally determined historical contexts (1983). The study of festivities had led to the development of new approaches and new understandings of these phenomena. For instance, in 1982, Honorio Velasco edited '*Tiempo de fiesta*' (time of the festival) and with it, according to Ariño (1993) he contributed in establishing not only in Spain but in Social Science as a whole a new current in the study of festivals, bringing the festival at the core of scientific analysis as a specific and explicit object of investigation and reflection.

In post-World War II Italian context, the anthropological study of festivals has focused on these institutions as cultural phenomena (Bonato 2017). Since Lanternari published his reflections, numerous Italian scholars have addressed festivals, festivities, and celebrations, often with a specific attention towards the ritual element and basing their reflections upon their fieldworks' experiences. Among the most important figures in the Italian academic landscape, Gian Luigi Bravo – for a long time Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Torino - has devoted numerous works to the analysis of the festive dimension of folk events and to their connect with institutions such as local museums (see Bravo 1983, 1984, 2001, 2005). Italy – with its rich and constantly evolving festive landscape - has proved to be offer a fertile ground to the study of these phenomena. The works of Bonato (2006, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017), Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Torino, and those of Spineto (2011, 2015), professor of History of Religion at the same institutions – where Bravo too held a position until retirement – contribute in making this university a leading institution in the field.

Many are the Italian scholars who engaged with festivities and festivals as a topic of enquire, contributing in both documenting local practices and enriching the academic debate. Among them, Satta (1982, 1985, 2007), has examined the Sardinian festivities context, and Apolito (2014, 2020) who has worked extensively on the exam of ritual and religious expressions in Italy while also focusing on festivities as occasions were collective – albeit often temporary - identities are shaped.

Falassi – whose 1987 edited volume has become a text of reference for many scholars in the field, both in Italy and abroad – has examined the etymology of the term festival and its semantical dimension, notices that, in common language, the term has acquired a specific set of meanings since it «covers a constellation of very different events, sacred and profane, private and public, sanctioning

⁴⁴⁵ Lanternari has devoted a great part of his life to the study of festivities and festivals (see for instance Lanternari, 1983). He published extensively about this topic but his interests were not limited to this specific cultural phenomenon.

tradition and introducing innovation, proposing nostalgic revivals, providing the expressive means for the survival of the most archaic folk customs, and celebrating the highly speculative and experimental avant-gardes of the elite fine arts» (1987:1).

The celebratory character is the central feature of these events, and Falassi explains that the current shared understanding of festivals considers them as

[...] periodically recurrent, social occasion[s] in which, through a multiplicity of forms and, a series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly, and to various degrees, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview (1987: 2).

As Bonato points out, festivals and festivities are the moments in which the community re-establish itself, celebrating its continuity across time. These events offer moments and spaces for the re-appropriation and risemantization of local practices, allowing the community to build itself on selected elements from its own past. They are also parts of wider self-representation strategies through which the community chooses how it wants to be seen and understood (2017).

According to tourism scholars Jæger & Mykletun – who have studied the festival-scape of Finnmark (2009) – “festival” is a slippery term and the definition of what should be considered to be a festival is potentially unclear. Following Falassi’s (1987) understanding of the concept, I consider festivals as social phenomena which constitute communities’ arenas for negotiation of a variety of issues and offer an occasion of social cohesion as well as sites of conflict, and their management.

Festivals are subjective embodied events that are composed of a myriad of interconnected and interdependent elements. These trans-cultural social institutions vary in shape, form, contents, targets, aims and premises and, as Daelanty (2011) notes, today the term “festival” evokes a particular kind of cultural experience; furthermore, contemporary arts and cultures festivals differ from the festivals of the past and from religious festivals.

Scholars have drawn a typological distinction based upon the opposition between sacred and profane and between “traditional” and “modern”. The setting has also become relevant to the classification of festive events. Depending on their setting as the basis of the analytical category, a further division distinguishes between rural and urban festival: the former are considered to – and often do – have a long history, to be connected with the land, to focus on fertility rites and cosmogony myths; while the latter are considered to be of recent origin, connected with urban areas, celebrating prosperity in its contemporary connotations (Falassi, 1987: 3).

This dichotomizing understanding of festivals does not always fit in their reality because, as I observed during my fieldwork, as of today some festival occurring in a supposedly rural setting do not celebrate fertility or other features connected with management of land and animals. They also lack a focus on religion. They rather tend to celebrate local rural identity through art in its various forms, a feature often associated in the literature with urban festival. In the cases I came across there was an urban dimension despite the rural setting, since the organizers, as a result of their encounters with urban environments and their atmosphere⁴⁴⁶, had developed an urban sensitivity. In this respect, Bravo's theorizations about festivals' commuters/commuting has proved essential in delineating some of the features of the festivals I was examining: Bravo (1983, 1984), basing his reflections on years of fieldwork and research on festivals, draw a relationship between commuters/commuting and festivities in rural context. His primary aim was to offer an explanation for the continuous growth of festivals in Italian rural festivities' landscape. These phenomena were, in Bravo's view at the intersection between contemporary the rural and the urban, which have a point of contact in the figure of the "commuter", this expression refers to "cultural commuters" situated in a context where commuting describes the continuous exchange between the rural and the urban at the hands of people who left life in the countryside to go and live in cities (a phenomenon that characterised post-War Italy as well as many other regions of Europe) but who come back to their place of origin on a recurrent basis, hence maintaining their social roots and the closest ties in the rural world. It is to these figure that Bravo traces back the revitalization of events of various nature in the Italian rural world. These commuters emerge indeed as the main organizers of festivals recovered by the community. These festivals offer to them a way of orienting themselves in their new role as urban dwellers, offering them a renewed connection with their place of origin, which fosters a sense of self-confidence and belonging despite the alienation of the city.

My aim in this section is not to provide a comprehensive overview of festivals in all their forms and shapes – as such a task would be beyond the scope of this thesis – but to examine the main features of contemporary festivals in the indigenous context of Sápmi. Contemporary indigenous festivals differ greatly from other forms of festivals addressed in the earliest anthropological works on festivity⁴⁴⁷. Unlike more classical festivals – most of them religious in nature – the events referred to as "festivals" in Sápmi are mostly of recent origins, the majority of them lacking a religious dimension

⁴⁴⁶ Many young members of the rural communities where these new festivals take place attended university in urban contexts and were exposed the urban environment as well as – through higher education – to new theories and thought.

⁴⁴⁷ Early anthropological literature about festival examined so called specific forms of life crisis, with a focus on those "life crises" provoked by cyclical transformations and changes. The earliest theorist to focus on these issues has been van Gennep, who devoted his studies to rites of passage, moments when individuals or groups symbolically undergo a change, moving from their original social, moral, or ontological state to another. He published his theories in the seminal work, *Les rites de passage*, first published in 1909.

– the most evident exception being Isogaisa – and most of them having developed since the late 20th century thanks to the initiatives of young members of local – mostly rural – communities.

Furthermore, all festivals with a Sámi profile are social gatherings where arts – music in particular – are at the heart of the events, along with the desire to stay together and enjoy a few days of a break from normal daily life – corralled by the constraints of a pervasive colonial context – and with indigenous practices and values as the basis of social interactions. These features are in line with international trends documented by scholars from all disciplines throughout the world. Since the second half of the 20th century, a growing number of festive events – often labelled as festivals – based on the rediscovery, selection, elaboration and transformation of local cultural elements (Wagner 1975) have been held throughout the world, attracting the interest of numerous scholars who have, in their reflections, either touched upon or focused on festivals and festive events based on such premises in various parts of the world, highlighting these events’ strengths, positive outcomes and intrinsic creative character but also their shortcomings and, at times, controversial outcomes (see for instance Freeman 1998; Furniss 1999; Neuenfeldt 2001; Thompson & Matheson 2007; Whitford 2008; Zola 2008; Higgins-Desbiolles 2016; Novak 2017; Penoni 2018)

Festivals are social events characterised by multiplicity and heterogeneity, each of them with a specific background and history, and aspiring to celebrate long-stigmatized local indigenous cultures. These features are in line with Frost’s analysis of festivals as events that play a significant role in «affirming identity, especially of marginal populations» (2016:571).

What makes arts festivals important objects of enquiry is their cultural significance: they contribute and epitomize contemporary transformations of public culture, and they provide a platform where contemporary artistic practices are expressed and political issues can be addressed with a critical focus, offering opportunities to discuss issues affecting the community. Festivals are not just joyful events but they often also have a more political dimension because they convey specific meanings both through their artistic offering and by the positions they endorse. Sometimes the very fact that the festivals exist has a political value in itself, as is the case with indigenous festivals such as the Sámi ones.

With the expression “Indigenous festivals” I refer to those events that have a clear indigenous profile where the organizers – or at least some of them – are indigenous, where the celebration of indigenous cultures is at the core of the event and where such events benefit the indigenous community. A growing body of recent anthropological literature has documented an astonishing number of new contemporary festivals, all of which share some core features:

- They constitute public celebration of the specificities of the organizing communities;
- They have emerged as sites and actors of cultural and social change, reproduction and renewal which have developed into important arenas for identity-construction and meaning-making;
- They are public events where identity and cultures are performed and renewed;
- They grant visibility to the community and the place they celebrate;
- They renew and strengthen local networks and interpersonal ties.
- They have become important cultural and economic opportunities for local communities, with significant implications for the development of local tourism
- They offer platforms where a multiplicity of otherwise often-silenced voices can be heard;
- They have become important means of empowerment for those who have little or no social or economic influence in society, allowing them to express themselves openly and freely;
- They offer opportunities to interpret and experience time and space, situating the present in relation to both the past and the future;
- They can foster positive attitudes towards the cultural expressions the festivals celebrate
- They are moments where the connections with the ancestors' lands are reaffirmed

(see Azara, I., & Crouch, D. 2006; Picard, D., & Robinson, M. 2006; Fjell, L. 2007; Delanty 2011; Frost 2016, Bonato 2017);

In many festivals, the local content is the cornerstone of the event, the location being both the material and symbolic basis of events which have a strong social dimension. A core element of the social dimension of festivals is their capacity to forge societal unity by shaping a transcendent identity among participants. In the case of community festivals, through these events it is possible to address both diversity and unity⁴⁴⁸ in a process that strengthens and renews social ties. According to Delanty, festivals share specific features or qualities that can help in (re-)creating and fostering identities

⁴⁴⁸ Unity in diversity is also one of the features that first struck me while attending Sámi festivals such as Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu: different Sámi cultures intermingled as the various shapes and forms of different *gáktis* (Sámi costumes) shone across the festival site, with Sámi jewels sparkling to the rhythm of joik (Sámi chant). Different Sámi languages resonated across the fields, mixed with English, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian. Not only were they spoken in tents and *lavvos* (Sámi tents) but also, and especially, on the stages – the most public of all arenas – for everyone to hear, an empowering act since it constitutes a reversal of colonial policies of silencing that long relegated Sámi languages to the private sphere.

(2011, see also Jæger and Mykletun 2013 in Skogvand, Bonato 2019). Festivals have the power to influence people's sense of identity as well as the identity of the place where the festival is celebrated.

There is also an underlying characteristic that makes festivals sites where participants and organizers challenge the status quo. Picard considers festivals as spaces where individuals can meet and interact while also «ceremonially contest[ing] hegemony and pragmatically initiate changes» (2016:610). Picard notices that, in recent literature about festivals, scholars have highlighted a tension between seemingly opposite forces inherent to festivals: the power to reproduce «[...] social and cosmic order» as well as the capacity to provide physical and symbolic spaces for «[...] cultural creativity and change». Festivals can be empowering institutions and have proved that they have the power of becoming agents for social and political change. In indigenous contexts, festivals offer important opportunities for indigenous actors to represent themselves and their culture on their own terms and according to what they consider relevant and appropriate to show to both their own people and to outsiders. Festivals hence emerge as important socially-defined forms of communication. Indigenous festivals enjoy different levels of recognition, and many of these festivals have gained international reputations, attracting visitors from beyond their community.

6.1.2 Festivals in contemporary indigenous contexts, an overview

In the past, indigenous festivities and ritual celebrations attracted the interests of scholars from various disciplines, among them Anthropology. Many studies were devoted to the documentation of these phenomena, often perceived as the last remnants of cultures about to die out (see for instance Boas's study of the Potlatch among the Kwakwaka'wakw – 1897 – and Wolcott's reflections upon the Potlatch in his 1964 “A Kwakiutl Village and School”)⁴⁴⁹.

⁴⁴⁹ The Potlatch is a gift-giving festive event celebrated by Indigenous peoples (belonging to mainly but not exclusively the Heiltsuk, Haida, Nuxalk, Tlingit, Makah, Tsimshian, Nuuchahnulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Coast Salish cultures) of the Pacific Northwest Coast of the United States and Canada. The Potlatch revolves around the ritual exchange of goods and it involves the destruction or renunciation of valuable objects and other expressions of wealth. Through a potlatch, intra- and inter-community connections and relations were established and reaffirmed. Potlatch as a ritual practice with a marked political dimension, encountered the scepticism of colonial authorities, which ultimately resulted in the criminalization of the potlatch by the Government of Canada (which officially forbade this practice in 1884). The ban though, according to Boas – the first anthropologist to study this festive phenomenon – did not succeed in preventing people from engaging in this specific form of ritual exchange and collective celebration. In 1888, he described the potlatch and the failure to implement the ban – even among those *Kwakwaka'wakw* who converted to Christianity – as follows: «[...] a law that was passed, some time ago, forbidding the celebrations of festivals. The so-called potlatch of all these tribes hinders the single families from accumulating wealth. It is the great desire of every chief and even of every man to collect a large amount of property, and then to give a great potlatch, a feast in which all is distributed among his friends, and, if possible, among the neighbouring tribes. These feasts are so closely connected with the religious ideas of the natives, and regulate their mode of life to such an extent, that the Christian tribes near Victoria have not given them up. Every present received at a potlatch has to be returned at another potlatch, and a man who would not give his feast in due time would be considered as not paying his debts. Therefore, the law is not a good one, and can not be enforced without causing general discontent. Besides, the Government is unable to enforce it. The settlements are so numerous, and the Indian agencies so large, that there is nobody to prevent the Indians doing whatsoever they like» (Boas 1888:632).

Between the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st, indigenous festivals have been flourishing, epitomizing the vitality of the culture they embody and defying the gloomy predictions that imagined a future without indigenous cultures (Bratlinger 2003)

Throughout the centuries, the forms and functions of festivals in indigenous contexts has often changes and, if many festivals are no longer practiced today, new ones have been developed. In contemporary indigenous contexts, festivals have become new social spaces which have proved to be important *loci* of cultural creativity and effervescence. Philipps, who has studied festivals in relation to Australian indigenous contexts, has examined the roles these events as site that can guarantee indigenous communities opportunities for self-representation while also providing chances for cross-cultural negotiation of meaning and spaces. Philips has highlighted that, in today's indigenous contexts, events like festivals are regarded as opportunities to celebrate and assert connections between individuals and their community and between the community and its location. Through the celebration of identity, festivals foster a sense of belonging while also contributing to regenerating indigenous culture and in projecting it towards the outside world (2016).

The cultural effervescence – to use a Durkheimian term – that characterizes festivals from their ideation to their realization is unquestionably positive but there are also potential hindrances deriving from the growing importance indigenous festivals are gaining on the national and international scenes. Henry (2008) refers to this phenomenon as the “colonization” of indigenous spaces. In the case of festivals and other cultural arenas, contemporary colonization does not unravel through physical dispossession of lands and rights but as a more subtle penetration of non-indigenous stakeholders and interests into indigenous symbolic spaces.

According to Frost, festivals are attracting the interest of governments that recognize in them opportunities to include and incorporate indigenous “marginalized communities” into the wider institutions of the hegemonic state. At the same time, though, governments may exploit festivals, using them as a means of commodifying indigenous cultures while “celebrating their difference” (Frost 2016). With regard to this aspect, Philipps has examined the case of indigenous festivals in Australia and has come to the conclusion that state as well as other development agencies may resort to festivals as opportunities to interact with indigenous communities with the aim of implementing government targets such as «social inclusion, employment pathway, economic and social development, health and educational improvements» (2016: 570). Albeit seemingly noble causes,

The ban was repealed only in 1951 but, when Wolcott carried out fieldwork in the Vancouver area in 1962 many – also among the natives - believed the practice was disappearing. Nevertheless, at Wolcott (1964; 1996) also points out, the ceremony never died out and, actually, was being revitalized by young generations.

these targets reproduce patronizing colonial patterns of subjugation and stigmatization, since they are based on paternalistic assumptions that frame indigenous peoples as unable to provide for themselves while obscuring the colonial history that for centuries has marginalized indigenous peoples.

Philipps highlights that such intrusion enshrine a risk that is at the core of the interaction between the often conflicting indigenous and non-indigenous interests: by giving state agencies access to festivals – but also to other indigenous-managed institutions – indigenous communities increase the risk that such agency will try to interfere with indigenous agendas. The risk is especially high when state agencies provide funding that enables communities to organize festivals in the first place. The asymmetry in power relations requires, as Philipps points out, that the indigenous communities are able to negotiate their position and that of state agencies.

Philipps though notes that in Australia festivals are undergoing a process of valorisation and, at least in the cases he has examined, such valorisation is «an integral part of the renovated postcolonial, multicultural national fabric, particularly for the purposes of international projection in tourism and cultural diplomacy». Similar dynamics are at play in Fennoscandinavia, where festivals with a Sámi profile are more and more integrated into national agendas. It is true that state funding and more benign policies towards indigenous peoples have allowed indigenous festivals to develop, but such festivals shall not be considered solely as phenomena prompted by positive state policies. As Henry writes: «The Aboriginal cultural renaissance is clearly not just state-sponsored and generated for the tourist industry. It is a political response by indigenous people, an attempt to control their relationships with the state» (2008:53). Henry's last passage is of particular importance in that it highlights an important feature of indigenous festivals: they can articulate and further the interests of communities which, otherwise, have little possibility to put forward their demands. As Henry notes (2005:56), «... festivals can represent unique opportunities for indigenous peoples to influence the local governments». The empowerment festivals contribute to fostering works on multiple levels, including the institutional one.

Furthermore, Philips points out that, from a historical perspective, festivals « [...] are part of a global, cultural–political assertion of indigenous political and cultural rights most prominently articulated through the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Festivals are particularly important for generating landscapes of hope in marginalized indigenous communities, which suffer the lingering, traumatic symptoms of the recurrent and violent colonial experience» (Philips 2010:284). From this, we may conclude that the importance of indigenous festivals lies in their capacity to provide opportunities for what Philips defines «fuller indigenous social, political and economic participation on indigenous terms». A participation that, in a settler–colonial context,

challenges hegemonic notions of sovereignty. I find Philipps' analysis – based on Indigenous Australians' milieu – especially fitting in the Fennoscandinavian festival context where festivals with a Sámi profile have become unique sites where Sámi individuals and communities can exert their agency by creating representation of Sámi cultures on their own terms. Furthermore, at these events, indigenous sovereignty is embedded in daily practices since Sámi cultures are the axes of these events and Sámi indigenous principles and attitudes are at the basis of the festivals.

For this reason, indigenous festivals provide unique opportunities for cultural outsiders to approach indigenous cultures on indigenous terms. Philipps, inspired by the works of Mignolo, addresses this contact-function of indigenous festivals, considering them as «opportunities to cultivate understanding and sympathy with indigenous difference, histories and cultures. Indigenous festivals can open decolonial possibilities, disrupting settler–colonial cultures of domination» (Philipps 2015:684). Hence, indigenous festivals emerge as sites where decolonial practices are carried out in positive contexts. Successful local festivals of the kind we are discussing often have a domino effect: they may inspire other communities to hold their own festivals tailoring them to local conditions in a virtuous circle leading to identity and cultural valorisation, as is the case of Márkomeannu.

Philipps, to give a parallel example from a different context, has addressed the proliferation of indigenous festivals across Australia, highlighting that such an increase in the number of festivals can be traced back to the ability of indigenous communities scattered across the continent to «learn from the experience of others, and take advantage of the (limited) window of government and philanthropic support for festivals» (2016: 684).

6.2 Sámi Festivals: an overview

The debates mentioned above will now be examined and enriched by reflections on Sámi festivals based on the experiences from my own fieldwork at Sámi festival

In the course of my fieldwork, festivals revealed themselves as being privileged spaces for examining current dynamics in Sámi society, the challenges and the obstacles they are still facing, the failures they have endured and the successes they have achieved.

Throughout the year, numerous festivals and cultural events are arranged all over Fennoscandinavia. Since the 1990s, more and more of these happenings have focused on various aspects of Sámi culture. Often defined as Sámi festivals, they take place in different locations inside Sápmi and outside its blurred borders, in all the major cities of Fennoscandinavia. The vast majority of them are relatively recent but some stand out as more established and, in one case, as an ancient institution that has been part of Sámi cultures for centuries. Nevertheless, even the most ancient Sámi

gatherings have acquired their current features – a strong focus on art – relatively recently as they originally were closer to market fairs – a feature that still persists and is central to Sámi festivals – than cultural festivals. The number of festivals with a Sámi profile increases every year⁴⁵⁰, with many festivals developing in various parts of Sápmi as well as in locations all over Fennoscandinavia.

6.2.1 Towards a definition of Sámi festivals

A first element that needs to be discussed when addressing Sámi festival concerns the definition itself of Sámi festivals. What defines a festival as Sámi? Is it their contents? The context into which they developed? Does it depend on who first developed them? On who organize them or pays for them? On who takes part to them as artists or as visitors?

The same question can be transposed and asked with reference to other social phenomena. What makes Sámi food Sámi? What makes Sámi music Sámi? What makes Sámi art Sámi? There is no easy solution to a question that seemingly answers itself but that requires researchers to take into account issues such as ethnicity and self-identification but also cultural appropriation, cultural preservation, essentialization strategies as well as reification processes. Festival do concern all these elements. In the case in exam, Sámi identity is crucial in understanding Sámi festivals and the former is a building block of the latter. One of the possible means to define ethnic affiliation in Sámi contexts is the eligibility to vote in one of the three Sámi parliament established in the Nordic Countries (but not in Russia). Specific criteria have been established to regulate enrolment in the electoral census: such criteria are both subjective (self-identification) and objective (language criteria). Language criteria are based on the individual linguistic heritage at least one grandparent had to be a Sámi native speaker (Broderstad 2011). In my opinion, these criteria, developed by Sámi representatives, offer a privileged starting point for reflections on ethnic affiliation, since they reflect a Sámi emic understanding of Sámi identity by highlighting what Sámi consider the core of their own identity regardless of geographical locations. Furthermore, such criteria have become crucial wherever it is required to define Sámi identity in order to implement indigenous rights. This working definition of Sámi identity shall be placed within the wider colonial context of Northern Fennoscandinavia, characterised by centuries of systematic cultural repression and assimilation leading to the erosion of Sámi languages and cultures. According to Árnadóttir (2018), who has focused on the Swedish side of Sápmi, it has not been easy for Sámi to delineate the characteristic that may define Sámi identity in contemporary contexts.

⁴⁵⁰ This was true up to 2019. As explained in chapter 6, section 9.2, Covid19 is having a major impact on Sámi festivals.

These criteria, which have proved to be extremely useful in establishing Sámi consultative organs such as the Sámi parliaments, have also encountered criticism within Sámi societies as not everybody agrees on language as a criterion, considering it too narrow, especially in (post-)colonial contexts like the various regions into which Sápmi is divided. Assimilation and colonization have deprived many Sámi of their own ancestors' culture and language, preventing them from accessing their lands, their way of life and their worldviews. In light of what mentioned above, a festival with a Sámi profile, or a Sámi festival, is an event where Sámi cultures are the focus, the core and the inspiration for the event itself. But this is not enough to make a festival Sámi. Actors and stakeholders – at least some of them – have to be Sámi. Furthermore, as the Sámediggi highlight, such events shall also work to make visible and disseminate Sámi art, culture and language, while also being cultural meeting places and cultural arenas where children and young people can be socialized in and enjoy the Sámi culture (Sámediggi 2021).

Sámi festivals go hand in hand with, and are part of, a growing tendency in Sámi communities to nurture the local Sámi culture in a virtuous circular process which is making Sámi cultures more and more visible as well as bearing witness to Sámi ethnolinguistic vitality. For instance, festivals foster interest in, and positive attitudes towards, *duodji* (craft), the local *gákti* (Sámi costume) and the local Sámi language (Skogvand 2016). At the same time, Sámi festivals are not developed in a cultural vacuum and their conception and development is possible only thanks to the work of groups of activists, of that of cultural institutions but also through personal-community networks. These events have indeed been built upon the efforts of previous generations; many of them –such as Márkomeannu- becoming possible only once the acceptance of the local Sámi identity in the community grew stronger, often as the result of the initiatives of local activists combatting negative tendencies on the part of other members of the same community. Such tendencies are the consequence of internalised stigma induced by decades of negative pressure imposed by state-led assimilation processes. The pervasiveness of these anti-Sámi policies resulted in negative attitudes towards Sámi cultures not only among non-ethnic Sámi but even among many Sámi themselves, often resulting in self-loathing and a sense of inferiority leading many of them to choose not to transmit their cultures to their own offspring.

For this reason, festivals and other celebrations of Sámi identities are not only joyful events but also powerful reactions and responses to such policies which, albeit no longer enforced, left deep gashes in the fabric of Fennoscandinavian society. In the words of Marianne Vigdis Henriksen, festivals like Riddu Riddu are «important to Sámi who want to reconnect with their heritage» (2017: 13). This statement is of particular interest since Henriksen discovered her Sámi background indirectly through

her work on Sámi festivals. She had grown up cut out from contact with Sámi culture, yet she devoted her Master's thesis to Riddu Riđđu and later published a book on the same topic. As she states, by the time she attended this festival for the first time she was still not confident about her own cultural background and the work she did for her thesis made her realize that her own childhood experience resonated with that of many who had built Riddu Riđđu. Once back home in Hammerfest – a town on the western coast of Finnmark – she devoted her efforts to digging up her own family's hidden past, confirming her impressions. She was indeed of Sámi background since her maternal grandparents were both Sámi. The festival had become for Henriksen and her own mother – who previously was oblivious of her own parents' ethnic identity – an opportunity not only to rediscover their origins and their ancestors' cultures but also to live and absorb it.

A fascinating fact revealed by Marianne Vigdin Henriksen's experience is that her specific Sámi identity (which had been, in her own words, "lost" in the sense that she was not socialized in the culture and not really know about her Sámi heritage until she was an adult) did not coincide with the Sea-Sámi identity of Riddu Riđđu. Consequently, she reconstructed her Sámi identity by ambling tesserae of the mosaic of Sámi identities, condensed and proposed at Riddu Riđđu, drawing on features she could relate to even though they may have not been the ones her family used to have before shifting their ethnic identity and adopting a Norwegian way of living. Marianne Vigdin Henriksen's experience is of particular relevance since it brings to our attention that Sámi identities are not homogenous and that festivals such as Riddu Riđđu help bring Sámi cultural diversity, as well as new ways of being Sámi, into light by celebrating local and specific cultural identities that, until a few decades ago, were obfuscated and often stigmatized⁴⁵¹.

Festivals may compensate the loss of identity caused by assimilation processes by providing alternative but culturally meaningful pan-Sámi threads with which individuals are able to sew the tapestry of personal identity, driven by the desire to piece together their family background by returning – albeit limited to the duration of the festival – to their ancestors' culture.

Although differing from one another in origin and purposes, these events share a similar structure: most of them are four-day-long happenings⁴⁵² consisting of workshops, conferences and various artistic performances as well as *duodji* market and Sámi food stands. The most important part of the day is the evening concerts. Nearly all visitors, volunteers and workers sleep in the festival areas

⁴⁵¹ Cultural outsiders considered these Sámi cultures more recognizable and "authentic" – for instance, the Inner Finnmark Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and Kárašjoga /Karasjok ones or reindeer tending Sámi cultures – and these perceptions fostered among Norwegians hegemonic, essentializing and uniformizing narratives (Mathisen 2004) that relegated other forms of Sámi identity to silence.

⁴⁵² Festivals such as the Guovdageaidnu's Easter Festival last several days.

intended as camping sites. Along with music and good fellowship, these boarding helps to create an atmosphere of merriment and an environment of excitement among the gathering. Festival activities are hosted in non-permanent and semi-permanent buildings and in local community facilities such as museums, barns, schools, libraries, polyfunctional centres. A close bond between at least some of the local community and the festivals is simultaneously and reciprocally forged by this utilization of local facilities. Nevertheless, not all festivals have strong links with the local institutions because of the controversial role of contradictory aspects of the Sámi environment. Non-participants as well as cultural outsiders may view the festivals as being happy, cheerful musical and amusement events. To cultural insiders though, they are much more, the fruit of a year's work, constituting an assertion of identity, resilience and resistance. Different coping strategies were implemented to deal with an oppression so pervasive that many gave in to it, often unwittingly. When addressing the consequences of state-led assimilation processes, it becomes clear that each case is different because every community, every family, every individual reacted in its own way. These premises enable us to understand why Sámi festivals are so different from one another even though they share some fundamental elements. These common core elements are at the heart of what we consider to fall within the category of Sámi festivals and, in their own right, they are what make these events sites of intergenerational healing and cultural renovation.

Sámi festivals are characterized by a number of features which cannot be fully conveyed in writing. They are mixed arts festivals where the boundaries between different artistic expressions are often blurred. Music performances, film screenings, visual and material art exhibitions, performing arts, handicraft markets and food are all inextricable aspects of these events, each contributing to the festival as an experience which, while it lasts, encompasses all aspects of daily life. The aforementioned artistic expressions are often provocative, connected as they are with activism and characterized by political overtones, providing a safe arena for political criticism.

Sámi festivals are characterized, among other things by strong forms of reciprocity that express itself through various means: around the numerous bonfires that dot the festival area at night, people offer food and drinks to strangers in a convivial atmosphere where sharing is at the basis of social interactions. A more formalized form of reciprocity is the time people pour into the making of the festival. Throughout the year, festival staff works to organize the week-long event and the vast majority of the staff works for free as only a handful full-time of positions have a salary⁴⁵³. Similarly, during the festival, volunteers' contribution is crucial to the success of the festival. They devote their

⁴⁵³ At festivals in Norway, people who work on the festival premises are either paid labourers, volunteers, or hold a paid positions

time to work for the festival in exchange for a free pass and a sense of involvement in the event. The volunteering ethos is deeply rooted in the Nordic countries, and many join these festivals as volunteers and not only as spectators because of the community building that volunteering at festivals provide. For these reasons, these events foster a strong sense of community both at a local and at a pan-Sámi level.

Furthermore, each of these events has its own history, its peculiarities, its specific contents, its purposes and its aims. For the most part they are, as we have seen, the result of the painstaking preparatory work of local, grassroots associations and organizations, and take place in complex contexts where varying, often contrasting, dynamics are at play. Despite the intrinsic differences characterizing these events, Sámi cultures are the axes on which these festivals turn and spin. Each of them requires equilibrium among all its components while simultaneously pushing limits and boundaries, stretching them to make space for themselves within Sámi society. Over the years each festival has grown to earn a specific position within local and transnational Sámi society.

6.2.2 Of Sámi festivals as venues of Sámi efflorescence

In the growing – but still limited – literature about Sámi festivals, many scholars have stressed how they are often understood as both expressions of, and tools for, revitalization processes. Over the past decade, the concept of Sámi ethnic renaissance has been gaining prominence (Johansen 2013). A further concept has gained ground in the study of indigenous expressions: efflorescence⁴⁵⁴.

Roche, Maruyama and Kroik (2018) employ Amery's interesting reflections upon these widely adopted conceptual categories that, Amery notes, are built on a framework that relies upon action being repeated, a concept linguistically expressed by means of the prefix re⁴⁵⁵ -: *revitalization revival*, *resilience*, *resurgence*, *renaissance*, *return*, *resurrection*, *resuscitation*, and *renewal*. Indigenous efflorescence on the other hand distances itself from the abovementioned approaches, looking at acts of resurgence not as re-iterations, re-interpretation and re-actualization of past practices but as new practices grounded in the past but tailored on the present and projected towards the future. The scholars also highlight how the concept of 'efflorescence' is of particular utility in indigenous contexts thanks to its focus on *process*. The scholars point out that such a focus has the merit of attracting attention towards the inventive, creative, dynamic character of contemporary Indigenous cultural expressions. It also perceives involvement in something more than the re-enactment of the

⁴⁵⁴ As other terms that have gained prominence in social sciences, efflorescence has been borrowed from the hard sciences.

⁴⁵⁵ The prefix *re-* is a word-forming element meaning "back to the original place; again, anew, once more". It can have an intensive function but it can also convey the idea of "undoing". This prefix entered English in the 13th century from both Old French and directly from Latin *re-*. (cfr the Etymonline dictionary: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/re->)

past, a return to what was once but is no longer and that could never be, for the past is gone cannot come back. Efflorescence is not only a matter of resuming consolidated cultural activities, and it does not suggest starting again where indigenous peoples stopped before the advent of colonial powers and the historical consequences they brought about. Rather, this approach acknowledges that the societies of the time before contact – even though in some cases such as that of Sápmi, contact with neighbors is as old as Sámi identity itself⁴⁵⁶ -are historical entities that cannot be resumed.

Before proceeding with the analysis of this conceptual framework and its application in Sámi contexts, I would like to focus on the origins of this concept. Efflorescence originally pertained to chemistry, where it indicated a physical process through which salt, originally part of a material substance, once in contact with water re-emerges, albeit transformed, on the surface of the material itself becoming visible. Most of the salt evaporates leaving a thin coating in a sparkling crystalline state. The fundamental idea encapsulated in the chemical process described above is that something invisible at first, because lying deep under the surface, emerges once stimulated by external factors: in the case of salt, water; in the case of cultural expression, social factors of various nature such as renewed awareness and pride.

The original term – which entered English from French – was the Latin *efflorescere*, which is a compound of *ex-* (“out”) + *florescere* (“to blossom”). In my opinion, the etymological meaning of efflorescence as blossoming is especially suited in this context. Blossoming is a metaphor particularly suitable for describing the set of cultural phenomena characterized by identity pride, linguistic revitalization, ethno-political activism, which are taking place today in many indigenous contexts. These phenomena must not be analyzed only as strong responses to assimilationist and colonizing pressures but also as autonomous expressions of cultural vitality. Like flowers that during the winter seemed dead under a layer of snow, many indigenous cultures are today expressing their vitality by blooming again in a spring where cultural expressions make their way through the melting snow.

Today the concept of efflorescence is used in a number of disciplines for instance chemistry, botany, construction, geology, pathology, and social studies including anthropology. In all these disciplines, the basic meaning of the term is the idea of something emerging to become visible. From a social perspective, efflorescence implies economic prosperity, human thriving, and cultural creativity. As

⁴⁵⁶ We are used to thinking of colonial-indigenous contexts as defined by the moment of contact between the two. In many cases such contact is traceable to a specific historical moment or series of moments as is the case of the “discovery” of Americas, New Zealand, Australia and so on, even though contact with peoples living in the inner regions of these areas took place over an extended period of time. This is not invariable the case though as the experience of the Sámi people illustrate: contact between Sámi and Norse/Finnic/Russian and indigenous arctic peoples characterised Sámi history. A slow erosion rather than a contact moment interrupting a pre-contact

Roche (2018) explains, within a colonial framework, these phenomena are informed by an element of surprise grounded in outsiders' expectation that the cultures which currently experience efflorescence – and therefore thriving – had been doomed to vanish. The importance of the concept of efflorescence lies in its characteristics: it is in practical contradiction with the notion of indigenous societies' crisis that has characterized the debate about indigenous peoples since colonial times. The idea of indigenous peoples as savages doomed to vanish permeated discourses about indigenous cultures, resulting in predictions of cultural extinction that resembled apparently self-fulfilling – albeit proved erroneous by history -prophecies. The understanding of Indigenous Peoples – and the Sámi among them – as doomed can be traced back to what Brantlinger (2003) defines “extinction discourse”, an expression of imperialist and racist ideology which is reflected in the literature of the time. This theme, the consistency and pervasiveness of inevitable extinction of “primitive peoples” who were “relics of the past”, was seen as an inevitable and intrinsic characteristic of the very condition of “primitive” that was attributed to these populations. These predictions were at the heart of colonial enterprises and civilizing aspirations that colonial actors embraced in what became known as the “man's burden” (Wolfe 2006; O'Brien 2010).

In this regard, Appadurai's concept of the ‘trap of trajectorism’ offers a useful key to understand the basis of the above assumptions concerning indigenous peoples' fate. Appadurai explains that a deeply embedded ‘epistemological and ontological habit’ based on the assumption of time as not only invariably linear and monodirectional but also pointing towards a predetermined – albeit unknown – end, a *telos*.⁴⁵⁷ According to this approach, one may know the future by designing a past-present-future continuum where the past informs the present and hence the future. This approach was the basis of predictions about the death of indigenous cultures which extended into a presently-unknown future projections that tell more about the cultures that produced them rather than those that they aimed to describe.

Indigenous efflorescence, as expressed for instance by the revitalization of languages, contradicts in very concrete terms the “extinction discourse” that for a long-time characterized conversations about Indigenous peoples in the era of high colonialism and whose echoes still surround numerous non-academic discourses about indigenous peoples⁴⁵⁸. By surviving as communities and cultures,

⁴⁵⁷ Teleology is a mode of explanation in which the presence, occurrence, or nature of some phenomenon is explained by the end to which it contributes. Building on this concept, scholars have developed the philosophical concept of teleology. Walsh (2008) access at <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195182057.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195182057-e-006> on 23/3/21

⁴⁵⁸ In this regard, the title of an article published in 2018 on “the economist” is very suggestive: “Indigenous peoples across the world no longer seem doomed to extinction” (1 Dec 2018) <https://www.economist.com/international/2018/12/01/indigenous-peoples-across-the-world-no-longer-seem-doomed-to-extinction>

indigenous peoples have disproved 19th- and 20th -century speculation about – and active policies aimed at – their cultural disappearance through assimilation.

Anishinaabe scholar Gerard Vizenor, Professor of American Studies and member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, refers to the strenuous survival of indigenous peoples against the gloomiest predictions as « Indigenous ‘survivance’ » which he describes as « [...] the ‘active sense of presence’ » now and in the future despite indigenous people’s « historical absence » at least in history as written by cultural outsiders, most of the time the colonizers who tried and erase them. Vizenor formulated this concept to convey the notion of indigenous “presence” in the present and of « [...] continuance of native stories, not [as] a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victory » (1994: VII). This approach is of particular relevance if we take into account the fact that indigenous peoples have for a long time been symbolically excluded from the present through an allochronic approach that Fabian (2014) defines as the « denial of coevalness » and that has characterized early anthropological approach towards the ultimate others, those indigenous peoples identified as “primitive” or “savage”. The analysis of the extinction discourse applied to Sámi contexts offers an opportunity to address how indigenous efflorescence as a theoretical concept can become a useful theoretical tool that can help understand contemporary expressions of Sámi cultures. The extinction discourse found fertile ground in the late 19th century Fennoscandinavian intellectual circles, leading Scandinavian scholars to deem the Sámi to be doomed, with their lifestyle threatened by incipient modernity. During the Modern Era, Sápmi had been divided by the emerging nation states, which partitioned the Sámi lands among each other through colonial practices (taxation, registration into the church books, forced labour), wars and treaties. Being subjects to different states meant that the Sámi were subjects to different set of laws according to where they were registered in the church records⁴⁵⁹. As it happened in many indigenous contexts, the fates of people sharing language, culture and family ties took different paths according to which side of the colonial border they lived on. In Norway, the government implement an assimilation policy known as *Norwegianization* (Minde 2003). Weinstock (2013), drawing on Lundmark, explains that, throughout the 19th century, Swedish policy was characterized by

[...] a paternalistic attitude toward the ‘Sámi’ prevailed in the Swedish Riksdag⁴⁶⁰: Sámi were slowly dying out, allegedly because they were at a lower stage of evolution and could not successfully compete with Swedish farmers. According to Lennart Lundmark, the Riksdag felt its duty was to delay the demise of reindeer herding. By the end of the century,

⁴⁵⁹ Churched worked as outposts of the Lutheran states until the establishment of a strong and centralized power in the late 19th century.

⁴⁶⁰ The Swedish Parliament.

*‘lapp skal vara lapp’*⁴⁶¹ became governmental policy, meaning that Sámi reindeer herders were to be isolated from the majority population.

A quotation from the Danish doctor and writer Kaarsber exemplifies this attitude:

I regard a true Lapp with an interest similar to that with which an antiquarian regards a well-preserved flint tool from the Stone Age: it may well be that the sharp edges of the stone wedge have been damaged in places over time . . . The stone wedge has still remained essentially unchanged. And you would hardly be wrong to see in the Lapp the genuine flint remnants of a highly peculiar aboriginal people. (Kaarsberg 1897 in Hansen & Olsen 2013: 5).

Swedish policy, in line with the salvage paradigm, aimed at isolating and segregating those Sámi that fitted into the stereotypical image of the reindeer tenders. Their lifestyle, characterized by seasonal mobility, was regarded as the authentic Sámi way of life. All other Sámi, being them fishers or farmers, were not considered Sámi enough for their culture to be preserved. Hence, they were to be absorbed into the majority society. Both in Norway and in Sweden, the main means of assimilating Sámi peoples had been the socialization of Sámi children into the hegemonic society⁴⁶². If the so-called semi-nomadic lifestyle and Sámi cultures were perceived as on the verge of disappearing and reindeer tenders were isolated from the rest of Swedish society, the Swedish government believed that Sámi material cultures could at least be preserved in museums, as vestiges of a supposedly soon-to-be-dead culture. The other Nordic states held similar views and implemented similar museum policies. Initially, both Fennoscandinavian and Sámi objects were held at the same institutions. With the establishment of folk museums in the Nordic countries at the turn of the 19th century, objects and costumes representing the majority society were exhibited in folk museum collections⁴⁶³. They embodied the essence of the nation. Sámi artefacts instead were classified as ethnographic material (Magga, 1995: 16 in Webb 2006:170), as if they did belong to a different context and a different nation. The implications of this classification are political and show the performative character of

⁴⁶¹ «Sámi shall be Sámi». This policy of segregation is one of the numerous forms of physical and symbolic marginalization that led to the fragmentation of Sámi communities (Hirvonen 2008:69).

⁴⁶² (Norwegian: *internat*, Swedish *nomadskolor*) The experience of boarding schools had been particularly traumatic for many children and led to fragmentations of Sámi society.

⁴⁶³ Folk museums' history is deeply intertwined with national political agendas and would require much more space than that I can provide in this section. I shall return to this topic later in this thesis. I shall just mention here that the Skandinavisk-Etnografiska Samlingen (Scandinavian Ethnographic Collection) was inaugurated in Stockholm in 1873. In 1880 the museum became a foundation and the name was changed into Nordiska Museum (today Nordiska museet ie Nordic Museum) Silvén (2019). In Norway, the new Folk Museum was established in the 1890s (Webb 2006).

The Finnish Kansallismuseo, located in downtown Helsinki, was founded in 1893 as the State Historical Museum. It comprised several older collections that were then placed in the care of the state.

(<https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/en/kansallismuseo/historiaa>). The open-air folk museums originates in Sweden: in 1891 Arthur Hazelius (1833–1901) established the Skansen museum. Hazelius' aim was to illustrate the way of life typical of folk peoples in the different cultural areas of Sweden in the times before the country's industrialization.

narratives created and reiterated in museums. This physical collocation in different museums exemplified the perceived distance between the Swedes and the Sámi. The Sámi were not part of the national history. As Webb (2006: 170) highlights, « [...] a narrative of the Sámi as a people with no historical depth was constructed ». Their cultures were hence not only primitive but also immutable. Prior to the missionary accounts written during the colonization and Christianization of Sápmi, the information about Sámi people is just scattered in Norse sources. Brief mentions of hunter-gatherer groups identified with the ancestors of the Sámi are present in classical Greek and Roman sources (Tacitus, Procopius, Ptolemais) but these were not considered proof of the Sámi past in the region. Furthermore, their archeological past was silenced, made invisible in museums while the Nordic nations developed their own identity and were creating a national past through the valorization of archaeological materials. Through museum exhibitions, the Sámi, as other indigenous people, were relegated into an eternal present and their cultures were portrayed as static and immutable. The atemporality, into which museums for a long time had relegated indigenous peoples, finds correspondences in the ethnographic present, a narrative construct and a literary device (Hastrup 1990) as well as a mode of presentation (Sanjek 1991:612) characteristic of ethnographic writing. With respects to the Sámi context, this approach⁴⁶⁴, implied that the Sámi were perceived and presented as without a past and, at the same time, without a future as a people. The collections of material culture were to document the lives and customs of the «[...] last nomads of Scandinavia» (Olsen 2006, Dankertsen 2016), this understanding of Sámi history is deeply embedded into a stadial understanding of human history shaped by social Darwinism.

As a consequence of the phenomena mentioned above, for a long time, Sámi have been considered a “people without history”, to use Wolf’s expression (1982). In the last 70 years, many scholarly works have proved these theories wrong and oral history is undergoing a process of re-evaluation also outside the indigenous Sámi milieu. Furthermore, the Sámi cultures, through the Sámi people, have demonstrated their vitality despite the odds. Sámi cultures have a future. Sámi cultures, as those of other indigenous peoples, have not only survived but also thrived, embodying indigenous efflorescence and hence disproving 19th century colonial narratives of the “vanishing native” that still resonate in contemporary non-academic discourses. Nevertheless, the impact of the aforementioned theory has been grave, and it is still perceived today and consequences of ethnographic practices such as the removal of cultural items from the Sámi communities have had negative effects on these very communities who are today unable to easily access their own cultural heritage. As late as the mid-20th century, for many European travelers and scholars, the Sámi peoples had embodied this

⁴⁶⁴ For a comprehensive critical analysis of the ethnographic present, see Hastrup (1990) Sanjek, (1991) Halstead et al (2008)

“primitive other” who lived at the fringes of their world – in the Northernmost regions of Europe – in an endless present that reflected their own past but had no place in the future. A prediction grounded in the extension into the future of the then current perceptions of indigenous cultures as on the brink of extinction. Nevertheless, Sámi – as well as other indigenous groups throughout the world – have proved such predictions wrong. Their very existence into the present can be seen as a form of defiance and an act of resistance. Furthermore, not only they exist as a people, but they are also projected into a future that, according to the colonial paradigm, had no space for them. The outlook towards the future is an essential standpoint of “Indigenous efflorescence” as a theoretical framework as it acknowledges not only the present but also the thriving of indigenous people – within and despite ongoing colonial practices and attitudes – and their active engagement in creating a future for themselves.

Some distinctions relating to the origins and current uses of the terms “revitalization”, “renaissance” and “efflorescence”, become necessary here: in my opinion in Sápmi we are witnessing a general process of efflorescence which includes numerous aspects of the social, cultural and private sphere in Sámi communities. These are also expressions of the struggle for cultural autonomy. Although revitalization, renaissance and efflorescence may appear as similar concepts, they have different nuances and efflorescence includes and goes beyond revitalization, revival, and renaissance. Efflorescence as a term and concept has gained popularity in recent years but its use in social sciences dates back to at least 1981, when the term is used in the synthetic description of Smith’s book “Ethnic revival”⁴⁶⁵, where efflorescence is juxtaposed with the expression “ethnic renaissance”. As we can see, already in Smith’s work these three concepts coexisted and contributed in describing processes of cultural valorisation.

The expression *cultural revival* – usually associated with minority(-ized) groups - refers to a process of collective identity formation based on shared cultural elements. The concept embedded in this expression is the following: lost elements of the culture with which a group identifies are retrieved through activism, social engagement and art. The cultural loss endured by the group is traced back to colonization in its multiple manifestations (cultural assimilation, oppression, stigmatization) as well as to modernization. Theoretical considerations on cultural revival spur from the intersection of reflections on modernity, nationalism and ethnicity and for this reason works on cultural revival often focus on instances of ethnic nationalisms.

The cultural revival framework was extremely popular in the 1980s and 1990s and has been widely investigated by historians, sociologists, and anthropologists

⁴⁶⁵ The text reads: «Since the Second World War, the world has witnessed a remarkable efflorescence of ethnic feeling and nationalist aspirations».

Phenomena falling within the coordinated of “cultural revival” have been identified among numerous minority(-ized) groups usually in contexts of cultural oppression and/or assimilation, where cultural continuity has been forcibly interrupted, severing the ties between new generations and their collective cultural heritage. In these contexts, the will to sew back together such ties and re-establish a connection with the past through a process of heritagization, valorisation of cultural features – among them languages - leading to concrete actions spanning from language activism to the establishment of institutions such as cultural centres or festivals.

Numerous studies have focused on such phenomena among Indigenous peoples throughout the world with numerous works focusing on Native peoples of the Americas, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in Australia as well as in Asia and in Northern Europe.

In such contexts, marked by centuries-long cultural and political deprivation, oppression, urbanization – but also forms of forced relocation, prejudice and power asymmetries - cultural revival has often been understood as a reaction against cultural stigmatization and enforced assimilation as well as a empowering response against the prohibition or disruption of indigenous cultural practices⁴⁶⁶.

The expression “cultural revival” was employed to refer and define those specific set of practices that were bringing back to the public sphere rites, ceremonies and practices and languages that either had long been relegated to the private (so that the hegemonic society would not see and condemn them) or had fallen in disuse as consequence of colonial pressure. Such practices were fostering a positive image of the group among its own members drawing on previous generations’ cultural features. In doing so, they became a repository of individual and collective pride grounded in the community’s own culture. They provided symbolic and concrete recognition to cultural identities that had long been devaluated by the hegemonic society.

Cultural revival is considered as a “tactic” to which politically marginal groups resort to, either consciously or unconsciously, in their articulation of claims concerning collective rights, and cultural, political and/or legal recognition as a group.

Cultural revival is connected with the notion – or the critique - of “authenticity” as examined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger as well as with what Spivak defines “strategic essentialism”

Hobsbawm and Ranger’s seminal collection of essays *The Invention of Tradition* critically reflect on the concept of “tradition”, highlighting the relatively recent origin of numerous cultural

⁴⁶⁶ Where such state strategies attempted, usually deliberately, to erode ethnic allegiances that opposed state hegemony,

expressions or phenomena often regarded as “traditional”, i.e. as the etymology⁴⁶⁷ of the term itself reveal a practice handed down from generation to generation.

In their own words, many traditions are «responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition » (1987:2). Hobsbawm and Terence consider these “responses” as reactions to the swift changes and socio-cultural transformations characterising modernity. They consider the formalization of practices as processes of tradition formation.

Cultural renaissance, revival and revitalization have been important conceptual tools that helped describe and give visibility to hundreds of phenomena that epitomize the work of activists engaged in processes of cultural valorisation. These conceptual tools have also been central in structuring the debate concerning such phenomena and their function in processes of symbolic and concrete legitimation.

The term revitalization entered the anthropological literature in 1956, when Anthony F. C. Wallace published the paper “Revitalization Movements” in which he describes such movements as a «deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture» (1956 265). The expression gained foot becoming almost routinized and is sometimes used as a generic term without reference to its source. The concept- originally applied to the ritual and religious dimension – has been employed in numerous contexts and is today widely used in the analysis of indigenous contexts, where it is employed to describe the re-enactment of expressions of pre-colonial cultures that, by the time revitalization is implemented – or attempted – had become weak because threatened by the local hegemonic culture. Revitalization implies a conscious commitment from activists – individuals and organizations – to reintroduce threatened – or already disappeared – cultural expression into daily life. This concept is often used with reference to music and, especially, in sociolinguistics where it is employed to address cases of endangered languages – languages with very few active speakers left – that have undergone a process of valorisation leading to a return of the language as a means of communication. In a wider perspective, this concept refers to a process in which some cultural features which had been dormant were woken up and stimulated to regained strength, with the result of a resurgence of such features in the public sphere.

In indigenous efflorescence contexts, renaissance and revitalization are contextual concepts that, ultimately, epitomize the (re-)assertion of cultural pride. Drawing a distinction between

⁴⁶⁷ The English term “tradition” entered English from Latin through Old French. The Latin word *traditio*, *-ionis* (acc *traditionem*) comes from the verb *tradere*, meaning “deliver”, “hand over”. This verb is formed by the prefix *trans*- “over” and the verb *dare* “to give”.

revitalization, revival and renaissance is not an easy task as these terms are often used almost interchangeably. From an etymological perspective, the nouns revival and revitalization – from the verb “to revitalize” – originate from the same stem, the Latin verb *vīvō* (“to live”). The original meaning of “revival” is to “return to life” “bring again to life” or “to reanimate”, “to prevent from dying” but it also came to mean “to recover from a state of oblivion, obscurity, or neglect”. Similarly, to revitalise literally means “to give new life or energy to something” but also, “to rouse from a state of inactivity or quiescence”. In anthropological jargon, these terms have been employed with this specific meaning, reflected also in the term “renaissance” which is used to define a period of strong cultural creativity expressed across various disciplines and through different forms of art. Renaissance comes from a French term derived from Latin⁴⁶⁸, literally means “re-birth” and initially referred to a « [...] great period of revival of classical-based art and learning in Europe that began in the fourteenth century» (www.etymologicon.com).

An exemplary case of the contextual character of the applicability of these concepts is that of the *gákti* –the Sámi costume. In some communities, the *gákti* had completely gone out of use and no physical traces of it were visible. In others, it was still used even though only by a minority of the population, albeit still visible despite its marginality in the community’s daily life. In yet other communities, the *gákti* was generally accepted and used not on special occasions but also in daily life. All these possibilities occurred simultaneously in different – sometimes even neighbouring – communities, depending on contextual factors as well as a number of variables many of which were beyond the control of the community itself (proximity to non-Sámi societies, engagement in public state-led activities, population density, access to non-Sámi institutions, access to Sámi-managed institutions, family values, religious values, mother tongue, exposure to Sámi language and culture, exposure to non-Sámi language and cultures, transmission of experience-based knowledge, livelihoods, exposure to ethnic-based violence and hatred)

This is especially true in those areas which had been most affected by the devastation brought about by World War II, which in Northern Troms and Finnmark (Norway) as well as in Lapland province (Finland) erased all traces of the local material culture. In those regions, everything was razed to the ground and evacuees were left with nothing but the clothes on their backs. In some communities, the intersection between the ravages of war and state-led assimilation policies meant that people of Sámi heritage had nothing to come back to when the war was over – either in terms of memory or material objects – when the war was over. The cultural annihilation caused by these processes meant that, in

⁴⁶⁸ Renaissance comes from the Old French *renaissance*, from Vulgar Latin *renascere*, from Latin *renasci* “be born again, rise again, reappear, be renewed” formed by the prefix *re-* “again” and the verb *nasci* “be born”.

some areas, the Sámi had to rebuild their lives from scratch by embracing mainstream Norwegian culture, which not only was imposed upon them by the state but to which they had become accustomed during their evacuation. Furthermore, for many the hegemonic culture meant modernity and escape from the poverty War imposed upon them. The cultural pressure which relegated Sámi cultures to conceptual denigration fuelled contrasting feelings in many Sámi people who had introjected the negative attitudes which for decades the Sámi had to endure from the rest of society. The new lifestyle many Sámi embraced after the War left no space for Sámi identity, language or culture, which were not as a consequence transmitted to later generations.

Even though often understood and portrayed as static, Sámi cultures – like all others – have been characterized by constant change, adapting to external and internal pressures. Given the autonomy of individuals, families and communities, as well as the different stimuli and forms of pressure, such adaptations have taken many forms. Agency played a crucial in peoples' coping strategies (see the Sámi concept of *birget* analysed by Evjen & Lehtola 2020) and what today may be interpreted as a loss of culture (the language shift, the abandoning of Sámi customs and costumes) was in many cases a choice made for the sake of future generations. Such a choice was curtailed by adverse circumstances which greatly penalized Sámi identities, but it was still a conscious choice. The consequences of the different coping strategies and accompanying choices are today visible in the effects on the decisions made by younger generations.

In my opinion, Sámi festivals should be address in the light of these considerations and bearing in mind both the specific socio-cultural context into which they develop and the wider context of Sápmi ad these phenomena constitute links between the two. When addressing a festival, it is necessary to reflect on a few key questions: where, when, what happens there, and why. The answers to such questions are usually extremely complex and bring into light how these events are entangled in wider issues and often epitomize a long history of both stigmatization and pride and the tension between the two. Skogvang, who builds on research on Sámi as well as non-Sámi festivals, explains that contemporary Sámi festivals contribute to shaping identity and foster cultural upliftment deeply rooted in local communities (2016).

As Hilder highlights in his PhD thesis focused on Sámi musical performances, Sámi festivals constitute various articulations of Sámi identities (2014), showing simultaneously how different issues and subjects are relevant for different communities and individuals. Some Sámi actors may consider specific features that from the past have been maintained into the present – for instance, reindeer-tending in those communities where this activity is still practiced – as essential to their own

understanding of their hodiernal Sámi identity while others may adopt other expressions of Sámi cultures grounded in their local past as their own peculiar characteristic epitomizing “Sáminess” and such features are then proposed during events like festivals as symbols of a local way of being Sámi. This process of selection, that reminds of the processes of heritagization outlined by Lowenthal (1996), has occurred throughout Sápmi, leading to the current situation in which Sámi identity has multiple articulations.

The internal differences that characterize Sámi cultures do not necessarily imply fragmentation, because unity is not uniformity. Nevertheless, and despite the broad support Sámi festivals enjoy in Sámi communities, there are many who prefer not to attend them since they do not share some of the behaviours associated with festivals or are not comfortable with public displays of Sámi cultures, the latter being an issue that originated in the public stigmatization of Sámi cultures as well as in its privatization (Minde 2000; Olsen 2007). Since local history and customs play an important part, the festivals must be regarded as related to heritage. Such customs are not to be taken for granted during these events but to be discussed, updated and adjusted and applied according to new cultural trends (even if just during the events themselves). All these features help younger generations to perceive a contemporary, nuanced way of being Sámi, contributing to making Sámi festivals sites of cultural creativity (on cultural creativity and festivals, see Bonato 2019). Not only have they reinvented local knowledge and traditions but have ensured that they will be shared and transmitted – conditional on their becoming annual events – (Smith et al. 2010). Sámi festivals celebrate publicly not only identity but also resistance and resilience⁴⁶⁹ because they incorporate the continued existence and mutation of a culture fiercely objected to and persecuted for a long time. During my fieldwork and interviews, it became clear that the Sámi themselves used the complex term “resilience” as a means of describing the situation in which they find themselves. They tended to perceive resilience as their ability to

⁴⁶⁹ Resilience is a complex concept that has entered anthropological literature in recent decades. The concept probably originated in the hard sciences, in which it denotes the intrinsic features that enable a material or system to return to the original state of equilibrium after being exposed to stress (Barrios 2016). In the social sciences, it has acquired a specific meaning which Cutter et al. (2008) frame as «[...] the ability to survive and cope with a disaster with minimum impact and damage». Hence, resilience has come to refer to successful adaptation by cultures and individuals in the face of adversity. Despite its growing popularity, the term is not immune from criticism. As Barrios explains, this concept tends to focus on the ability of communities to survive while failing to acknowledge the systemic reasons that put them at risk in the first place. Furthermore, having this term not originated in social sciences or anthropology but having it been borrowed by and adapted from ecology and physics, numerous implicit assumptions inherent to this term are, as Barrios points out, «not suitable for understanding people and systems of social organization» (2016:29). In Barrios' view, one of the most important of the problematics connected with the concept of resilience is its intrinsic reference to a return to an equilibrium as both the premises and the outcome of resilience. This notion, which makes perfect sense in hard science would be misleading in social sciences as societies and cultures are not “static” – equilibrium – but in constant change and adaptation. Barrios examines not only the cons but also the pros of the use of this concept in social sciences and he highlights that many scholars focus on resilience as «[...] the capacity for adaptation and flexibility» distancing the term from its original implications rooted in hard sciences. Barrios acknowledges the popularity and utility of this concept despite its shortcomings. For this reason, he also acknowledges that the «[...] term resilience remains in use as a means of describing those communities that manage to recover from disasters, if not actually “rebuild better”» (2016:25)

survive as a culture despite the strong colonial homogenizing pressure. This topic aroused my interest as I wondered how this indigenous community understood this concept and how they used it in pursuing their ethno-political goals. The following interviews show how two of my interlocutors – two cultural activists who currently have a political role in the Sámi society – articulated this idea, reflecting upon this concept, which has emerged as central to Sámi festivals.

When I asked Anne Henriette (Márkomeannu Festival Leader of the 2018 edition) why they had a poster with the word “Resilience” written on it as graffiti at Márkomeannu 2018 (image n90), she framed this concept as part of a wider discourse on self-determination and self-representation, connecting it with the Sámi history of oppression and the recent movements aimed at deconstructing colonial narratives concerning the Sámi. She explained:

We are kind of taking back the power to define ourselves, cuz’... So we’re kind of taking back the power to tell the story ourselves and also taking back the power to kind of and ending this trauma loop that has been, there we have been given by the years of assimilation, colonization. Resilience? Is a way to understand that we have the power to, to separate, to separate the bad emotions in the loop, from the experience so that we can kind of break free from this pattern we’re in, and the Sámi society these days are really, really working on some really structural difficult things that maybe before people have been trained to kind not to lift because of the fear of being stigmatized. [...] but we are finally taking the power to talk about these things and try to change them and I think this “resilience” is kind of the “resilience of heart”, this “resilience of soul” that we understand that that we Sámi, the Sámi culture is wise, Sámi culture is not damaged. It’s just the patterns we were forced into [that are damaging]. And Márkomeannu has my opinion is... I feel so privileged to have been able to work with the festival because there’s such a collective consensus in this that, Márkomeannu dares to make a political standpoint, there’s to lift this difficult subject, [that it] is not afraid to be stigmatized. So there’s really strong resilience in the festival, to define the truth by our own souls and hearts and not be not be confined or boxed in by, by the system we live in. And of course, it applies on layers upon layers, it also applies to the Sámi people and not accepting for all the way down to the Alta action in the 1980s, to now that we have this, this copper mine in Kvalessund⁴⁷⁰, so if there’s a resilience in the people that I’m really proud of, and that I think is one of the core values to the Sámi people, [them¹ being so strong. We are really, the Sámi people are, if you want to call it if you.. If you compare it to other indigenous cultures and minorities, the Sámi have... yeah, we are not the culture that has the worse state, right now. The Sámis are *Ofelaččat*⁴⁷¹ in the indigenous world. They fight for international indigenous rights and so on. So I think this resilience kind of plays into all layers.

Later in the same interview she specified:

I think resilience is kind of just a signpost to something that is innate in minority cultures, or people that have to kind of die out there that are forced to take a stand point towards identity

⁴⁷⁰ The planning copper mine in Reppafjord, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, has become a site of major confrontation between the mine’s stakeholders and local population mobilizing Sámi people from all Sápmi as well as environmental organizations (See chapter 8, section 3.1).

⁴⁷¹ *Ofelaččat* (NS plural of *Ofelaš*) means path-finders (see chapter 7, section 2.2).

and awareness, and nature and society and system structures. And I think there was definitely that we are able to put a word on it. Okay, it's probably because we are highly educated. But I think I think the words are just name tags on something that already exists. And we are able to kind of make do in the system, because we have been forced in and chosen to kind of learn the system, to be able to take back the power to not be a slave to the system anymore. And the Sámi, the semi people are one of the most educated indigenous peoples in the world, if not the most educated people. So and that has been so important.

She then reflected on a historical figure that, in her view, epitomizes Sámi resilience:

Jakko Sverloff, he was chosen [as the subject of a theatrical performance held at Márkomeannu], because of his ability to rebuild a society, because he was part of the Skolt Sámi that were driven out of their homes and forcedly placed in a completely new and not really good place for them to start a new society. But they kind of managed. He's kind of a symbol of the resilience, the resilience of the Skolt Sámi people. So he was chosen for his kind of ability to rebuild. something from ashes

When I asked Runan Myrnes Balto (former festival leader of Márkomeannu and currently leader of the NSR Sámi political party and advisor to the current Minister Aili Keskitalo) what resilience meant to him, he contextualized it within the wider festival concept of Márkomeannu²¹¹⁸ (see chapter 7) and explained to me that:

[Resilience] was sort of the point of the festival. And that was, that was how I understood it. The idea [of the festival concept, i.e. 100 years in the future the world is almost destroyed but Sámi people managed to survive] is that even though even though the world is going to hell, the Sámi manage to survive. It is sort of ... it's sort of part of our national story, I would say that it's pretty incredible that Sámi culture, and language still have survived that extreme pressure of assimilation and shame that has been over [them] for so many, so many generations. That's something I find really astonishing. And that's, that's sort of what the resilience means, for me.

He then later pointed out that resilience not only pertained to Sámi cultures but was something that unites all indigenous peoples across the world, creating a sense of community of the basis of a share, traumatic past that, nevertheless, see them survive:

For me, it means like a kinship with other I know that I can talk to any indigenous person in any part of the world and I will have a similar experience or we can have a similar story about our family or culture, like the cultural expressions are the same even when the languages aren't the same. Music isn't the same, but the story is always the same. It's a story of oppression and resilience. In some cases more brutal than others, but at like an ideological core, but it's usually this, we're oppressed for the same reasons. And we fight for the same reasons. And we meet the variations of the same problems.

From these two interviews with two members of the Sámi community who both have been part of the Márkomeannu team and are currently holding a position within the Sámi political system, it emerges how they tend to attribute a cultural-specific interpretation to the concept of resilience, employing it to signify the survival of Sámi cultures against all the efforts of colonialism to obliterate all traces of it. Through the lens of Sámi own understanding, resilience is framed as the ability to

survive as a people despite the colonial pressure. In a way, resilience is understood as the constant defying of oppression.



Image 90: Posters of previous editions of Márkomeannu at Márkomeannu 2018; of particular relevance is the word “Resilience” written on them through the graffiti technique. (Photo by the author).

6.3 Sámi festivals throughout Sápmi

As mentioned above, Sámi festivals are a widespread phenomenon and, albeit different in origins, today such events fulfil a major socio-cultural, but also economic, role in Sápmi. Every year new events are organized while older events may be suspended due to contingent circumstances. In the following sections I address some of these events providing information regarding the context into which such festivals have emerged.

6.3.1 A map of major Sámi festivals

While in Norway, I attended several gatherings that were regarded as Sámi festivals or Sámi events. My experience is limited in both time and space, temporally spanning as it does on only three years and the locations of which I have experience are all within the borders of Troms-Finnmark County. All the events I attended shared a common feature: they all revolved around Sámi cultures, most often from a holistic perspective, merging the lines that delineate the various expressions of Sámi identity. Skogvank has produced the first study aiming at delineating a comprehensive account of Sámi festivals, a book chapter entitled “Festivals with a Sámi contents” (2016). In his work, he elaborated a table reporting various Sámi festivals in Norway, reporting data such as the festival’s name, where

and when it takes place and year of establishment plus comments. I have developed Skogvank's table, including festivals from other regions of Sápmi (table 9). This chart offers a concise, albeit not exhaustive, summary of the most important of the dozens of Sámi festivals held in Sápmi throughout the year⁴⁷².

	<i>FESTIVAL</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>County & State</i>	<i>Time of the year</i>	<i>Year of Est.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Jáhkámáhke Márnána Jokkmokks Marknad /	Jáhkámáhkke/ Jokkmokk,	Sweden	February	1605	Market Festival coinciding with the Sámi national day ⁴⁷³
2	Påskefestivalen	Karášjoga/ Karasjok	Finnmark Norway	Easter	1966	Easter Festival
3	Sámi beassášmárkaniidd a	Guovdageaidn u / Kautokeino,	Finnmark Norway	Easter	1972	Easter Festival ⁴⁷⁴
4	Riddu Riđđu	Olmmaivággi/ Manndalen Gáivuotna/ Kåfjord	Troms Norway	July	1991	Festival celebrating the local Sea-Sámi culture
5	Skabmagovat	Aanaar/Inari,	Lapland Finland	January	1998	Film Festival
6	Márkomeannu	Gállogieddi Stuornjárga – Tjeldsund	Nordland- Troms Norway	July	1999	Festival celebrating the local MárkaSámi culture

⁴⁷² I have not listed here the events that take place outside Sápmi.

⁴⁷³ celebrations on the 6th of February take place all over Norway, Sweden, Finland and Kola Peninsula.. they mark the anniversary of the first PanSámi meeting, held in Traante/Trondheim in 1917

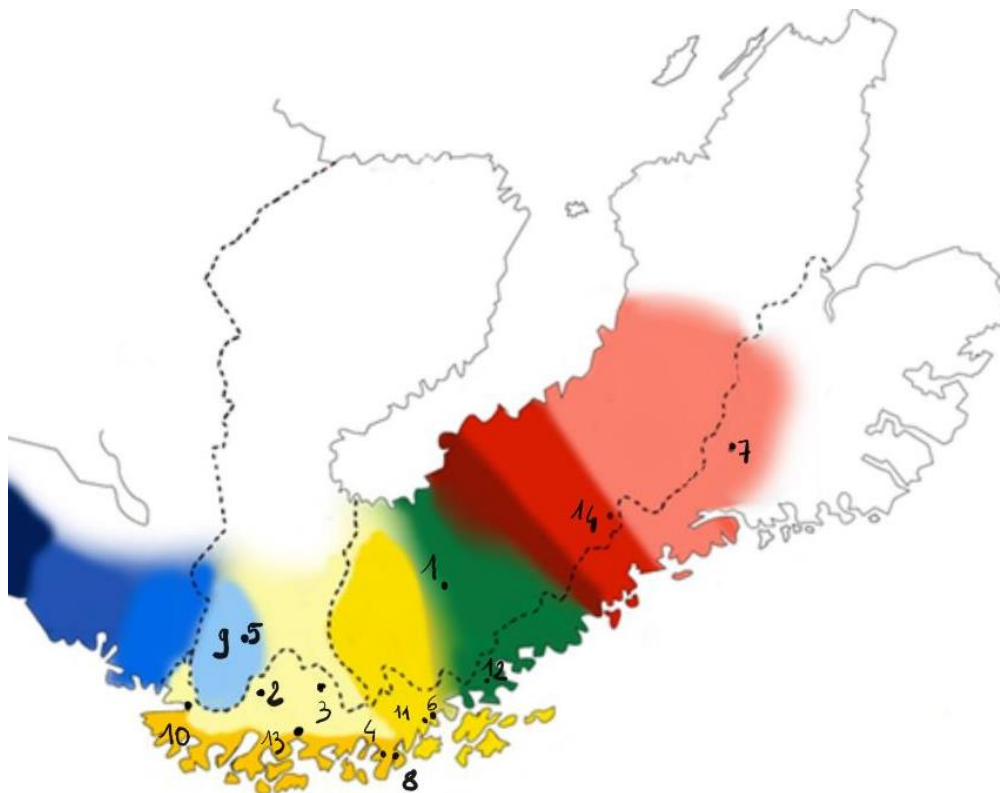
⁴⁷⁴ The festival was established in 1972 while the music Sámi Festival (during the Easter festival) was formally established in 1990

7	SørSámisk kulturfestival Raasten rastah	Røros	SørTrøndelag Norway	Sept/ October	2002	Festival celebrating the local South-Sámi culture
8	Sámi Vahkku/ Sámisk Uke	Tromsø	Troms Norway	February	2004	Celebrations for the Sámi national day
9	Ijahisidja	Aanaar/Inari,	Lapland Finland	August	2004	Music Festival ⁴⁷⁵
10	Vuonnamárganat – samemarkedet i Varangerbot	Vuonnabahta/ Varangerbotn Unjarga/ Nesseby	Finnmark Norway	Late aug/early sept	2005	Market fair
11	Isogaisa	Loabák/ Lavangen	Troms Norway	August	2009	Neos-shamanic festival based on non-Christian Sámi worldviews
12	Julesáme vahkko / Lule Sámisk uke	Måsske/Musken Divtasvuodna suohkan / Tysfjord kommune	Nordland Norway	July	1972- 1986 ⁴⁷⁶ 2010	Festival celebrating the local LuleSámi culture
13	Alta Sámi festival	Alta	Finnmark Norway	February	2011	Celebrations for the Sámi national day
14	Åanghkeren	Åanghkeren	Sweden	Summer	unknown	Informal celebration close to the local church

⁴⁷⁵ The event is the only music festival held in Finland that focuses on Sámi music

⁴⁷⁶ DSJ – Doajmmasiebrre Julev-Sábmes was established in Måsske (Musken) in Divtasvuodna suohkan/ Tysfjord municipality in 1986 and was named Aktivitetslaget Oarjjevuodna (ALO). The scope of the activities in the organization has increased considerably, and there was a need for reorganization in 1996. The name was then changed to Doajmmasiebre JulevSábme. Julevsáme vahkko is arranged. The first time the festival was held was in 2010, however HellmoCup (which is an important part of Julevsáme vahkko) has been held since 1972 (Skogvand 2016).

Table 9: table of festivals held across Sápmi, indicating the name of the festival, the location, the county and nation, the year of establishment and some information about the festival itself. (table by the author).



Map 17: Map of Sápmi with the location of the festivals mentioned in table n3. Each number corresponds to the numbers in the table. (Map by the author).

6.3.2 On the origins and typologies of Sámi festivals

Sámi festivals, or festivals with a Sámi profile, can be divided into different categories, according to features selected as criteria. For instance, it is possible to draw a distinction between long-standing social institutions – such as the Jokkmokk festival (whose core elements date back to 1605) – and more recent cultural phenomena – like Ijahisidja (est. 2004). Another distinction is that between festival with a secular or religious character or basis.

The Easter festival (in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino) was first established in the 1970s and, even though is not a religious festival *per se*, it was consciously arranged to take place around Easter, a time of the year where Sámi from all over Finnmark gathered in central locations such as Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and Kárášjoga/Karasjok. Such gatherings have taken place for centuries, independently of the Christian liturgical calendar even though they approximately coincide. Upon the formal conversion of the Sámi, these gatherings acquired a ritual dimension. When, in the 1970, local artists decided to organize a secular event, they chose Eastertide for then Sámi people already congregated.

With regard to secular festivals, the Jåhkåmåhkke festival represents an outstanding but not unique example of the deep entanglement of Sámi cultures with the colonial practices: the festival dates back to 1634. This does not mean that before that date Sámi people did not gather in the Jokkmokk area. It only signifies that, upon that date, the gathering acquired an institutionalized profile. Taxes were exacted, marriages were blessed, (colonial) justice was administered. The Jokkmokk festival, as we know it today, is the result of the colonial exploitation of Indigenous Sámi gatherings for the purpose of taxation. Swedish authorities took advantage of mid-winter Sámi assemblies (when *siidas* – Sámi communities – met up along the seasonal reindeer migration routes) whose primary aim was commercial exchange and, as in the case of the mid-April gathering in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, marriage among people belonging to different *siidas*/Sámi communities. In time, these gatherings became established seasonal market-places, hence the original commercial aspect is still alive even though today, the cultural profile is more pronounced.

The Vuonnamárkanat market festival shares with Jåhkåmåhkke festival many important core features: As usual in Sámi market fairs, here people can gather and enjoy Sámi music while eating reindeer meat and comparing and purchasing *duodj* (Sámi handicrafts). Vuonnamárkanat though has a complex history that makes it one of the oldest festivals in Sápmi but, at the same time, inscribes it within the “new wave” of festivals that has characterised the Sámi cultural landscape in since the mid-1990s.

Vuonnamárkanat constitutes a unique example of a new Sámi festival – such as those openly established since the 1990s to bring visibility to the community and to counterbalance the language shift process – while also epitomizing both the centennial presence of Sámi people in the territory and the deep entanglement between trade and colonial control over Sámi people. Vuonnamárkanat is a historic market held in Vuonnabahta/Varangerbotn and first established in 1688 in fulfilment of the orders from the then king of Denmark Christian V. The exact location where the late 17th century market took place is unknown but it is assumed it was somewhere in the area at the bottom of the local fjord Várjavuonna/Varangerfjord, an area inhabited for millennia as the archaeological evidence retrieved in the area demonstrates. The area had probably been a gathering point and the site of trade among Sámi people long before – and stayed so also after – governmentally instituted official markets. The first official market was closed down in 1760, following the orders of the then Danish king Christian VII and was organized again in 1831 in Stuorravuonna/Karlebotn – a settlement located just a few kilometres south of Vuonnabahta/Varangerbotn, the current location of the market festival – just to be abolished once again in 1899.

The festival website quotes historical documents bearing testimony to the centrality of this area, often perceived as marginal in relation to the rest of Norway. The market, and its location, Vuonnabahta/Varangerbotn, was an international hub attracting people from far and wide. In 1694, Bailiff Niels Knag describes the market as follows: [the market is visited by] citizens from Čáhcesuolu/Vadsø, Kiberg and Vardø, with Swedish merchants from Tornio, with Swedish border fairs and with Russians from Kola, and “Russian Finns” from Neiden and Pasvik (Skolt Sámi) (<http://www.varjjat.org/> access on 20/4/21).

In 2005, almost one hundred years after an official market was last held in the area, a group of local cultural workers and activists connected with local institutions – the Várjjat Sámi Musea/Varanger Sámi Museum – the institution managing the market area and the Isak Saba Center decided to arrange again the old market. Vuonnamárkanat, making it an annual event held between the end of August and the beginning of September

When the festival was organized again in 2005, the organizers made it clear that a clear Sámi profile was to be one of the market festival’s cornerstones. Their aim was to make Vuonnamárkanat a new old Sámi meeting place. This market festival was, in the intention of its founders, to become an arena where speaking Sámi and wearing a *gákti* (the Sámi costume) should be natural, easy and safe. Locally made duodji (Sámi handicrafts) are here sold and so is locally produced Sámi food such as reindeer meat. These features make this market festival a physical venue where to show and sell local products – both objects and food – made following family traditions. The linguistic landscape of the festival too is centred around North Sámi language and people are encouraged to speak or use it while at the market. This is a feature common to many festivals, such as Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu and is a conscious choice aimed at strengthening Sámi languages and culture. In the light of what has been mentioned, it comes as no surprise that the market festival at Vuonnabahta/Varangerbotn, was established with the aim of strengthening the local Sámi cultural identity and with the hope of making the area once again a local, regional and international meeting place for Sámi peoples throughout Sápmi (from my fieldnotes written during my stay with members of the Smuk family, Vuonnabahta/Varangerbotn, february 2020). Both Vuonnamárkanat and Jåhkâmáhkke festival originally developed from the intersection between indigenous intra-ethnic gatherings and the central – southern - governments’ ambitions to control and exert power upon Sámi peoples. Both festivals have long histories deeply embedded in asymmetrical power relations. Even though these gatherings most likely existed long before State authorities formalized them as markets where authorities could collect taxes, administer (colonial) justice and control the population, it was thanks to the colonial institutions that these events developed into festivals, showing the deep entanglement between Sámi and colonial institutions.



Image 92a and 92b: Unjárga/Nesseby, Vuonnaabahta/Varangerbotn, the site of the market festival in February (photo by the author).



Image 93 Unjárga/Nesseby, Vuonnaabahta/Varangerbotn, the site of the market festival in February (photo by the author).

An important element that did not figure in neither Vuonnamárkanat nor Jáhkámáhkke festivals is the religious dimension that, on the other hand, characterises the easter festivals of Páskefestivalen in Kárášjoga/Karasjok and Sámi beassášmárkaniidda in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, These Easter festivals are the two oldest Sámi events that have similarities to today festival events, with roots far back in time before “festival” became a concept. Like the name dictates, they are arranged at Easter, which through the ages has been the time when the migrant Sámi came down again to the village, and traditions and customs were maintained and continued through that family and friends met (Hætta,

2002). The author elaborates on how important the Easter holiday was for the Sámi: there relatives and friends gathered, and the children were baptized, confirmed, and married. This is events that still today bring together relatives and friends from all over the country, and *Kárášjoga* /Karasjok and Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino are places where displaced people still “come home” to celebrate Easter. The Easter festival in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino was first held in 1972, where Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (Áillohas) held the opening concert, and the music festival with Sámi Melody Grand Prix was established as part of this in 1990. The Jokkmokk festival is the most ancient festive event of Sápmi and it is also among the most studied of all Sámi festivals (see among others: Müller & Pettersson (2004). Its curious history shows how Sámi and colonial histories are deeply intertwined: the festival originally was an occasion for Swedish authorities to exact taxes from the Sámi who, at the beginning of February gathered there on their reindeer-tending routes. That time of the year was hence characterized as a time for gathering long before the Swedish king established the Jokkmokk market in 1603. From that year though, the market has been developed into a permanent meeting poi and, since the second half of the 20th century, into a festival (Abram 2016).

An event that shares many features with the festivals outlined above is the gathering held annually at Åangkeren. This event takes place in a region of Sweden known as northern Jämtland, there is no record of when the first gatherings in Ankarede occurred but councils lasting a few days each year have a long history in the region. As it is often the case with historical Sámi festivals, the location is not a Sámi settlement per se but was originally a strategic place chosen as a gathering point because of its central position in relation to the various local historical Sámi tax groups. Ankarede is positioned along the reindeer routes from the mountains on Swedish side of Sápmi to the coast on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. At the convergence of these routes, a chapel was built in 1785. Reindeer tenders Sámi gathered at this chapel during spring and autumn when passing through Ankarede during their seasonal migrations and for church holidays. With the passing of the years, the gathering established itself as a focal point in the collective life of south Sámi communities⁴⁷⁷.

⁴⁷⁷ During special liturgical events, religious ceremonies were held by both the priest and other authorities. For South Sámi communities, Ankarede acquired a position of prominence as, during the 1919 spring fair, the Frostviken Sámi Association was established, with the aim of improving living conditions and education for South Sámi people, a proposition that was included in the association's own statute. Concurrently, the association erected a building that functioned as a headquarters, inaugurating it in the summer of 1927. Interestingly, this building was the first in the area that was constructed following Scandinavian patterns the building still exists and stands as a symbol of the local history. This building was a meeting place not only for Sámi peoples who passed by but it was also a contact zone where Sámi people and member of the Swedish hegemonic society – doctors, police and the Lapp bailiff – met and discussed. Until SSR (the Swedish Sámi National Federation) was founded in Jokkmokk in the 1950s The association became an arena for collective decision-making and proposed initiatives at the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) level, functioning, through its spokesperson, as a representative for Sámi to Swedish authorities. Since the 1950s, Frostviken Sámi association has shifted the focus of its initiatives toward the protection of local Sámi language, and traditions, with the aim of preserving them for future generations (<http://ankarede.com/om-oss/>).

According to Nilhas, an interlocutor from Jokkmokk I first met in Guovdageaidnu during the 2019 Easter festival, «Åanghkeren is a very special place. That's kind of a festival, kind of not the best one. But it's special. That's a really interesting, interesting meeting place because it's not organized. It's just stood up of thin air. The church has a meeting there. It's like... you should go to church there, but none does. well some people do these days, but not too many. And then you dance stay there. And it's really intimate. you could go to anywhere and then you could just introduce yourself and just talk» (Nilhas, Interview 20/4/19 Guovdageaidnu)

From the analysis outlined above, it is possible to draw some distinctions among festivals bearing though in mind that, in cases such as the ones here highlighted, borders are often blurred and the polyvocality of Sámi festivals makes categorizations difficult. Hence, the following typologies I elaborated should be regarded not as a strict form of classification but, rather, as a tool helpful in highlighting the most salient characteristics of Sámi festivals when they were first organized. Today features that are the characterizing elements of one kind of festival may – and often do – appear also in other types of festivals due to the fluid nature of such events. In some cases, festivals had multiple purposes since their very origins, as in the case of Jåhkâmåhkke.

On a broad level, Sámi festivals can be divided into

- festivals which originated from market fair festivals, where the main event was once represented by the Market (for instance Vuonnamárkanat and also, to an extent Jåhkâmåhkke market);
- festival which originated from gatherings occurring during religious holiday (for instance, the Easter festivals)
- Festivals which originated in the late 20th century early 21st with the purpose of offering visibility and prestige to a specific Sámi groups (for instance, Riddu Ridđu)

The complexity of the festival-scape of Sápmi and the arbitrariness of categorizations is epitomized by Vuonnamárkanat, originally developed as a market fair, the festival has been “rediscovered” just a few decades ago and has undergone a process of risemantization that made it a cultural event only partially focusing on the market that, yet, still holds a central position in the festival's identity.

6.3.3 Sámi festivals on the Norwegian side of Sápmi

The importance of Sámi festivals is acknowledged by Sámi institutions such as the Sámediggi, the Norwegian Sámi parliament, which emphasizes festivals' role as important actors and partners in the development of Sámi art and cultural life. According to the Sámi parliament 2016 budget, Sámi

festivals are regarded as strong Sámi institutions that have become vital in managing, developing and disseminating Sámi culture, arts and historical heritage. They also provide safe spaces to express, practice and develop skills in Sámi languages and Sámi music – *luohiti/joik* (Sámi chants) as well as other musical expressions -. In the case of Sámi languages, it is of the uttermost importance to have safe spaces like festivals where people can listen to and speak Sámi languages in informal contexts, an opportunity that many Sámi – especially young people and children who live in big towns or away from the Sámi core area – seldom have in their daily lives. Festivals are also acknowledged for their safeguarding role, protecting Sámi cultures and cultural heritage while simultaneously fostering them. Hence, these institutions are recognized as crucial to the development of Sámi society representing pillars of Sámi social life. Sámi festivals, as public celebrations of Sámi identity, have acquired a further dimension: they make Sámi cultures visible, bringing them back into the public sphere from where they had long been excluded (see Olsen 2007). Sámi festivals are diverse and each of them unique. They present and disseminate knowledge about various aspects of contemporary expressions of Sámi cultures and identities, and for this reason they are supported by Sámi institutions like the Sámediggi (the Norwegian Sámi parliament) as well as the local counties and the *kommune* (municipality) where the festival is held (Skogvang 2016). As of 2020, the Norwegian Sámediggi offers grants to the following Sámi festivals: Riddu Riđđu Festivála; Sámisk páskefestival i Kautokeino; Márkomeannu; Kárášjoga festiválat / Festivaler Karasjok; Raasten Rastah; Julevsáme vahkko – Doajmmasiebrre Julevsábme (DSJ); Sámisk uke i Tromsø – Stiftelsen Midnight Sun Marathon; Sámisk musikkfestuke i Alta – Audioland AS; Beaskán Luossarock; Tjaktjen Tjåanghko – Saemien Sijte (Samediggi 2020)

The subsidy granted to the festivals shall be employed to:

- ensure stable operation of the Sámi festivals
- ensure opportunities for development and renewal
- make Sámi festivals attractive and encourage public participation
- ensure Sámi festivals maintain their role in providing visibility to Sámi art, culture and language while also disseminating it
- foster the position of Sámi festivals as Sámi meeting places
- nurture their position as cultural arenas for children and young people

Given their importance in the Sámi and Fennoscandinavian cultural landscape, and the attention many disciplines have paid to festivals as social phenomena, the growing academic interest in Sámi festivals comes as no surprise. These events have been studied from different angles, through different lenses and through a variety of methods as seen before.

Building on the existing literature about Sámi festivals, I shall address the latter through the lens of cultural anthropology, bearing in mind that, by resorting to participatory observation, my primary tool during fieldwork at festival sites was my own body. Never as during such events have I felt so strongly the effort and passion my interlocutors put into bringing the festivals to life. By witnessing and taking part in performances, practices, story-telling and joik sessions, as well as eating along with fellow volunteers and drinking around the fire with friends both old and new – in other words by letting the atmosphere pervade my body and mind – I was able to grasp how festivals are, after all, an embodied experience. Furthermore, being in the company of cultural insiders gave me the priceless opportunity of appreciating at least part of the rich symbolic and political meanings associated with specific signs and practices.

6.3.4 Voices from the “margins”

As mentioned above, local Sámi festivals may facilitate the capacity of minority groups such as Sea- and Márka-Sámi to celebrate their specific Sámi culture as part of a broader community, in safety. (Pedersen & Viken 2009), this is in line with Frost’s argument concerning the role of festivals in «affirming identity, especially of marginal populations» (2015:571). Hence, in this section, I address the features of those festivals that, from the “margins” of Sámi society, have enabled the voices of relatively small and minoritized sections of Sámi society to be heard in all of Sápmi. Festivals like Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu are not just Sámi festivals but Sea- and Márka-Sámi festivals. They articulate specific, local cultural identities that have long been silenced not only in colonial but also within Sámi milieux. The communities they celebrate were the marginals among the marginals. Nevertheless, given the difficult condition endured by those communities that were stigmatized by both Sámi communities (for not being Sámi enough, i.e. being small-scale farmers and fishers instead of reindeer-tenders) and Norwegian society (for not being Norwegian), in the early years, festivals such as Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu were opposed by sections of the respective communities, unwilling to see local Sámi cultural identity expressed openly. They did not want their community to be recognized as Sámi or, rather, they did not want to remind their Norwegian neighbours that, after all, they indeed were Sámi. Some members of the community also feared that the events would contaminate “local traditions” and while simultaneously encouraging their commodification (Leonenko 2008; Sigbjørn Skåden, private conversation 14/2/19). For this reason,

in many contexts relatively recent Sámi festivals have organized only after numerous debates, concessions – on both sides – and negotiations among various social actors. It is only thanks to the effort of many cultural activists that such events could grow flourish becoming landmarks in the Sámi cultural landscape.

Sámi festivals are simultaneously communal and individual experiences and it is neither possible nor advisable to generalize about Sámi festivals' perceived meaning for Sámi society as a whole as well as for its members. For this reason, the account of festivals where I carried out fieldwork that I shall provide in the following pages is biased and built upon my own experience and, most importantly, upon the memories and impressions of my interlocutors, many of whom have been – and still are – deeply involved in the organization of the festival or are regular festival-goers.

During the festivals I carried out participatory observation and, in six out of the eight Sámi festivals and events I attended, I worked as a volunteer. In doing so, not only did I get a free pass for the festival but I also had access to sections of the festival areas that were restricted to the public. Similarly, I was able to view the festival from a perspective different from that of the audience, having the opportunity to grasp how the whole festival structure works behind the spotlights. I tried to avoid interviewing my interlocutors during the festival weeks since I knew I would be able to talk to the majority of them later outside the festival context since many of my them either worked in Tromsø – where I lived at the time – or visited the city relatively often. In those cases where I was not sure I would be able to meet a prospective interlocutor at a later time, I carried out the interview on the festival site, at a time convenient for both parties which would not disrupt my interlocutor's experience of the festival. To me, this was an important aspect of my research: studying festivals and their meanings for the people involved, I did not feel comfortable in preventing my interlocutors from enjoying those very features I was investigating through their own eyes. Festivals are indeed personal, subjective and embodied happenings that one lives in one's own personal way, often despite, and regardless of, the organizers' intentions, even though the feelings and interest of organizers and participants often resonate, at least as far as my experience in Sápmi has thought me.

To understand a Sámi festival, we shall not limit our analysis to what unravels during the 4-5 days of emotions and vibes. It is important to let the gaze wander and seep through the cracks of the visible – what is intended to be seen by the public – to scratch the surface and go behind what is evident. In this way, one has the opportunity of grasping the multiple layers of meaning of the plethora of symbols scattered around the festival areas, emerging as hints of much wider and more complicated processes. And from the vantage point of the backstage, understood as both a physical and

metaphorical space comprising the joint efforts of all those involved in the realization of the festival, one can observe both the festival as intended by the organizers and how the public reacts and engages in it, like peeking from behind a theatre curtain.

When it comes to Sámi festivals, what we can experience and appreciate we owe to those who paved the way. In 2018, the festivals rested on complex administrative pillars: a highly structured organization where everybody – the CEO, the Festival Leader, the board members, the staff members, the employees, the artists, the guests, the volunteers, and even the public – have clearly defined roles. It was not always like this. The structure came with the professionalization of Sámi festivals which, in the early days, were more like semi-informal gatherings for the local youth. Nevertheless, since their very inception, all these gatherings were marked by a profound Sámi profile. As of today, the age of board members and staff ranges between the late teens and the early 30s. Similarly, when these festivals first developed, the first organizers belonged to that age-span. This suggests that these are youth events. Nevertheless, things are more complicated than they might appear at first. Today festival-goers belong to every age-groups and this has become an important feature addressed by the organizers by designing events for each age-group. A further element that should be accounted for is the pivotal role played by older generations when the festival first began. *Riddu Ridđu* began in the early 1990 while *Márkomeannu* was initiated in 1999. Today we look at these festivals as well-established annual events. As social moments where Sámi people gather from all of Sápmi and beyond, festivals have become temporal landmarks that mark the time across the year in the whole of Sápmi (as a transnational entity), with events taking place all over the year and in all corners of Sápmi. When they first took place, nobody could foresee the future of these festivals so it would be erroneous to apply a teleological perspective when addressing them. For sure, the founders hoped these festivals would prosper, but they could not fully control developments that led to the festivals as we know them today.

The generational aspect is significant. The first organizers were in their teens and early twenties when they initiated the festivals. Today, they are in their late thirties, in their forties and early fifties. Many of them are no longer actively part of the festivals but are still involved in different stages of the production. Most of them have chosen cultural work – in all of its multifaceted aspects – as a career path. Younger generations look up to them as pioneers⁴⁷⁸ and role models because the passion and dedication they demonstrated against the odds. In the same way as today's younger generations have a source of inspiration in the festival founders, so did the festival founders find a role model in

⁴⁷⁸ Those who, between 30 and 20 years ago, started festivals such as *Márkomeannu* or *Riddu Ridđu* are today seen as symbolic “parents” of these festival. See for instance: <https://www.sagat.no/stolte-foreldre-ser-tilbake/19.17932>

their own parents' generation. Without the help and support of their parents, these youngsters would have not been able to carry out a difficult, albeit fulfilling, task such as establishing a festival which, in time, was to become iconic. This is true for both *Riddu Riđđu* and, almost a decade later, *Márkomeannu*. In the case of *Márkomeannu*, the parents had paved the way for their children to be Sámi in broad day light despite the negative attitude of both Sámi and non-Sámi in the region. The complicated history of the handling of the Márka-Sámi identity – its active privatization as well as its public celebration – is explicatory of the at time tense relations among members of the local Márka-Sámi community, not all of whom were happy about the establishment of Sámi institutions in the area. Since the 1960s, then young Márka-Sámi activists – what I, following Hirvonen's analysis of the generational aspect in contemporary Sámi women authors (2008) call the parents' generation – worked strenuously to make Sámi identity publicly acknowledged. The members of this generation were trailblazers and space makers who worked strenuously to propagate a positive image of Sámi identities: through the establishment of cultural institutions, by bringing Sámi issues to the attention of major political players, by contributing in establishing indigenous Sámi administrative organs. Their work paid off, resulting in the establishment of a Sámi kindergarten (*Sáráhká Sámemánák*), the activation of Sámi as a second language in the local schools, the establishing of a Márka-Sámi Museum, the opening of a Sámi cultural centre (*Várdobáiki*). *Márkomeannu* as a festival shall be examined in relation to other local institutions. *Márkomeannu* as a cultural achievement shall be addressed as the result of both the then youngsters need for a Sámi space for the local youth and the parents' courage to nurture in their children the desire for a Sámi arena to exist. For their part, the younger generations laboured to transform their ideas – fostered by the positive cultural environment nourished by their elders – into events celebrating the multifaceted aspects of their cultures. It is essential, therefore, to examine Sámi festivals as products of their environment – although taking into account individual initiatives – rather than separate and examine them in isolation.

The core of these events, their essence, is buried deep underneath their organizers' skins; it is in the soil they walk upon, in the air they breathe and in the water they drink as well as in the blood that pumps through their veins. Strong and tangible as is, it is nevertheless vulnerable. It is *ceavli*, pride – pride in being who there are, in being Sámi. As in a play of mirrors, what these activists and festival-goers make visible today in the festival – as well as and in their daily lives – was once the very thing that many Sámi had to conceal or endure: being Sámi.

What some wanted to suppress, other concealed – enduring shame in silence and only partly sharing it with their descendants – and yet others, despite the vulnerability this choice exposed them to, openly expressed what others wished to hide, thereby saving and preserving their culture in a precarious

balance. Given the difficult conditions imposed upon the Sámi by the hegemonic Nation States, this was more difficult in some areas than others depending on the texture of local society.

6.4 Riddu Riđđu

As we have seen, the festival landscape of Sápmi is characterized by numerous events that take place across the year. Among the various Sámi festivals taking place in Troms County, Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu are probably the best known. Both these festivals are important musical and cultural events. Today, the former hosts Sámi as well as indigenous artists from all over the world. The latter revolves mainly around Sámi culture. Another important gathering in the region is the shamanic festival Isogaisa. Held in Loabák/Lavangen, this festival celebrates contemporary expressions of Sámi non-Christian practices (Fonneland, 2017). As other Sámi festivals, both Isogaisa and Riddu Riđđu have an international outreach, attracting visitors from all over Sápmi, Europe and beyond. Foreign performers and visitors have attended the Festivals in Olmmáivággi/Mann dalen and Loabák/Lavangen for many years. Márkomeannu, on the other hand, tends to attract visitors mainly from Sápmi and the majority of them from its Norwegian side.

In order to understand the specificity of Sámi festivals, it is essential to put Sámi festivals into dialogue with one another. In particular, I regard an analysis of both Isogaisa and Riddu Riđđu as necessary to provide a wider context for Márkomeannu.

6.4.1 A festival in the spotlight

I would like to begin with an analysis of Riddu Riđđu festival. This festival has received a lot of academic attention given its unique position in the Sámi cultural landscape.

This festival was founded in the early 1990s in Olmmáivággi/Mann dalen in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord by a group of young local activists belonging to the Sámi *Gáivuona Samenuorat* youth association. At the beginning, it was just an informal gathering among friends, but it soon grew into a major event (Pedersen et al. 2009) that, with time passing, became iconic. Riddu Riđđu represents the first example of a Sámi cultural festival focused on Sea-Sámi culture through music, arts and debates. Furthermore, it was initiated by the members of a local Sámi youth association (*Gáivuona Samenuorat*) with the specific intent to combat the strong stigmatization and profound contempt that the community had towards the Sámi identity, although the majority of the local population had a Sámi background. The aim of its founders was to raise awareness about the local Sea-Sámi culture by offering an arena where Sámi languages, costumes and practices could find a place and a space

for expression. The festival was immediately a success, despite strong opposition from some members of the Gáivuotna-Kåfjord community who did not appreciate the display of Sámi identity or the fact that such a festival was inevitably to signal the area as a Sámi. The significance of this festival can be appreciated only in light of the ethno-political tension that characterized the area, which was deeply affected by the Norwegianization process and experienced complete destruction during the last months of War in 1944. As a consequence, many members of the local community refused to acknowledge or accept their Sámi background. Nevertheless, a group of young activists decided to bring back to the public dimension their ethnic identity and they organized the first edition of what would have later been known as Riddu Riđđu. In the years to come, this small gathering became one of the most important festivals of Norway, contributing in raising awareness concerning coastal Sámi communities (Pedersen & Viken, 2009).

Even if Initially, the first gathering did not have a name, soon the organizers decided to call it *Jagi vai beavvi* (the years and the days) but then changed the name in the evocative « Riddu Riđđu, which translates as “storm at the coast” (N *storm på kysten*) » (see <https://nordligefolk.no/sjosamene/kunstmusikk-litteratur/riddu-riddu/>). This name was an inner reference to both the role of the festival as a destabilizer of the local situation – shaking the walls of stigma that surrounded Sámi identity – and of the Sea-Sámi identity of the village, a detail epitomized by the reference to the coast. Furthermore, the festival takes place just a few hundred metres inland from the coast of the fjord. As of 2021, at least two books about this festival have been published and distributed in bookshops: in 2008 Lene Hansen wrote “Storm på kysten” – a storm by the coast – and in 2020 Susanne Hætta edited the volume “Riddu Riđđu 30 jagi/år/years”. In this book, it is examined how this festival developed from a “coastal Sámi gathering to international Indigenous festival”, as the heading reads. The book is written in North Sámi, Norwegian and English, with texts in these three languages appearing on the same page.

This festival has attracted interest both in Scandinavia and abroad and, many students from the “nearby” city of Tromsø (some two hours away from Gáivuotna/Kåfjord) did their fieldwork for their MA thesis at Riddu Riđđu (Among the thesis devoted to Riddu Riđđu, see: Lervoll 2007, Leonenko 2008; Hansen 2015; Bateman 2016). As Marit Myrvoll – a Sámi scholar and cultural worker – once told me, she remembered she could spot anthropology students all over Riddu Riđđu in the early 2000s. In her words, they were « [...] those who had their nose stuck on their book-notes, wandering around observing and asking questions to everybody without enjoying the festival» (private conversation Tromsø, March 2019). Not only students but also more senior researchers have worked on this festival from different perspectives. In particular, the works of Pedersen, Viken, and Nyseth

offers important insights into how Riddu Riđđu Festival has been a means of ethnic negotiation for the community of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, framing the local cultural developments into a wider discourse about what the authors refer to as the «[...] globalized reinvention of indigeneity» (2009:183). Another important study that sheds some light onto the role this festival had on fostering a positive attitude towards Sámi heritage in the local community is Henriksen's 2017 article: 'A Gathering Storm: As stigma dissipates around the Sámi, an annual festival is helping young Norwegians rediscover their roots'. True to its programmatic title, the article examines the difficult context of cultural stigmatization and devaluation into which Riddu Riđđu developed and against which it fought in order to bring into light the Sámi heritage of the community.

6.4.2 Riddu Riđđu, before “the days and the years”⁴⁷⁹

In light of the relatively wide literature on Riddu Riđđu, I decided to analyze and contextualize this festival through the experience of two women – mother and daughter – who are from Gáivuotna/Kåfjord and are/feel connected with the festival. Torun, the mother, has been involved since the festival was first celebrated and Sara, the daughter, since she herself was born. What I investigated in the following sections is the ways cultural activists who contributed to the creation of festivals describe their work and the frameworks through which they interpret their own efforts.

As mentioned, Riddu Riđđu was born out of the young local Sámi members of *Gáivuona Samenuorat's* decision to celebrate the local Sea-Sámi culture. A desire they developed after reflecting upon their roots, the history of their village and of their Sea-Sámi culture as distinct from that of the Norwegian and the Sámi from the inland. The following interview extract, where Torun Olsen⁴⁸⁰ explains her memories about how Riddu came into being, illustrates the process of acquisition of awareness that ultimately led to the Festival.

Torun: I live half here [in Tromsø] and half there [In Kåfjord] but I have a big family there in Kåfjord also, and friends. and of course Riddu Riđđu and I do not know, to be a Sámi, I don't know if it easier [to be a Sámi] there in Kåfjord or here in Tromsø, but of course it's... well, I grown up there. And here I learned about my past. Yeah, I mean identity, you know? When we went to primary school [in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord], we didn't know that we were Sámi people, we didn't know that our community was Sámi at all. So, so that was with my friends in Riddu Riđđu in that time started to investigate. In a way we became students in terms of time and we learnt

⁴⁷⁹ This was the original name of the festival before, in 1995, the organizers opted for the more concise and easier to pronounce Riddu Riđđu.

⁴⁸⁰ Torun is a woman in her late 40s and she was among the original group of youngsters who started the festival and she currently works at the “Senter for nordlige folk” (the centre of the the Northern people) where she, among other positions, is the *webredaktør* (web editor). The interview took place on 25/2/2020.

a lot about our own community. We didn't learn before... we learned from school, from university and from other Sámi people we met around.

Erika: And... When did you Study in Tromsø

Torun: First time, let me see... 1990 1989? Yes.

E: And you came here [to Tromsø] to study at university?

T: Yes. I did study history, sociology, and pedagogy.

E: And you learnt about Sámi cultures more here in Tromsø than in Kåfjord?

T: Mostly, but actually, we were a group of people who, in a way started to, to investigate. Investigate is a little strange word. But... but yeah, we did to research about our past. Because we started to hear that are you from Kåfjord, you are Sámi... But for people in Manndalen, I think they were they did know that they knew about their background. And you can say that. They were not proud of it. They were ashamed. So then we had, we started to have we had a group of people and some from Manndalen, some from Ordedalen. Some from Birtavarre. And we stayed here in Tromsø and we also had, we started this organization, this youth organization in in Kåfjord. In Manndalen, I know if you heard about it, is *Gáivuona Samenuorat*. You heard about it. Yeah. They started Riddu. We were very active, also in Tromsø we started to have this kind of... We used to laugh about it sometimes that it's here in Tromsø [that] we started Riddu Riddu actually because we had the collective. we lived in big house together with many people and we started to have some concerts. Yeah. We played football against people from the city. And so in a way we started here, but of course it was. But of course then this *Gáivuona Samenuorat* that started it was more organized so to say. It was in I think it was 1990 or 1989 or '90, something like that. The Riddu Riddu started first time it was 1991. it was just a little little party in the woods. With barbecuing... [laughs]

I found the conversation with Torun illuminating as she explained that she and her friend from her village who also attended university in Tromsø started to develop an awareness of their Sámi background only once they were removed from their own context of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord – where everything pertaining to Sámi heritage had been erased and Sámi voices had been silenced – and they entered into contact with people who recognized them as Sámi, instilling in them a curiosity that led them towards a long journey of re-appropriation of their own heritage. Small party houses, discussions and reflections on their own past and the contact with other young Sámi students from other regions lead to the development of a sense of awareness about their own heritage as well as a need to learn more about it. This aspect is extremely important since, in their own village, no mention

was ever made about the Sámi dimension of the area and children at school were completely oblivious to what had happened there just a generation prior to their own.

It was thanks to the enriching cultural and political stimula provided by the city where they studied and its vibrant cultural milieu (making them commuters between the city and their villages, with the consequences highlighted by Bravo 1984) that these young Sámi in their early twenties came into contact with new theories. For instance, as Ramnarine points out, Fanon's seminal work "the Wretched of the Earth" «[...] was widely circulated in the northern regions of the Nordic countries during the Sámi political movement of the mid-twentieth century, inspiring activists such as Nils-Aslak Valkeapää» (Ramnarine 2013:248). Works focusing on the criticism of colonization and on post-colonial theory informed young Sámi university students, showing them that their colonial experience was part of a wider, global history of oppression. At the same time, these theories offered them conceptual tools with which they were able, albeit perhaps not consciously, to ground their aspirations into a theoretical framework that put the critique to colonialism and its consequences at its core.

As Torun recounted, the idea of a festival slowly took shape in the minds of the members of *Gáivuona Samenuorat* during their time at university. In her own words, the idea to make a festival came to them while living all together in a student house like the many that dot Tromsø. For this reason, it can be inferred that this festival was inspired by a sense of awareness about the local ethnic heritage, by the decolonial theories these young students had come into contact with, and by a growing sense of pride conjugated with a rebellious attitude of young people who wanted to take back what colonization had taken away from their parents. Later in the interview, Torun stated that the festival at the beginning was «just a cultural day».

6.4.3 Pride and Prejudice: a wound in the heart of the community

Given the importance of the physical location of the festival, at the heart of Olmmáivággi/Mannalden – a village that was heavily influenced by enforced assimilation – I asked Torun if the festival have always taken place in the fields at the bottom of the Fjord, at the foot of the mountain. This question triggered a wider discourse about the reasons (subjective, individual, collective, political...) why the festival was first arranged

Yeah, it's the same place. Well not, not exactly where we first actually had it but in Mannalden, yes. But then, the first time, it was up in the woods, where we have barbecuing and have some music, and drummers. Actually they were from, from Africa! They also have played

in our house in drums. And for I think not for everybody Riddu Riddu was a question of Sámi identity or background or wanted to, show that we are Sámi people. I think for someone it was more to be in this youth organization, it was also to be more political, it was not a question about environment and things like that. And for some people it was to do something to, yeah, so, it was both political and for some people it was about identity and showing the background. And hope, hope. because in Kåfjord, as you already know, I guess it was very difficult in those times to say that you are Sámi people.

Torun here vividly describes what this new event meant for those who started it. The social nature of a festival and the feeling of being part of a group played a role for some but the political dimension was what was relevant for most of them: the need to act, the will to show their Sámi identity. A concept reminiscent of – and perhaps inspired by – the 1980s political slogan ČSV⁴⁸¹.



Image 94: ČSV poster close to Riddu Riddu, 2019 (Photo by the author).

⁴⁸¹ The concept ČSV was developed in Maze at the time of the organized Sámi resistance against the Alta river hydropower projects. As Sámi artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen explain, this concept was developed almost as a joke but soon became a powerful symbol whose power has never faded away. According to Mathisen, this term was first used in the written form in 1973 (<http://www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/141466668>). Since then, it has become a popular and important symbol of Sámi identity and it has been reproduced in works of art and on multiple material objects (t-shirts, tools, even on *Gáktis*) as well as on social media, often in the form of an hashtag. This term is at the same time a concept, an acronym and a slogan. There are multiple possible interpretations to this concept, according to the words one associates with these initials which are also three letters that recur often in Sámi languages.

Some of ČSV several meanings are: *Čájet Sámi Vuoiŋŋa* (show Sámi spirit) – which is the explanation I heard most often while discussing it with my interlocutors; *Čohkke Sámiid Vuitui* (organize the Sámi for victory), *Čállet Sámi Verddet* (write Sámi friends, a reference to encourage Sámi people to speak and write in their own Sámi language in a time when Sámi languages were still highly stigmatized). Stordhal defines it as «[...] concept and a symbol for those who wanted to challenge the position of the oppressed as well as a label for identifying those who actively joined and supported the Sámi political movement (1997, p145)». In any case, ČSV symbolized Sámi ethnic awareness and promoted pride for the Sámi languages and cultures. (Stephansen 2017; Eriksson 2017).

These discourses acquire meaning when examined in the light of the fragmented ethnic landscape of Torun's village, where the perception of Sámi identity was mostly negative even though the majority of the local population was of Sámi background. Such perception led to frictions between people who self-identified as either Sámi and non-Sámi and the fracture ran deep in the community, dividing its members, even members of the same family, as was the case in Torun's own family:

Some people knew there were some anyway, they didn't say like you did it. But our parents knew they were Sámi.

I must say my grandparents knew they were so me and my father, also my father, he is what you call "a child after second World War". Okay, so when he grew up, he didn't learn anything about his background because my grandparents didn't want to show their Sámi identity or background, as they were ashamed. But my, my uncle who was 10 years older than my dad, yeah, he he spoke Sámi language fluently so it kind of something happened after the Second World War. So my father never has talked about it at home and not my uncle either after the war because he also was ashamed. But he had learned the language but he, he didn't want to... I guess my father he knew but it was nothing to talk about. So in the beginning they were very skeptical, my parents also skeptical about this. Imagine Yeah,

Here the generational element is crucial in understanding language shift in the community. As it had already emerged in this thesis (see chapter 3), it was around the wartime that everything changed and the linguistic shift occurred. In Torun's own family, in her parents' generation, the date of birth determined whether children were socialized in Sámi or in Norwegian: her uncle grew up speaking Sámi as a child, her father – born just ten years later – was not raised in the language. Silence surrounding the language reflected the silence around the ethnic identity that language epitomized. Torun proceeded explaining her parents' ethnic background in light of the state-led assimilation process, pointing out that modernization and cultural assimilation were the driving forces behind her family's linguistic choices. Furthermore, she also offers an insight on why her own community «kept the language longer» than other nearby ones. In a pattern that is attested along the whole coast of Norway, proximity to the sea and to roads were determining factors when it comes to assimilation. A factor that Torun herself brought up when discussing her family's connection with the area:

E: Is your mom from the same cultural area?

T: Yeah, yeah. She's from but she has more Norwegian ancestors. But my father is Sámi from both sides his mother and father. My mother also has many Sámi people [in her ancestry] but not so. So close.

E: But was from the same cultural are?

T: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. From Kåfjord Yeah. So it was a lot of discussion in family and all around the society and you know in all the Ordedalen what worse to be some and then in Manndalen because Ordedalen more... you know... what is the translation? well, you know the word *fornorsking* [assimilation]? Yeah.

E: So it was stronger there?

T: Yeah. stronger and

E: what do you mean it was stronger. How could that happen?

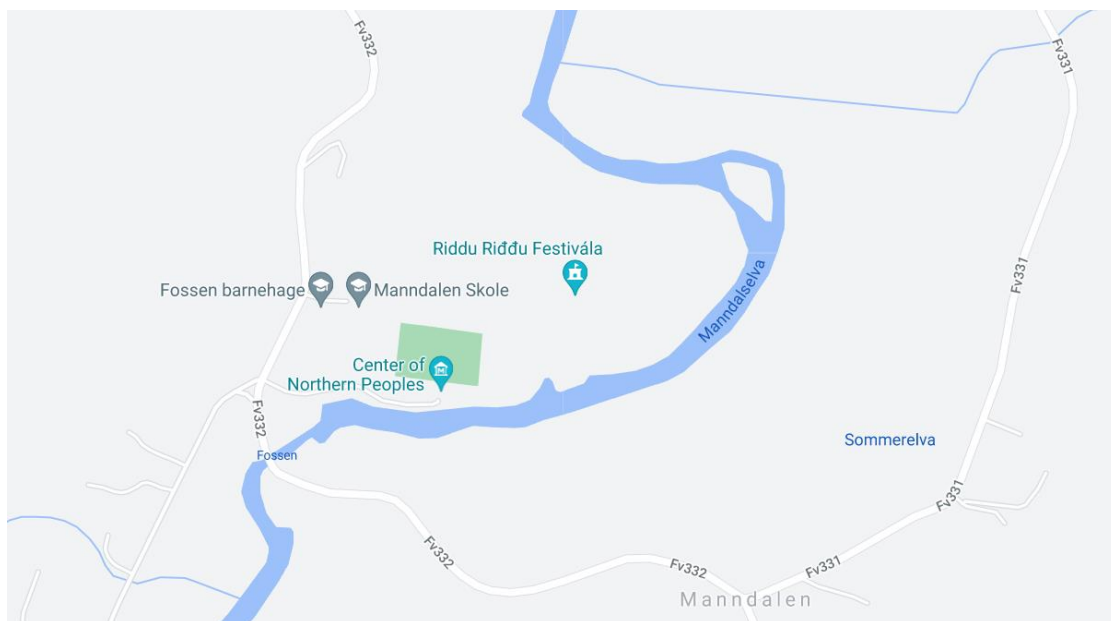
T: I think that Manndalen, Manndalen was quite isolated for so long. To know only got all these institutions schools. Yes. And Norwegian teachers and yeah, so it was the language. I think in Manndalen, they kept the language much longer because they were so isolated. There was no road you know, around there. they have to take a boat to go, go to Manndalen, for example. Not before 1972 So, so they kept their culture much longer. I think that's the reason. Mostly to come with the boat. Yeah.

The phenomenon Torun is addressing is of extreme relevance and had profound local ramifications – that ultimately provided the context for a festival like Riddu Riddu to flourish – but was by no means unique to the area.

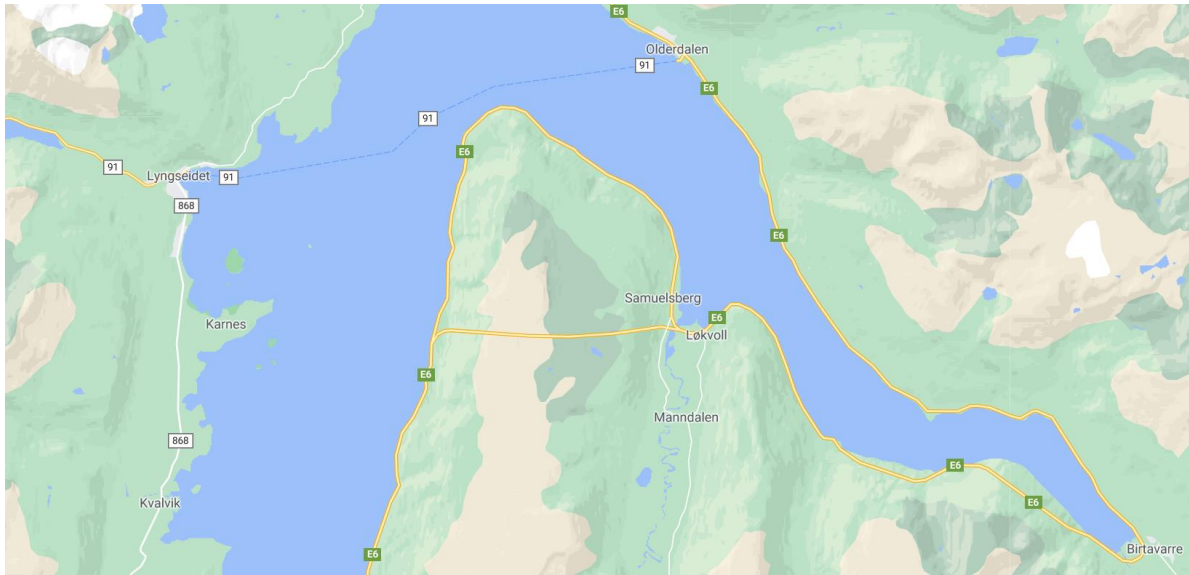
Isolation and “remoteness” in relation to the Norwegian infrastructures (roads and schools) meant that Sámi (but also Kven) languages and practices were preserved longer. Furthermore, the fact that a place like Ordedalen was a centre of Norwegian(ised) culture that heavily stigmatized the neighboring communities’ Sámi expression perfectly fits the assimilation model that sees communities closer to the open sea – in this case, the main fjord – exposed to hegemonic Norwegian culture earlier, stronger and more intensely, with the result that these communities self-identified as Norwegian, despite the mixed cultural heritage, sooner than those situated in inner locations that were less easily reached by external influences. The map n19 shows Gáivuotna/Kåfjord municipality’s political geography, helping to visualize the positions of the locations mentioned by Torun in relation to the wider local context. Ordedalen is situated at the convergence of Lyngenfjord and Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, a position that made the village a cultural crossroad between the Norwegians settled along the coast and the people (Sámi and Kven) living in the inner fjord areas. Olmmáivággi/Manndalen, located along a river a few hundred meters inland, emerges as relatively distant from the main fjord as well as from the small lateral fjord of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, and hence

from the stronger Norwegian presence. Yet Birtavarre, a settlement located where the river enters the bottom of the small latera fjord of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, was the most secluded of the settlements and for this reason it was protected (or excluded) from Norwegian influence longer than other local villages. Sooner or later though, norwegianization slowly penetrated the local culture and visual elements associated to Sámi identity became source of shame. The local Sea-Sámi *gákti* (Sámi costume) started to go out of use already in the late 19th century. During WWII, the German troops reached the area and burned down everything. Those in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord were the last settlements to be turned into ruins by the retreating troops. The devastation of the scorched earth tactic, and the concomitant the evacuation of the area led to the complete loss of local Sea-Sámi material Sámi culture and accelerated the cultural-linguistic shift.

By celebrating a festival revolving around the local, Sea-Sámi way of living, these young people showed the resilience of Sea Sámi culture that, despite the assimilation policies, managed to survive in Kåfjord/Gáivuotna



Map 18: Map of Olmmáivággi/Mann dalen, Site of Riddu Riđđu, (from google maps).

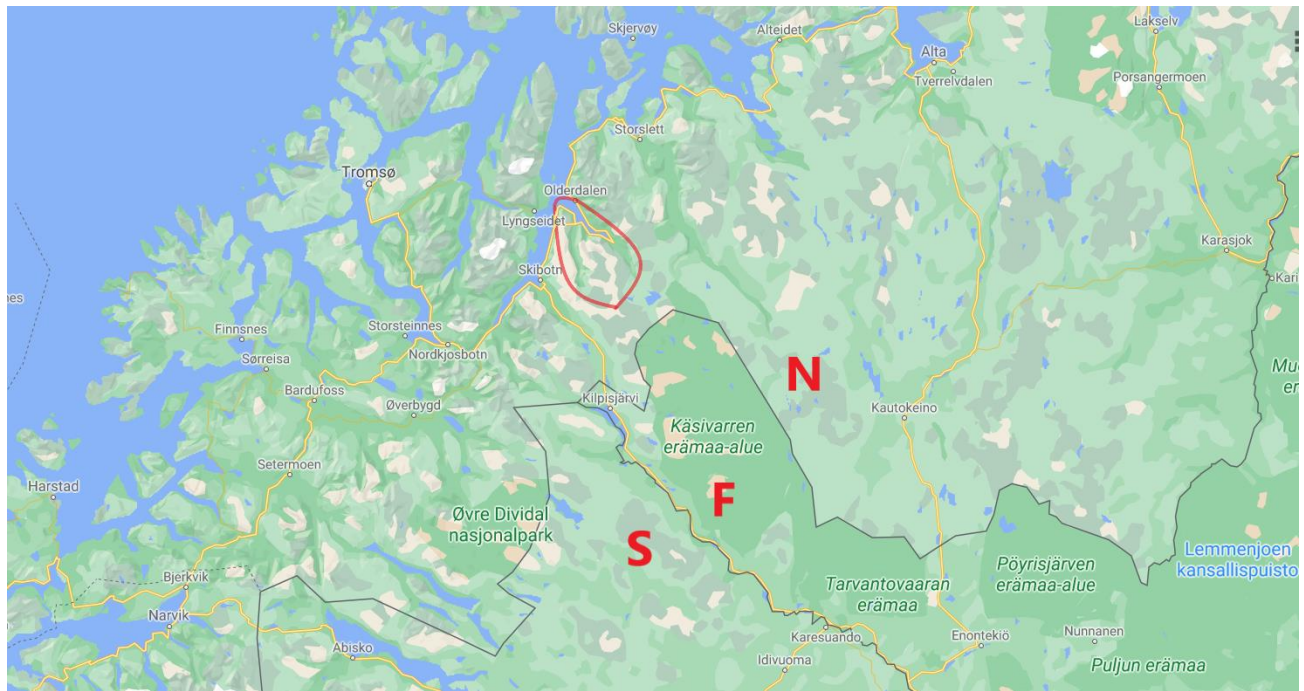


Map 19: map showing the position of Olmmáivággi/Mannдалen in relation to both Birtavarre and Ordedalen (from google maps)⁴⁸².



Map 20: map showing the position of Olmmáivággi/Mannдалen in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, (adapted from google maps).

⁴⁸²The map – adapted from the satellite google maps app – reports the names of the local main settlements. It is interesting to notice that Olderdalen – a village facing the main fjord of Lyngen, is a Norwegian name and the same toponym was used by Torun. On the other hand, the inner settlement of Birtavarre is reported solely with its Sámi Name and as such is known locally, as Torun’s own words show. Yet Olmmáivággi/Mannдалen is reported on the map with only the Norwegian toponym, to which I added the North Sámi one for clarity. Furthermore, of the 19 names (of settlements, rivers, fjord or valleys) reported in the map, only 3 are in Sámi and no bilingual denomination is present.



Map 21, map showing the position of Gáivuotna/Kåfjord in Northern Norway (adapted from google maps).

6.4.4 Becoming Indigenous

Later during the same interview, we touched upon a feature of Riddu Riđđu that has made it famous at the international level. The festival has been focusing more and more on its brandization as not only a Sámi but also as an indigenous festival. Such a decision was not casual and is having profound ramifications. Even though the festival still focuses on the local cultural heritage, working to preserve the local Sámi language and proposes itself as a venue where Sámi people can gather, Riddu Riđđu is also broadening its horizons and every year invites a delegation from an indigenous group – usually but not necessarily from the sub-Arctic – to join the festival and contribute to it with performances and seminars modelled upon their own culture.

This indigenous turn represented a major shift in the history of both the festival and of Sámi people, making visible not only to the Sámi but also the Fenno-Scandinavian the fact that the Sámi considered themselves as indigenous, a status they have enjoyed in Norway since this state ratified the ILO convention 169. By openly referring to Riddu Riđđu was a choice connected with pan-indigenous movements that saw Sámi spokesperson on the frontline (see Kemner 2013). Despite the context into which Riddu Riđđu developed offered clues on why it slowly acquired an indigenous profile, I was curious on why the festival leaders, long after Torun and her *Gáivuona Samenuorat* fellow members have left the leadership of the festival, entrusting it with younger people, had chosen to orientate the festival towards a focus on Sámi as an indigenous identity in a wider indigenous context. While

reflecting upon this, comparing the situation of Riddu Ridđu to that of Márkomeannu and of Inner Finnmark, I wondered whether the people of Olmmáivággi had decided to turn to other indigenous peoples in the attempt to enrich their own indigenous cultural identity, heavily eroded by assimilation – which took away much of the immaterial culture – and by destruction brought by war – which deprived the local community of most of its material culture -. Torun's insights were illuminating, providing me with new insights and with a clearer picture of the dynamics at play in Olmmáivággi.

Erika: why do you think they decided to frame it as indigenous?

Torun: I don't know. You can see that the sea Sámi culture was very different from Sámi people from Indre Finnmark. And they have more, they were more... they didn't doubt their identity in a way. But we have to in a way try to find and try to reconstruct our identity in a way, because we lost it. So I think for us it was to include... other indigenous people gave us some more confidence in a way because the history was so much the same.

By connecting their own experience with that of other peoples who suffered similar conditions, the leaders of Riddu Ridđu positioned themselves and their whole community within a wider decolonial framework, working to reconstruct their identity not by avoiding their trauma but by using it as the start of a new beginning where they could share the pain with others who had been through similar circumstances. As Torun herself explains, being Sámi in the area was an extremely difficult choice and commitment to the cause was necessary to survive:

E: How was it to be a Sámi in Manndalen before Riddu Ridđu?. Was it difficult? Was it possible to be a Sámi before Riddu Ridđu.

T: It was possible. Did you know we didn't have in this time, we didn't have any like symbols like today with Gákti and clothes and...

E: and when was it? was it in the 1980s?

T: in the end of the '80s and beginning of the '90s. And of course, it was very much... a lot of conflicts around this. So, as I told you, there was discussion, in the in families all around and maybe one member of family was Sámi and one was not. So it was it was very tense and just difficult, very difficult. And for example, in Ordedalen, you couldn't go to the pub without being you know, haunted or like you are, you come here, you are Sámi and you come here, and you joik, you know, and they called, they called us plastic Sámi people.

E: why?

T: Because they, they saw that, or they want to think I will say that we, we want it to be some because it was kind of modern than in the way it was not really. But it was, I don't know, for them we were not “real Sámi” people, because also because we lost our language, you know, and then and it in the middle of the 1995-95, Lyngen Kofta I think , you know, *gákti* was reconstructed, and I remember I used it in Ordendale on the 17th of May, in 1996, around there. And the first time I used it, I was so proud. But I was the only person on the 17th of May, you know, it's the National Day, who had this clothe. So in a way I did it in a protest. And it was very difficult. And some people said, “ah, look at her. So ugly, look at this ugly clothes”, [laughs and the, the tone becomes suddenly serious] it was difficult. So it took a time to get us to, to these clothes, to us that.

In this passage, Torun is referring to one of the most important cultural elements that have characterised the Gáivuotna/Kåfjord Sámi revitalization efforts. The Gaivuotna *gákti* (Sámi costume) – often called Lyngenkofta in Norwegian – went out of use in the middle of the 19th century. Furthermore, any material trace of it was completely erased during the German retreat and concurrent burning of the local villages. The local *gákti* (costume) was not completely lost though as images of it had been preserved in Ole Thomassen’s manuscript⁴⁸³, dating to 1898. Working on those old images, the Gáivuotna NSR worked to recreate the local *gákti* and presented the first reconstructed *gákti* during the 1995 Riddu Ridđu.

The fact that Torun decided to wear it for the first time on the 17th of May, furthermore in a Norwegian(-ised) settlement has a strong symbolic value since the 17th of may is the Norwegian national day, when people usually gather in the streets wearing the Bunad (the Norwegian costume) and celebrate Norwegian identity. By wearing the Gakti, and by wearing it on that specific occasion for the first time, Torun made a clear ethno-political statement declaring not only her Sámi identity but also her pride in being Sámi.

E: So in the first Riddu Ridđu, you were not wearing the *gákti*?

T: no...not in the first.

E: Because now it's like one of the main things you see at Riddu Ridđu is that everyone.

T Yeah. So you see a lot of thing happens this year. And for our children, you can say like, Sara, it's, it's it's not a question. It's she, she doesn't have to look for identity. For anything, she

⁴⁸³ Between 1896-98 Ole Thomassen (1844-1926) wrote a description of the situation of the coastal Sámi communities on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. He sent this report to the folklorist and linguist J.K. Qvigstad to whom he was both an interlocutor and a collaborator of Qvigstad.

is just natural. Everything is natural. So when I tell her about this, this time or this period, she can't believe it.

E: So you did that for your children?

T: yeah, you can say we did for the children, for our children.

Through these words, Torun let me peek into her young self's dreams but, at the same time, she also allowed me to peek at some of the most difficult memories of the youth, sharing with me the sufferance brought by cultural and linguistic assimilation. As it often happens, her own grandmother, once she was very old, came back to the language of her childhood. A language that very few could still understand. The impossibility to communicate and the sickening piercing silence between two people who could not talk even if they could speak because words failed them left deep scars in Torun, a trauma her own daughter embraced, leading her to learn Sámi and embark on a career in nursing. Torun's account of her grandmother's struggle in a world that could not understand her evokes many other stories I heard while in Sápmi about elderly people «who came back to the language» in their final years. Similarly, Torun's acknowledgment of her once passive understanding of Sámi thanks to her overhearing older people's conversation – what she calls “kitchen Sámi” – is in line with similar accounts I recorder while in the Márka.

Torun: with my grandmother, when she was when she got old, she got dementia. . Then she started to talk a lot. I always heard her talk Sámi language, also Finnish language, she could [speak] tree language. But then she started to ask “Why can you speak Same languages? Why?”

E: oh, can I write it?

T: Yes, yes, you can write it. Okay.

E: So she was your grandmother?

T: my grandmother.

E: When was she born?

T: She was born, let's see... in 1889.

E: and she could speak many languages?

T: Yeah. Like Finnish, Norwegian, and the Sámi language of course. but back then, a lot of people in our community could. So it was quite, as they say, a multicultural society. Not everybody did in this society, but she did. But I think of course, same language, she spoke that better.

E: And when she got dementia? was it like Alzheimer?

T: Not like that, but like a book and kind of get from age when you are old. Yeah. And then she started, she could not understand why we didn't speak same and just she preferred to speak Same herself.

E: And were there other people who were able to speak with her in Sámi

T: No... I guess her oldest son but I don't know if they did. I don't know if he wanted to, to do that. I guess they did. We just didn't hear.

E: But could you hear your grandmother speaking Sámi when you were young?

T: Yeah

E: So you knew without knowing?

T: Yeah, it was a kind of, we call it the kitchen language, you know? When they didn't want anyone to understand, or hear what they were talking about.

E: But then you did hear, and understand...

T: a little bit, but not so much. I guess my father understood more... But it was kind of exotic, but we didn't think about it. It was like it was natural. Older people talked like that. How strange. So it's things like that when we got older and started university and heard about and then we understood that we are we are living in biggest Sámi community actually in Norway.

Later the conversation switched towards other topics and we discussed how the festival was first received by the local population. Torun explained that it was not easy for the local Sámi youth association to organize a Sámi event in a region where Sámi identity was heavily stigmatize by people with a Sámi background.

T: you know, a small community like Kåfjord when there are so many people. are so angry with this Sámi culture at all, they didn't want to identify with it. And when you know when the community had this sign, Sin mi language people felt like they are pushing on them, "they are forcing us to become Sámi people" you know. So, so it was very difficult to be popular to live there at all. So of course Riddu was this place where we could relax and be without problems and meet other people w with the same background. And then, it became bigger and bigger. And, of course, I remember it was, I guess, in 1995, when we have Mari Boine, you know, she was the biggest, Sámi artist. And also, well-known internationally. So we didn't have so many sea-Sámi people, you know, artists from our own areas. So we, we also started to look for our identity in other Sámi areas like Finnmark. And you know, and so, I think when Marie Boine came, you know, she brought more status and with more Status, you known, more people come. and more status. It was a very special year that year. I think it was the first year when it was called Riddu Ridđu also. but of course, for other culture, like other indigenous people, it's also

important to come to a place where you can be yourself, and you can express your culture and respect and accept for your culture. (30/9/2019 Tromsø)

From this extract, 1995 emerges as a turning point in the history of Riddu Riđđu which not only acquired its new and final name but also established itself in the Sápmi cultural arena thanks to the presence of a renown and much appreciated artist such as Mari Boine. Furthermore, it was in that year that, for the first time after more than 100 years, the Sámi colours of the Gáivuotna Gákti (Sámi costume) shone again in the valley of Olmmáivággi.

A few months before meeting with Torun, I had an interview with her daughter, Sara (13/10/2019), a young woman in her early 20s. I met her through a common friend and she agreed on an interview. By then I was not aware her mother was among the founders of Riddu Riđđu and she initially only introduced herself as a Sea-Sámi. As already arranged via mail, I started the interview by asking her about her connections with the Sea-Sámi culture and whether she could speak Sámi

Sara: I had Sámi language education from the first to third grade. But then I quitted. I quitted because I felt like I was an outsider. Because I was like, getting picked up in my classroom. And I saw it easy to go into this class [with no Sámi language education] instead. So yeah, but then again, after high school, I started again, just a year. And then this year, I have been studying Sámi at University. Just to really learn it. So I have been, yeah, you see just focusing on the language. And the next year, I will go to nursing school.

E: Wow! nursing school.

S: Yeah. I am excited! Yeah.

E: So you took like, one gap year to study the language [Sámi language]?

S: Yeah, I really wanted to learn it, since I was in high school, to learn it. Then, that looks not so good. Like, I can communicate with others. So now I'm way better. But I still need to practice alone. Yeah, it's very hard.

E: But do want to use it also in your nursing career? you want to be a nurse with Sámi as your working language?

S: mhm mhm [nodding] Because here in North Norway, they have a big problem with that. We don't have enough Sámi speaking nurses and doctors. And therefore it's very important to me, that especially the younger generation, when they get older, they start to forget a little bit Norwegian, and they go back to Sámi. And a lot of older people have been mistreated, right? Because that the nurses didn't understand what was wrong with them. So they were given the wrong pain medication. M Yeah, so definitely I want to do something about it.

E: So you didn't grow up speaking the language?

S: No. not at all. Because my, my great grandmother, she spoke Sámi. Right before my grandfather came along. She stopped speaking because of you know... So we didn't learn it. And then my mom didn't learn it and now I do.

From this short extract from a much longer interview we can infer important elements that connect – but also differentiate – Sara’s experience from that of her mother: for Sara, language had become central in her quest for identity while also being an empowering tool that may allow her to help elderly Sámi when none was there to help her own great-grandmother. As her mother highlighted though, for Sara her Sámi identity is not something she has to fight for as it is already hers thanks to her own mothers’ efforts. Nevertheless, the pain that her own family had endured has not been forgotten, inspiring Sara in the choices she is making for her own future.

6.4.5 Rear chapel

I would like to conclude this section on Riddu Riđđu by addressing some of this festival’s feature through the words of a young woman who is simultaneously a cultural insider, since she is Sámi, and a cultural outside, since she is from Deatnu. I had met Marion, a law student in her mid-20s in Tromsø through a common Italian friend and, due to logistical problems, we had the interview during Riddu Riđđu, while none of us was working on her shift (I as a volunteer, her as a project manager).

Erika: why are these festivals important to you? What do they mean to you?

Marion: Well, they mean, it's a place to, to be Sámi without much... without much question. So it's a very comfortable setting. And of course, it's a time to party and connect with people, and reconnect. And well, it was a place to develop that, that this is Sámi culture for me, I always look at the fashions for the *gákti*, how they are developing, and what kind of new handicrafts are... are popping up and new vendors. And this [Rissu Riddu] is also a place to meet all the new Sámi people that I haven't met before. So it's also a place to develop the future.

E: How long have you been working for this festival?

M: I think I joined this staff ... mhm, I do not remember... a few years ago? No, not a few maybe like five years ago. So before, I wasn't the staff. I don't I think, I just worked for mockumentary two years, for just one year, being talking about the backstage area. And then I had a position... I was a project manager for one of their projects. And then I think I started working for it too maybe.

E: I've heard that a few years ago, the festival was not really appreciated by some of the Sámi communities. But I've also heard that things are starting to change now that it has been 20 years and more.

M: Yeah, the only thing I've heard, because I'm from the outside (non from Gáivuotna), so of course, I don't get all the, all the information, but what I've heard is that they're a very Christian [Læstadian] community⁴⁸⁴ not very fond of the festival. And that, I guess, makes sense. Because it's, there's a lot of partying [at the festival] and just, yeah, maybe a lot of things that a very pietistic or conservative Christian society doesn't like (Marion, interview 13/7/2019, Olmmáivággi).

These few words offer important insights into the difficult negotiations that have been carried out in Olmmáivággi since the early 1990s, when the first activists organized a festival against the wishes of conservative members of the communities who regarded music, dancing and parting as sinful and, similarly, considered anything associated with Sámi identity as source of shame. Riddu Riđđu combined these two elements, creating an event that disrupted the social order of the community, fostering, in the eyes of its pietistic detractors, sinful and lustful sentiments in the local youngsters. The strong rejection of the festival on the side of devout local members of the community further fragmented the local community, exacerbating an already complex situation and, once again, dividing families over a controversial topic: articulation of individual and collective identity



Map 22: map of Gáivuotna/Mann dalen showing the position of the Læstadian chapel in relation to Riddu Riđđu. (Adapted from google maps by the author),

⁴⁸⁴ there is a Læstadian chapel just a few hundred metres from the festival site.



Image 95a: Gáivuotna/Mannalden Læstadian chapel (photo by the author).



Image 95b: The Riddu Riđđu festival area seen from the Læstadian chapel (photo by the author).



Map 23: map of the Riddu Riđđu festival area. the circled building is the Læstadian chapel, the blue section is the entrance to the festival area. The grey area is the parking lot. The yellow area is the main festival area. The red area is the adult camping site where alcohol – but not drugs – was allowed. Close to the entrance to the festival area stands the Senter for nordlige folk/Centre of Northern Peoples, which hosts numerous events during the Riddu Riđđu (adapted from google maps).



Image 96: Duodji (Sámi handicrafts) workshop during Riddu Riđđu (photo by the author)

6.5 Márkomeannu

Márkomeannu is an annual festival taking place in July around the Márka-Sámi Gállogieddi open air museum, physically and symbolically at the centre of the Márka-Sámi area of Stuornjárga.

The history and ideological premises of this festival encapsulate and summarize the local articulations of indigenous Márka-Sámi identity that have led to the valorization of some aspects of the local Márka-Sámi history to the detriment of others

Márkomeannu festival was organized for the first time in 1999 in an area near the local airport. As Riddu Riđđu, Márkomeannu early editions were little more than small gatherings among members of the local Márka-Sámi youth, their families and their acquainted. Throughout the years, the festival the festival has undergone an evolution from local to pan-Sámi, although a pan-Sámi component has always existed *in nuce*. As of today, despite the growing importance of the pan-Sámi element, the festival is still a local event deeply grounded in its context. Today, it is a major event not only on the Norwegian side of Sápmi but in the whole of Sápmi. but, in just a few years, it developed into a major Sámi festival.

6.5.1 *Gulak gus buzza*⁴⁸⁵? The noise in the Márka

To understand what Márkomeannu is in the eyes of its own organizers, we shall look at how the festival is presented on its official webpage:

About Márkomeannu

Pride, identity and butterflies in the belly. Márkomeannu is a small but large festival that is important to Sápmi. The festival will promote Sámi culture in addition to art and culture from all over Sápmi. It is important to preserve and revitalize the Sámi culture with its traditional values. It is equally important to develop art and culture and to be innovative. At Márkomeannu you get the best Sámi art and cultural experiences - and it is said that the atmosphere at Márkomeannu is unique!

What is Márkomeannu?

Márkomeannu is a Sámi festival on Gállogieddi on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. The festival has a clear Sámi profile, and Márkomeannu presents Sámi artists, artists and cultural practitioners from all over Sápmi at the festival. The program is varied and you will find music,

⁴⁸⁵ Can you hear the buzz?

Mii gullo? What do you hear? is the question people ask each other when they meet (Helander)

visual arts, performing arts, literature, seminars, sports, walks, market, children's program and youth program at the festival.⁴⁸⁶ (www.Márkomeannu.no access on 13/5/20)

Unlike other Sámi festivals (such as Riddu Riđđu, Isogaisa, Jokkmokk winter market, Kauokeyno Sámi Easter Festival) though, so far Márkomeannu has received little attention from scholars and researchers. At the moment, the studies are limited to a master's thesis on food sold at the festival, to an article (De Vivo 2019) and to the research project OKTA. This project group is managed by Britt Kramvig (UiT Norway's Arctic University), Mathias Danbolt (University of Copenhagen), Hanna Guttorm (University of Helsinki) and Christina Hætta (Sámi Council), and focuses on art and its political significance in Sámi contexts (“When is Sámi art political?”)⁴⁸⁷. The fact that Márkomeannu was selected for this project shows how much this festival is becoming more and more important, known and recognized as a platform in which issues relevant to contemporary Sámi society are addressed. Given the lack of literature on this festival, the reflections I propose here are based on interviews and informal conversations with Sigbjørn and Emma Skåden – both members of the organization which founded the festival – as well as with other members of the Márka-Sámi community, with former and current festival leaders and CEO, and members of the staff but also on conversations with professors and researchers at UiT, with artists and festivals-goers.

Throughout the years, the festival has been characterized by strong political overtones even if the issues addressed during the various editions of festival changed according to the staff's interests as well as to the political debates concurrently taking place in Sápmi. In light of this consideration, it comes as no surprise that many of the people who worked at the Márkomeannu as festival leaders, directors or members of the staff were political activists and some (at least three, among them Runar Myrnes Balto, Beatrice Fløystad, and Anne Henriette Reinås Nilut) later in their life have embarked on political careers and were members of the Sámi party NSR (*Norske Sámiisk Riskforbunt*).

⁴⁸⁶ *Om Márkomeannu*

Stolthet, identitet og sommerfugler i magen. Márkomeannu er en liten, men stor festival som er viktig for Sápmi. Festivalen skal fremme Márka-Sámisk kultur i tillegg til kunst og kultur fra hele Sápmi. Det er viktig å bevare og revitalisere den Sámiiske kulturen med dens tradisjonelle verdier. Like viktig er det å utvikle kunsten og kulturen og å være nyskapende. På Márkomeannu får du de beste Sámiiske kunst- og kulturopplevelsene – og det sies at stemningen på Márkomeannu er unik!

Hva er Márkomeannu?

Márkomeannu er en Sámiisk festival på Gállogieddi på norsk side av Sápmi. Festivalen har en klar Sámiisk profil, og Márkomeannu presenterer Sámiiske artister, kunstnere og kulturutøvere fra hele Sápmi på festivalen. Programmet er variert og du finner både musikk, visuell kunst, scenekunst, litteratur, seminarer, idrett, vandringer, marked, barneprogram og ungdomsprogram på festivalen

⁴⁸⁷ The project was presented during Márkomeannu 2019. The presentation *Goas lea Sámi dáidda politihkalaš?/Når er Sámiisk kunst politisk?* was part of the festival program. The project is funded by the Norwegian Arts Council and the Danish Art Council. (Sámiráđđi report 2019)

As for Riddu Riđđu (see Leontenko 2008; Pedersen et al. 2009), albeit in a different way, the festival has changed meanings and functions over the years: from a small local summer party and a form of protest, it developed into an established cultural event relevant not only for the Márka but for Sápmi as a whole. The festival has evolved from a local to a pan-Sámi event. As we shall see, the shift was a gradual process that both shaped and reflected the growing importance of Márkomeannu in the cultural landscape of Sápmi. Through change, the festival managed to adjust itself to the changing context of Sápmi, becoming a reference point way beyond the cultural borders of the Márka. In doing so, it fulfilled the ultimate scope of the founders: «put the Márka on the map».

Even though the festival has evolved into a pan-Sámi event, the local dimension and the celebration of the Márka-Sámi culture – in its various forms and expressions – has always been a cornerstone of Márkomeannu. The festival is indeed deeply grounded in the local Márka-Sámi context which aims at celebrating. In this regard, the very name of the festival emerges as programmatic: Márkomeannu is a compound noun consisting of two North Sámi words: Márka, referred to the region, and *Meannu*. According to the official website of the festival, *Meannu* can be translated into Norwegian as *spetakkel*. *Spetakkel* means “noise”, “party” but also “riot”, “scene”. *Meannu* can also be translated as *adferd*, the Norwegian word for behavior. The name itself hence emerges as programmatic: “Party (but also Riot) in the Márka”.

During the first editions, the festival was able to survive thanks to the strong community ties within which its organizers positioned themselves. The families of the first organizers offered their support, helping their children in creating an event from scratch. Strong family-ties and friendship networks were the backbone upon which the young members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* could rely for advice and support and, incidentally, it was thanks to this support network that the dream of having Márkomeannu hold at Gállogieddi, as we shall see.

6.5.2 Márkomeannu’s history and ideological grounds

The importance and revolutionary character of Márkomeannu can be grasped only if the festival is examined through the lenses of the local history as outlined in the previous chapters (see chapter).

Márkomeannu did not emerge in a cultural vacuum. On the contrary, it was only thanks to the individual and collective, political and cultural experiences of its founders that Márkomeannu came into being. The idea to establish a local festival was developed by members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak*. this association counted among its members many people related to each other: siblings, and cousins started working on this project together, with the support of their parents. The close relationships of friendship and kinship that existed between the festivals’ founding members made

this experience unique for those who took part to the establishment of Márkomeannu. When Emma Skåden described to me the first editions of Márkomeannu, it was precisely this element of complicity and conviviality between people who knew each other and who shared deep family ties to emerge: «It seemed like a family thing, we all knew each other, we were, we are all related» (Emma Skåden, Interview, Tromsø).

The first organizers were, in the words of Emma Skåden (Márkomeannu opening 2019, fieldnotes) “children of activists”. Their parents were cultural activists and workers, teachers, and authors who worked to make Sámi identity acceptable and visible in the area. For instance, Asbjørg Skåden – mother to Sigbjørn and Emma – was among the women who started the Sámi kindergarten Sáráhká Samemanak in the late 1980, a kindergarten many members of the Márkomeannu staff attended as toddlers. When they became young adults, many of these children of activists followed their parents’ steps (the parents were active in the IJBSS)⁴⁸⁸. This is how *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorat*, the Sámi youth association of Stuornjárga, came into being. *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorat* was commonly regarded as the youth counterpart of the local branch of IBBS, the local Sámi political organization which later adhered to the “left wing” Sámi party NSR (*Norske Samer Riksforbund* – the Norwegian Sámi association). The connection between these two associations was deep and characterized by strong family ties since many of the members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* were the children of local cultural and political activists who belonged to IBBS. The first organizers are the children of local political and cultural activists and one of them, the first festival leader and founder of Márkomeannu Sigbjørn Skåden– along with his late cousin Torggrim Eriksen – was the first local Sámi boy to be able to study the Sámi language as a subject at the local school.

Just as the meticulous work of older generation of local Márka-Sámi cultural activists was a necessary premise for creating ethno-political awareness in the organizers, so important to the conception of Márkomeannu were external cultural stimuli. The emergence of Sámi youth arenas aimed at valorising Márka-Sámi cultural identity had its premises in numerous initiatives organized throughout the years by members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak*⁴⁸⁹ but it was influenced by the participation of members of SSN to cultural activities outside of the Márka. For instance, their involvement with Sámi associations in Tromsø – where they had moved to study at the local university – provided the members of SSN with cultural reference points which proved crucial in

⁴⁸⁸ IJBSS (*Inna Ja Birra Sámi Searvi*) Inna is the nearby Island of Innhoya, where Harstad is. It is the thirsd biggest Island of Norway.

⁴⁸⁹ Members of SSN had organized informal gatherings long before Márkomeannu was established. On some occasions, such gatherings were small scale events among friends and relatives while, on other occasions, they were designed to collect funding for charitable causes. Yet on other occasions, SSN members pretended to have organized a festival as a provocation, even inviting journalists from nearby towns (fieldnotes, May 2019).

developing Márkomeannu. As it was the case with the founding members of Riddu Riđđu, the founders of Márkomeannu too were cultural commuters (Bravo 1984) who went away but kept coming back, bringing new – urban – ideas in the rural context into they were born. An important cultural reference point for the Márka-Sámi youth in the 1990s has been Riddu Riđđu: the connections between these two Sámi festivals are manifold and are articulated on various levels. Some of these connections concern the context within which the festivals originated, while others are represented by a direct link between the two events. Regarding the first element, both festivals are situated in complex cultural contexts where the specific local Sámi cultural identity - Sea-Sámi in one case, Márka-Sámi in the other - was a source of friction in the community, at the same time opposed by some and embraced by others. Furthermore, although different from each other, both the Sea-Sámi culture and the Márka-Sámi culture were marginalized realities within Sápmi, since they did not fit with the normative image of the Sámi reindeer herders. At the same time, they were strongly opposed by the Norwegian component of the neighbouring communities who either did not recognize them as authentic Sámi or stigmatized them as Sámi. Hence, the origins of this festival and its ideological premises to an extent mirror those that led to the establishment of Riddu Riđđu. As for the second element, during one of our meetings Sigbjørn Skåden pointed out that «We [Márkomeannu] are related to Riddu Riđđu somehow».

The nature of this relation lies in the festival model Riddu Riđđu provided to younger generations of Sámi from marginalized – non-reindeer tending – communities: If Riddu Riđđu was managing to foster a sense of pride towards local Sea-Sámi heritage, the same was possible in the Márka too. The youth from the Márka saw in Riddu Riđđu mode of expressing and valorizing Sámi identity that they thought would prove successful in their own home villages. Encouraged by Riddu Riđđu's success, they worked towards the creation of a local, Márka-Sámi festival. The identity strategy embedded in the idea of establishing a festival (Bonato 2017) is self-evident in the case of Márkomeannu. As mentioned, the organizers' visit to the Riddu Riđđu festival was a key factor in the emergence of Márkomeannu and as such is acknowledged also on the Márkomeannu Festival Norwegian-language website, where, in the “about us” section, the history of the festival is summarized as follows:

The history of Márkomeannu is a piece of Márka Sámi adventure. In 1998, a group of Sámi young people came up with the idea of arranging a Sámi festival at Stuornjárga, which is located in the Márka-Sámi area and includes the municipalities of Evenes and Skånland. They had been to the Riddu Riđđu festival in Kåfjord and seen what significance it had for the Sámi culture, history and identity there. In the same way as Kåfjord, the Márka Sámi area was affected by an aggressive Norwegianisation policy from the Norwegian state from the early 18th century. The young people wanted to do something positive for the Sámi culture, history and identity at home

in the Márka-Sámi area. In 1999, the first Márkomeannu festival was held. Thus, the adventure was underway (Márkomeannu website access on 23/8/20)⁴⁹⁰.



*Image 97: Members of Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak attending Riddu Riđđu, late 1990s. Some of the youngsters depicted in the photo wear the Márka-Sámi gákti (Sámi garb) and luhkka (Sámi hooded cape). The banner in front of the SSN camp.: Stuornjárga Samenuorak, "forlat alt háp fare dere som her inn skrider", "abandon hope all ye who slip in here". The sentence is an open reference to Dante's *Inferno* (Photo courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).*

In an interview, Sigbjørn Skåden elaborated on this topic as follows:

Sigbjørn: we wanted to be a festival. I mean, we were aware of Riddu Riđđu. We've been there at Riddu Riđđu on sand, what they were and, and, but we were also impressed by the by the effect that had on the local community to make a festival (Sigbjørn Skåden, interview 14/2/2019 Tromsø)

An important element emerged during interviews and informal conversations with Sigbjørn and Emma Skåden is their determination – and that of their fellow members of SSN - to create a festival independent from the then Sea-Sámi festival Riddu Riđđu. Even if Riddu Riđđu had been a source of inspiration for the local youth, providing them with a concrete and successful example of how to valorize local identities, the members of SSN did not want to just replicate the Riddu Riđđu format

⁴⁹⁰ *Historien om Márkomeannu er et stykke Márka-Sámisk eventyr. I 1998 kom en gjeng Sámiske ungdommer på ideen om å arrangere en Sámisk festival på Stuornjárga, som ligger i Márka-Sámisk område og blant annet omfatter Evenes og Skånland kommuner. De hadde vært på festivalen Riddu Riđđu i Kåffjord og sett hvilken betydning den hadde for den Sámiske kulturen, historien og identiteten der. På samme måte som Kåffjord ble det Márka-Sámiske området rammet av en aggressiv fornorskningspolitikk fra den norske staten helt fra tidlig på 1700-tallet. Ungdommene ville gjøre noe positivt for den Sámiske kulturen, historien og identiteten hjemme i Márka-Sámisk område. I 1999 ble den første Márkomeannu-festivalen arrangert. Dermed var eventyret i gang.*

in the Márka. They wanted the festival to be grounded in the local culture. For this reason, despite spurring from a shared need to express local articulations of Sámi culture and even though both festivals were developed in complex ethno-cultural contexts that share many – but not all – historical features marked by state-led assimilation, Márkomeannu and Riddu Riđđu differ greatly from each other. Such difference is epitomized by the directions these festivals have taken: throughout the years, Riddu Riđđu has developed into an international indigenous festival while Márkomeannu has highlighted its function as a celebration of local identities. Márkomeannu's aim to promote the local Márka-Sámi culture has given visibility to the differences within Sámi cultural landscape while also making the Márka – a once marginalized cultural area at the hands of both Norwegians and other Sámi – a reference point in Sápmi.

Sigbjørn: [...] during our childhood, you know, Sámi, Sámi stuff had always been kind of, not necessarily but for, for people who were part of the Sámi education was kind of just extra work things you didn't get, like the like didn't get so much that felt like a profit, you know, from having Sámi education. So, a festival is a way to, to make local people feel gratified, for people did some Sámi education, who learn a bit language or know a bit the language, to make them feel as they get some profit, not just extra work or school or it's a fun thing. So that was part of it, but also that it was a possibility to show Sámi identity in a friendly way, with a friendly Sámi face... that's because in the 80s and early 90s, you know, it was like... Sámi politics became a more and more outspoken part of the local politics. But it was also very controversial still back in 99, when we started, you know, it was very controversial in many ways. So, so we wanted to, you know something fun, something smiling, not just angry people wanting place names on signs and stuff like that, which he of course did, but you know, it kind of do it in another way (Sigbjørn Skåden, Interview 14/2/2019 Tromsø).

In this extract, Sigbjørn Skåden mentions numerous relevant and interrelated issues that deserve further consideration. The first element he mentions is grounded in his own experience of Sámi identity as a young boy. As the oldest son of a Sámi activists and politician, Sámi identity for him as always been an integral part of his upbringing but he also acknowledges that, for him and for the other pupils in primary school who had Sámi as a subject at school, Sámi education meant extra workload compared to other children. A festival was an opportunity to show that all those hours spent working on Sámi language had a positive counterpart, that the effort they put in learning the language paid back. Therefore, one of the various purposes of the festival was to offer a moment of gratification and merriment based on the local Márka-Sámi culture to those who had learned Sámi language as a second language. A second but not less important reason that led to the establishment of Márkomeannu was the desire to offer locals and festivalgoers alike a positive image of Sámi identity.

This need must be contextualized within the specific local socio-cultural and political context in the last decades of the 20th century. The intent was to show the local population a light and nice side of the local Sámi culture, a goal aimed at dismantling some prejudices that instead pigeonholed the Sámi people as angry and troublemakers. The years preceding Márkomeannu were the years in which its founders grew up, witnessing the escalation of the local political debate. Within that debate, Sámi politics not only became increasingly visible but also controversial, especially in reference to the recognition of the area as a Sámi zone, expressed visually through the use of road signs with directions in two languages: Sámi and Norwegian. Sigbjørn's remark about «angry people wanting place names on signs» refers to this debate (addressed in this dissertation in chapter 5). The aim of the young members of the *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* was therefore to create a space that would give visibility to all that part of Sámi life characterized by playful and cheerful aspects. The idea that Sámi people in the area were almost inherently politically engaged and aggressive was deeply rooted in the Márka. This is evident also in Emma Skåden's brief description of the political climate in which she grew up during the 1980s and 1990s. She also points out though that Márkomeannu helped changing the perception cultural outsiders had of Sámi people. While acknowledging the political overtones of the festival, she also considers Márkomeannu as an initiator of change fostering positive attitudes towards Sámi identity in the Márka.

This was back in the 1980s. And also the '90s. You know, basically but still 80s mainly. So everybody then at that time, [...] sort of was like “Sámi equals politics” or saw “me as Sámi sort of equals fighting” or I don't know, it was really like that, and it was in many ways.

But when Márkomeannu started, yeah, it was politics for sure it was politics. Of course it was. But still now, you know, when a few years went by it, it sort of changed to be more like, you know, oh, Sámi isn't just... “doesn't have to mean that it's politics” or, or, you know,” fighting for rights” or arguing or something like that. Sámi here now is just, you know, enjoying music or enjoying culture or meeting people. And that's what Márkomeannu has done in this last couple of decades, this last 20 years. [This is] what we have done, and what the next generation, as I call the next generation of the crew, has done. We've, oh, what's called in English... you know, made it a little less dangerous or not dangerous. No, but it's called before earlier. Less demanding or less, you know, it's not that scary, or less scary for people to actually be Sámi. I don't know, in lack of better words to prefer, but it's less scary for people to join in or to, you know, hear the Sámi [language]. I don't know, it's, it's sort of normalized,

More normalized, I guess. From being from being, you know, an identity for just some people, for some families of like activists, who were really in the front, it's become sort of a more normal thing for kids nowadays, or for people, and to get a new gákti, for either Márkomeannu or to,

you know, actually be a part of Márkomeannu, not just coming there to sort of drink and fight. Something people probably still do. But you know, there's assholes everywhere. That's just how it is, but but from, you know, from going to actually to actually embracing it more, you know, to embracing the Sámi culture more and not, or their Sámi identity more and not being afraid of, sort of, Okay, if I now say that I'm a Sámi, or ,hey found out I own a gákti. I'm going to have to go into the fight is like putting on, you know, an armoured suit. But it's not anymore, you know, to put on to put on the gákti now. You know, it's not the same as when we did it when I did it. When we did us youngsters 30 years ago, it was almost like, you know, it actually almost felt like sometimes do when you put on the gákti, you put on your armour, and you have to have, like, you know, you have to have your guard up. Because then you most likely have you have to have some sort of fight verbally or, you know, something, but now it's not. And I think maybe that's what a lot of people also felt. I don't know. But now it's not bad anymore. At least not for more it still is, you know, it's not picture perfect, but it's better and it's so good achievement for something started as a small local event (Emma Skåden, interview, 35/2020 Tromsø)

The festival organizers consciously conceived the festival as opportunity to change the perception local people – many of them Sámi themselves – had of Sámi identity: in their view, people had to be given the possibility to see and experience Sámi identity not as conflictual and oppositional as it was often portrayed but also as positive and enjoyable, as well as gratifying. Sámi people are often portrayed as being angry and belligerent but such perception fails to acknowledge the reason why many Sámi may hold grudges: the oppositional character taken on by many was indeed a response to stigmatization. Furthermore, in a context of reiterated stigmatization, feelings of frustration were often interpreted as anger and those who wished to defend Sámi values and identity were forced into a position of opposition. Many Sámi did not wish to be identified as such precisely because of such negative perceptions. It was not only the understanding of Sámi as backward, illiterate and dim-witted and prone to drunkenness – stereotypes directly deriving from colonial subjugation – but also this image of the Sámi as angry delinquent ungrateful for the improved living conditions brought about by the welfare state that led many to take their distance from Sámi identity and culture.

A further element that characterizes Márkomeannu and that is a source of pride for its organizers is its role as a platform for young artists that often, perform in front of a vast audience at Márkomeannu for the first time. Many of them became important figures in the Sámi cultural and musical landscape, reinforcing the importance of the festival as a place that gives space to emerging artists from all of Sápmi, allowing them to have their voices heard. Emma describes the process as follows:

«So we were quite proud of ourselves to be trying to find like small artists or young artists, but hardly had stood on the stage before and gave them that space. Like, I mean,

Slincraze, for example, in 2005, or 2004, I think it was we had heard of a band called Mazemafia that was band of youngsters from Maze outside of Kautokeino»

Even if the band is no longer active Slincraze has established himself as one of the most important Sámi singers and has specialized in rap music and sings in North Sámi and Norwegian. Many of his songs have strong political overtones and tackle difficult issues related to the conditions of the Sámi today. Slincraze articulates his critique of colonialism and oppression through both the lyrics and the videos, which powerfully visualize the contents of his lyrics which, being them often in Sámi, are understandable by only part of the Sámi and by very few non-Sámi. The song Suhtađit⁴⁹¹ (Image 98a,98b and 98c) for instance has a visually strong and highly evocative video that offers a powerful background to the lyrics, showing a baptism of Sámi men – dressed in their gákti (Sámi garments) – and their subsequent revolt against the minister epitomizing the colonial authority and here played by Slincraze himself.



Image 98a: fram- shot from Silcraze's 2012 video Suhtađit .

⁴⁹¹ The translation into English of the central part of the text reads: welcome Sápmi, our situation is so easy, it is not hard at all. If there's something we're missing we put our gákti on, then we travel to the Dadjat (Norwegians/non Sámi) complain? oh-ohh, I am a Sámi (Sápmelaš), I'm saying, Jo-hoo (yes), I am a Sámi (Sápmelaš). They destroy our signs, step one of our language. They do whatever they want because they can. I wonder why I have talked to act like that, is it because they are afraid? is it because they believe that we want to our own State and that we are now creating it in secret (hahaha) if that's what they think, then I think they are stupid hate is what controls them. That's why they can't see. but t I can't change their views. I'll just sit down and let them believe, (Slincraze official YouTube page <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOWH0W6t6eM>)



Image 98b: frame-shot from Silcraze 2012 video Suhtađit .



image 98c: frame-shot from Silcraze 2012 video Suhtađit.

6.5.3 In the footsteps of the ancestors

As we have seen in chapter 5, section 2.4, Márkomeannu takes place on the premises of the Gállogieddi Friluft museum (the Gállogieddi open air museum). The choice to have a festival in a place like Gállogieddi was grounded in the festival founders' emotional connection with – for some of the founders, such connection was reinforced by blood connections with the ancient owners of the farm - and respect for the farm which has been transformed into the current museum. Having a festival inside a museum area poses specific challenges (see chapter 5.2.4) but it also offers numerous advantages, such as the opportunity to reinforce the connection between festival-goers and the area the museum symbolizes and epitomizes. Furthermore, a festival brings life, energy and resources to its location. In the case of Gállogieddi – a farm that has not been inhabited since the 1960s – a festival ensures that the area is inhabited again, albeit temporarily – keeping it alive. This positive effect the festival has on the museum has been highlighted also by the institution that manages Gállogieddi. On the Várdobáiki website, a note reads:

Carrying out a large festival in a protected museum area must be called PROTECTION THROUGH USE [capital in the original Norwegian text] in practice. And that's how it should be - the cultural heritage should be part of today's activities and these should have mutual respect for each other. Cultural heritage must never become so “sacred” that we put everything on display and do not dare to touch it - just look but do not touch! Cultural heritage lives longer if it is remembered, passed on and used with respect (<http://www.vardobaiki.no/Markomeannu-2016/> access 13/5/2021)

These few lines epitomize the approach the museum management has towards the festival and towards the function of protected cultural heritage sites. By having a festival in the fields surrounding the museum, ensured that festival-goers behave themselves and do not damage the site, the cultural heritage becomes embedded in the festival, it is experienced through direct contact and hence it is kept alive through respectful use. Furthermore, the relationship between museums and festivals is deeper than it may seem since both are places of cultural mediation. During the festival, the transmission of elements of local Sámi folklore is implemented through storytelling, with stories connected to the place are told around the fire or while walking around the area, with elements of the local landscape stimulating the telling of stories connected with them.

Another advantage is the visibility the museum – and hence the Márka-Sámi culture – gains from being the festival site. Furthermore, by hosting a festival on its premises, the museum and the institution of which it is part have the opportunity to reach a huge audience and hence, through seminars and workshops, disseminate knowledge about the local history and culture. On the other

hand, the festival benefits from being held in such a special since it allows the festival to inscribe itself into the local Márka-Sámi culture, connecting the present with the past.

We shall though bear in mind that, if today Márkomeannu is a major festival with professional staff and thousands of guests, when it started it was a small gathering managed by a handful of resourceful young and volunteers. These youngsters saw in Gállogieddi the perfect location for their festival but, besides the aforementioned reasons, there are other, more personal motives that made them have the Festival at Gállogieddi. During an interview, Emma Skåden – one of the festival founders – explained the process of selecting Gállogieddi as their festival’s venue as follows:

But also, I think, I don't know. I think it was someone that said once, I can't remember that, well. Something like, well, to use this old place, like museum or an old place for this kind of thing, like our festival and all, So I can't remember who it was who said it, but someone said once, then well, knowing that these ancestors, they are our ancestors... I think maybe, you know, that they are proud of the kids starting a festival because they understand that. They've understood by now that the youth didn't start this festival to be able to have a new place to party, they started it because they want to show how proud they are about their Sámi identity and thus also how proud they are of their ancestors, and they're, so to say, taking it a step further, I guess. And that's also the thing that in my mom's generation, when they when they fought for the rights, they did really fought for rights, they fought for being able to give us an education in the Sámi language, being able to have Sámi kindergarten, It was basic rights, basically, or so should have been, but yeah. And so that was a hard political struggle.

[...] but we promised to treat it [Gállogieddi] with respect. And we really meant it. Because this wasn't a place that was, you know, just a place for us. As I said, we all had a relationship to it, and a good one. And we, yeah, we didn't want to disrespect anyone living or the dead, or the, the ones living there, but you can't see. Especially those! We didn't want to, you know, piss them off. So, yeah, so we, I don't know, but that was our idea. And it worked. (Emma Skåden, interview, 35/2020 Tromsø)

Emma’s words offer a glimpse into a very personal relation her generation – the one that started the festival – had with older generations – like that of Emma’s mother – as well as with those past generations whose members died long before Emma, her siblings, cousins and friends were born. These people, their own ancestors, once lived in farms very much like Gállogieddi. Even though, for some of the people who started the festival, Gállogieddi was the actual home of their great-grandparents, for all the members of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* Gállogieddi had become a sort of symbol of past generations and its inhabitants were like symbolic collective ancestors to all of them. Furthermore, all of them were also related more or less directly to the people who once lived at Gállogieddi since family relations tie most of the families of the Márka together in complex networks of kinship. When Emma expresses her confidence that the ancestors are proud of them “kids” starting a festival (the members of SSN were between 15 and 25 year of age when they started the festival), she places her actions and that of her fellow members of SSN in a line of continuity with the past. It

is also a way of acknowledging that the establishment of Márkomeannu had been possible only thanks to her own mother's generation fight for Sámi rights.

In this regard, the ancestors are, in her view, pleased to see that their young descendants not only accept the inheritance they passed down to them – Sámi identity – but they embrace and celebrate it as valuable. In other words, they must be pleased to see that the young generations are not ashamed of who they ancestors were but, on the contrary are proud of them and their Sámi heritage. And it is not only the ancestors that they did not want to disturb but also the Ulddat, the little people of the underground that have in Gállogieddi their home. There are numerous stories in the area about Ulddat complaining with humans for the noise human make during the day – when the Ulddat sleep – and usually the Ulddat communicate their dissatisfaction through dream. With the festival though, the Ulddat seem to have accepted – in Emma's view – a bit of *meannu* (chaos) for the sake of the Márka. Otherwise, they would have expressed their unhappiness and the festival, without their approval, would have never been a success.

A further element that shall be taken into account – and that makes Emma's reflection even more interesting – is the different contexts into which Emma's generation and those of her ancestors lived in. If today the idea of celebrating through a festival is acceptable, at the time of Emma's great-grandparents it would not have been considered appropriate. That's because at the end of the 19th century, the Márka-Sámi people had embraced Læstadianism, a pietistic branch of Lutheranism. Læstadians avoid any form of secular activity such as music, dance, alcohol consumption and extra-marital sex. Emma's world and that of her ancestors are culturally very different and different are also the sets of values that regulate life. Nevertheless, despite this wide gap between them, Emma is confident her ancestors are proud of the goals she and the other members of SSN have achieved. In her view, it is the celebration of the Márka-Sámi identity that pleases them, acknowledging that the means are temporally and culturally bounded but ethnic identity runs deeper than them: it runs in the veins of their descendants and in the soil of the Márka in which they themselves have been buried.

For the members of SSN, to be having the festival at Gállogieddi – or any other relevant historical site connected with the past of the Márka and hence with the Márka-Sámi peoples of the past – has been a way to celebrate and honour their ancestors and the identity they inherited from them. It has been an act of love and respect that transcends time. It has also been a way of thanking the past generations that, through their work, have kept the culture alive allowing young Sámi today to be Sámi in the broad daylight.

A further element that may make the ancestors proud is the key role the festival is having in mending and sewing the social fabric of the Márka, torn apart by colonial borders. As examined in chapters 4 and 5, Márkomeannu takes place just a few meters from the border between two counties (Nordland

and Troms) and between Norway and Sweden. These borders are now considered and described as colonial impositions which have had a tangible effect on the population of the Márka. The county border cuts across the Márka area, dividing and fragmenting its community. On the practical level, all the services provided by the state, the county and the province depend on the municipality of residence and, for example, children must attend school and sports activities in the municipality of residence even if this is further away from their home than the school in the neighbouring municipality. In this way, children are separated from their peers/relatives belonging to the same cultural area and are forced to attend schools located in locations with a Norwegian majority, where the chances of speaking in Sámi decrease. In this regard, the festival acts as the engine of a decolonization “from within” of this border area, claiming the centrality of an area long considered marginal both metaphorically and physically by Norwegians and other Sámi alike. The festival constitutes a bridge that reconnects the social fabric broken by borders.

6.5.4 A changing festival true to itself

In my opinion, and drawing on my interlocutors own perceptions of the festival, the history of Márkomeannu can be divided into three phases: a first phase characterized by a strong focus on making the Márka as a cultural entity visible in Sápmi; a second phase which distinguish itself for its strong pan-Sámi output; the third phase is still yet to begin and is linked with the challenges brought by Covid19. From a chronological perspective, the first phase goes from 1999 to 2009 and the second from 2009 until 2019. In 2020, the outbreak of Covid19 put a halt on the festival as a major event which – like most of the events in Sápmi and all over the world – was cancelled. In its stead, smaller locally oriented events took place both in the Márka and in Oslo.

The division between the first and the second phase is mirrored in the gradual transformation from a small local gathering into an international Pan-Sámi event. This shift was characterized by moments of crisis and renewal, a generational turnover, the slow but increasing professionalization of the staff, a growing number of guests, a more official profile (reflected also in the funding sought and in the partnership with institutional bodies such as the Sámediggi and the university of Tromsø).

The 2009 crisis was a turning point in the history of the festival. As Runar Myrnes Balto told me during an interview, with the 10th anniversary approaching, the pressure on the festival staff was becoming to heavy to carry and the staff was experiencing strong distress. In Runar’s own words:

The thing is, was that when we had to come up with ideas for 2010, it was 10 years [that people had been working on the festival]. You have the same people having worked with the festival but relatively few new people. Basically, the whole arranging of the festival was done by the same people, and so by the time after the festival 2008, people were really really tired of

our work. It was really exhausting and with no fresh people... we hadn't really started recruiting anyone from the younger generations at that at the time. So we were under the impression that since we really were so tired we just assumed that nobody else would want to do it either again [work for the festival]. We didn't dare to ask... like they never asked for help. So the mood really was that okay, we just gonna do this year's festival events and then we'll see. We were starting [the organization] at Easter 2009. [It was then that] we really started planning the festival. So by Easter we had a meeting, like a crisis board meeting. Back then, we were not even sure whether we were gonna do this [the festival]. Well, no, not before Easter. This is how it is. Nothing was planned by them. So, what are we learning? We decided to make the festival like we managed to do it. Yes. 2009 and that is why we chose the fly [for the poster]. Yes. And I love that because that's the one of the year I was in charge. (Runar Myrnes Balto, Interview, 24/4/2019, Tromsø).

As the interview shows, the festival staff – its board members as well as its volunteers – were not able to cope with the growing pressure of a festival that was becoming more and more important and that required specialized workforce as well as a new generation to take over the crisis, epitomized in Runars' view by the image of a fly (see appendix) was also a moment of renewal.

It is in the light of its growing importance and its wider and more heterogeneous public that some profound changes were implemented. Among them, the most important adjustment has been the detachment of the festival organization from the local, politically oriented, association SSN (Stuornjárga Sámenuorat)

For the first seven years of activity, *Stuornjárga Sámenuorat* organized the Festival. In 2006 this association ceased to exist and a new association was founded: the Márkomeannu Searvi which took over the organization of the festival. Emma Margarete explains this process as follows:

We were like, you know, the local youth when we started the festival, and then at some point, we saw that we had to... change that because we [as a festival] couldn't be connected to just one political organization. And that's because the festival wasn't to be that kind if political. The point of the festival was the political thing. But it didn't have to be exclusively political. So we had to detach the festival from the association political association [*Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak*] So we did that. Because we, thought that it will be more inclusive. For others who maybe didn't, I don't know, feel like being an asset? Or were not [affiliated] with NSR. Because It was the point of the festival? Sort of, not that not that kind of political if I can say it was, yeah, it's a cultural festival. With a strong political statement, of course. But cultural (Emma Skåden, interview, 3/5/2020 Tromsø)

As evidenced by Emma's testimony, through the work of its members, the SSN association had contributed in a fundamental way to the establishment of the festival. Over the years, however, this association with a marked political profile was no longer suitable for the organization of the festival itself. This is because the festival had grown in size, attracting more and more people not only from the Márka area and neighbouring areas but also from the whole region and also from other areas of Sápmi. Not necessarily all the people who came to take part in the festival were politically affiliated with the same party to which the SSN referred. For this reason it was necessary to detach the festival from this political youth association, instead founding a new association dedicated exclusively to the organization of the Festival. This does not mean that the festival lost its political claims. But that it was no longer a publically-oriented entity to organize it but a neutral body, a factor that guaranteed the festival's inclusivity. The decision to create a new association and, at the same time, to separate the most eminently political aspect from the festival, was a turning point in the history of the festival itself. Not only did this decision guarantee people who initially may have felt excluded – perhaps by virtue of their political background or of that of their own family – were now able to access the festival not just as members of the public but also as organizers, without feeling the weight of a political legacy that often belonged to their family but in which they themselves did not identify.

2006 was a turning point not only because Márkomeannu Searvi was established, making Márkomeannu an independent festival, but also because that year was the last one the festival founder Sigbjørn Skåden worked as festival leader. This means that from the following year new members covered this and other positions. This element leads the reflection to analyze the generational shift in the Festival organization: going through different phases of life, members who contributed to the foundation of the festival left room for new generations and in this way they also guaranteed the survival of the festival itself. The handover was perceived as necessary since the people who until then had dedicated their summers – and also most of the year - to organizing this event were at that point exhausted both physically and mentally-emotionally. The handover was neither simple nor unproblematic, despite the fact that the original members of the association recognized that the time had come for the festival to pass into the hands of the “new generation”. As can be inferred from the following extract from an interview with Emma, concerns were mainly related to how this new generation would carry on the festival, keeping its ideological aspiration while at the same time fostering innovation without distorting the original spirit of the festival. The Festival founders felt a strong sense of protection towards Márkomeannu, and Emma described this feeling as in terms of family relationship attributing to the festival the position of symbolic child:

Emma: it was, it's difficult letting go in that sense of, well, “and now what?” Oh my God, it's almost like oh, “who's my kid dating now?” It's almost like feeling like “Who is this person that

my kid is dating?’. It’s actually like that. I’ve had that feeling this year [2018] to be fair, because the producer is not from Márka (Emma Skåden, interview, 35/2020 Tromsø).

In this section Emma not only exposes some of the contrasting emotions she felt in handing over the festival she contributed in creating but also the sense of worry that she experienced when, in 2018, the festival passed into the hands of a new producer and CEO who, unlike those who had directed the festival after Emma had left her position as festival staff, did not belong to the Márka *strictu sensu*. For the first time, the chief organizers of the Festival were not Márka-Sámi since Anne Henriette, came from another Sámi community. The next year, the festival CEO was a young man in his early 20s who comes from a nearby non-Sámi community: Magnus was the first person to work in that position who does not self-identify as Sámi⁴⁹². Despite these initial concerns, Emma also pointed out that she is very pleased with the way not only the generation to whom she handed over the festival – those who worked there between 2007 and 2017 – but also the “newcomers” have navigated the difficult task of organizing Márkomeannu:

Yeah. And I’m really, really proud of it. And that’s also something that I sort of, I’ve thought about a lot. Yeah, we should be proud of it. And that’s what I said, we we are, we’re proud of it. You know, the founding mothers and fathers are proud of it. And I’m also really proud of the next generation because most of them are not from the Mara. They do not have any connections at all. Yeah. The only connection they have is that they were involved in the festival before.

What Emma most appreciates about the works of these people who took over the festival even if they did not belong to the community it celebrates,

Yes. And then they know exactly. So once I saw how they worked, I was like “Oh shit”, but at the same time, I was like “okay”, but I know, Even though you know, they, they’ve joined in after I sort of left, but still I knew that they had been in the crew for some years. And I thought, Okay, well, then they know. Yeah, they know how to do it. Or they learned. Yeah. And they know also the meaning of the festival and I think... well, they would understand how not to ruin this. And they did. So, yeah, I’m really satisfied. And I’m so glad to actually see that other people, like, from the outside [from outside the Márka] can have the same, or I don’t know but more or less, the same feeling towards the festival as all of us. So as we, you know, the old bunch, still are here to help, but also, of course, letting them doing things their own way. Which, you know, they have to do, they can’t really always do things as we did. As long as they have,

⁴⁹² During an informal conversation, Magnus told me that, even though he does not self-identify as Sámi, he is of Sámi descent. He only found out this part of his family history when he told his family he was going to be the Márkomeannu festival producer, he was told he was probably going to work with people he is related by blood since one of his grandparents was from the Marka. Furthermore, in the village his family is from, in the recent years people have started to claim back their own coastal and “Marka” Sámi identity as *gákti* (Sámi costumes) were found hidden and forgotten in lofts.

you know, as long as the spirit is that, as long as this sort of basic thing is there, it's ok. It's like remodelling your house, I guess, you know, at some, some of it is still there, as long as you can recognize it. Because what I've heard many times is that it didn't really do now is like a man who managed to stay loyal to itself. That's not the data that I bought. It's more like an impression people gave me but also that it has become more than it once was. Also, for people not from the Márka. People who do not belong there came all the way from Sweden, from Finland. So it managed to become like a pan Sámi event. Yeah, being from marginal like, to pan-Sámi (Emma Skåden, interview, 3/5/2020 Tromsø).

Emma gives great importance to the fact that, although Magnus and other members of the staff had not grown up in the specific context of Márka, they were able to not only grasp but also implement all those nuances that made Márkomeannu a one-of-a-kind festival.

Emma points out how they were able to maintain the specific character of this festival despite the necessary changes brought by time and by the festival's own fluid nature. In her view, this was possible thanks to the fact that the "new generation" – as she defines them – had taken part to the festival in previous years and had also worked as part of the staff. This working experience gave them the opportunity to familiarize with, embrace and internalize all those specific cultural but also political ideals that animated her, her brother and her friends, inspiring them into organizing a Márka-Sámi festival. In other words, Emma points out how the "new generation" had managed to ensure that the festival remained true to its original spirit while also ensuring its cutting-edge nature.

I asked Magnus⁴⁹³ about the impression he had, working as the festival CEO while being from another area and if he thought he had managed to win the founders' trust. With reference to Emma, he replied that:

Yeah, she approved of us. Even though we're not from, from the area. Of course, it's difficult because it's in a festival like this, it's a lot of traditions that you need to try to keep track on. It's tradition in the way they do things, that's not written down anywhere. It's just need to know them or us so long if you can't remember to ask someone if like, is this a thing we used to do? And also it's like knowing people in the area is extremely important. Like we need someone to drive a tractor, who can we call to do that? I have no idea. I just know the guy I rent the house from and the people that's already in the festival doing stuff. So it's also things like that then

⁴⁹³ Magnus is a young man in his late 20s (at the time of writing). His family is from Salangen, not far from the Marka. He does not self-identify as Sámi but has family connections with local Márka-Sámi Sámi culture. He lived in Oslo and Tromsø. He studied at Tromsø university and worked for Norwegian environmental organizations. He was the 2019 Márkomeannu CEO. Prior to this working experience, he had been part of the festival staff for many years.

knowing like, where things are, it's an old house, a couple of kilometers from the festival where we have stored all our mattresses and like pillows, and tools. And I did not know where

Yeah. So it's a lot of like small things that you just need to learn to ask about. But it's I think it's gone it's gone really well. And I haven't heard, none has told me to me at least that they're not happy with the work and that's it's coming from people from outside (Magnus, interview, 11/2/2020 Tromsø).

Magnus' words bring to our attention a set of challenges he, as an outsider, had to face once he had to manage the festival. It emerges that the organization of the festival is grounded in a series of practices that heavily rely on pre-existing social networks connecting Márkomeannu with people who do not formally work for the festival. This aspect offers a glimpse of the local involvement that make the festival possible as well as on the importance of learning how to do things from experience and dialogue rather than from studying how to do a specific task. There is no handbook but, rather, newcomers are required to learn how to ask what to whom and, in doing so, nurturing the connection between the festival and the local people.

By handing over the organization of the festival to new people, the original founders guaranteed the festival's vitality while also protecting its cultural autonomy. Emma's words show how the founders were able to guarantee not only the success but also the continuity of this festival, preserving its vitality and its innovative character. This was possible because, although the festival was an integral part of their lives, they were able to "let it go" at the right moment, when they themselves were already exhausted given the growing importance of the festival and the related chores no longer manageable at the level of voluntary work during free time. We can therefore note that the increase in the national and international profile of the festival has led first to its institutionalization and, secondly, to the generational change. These factors have in a certain sense made the festival an entity independent from that of its founders - to which though the festival is still connected – a feature that is reflected in the cessation of the activities of *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* and in the foundation of a new organization, disconnected from political connections and aimed solely at the organization of the festival itself.

I had direct experience of this phenomenon during the 2019 festival edition. On that occasion, I did not attend the festival as a volunteer since I was offered a press pass (as the organizers knew I was doing research on this festival). I went to the festival with some friends: in particular a young Dutch researcher who, at the time, was working at SESAM, the Center for Sámi Studies at UiT - where I was visiting scholar-, and once there I was joined by Gunn-Tove, a friend in her early 60s who comes from a village a few kilometers from Márka. In the festive context of a post-concert evening, around

midnight, I happened to meet a group of people while I was walking around Gállogieddi with the founder of the festival, Sigbjørn Skåden. A group of boys began to converse with me and Sigbjørn. The conversation was held a little in North Sámi, a little in Norwegian - in the local dialect - and a little in English. They offered us some homemade dried reindeer meat and we introduced ourselves, me as Erika and Sigbjørn simply as Sigbjørn. A few minutes later a young man, noticing my accent, pointed his finger at me and exclaimed: « You are the Italian girl! Gunn-Tove's friend! » . I said yes and both Sigbjørn and I were immediately invited to drink with them at their *lavvo* (Sámi tent). Once we reached their group of friends, most of whom were wearing a *gákti* (Sámi garment), he asked us to introduce ourselves, but only after he had first introduced me as “the Italian girl”. I remember that I was not so surprised to have been identified so quickly. Under those circumstances, I doubted there might have been any other Italian girl present. In a relatively small and “culturally homogeneous” context like the Márkomeannu, word had spread that there was an Italian girl. Moreover, I was easily recognizable thanks to my long braid, an element that I also used as a tool during the camp because it made me particularly visible. I was therefore certainly perceivable as an external entity to the festival and easily identifiable. The interesting aspect pertaining to this episode, however, concerns not only the fact that a stranger immediately recognized me but that, at the same time, he did not recognize Sigbjørn. I thought that he did not need any introduction as he was the founder of the festival, but I realized that our hosts had not recognized him. It is interesting to note that the age difference between Sigbjørn and this groups of men we were chatting with, no more than 15 years. Nevertheless, they did not recognize Sigbjørn, nor did they identify him as the founder of the festival itself once he introduced himself (from my fieldnotes, July 2019, Gállogieddi).

This revealing episode shows that, for many of today's festivalgoers, the festival is no longer necessarily linked to the original founders but has become an autonomous event, in which people gather to celebrate and party, without necessarily knowing how and why this festival was established. In particular, the group of thirty-year-old men we spent some time with was not politically active - as emerged during the conversation - and had only come to the festival in the evening, to party. This is of particular relevance in the analysis of festivals like Márkomeannu because it shows that the festival may have different meanings for different actors and that the ethno-political element is not necessarily preponderant. Furthermore, for many members of younger generations, it is as if the festival has always been there because they remember it from their own childhood, as they have been attending it since they were little. The episode I outlined above – and the reflections I suggested – shall be put into dialogue with the following phenomenon: for many Sámi belonging to younger generations – those who are younger than 30 years of age, born and raised after the establishment of the Sámediggi/Sámi parliament and after the recognition of at least partial Sámi rights – public

expressions of Sámi identity today come as relatively natural compared to the youth experiences of those who are now in their 40s and 50s. The relatively more accepting contemporary context did not develop by itself but, rather, is the result of years of work. As Torun (see chapter 6, section 4.2) and Sigbjørn explained (see chapter 7, section 5.2) young activists in the 1990s and early 2000s engaged in festivals to carve safe Sámi spaces for young Sámi. They did that for themselves as well as for future Sámi generations, for those Sámi children who were not yet born. They did that for their own daughters, sons, nieces, and nephews long before they were adults themselves. Even if public displays of Sámi identity are still unfortunately stigmatized by Norwegian sectors of society, the very existence of places and spaces like Márkomeannu have enabled young generations to express themselves as Sámi in spaces that are safe and where Sámi identity is the norm rather than the exception.

This phenomenon can be configured as the outcome of a series of stratified efforts made by different individuals, over several decades and across generations. The small results obtained over time, adding up one to the other, have created a context that is increasingly favorable to individual and collective expressions of the Sámi identity. This layering of efforts and contextual successes has guaranteed, over the course of 50 years, profound positive changes in the social fabric of Sápmi in general and of the Márka in particular. These changes find expression in a reversal of the language shift, in a return to the public sphere of expressions of Sámi ethnic affiliation despite the still existing limitations due to the persistence of negative approaches many Norwegians hold against Sámi cultures.

Visible and tangible expressions of such changes can be identified in the establishment of Sámi language nurseries, festivals such as the one here examined, and museums such as Gállogieddi.

The fundamental aspects that led to the foundation of the festival, i.e. the enhancement of the local Sámi identity, remained as the foundation of the festivals in later editions. Local instances, however, were at this point conjugated to battles relating also to issues that did not concern only the local community but that of Sápmi more generally. In this way the festival maintained a local profile but also incorporated elements that referred to other realities within Sápmi, thus contributing to enrich itself in terms of the issues it addresses and, ultimately, becoming a pan-Sámi event. In this regard, it is interesting to consider what this festival represents to some festivalgoers, through their own words. In particular, the experience of Nihlas, a young Sámi man in his early 20s. Nihlas⁴⁹⁴ spent his childhood and teen-age years in Sweden's capital Stockholm and recounts his experiences of Márkomeannu as enjoyable but also as important moments where a teenager living outside of Sápmi

⁴⁹⁴ I met him in Guavdogeidnu during the 2019 Easter festival. We shared the same flat and it was only by chance that we started talking about Márkomeannu festival. Nihlas agreed on an interview for the next day and we discussed not only the festival but also his background. I here report only the extracts pertaining to Márkomeannu.

had the change of being surrounded by likeminded people to whom no further explanation is required. follows:

Erika: And how did you know about Márkomeannu?

Nihlas: Well, I think my father told me about it many years ago, when I was quite small. And then we went to, to Márkomeannu I think when I was 14 years old or something. Maybe it was even before that. Yeah.

E: So you have been at Márkomeannu already. 2018 was not your first time?

N: No, I've been there. I've been actually in Márkomeannu. I've also been an artist on the stage. Oh, yes. And I've been performing. Yeah. And I enjoyed that as well. Yeah. It was a couple of years ago. Okay. Yeah. And I was also a presenter on the stage. And then the one year we were there with store Stalka [a company belonging to Nihals' father and based in Jokkmokk], with our company, we had a band weaving course in traditional bandwidth. Yeah. And then I also got artists' and backstage passes and stuff, but I don't know how artistic we were. I don't know... but it was fun. I think I've been there four or five times now. Or six...

E: so you are a frequent flyer.

N: Yeah. Yeah. Experienced.

E: So you have seen it? Through the years?

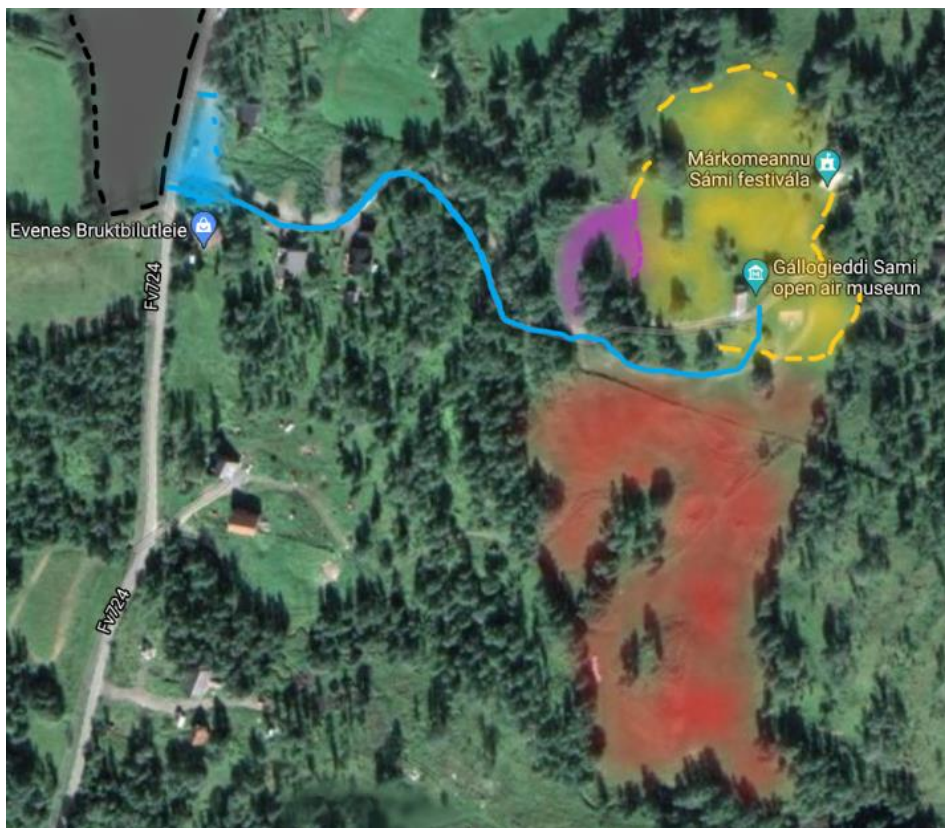
N: Yeah. And we've felt the test changes or your impression. I mean, the thing that I really like about Márkomeannu is that it's, it's a Sámi, it's a Sámi festival. I mean, literally. It's an indigenous festival in its own regards, but Márkomeannu is Sámi festival, and everyone who works here are Sámi people. And it makes it like a kind of safe space. It's like you don't need to, to explain yourself, you don't need to. And for me who've been living a lot outside of the geographic area of Sápmi in Stockholm, it's harder to find the community. We have Sámi community in Stockholm but it's it's not as frequent and not as intensive as a festival would be with only Sámi people for a couple of days. And I really enjoy spending time in that in the intensive Yeah. And last year... Oh, I was actually not planning to go to my friend. Okay, but why not? Then I don't know. I think I had other plans on somewhere I was working. But then I felt like well, why the heck not I should go to Márkomeannu? So I I flew up to Jokkmokk Because all my tents and stuff was, was there. I went to Lulea, and then I rented the car. And I traveled to Jokkmokk to get all my stuff. So I ended up there. It was nice. It was so warm last year. Yeah. I met some old friends. I mean, that was really fun (Nihlas, interview, Guovdageaidnu, Easter 2019)

From Nihlas' words it emerges the importance this festival had form him as a young Sámi man living in a major Swedish city. Having been there as an artist and as a seller, representing his father's firm, has further nourished his feelings for this festival and its atmosphere but, as he clearly states it is the festivals' clear Sámi profile that is appealing to him. This Sámi environment is, for Nihlas, an opportunity to live a few days immersed in a Sámi context, an experience that he defines as intense and fulfilling. I recorded similar comments during my fieldwork as many people I causally interacted with highlighted how they loved Márkomeannu because of its marked Sámi profile, especially

compared to Riddu Riđđu, a festival my interlocutors enjoy but that they often described as « and indigenous festival with indigenous peoples from all over the world» (fieldnotes). Márkomeannu instead is usually described as a “Sámi thing” and many of the people I discussed the festival with pointed out that it was “cosier” than Riddu Riđđu because it was smaller and more party-like, highlighting also the importance of the social dimension of the after-concert parties around the fire in the main camp.



Map 24: Satellite map of Gállogieddi, (photo from google maps).



Map 25: Márkomeannu festival's site at Gállogieddi. in grey: the festival parking lot, in blue: the road from the parking lot to the festival area; in yellow: the main festival area; in violet: family camp; in red: main camp (adapted from google maps by the author).

6.5.5 Márkomeannu's posters: windows onto the festival

As mentioned above, when they first organized Márkomeannu, the festival founders wanted to affirm the uniqueness of the local Márka-Sámi culture as opposed to the normative vision of the Sámi as reindeer tenders. The stereotypical image that equates Sámi identity to reindeer tending has deep roots that can be traced back to a number of factors, among which, colonial approaches towards Sámi cultures played a central role⁴⁹⁵. Following in the footsteps of their parents' generations, the local youth organization *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorat* fought against⁴⁹⁶ those local Sámi who were trying to keep a low Sámi profile by relegating Sámi culture and identity to the private sphere⁴⁹⁷. The primary aim of the festival founders was to make the Márka culture visible in the area, and to celebrate it as the cornerstone of the local identity. They wanted to give “Sámi dignity” to the Márka-Sámi culture that, until then, was regarded as inferior to both the Norwegian and the Inner-Finnmark Sámi cultures. Furthermore, they wanted to affirm not only the local farming life-style but also the local Márka-Sámi language, a branch of North Sámi⁴⁹⁸ differing from the Inner Finnmark North Sámi which – because of its relatively large population of speakers – has grown into what many perceive as Standard North Sámi. This position exerted on other Sámi communities a form of pressure that Emma Skåden frames as follows:

Emma: [...] Well, the stereotypical Sámi would have for the festival, gákti from Kautokeino or Guovdageaidnu. And had reindeer. And I had neither. Nor the language at some point. So. yeah, I guess I probably feel the pressure a lot because people would expect me to be like a card-picture. And I was like, No, nothing like it. Which was also one of the points of the festival. Yeah, why we always would have like a focus on a cow instead of a reindeer. We'd never have... if we would have a new logo, with an animal in it, it would most definitely, not be a reindeer, because we were really obsessed with it. It would be a sheep or a cow. (see image n87)

⁴⁹⁵ This common place had many ramifications and, given its performative character, contributed in the stigmatization of those Sámi cultures which did not comply with this image of Sámi identities. The common association between Sámi cultures and reindeer tending can also be traced back to the perceived peculiarity of reindeer-tending lifestyle compared to Sea- or Márka-Sámi ways of living. Reindeer tending was perceived by colonial authorities as intrinsically different from their own settled society

⁴⁹⁶ They engaged in various forms of protests, for instance, during the dead of the night, in 2001 wood road signs in Sámi (often with spelling mistakes) appeared around the area and many suspected the people behind this action were members of SSN.

⁴⁹⁷ Low profile and activism: two diametrically opposed reactions to the same impulse: protection. The former aimed at not creating troubles, be silent, carry on, be good Norwegian and enjoy the civil rights of the nation, no special treatment because they did not want to be singled out as different. The latter aimed at “claiming” (look for a better word) Sámi rights as Sámi rights.

⁴⁹⁸ The local Márka-Sámi language belongs to the Duortnus (Torne) dialects, being a western variety of the Čohkkiras dialect (Kejonen 2020)

In 2006 it was indeed a cow the subject of that year festival poster (see image n87). This animal – as the rubber boot depicted in the 2008 poster and from which spring Sámi people (see image 100) – functioned as a symbol of the local small-scale farming culture as opposed to the hegemonic representations of Sámi cultures as based on reindeer and its management (see Mathisen 2004). During an interview with Tor Åge, the poster designer, he explained that:

So then we have to focus more on the farm. So we wanted to say: “You don't have to be you don't have to be reindeer herder to be Sámi” o so this this cow is a farm animal but we did it in a kind of like this dance trance style like disco style with the with the still in in red and blue and yellow, like Sámi colors (Tor Åge, interview, 5/6/2019, Tromsø).

Reindeer did indeed not figure in any of Márkomeannu’s poster until 2016 (image n107a). where these animals were included in the background. Nevertheless, they played an important symbolic function, signaling the wider spectrum of identity articulations expressed at Márkomeannu, including the reindeer hunter ones, previously excluded from Márkomeannu.



Image 87: Márkomeannu 2006 edition Festival poster, the cow stands for the local small-scale farming culture. The museum symbol reveals the festival site, the Gállogieddi Friluftmuseum. (Image courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).



Image 100: Márkomeannu 2008 poster, notice the rubber boot symbolizing a farming lifestyle (photo by the author)

This brief analysis introduces us to an important dimension of the Márkomeannu festival, its posters. Posters, especially propaganda ones, have long attracted the curiosity and the interest of scholars belonging to disciplines such as art, political studies, history, tourism studies, advertising research (see among al. Hewitt, J. 2000; Gardner et al. 2000; Cushing & Tompkins 2007; Angelo, Fraser, & Yeatman 2019). Posters play an important role at Márkomeannu as they not only are a key advertising tool but also have come to symbolize the festival. For this reason, it is useful as well as important to address Márkomeannu posters: they are privileged viewpoints from which to grasp a glimpse of the festival's soul throughout its edition. I shall do so by highlighting some of the symbolic meanings stratified within the rich iconography proposed, year by year, as an emblematic of the festival. Each Márkomeannu poster is designed to capture the essence of the respective festival edition, making both the poster and the festival recognizable. They are also programmatic statements in a visual form. Through the analysis of the posters it is possible not only to grasp the changes Márkomeannu underwent throughout the years but also to an overview of the topics relevant to the festival organizers and participant (addressing the political overtones of the festival and its engagement in public debates such as the ones on gender and on road signs).

Since 2003, every year, the festival staff commissions a poster advertising the festival to the Tromsø-based designer Tor Åge Vorren (Røst kommunikasjon) who is not Sámi himself but who comes from an area adjacent to the festival and is a friend of the festival founders. These posters are works of art created through collaborative work and constant dialogue between Tor Åge Vorren and the management team of the festival. Once the poster is ready, it is hung around the region and across Sápmi. In the past, leaflets reproducing the poster and advertising the festival were distributed in the region, to up to 35,381 mailboxes between Nordland and Troms (fieldnotes, July 2019). posters are also exhibited at petrol stations, tourist information, shops and restaurants and on board-walls in various places throughout Sápmi.

Throughout the years, these posters have become icons of the festival itself. Through these posters, the festival advertises itself throughout Sápmi. It also positions itself within a wider political debate (both within the Sámi community and on an inter/national level). Every year, the poster refers to the themes of that edition of the festival. Pop culture deeply influenced these posters. They resemble pieces of art inspired by the principles of the “cultural jamming” (Junka-Aikio 2018). This technique characterizes also the artistic production of a group of Sámi politically engaged artists. Posters have different levels of reading, and full of hidden references, allusions and veiled meanings. Such meanings may undergo unnoticed if they are not read through the lens of the local Sámi culture.

To understand and appreciate these posters fosters a sense of belonging between those who take part to the festival. By examining the festival's posters it is possible to retrace the history of the festival, its evolutions, its crises and the political/cultural battles carried out by the local Sámi community in the last 20 years. As demonstrated in chapter 5 – where the 2012 Márkomeannu poster has been addressed and contextualized – each poster has a history, a specific *raison d'être* that makes them privileged points of entry into the ideological premises and the ultimate aims of each edition.

The festival posters can be analysed through different lenses and, in the following section, I will resort to narrative analysis articulated through aesthetic as well as textual analysis to describe and analyse visual information encoded in and conveyed through the posters. What I propose here are reflections based on my personal interpretation of the available visual material. My interpretation though is informed by the numerous conversation but I had on this topic with my interlocutors, in particular Sigbjørn Skåden, Runar Myrnes Balto, and Tor Åge Vorren⁴⁹⁹. At the time of writing, no specific study has addressed the festival posters.

In the festival's early years, posters where mostly focused on the Márka-Sámi culture and/or its the agro-pastoral dimension. When the festival was already a well-established Márka-Sámi institution, its aims slightly shifted towards a more pan-Sámi output, a change reflected in the poster, which became a visual venue through which address – often ironically or provocatively – issues that are relevant to and discussed within the wider Sámi community (see for instance images n102, 103, n106). Before dwelling into the analysis of the festival poster, I would like to delineate the role of the designer who, for 16 years, has worked alongside the festival staff in order to create each year a poster encapsulating the nature, the themes and the ideological grounds of each edition. To do so, I shall quote an extract from an interview:

Erika: how did you end up working on posters?

Tor Åge: Yeah, I am from from the regions, okay. No, I'm from... from Narvik, the city. Okay. So, my friend is from Gállogieddi. Okay. Yeah, he's his mother was born there. So yeah, the grandparents there. so I have been there some sometimes before there was a festival there. So but but only as a friend. So I knew them and then and I was I lived in Tromsø too and worked as a designer. So I so they asked me if I wanted to do a cultural themed designs. Yeah, I think they felt that I knew the region, I knew them, I am there every year, in that same area,

E: you go back to Narvik?

T-A And I have a cabin that is not far from Márkomeannu

E: So, you do not identify as Sámi?

⁴⁹⁹ I went through all the festival posters with all of them and each of them provided me with important insights which inform my reflections about the contents and the messages enshrined in the posters.

T-A: No, I have some Sámi heritage but it's something that my grandparents did not talk about. My great grandmother, I would call her a Sámi, but not it's kind of not official. So they choose another side of the family tree to focus on, which was Finnish, so they recognized the Finnish heritage. I think they migrated here because of starvation. There was a large migration of Finnish people back in the 1800s. So, on my mother's side I have both Sámi and Finnish blood. So, um, but on my father's side, he is from Lofoten and they were mostly from southern Norway. But, but I grew up in this area in Narvik. But it was taboo to talk about, I remember my grandmother, when my friend chose to wear Sámi gákti she was almost exaggerating how she thought that was ridiculous. Because she wanted that kind of erase it, not embrace that, from which came from. But she did not want to talk about it. Yeah. So that's, that's difficult for many people. And then when you're, when you have a mixed background, but I think that that's why a lot of people can identify with Sámi people without identify themselves as Sámi. So you understand the cultural background and you and if you have some of the same heritage (Tor Åge, interview, 5/6/2019, Tromsø).

As it emerges from this interview, Tor Åge has very close contacts with some of the founding members of the festival and it is through these informal contacts that fall into the personal sphere of friendship that he came into contact with the dimension of the Márkomeannu, and then ended up working on it. for many years (to date, Tor Åge is an established designer who has worked on numerous projects for major organizations and institutions).

Tor Åge already knew the Márkomeannu area as he frequented Gállogieddi as a boy, where his friend had a house. He himself owns a small Cottage in the area and for this reason he has very deep even with the Márka herself. An important element that emerges from this interview concerns the ethnic dimension in a context such as that of Northern Norway, where many have a mixed ethnic background. Through his grandmother, Tor Åge is linked to the Sámi community of Duortnus/Torne. However, as he himself points out, this ethnic identity was not recognized and valued in his family even though everyone was aware of it. This sort of open secret was indeed a source of unease for his family, in particular for his own grandmother Sámi. For this woman (born in the early 1900s), her belonging to the Sámi people was a source of shame and she was the first to criticize those who claimed a Sámi identity. Precisely in light of the dynamics that we have examined previously in this thesis, it is not surprising that she was the grandmother herself the most sceptical person when friends from Tor Åge decided to wear the gákti (Sámi garment) again in public. This excerpt shows us once again the ethno-political dimension of the Sámi identity, and the power that forced assimilation and stigmatization have had in shaping the self-perception of many Sámi.

I would now like to return to the initial topic of this paragraph: the analysis of Márkomeannu's posters. I deem their analysis relevant as I consider them to be emblematic of the context in which they were produced. Hence, by examining them, it is possible to shed further light on Márkomeannu as a festival. Conversely, following Schirato and Webb (2004), I also regard the context as crucial in

decoding the visual content of the posters. Here I shall address only some of the posters (the 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019), highlighting their connections with other forms of Sámi artistic expression⁵⁰⁰. According to some characteristics related to their design: for example, until 2004, the main element of these posters is what Sigbjørn calls 'the little Márkomeannu man', a stylized individual wearing a *gákti* (Sámi garment) which recalls the characteristics of the Márka, and of the Duortnus/Torne-Sámi culture. This detail is particularly evident in the 2001 poster: the little man dominates the poster along with the colours of the Márka-Sámi *gákti* (Sámi costume). In particular, the background and the *gákti* (Sámi garment) blend into each other. The features of the *gákti* are outlined through the use of two other colours, red and yellow, which are the colours that adorn both the hems of the sleeves and that of the tunic and which, in this poster, cross over the borders of the *gákti* to fill the background with colour. In 2003 and 2004, the same image transposed in different contexts. In the case of the 2003 poster, a light blue sky dotted with clouds, the little man is distinguishable among the clouds that form his image in the sky; in 2004 the little man of the Márka shines through the contrasts of colours in the bark of a birch trunk.

Tor Åge, the designer, explains these early posters and their design as follows:

I was not involved in the design of the first poster from Márkomeannu. the first poster was kind of art-piece, made by an artist from the area. And I think they used that poster two times. So yeah, the first poster was, was already there when I started working with them. And I had used this poster twice, I think. they identified with this image, but they didn't want to reuse it and they wanted to make it more modern, but they still wanted to keep the image like so. So I made this image in the sky. So the idea was to use the image of Márkomeannu in the natural environment. So the first two years was based on this image. And the idea of making this image appear as a pattern on a stone, or on the tree. So the next year it was on a tree. And that pattern on the tree was photoshopped to, to give you this image of this happy Sámi man, of course a reference to the original painting. As I mentioned, the challenge was that they wanted something new, but they still wanted to keep the image of the small Sámi man in some way. And so I did make him as the logo for the festival. So when they sign contracts and stuff, they just use that as a logo as well. But every year, the festival has its own profile. So it's changes. But still, you can still tell it's a Márkomeannu festival. Yeah. You know, the style is changing (Tor Åge, interview, 5/6/2019, Tromsø).

⁵⁰⁰ A reproduction of all the available Márkomeannu poster, along with a synthetic description of each poster, is included in the appendix A.



Image 100: 2001 Márkomeannu poster (photo by the author).



Image 101a and 101b: Márkomeannu 2003 and 2004 posters (photo by the author).



Image 102a: 2005 Márkomeannu 2005 poster (photo courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden);



Image 102b: the Joikakaker new packaging, released in 2019, still depicting a stereotyped imaged of Sámi people (image by the author)

The 2005 poster is of particular importance since it merged the previous posters with new symbols. The “little Márkomeannu man”, the central symbol of the 2001, 2003 and 2004 festival posters appears here in its upper part of the box reporting the names of that year festival artists. This very visible position guarantees the establishment of a link between this poster - and therefore this edition of the festival - and the previous posters and, by extension, the relative editions. This visual element though is accompanied by a new iconography: the main element visually dominating the poster is a laughing little man. To understand the true meaning of this image, the context in which this little man is symbolically placed is important. This representation evokes the logo of a famous Norwegian tin-food, the Joikabolle meat-balls. This logo (image n102b) reproduces stereotyped colonial imaginaries of the Sámi. The association the food-company drew between its product and Sámi cultures shall traced back to the ingredients of the meatballs: they contain a practically negligible percentage of reindeer meat. Hence, the company resorted to a stereotypical Sámi iconography as an advertising strategy for its product, aware that, no matter the actual percentage of reindeer meat, Norwegian customers would immediately associate the colonial Sámi iconography with reindeer meat, a dish considered a delicacy.

The logo’s imaginary, however, is deeply rooted in a colonial form of representation. In this regard, the colonial elements are mainly characterized by the representation of the Sámi as happy and naive, almost stupid, little characters. A second key colonially-informed element of the logo is the *gakti* (Sámi costume) depicted in the logo. This *gákti* (Sámi costume) is typical of the Central Finnmark area, where reindeer tending is an important economic activity. There is therefore a further affirmation of the Sámi identity as indissolubly linked to that specific and culturally-geographically delimited Sámi culture, which excludes all other expressions of Sámi identity, both among reindeer herders – for example South Sámi who do not correspond to the proposed geographical profile – and other Sámi who instead live in more northern areas. This is the case for example, of the Duortnus/Torne Sámi who practice reindeer tending but who do not wear that specific costume. A whole section of contemporary Sámi society which does not practice any activity connected with reindeer tending - the vast majority of the Sámi population - is made invisible by the imagery fostered by the logo. Even if these may appear as harmless and even funny images are actually perpetuating dangerous performative stereotypes, which constantly erode Sámi cultures through the repeated reprisal of harmful clichés deeply imbued with colonial rhetoric relegating the Sámi to a position of cultural, and even biological, inferiority. Such rhetoric were also verbally expressed by the food company on its website, where the Joikabolle logo was described as follows: «The red colour and the yellow and black table are inspired by Sámi jackets (*kofta* in Norwegian, *gakti* in North Sámi). The Sámi boy has been drawn by Knut Yran. Yran participated in the world exhibition for drawings in

Berlin and won the competition. From there, the Sámi boy took the road to the Joika box ». (fieldnotes). The expression Sámi boy – Sameguttan – is actually loaded with colonial overtones and is reminiscent of the language used in the USA to belittle Black men, described as “boys” no matter their age (see Mask 2020). The Joikakaker logo represented and was perceived by Sámi people as a form of belittlement, mockery and ridiculization of Sámi cultural expressions fostering discriminatory practices. In 2019, the company selling the Joikaboller (joik meatball). The company's statement concerning a planned restyling of the meatballs packaging led many in the Sámi community to hope for a long-awaited change in the logo not only from a visual point of view but also, in a certain sense, on the ideological level. The hope expressed by many was that the company would withdraw the old logo and replace it with a more culturally neutral one. In reality, however, the restyling announced by the company would have had effects not so much on the logo as on the shape and structure of the package itself: from cans to packages made of paraffin cardboard, the aim being a new and sustainable packaging for the Joika meatballs. When the nature of the planned changes was finally announced, it sparked massive criticism. Many Sámi associations expressed their dissent and so did many private citizens, including prominent people within Sámi society. In just a few days, the situation developed into a very heated debate. In both in traditional media, television but above all in both print and online newspapers, important personalities in the Sámi cultural landscape and the Sámi institutions themselves expressed their opinions. Similarly, the Internet, through Facebook, Twitter and other social media was literally invaded by demonstrations of dissent from Sámi institutions, associations and individuals who protested against the company's decision not to change the design of the logo. Many Norwegian expressed their support towards the Sámi community but, at the same time, many others mocked the Sámi's claim, reducing Sámi protests to a supposed inability to joke and a lack of self-irony. Titles like «The Sámi say no to Nortura's “stereotypical portrayal of the Sámi” on the Joika meatballs» (Kongsnes 14/4/2020)⁵⁰¹ appeared on local and national newspapers and, in a public statement, Christina Hætta, head of the Sámi Council's culture department⁵⁰², expressed her concerns as follows: «The Joika pack reduces the Sámi to caricatures and myth figures. It is about respecting

⁵⁰¹ LOVED AND DISPUTED: For 60 years, Norwegians have eaten Joika cakes. But after a major advertising campaign this winter, a number of Sámi and Sámi organizations have reacted to the name and logo. Does the Joika pack reduce the Sámi to caricatures and mythical figures, or is it offensive hysteria? (Grønneberg 23. april 2020, my translation)

Original text: *Sameguttan kan forsvinne*

Denne maten oppleves diskriminerende. Nå skal Joika-produsenten møte Samerådet.

ELSKET OG OMSTRIDT: I 60 år har nordmenn spist Joikakaker. Men etter en stor reklamekampanje i vinter, har en rekke samer og Sámiske organisasjoner reagert på navnet og logoen. Reduserer Joika-pakningen samene til karikaturer og mytefigurer, eller er det krenkehysteri?

⁵⁰² The Sámi Council is the Sámi non-profit, cultural-political and political co-operation organization consisting of Sámi member organizations in Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The Sámi Council was founded in 1956 and is one of the world's oldest indigenous organizations. One of the main tasks of the council is «to promote and secure the interests and rights of the Sámi and other indigenous peoples».

our culture and our right to define ourselves and how we are portrayed. It is very good that we focus on the environment and sustainability, but in 2020 we should be able to expect an increased focus on cultural sustainability and that commercialization of our culture will also benefit our society» (fieldnotes). The debate lasted for a few months and in the end the company – once reached an agreement with the Sámi Parliament - decided to apologize and to change the design of the logo. Upon reaching an agreement with the Sámi council, the food company publicly commented on the issue: Stavenæs, their spokesperson, stated that: «Words and graphic expressions that were commonplace at the time are experienced differently today, and it is the right decision to change them in line with this. The first thing we will do is remove the illustration of the Sámi boy. We will need more time to change the name itself, which will happen gradually to get the consumer used to a new name. Our products must not contribute to discrimination». It is evident that, without the strong indignation expressed by the Sámi community, the company would have never withdrawn the logo *sua sponte*. In the course of interviews and private conversations, I was able to discuss this episode with some of my interlocutors and I noticed a certain sense of humour towards the whole issue. None of the people I spoke to was surprised by how the issue unravelled and by what the company had initially decided. They were most aware that the imagery reproduced in the logo is so deeply rooted in the non-Sámi collective imagination that many fail to even see the damage such stereotypes cause. In fact, my experience has shown me how many of my interlocutors made fun of the whole story, aware that in reality the problems that this same episode highlighted many times are not understood but rather ridiculed. By relating the 2019 debate with the festival's 2005 poster, it is clear that at the Márkomeannu already in 2005 this very issue was addressed by resorting to irony as a way to address discrimination against the Sámi. By appropriating themselves of a highly visible and easily recognizable logo charged of colonial stereotypes, they not only ridiculed it but they also put forward a political statement by making the Márka-Sámi culture the normative Sámi culture, at least on the poster. The festival staff had commissioned the poster bearing in mind the colonial imagery and used it to tease the actual colonial setting which had inspired the food-company logo in the first place.



Image 103: 2013 Márkomeannu poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).



Image 104a: Suohpanterror 2013 artwork Suohpangiehta (source <https://www.instagram.com/suohpanterror/?hl=it>); image 104b: ‘Rosie the Riveter’ by USA artist J. Howard Miller (source National Museum of American History, access 21/3/21).

In order to understand Márkomeannu's 2013 poster, it is necessary to put it into dialogue with the works of art which had inspired it: Miller's war-time poster 'We can do it!' – and the meanings later associated with it - and Suohpanterror's 'Suohpangiehta'. As Tylerson highlights in her masters thesis (2019), the 2013 poster is a play on one of the earliest work of art by the Sámi art collective Suohpanterror: 'Suohpangiehta'. Suohpanterror's posters are designed with the specific purpose of addressing social issues and denouncing colonial injustice by fostering reflections in their audience. Hence, also Suohpangiehta is charged with multiple meanings. First published on Facebook on 17/6/2013, 'Suohpangiehta' in turn plays on the famous USA war-time poster 'We can do it!' also known as "Rosie the Riveter" by USA artist J. Howard Miller. Miller's poster is today often associated with feminism, an overtone that has been included also in Suohpanterror's artwork. Suohpanterror's use of Miller's iconic poster can be framed within the practice known as culture jamming (Junka-Aikio 2018), where a prior and highly recognizable image is appropriated and reinvented in order to convey a specific set of messages.

Both Miller's propaganda poster and Suohpanterror's 'Suohpangiehta' present a woman, dressed in blue, against a yellow backdrop. Miller's woman dressed in a war-time factory uniform with kerchief on her head while Suohpanterror's lady wears an Inner Finnmark *gákti* (Sámi garment) a sowl and an Inner Finnmark hat. In both images, the lady shows off her bicep but, where Miller's one is depicted as pronouncing the now iconic expression "we can do it", Suohpanterror's one stands under the word 'Suohpangiehta' which translates in English as 'lasso arm'. Tylerson points out the ideological correlations between Miller's and Suohpanterror's works of art, stressing how Miller's poster original meaning - calling for women to enter the workforce while men were fighting at the front, contributing to the war effort through their work (see Honey 1984) – may have been rearticulated by Suohpanterror as a form of modern and indigenous 'call to arms'. In Tylerson view though such a 'call to arms' was not directed at Sámi women in particular. Tylerson contextualise this 'call' within the wider context in which Suohpanterror acts: «While there is no physical war being waged, the proverbial battle cry could refer to the invisible war Suohpanterror view is being waged on the Sámi » (2019: 86) The only written text in Suohpanterror's poster is the expression that gives the name to the work of art: Suohpangiehta. This North Sámi word suggests that the prospective target of the message are (North) Sámi people (Tylerson 2019). On the other hand though, the highly recognizable image upon which this work of art was modelled makes at least part of its message easily recognizable also by cultural outsiders.

Since the 1970s, Miller's propaganda poster – removed from its original context - has been appropriated by feminist groups which transformed "Rosie the Riveter" from a propaganda tool into

an symbolic icon of women's empowerment (Aguierre 2018) and such feminist character is present also in Suohpanterror's work of art. As we can see, the original artwork by Miller has undergone numerous semantic transformation well before been appropriated by Suohpanterror and then Márkomeannu. In this regard, it is important to address the specific target of Miller's propaganda poster: white, middle class women (Honey 1984). Indigenous women and women of colour were hence automatically excluded. This feature charges 'Suohpangiehta' with further meanings, since here the woman is an indigenous Sámi. As Tylerson explains, 'Suohpangiehta' may «be representative of the real feminist movement that is gradually burgeoning amongst the Sámi in the Nordic countries» (2019:87). As Sámi feminist and indigenous scholar Rauna Kuokkanen notices in her numerous publications (1994; 2020) feminism in Sámi contexts is a complex movement grounded in an intersectional approach that takes into account not only gender equality but also self-determination, social justice, cultural heritage, and language rights and environmental causes.

In Márkomeannu 2013 poster, Sámi feminism was indeed the core element Márkomeannu staff wanted to represent, as the designer who made the poster confirmed during an interview: « the message was feminism » (Tor Åge, interview, 5/6/2019 Tromsø) but there is again a strong emphasis on the local dimension through the use of elements that, to cultural insiders, immediately point at the small-scale farming culture of the Márka: the colours and decorations of the *gákti* (Sámi garment) are not identifiable given the neutral colour of the drawing but the hat the lady is wearing culturally identifies her as a Duortnus/Torne Sámi. Furthermore, the poster presents also a reproduction of two tools widely used in farming: a pitchfork and a sickle – reminiscent of the communist symbol 'hammer and sickle' - are included in a stamp-like cameo on the lower left side of the drawing. With reference to the written text, the poster reports details concerning the festival – the venue, the artists, contacts – and like in Suohpanterror's 'Suohpangiehta', here too the only text beside the location (indicated in turn in Sámi) is in North Sámi, in its Márka-Sámi form, and it reads: *giela giela*, i.e. language language.

The 2015 poster brought the political dimension back to the centre of the festival poster: by means of cultural jamming (2018), the festival resorts to a highly powerful image: the Black Power Glove, the Black American winners from the 1968 Mexican Olympic games are here though wearing *gákti* (Sámi garment) drawing a connection between the Black rights movement and Sámi rights advocates. References to the Sámi world are everywhere in the poster: a woman is casting a lasso and the buildings in the background evoke Gállogieddi while a man holding a rake – an inside reference to the 2013 poster- as well as a fence in the lower right corner are all elements that hint at the small-scale farming culture of the Márka.

MÁRKOMEANNU

23.-25.07.2015 | EVENÁŠŠI | SKÁNIK



JON HENRIK FJALLGREN

SOFIA JANNAK SUOHANERROR

YLVA RITOK AILU VALLE IVVÁR MAX MACKHÉ

MIILLAS HOLMBERG & RODEPE MÄENPÄÄ

SARA AJNNAK CAROLA GRAHN ++

Image 105: Márkomeannu 2015 poster (photo by the author).

During Márkomeannu 2019, a French man (one of the only 8 continental European foreigners attending the festivals, included myself) told me the 2015 poster was, in his view, a form of cultural appropriation and that the condition of Black people in the USA and that of the Sámi in Fennoscandinavia cannot be compared. We discussed for a while before he left, the festival camp. Despite I did not agree with this man's position, I decided to bring up this issue with Magnus, the 2019 festival's CEO and he replied to this comment as follows:

It's definitely like a play of other symbols. But I wouldn't call it like cultural appropriation. I think it's kind of of global way to show resistance. That's what's being done. Well, of course, like this. Yeah. I don't know anything about the story for that poster. It was before I joined the festival, but I was in the *cavva* when they made the poster. This is obvious. I'm thinking like, American civil rights movement. Okay, it's fine for me if people think that. But we've tried to make a debate with the posters (Magnus, interview, 11/2/2020 Tromsø).

There is no doubt that, by resorting to the iconic image of Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising a black-gloved fist during the medal ceremony – an act of defiance that went down in history – the festival openly referred to the Civil Rights movement. Nevertheless, rather than an act of cultural appropriation as suggested by the French man at Márkomeannu 2019, its use in the 2016 poster signified that the Sámi – at least those involved in the organization of the festival – sympathize with the Civil Rights movement and feel they can relate with Black activists, since both African-American and Sámi people have suffered marginalization and stigmatization at the hands of the hegemonic sector of the respective states.

The African-American athletes' silent protest during the playing of the US national anthem during medal ceremony was captured by photographer John Dominis. The photo transformed Smith and Carlos's political statements in a and iconic image that soon front-page news around the world (Peterson 2009) and whose power has not faded away, as it use in the Márkomeannu 2016 poster demonstrates.

MÁRKOMEANNU

28.-31.07.16 | EVENÁŠŠI | SKÁNIK



AGNETE JOHNSEN • ELLE MÁRJÁ
ÁGY • FELGEN ORKESTER • ARVVAS • AMOC
MARJA MORTENSSON • RAVGGON
TROUBLEMAKERS • NUORAIÐ SESSIONS
ANJA STORELV • IVAR MURBERG
CAROLA GRAHN

INFO@MARKOMEANNU.NO | MARKOMEANNU.NO

Image 106: Márkomeannu 2016 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

The 2016 poster (see image 106) received a lot of attention and the response was, according to my interlocutors, overwhelmingly positive. They also pointed out how some people protested against it for the message it conveyed and the poster was torn down on multiple occasions. Despite these forms of protests, the poster was an immediate success, soon spreading on social media, also among non-Sámi (fieldnotes). The poster shows two Sámi people kissing in the midnight sun. At closer inspection, one can notice that they are two men. The poster, a hymn to love and equality, openly referred to same-sex relations in Sámi society. A topic that, until then, had not been publicly addressed and was actually often openly avoided⁵⁰³. The concept of the poster was developed the same year as the parish council in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino issued a statement declaring their firm refusal to

⁵⁰³ Since then, a growing number of works have been published on this topic and attention on gender identity and LGBTQ+ issues in Sámi contexts has steadily increased as reflected in the academic literature which also offers reflections about gender identities in Sámi milieux (see Løvold 2015; Olsen T. A. 2015;). There has also been an increasing number of parades, performative works of art, art installations as well as novels by Sámi artists and writers focusing on LGBTQ+ people's situation in Sápmi and related issues (see among others, the Queering Sápmi project, <https://rorosmuseet.no/en/queering-Sápmi> and the book based on the exhibition). In this sense, Márkomeannu has paved the way for discussions around gender identity in Sápmi. The cultural milieu into which Márkomeannu developed has been characterised by discussions on difficult topics, among them gender and queer identity in Sápmi. In this sense, *Ihpil*, the first novel by the Márkomeannu founder Sigbjørn Skåden (2007), was a watershed event. First written as a blog, it was later published as a book. The blog was written in North Sámi, in the Márka-Sámi dialect of the Deartnu/Torne Sámi language. The book was first published in Sámi and later in Norwegian. The main character is a lesbian girl from the Márka, known only as *Ihpil*. As Skåden explains (private conversation), *Láhppon mánáid bestejeaddji*, later translated in Norwegian – *De fortapte barns frelser* (2011) – (*The Savior of Lost Children*). The blog began in August 2007, on *Ihpil*'s first day as a student in Tromsø. The last entry of the blog dates to the day of her tragic death on December 17, 2007. In the blog, *Ihpil* describes her everyday life and her experiences as a Sámi and lesbian girl moving from a small rural community – that of Skåden himself – to the big city of Tromsø. Sigbjørn Skåden's intention was to first create a blog pretending to be a young lesbian Sámi, then create a book based on the blog, and then stand out as the actual writer. The aim of this literary project was twofold: first, the book was an opportunity to contribute to contemporary literature for adults in (North) Sámi. Second, Sigbjørn Skåden wanted to bring to light homosexuality in the Sámi community and encourage a debate on this then widely neglected topic. In the late 2000s, homosexuality was still an almost forbidden topic in Sámi milieux and many LGBTQ+ Sámi people experienced a form of double stigma, epitomized in the blog/book by *Ihpil* who suffers from stigmatization as a lesbian and as a Sámi. Nevertheless, being the blog/book written in (North) Sámi, the readership – and hence the debate – was initially limited to North Sámi speaking Sámi. Given the strong connection between many in the Sámi population and Læstadian tradition, many Sámi are extremely conservative in relation with sexuality and gender identity.



Image 106b: *Láhppon mánáid bestejeaddji* blogpage (access on 7/5/2021).

celebrate same-sex marriage. Given the position of the Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino parish council, the poster was sent to Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino parish office as an act of protest (fieldnotes). Since then, Márkomeannu has always openly supported the LGBTQ+ community (see images 137 and 138) – which has been an integral part of the festival since its very beginning – and many among the staff members identify as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community. With regard to this topic, Anne Henriette told me during an interview that the Sámi community that gathered at Márkomeannu in 2016 fully supported the LGBTQ+ caused epitomized by the festival poster: «we had seen in 2016 when, when Márkomeannu did the queer poster, that entire festival kind of developed into a theme and the artists kind of took it to heart and we had the feeling that kind of stood together all the program posts» (Anne Henriette, Interview 2/3/2021 via zoom). Anne Henriette's insights are of particular importance since Anne Henriette herself one of the three openly gay members of the Sámi parliament along with Mikkel Eskil Mikkelsen and Runar Myrnes Balto, the festival leader of Márkomeannu 2016.

Tor Åge, the designer who created the poster described the genesis of the 2016 poster as follows:

Tor Åge: In 2016 they wanted to do, like, something on the line of the Russian propaganda posters from the 50s or like the Finnish tourists posters from the 60s. And that's the idea of the references that inspired me within this genre. So, in the end, it's a nice kind of 1950s-1960s tourists posters. So, this is beautiful, this composition. this big tree-section as the sun and trees through shadows. It's an open composition with the sun in the center, and the persons here. And I wanted to do it as wood carving look. and then said they liked it, and they wanted these mountains from the area so those mountains are the mountains around the Márka. So the people there would recognize the mountain.

Here the dialogical process between the designer and the festival staff emerges as a key component in the ideation and construction of the poster's design.

And then they wanted the persons in the person to be to male Sámi people kissing. Okay, I think that's a great idea. So then I did the illustration for that: the one person to the left wears the kofte from the Márka, the one from the right wears a *kofte* (the Norwegian word for *gákti*, the Sámi garment) from Kautokeino I think. (Tor Åge, Interivew 22/4/20)

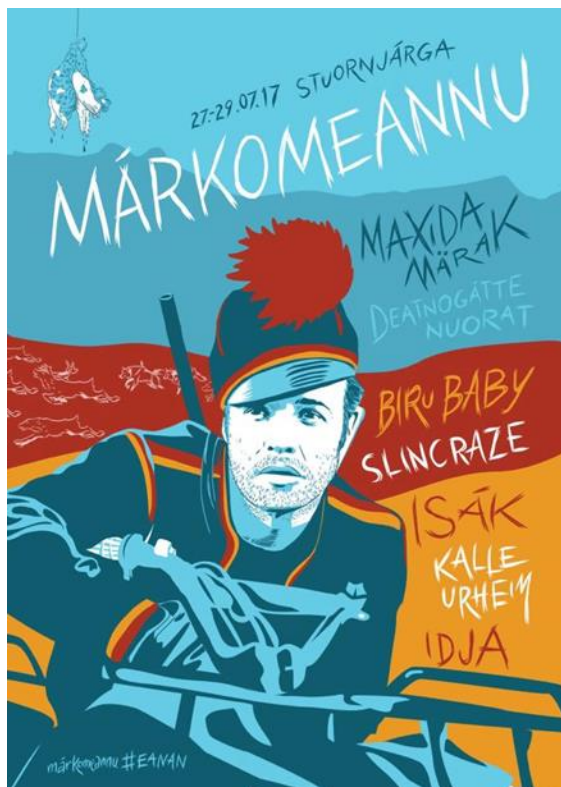


Image 107a: Márkomeannu 2017 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden);



Image 107b: Marlon Brando in 'The wild one', 1953 (open source).

The 2017 edition of the Márkomeannu poster is, like the other posters, rich in symbolism and references to themes deemed important in Sámi milieux. First, it is important to analyse the central element of the composition, namely the man who is leaning against a vehicle that appears to be a snowmobile or a land-water vehicle. This man, holding a rifle on his shoulders, is an evident reference to the iconic figure of Marlon Brando, resemantized in this context to assume the identity of a charming Sámi man with a strong masculinity. Shifting our attention to the rest of the composition, we will notice that the object of the hunt is in the background: a dead partridge hangs in the upper left corner, drops of blood dripping over from her broken wig. The Partridge is one of the symbolic animals of the Arctic and is a very important animal in Sámi cultures. In the background we can also see the silhouettes of a herd of reindeer and those of a pack the wolves chasing them. This detail allows us to contextualize the man as a reindeer tender protecting the herd from wolves. In the background we also see the profile of mountains representing the mountains that surround the festival area. As far as the composition of the poster is concerned, it is also very important to emphasize the use of colours: if the man is portrayed only through a play of light and shadows set on various shades between light and dark blue, the only other colours in the poster are red and orange. As already mentioned, these are the colours that were and are still are used today in the details adorning the hems

of the *gákti* (Sámi garment) and those of the Sámi hat. The hat is fundamental, placed in the geometric centre of the poster and clearly visible above all by virtue of its red pompom. this hat is typical of the Duortnus/Torne Sámi area to which the Márka culturally belongs. Tor Åge, discussing the subject of the poster, explained that:

I just think that just wanted to have the diversity. So now we have the more straightforward Sámi a man hunting and keeping the reindeer safe, and it's in the nature so they want the mountain to be recognizable in the background. They are the mountains around Márkomeannu, the same silhouette. you can recognize them if you squeeze your eyes.

By putting this extract in relation with the analyses of previous posters, the mountains surrounding Gállogieddi emerge as a recurrent theme in the posters. Hence, for the festival staff, these mountains must hold a special position in their understanding of the festival area. This attitude, which emerged again in the 2018 edition of the festival (see chapter 8), fits with what I learnt while carrying out fieldwork in the region. As outlined in chapter 4 (section 4.1.2), the mountains were perceived as a protective element that kept the Norwegians from the coast away from the Márka. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the outline of the mountains far in the distance were not only a familiar but also a reassuring feature of the local landscape and that also young generations associate them with Márka-Sámi identity. Since I have introduced the 2018 edition of the festival – which is addressed in the next chapter – I shall now briefly touch upon that year festival poster (see image n108).



Image 108a: Márkomeannu 2018 festival symbol (Márkomeannu website);



Image 108b: the Márkomeannu 2018 (photo by the author).

During an interview that took place in 2019, Tor Åge explained that, for the 2018 edition, the festival staff had opted for a new marketing strategy at the expenses of the poster which was absent in their original idea. They decided to have one at the last viable moment. In Tor Åge's words:

so, the thing is, they wanted to use all my resources to try to make something different. They used the budget in another way, so they've toned down the poster last year.

last year, they tried to do something radically different with the marketing of the festival, it was linked up to the performance. So the marketing was a part of the performance as well. And this was on the social media with the video, and postings and involvement of the artists. So they were reporting from 2118. In the future, yes. Yes. So this was a very demanding concept. [...]

And then, in the last minutes, they realized, 'Oh, we do need a printed poster as well'. So people don't think it's not happening. So the printed, the physical poster is also important. I think they figured that out so that so they did, they just used the teaser poster and got that printed, so they can have physical appearances in the area. So the poster played at a smaller part in the marketing [compared to previous editions].

According to the designer, the organizers in their initial plan did not foresee having a poster for this edition of the festival. However, with the event approach, they realized the need to also have a paper version of the images they had already released online. It was important the festival visible to a wider public through more traditional channels – by hanging posters in places that guarantee visibility – employed by the festival for years, in addition to the use of social media which in recent years has become increasingly important in organizing and disseminating information about the festival. They then used one of the images already available on the website, making a poster out of it (see image n108). The image reproduces a man wearing the gákti and the Duortnus/Torne Sámi hat, with the pompom on its top. The man's face, however, is not recognizable. The image is made using only three basic colours inspired to the colours of analogic television: light blue, red, and black that relate to the white background. Furthermore, it is as if it had been broken down along many horizontal lines. All these factors contribute to giving the viewer the idea of looking through a screen: the image appears disturbed, as if there was an interference or low signal / connection or bad reception.



Image 109a and 109b: Márkomeannu 2019 poster (<https://rostkommunikasjon.no/>).

The poster of the 2019 edition of the festival was made in two shades of colours, one tending to red and the other tending to purple. The images are reproduced through the alternation between two colours (either pink and red or light and dark purple) and white. This poster was created with the express intent of celebrating the festival's 20 years. For this reason, various subjects of the previous festival posters have been included in the poster, merged with the digitally drawn repositioning of people depicted in photos taken during the 20 years of the festival. The name of the festival interacts with the people hatched in the poster, as we can see in the case of the letter 'o' crossed by a man holding a microphone. We also see various individuals expressing joy by jumping, singing and celebrating. At the visual centre of the composition lies the inscription '20 Jagi', *jagi* being the North Sámi word for years. Around the number 20, we find the subjects of the previous poster festivals interacting with the drawings of real people, in a reciprocal reference between the various editions of the festival and its participants. Some of the subjects of the previous posters can easily be mistaken for real individuals. The identification of all the references to previous festivals was a kind of game that builds on the knowledge of previous posters. Clockwise from above, we can identify: the Sámi hunter from the 2017 poster; the cow from the 2004 poster; the two men dressed in *gákti* (Sámi garment) raising their fists, a reference to the 2014 poster; the street-art style flame of the 2010 poster; the two boys kissing that appeared on the 2016 poster; the woman who squeezes her biceps that appeared in the 2013 poster; the 2012 waymark and, below the waymark, the rubber boot from the 2008 poster. These multiple layers of internal references offer an opportunity to go through the whole

history of the festival by looking at this poster, each symbol representing the edition into which it is collocated.

In this section I discussed the significance of the Márkomeannu posters by addressing their artistic merit and the meanings they convey and the political messages they often carry through content and semiotic analyses. I acknowledge the posters' intrinsic value but I also deem it important to contextualize each of them in their specific historical context. The analysis of the various Márkomeannu posters demonstrate the importance they had not only as part of the festival marketing strategy⁵⁰⁴ – also because Sápmi is, after all, a small place and news travel by word of mouth – but also and especially as programmatic statements that, each year, position the festival in wider debates occurring in Sápmi. By including elements previously excluded both within Sámi contexts and in the colonial dominant understandings and representations of Sámi people, they openly challenge colonial mindsets as well as inter- and intra- ethnic bigotry (cfr the 2016 poster, image n106). These posters are visual texts conveying, to those who know how to decode them - specific narratives. Hence, prior knowledge of the context into which these festivals were produced and which they address is necessary if one wishes to grasp at least partially their meaning.

Furthermore, changes in the topics tackled by the posters reflect the changes the festival has underwent throughout the years. Hence, by understanding how the design and content of these posters have altered over time, it is possible to retrace the evolution of Márkomeannu. This festival started as a small gathering organized by a group of friends with limited economic resources but with strong support from their families, and is now a major pan-Sámi event that receives the support of many major institutions such as the Sámediggi/Sámi parliament. We find here balance between opposed forces: the narratives proposed through these posters hold onto and reinforce well-established narratives concerning Sámi cultures - but they do so at the Sámi own term - while also proposing new narratives concerning both the local Márka-Sámi culture and features transversal to all contemporary Sámi cultures. In the posters, the visual and symbolic elements are preponderant, with written texts reduced to few key information concerning the artists, the venue, contacts, and location. The importance given to the visual component reveals that these posters almost exclusively rely on visual elements to express the festival's theme.

Through pop references, inside jokes, and the use of cultural jamming, the posters reclaim (Márka)-Sámi narratives challenging mainstream perceptions of Sámi cultures and critiquing hegemonic narratives by resorting to humour, wit and provocative images in order to foster positive changes in

⁵⁰⁴ Márkomeannu posters are printed in A3 format and hung throughout Sápmi but they are also uploaded online and posted on various social media (fieldnotes).

society. Hence, these posters can be considered decolonial tools epitomizing the spirit of Márkomeannu. Through forms of symbolic appropriation and deconstruction, as well as through humour, these posters help dismantle commonplaces and stereotypes regarding Sámi peoples.

6.5.6 Márkomeannu: A linguistic landscape suspended in time but anchored in the ground

In the light of the reflections upon place-names provided in chapter 5, the use of the toponym Gállogieddi at Márkomeannu emerges as a self-evident choice charged with deep political meanings.

The toponym Gállogieddi enshrines the local Sámi worldview while also encapsulating information on the location and its features as it refers to the great stone dominating the farm's meadow. In the local variety of North Sámi language, *gallo* alludes to a big erratic rock while *gieddi* in North Sámi for meadow.

Hence, the name Gállogieddi describes the features of the local landscape, constituting an oral map in its own right. Another name once used as a toponym for this area is Gallogoahti. Even if the *gallo* – the boulder – is still the first element of this toponym, signaling its importance as well as its lasting physical and symbolic visibility, this place-name is not modelled upon the meadow – *gieddi* – but a type of semi-permanent Sámi dwelling-place – the *goahti* (turf hut) – which probably once stood where later the farm was built. As both place-names demonstrate, the boulder had a profound significance for the Sámi families who once dwelt in the area during summertime and later, during the late 19th century⁵⁰⁵. This erratic rock is deeply interlaced with non-Christian Sámi cosmologies:

As mentioned in chapter 4, local stories tell that beneath the *gallo* (boulder) lives an *uldda*, an usually non-visible being from the underground. More stories tell of the interaction between locals and the *Uldda* living in the area⁵⁰⁶ and such stories connect the local landscape and its historical (the farm) and topographical (the boulder) elements with Sámi indigenous worldviews. Hence, this name has a strong value, reflecting what Ligi (2016) defines the historical-emotional depth place holds. The unique historical circumstances that shaped the relations between the people living by the coast – by the Márka-Sámi communities have led to the conflictual situation that has characterized the area since

⁵⁰⁵ The first Sámi family who settled in the area in the late 18th century used to live in a *goahti* (turf hut). Only later, at the end of the 19th century, descendants of the first settlers built the wood houses that now constitute part of the Gállogieddi Museum. The ancient *goahti* has now disappeared due to the highly perishable materials it was made of. According to archaeological data and local knowledge, by the 1950s the Márka-Sámi had completely abandoned the *goahti* and moved into Norwegian-style houses (Finbog, 2015) like the main building on the Gállogieddi farmyard.

⁵⁰⁶

the late 1980s and that often manifested themselves through conflicts over individual and collective linguistic choices as well as un/official language policies.

For the festival founders – and once they stepped back, the other organizers – the use of the toponym Gállogieddi in both formal (official posters, leaflets, webpages) and informal (blogs and social media) material concerning the festival has always been an ideological cornerstone that reflects the festival's political undertones. It shall be born in mind that when the festival started and when it was moved to Gállogieddi, heated and often nasty debates concerning Sámi place-names in Sápmi, and in the Nordland-Troms area in particular, were part of people's daily life. The members of the local Sámi youth organization *Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak* – who founded the festival – had actively engaged with the debate in their teenage years and early adulthood. They actually had been involved in this debate since they were children as their own parents were among the activists who demanded Sámi place-names to be again part of the local “linguistic landscape” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) through their adoption on road-signs.

Their concerns over this issue were at the basis of the festival's linguistic policy and, henceforth, its linguistic landscape: the founders worked to make the festival a space that would foster the visibility – and audibility – of the Márka-Sámi language. This attitude was preserved throughout time since, as the producers of Márkomeannu 2018 and 2019 Anne Henriette Reinås Nilut (Interview via webex) and Magnus Storvoll Strømseth (Interview 6/2/19 Tromsø) point out, the organizers still try to resort to North Sámi as often and in as many contexts as possible. As points out «Language is all around us in textual form» (Gorter 2006:1) and, at Márkomeannu, it is Márka-Sámi that is all around in its textual form, shaping the festival's linguistic landscape. Such landscape emerges as a core element of this festival and its relevance lies in the importance linguistic landscapes have in creating a sense of belonging.

Even if, as Gorter explains (2006), people most often do not pay attention to the linguistic landscape surrounding them, at Márkomeannu the linguistic landscape is designed and display so to be noticed and being paid attention to. The linguistic landscape of a place creates and conveys ideas and notions about linguistic and cultural belonging, but also diversity (see Coupland, 2010). In the case of Márkomeannu, the presence and high visibility of North Sámi language, and the subordinate position of Norwegian – visually expressed by the physical position of writings in these languages on posters or signs – fosters a sense of shared Sámi identity and encourages the use of North Sámi. Pachné Heltai and Bartha examined the linguistic landscape of an Aanar Sámi language nest – a nursing school where only Anaar Sámi is spoken – and have described how, by physically placing signs in Sámi

above those in the Finnish, the dominant language in the country, signalled the value attributed to Sámi in the local community (Pachné Heltai and Bartha 2017).

Márkomeannu has always aimed at being a festival, a place and a time suspended from the normal Norwegian-dominated daily life where and when being Sámi is a challenge. Márkomeannu aimed at being a place and time where and when Sámi from the Márka, as well as from all of Sápmi, can easily access their own language, speak it with old friends and new acquaintances, use it in both daily and special activities. The focus on the (Márka) North language as not only a living but also a thriving language makes Márkomeannu a site of “linguistic activism” (Salo 2012). As consequences of assimilation policies in Fennoscandinavia, many are the people who identify themselves as Sámi but who have not learnt the language in their childhood and/or do not speak any Sámi language as their first or second language.

For those who live outside the Sámi core areas, who do not have access to social environments where Sámi languages are spoken and/or have did not have any Sámi language as a language of instruction or a subject, Márkomeannu represent one of the very few opportunities to use Sámi in an informal context, such opportunities being for instance Riddu Riđđu and other Sámi events or gatherings. The importance of (Márka)-Sámi words at Márkomeannu encompasses all aspects of the festival. For instance, elements and buildings are addressed by both organizers and visitors using the Sámi name: Sámi tents for instance are called *lavvu* (see image n110). Similarly, the small turf-hut built around 2010 on the premises of the museum, at a short distance from the main festival area, is referred to with its Sámi name: *goahti*. Language is used during seminars, as part of daily social interactions such as ordering food or drink as well as chats among friends and strangers. Hosts, guests and artists – if they are proficient enough – speak in a Sámi language whenever they can, and often address the public in Sámi first and then in Norwegian and, sometimes, in English. At Márkomeannu, Sámi languages are not just spoken and heard but they are also visually used and displayed. Whenever

possible, buildings, objects and signs are marked in Sámi along with their English or Norwegian translation.



Image 110: The area reserved for journalists at Márkomeannu 2019. The sign reads 'big lavvu' in Márka-Sámi

In 2018 – the first time I attended Márkomeannu – fountains were labelled *čachi* /Vann (water in Márka-Sámi and in Norwegian, see image n112a). A sign with the Sámi term *hivssset* (cfr image n3) indicated the toilets while one with the words *festiválgirjerajus* and, below it, *festivalbibliotek* (festival-library) written on it stood close to the temporary library organized in association with Nordland fylkesbibliotek (the library system of Nordland County (see image n111). Furthermore, not only words but also short sentences appear on the signs erected in the festival area (see images n112b, n113).



Image 111: The sign (in both Márka-Sámi and Norwegian) signalling the festival library at Márkomeannu (photo by the author, 2018).



Image 112a: A fountain, the sign reads 'water' in Márika-Sámi and Norwegian (photo by the author, 2018).



Image 112b: A sign reading 'family camp, be quiet' in both Márika-Sámi and English (photo by the author, 2019).



Image 113: Márkomeannu's landscape; on the lower right corner, a sign in Márika-Sámi and Norwegian reading: walk this way (photo by the author, 2018).



Image 114: The festival kitchen, Márkomeannu (photo by the author, 2018).

Further attention deserves the name of the semi-permanent building hosting the now festival kitchen⁵⁰⁷: *boaššu* (image 114). This word, painted on a big wooden sign, dominated the building. The use of the North Sámi word *boaššu* is a relevant detail since, in this context, this noun functions as a metaphor: it constitutes a transposition of the ancient Sámi daily life into contemporary Sámi cultural events. The word *boaššu* refers to a delimited area within the *lavvu* or the *goathi*. This area lies opposite to the entrance, just behind the fireplace. This space used to have deep cultural and spiritual connotations since it was considered sacred and none could step onto it, women in particular. In some Sámi regions, it was in the *boaššu* that the ritual drum was kept (Spangen, 2016). Furthermore, given its proximity with the fireplace – where the cooking was done – the food used to be stored in the *boaššu*. The *boaššu* was a sort of kitchen, even if the food was actually cooked on the fire. The North Sámi word for kitchen though is not *boaššu* but *kievkkan/gievkkan*. By referring to the festival kitchen with the culturally-charged word *boaššu*, the festival organizers implemented a symbolic transference of the Sámi traditional spatial organization to the festival.

During Márkomeannu 2118, posters from the festival's past editions were hung on the rear walls of the market stands, using the posters to convey a firm political position against colonization and the injustice it fosters. Resorting to street-art graffiti style, the organizers wrote over the poster the following expressions: #ČSV, #2118, #meannu2118, #Ráfi Olggos, “resilience”, “together we rise” (see images n115, n116a, n116b, n117).



Image 115: Márkomeannu 2018 politically charged graffiti (photo by the autor).

⁵⁰⁷ Until 2017, the festival kitchen was hosted in temporary tents (fieldnotes).



Image 116a and 116b: Márkomeannu 2018 politically charged graffiti (photo by the author).



Image 117: Márkomeannu 2018 politically charged graffiti (photo by the author).

These expressions deserve further exam as they represent important mottos in Sámi political contexts. The acronym ČSV is easily identifiable and highly recognizable. In Sámi contexts, even those who do not master any Sámi language know the meaning of these three letters and the message they carry. ČSV developed as a political slogan by the Maze group in the 1980s, during the Alta uprising (see chapter 6, section). The polysemy of this acronym made it a particularly versatile symbol. The most common reading of this acronym is *Čájet Sámi Vuoiŋŋa*, i.e. “show Sámi spirit”. The underlying idea is that, despite the oppression and marginalization endured by Sámi people in the past, today young Sámi can and shall be proud of their cultural background. *#Ráfi Olggos* literally translate as “peace out”⁵⁰⁸ and is a Sámi transposition of this English slang expression. Both Meannu2118 and 2118 were open references to the 2018 festival concept⁵⁰⁹ while Moratorio refers

⁵⁰⁸ For an analysis of the Sámi concept “*ráfi*”, see (Helander- Renvall 2010:49), cfr chapter 4.41.

⁵⁰⁹ As shown in chapter 7, the 2018 festival concept revolved around a sci-fiction plot prefiguring a dystopic future torn by wars and anthropogenic climate change in which the Sámi had found refuge at Gállogieddi (see chapter 7).

to Ellos Deatnu (Long Live Deatnu)⁵¹⁰ indigenous resistance and resurgence movement. On the summer solstice 2017, this movement set up a camp on the island of Čearretsullo in the river Deatnu/Tana not far from the village of Ohcejohka/Utsjoki on the northernmost area of the Finnish side of Sápmi. They concurrently founded the Čearretsullo Siida, and declared a moratorium on recreational fishing in the Deatnu/Tana waters while also proclaiming the island and the surrounding waters as autonomous (Holmberg 2018)⁵¹¹. In their political statements, they declared that no longer the Finnish state but customary Sámi law was to regulate life on the island. As Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkane argues, this declaration of Sámi sovereignty implied that fishing licenses purchased by tourists from the state were considered no longer valid by the members of this activists' *siida*. Hence, those who had purchased the Finnish-issued permits « were expected to ask permission to fish from local Sámi and especially those families whose traditional fishing sites are in question” (Kuokkanen 2021:1)⁵¹². It is interesting and important to point out that a delegation from the Ellos Deatnu movement attended Márkomeannu in 2015 (see image 118).



Image 118: A delegation from Ellos Deatnu movement at Gáalogieddi during Márkomeannu festival in 2017, on the right, Nihlas Holmberg, political activist and scholar, currently member of the Finnish Sámi parliament. The original caption read: #meannu17

⁵¹⁰ The name the movement chose, Ellos Deatnu, evokes the motto of the Alta protests: “Ellos Eatnu”, translated in Norwegian as “*La Elva Leve*” or, in English as “Let the river leave”.

⁵¹¹ The proclamation of the Čearretsullo island’s autonomy is, as Kaikkonen (2020, 2021) the first of its kind as never before a form of protest led by a group of Sámi artists and activists had declared an area as autonomous, claiming Sámi sovereignty. Nevertheless, prior to the Moratorio concerning the Deatnu/Tana waters, forms of art-activism have expressed similar political views. In particular, I refer to the Golden Aja (2015) and Mearrariika (2017) art projects and participatory performances developed in Tromsø by Sámi author and cultural worker Sigbjørn Skåden (among the founders of Márkomeannu), and architect and visual artist Joar Nango. Art activism is an expression coined by art critic Boris Groys, who uses it to refer to art’s capacity to operate as a venue of and a means for expressing social activism and political protest. An important aspect of this specific form of art is, according to Groys, its fluid character and its relatively transitory character embedded in the temporary nature of many of art-activism performances and events (Groys, 2016). As of today, many Sámi artists are engaging in forms of art protest that fit Groys’ definition, see for instance Pile o’ Sápmi by Máret Anne Sara.

⁵¹² <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/life-and-public/2017/07/local-protesters-demand-full-self-determination-over-teno-river-system>

As Gorter (2006) points out, linguistic landscapes are constantly changing and at Márkomeannu, there is no edition like the ones before, or ahead. Every year, the staff makes a festival out of an open-air museum. For a few days, the area is transformed into a site of cultural ferment that find a physical expression not only in the temporary and permanent buildings erected to meet the needs of the festival but also in the banners, posters and signs that cover the whole festival area, making Márka-Sámi visible in the area. The 2010 edition of Márkomeannu was quite *reMárkable* in this respect.

6.5.7 Art in the outer fields

That year the festival staff organized what journalist Marie Elise Nystad (30/7/2010; my translation) defined an «eye-catching (Iøynefallende) protest»: Sigbjørn Skåden – author and cultural worker – and photographer Kenneth Hætta along with artist Hilde Skancke Pedersen and graphic designer Sigurd Kristiansen worked on an art installation that was also a programmatic language project and, ultimately, a language protest. Sigbjørn Skåden selected various Márka-Sámi words (often with a either provocative overtone or working as a cultural “inside joke”) and wrote some short texts in Márka-Sámi. The team then realized more than 50 Sámi art installations which were exhibited on the festival site (see images n 119,121,122) as well as in the surrounding area (see image n123), positioned as far as Narvik and Harstad. This project, which Sigbjørn Skåden named “Lihkahusak” was a tribute to the Sámi language and culture while also being a highly visual and provocative form of linguistic protest against local attitudes against the (Márka-)Sámi language and culture. These art installations contributed to the local linguistic landscape, concretising (Márka-)Sámi language as well as, in some cases, culture-specific concepts. The art installation’s name itself, Lihkahusak, is programmatic and deeply connected with Sámi cultures. The word *lihkahusak*, reproduced also through an art installation on the festival site (see image 119), is Márka-Sámi for North Sámi *lihkadusat*. This is a culturally charged concept originated in Læstadian milieu. It means “movements” and refers to the uncontrolled body motions that Pulkkinen (2005:197) considers powerful physical and emotional manifestations of semi-ecstatic character. Associated with strong spiritual experiences, *lihkadusat* were believed to be the physical manifestations of “sensations of Grace”. People who experienced these states of Grace often wailed and cried. First recorded among Laestadius’ parishioners in 1845, *lihkadusat* appear to have been quite common in the early stages of Læstadianism but, according with Pulkkinen as the years passed and the congregation grew, these phenomena became less common and less marked (Pentikäinen 2005) but did not disappear as Brocchieri’s account of his 1930 journey across the Arctic (published in 1943 under the title ‘*Dall'uno all'altro polo*’) demonstrates .

By naming the project “Lihkahusak”, Sigbjørn Skåden affirmed the connection between the Márka and its cultural, and also spiritual, heritage by openly referring to the Lutheran Pietistic movement into which the ecstatic phenomenon known as *lihkahusak* emerged: Læstadianism.

Since 1848 (see section 4.3.3), when Læstadianism first arrived in the region, this Pietistic movement has been among the defining element of Márka-Sámi identity. Even if it is no longer actively practiced by the majority of the people in the community – especially not by members of the younger generations involved with the festival – Læstadianism is still regarded as a historically relevant part of the local cultural heritage, as the Gállogieddi museum’s display of Læstadian texts demonstrates (see section 4.3.3). Sigbjørn Skåden endowed this term, and the concept it enshrines, with new meanings as he explained in the interview with the NRK journalist Nystad: «you can also get into *lihkahusak* or ecstasy when you are at a Sámi festival» (in Nystad 30/7/2010; my translation). Here the author plays with words and amusingly bestows Márkomeannu with an almost-spiritual aura, comparing the excitement and joy sparked by the festival with the ecstatic episodes manifested by many during Læstadian preaching. It was in light of this multiple readings of this term that he decided to use it as the title of the art installation at Márkomeannu 2010.

Another art installation reproduced the word *čirga* (image 120), “diarrhoea” in Márka-Sámi was located close to the toilets in the festival area. In the interview with Nystad, Sigbjørn Skåden reportedly smiled while explaining that «*Čirga* is the Márka Sámi word for diarrhoea and therefore it is appropriate to have exactly that word placed next to the toilets. *Čirga* is a word that Norwegian speakers in this area also use» (in Nystad 30/7/2010; my translation).

Other words transformed into art installations, among them were *njannji*, *čiermmis* (see image n122) and *ánku* (see image 121). Sigbjørn Skåden the term *njannji* to the journalist through the contextualization of the word. He guided the journalist into finding out the exact meaning of the word by telling her: «at festivals you meet many new people and maybe you also find a *njannji*. You can probably in Norwegian call *njannji* a *festivalkjæreste* (festival girl/boyfriend⁵¹³)» (in Nystad 30/7/2010; my translation). *Njannji* is indeed a Márka-Sámi word used to refer to a partner when the relationship is not (yet) serious.

Čiermmis and *ánku* are two opposite Márka-Sámi terms which, at Márkomeannu 2010, complemented each other: *čiermmis* can be translated as ‘goose bumps’ while *ánku* means anxiety.

⁵¹³ In Norwegian the term *kjæreste* is used as gender neutral even if it formally is masculine. It is usually translated in English as “partner”.

As part of the art installation, both terms associated the festival with the emotions they describe: the goosbumps people feel at Márkomeannu and the anxiety over the future of Sápmi.



*Image 119: 2010 art installation at Márkomeannu reproducing the word *lihkahusak* (photo by Marie Elise Nystad / NRK).*



*Image 120: 2010 art installation at Márkomeannu reproducing the word *Čirga* (photo by Marie Elise Nystad / NRK).*



Image 121: 2010 art installation at Márkomeannu reproducing the word *áŃku* (photo by Marie Elise Nystad / NRK).



Image 122: 2010 art installation at Márkomeannu reproducing the word *čiermmis* (photo by Marie Elise Nystad / NRK).



Image 123: 2010 art and language installation in Stuornjårga (photo by Marie Elise Nystad / NRK).

All the textual elements examined in this paragraph (signs, posters, art installations) are intrinsically temporary since they are used and displayed only during the festival week. For those few days, these texts dominate the area, signalling the Sámi profile of not only the festival and the people connected with it but also the Sámi identity of the area and its inhabitants. Nevertheless since 2010 more permanent elements contribute to increase the Sámi elements in the local linguistic landscape: in 2010, not far from the museum's main house, the new stage was built. The stage bears the name of the festival in big capital letters carved out of colourful wooden panels. The sign 'Márkomeannu' symbolically stands at the centre of the stage and, from that vantage point, dominates Gállogieddi. In 2012, a further permanent element was erected: the waymark discussed in section 4.5.6. and reproduced also on the festival poster for that year edition. This wooden structure reports Sámi toponyms and the distance between their locations and Gállogieddi, whose name is reported on a wooden plaque at the very top of the waymark. As mentioned in section 4.5.6, this waymark was designed while – and as an answer to – a heated debate over place-names that was raging across the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Since 2012, this waymark has been a permanent, visible reference point becoming one of the symbols of the festival and of the place it stands for.

In the light of the reflections presented above concerning the display of written Márka-Sámi language at Márkomeannu, and the ideological reasons behind the use of Márka-Sámi in all possible written – as well as spoken – contexts the Márkomeannu festival linguistic landscape emerges as decolonial strategy implemented over a long period of time. People are encouraged to use the Márka-Sámi words in the festival context, even if they do not master the language. Being surrounded by these words, written in the context into which they are usually used (the food list in the festival kitchen, the word for water close to the fountains, the term for toilet nearby the portable toilet) also helps people memorize them, fostering language knowledge among festival-goers.

The aim of the festival organizers is to endow the local Márka-Sámi language with social prestige and hence, foster pride in its speakers. This is especially important in a community such as that of the Márka, where the Márka-Sámi language had long been a divisive issue among the members of the community. It is also relevant with reference to the multilingual and multicultural context of Stuornjárga – the peninsula where the Márka is located – where Norwegian language has been associated with social prestige due to the state-led norwegianization process.



Image 124: Márkomeannu's main stage, on the right, the waymark (photo by the author, 2018).

As shown in the previous paragraphs, there is a close correlation between art - in its various forms - and Márkomeannu festival. Each year the festival staff selects an artist or group of artists and

commission one or multiple pieces of art for an on-site exhibition. In 2010 the exhibition focused on the Sámi language of the Márka and was a form of protest-art aimed at denouncing local attitudes against the Sámi language and culture and, for this reason, it can be considered an expression of art-activism. This protest-art exhibition shows the entanglement between art and politics in Sámi contexts, an issue that emerged multiple times at Márkomeannu.

In 2015 the anonymous artist and artist (art-activist) group Suohpanterror took part to the festival with an exhibition “A fighting spirit – Ei ukuelig ånd” (an indomitable spirit). Suohpanterror is an important art collective active on the Finnish side of Sápmi which held exhibitions in Helsinki, Inari, Utsjok, Tampere, Mänttä and Oulu in Finland. In addition, Suohpanterror took part to the traveling exhibition Gállok Protest Art⁵¹⁴, which has toured in Sweden and Finland and which centred around art as protest against the mining activities on the Swedish side of Sápmi (Cocq 2014). The collective also participated to the traveling exhibition Sámi Contemporary. The Márkomeannu 2015 exhibition was of particular importance since it was the first time Suohpanterror had a separate exhibition on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. As Junka-Aikio (2018) explains⁵¹⁵, the art of Suohpanterror addresses the Sámi fight for rights while also making, through art, a strong stance against the exploitation of natural resources in Sápmi. Humour is one of the key characteristics of Suohpanterror artistic expressions which, along with the use of a technique known as culture-jamming, makes their works of art visually strong and easily decodifiable while also being rich in symbolism and inside jokes.

In 2017 Márkomeannu hosted the exhibition #EANAN, to which contributed some of the most important and famous artists on the Sámi sculpture and installation art scene. On that occasion, artists Unn Kristin Laberg from Liland, Katarina Pirak Sikku from Jokkmokk, Matti Aikio from Vuotsu, Joar Nango from Alta and Anders Sunna⁵¹⁶ from Kieksiäisvaara installed a series of more or less permanent art-pieces not only in the festival area but throughout the Márka. These artists come from different sides of Sápmi and belong to various distinct Sámi cultures. By exhibiting their installations, Márkomeannu contributed in bringing these different sides of Sápmi together. Throughout the years, the contribution of well-established Sámi artists has made Márkomeannu and by extension

⁵¹⁴ In 2013 activists built barricades and obstructed miners' work with their own bodies at Gallok/Kallak, a site just 45 kilometres outside Jokkmokk, where the British mining company Beowulf was opening a new mine. Scholars such as Cocq (2014) have demonstrated the similarities between these protests and the fight in Alta, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi between 1979 and 1981. In both cases, Sámi people found the support of environmental groups from all over the world but, during the Gallok protests, great international participation has been mobilized through Facebook and Twitter, showing the importance of social media in contemporary Sámi contexts.

⁵¹⁵ As of 2020, limited works have addressed this specific anonymous art collective. Among them, besides Junka-Aikio (2018), in 2019 Lydia Tylerson wrote a Masters thesis on the indigenous narratives are conveyed by Suohpanterror in their works.

⁵¹⁶ Anders Sunna and Máret Anne Sara, along with Pauliina Feodoroff will represent Sápmi at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, transforming the Nordic Pavilion into the Sámi Pavilion (www.e-flux.com 14/10/2020) <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/345905/indigenous-artists-transform-nordic-pavilion-into-smi-pavilion/>

Gállogieddi, a prestigious leading place for contemporary Sámi art. Emerging artists who exhibit their works there can find a welcoming and stimulating space but also an audience interested in their works. For these reasons, this festival has become an important cultural and artistic arena. This is even more important if we take into account the role of art as a tool of protest. The works of the anonymous collective Suohpanterror, along with that of Máret Ánne Sara, author of *Pile o’ Sápmi* (Hansen 2019), show that art has become an important venue for expression of wider concerns over access to resources, recognition of rights, language policies. Tension now are often poured into and expressed through art.



Image 125: Anders Sunna’s art installation at Márkomeannu 2017 (photo: Anders Sunna’s Instagram account).

In light of the reflections and considerations I proposed in this section, and taking into account the specific features of this festival, throughout the years Márkomeannu has become a *locus* for creative, oppositional activism against inter- and intra-ethnic marginalization. By celebrating the local Márka-Sámi culture, the festival challenges both hegemonic Norwegian society and hegemonic tendencies within Sámi society. It is also a *locus* of cultural creativity (Bonato 2019) and a time when shared experience help nurture intra-Sápmi relations. Here activism and art merge, fostering experimentation and cultural activism. Furthermore, by becoming a reference point in the festive calendar of Sápmi, it managed in fulfilling one of its founders' aspiration: 'putting the Márka on the map'. The festival acts as the engine of a decolonization "from within" of this border area, claiming the centrality of an area long considered marginal both metaphorically and physically by Norwegians and other Sámi alike.

This festival though shall not be addressed without considering the wider context in which it was developed. The cultural work and the political activism of many Márka-Sámi during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s created a favourable context for a festival to flourish. Furthermore, also the family and friendship relations played a major role in the development of a Márka-Sámi festival since many of the festival founders were children of activists and activists themselves. It can be said that the cultural milieu in which the festival founders found themselves – both in the Márka and in Sápmi – has enabled the festival founders to embark on a project that led to the establishment of one of the most important festivals in Sápmi. Once this festival is put in relation with other achievements on the side of Márka-Sámi people – for instance the kindergarten or the Várdobáiki cultural centre but also language projects and so on – they all acquire a deeper dimension and, as pieces of a jigsaw, they form wider picture of cultural thriving that can be considered an expression of cultural efflorescence.

Given the strong connections between Márkomeannu and the local political organizations and the personal involvement in politics on the part of its first organizers, the festival has had a strong political character since its very beginning. Such overtones became a characteristic of the festival and were reinforced throughout its various editions, allowing young Sámi people of the region (residing in the Márka or elsewhere) to tackle important and controversial issues such as Sámi identity, political activism, gender identity⁵¹⁷, the role of women in Sámi societies, and, recently, climate change, as suggested by the festival posters.

⁵¹⁷ Márkomeannu was one of the first arenas where gender was publicly discussed within Sámi cultures.

6.6 Isogaisa

Isogaisa was a festival with a marked Sámi profile commonly known as a “Sámi shamanic festival” and as such it was advertised on social media and on the festival website (<https://isogaisa.org/>). Founded by Ronald Kvernmo in 2010, this four-day event focused on Sámi non-Christian worldviews merged with elements derived from the New Age movements. Isogaisa has attracted the interest of many researchers and scholars such as Trude Fonneland (2015a, 2015b, 2015c; 2016;2017a, 2017b;2018) and Siv Ellen Kraft (2009; 2015; 2020a; 2020b) (Fonneland & Kraft 2014) have published extensively on both this festival and other events or phenomena connected with what they describe as Sámi Neo-Shamanism. Furthermore, this topic has been addressed also by other scholar who have examined both Isogaisa Festival and how Sámi non-Christian worldviews have become a repository of meaning in sections of contemporary Sámi cultural expressions (Lewis 2015) (Brattland 2016) (Äikäs et al. 2018).

6.6.1 Neo-Shamanism, an overview

Before addressing the neo-shamanic festival Isogaisa, it is necessary to delineate the concept of neo-shamanism, even though defining “neo-shamanism” means addressing a challenging terminological and epistemological issue that is beyond the scopes of this thesis. Nevertheless, I shall outline some core features pertaining to this concept in order to contextualize the discussion about neo-shamanism in Sápmi. Neo-shamanism is a term formed by the prefix ‘neo’ meaning new and shamanism, in turn a derivation from shaman, a western term constructed upon an emic definition used among Siberian Tungstic people to define their ritual specialists. The word English word ‘shaman’ derives from the Tungus ‘šamān’. This term originally referred to the religious specialist of today Siberia indigenous societies. This term reached Europe through travel literature and through the accounts the Old Believers, religious dissidents who had traveled to Siberia to escape persecution (Zola 2008). The introduction of the term ‘shaman’ into European and hence western intellectual culture shall be traced back to the works of German explorers and scientists who had travelled to the eastern regions of Russia during the 18th century (Znamenski 2004).

If Orthodox priests and early Russian researchers and doctors identified the shaman respectively as a quack, as an agent of anarchic religious form belonging to ‘primitive societies’ or as a mad-man, later anthropologists considered shamans as individuals with a specific ritual role in their community. In 1903 Van Gennep addressed the figure of the ‘shaman’ criticizing the idea of shamanism as a religion’ and he explained this as follows: « There can be no more question of shamanistic beliefs than of shamanic cult, therefore of shamanic religion. The reason why is simply that this word does

not designate a set of beliefs expressed in a set of practices, but asserts only the existence of a certain kind of man who plays a social and religious role» (Hamayon 1993). Similarly, in 1907, Kroeber traced a connection between what he considered to be the evolutionary stage of a people and the importance of a the local ritual specialist whom he defines a 'shaman' (Pharo 2011). Western interest towards indigenous practices and ritual systems where the ritual specialist can be described with the term 'shaman' as characterized numerous disciplines. As Flatberty shows, during the 18th century European fascination with shamanism later influenced a wide range of disciplines included but not limited to ethnography, philology, archaeology, aesthetics, philosophy and theology (1992) as well as early 20th century psychology, as Jung's personal interest in shamanism demonstrates (Atkinson 1992).

Since the 1980s, there has been a renewed academic interest in the field of shamanism studies and cultural anthropology has critically addressed and deconstructed shamanism as category, warning against the risk of reification. In this respect, Atkinson points out that ethnographic approaches are crucial when discussing 'shamanism' since it is only by grounding analyses in their specific contexts that is possible to avoid that reductionist and romantic exoticizations of heterogeneous phenomena into a 'homogenous other'. 'Shamanism' is indeed a phenomenon that is deeply embedded in the systems of practice and knowledge of the culture into which it emerges (Atkinson 1992). Scholars have highlighted the fact that shamanism, as a category, is a western academic construction that reflects, in the changes that this term has undergone, the various currents that have crossed the disciplines – such as anthropology and history of religions – that have dealt with it (Taussig 1987).

The expression 'neo-shamanism', introduced in the academic literature by Hamayon (1993), is today used to define a wide set of ritual practices - mostly but not exclusively performed by Western people - inspired by and built upon rituals practiced by shamans, healers, medicine doctors and other ritual specialists among various indigenous societies. Hammer (2015) has shown how certain texts produced within the context of academia (first of all, the works of Eliade and Harner) have reached a wide non-specialist audience, becoming an important source of inspiration with regard to self-discovery. Non-specialists' interpretation and implementation of what they read in these texts (used as manuals) formed the basis for the development of local forms of neo-shamanism through a process of reinvention of tradition, at least in the Nordic context (Hammer & Lewis 2007). DuBois identified in the study of the use by neo-shamans of ethnographic data or of key texts such as the work of Eliade as one of the most promising themes in the discipline of the history of religions (2009).

Both neo-shamanism and indigenous practices framed within the umbrella term 'shamanism' have received the attention of researchers, especially anthropologists. Academic interest on neo-

shamanism has focused on different geographical areas and on some specific issues: The topics most examined are healing, narratives, music, genre, ethnobotany and material culture. In DuBois's view, it is precisely the theme of healing that has been most successful at the academic level. According to Dubois, the study of ancient shamanic practices and the systems of knowledge into which they were collocated has also enjoyed considerable academic success (2010). Basing the exam of ethnographic cases Many are the scholars who, throughout the years, have address 'shamanism', Indigenous ritual practices and 'neo-shamanism' in both new context and among indigenous peoples who merged indigenous ritual forms with element derived from Castaneda's and Harner's speculation, (see and Hultkrantz 1973). Other scholars, among them Levi Strauss, have rather focused on the structures of what came to be known as shamanism. Countless studies have been devoted to the Siberian (see among al. Vajda 1964 Lindquist 2005; Zola 2008, Sundström 2012), Arctic (see for instance the works of Tanaka 2000 with reference to the Ainu context, Rydving 1993, Hage for the Sámi one), South American (among al. Praet 2009) and Native American (among al. Comba 2012) as well as aboriginal Australian contexts. Nevertheless, also eastern Asian practices – for instance in south Korea (among al. Kim 2018) or Japan (among al. Zanetta 2017) – have been addressed by scholars interested in shamanic phenomena.

Neo-shamanism originated during the second half of the 20th century and the works by Mircea Eliade, Carlos Castaneda, and Michael Harner have been extremely influential in the development of this new form of religious practice. In 1951, the Romanian-born historian of religions Mircea Eliade published 'Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy' in which he examined various ritual and religious phenomena. In this text, he delineated shamanism as a form of primordial and universal religion which had in the journey of the soul its most important and defining feature. Eliade's work, albeit criticized by numerous scholars concerned about the consequences of extending the Tungus emic term for 'ritual specialist' to other context, became a reference point for generations of people interested in shamanism. Among them, Castaneda and Harner. As Von Stuckard highlights, (2002), Castaneda - a Peruvian-born USA citizen who held a PhD in anthropology - published in 1968 *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*, the first of a series of books in which he described his alleged apprenticeship with a man supposedly named Don Juan Matus. According to Castaneda, Don Juan was a Yaqui Indian from northern Mexico who was well versed in the local traditional ritual practices. Castaneda's work enjoyed widespread success among non-specialist readers despite the doubts anthropologists and other scholars held concerning the accounts he recounted in his books. With his publications, Castaneda contributed in assembling culturally specific ritual practices into a-cultural set of practices that anyone could perform in total autonomy. This element is of extreme importance since it is among the core features that fundamentally distinguishes

neo-shamanic practices from indigenous ritual practices categorized according to Western criteria to the western-constructed category of 'shamanism'. In those societies that practice(d) 'shamanism', becoming a ritual specialist was not a personal choice. Rather, individuals were 'chosen' by the 'spirits' – through specific signs and often against the will of the chosen person - and had to undergo a challenging training before being acknowledged as a ritual specialist by the community.

Another trained anthropologist, Michael Harner, inspired by Castaneda's a-cultural or super-cultural shamanism, developed what he called 'Core Shamanism', first proposed to the public in his 1980 book 'The Way of the Shaman'. As Castaneda before him, Harner based the book on his allegedly experiences with South American ritual specialists. He also disclosed that he consumed hallucinogens during his stay among indigenous South American 'shamans'. Harner used this term when referring to spiritual and ritual specialists of numerous indigenous groups where such specialists are defined with indigenous emic terms. In his works, Harner removed practices, rituals and other elements from their cultural contexts, depriving them of their original meanings and functions while making them available to wide audience, fostering forms of cultural appropriation. Harner has founded a school – the Foundation for Shamanic Studies - where he teaches core shamanism. He also travelled extensively, holding seminars and workshops across the world (von Stuckard 2002). Since the late 20th century, numerous neo-shamanic movements developed throughout the world, merging the offered in Castaneda's and Harner's books (but also often relying on Eliade's work) with elements belonging to culturally specific religious or spiritual traditions (cfr Lindquist 1997). According to Von Stuckard, these new phenomena share a specific common leitmotiv: they are all centred on Nature (2002), a feature that is even more relevant since, as Lindquist (1997) and Bužeková (2010) highlight, contemporary neo-shamanism mostly develops in urban context (see also Fonneland 2017). As DuBois (2010) points out, indigenous communities around the world have attempted to restore indigenous ritual practices that have disappeared due to the violent encounter with colonial authorities. In some cases, members of indigenous peoples which – prior to enforced conversion to the religion of the hegemonic society that colonized them – practiced indigenous and culturally situated forms of 'shamanism' attended Harner's courses, using this new form of knowledge to construct an indigenous-inspired form of neo-Shamanism, as it is the case of Sámi contemporary shamanism (see Fonneland 2017). In these contexts, neo-shamanism has emerged as a symbol or instrument of a particular cultural identity. DuBois inscribes these processes as expressions of cultural revitalization.

In the context of Sámi studies, many are the scholars who studied Sámi indigenous worldviews and the practices of Sámi ritual specialists: the *noaidi*⁵¹⁸. (see among others Hagen 2005, 2006, 2006b, 2015; Ligi 2019; Pentikäinen 1987, 1987b, 2010; Rydving 1995, 2010). Hagen has studied the proceedings of some trials against men and women identified as witches for being Sámi ritual practitioners or *noaide*. These trials took place in the 17th century in Finnmark. Pentikäinen is one of the leading contemporary experts on Sámi drums. Following in the footsteps of Manker (he) he dedicated himself to the study of Sámi cosmology through the examination of the symbols present on the skin of the drums. Rydving devoted himself to the study of Non-Christian Sámi religions between the Western Sámi and the Southern Sámi with particular attention to the moment of transition to Christianity (17th and 18th centuries).

Although some authors also use revivals in reference to Sámi neo-shamanic practices (Kraft 2015), the application of this term to the Norwegian context is controversial. In the Fennoscandinavian context, it has become evident how media, museums, festivals and music are vehicles for the transmission of knowledge related to Sámi neo-shamanism (Christensen 2015, Mathisen 2015, Fonneland 2015, Kraft 2015). Neo-shamanism acquired has a profound ethno-political dimension for those Sámi people who either identify themselves as shamans or perform practices inspired by Harner's core shamanism and articulated through Sámi lens. As for the main differences between neo-shamanism and traditional Sámi *noaidevuohta*, the fundamental elements are the following:

1) The role of the ritual specialist has undergone profound changes: in the practice known in Sámi as *noaidevhuota* (the crafts of the *noaidi*) the *noaidi* had a very specific and important role within society (Solbakk 2015) while contemporary (neo-)shamans work on an individual, do not have a role of prominence in Sámi communities and their positions as ritual specialists is not acknowledged by wider Sámi society.

2) The conception of spirits has changed radically. In the traditional Sámi worldview, spirits are considered extremely powerful and potentially dangerous entities. In the (neo-)shamanic conception, on the other hand, spirits are represented as benign entities that help and assist the shaman. This resemantization of spirits has also led to a transformation of the relationship of power that is

⁵¹⁸ The North Sámi term *noaidi* (Southern Sámi: *nåejttie*, Lule Sámi: *noajdde*, Kildin Sámi: *noojd/nuojd*, Ter Sámi: *noijte*, Skolt Sámi: *nōjjd*) is cognate with Estonian *nõid* and Finnish *Noita* as well as with Ingrian *noita*, Karelian *noita*, Veps *noid*, Võro *nõid*, and Votic *nõita*. The origin the Sámi *noaide* and cognate terms have been traced back to a hypothetical Proto-Finnic **noita* (ritual specialist). Through their shared stem, these words are connected with the idea of seeing (cf contemporary Finnish *nähdä*, Estonian *et näha*, both meaning 'to see'). As Kallio (1997) explains, the *noaidi* were those who mastered the art of seeing spirit (*noaiddaseapmi* in North Sámi). In Finnish, the term *noita* has undergone a semantic shift and today is used mainly with the meaning of 'evil-working sorcerer'.

established between the spirits and the shaman. Within the traditional Sámi concepts, the *noaidi* was considered the master of spirits. His power came precisely from the spirit helpers he dominated (Hammer 2015). The *noaids* were chosen by the spirits themselves or inherited their powers from their relatives (Solbakk 2015) The power of the (neo-)shaman instead would reside in the neo-shaman himself and, potentially, all humans could become shamans (Hammer 2015).

3) One of the most important elements in (neo-)shamanic narratives is the importance of continuity, true or ascribed, with the practice of *noaidevuohhta*. Ancient symbols and practices have undergone a process of re-semanticization aimed at legitimizing both religious movements and political claims on ethnic grounds. Traditions, symbols and traditional practices have been reused in an identity key. The literature offers numerous analyses of case studies in which processes of legitimation, traditionalization and authentication emerge (Kalvig 2015, Fonneland 2015a).

The use of the term ‘shaman’ to refer to the *Noaide* risks reiterating the imposition of external categories and meanings which did not pertain to the cultural phenomena associated with the original set of practices, rituals and knowledge systems onto which the ritual specialist positioned himself, but which conveyed notions intrinsic to the western understanding of word shaman. Translation is not a mere transposition of terms from one language to another. By translating words, there is an attempt at translates worldviews and ontologies, often in a misleading way. The attempt by Western scholars to categorize foreign, ‘exotic’ phenomena and practices often results in translations which, instead of describing the other, essentialize and simplify it making it understandable to the Western gaze. (Lefevere 2002).

6.6.2 Isogaisa, a festival at the intersection between Sámi indigenous worldviews and core shamanism.

The name Isogaisa⁵¹⁹ is a north Sámi term referring to a sacred mountain. The festival was first held near the military base in *Istindportalen*, Bardufoss (Fonneland 2015a). Since 2013, Isogaisa is held in Loabák /Lavangen in the southernmost part of Troms County, a region which, as illustrated in chapter 4, had been the target of systematized missionary activity and which, in the early 18th century, was visited by the famous missionary Thomas von Westen. Traces of the Sámi non-Cristian practices are still present in the local oral traditions and the recovery of the Hilsa drum (made between 1680 and 1765 when the worst witch hunts in Finnmark were already over) proves that, even after the

⁵¹⁹ *Gaisa* is a North Sámi word for mountain.

official conversion to Christianity, local Sámi were still engaged in non-Christian spiritual activities (Fonneland, private conversation).

On the festival web-page, the festival founder described Isogaisa as follows:

What is Isogaisa? Isogaisa is a mountain, a goal in the distance. A wish to experience something beautiful, something indescribable. The Isogaisa festival is a social meeting place, where different cultures blend. The old Sámi spiritual way of seeing the world is combined with modern ways of thinking. Indigenous people present their own culture and then take part in the performances of other groups. In this way shamanism is brought to a higher level and achieves broader professional content. (<https://festival.isogaisa.org/> access 2/5/2018)

From this description we can grasp what the founder and the organizing members wanted to create when they first arranged Isogaisa. The event was designed as a festival centered around Sámi non-Christian worldviews merged with “modern ways of thinking”, providing a hybrid spiritual experience where different cultural traditions blended and enrich each other. Interestingly, this incorporation of different spiritual approaches is seen as a way of consolidating and strengthening shamanism. The festival aimed at becoming a symbol of continuity between past indigenous Sámi ritual practices and worldviews and modern expressions of Sámi-inspired spirituality. Sámi (neo)Shamanism, sometimes also referred to as Contemporary Sámi shamanism (Fonneland 2017), is a relatively recent phenomenon only partially connected to the old Sámi Systems of Beliefs. People who practice it tend to be called shamans even if the word *noaidi* (the Sámi spiritual specialist in ancient non-Christian Sámi societies) is also used.

Contemporary shamanism in Norway is a complex and dynamic phenomenon in which Norse, Sámi and Foreign worldviews have become sources of meaning. Contemporary Sámi shamans base their practices on elements derived from ancient Sámi cultures (worshiping indigenous gods and spirits such as the Ulddat and Gufithar) blended with elements and practices borrowed from other spiritual traditions. Sámi past and its ritual practices are a source of inspiration and for many represent a way to reconnect with their own Sámi ancestors, becoming, as Fonneland highlights, a strategy to assert affiliation and a way to relate with their own people’s past (2017). For shaman practitioners who self-identify as Sámi, resorting to non-Sámi practices was necessary since very little is known about non-Christian Sámi religions. The sources available are related only to some areas and are all the result of the work of Lutheran missionaries whose task was to convert the Sámi. Many of their accounts interpret Sámi practices in a Christian way (possession, the work of the devil, sorcerers). The drums (whose surfaces were painted) that were used for divinatory practices were requisitioned and often destroyed (for example left to sink in lakes) or sent to Copenhagen, the capital of the Danish Empire

to which Norway was a part. The drums stored in Copenhagen were destroyed in a devastating fire. Some drums preserved in other locations (museums and institutions) were saved and their decorated surfaces are today one of the most important iconographic sources from which shamans (but also the Sámi in general) draw inspiration for contemporary Sámi iconography.

As Fonneland (2017) and Kraft (2015) have highlighted, when it first appeared in Norway, contemporary shamanism was very much a reproduction of Harner's core shamanism and it was not initially linked to Sámi culture. It was only after 2005 that New Age movements inspired by Harner's Core Shamanism acquired a more specific Sámi character thanks to the work of Ailo Gaup, a Sámi man from inner Finnmark who grew up in a non-Sámi family in Oslo and, as part of his personal spiritual path to reconnect with his own Sámi heritage, studied with Harner⁵²⁰. He later developed an independent shamanic school, based in Oslo and named *Saivo* after the North Sámi word for "the land of the dead" (Fonneland 2018). Today numerous local small, more or less structured, organizations are present in many towns and cities across Norway and, in 2013 the "Sjamanistic Forbund" (Shamanic association) has been granted the status of religious denomination. As Fonneland highlights, Sámi-inspired shamanism is characterized by fluidity and festivals or other gatherings represent focal moments for people to meet, exchange information and perform rituals on a collective base (2017). The social Media (Facebook in particular) have become important virtual meeting places where people from all over Norway discuss and share information and knowledge. Courses and workshops are held all over the country and shamanic festivals constitute a meeting point for shamans and people who are interested in this contemporary form of spirituality. Even if Isogaisa has a distinct Sámi character (Fonneland 2017), many of the people who attend the festival are not Sámi. Moreover, even if the main aim is to resort as much as possible to the ancient Sámi worldviews as sources of meaning, the festival does not exclusively focus on Sámi shamanism nor on the ancient practices of the *noaidi* (Sámi ritual specialist).

At the festival Isogaisa, Sámi shamanism is listed and marketed as both entertainment and as an important tool for self-development (Fonneland 2017). Isogaisa is also an international festival: not all the shamans performing official ceremonies identify themselves as – and are recognized as – Sámi and some guests and practitioners travel from abroad to join Isogaisa which indeed is well-known in

⁵²⁰ Once the school was established, some Sámi interested in *noaidevuotta* (the arts of the *noaidi*) learnt the principles and practices of contemporary Sámi shamanism from Gaup. Eirik Myrhaug and Ronald Kvermo did indeed study at Gaup Saivo school and both are today prominent figures in Sámi contemporary shamanism. Gaup had been a point of reference for Sámi contemporary shamans until he passed away and even now, years after his death, he is regarded as the most important contemporary Sámi shaman. His name was evoked multiple times throughout the Isogaisa festival and his memory and teachings are very much alive among the people who met him.

the new-age milieus in and out of Norway⁵²¹. Furthermore, ritual and spiritual elements originating in other indigenous contexts are incorporated into the festival. Such elements were considered as an enrichment to the festival, to the individual festival participants and as a way to strengthen inter-indigenous connections. For instance, Erena – a Maori ritual practitioner – performed numerous individuals ceremonies and was also among the ritual specialists who carried out the opening and closing sacred ceremonies (See image n127).

The festival is articulated in a series of rituals, activities and performances. The rituals took place both outside and inside the The Oktagon, which was the main semi-permanent structure at Isogaisa. It was composed by four big *lavvu* (Sámi tents which, in this case could host up to 100 people each) connected to each other through a big central tent organized around a central holy fire. The orientation of the structure is inspired by the principles of the “medicine wheel” and so are the rituals and their organization. The four *lavvu* were orientated according to the cardinal points and each cardinal point (see image n129) represented a natural element. The rituals (at least the ones I took part in during my fieldwork) are usually standardized and have recurring elements: fire, drums, playing circles, and invocations to divinities. Common are the “drum journeys”.



Image 126a and 126b: Isogaisa festival 2018. Shamanic practitioners by the fire in the Oktagon, warming up the skins of their drum, to tighten them up before a drumming session (photo by the author).

⁵²¹ Within these shamanic circles, there are both individuals who claim and claim their Sámi identity and individuals who identify themselves as Norwegians. There are also some Danes, some Swedes, a Maori, some Poles, some Finns. As for those who identify as Sámi, many of them have only recently rediscovered their Sámi identity. Many of the Sámi who identify as shamans have very weak ties to the culture of their ancestors. In most cases, these are individuals who grew up in the city and who do not speak any Sámi language. In some cases the rediscovery of their Sámi origins was very recent and the result of a personal research path.



Image 127: Erena, the Maori woman in the right high corner, instructing festival goers on how to construct a Maori cooking pit for a ceremonial lunch during Isogaisa 2018, (photo by the author).



Image 128: The central *lavvu* (Sámi tent) of the Oktagon. Next to the main poles, the festival leader Ronald Kvermo wearing the local Márka-Sámi *gákti* (photo by the author).



Image 129: the southern *lavvu* (Sámi tent) of the Oktagon – named *Lulli* (NS) meaning south, with reindeer skins positioned around the fire (photo by the author).

At Isogaisa, Sámi cultural elements permeated the festival. For instance, reindeer skins were made available for participants to use them during the whole festival and, at the local market, vendors sold reindeer skins along with antlers and objects made out of them. Leather bags and horn ornaments as well as *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) or Sámi jewels could be purchased – along with items available in new-age fairs such as dream-catchers, cards and other paraphernalia – while, during workshop, it was possible to carve reindeer horn under the supervision of a *duodji* (handicraft) maker.

Furthermore, the Sámi flag was a recurrent element, to signal the ethnic affiliation of the festival. Hand-made drums reproducing ancient Sámi ritual drums were also available to purchase even if many participants had built their own drums by themselves during workshops or had commissioned them to skilled *duodji* (handicraft) makers. In some cases, the drums were the exact reproduction of ancient drums now held in museums or lost but whose drawings had been recorded and preserved (see images 130a and 130b) while, in other cases, the drums reproduced symbols connected with Sámi non-Christian cosmologies (most often the Sámi symbol of the Sun) while also integrating elements of modern day society (see image n133), demonstrating the cultural creativity intrinsic to contemporary Sámi shamanism.



Image 130a and 130b: image 130a a drum photographed at Isogaisa (photo by the author). The drum owner decorated the drum-skin in the exact reproduction of an ancient Sámi framed south Sámi drum recorded and catalogued by E. Manker (image 130b). Source: <https://old.no/Sámidrum/> .



Image 131: Workshop where reindeer antlers were prepared and decorated in order to become drum's hammers. (photo by the author).



Image 132: Ronald Kvernmo's bowl-shaped drum. Back. On the back, the carving and the marquetry details made from reindeer antler reproduce shapes and form attested in historical drums. At the centre of the holder's marquetry there is a reproduction of a Sámi *noaide* (ritual specialist) holding a drum and a hammer. (Photo by the author).



Image 133: Ronald Kvernmo holding his framed heliocentric drum. On the drum-skin Kvernmo reproduced numerous figures attested in Sámi ritual drums from the 17th and 18th century. Furthermore, he added elements from his daily life that are relevant to him in his divinatory practice: the Fylkesvei 83 (the local County road) along with the local church and the village buildings. Another important symbol reproduced on the drum is the crossed "e" of Internet Explorer, representing technology. (Photo by the author).

Unlike other Sámi festivals which take place on the premises of cultural or institutional organs, Isogaisa on the other hand takes place in a meadow close to a hotel and is hosted in the Oktagon. Due to the controversial role of contemporary shamanism in Sámi milieu (Christensen, 2015), it has only marginal links with local cultural institution. As other Sámi festivals, Isogaisa too has encountered resistance from the local community even though, in the case of Isogaisa, the reasons against this event differed greatly from those brought about against Riddu Riđđu first and, later, Márkomeannu.

As Fonneland highlights, in 2013 – one year after the festival was first organized in Loabák/Lavangen – a local newspaper reported on the criticism local Sámi people had moved against the festival. The festival was criticized for the following reasons:

- disclosure of practices that should remain known only within the Sámi communities
- use of public funds in events that are not representative of Sámi cultures
- spectacularization and commercialization of “secret” care practices
- commercialization and spectacularization of lost Sámi “traditions”
- request for money in exchange for services which, “traditionally” are free of charge
- catalyzing public attention on a marginal phenomenon, diverting it from what is (considered) more relevant
- exoticization of Sámi cultures
- claims that, “traditionally”, gifts are acquired involuntarily and that are often handed down within families in secrecy. Hence, advertising them in a festival context was a violation of the community’s implicit rules.

Following such complaints, the Barents Secretariat – one of the institutions offering financial support to Isogaisa – commissioned an independent investigation to NIKU (the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research). Two researchers, Marit Myrvoll and Camilla Brattland, examined the ethical aspects pointed out by the festival detractors and, in their final report (2014), they acknowledged the fact that, through the festival, Sámi secret practices were indeed disclosed to cultural outsiders but they also highlighted the festival’s importance as an arena for the development of a Sámi-inspired spirituality despite. Despite the generally positive portrayal of the festival provided by the NIKU report, not everyone in the local community was satisfied with the report’s finding and the local Lutheran minister harshly criticized the festival for being a site of idolatry and a source of danger for the pious Sámi population of Loabák/Lavangen (Fonneland 2017)

Not only the festival but also Ronald Kvernmo, leader and founder of the Isogaisa festival, was harshly criticized for some personal choices (running the festival, sponsoring his own business during the festival <has been used as an advertising platform for his family Chaga Tea production company> (fieldnotes) and his figure gradually contrasted with that of the other leader (but not founder) of the Isogaisa festival: Eirik Myrhaug. Both Kvernmo and Myrhaug (who are cousins) were students of the first contemporary Sámi who proclaimed himself a shaman: Ailo Gaup (who studied with Harner and who imported core shamanism to Norway). Eirik Myrhaug is an extremely charismatic character while Ronald Kvernmo does not have the same ability to fascinate and catalyze the attention of his interlocutors. personal charisma plays an important role in these dynamics of community recognition.

Sámi-inspired (neo-)shamanism is an extremely marginal phenomenon within the broader contemporary Sámi cultural landscape. If compared to other phenomena in contemporary Sámi society, the “shamanic movement” presents itself as fragmented and disorganized. There are numerous groups on social media (Facebook *in primis*) in which these shamans virtually gather in shamanic circles. Given the fragmented nature of these groups, Isogaisa festival had for 10 years represented the main gathering event where collective rites were performed. For this reason, this festival had represented a unique arena for the development of a Sámi identity centred around an incorporation of Sámi non-Christian elements into their contemporary lives.

As mentioned, in the last 10 years – before Covid19 reached Europe – the festival Isogaisa, had become a meeting place for people interested in contemporary shamanism. The festival though was not arranged in 2020 and currently there is no plan on a 2021 edition. The Covid19 outbreak has not been the only reason that brought the festival to a suspension – which may be definite – but already in 2018 the festival had witnessed a stark decrease in attendance compared to the previous years. In 2019 the number of festivalgoers had did not exceeded the 200 people, including organizers, guests, performers and visitors. The group of shamanic practitioners managing the festival – known as Siida Isogaisa (NS) or Isogaisa Sjamanrådet (N), translated in English as Isogaisa community council – was characterizes by deep rivalries resulting in a defection of some members. In 2019 Isogaisa Festivàl suffered the absence of many of its historical and most influential adherents such as the influential shamanic practitioner Eirik Myrhaug. Concurrently, a new shamanic association was created (Arktisk Sjamansirkel⁵²²) in which those who left the association “Siida Isogaisa”

⁵²² Arktisk Sjamansirkel – Arctic Shaman Circle – was formally founded in Oslo in November 2018 (Kraft 2020). This new association has founded a new festival (Arktisk sjamanfestival) which took place in 2019 near Mo i Rana (on the Norwegian side of Sápmi). The Tromsø Shamanistic Association (Sjamanistic Forbunt) has organized a nature festival in southern Norway this year. This event was sponsored, among others, by the Sámi parliament of Norway although the association does not have an exclusively Sámi profile.

converged, and such association has started its own festival. This detail shows that festivals are still regarded as crucial in the development and articulation of Sámi contemporary shamanism since they provide practitioners with a physical venue to practice rituals and renew the ties between members of this spiritual network.

6.6.3 Local cultural days

Besides the major and well established events such as those outlined above, Sápmi is dotted with a myriad of small-scale events configured as festivals, often referred to as “cultural days” (fieldnotes). One of such cases is, for instance, Grovfjordagen (Grovfjord day), held in Grov (in southern Troms, on the border with Nordland county). Not far from Grovfjord, the local community celebrated Snubbadagen (Snubba day), an event held each year in the village of Snubba (Northern Nordland, on the border with Troms-Finnmark County) during late July or early August. In such cases, local and national Sámi institutions are involved and offer funding to enable the local association to organize the event and invite guests. The fares for tickets are usually low and food and drinks are available on site. These events revolve around the local villages’ histories and cultures, with a strong focus on the local Sea- and Márka-Sámi heritage. During the day, seminars, talks and workshops are organized and guests are invited to take part to activities connected with the local cultural heritage. Often, organizers arrange so called “cultural-walks” in the surroundings, guiding guests across the local landscape, visiting local historical sites (see images 39, 40). In 2014, Snubbadagen was formally opened by the leader of the Coastal Sámi association Kurt Stormo and a photo exhibitions by Per Heimly and Unn-Kristin Laberg was held in the parish house while the Várdobáiki Sámi centre offered children’s workshops. During the day musical performances were held and the local community house (*Grendehuset*) was open for festival-goers. During that edition, the cultural walk was held by Gunn Tove Minde and Geir Elvebakk and consisted on a trip to Várevuolli (Nova). The meeting place for the cultural walk was the dam east of Skoaberjavri / Skoddebergvatnet (from my fieldnotes, private conversation Gunn Tove Minde April 2020)⁵²³.

These small-scale event, albeit reaching a smaller audience compared to major festivals such as Riddu Riđđu, have a powerful impact on the local community since they strength the bond among community members – who work together to organize the cultural day – and between the festival participants – often people who live away from the village but have strong family connections with it – and the place itself, fostering a sense of pride in belonging to both the area and the community. Furthermore, such small-scale festivals are intimate events where the community, by spending time

⁵²³ I attended both Snubba-dagen and Grovfjord-daged in 2019

together and through the sharing of food and drinks, of stories and anecdotes renews the ties between those who still live in the village and those who come back during holiday-time. What I found most interesting while attending these cultural days was the passion local guides transmitted to younger generations.



Image 134, Snubbadagen 2019, note the lavvu (Sámi tent) (photo by the author).



Image 135, Snubbadagen 2019, detail of the photographic exhibition (photo by the author).

6.7 Sámi festivals in the time of Covid19

When I started this PhD project – and my fieldwork – we lived in a different world even if, by then, we were not aware that things were soon bound to change. While the world was still oblivious of what was to come, a cluster of pneumonia, later named COVID-19, started spreading across central China. At first, rumours of hospitals built in the dead of the night in a – to most – previously unheard major city in China soon gave room to certain news and in the blink of an eye, a new, extremely infectious form of pneumonia was sweeping quicker than imagined and all attempts to track it seemed like a race against the odds. In a domino effect, country after country states closed down their national – and local – borders, restricting travel across and within countries in the attempt of slowing down the contagion⁵²⁴. The outbreak of Covid19 disrupted social life in almost every corner of the world, insinuating fears and doubts in all of us. It is still too early to foresee the long-term impacts of the pandemic but some of its repercussions are already part of people’s everyday life. Its early

⁵²⁴ When I first heard of a new disease spreading quickly across central China it was late December-early January. By the end of that month, fear was already spreading across the streets of *Borg di Scigolatt*, known commonly known as Milano’s Chinatown. I lived in that district for 23 years and, for the first time, upon visiting my family before my scheduled travel to Norway, I witnessed a surreal silence permeating the streets of my old neighbourhood. All shops were closed, no soul walked the streets and the sound of my own steps gave me shivers down my spine. The local Chinese population had decided to go under a self-imposed lockdown after news about the true proportions of the outbreak from their relatives and friends had reached them before the Italian and International news had really started to address it. As for many, those last days before everything changed have become impressed in my mind. I visited a hospital on the 28th of January for a routine visit and that same hospital, at the time, was the only one in the whole Northern Italy with Covid19 positive patients. When, 3 days later, I left Italy for Norway, I was planning to stay in the country for little more than a month of fieldwork. My return ticket was booked for the 6th of march. After I left Italy, news started to spread that the situation was quickly deteriorating. I was in Unjárga, sitting with my host family sipping tea and watching the news when my friend’s mother told me: « look, it’s Milano ».The Norwegian National Broadcasting agency NRK was broadcasting images of empty shelves and people in complete shock, wearing masks and rushing to buy paracetamol and other drugs. Until that moment I was totally unaware of what was unravelling in Italy, having spent a few days in a cabin somewhere in the mountains of Mieskarohu, between Kirkenes and Varangerbotn. I distinctly remember my friend talking to his mother in North Sámi, looking at me and at the television, exchanging eloquent gazes. Then I asked my friend, Paul, if he thought it was a good idea to go back to Milano, in amidst the first Italian outbreak. His clear answer was a simple “no”. A few days later I flew back to Tromsø and when there, while I was at SESAM the Centre for Sámi Studies, my flights were cancelled, I rebooked them and they were cancelled again. This dance went on for a few days until the Scandinavian company operating in the region suspended all flights towards Italy. And that’s how I got stuck 350 km north of the Arctic circle, with 2 and a half metres of snow covering the streets out of Tromsø and a temperature of minus 15°. These were not unusual circumstances had it not been that the contract for my flat had expired and I found myself homeless, couch-surfing at friends’ places while Norway was entering a relatively strict lockdown. I was extremely lucky in that I received support from UiT and SESAM, helping me with finding an accommodation and endure the hardship of witnessing disaster unravel at home. Family friends succumbed to Covid and so did one of my former supervisors, Professor Enrico Comba. the news of his death touched many as he was a kind and much beloved person. Those long spring days spent alone in Breiviklia (a guest house for visiting researchers on campus at UiT) gave me much time to think about the situation we all were going through. It also led me to reconsider what I was doing in Sápmi, and what the pandemic was going to bring to the lives of those close to me, among them my Sámi interlocutors. Some of those reflections are reflected in this thesis while others did change my perspective on issues I had already examined and written about. Stuck in Sápmi, I was lucky enough to have friends around me that became my family and treated me like a daughter, a sister and an auntie. In way, those months of unexpected unplanned – and to an extent unwanted – fieldwork were the most important of all. When life was on hold, I lived some of the most invaluable experiences of my life. For these reasons, I deemed it relevant to address the context into which part of this thesis took shape. Within Norway the Covid19 pandemic hit hard but, compared to other regions of Europe, we had the chance to live relatively normal lives as the restrictions were not as strict as elsewhere in Europe. It was like living in a time out of time.

consequences torn the threads of the fabric of society, compromising the daily activities we all had long taken for granted.

Among its many unfortunate effects, the Covid-19 outbreak has put on hold major cultural manifestations, forcing the 2020 (and probably 2021) editions of festivals as well as smaller events to be postponed or even cancelled. The decision to cancel or massively downscale festival is historic in the Sámi context. The consequences of such a massive disruption of the Sámi cultural landscape are beginning to emerge, showing the crucial role festivals play in Sámi cohesion. As of May 2021, it had not been confirmed that summer festivals will take place, and if they do, in which form they may be arranged. For this reason, it is necessary to take into account the changes Covid19 – and the restrictions against its spread – is imposing upon Sámi communities throughout Sápmi. In this section, I am not going to extensively examine the consequences of Covid19 on Sámi festival since such a study is beyond the scopes of this thesis and would, ironically, require more fieldwork. Nevertheless, I deem it relevant to at least address the impact of Covid19 on Sámi communities in the light of the consequences the current pandemic is having on festivals.

It was only when festivals were first cancelled that, by reflecting upon it and by discussing with people who are actively involved in festivals as organizers, artists as festival-goers, that I became aware of some aspects that, previously, I could only sense but not really grasp. It was through absence that the importance of the presence became apparent.

The severity of the Covid 19 aftermaths have meant a suspension of daily life for the vast majority of the world population and the first studies and preliminary considerations concerning the impact of Covid19 are already appearing on specialised journals. Since Covid19 impacted all aspects of life, numerous are disciplines addressing Covid19 and its aftermaths under different perspectives. Studies on festivals in the time of Covid are currently beginning to be published on scientific journals (see Testa 2020; Davies 2020; Radice 2021; Fontefrancesco 2021;) while academic works that take into account the potential consequences of the intersection between Covid and practices connected with festivals -such as the movement of hundreds of people – are also addressed by researchers in fields such as epidemiology and statistics (see Ebrahim & Memish 2020). After all, the spread of this disease was heavily influenced by the fact that hundreds of thousands of people were travelling across China to celebrate the New Year and the spring Festival (Zhong et al. 2020)

Researchers in the field of cultural anthropology and of other disciplines based on extensive fieldwork are facing severe consequences due to travel restrictions and the first anthropological reflections on the intersection between fieldwork-based research and the current pandemic are already being published, focusing on the challenges brought by not only travel restrictions but also by the

fear this invisible disease instils in people, making everyone wary and often unwilling to meet up with others. Such a precaution can save lives but, at the same time, hinders those social contacts and relations upon which ethnographic fieldwork is often based (see Meza-Palmeros 2020; Silva & Câmara 2020). Some of the academic articles already published focus on the strain experienced by those researchers who, like me, were away from home when the worst case scenario started to unravel (see Chao 2020). At the time of writing, there is at least one MA thesis on the experiences of university students from different disciplines but all enrolled at Utrecht university who were conducting during their ethnographic fieldwork during the early months of the pandemic (Rehorst 2020). I am confident many of the students who contributed with their experiences to Rehorst's study could relate to my own situation while stuck in Tromsø during spring 2020.

Anthropologists are already embarking on ethnographies of Covid19-induced social contexts, situations as well as on the theories and perceptions surrounding the outbreak and the responses to it (see among al. Higgins et al. 2020; Meza-Palmeros 2020; Silva & Câmara 2020). Similarly, studies are already focusing on an already existing form of remote ethnography, netnography, a practice that, under the current circumstances has proved to be a useful tool to continue – or even begin – ethnographic research (Góralaska 2020) as the Internet is providing a new arena for cultural expression when face-to-face social interaction is impossible (Teevan 2020). I am confident this new field of enquiry will attract the interest of many researchers due to the massive short- and long-term consequences of Covid-19 on societies across the globe.

The outbreak of Covid19 led to unpredictable situations⁵²⁵, marking the beginning of a period of global crisis and put a halt to almost all major events being them cultural, sport, business. In 2020 – and early 2021 – physical events, fairs, concerts and festivals, have been postponed and/or cancelled and many events – for instance graduations or other forms of celebrations – were reshaped and restructured so that they would comply with new regulations designed for covid-preventions and mitigation.

The problems posed by the Covid outbreak and spread show the importance of events such as festivals in contemporary societies. Celebrations and commemorations that bring people together were not only discouraged but actively forbidden, resulting in ceremonies or events very much different to those in years gone by. Gathering online via video link from home could not make up for the lost

⁵²⁵ The unforeseeable nature of a pandemic such as Covid19 is debatable as many scholars regard this zoonosis as an indirect consequence of anthropogenic climate change and human interference in animals' habitats (See among others Córdoba-Aguilar et al. 2021).

physical contact or for the embodied sensory experience of festivals where the whole body is a means through which the events are perceived, understood and ultimately, lived.

Because of safety measures, people were not be able to mark important occasions– for instance births, weddings, funerals, graduations – in their lives as they would have normally done, causing distress and disappointment but also disorientation. Life without culturally defined temporal landmark becomes difficult to navigate and important events that would usually function as symbolic watersheds in people’s lives lost much of their visibility as well as the excitement and enthusiasm they usually are associated with, often resulting in dim memories rather than celebrated landmarks.

The pandemic not only has changed the way people celebrate festivals all over the world but – through the collective and individual trauma it caused – it may have also influenced the very perception people have of festivals, being them gatherings where people meet and physical distancing is highly reduced. Festivals are like a concentrate of life, where everything may does happen and physical contact – through dance, communal meals, camping, sharing of facilities – is omnipresent. In the course of little more than a year, all these features have become foreigner to most people’s ways of interacting with the others and many – once the circumstances will allow so, may have to learn how to be free from fear of contact, an essential element of festivals.

In 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, major Sámi festivals in Sápmi were not staged. Facing an unprecedented situation, authorities had to act to protect the population. In order to comply with travel bad within the Nordic Countries and the travel restrictions within the various national counties, people were discouraged from travelling. The first events to be affected were the Easter festivals Sámi beassášmárkaniidda in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and the Påskefestivalen in Kárášjoga/Karasjok. The quickly evolving situation across Europe added uncertainty to an already complicated situation and, just a few weeks shy of Easter all public celebrations in the whole of Norway were cancelled. Later during 2020, during summer the Covid situation started to improve thanks to contact tracing, quarantines and isolation of cases. Nevertheless, the global and national conditions did not allow for summer festivals to be held as usual. Public celebrations were hence either cancelled or downscaled and only minor events were held for the local public. At the same time, presentations, concerts and seminars were streamed live. Even if the core and essence of festivals lies in live performances and the sensorial experiences induced by physical engagement, the Internet, through social media, proved to be crucial in preserving festivals in Sápmi amidst the Covid crisis. Through social media and livestreaming it was possible for organizers to keep the audience engaged during the festivals, and to keep touch with the public, keeping people updated all year-round.



Image 136: this image, showing a laptop playing music with two Sámi people wearing a South and a Duortnus/Torne Sámi gakti (Sámi costumes) and face mask on the background was available on the 2020 Jokkmokk festival website (Source: <https://jokkmokksmarknad.se/en/the-program/> artist unknown).

In a way, technology allowed to foster a sense of community even when such community could not meet. Nevertheless, the digital world – no matter how useful it can be in keeping people connected – cannot replace live performance nor can it foster the same sense of unity and *communitas* that physical gatherings generate.

Furthermore, as Fieldseth highlights, the pandemic-induced crisis has exposed the vulnerabilities of the whole industry revolving around festivals. As entertainment and cultural events were suspended, cultural workers lost their jobs and their source of income, with concrete consequence for their lives, a situation that added a sense of precariousness to an already difficult situation. In the Nordic countries, singers, performers, artists, dramaturges, choreographers, scenographers, designers, critics, writers, but also producers and technicians and all other specialists who work in the industry usually earn income by combining various grants, stipends, project supports, fees, short-term contracts and on some occasions a share of ticket sales. As Fieldseth explains, these workers are not necessarily eligible for support unlike other employees who have access to specific social security

schemes making them extremely vulnerable⁵²⁶ during the Covid-19 outbreak (2020). In the context of Sámi festivals, the efforts, the skills, and the knowledge of these cultural workers is essential to preserve, maintain, and transmit Sámi cultures and languages across generation and in informal contexts. The virtual total halting or downscaling of festivals and cultural events meant a break in the chain of cultural transmission since. for many Sámi, festivals are like a cultural lifeline: by suspending festivals or by reducing access to them, the pandemic has deprived many Sámi, especially children, teenagers and young adults, of the opportunity to meet up and socialize with other Sámi in culturally Sámi public contexts, where they can use, practice or even get acquainted with Sámi languages and cultures⁵²⁷. Furthermore, they are prevented from expressing themselves by articulating their Sámi identity through the use of Sámi items and the wearing of often hand-made *gákti* (Sámi costume).

On the other hand, there is an important factor that should be taken into account when addressing what a suspension of festival means for local communities. During an interview with former Márkomeannu festival leader and current member of the Sámi parliament, Anne Henriette and I discussed of the ramifications of Covid and the intersection between the pandemic and Sámi festivals. During the interview we tackled upon numerous issues and, among them, we addresses why a halt to major events - the only viable option given the circumstances – was actually welcome and encouraged by local communities (December 2020, Alta/Torino, via WebEx).

Anne Henriette: it most important to remember in the climate of the entirety of the northern part of these countries in the spring and summer was that in Norway, we even had like this, *sørlig karantene*, quarantine for people coming from the south. And the and the national borders were closed. So a lot of the smaller Sámi communities didn't really want people together. At least not people traveling to these small vulnerable societies. So I think Márkomeannu, as well as the main festival, they did that out of respect for the Small society there. And they have the children's festival in August I think. So for like the local children to make sure that something at least happens locally. So as I see it, I think, in the perspective of COVID it's hard to imagine it being done in another way, when, when locally nobody wants any kind of big events now, yes. Because even if you if you made a concert and kind of say it was for local people, there was no way of guaranteeing that people wouldn't travel in and you would most staff would have to travel there either way. So yes, no, it would have been very dangerous. Somewhere when people were afraid, of course, and are afraid of COVID. I think that it could be, I think it would be much more sensitive to take the opportunity of, I think the opportunity, I haven't myself been a part of the festival the last year, but I think that the opportunity in Oslo was kind of opportunity that were given to them, and they took it and did the best they could out of it.

⁵²⁶ In Norway, the Ministry of Culture, along with government agencies, associations but also private foundations are currently working to design and implement financial measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on cultural workers (Fieldseth 2020).

⁵²⁷ Albeit being public, such contexts are also safe environments were Sámi individuals, and youngsters especially, can express their Sámi identity in safety, without fear of hate-speech and harassment because of their manifest ethnic affiliation. Cases of bullying or harassment in public or online against individuals wearing *gákti* (Sámi costumes) or affirming their Sámi identity in other ways are relatively common in all the Nordic countries (see chapter 6, section 9)

Later during the same interview, Anne Henriette said:

I think that the Sámi society is so dependent on these meeting places. So to go another year [without Festival], I think both mentally for the Sámi people, we need to meet and have a place where we are the majority and to kind of get to enjoy our pop culture because, because that isn't a natural part of the majority societies culture yet. And I also think that for instance, the Duodjer... when there are no markets now, so they don't get to sell their products. So it kind of hits both artists and the audience. It hits handcrafters it hits everyone in the Sámi society when the meeting places are shut down.

These two extracts show Anne Henriette's concerns over the potential consequences of the halt posed on festivals, being her aware of the importance of Sámi festivals in keeping Sámi society together and on the detrimental effects the current suspension means for festival-goers and cultural workers alike. Having worked as festival leader and being now part of the Sámi Council, Anne Henriette's opinions are informed by both her first-hand experience on the field and the information she has access to through her political position.

Despite the clear acknowledgment of the importance festivals hold in Sámi cultural landscape, Anne Henriette's words show that concerns over Covid infection prevailed over the need for socialization and celebration. In this respect, the awareness that many festivals take place in rural areas, where hospitals and other infrastructures are difficult to reach and where the average population is relatively old and often has health issues has been an important factor in the decision not to host festivals during the outbreak. Rather, organizers opted for small events tailored on local children, to keep them engaged with the community and the culture while avoiding a potentially dangerous and uncontrollable influx of people from outside the community. In a way, it was like a return to the early years when local festivals were little more than small community gatherings among the local youth.

Even if, as of May 2021, people are working towards the 2021 edition of summer Sámi festivals, it is still uncertain whether they will take and, in the case they will, how they may be arranged as borders many national borders will probably be close and many of the Covid-related restrictions will still be in place during the summer. This situation epitomizes the uncertainty Covid19 is causing.

Among the effects of Covid19, the measures to mitigate the spread of the virus induced national and even local governments to "close" the borders, restricting trans-national and trans-regional travel. This decision has devastating effects on Sámi communities and this factor too proved to be a central critical element with regard to Sámi festivals and their organization, posing challenges also for the years to come:

Anne Henriette: with all the Sámi festivals, you know, we are so dependent on the national borders being open. Because it's very, very difficult to imagine Sámi festival with only participation and artists and staff from one side of the national border. Usually all the time and

festivals, they have staff and artists and audience and everything from like, all over Sápmi. Yes. So I think waiting to see how... how the pandemic evolves and I think either way, as I have understood this, we still have quite a way to walk before we are back to normal. So, I'm of course hoping.

The conversation then switched back to the issue of borders and Anne Henriette and I discuss how Sámi communities and Sápmi as a trans-national nation have been fragmented by the destructive power of borders. Looking at how the Covid19 situation was then [in December 2020] developing in Northern Fennoscandinavia. Reflecting on the spread of Covid19 in Norway, we discussed how the scarcely populated North, compared to the South of the country had relatively been spared from the outbreak, with very few cases being recorded. If the North was divided from the South and the State borders were not structuring, or actually, destructuring Sápmi the way they are now, things would have been very much different for Sámi people living in Sápmi: they would be able to travel across Sápmi since there the contagion rate was very low. Due to the national borders though, travel through Sápmi was almost impossible while, conversely, reaching Oslo from Tromsø – or the other way round – was relatively easy despite being much more dangerous. Borders have long been a fragmenting institution in Sápmi (see Lantto 2010) but agreements between the Nordic countries had also helped easing the pressure border put Sámi peoples. Borders had almost become invisible and almost imperceptible entities that were only partially significant in Sámi peoples' lives on a superficial level (but acted on a deeper level, influencing, for instance, Sámi peoples' upbringing through schooling), allowing people to maintain contact on all sides of the various borders. When Covid came, the borders suddenly transformed from bureaucratic lines on the ground in impenetrable walls made of regulations, forcing many to face the true, pervasive colonial nature of such institutions. As Anne Henriette explains:

A: [Before Covid] we didn't really think so much about how the national borders really affect us. But what I think the COVID19 pandemic has really awoken some reflection inside me exactly on how the national borders are kind visibly forcing us into, like a system of existence that we have. They have been there now for so long that we have kind of learned to coexist and how to kind of work around the borders. But now that the borders that we are used to being open, at least between Norway, Sweden and Finland, are close, I think it has... has also made us aware of how locked out the Russian side of Sápmi has been for a long time. Now, it's, it's equally hard to get to Finland and Sweden, and we have families that live close to borders that are split into people. If this was to happen, for instance, in Norwegian families, there will be outraged if they were not able to see their family for like a year. And so and there are so many kind of layers also to the national border. For one, it's it makes like that we always talk Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish Russian side of Sápmi, instead of being able to talk just us about Sápmi, yes, it forces us to have three Sámi Parliaments, it forces us to work with not only the taxation rules in one country, but in three or four countries. It forces us with the Russian side to work with visas. So I think we haven't really reflected upon how much administration goes into actually existing within this life. Yes. And that that really has kind of been brought to light.

Among the unforeseeable consequences of Covid19, there may be wider reflections upon borders, politics and colonialism in Sápmi. Covid brought to light once again the enforced division imposed upon Sápmi. A fragmentation which was not so self-evident before, but that now has become prominent, visible and tangible. A further element that emerges as consequence of Covid19 is the fact that the closing of borders – and hence the forced and prolonged separation between family members who live on different sides of national or even regional borders - also brings back and make visible the trauma suffered by Sámi peoples during and after the wars, when Sámi living on the then Russian side of the border were cut off from the rest of Sápmi or where prevented from coming back home, a home that was now on the other side of the border. In this sense, and without disregarding the pain and sufferance the current brought about by the pandemic, Covid19 may offer an opportunity to shed light on and reflect upon the injustices suffered by the Sámi,

All the abovementioned elements highlight a renewed sense of awareness among Sámi peoples but not outside of them – that, according to Anne Henriette fostered new forms of trans-border cooperation. In her view, such events should also stimulate discussions that focus on Sápmi as a unitary entity, dismantling the colonial construction of different sides of Sápmi and demonstrating that colonialism is not an event of the past but a process still very much in the making.

Anne Henriette: you would think that this would have brought a new awareness to the government's but it doesn't seem it does. No, I must say, I find very little understanding in the governments and I think that, like, for instance, the reindeer herders, many of them are dependent on being able to move across the border lines up here North the herds going for winter, and summer grazing and so on, and I think even for them, there has been quite a lot of work into them actually being able to kind of do their job without having to quarantine. I think it's a wake up call also, for Sápmi to, I think the COVID pandemic has, has really shone a light upon how, how much of the colonization is still going on and how also all the injustice that's around them, the injustice and also that people are kind of because of the borders being closed, I think we are communicating maybe even more across the borders now than we did before the pandemic and I feel like it's kind of this, this wave of kind of cross border cooperation in like in another scale and has been before because we naturally want to fight off this feeling of being divided. so important for us to feel like one and now we are really kind of really been shown that we are divided by the national borders and we have tried to find ways to do something about that.

At this point of the interview, social media became a focus of the conversation. I just, almost incidentally mentioned them but my remark encouraged Anne Henriette to provide me with her opinion of the role social media are fulfilling in this time of forced physical distancing:

E: Luckily enough, there are the media. Sorry, luckily enough, you have the social media and the internet. And zoom. it's really like it made all the difference, I guess.

A: Yes. it does. And then Sámi society and organizations are really, really good at using them. And then again, you have that both the national media, but I think also we have, maybe, yeah, because they have also been kind of working inside the borders. So Sámi media, Norwegian side, right above, Sámi things on the Norwegian side. And the same with the other Nordic countries. And which is also kind of a paradox when you when we always say that we are one people in four countries that we all got, at the same time, we have kind of been so used to the borders that we have, we have just unconsciously, kind of become divided.

Here, as also addressed earlier in this section, the Internet and social media have emerged as powerful and essential tools to keep people connected despite restrictions, in this case borders⁵²⁸. The pervasiveness of colonial borders and their subtle interiorization into peoples' lives and minds have emerged as important elements highlighted by Covid19. With the passing of time and of generations, borders cutting across and partitioning Sápmi had become normalized but Covid and the measures to contain its spread have led, according to Anne Henriette many Sámi to rethink borders as colonial institutions and, in her hope, such a renewed awareness may help decolonize Sápmi. as Anne Henriette reminded us, borders have divided Sámi people to such a deep level that it is often difficult to even acknowledge that and people now tend to describe themselves as being from the “Swedish, Finnish or Norwegian” sides of Sápmi. A remark that show how profound the colonial division of Sápmi is. Such division affects also Sámi institutions such as the Sámi parliaments which – besides being modelled upon the hegemonic political systems – exist in three out of four States where the Sámi live. hence, in a way, they foster political fragmentation despite the best attempts at collaborating. In this regard, Sámi festivals as the ultimate trans-national institutions with staff, guests, artists and workers coming from the whole of Sápmi. Festival are indeed among the few pan-Sámi institutions that unite Sápmi beyond borders.

⁵²⁸ The Internet and social media have proved crucial in coping with the short-term social consequences of Covid19. They are have a role of prominence in fostering a sense of shared Sámi identity an in encouraging and fostering Sámi language skills in a time when physical contact and travel are severely curtailed. Furthermore, given the context of Sápmi, remote teaching has been vital for those Sámi pupils who, otherwise, would not have had access to Sámi language education. Similarly, social media – and in particular the Sámi early social network Samenet, have represented a virtual arena where people from all over Sápmi could gather and practice the language in an informal context despite the physical distances. Samenet was also the platform where the first organizers of Markomeannu met for their meetings throughout the year, since many members lived scattered across Norway, away from the Márka for studying or working reasons. As of today, the role of social media in managing, communicating and interacting with festivals such has Markomeannu is becoming increasingly important and the study of the intersection between Sámi identity and cultural expressions and social media is attracting the growing interest of scholar and it is becoming an established field of enquiry in Sámi studies (see among al. Pietikäinen 2008; Cocq 2013; Griбанова & Nevzorov 2017; Outakoski et al. 2018; DuBois & Cocq 2019; Rasmussen et al. 2021; Nord & Wiilig 2021).

6.8 Sámi festivals as sites of cultural expression

To cultural outsiders, festivals with a marked Sámi profile may appear as events characterized by happiness, cheerfulness, music and amusement. The playful component of Sámi festivals is indeed a core feature of these events. In this regard it is necessary to point out how concerts, theatrical performances, and workshops but also moments of conviviality such as shared meals or cooking together, visiting the Sámi market, as well as attending conferences or seminars, represent focal points in festivals. Sámi festivals contribute to the constant renewal and regeneration of Sámi cultural expressions. By providing young and emerging artists (engaged for instance in music, literature, performative and visual arts) with a venue that offers visibility, these events allow young Sámi artists to express themselves in relatively safe environments while also ensuring the circulation of Sámi art in its multiple forms. Nevertheless, these events are, to the people who organize or attend them though, they are much more than just entertainment: they are the result of year-long hard team-work and constitute a celebration of different articulations of contemporary Sámi identity. Moreover, in the first years of activity, *Riddu Ridđu* (Leonenko, 2008, Torun Olsen, interview 25/2/20) *Márkomeannu* (Sigbjørn Skåden, private conversation 14/2/19) and *Isogaisa* (Fonneland 2017) have met with resistance from the segment of the population which did not welcome open expressions of Sámi cultural features and their concurrent association with the local community. On the other hand, resistance also arose out of fear that these festivals would spoil “local traditions” or make them available to a public of outsiders (Leonenko 2008, Fonneland 2017).

Festivals such as the ones examined above, are the result of discussions, compromises, and negotiations between different social actors. They offer visibility and constitute important opportunities for people who live scattered across Fennoscandinavia can gather, socialize and share experiences and news. As in the case of *Riddu Ridđu* and *Márkomeannu* – but also *Isogaisa* – they can also enable minority groups (like the Sea- or the Márka-Sámi as well as those Sámi who practice contemporary forms of Sámi-inspired Shamanism) to develop a celebratory moment (Pedersen et al. 2009) where Sámi identity not only is not stigmatized but, on the contrary, celebrate. For these reasons, Sámi festivals are considered as “safe spaces” (Sara Olsen, interview 13/10/2019), in other words, as venues where it is safe for Sámi to openly show themselves as Sámi by wearing *gákti* or speaking the language. During these events, people can practice Sámi languages in an informal context, where they are not judged for any mistake they may make while speaking Sámi. This is especially important for younger generations who have the opportunity to publicly be Sámi without fear of being mocked, in a context like that of northern Norway where episodes of verbal and physical harassment against Sámi people seeking Sámi in public or wearing *gákti* occur on a regular basis in major towns like Tromsø as well as in small communities like Skanik/Skånland.

Sámi festivals fulfil many roles beyond those outlined above. For instance, through the conferences they offer as part of the festival program - but also during informal gatherings around the fire in the festival camp—festivals are also arenas for discussing political issues. Politics permeates all aspects of these festivals. Cultural performances have often political undertones since art has been, in Sápmi, a venue of political activism. Furthermore, festivals such as Márkomeannu and Riddu Riđđu offer a chance to get to know the representatives of the Sámi institutions: many members of the Sámi political bodies participate in these festivals individually or in an official capacity. Institutions such as the Sámi Parliament, the University of Applied Arts of Guavdageidnu /Kautokeino, SESAM the Centre for Sámi Studies (University of Tromsø) and the local cultural centre Vardobaiki are present with stands or delegations, sponsoring their activities and, in the case of universities and educational centres, they also advertise their programs offering information to those who are interested in pursuing either language education or degrees connected with Sámi studies. An element that deserves further attention in festivals such as Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu is that of Markets organized on the festival premises. These festival markets are of extreme relevance because not only they offer an opportunity to purchase Sámi products (such as reindeer meat, reindeer skins) and *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) directly from producers from all over Sápmi but also allow festival-goers to get acquainted with new trends and styles in *gákti's* (Sámi garment), shawls', and jewels' design. Furthermore, people who purchase items or food from the market sellers are aware they are sustaining Sámi economy by supporting small companies. In doing so, they are aware they are helping preserve Sámi practices, knowledges and techniques by economically supporting those who practice the art of *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) or engage in reindeer tending. For people who engage in *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) these festival markets are like showcase where they can advertise their product and establish a network of buyers that, through internet, can outlive the festival itself.

Given the importance local histories or Sámi cultural practices such as *joik* (Sámi chants) play in these events, Sámi festivals can be regarded as heritage-related. Sámi festivals draw on practices considered as traditions, and such traditions are not simply taken for granted by they are studied, revised, adapted to new contexts and brought back to practice, albeit often only for the time of the festival. Hence these events constitute moments of great cultural creativity. Festivals like Riddu Riđđu – but also Márkomeannu – have also contributed to the consolidation of a modern way of being Sámi among the young generations. They have ensured the transmission and the sharing of local knowledge and practices as well as their reinventions. Nevertheless, it was only by becoming annual gatherings that these events managed to support cultural continuity

Sámi festivals are public celebrations of identity: the place identity in its Sámi dimension, and the Sámi identity of festival-goers. They also both foster and epitomize a sense of belonging: the festival-goers belonging to the place and their belonging to the wider Sámi transnational community. Hence offer a site where ethnic affiliation and cultural belonging can be manifested and reinforced. For this reason, for some people festivals are also opportunities to get acquainted with or rediscover their own roots. Márkomeannu, much like Riddu Riđđu, offers people who self-identify as Sámi a place and space to face and overcome the cultural trauma resulting from forced assimilation. For some people I interviewed, participating in the festival was part of or was the culmination of what one of my interlocutors called “healing process”. They also offer safe spaces where young Sámi people can express their identities without fear of being harassed because they speak Sámi or wear a *gákti* (Sámi garment) (Fieldnotes, July 2019)

Festivals are also venues of resilience and resistance as they embody the survival and continuous transformation of a culture that, for centuries, has been object of fierce opposition and persecution. Resilience is a complex concept which has been adopted also by the Sámi themselves to describe their situation. In the case of Márkomeannu, these elements are embedded in the very name given to the festival: Márkomeannu is a compound noun consisting of two North Sámi words: *Márka*, referred to the region, and *Meannu*, the “Party” (but also Riot) in the Márka. Indigenous festivals with a Sámi profile are able to bypass colonially constructed modes of cultural production by resorting to them while subverting some of their main rules and bending others. By working inside local communities and by resorting to local practices and values, Indigenous Sámi festivals situating themselves in the cracks of Fennoscandinavian hegemonic cultures. Indigenous festivals such as those occurring in Sápmi are more than venues for cultural expression, they make culture visible on the Sámi own terms, usually challenging outsiders homogenising cultural expectations. They are sites of cultural activism and source of inspiration providing other communities with opportunities to experiment new ways of expressing themselves, through models that are often borrowed, employed and reinterpreted, creating yet new festivals.

Festivals with a Sámi profile are simultaneously product and generators of cultural contexts that often recontextualise cultural practices as forms of protest. Sámi festivals emerge as points of connection and contact, in part able to mend the fragmentation and wounds caused by colonialism - a phenomenon that does not refer only to the past but which is still implemented albeit through new forms, offering moments and spaces for prolonged sharing over time although limited to what is, however, the time - and space - of the Festival.



Image 137: Sámi queer flag at Márkomeannu. In this image the Sápmi flag appears, with the colours and horizontal lines adapted to incorporate the LGBTQ + symbol within the flag itself. The original colours of the Sápmi flag are red, green, yellow, blue. the use in this case of the colours of the well-known Rainbow Flag offered an extremely effective and visually impacting mode of expression to the LGBTQ + Sámi community and to all those who support its cause. (photo by the author 2019).



Image 138: Márkomeannu 2020 arranged a series of concerts at Oslo. In this image – which is the Markomeannu Festival’s Facebook homepage cover photo, the band Keiino is performing on stage, on the right, a Sámi flag and on the left, its queer version. The band member Tom Hugo member – himself Norwegian singer – is openly gay and the band, as well as the festival, openly endorse and supports same-sex relations and rights, as the Rainbow flag shows. (photo by: Johannes Andersen) <https://www.facebook.com/pg/markomeannu/events/>



Image 139: Riddu Riddu 2018, friends cooking reindeer meat around the fire (photo by the author).

Chapter 7

Envisioning indigenous futures

Every edition of Márkomeannu is unique, depending on the festival leader and CEO, the members of the festival board, the artists, the guests, the volunteers and, ultimately, festivalgoers.

As in previous editions, Márkomeannu 2018 revolved around a festival program designed for this specific year. This time though, the program did not only comprised events, talks, concerts united by a common theme. In 2018, the festival had a highly articulated festival concept, usually informally referred to by my interlocutors as “the plot”: “*Sáŋgarat máhccet*” (the pioneers return)⁵²⁹. The concept not only did run through the whole festival but it also characterised the festival promotional digital material such as short videos and other digital contents which first introduced the plot to the public. On the site, once the festival officially started, the plot was implemented through various artistic means such as site-specific art installations, sound installations, the reproduction of digital drawings visualizing the festival narrative, and a theatrical performance which spanned across the whole festival and which engaged the public, allowing festival-goers to participate in the festival-plot. The theatrical performance was realized in collaboration with Giron Sámi Teáhter (Swedish side of Sápmi) and the South Sámi Áarjelhsaemien Theatres.

The background plot merged fiction and reality, setting the festival 100 years in the future, in a time when the «World is about to collapse in power struggle, nuclear war, colonization and environmental crises» and only Gállogieddi stands as a landscape of freedom for the indigenous Sámi peoples. This concept introduced festivalgoers to a dystopic scenario denouncing contemporary environmental malpractices while, simultaneously, reaffirming Márka-Sámi connections with their land, with Sápmi and the Sámi community as a whole. A thorough analysis of both the concept and its implementation can shed lights on the narratives, conceptual bases and cultural significance characterizing Márkomeannu in relation to Sámi indigenous cosmologies. It also enables a reflection upon the relation between humans (past, present, future) and non-humans in the time of climate change. Due to the Nordic States’ policies, the Sámi suffered cultural-ecologic traumas that echo the western understanding of apocalypse. In light of this dreadful experience, and out of concerns for history to repeat itself, a group of young Sámi activists addressed the existential threat the future may hold by resorting to climate-fiction and performative arts.

⁵²⁹ As Hanne Henriette explained during an interview, there were a few antecedents such as the 2016 edition. Presented to the public with had a queer poster, the whole edition of the festival developed into a thematic event. «[...]we had seen in 2016 when Márkomeannu did the queer poster, that entire festival kind of developed into a theme and the artists kind of took it to heart» (Anne Henriette November 2020).

The festival organizers hired a highly skilled and experienced creative team, relying on their artistic expressions to shape the festival site: a play writer, a project management, a sound artist, a scenographer and three actors created a production that gave the audience a comprehensive sensory experience centred on the festival narrative and concept. The interaction between the location and the scenography contributed to the enactment of the festival concept on the museum premises. Furthermore, the organizers commissioned ten drawings from Sunna Kittu, a young Sámi artist from Aanar/Inari (Finnish side of Sápmi).

In this section, I shall address how the public was introduced to the festival concept and what were the deep meanings and hidden or open references encapsulated between the lines of the Márkomeannu2118 plot. It is important to examine the text in its entirety, to grasp the multiple layers of meaning hidden between the lines as well as the cultural references each word hints at. For this reason, not only shall I examine the text but I shall also provide an account of the cultural and political premises that constitute the backdrops of the themes addressed through the festival concept. In light of their importance in helping visitors visualize the future, and given their artistic and cultural values, I shall also address the works of art by Sunna Kittu, contextualising her work within her own experience and background while also putting it in relation with wider concerns pertaining to Sámi peoples across Sápmi.

7.1 “100 years have passed”: an analysis of the festival concept

The Márkomeannu festival homepage (as it appeared in 2018, image n140) provides the links to the main festival-webpages in both North Sámi/Norwegian: the program (*programma/program*), the tickets (*bileahaid/bulletter*) and the info on how to become a volunteer (*eaktodahtolas/frivillig*). Nevertheless, a short text reproduced on the homepage was in English. It is this text that encapsulates the whole festival theme and that provided festivalgoers with the background information necessary to understand what was going on at the festival site.



Image 140; Márkomeannu homepage, detail. (From <http://www.Márkomeannu.no/> access 23/9/2018).

A striking detail is the date: the festival was held in late July 2018 but, as the caption reads, it is imagined to take place one hundred years in the future. The breakdown of time and space unity was the premises upon which the whole festival revolved. Fusing elements of reality, sci-fi, and Sámi non-Christian worldviews, Márkomeannu 2018 was presented to festivalgoers as follows:

100 years have passed, and the earth is caught in unavoidable darkness. The year is 2118 and the world is about to collapse in power struggle, nuclear war, colonization and environmental disasters. The indigenous peoples have found a way to create their own sanctuaries hidden from the dark colonial power led by the power hungry world chancellor Ola Tsjudi. The Sámi peoples' sanctuary is at Gállogieddi, where they are trying to build a new world for themselves (Márkomeannu, access on the 18/02/2019).

These few lines are at the core of the festival concept, which was implemented in the festival area through site-specific art such as sound installations, scenographies, politically provocative graffiti, and big canvas reproducing digital drawings visualizing the topic of the festival. Furthermore, theatrical performances engaged the public, allowing festival-goers to participate in the festival-plot. The theatrical performance was realized in collaboration with Giron Sámi Teáhter (Swedish side of Sápmi) and the South Sámi Åarjelhsaemien Theatres.

In this chapter, I propose a selection of the main elements that constitute the backbone of the background text. These core features are the red thread running through the four-day event and hence represent important tropes to look at. The first element that comes to our attention is time: 100 years in the future, Earth look unrecognizable due to anthropogenic disasters fuelled by greed. Life is almost impossible and the end of human society – and, possibly, life – looming over. Amidst the colonial devastation ravaging the world, though, hope still persist: the text opens up to a bright and positive alter/native to the apparent “unescapable darkness” brought about by Ola Tsjudi’s regime. Such alter/native lies in what the text refers to as sanctuaries, indigenous havens hidden and protected from colonial greed control the chancellor implemented through pervasive technologies such as patrolling robots and chips implanted into people’s bodies as a form of constant surveillance and strict control. The indigenous havens are secluded places where indigenous people escaped the tyranny of the chancellor, independently established their own societies. These indigenous sanctuaries are supposedly scattered around Earth, separated from the rest of the wasted world through barriers that ensures the sanctuaries’ safety and secrecy. According to the festival plot, one of such indigenous refuges is Gállogieddi, the farmstead-cum-museum where the festival takes places.

7.1.1 #Marko2118: interactive narratives on and off line

A few months before the actual festival began, the festival staff shot a series of short videos which were then uploaded online on a regular basis, slowly disseminating information about the festival plot, the dates and the location (the two latter elements being already known by the vast majority of prospective festivalgoers). In these videos, Sámi politicians such as Marit Mirvoll - at the time also director of the Várdobáiki center – and artists who would later take part in the festival, but also actors and other prominent figures of the Sámi society, as well as members of the festival staff, urged people to reach Gállogieddi before it was too late. In some cases, the people depicted in the videos wore gas masks to implement the festival plot. The languages spoken in these videos, set in the dystopian future outlined by the festival, were North Sámi and Norwegian while the texts were in North Sámi and English. One of these videos anticipated one of the festival themes that, albeit not fully explained during the festival, constituted a sort of substratum on which the festival plot was grafted. In the video, actors explained in Northern Sámi how there were numerous indigenous havens scattered all over the world and how, through the trees - whose roots run deep into the earth - it was possible to communicate with other indigenous peoples (images n141,142,143). This aspect of the plot was implemented during the festival through the use of the soundscape and the installation of specific speakers in correspondence of some trees, recreating voices that supposedly came from other indigenous refuges through the trees themselves. As Anne Henriette explained:

And another part of this kind of concept of ours that we didn't fully expand upon on this short weekend was that we kind of imagined there to be indigenous safe bubbles all over the world, many societies that had managed to survive this Apocalypse, and that these societies were connected through Earth, earth, and tree roots. So the roots of trees and plants were like an underground blanket that kind of connected the world and that people communicated through earth and the nerves of plants. So that was also a part of like the theatre performance. And the theatre performance was really kind of the thing that was supposed to connect the dots of installations and concepts and, and design and everything

In another promotional video, we see a man who, with difficulty, crosses a bridge. With this video the staff wanted to convey idea of escape from the devastated world where the evil supreme chancellor ruled in a reign of terror. In another video, all the Sámi were invited to reach Gállogieddi, the last safe place for Sámi people. Other videos instead featured a text alternating between its North Sámi

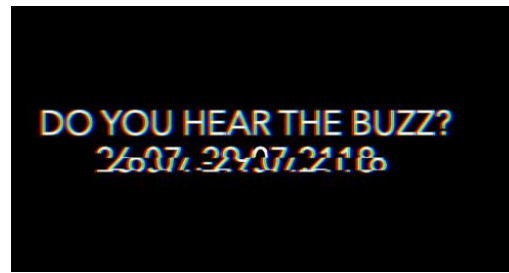
and English versions. The text - Do you hear the buzz / *Gulak gus buzza*⁵³⁰ - disappeared and reappeared as if there was a bad signal/connection. Below the text was the date on which the festival was to be held. The interesting aspect is that the indicated year, in correspondence with the alternation of the fake interferences, alternated between 2018 and 2118, thus representing a temporal collapse. In the background, the sound of birds chirping and insects flying, the same sound reproduced in the tunnel physically and symbolically represented the entrance to the festival. Tor Åge, the designer of the festival posters since 2003, was also involved in this new and innovative marketing strategy and he describes it as follows:

I worked as a consultant on marketing, on the social media strategy and on how they should communicate this concept that was very complicated, and has a very complicated way of reaching out. They [the festival organizers] wanted to use the artists as ambassadors for the concept. So the artist had to be 100 years in the future, I'm talking about the message. So it was a very complicated, very complicated, so they wanted to use all my resources to try to make this, so they used budget in another way, they've toned down the poster last year.



Images 141 a,b: screen frame of a teaser trailer for Márkomeannu2118. The texts read ‘*gulak gus buzza?*’ ‘do you hear the buzz’ and report the date of the festival, which alternates between 2018 and 2118.

⁵³⁰ This expression works as a reference to previous edition, as an inside joke as well as a programmatic statement: it evokes the sound reproduced on the festival site as part of the soundscape, standing as symbols of the sound of nature, an element used to symbolize the vitality of Gállogieddi in a future where everything outside of the indigenous havens is destroyed and nature is heavily compromised and hence silent, a concept paying tribute to Carlson’s 1962 seminal book ‘silent spring’. It is a reference to the old blog where Márkomeannu staff used to work to organize the festival before Facebook and other social media became the main virtual meeting points. The old blog was named *Gulak gus buzza?*. Internet has proved to be a vital tool in keeping the festival staff in contact since its members live all over Sápmi and all over Norway. It is also a reference to the 2004 festival poster, which report the expression near to the cow symbol of that year’s edition (see chapter 6, section 6). On a broader level, this expressions refers to the sound of the festival that breaks the quietness of the Márka. So that so, it is often said that to find where Márkomeannu is, it is enough to ‘follow the buzz’ (fieldnotes).



Images 141 c, d: 'do you hear the buzz' and report the date of the festival, which alternates between 2018 and 2118.



Images 142a,142b,142c: Teaser trailer of Ráhpán 2118 DAG 163 // 163. Original caption: BEAIVI Dá lea oasaš ráhpánčájálmahas "Sáŋgárat máhccet", man beasat oaidnit duorastaga dii. 18.00!// Her er en smakebit av åpningsforestillingen "Pionerene vender tilbake", på torsdag kl. 18.00! (Source <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10151080131244990> access on 13/3/21).



Image143: Teaser trailer of *Resirkulert* @Márkomeannu2118. Original caption in North Sámi: DAG 139 // 139. BEAIVI. "Resirkulert lea mátkkoštan jahkáii 2118. Dál lea maid Davvi-Romsa mannan helvehii, oktan reasta máilmmiin. Márkomeannu lea maŋemus báhtarusbáiki. Ja danne leat dál báhtareamen dohko . Mii čuojahit doppe bearjadaga. Ja sávvat ahte buohkat gávdnet luotta dohko viessobázahusaid čađa, vaikko heahti lea garrasit čuočcan Sis-Romsii ja Bonjovárrái." #meannu2118 #resirkulert (access at <https://www.facebook.com/232428074989/videos/10151068112324990> on 13/3/21).

7.1.2 A Sámi eutopia in a colonial dystopia

The background information available on the website provided guests with further information concerning Gállogieddi as an indigenous sanctuary. Gállogieddi is described, and imagined (see image n144) as a physical and cultural bubble, where Sámi from all over Sápmi gathered to escape from the expansionist goals of the evil chancellor.

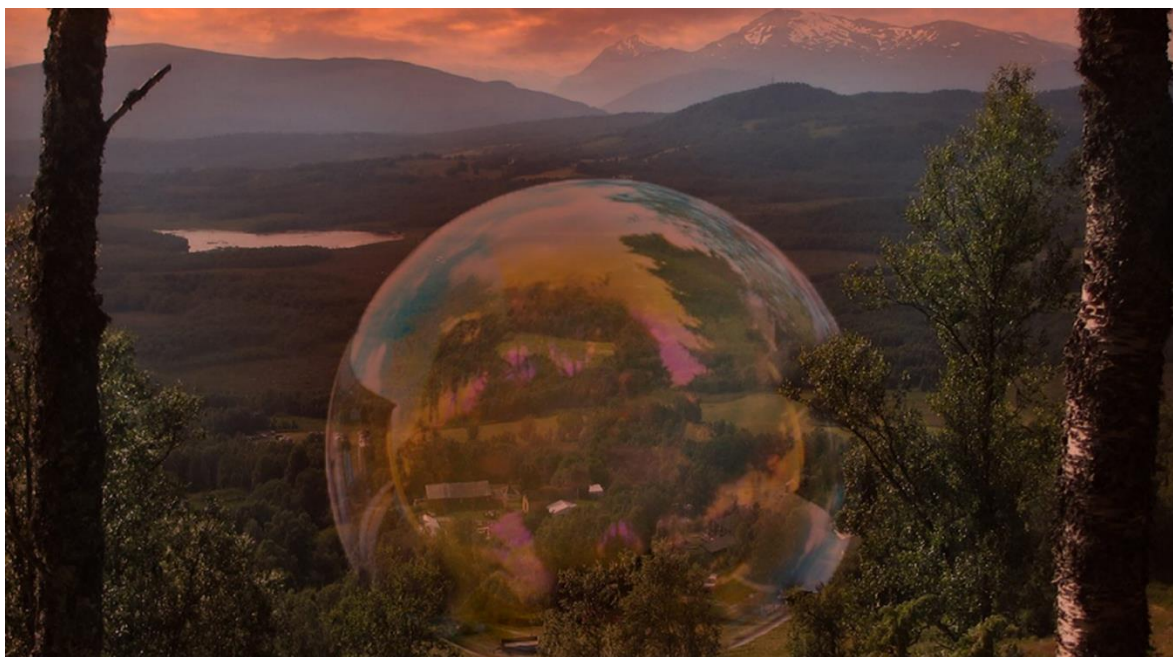


Image 144a: composed image visualizing the Gállogieddi “Sanctuary”.
(from Márkomeannu website <http://www.Márkomeannu.no/> access 23/9/2018)



Image 144b: view over Gállogieddi and the mountains.
(photo by the author)

On the webpage, the text further read:

The combination of new quantum technology and the rediscovery of the ancient Sámi belief have enabled society to return pioneers from ancient times. Over the years, much of the Sámi tradition and wisdom have disappeared in the struggle to survive as people. The pioneers are retrieved from the Saivo (the land of the dead) to assist in the creation of a peaceful, well-organized society (Márkomeannu website, access on 18/02/19).

These few words, that introduced the public to the second part of the story, are as dense with meanings and references as the first part of the text. The idea running through them is that the Sámi, if allowed to maintain self-regulation, would thrive and they would do so building on the experiences of their ancestors, here symbolically represented by the pioneers retrieved from the *Saivo*.

As it is apparent, these lines are plenty of references to the “non-Christian Sámi worldview” (Kaikkonen, 2018) which becomes a repository of inspiration and part of the festival’s narrative frame. By means of this caption, the Sámi past and the Sámi belief system are integrated into the Márkomeannu 2018 concept. When the two texts are put together, they form a highly articulated story that can be classified as belonging to the ‘Indigenous futurism’ genre as delineated by Indigenous scholar Grace Dillon (2012), as I shall explain in more detail later in this chapter. First though, I would like to take into account some plot elements which stand out in the festival plot. By comprehensively addressing them, it is possible to illustrate the complex cultural context into which the festival positions itself as well as references hinting at culturally-specific concepts, at debates taking place in Sámi milieux and at Sámi history as foundation for Sámi futures. These elements, characterized by multiple layers of meaning, are:

- The wrecked heart of the future
- Ola Tsjudi
- Gállogieddi as a safe haven
- The combination of quantum technology and rediscovered ancient Sámi wisdom
- the Pioneers

Each of these features constitutes an important element of the festival plot while also representing a key to unlock a series of issues connected with Sámi history and Sámi present, and possible Sámi futures.

The wrecked heart in which the plot is set in not our own but is 100 years in the future we are and focuses our attention on our descendants, it is a time so far and yet so near – less than four generations hence – where our immediate progeny may still be alive. This future though is an impoverished reality: shadow descended upon humankind as power struggles, nuclear warfare, colonial attitudes

and anthropogenic natural disasters has plunged humanity into darkness engulfing future generations in warfare and ecological collapse. All these elements simultaneously refer to what has already happened in Sápmi as consequence of colonization – and hence are deeply rooted in Sámi history(ies) - and to what may happen in the future if climate mitigation policies will not prove sufficient in containing the consequences of climate change not only in the Arctic but across the globe. The dystopic future presented here is marked not only by ecological and climatic catastrophes but also by social implosion characterised by constant control, lack of individual and collective freedom as well as a pervasive state of policing that deprives citizens from their rights. All these elements together, along with anthropogenic climate change and warfare, contribute in creating a gloomy future cultural and social landscape.

If we examine the festival plot in the light of Sámi history, the colonial power controlling the world mentioned in the text emerges as a representation of the centuries of colonial despotism and coercion endured by Sámi and indigenous peoples worldwide. In the Sámi case, such colonial oppression ultimately led to the fragmentation of Sámi societies. Sámi people's political autonomy has been slowly eroded by expanding Nordic and Russian powers, Sámi people had been subject to forms of forced labour first during the 18th and 19th century mining industry and, more recently, during WWII. (see chapter 2 and chapter 3). Relocation has also been part of Sámi recent history: after WWII, Skolt Sámi had to relocate in Finland, Reindeer herders had been relocated. In some cases, relocation was avoided only thanks to massive ethno-political mobilization: had the damming project on the Alta river not been scaled down, Sámi villages would have been submerged, forcing their inhabitants to relocate. These are only a few of the numerous examples of relocation in Sámi contexts but it should also be acknowledged that the imposition of borders cutting across reindeer migration routes meant that many *siida* (Sámi social organizations) were prevented from reaching some of their ancestral summer grazing lands. Sámi became citizens of the parish in which they were registered and, in the majority of cases, Sámi people were registered in their winter grazing lands, resulting in the loss of access to the economic and cultural, but also spiritual, resources enshrined in those lands. The Sámi case is not unique. Quite the contrary, relocation and dispossession are traumatic experiences shared by many Indigenous peoples who had been subject to colonial violence. In this regard, Whyte explains that: « Different forms of colonialism, of course, whether through environmental destruction, land dispossession or forced relocation, have ended Indigenous peoples' local relationships to thousands of plants, animals, insects, and entire ecosystems. While these relationships often continue to be enacted through Indigenous peoples' living memories, heritage, “felt knowledges”, social identities (e.g., clans), and philosophies, they have stopped as relationships involving direct ecological interaction» (2018:226).

The reference to a long-lost wisdom that the Sámi of the future were able to activate is of extreme relevance when addressed through the lenses of history. This line implicitly hints at the fact that, as a consequence of colonial attitudes and policies, Sámi knowledge systems had been the target of active persecution, that led to the loss of indigenous knowledges and understandings of the world (see chapter 4). In the text though it is remarked that « much of the Sámi tradition and wisdom have disappeared in the struggle to survive as people » (Márkomeannu 2018). This element is of particular importance since it represents a view of the colonization process through the lens of Sámi indigenous perspectives. Cultural loss is here addressed as a painful but necessary survival strategy that enabled Sámi cultures to survive in a hostile environment. Such a reading echoes explanations concerning the language shift occurred during WWII (see chapter 3,) and evokes Lehtola and Evjen's use of the Sámi concept of *beargi* – to cope – in contexts of cultural oppression (2019). The festival line enshrines - and proposes in the festival context - historical phenomena that took place throughout Sápmi and that characterized Sámi history of adjustment to an increasingly asymmetric colonial contexts. It is a way to make sense of cultural loss as well as of the acquisition of cultural features – among them Christianity – that originally did not belong with Sámi worldviews but that were soon integrated into Sámi knowledge systems. The ancient wisdom Sámi people were able to recover did not just disappear but, as cultural insiders know well, was actively taken away from them through enforced assimilation, missionary activity and the persecution of Sámi ritual specialists. Many Sámi, to escape violence, converted to Christianity renouncing – or practicing in secrecy – their Indigenous rituals. By acquiring and incorporating elements originally foreign to Sámi cultures while simultaneously giving up on other “traditional” Sámi practices, Sámi peoples managed to cope with the massive change brought about by the colonial pressure. Ultimately, this mechanism enabled the Sámi to survive as a community. The process though came at a cost, which meant the loss of indigenous practices and worldviews. This line of thought emerged during the conversation with Anne Henriette, when she openly referred to the contradictions inherent to the embrace of the Christian faith by Sámi peoples:

Christianity came to the Sámi people in a very difficult time. And what's really essential at that time is helping the Sámi people cope with colonialism, but has also brought with it a lot of issues because it clashes with the old Sámi ideology, you could almost say because there's a difference between [Sámi and Christian] mythology cosmology and everything (Anne Henriette 2/3/2021 via zoom).

Given these premises, the ability and capability to restore indigenous knowledges envisaged in the festival plot is an open reference to the resilience and resistance of Sámi peoples as well as to the strength and persistence of their indigenous insights into the world, against the odds and hindrances

posed by the colonial context of northern Fennoscandinavia. According to the festival plotline, the retrieved ancient Sámi knowledge along with hyper-modern technology, played a crucial role in retrieving the three Sámi “pioneers” who were transported from the Saivo/Otherworld to the present/2118. The Saivo is the Sámi non-Christian Land of the Dead or World of the Spirits, a parallel dimension where, according to Sámi non-Christian cosmologies, the dead keep on living in a world like ours, only better. In Sámi non-Christian worldviews, the Saivo was often situated in the depth of holy mountains. Today this term is often used to refer to the afterlife. The mention of technology as a means to reconnect with people from the Saivo introduces an element of sci-fiction to the festival plot and, in doing so, the festival makes a stand for the cultural creativity and the modernity of indigenous cultures by alluding to growing field of indigenous sci-fiction (cfr Dillon 2012, S. Skåden 2019)⁵³¹. The reference to a futuristic technology that allows Sámi peoples to open a quantum bridge between dimension – and also, in a way, temporalities – becomes a core element fundamental to the structure of the plot itself. Past, and future, as well as living and dead converge at Gállogieddi, making the farm the centre of a trans-dimensional and trans-temporal locus of meaning-creation. This aspect enables us to inscribe the festival background text in the speculative fiction genre, remarking Márkomeannu experimental character, a feature that has defined the festival since its first editions. The collapse of temporalities that converge at Gállogieddi can also be considered a transposition of the festival itself. At Gállogieddi, during Márkomeannu, the normal (Norwegian) time is suspended and people live in the (Sámi) festival time. During the festival, it is not Norwegian but Sámi ways that are at the basis of social relations and rules within the festival site. In this sense, we can say that Márkomeannu is a form of temporal decolonization of time, a ‘Sámi time out of Norwegian time’. Furthermore, the imagined convergence of dimensions and temporalities constitutes a translation in fictional terms of a real role fulfilled by Márkomeannu, and hence Gállogieddi. Throughout the years, the festival - and its location - have indeed become a meeting point between generations – as well as social groups, and individual belonging to different Sámi communities – ensuring inter-generation knowledge exchange. The festival has also fostered reflections into both the Sámi past (as during the 2017 edition, when the 1917 Tråante meeting was remembered) and the future (through workshops and discussions concerning the future of Sápmi). It is precisely with respect to this aspect that the presence of the pioneers acquires significance and further relevance.

⁵³¹ Indigenous sci-fiction as a literary genre has been constantly developing in the last decades. Indigenous sci-fiction is connected with “indigenous Futurisms”, a term coined by indigenous scholar Dr. Grace Dillon in her 2012 anthology “walking in the clouds”.

7.2 Key figures across temporalities

7.2.1 Ola Tsudj: a future foe from the past

The reference to Sámi history and Worldviews was quite apparent to anyone with a background in Sámi history and cultures but the specific message encoded in the choice of names was, as it was explained to me, a subtle word pun meant to be an inside joke for Sámi attending Márkomeannu. The devastation ravaging through the 2118 Earth was fuelled by hunger for power, epitomized by a caricature of the evil ruler, here named Ola Tjudi. This epitome is charged with multiple meanings as it emerged during the interview with the 2018 festival CEO. During an interview, I asked Anne Henriette whether the name of the chancellor could be interpreted as a cultural reference and Anne Henriette explained to me that this was what the organizing committee had in mind when they developed the figure of the world chancellor, as it is clear from the following extract from the same interview:

Well, it was kind of kind of a fun reference for us because I'm on the Norwegian Side. So beside often, when, when the majority person kind of talks about, like a, like a representative for the Norwegian society, it's all or all like Norwegian. So the first name comes from that all lies kind of like this definition of like colonizer first name, and then tsjudi is, was kind of, like a hint of the history of, of the, to the people that used to raid Sámi villages before. So we kind of wanted a name that had some fun puns to it, but also with some historical references that can be like played with. So that's why it's Ola Tsjudi, the we didn't, we didn't kind of put a lot of talk about it, but we wanted it to be a pun. And so it was also kind of a bit funny, even though he was like a dictator, evil dictator, controlling person. like I said that Ola, first of all, it's Ola Nordmann, Norwegian, male, white guy, standard kind of name they use when they talk about that demographic. So. So it was so clear reference to kind of contemporary issues and colonization. So we wanted the name to kind of when you hear it, then you automatically kind of know that this is not, this is the enemy. Or this is kind of the force that's trying to exploit us. (Anne Henriette 2/3/2021 via zoom).

Ola represents the stereotypical white male Norwegian, an exponent of the colonial society, often engaged in exploitative actions (mining activities or other forms of exploitation). It stands for a faceless and almost nameless (given his extremely common and vague name) member of the hegemonic male-dominated society that for so long has been pressuring Sámi societies and which he represents and embodies. On the other hand, the surname of the chancellor - Tsudj – has a long history in the Sámi folklore as it comes from Čuđit the Sámi ethnonym for the mythological enemies who loom over the Sámi – their villages, *siida* but also individuals – in folktales that are still passed down between generation. The title, chancellor, on the other hand has evokes sci-fiction scenarios, echoing

the galactic enemy *par excellence*, the supreme chancellor Palpatine from the cult sci-fiction series Star Wars⁵³².

The Čuđit were famous among the Sámi for being cruel human enemies, whose origins and ethnic is usually not specified in Sámi stories where they figure as nameless bands of thieves engaging in the cruel murdering and plundering of helpless Sámi communities. They were fearsome foes who came from other people's lands, menacing the survival of Sámi society and constituting a real menace that, in the tales, is usually combatted by a member of the Sámi community under threat. Usually set in a distant past, Čuđit stories may be originating from historical events being actual reflections of real conflicts or raids experienced by Sámi people. Many scholars, philologists and folklorists, have addressed the origin of the term and the contents of the Čuđit stories. According to Drannikova and Larsen (2008), who analysed the word Čuđit from an etymological point of view, Čuđit can derive from the proto-Slavic *tjudjo. This root conveyed the notion of stranger, and as suggested by Myrvoll (1999 in Drannikova and Larsen 2008) may in turn be a borrowing from Gothic or a Germanic root that connoted a 'nation' as in people. Following this line of thought, this term later acquired new meanings resulting from the contact between peoples speaking Slavonic and Finno-Ugric languages. Hence, Čuđit can be considered a blanket term without any precise ethnic identification itself which probably reflected groups with different ethnic backgrounds. In the Sámi context, the name Čuđit does not refer to a specific people or ethnic group, but has become a new umbrella term that refers to different enemies. Drannikova and Larsen (2008) consider that the term probably used to refer to a wide range of different ethnic groups that had reached Sápmi from East. Interestingly, they also notice that in the stories collected among the Eastern Sámi living in Kola Peninsula, the Čuđit come from the West. Many place-names in Sápmi reflect the presence of the Čuđit stories⁵³³. These place-names function as symbolic maps, placing these stories in the landscape. For instance, the first Sámi writer Johan Turi explains: « One event that I have heard about is how a *ruoššačuhti* was killed at

⁵³² Star Wars iconography has proved to be a source of inspiration in Sámi artistic milieux and, through forms of cultural jamming, iconic images derived from this series have been reimagined and transformed into expressions of 'artivism'. In particular, artist Andres Sunna has used pop-culture elements belonging to the Star Wars imagery and used them as the basis for a series of politically charged artworks. See appendix III.

⁵³³ Drannikova & Larsen (2008) have analysed place-names from Northern Norway and consider it possible that the historically older Sámi place-name element "Čuđe-" has a Norwegian counterpart in the toponic element "russe-". The scholars have examined a number of place-names such as Russehølet and Mannedrapet. Attested in Qvigstad, Russehølet refers to a Russians' vortex ie a whirlpool where, as the legends go, Karelian Chudes were killed through deceit. R. Larsen had collected the place-name Mannedrapet (man murder), referring to a location where the Čuđit supposedly killed all the local parishioners. Similarly, Russeflåget refers to a place where Karelians were killed with deception. The Lule-Sámi Place-name Tjudihårrå - "Pyramids of stones"- refers to 17 piles of stones symbolizing 17 Čuđit who reached the Nordland village of Kjerris. These place-names show that the word Čuđit can refer to "dangerous stranger" in a broad sense denoting all those groups perceived as intruders by the Sámi people.

Čuđibuolža. That is how that ridge [*buolža*] got its name, and that is what it's called to this day » ([1910] 2010:110).

Usually these stories revolve around a similar plot, following a specific narrative that repeats itself across Sápmi: a group of enemies, usually a band of merciless thieves organized in raiding groups, murder Sámi people to steal their belongings. The hero or heroine, a member of the local Sámi community, manages then to trick the enemies saving the rest of the community. To do so, the hero/heroine resorts to his/her deep knowledge of the local natural landscape to his/her advantage to drag the enemy to their death. The Čuđit legends are important elements of Sámi intangible heritage and are among the most common Sámi historical legends. Since they are attested throughout Sápmi, they belong to a pan-Sámi corpus of oral stories. Many variations of the Čuđit stories have been recorded across Sápmi: in the 1880s Finnish scholars Koskimies and Itkonen collected Čuđit stories from the Aanaar area. Norwegian philologist, linguist lexicographer, university professor and author J. A. Friis in the 1850s recorded Čuđit stories from the Norwegian side of Sápmi and so did, fifty years later, Anders Larsen, a schoolteacher and Sámi scholar born in 1870 in Kvænangen, Norway. During his more than one-hundred years life, in late 19th century and early 20th century, Norwegian philologist and linguist Just Knud Qvigstad collected a large number of Sámi stories and legends. His collections contain twenty-one Čuđit legends (Drannikova & Larsen 2019). One story the Qvigstad collected revolves around how the spiders rescued the Sámi from a group of Tsjudes. The spiders weaving their net over the entrance to the cave where they had hidden (cf. Qvigstad, 1927, I: 151, III: 385). According to Magga, Olsen and Sara, who have examined the humans-animals relations stories like the one Qvigstad documented were part of the pedagogical tools employed by parents to teach children to respect other living creatures as part of a system based on reciprocity (2001). In the first half of the 20th century, Johan Turi recorded many Čuđit stories in his masterpiece *Muitllatus Sámiid birra* (1910). Turi's friend, the Danish ethnographer and artist Emilie Demant-Hatt collected, among others, a number of Čuđit stories, which she published in her 1922 collection. In her field-notes – translated and edited by Barbara Sjöholm (2019) – Demant-Hatt tries to analyse these figures and their function in Sámi society. She distinguished them from the Stallos, the enemies that populated the Sámi tales. In her view, the 'Chudes' – Čuđit – are tangible and dangerous enemies who, according to the old stories, murder and plunder Sámi peoples. With an attention towards prosody and nonverbal communication ahead of her time, Demant-hatt is able to grasp the difference between the Stallo and the Čuđit. As she writes in her notes, « while Čuđit tales are always told with a smile and a humorous expression, it is completely different with cats legends, a sense of helplessness and fear of a horrible and overbearing enemy that never shows compassion, still remain behind these narratives» (Demant Hatt 2019: 104). Demant-Hatt also notices that, inferring from the details of some tales, it is easy to

suspect that those very tales told around the fire, were not about ancient Čuđit enemies. In those cases, the designation Čuđit was applied to the hostile neighbours being them Swedish, Norwegians or Russians. Even though set in the past, the stories Demant-Hatt heard were, in her opinion, referring to the contemporary challenges faced by her interlocutors. Tim Frandy (2019) considers Čuđit stories as being embedded in and reflecting border dynamics and at their core lies the violence of colonialism and the threat this process poses to Sámi communities and their values. The Čuđit stories are still today a repository of meanings for contemporary Sámi societies. Čuđit stories have become a way, grounded in Sámi cultural heritage, of addressing and understanding the present.

7.2.2 *Ofelaččat, those who show(ed) the way*

The Pioneers' presence in the plot maintains the role of the festival as a cultural arena where to discuss Sámi the early history of Sámi political activism while simultaneously establishing a connection with Sámi indigenous worldviews⁵³⁴. Such connection is reinforced in the terminology: if in the English text available on the homepage Elsa Laula, Jakko Sverloff and Anders Larsen are referred to as “pioneers”, in the Norwegian text they are indicated as *veivisere* while in the North Sámi text they are called *ofelaččat*. Both *ofelaččat* and *veivisere* mean guides, pathfinders or, literally, “those who show the way”. This term has come to define the “leader” and, as such is used today in Northern Sámi languages. The importance of the term *ofelaččat* (singular: *ofelaš*) is determined by the original function of the *ofelaš* as a figure: the *ofelaš* is, in Sámi folktales, the individual who, thanks to her/his skills and wit, saves his/her Sámi community from the threat posed by the enemies of the Sámi, the Tjudi. Throughout the years, and as a response to the massive changes occurred in Sámi society, the term has been charged new meanings, even though it maintains its original symbolic nuances⁵³⁵. The three *ofelaččat* or pioneers mentioned in the Márkomeannu2118 text came to take

⁵³⁴ The 2017 edition of Márkomeannu celebrated the centenary of the first pan-Sámi meeting, held in Tráante/Trondheim in 1917. Among the organizers of this event, regarded as a cultural and political landmark, was Elsa Laula. Márkomeannu Festival joined the celebrations, dedicating wide space to in-depth analyses, presentations and a exhibitions.

⁵³⁵ Since 2004, a cultural peer-to-peer program aimed at spreading knowledge about Sámi peoples in Norway bears the name Sámi Ofelaččat/Sámiske Veivisere (the Sámi pathfinders).

Every year, four young Sámi people are selected among those who apply to the program. The ceremony where the new Ofelaččat are announced usually takes place during the Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu festival, every other year.

The task of the Ofelaččat is to travel across the country, visiting schools and institutions to inform and educate the Norwegian youth on Sámi culture, Sámi social conditions and the individual experiences of Sámi youngsters. Their work has proved essential in fighting the prejudices against the Sámi, in fostering positive attitudes towards them by helping people with no or little knowledge about Sámi cultures to get acquainted with some of their basic aspects through dialogue and first-hand experiences. The strength of this program comes from the dialogue it allows between Sámi and non-Sámi youth, enabling the latter to have access to Sámi cultures as living entities rather than exclusively through books or teachers who may have themselves little knowledge about Sámi cultures.

This program was first developed as a three-year long pilot project with three ofelaččat in 2004 and has now become an established institution with four pathfinders.

Each of them comes from different parts of the Sámi areas of Norway so that each Sámi culture within Norway can be represented, hence contributing to the dismantling of one of the main prejudices about Sámi cultures: its supposed homogeneity. The ofelaččat usually visit high schools, but they also work with other relevant institutions where young people gather. This program is financed by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization (Kommunal- og

the role of symbolic ancestors to all Sámi peoples in the present and in the future. The encounter between the three *ofelaččat* and the Sámi of the future – i.e. according to the collective role-play, the Sámi who attended the festival - delineates a «dialogical narrative between descendants and ancestors» (Whyte, 2018:17) albeit in a festival context. In the intention of the organizers, the *ofelaččat* incarnated a political legacy contemporary Sámi should honour and embrace since «each of the pioneers represents a social challenge and a possible solution to it» (Márkomeannu website). Furthermore, in the participatory performance put on at Márkomeannu, the three of them – through the actors who impersonated them – were to offer guidance to the Sámi of the future in light of their own political expertise. The *ofelaččat* are Laula Renberg (1877-1931) (image n145), Anders Larsen (1870-1949) (image n146) and Jaako Sverloff (1900s) (image n147). Each of them was a prominent figure in recent Sámi history and they all contributed, each in her/his own right, to the promotion and the protection of Sámi values and rights.

As Anne Henriette highlights:

So each of them had a specific kind of role. And we've chosen we've chosen them to kind of help with a specific theme so Elsa Laula Renberg was chosen for her ability to kind of connect the people in a in a cause. Jakko Sverloff... He was chosen, because of his ability to rebuild a society... because he was part of the Skolt Sámi that were driven out of their homes and forced placed in a completely new and not really good place for them to start a new society that he kind of managed to. He's kind of a symbol of the resilience, the resilience of the Skolt Sámi people. So he was chosen for his, his, his forcing kind of rebuilding something from ashes. Larsen was a local, local person and he was the one who wrote the first Sámi novel if I'm not wrong, *Beaiveálgu*⁵³⁶. And he talked a lot about the Sea-Sámi culture and how that was on the coast of Sápmi, how they lived, how they worked with the conflict, how the colonization had been there and with the identity part. He wrote very good [pieces] about identity. So he was chosen for his ability to make people able to be proud of identity or have like, a language to talk with (Anne Henriette 2/3/2021 via zoom).

moderniseringsdepartementet) sponsored, and is organized by the Sámi allaskuvla/Sámisk høgskole/Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino (Romsa ja Finnmarku/ Troms og Finnmark fylke, Troms and Finnmark County). the Sámi University College provides the training and is also responsible for the implementation and operation of the young *ofelaččat*. The Sámi University College has specifically designed the course «*formidling av Sámisk kultur og samfunn*» (dissemination of Sámi culture and society) covering topics relevant for the tast the ofelacciat have to fulfill. It not only provides training about Sámi history, culture and economic activities but also about presentation techniques.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/Sámiske-veivisere-10-ar/id2005854/>

⁵³⁶ Bæivve-Alggo (1912).

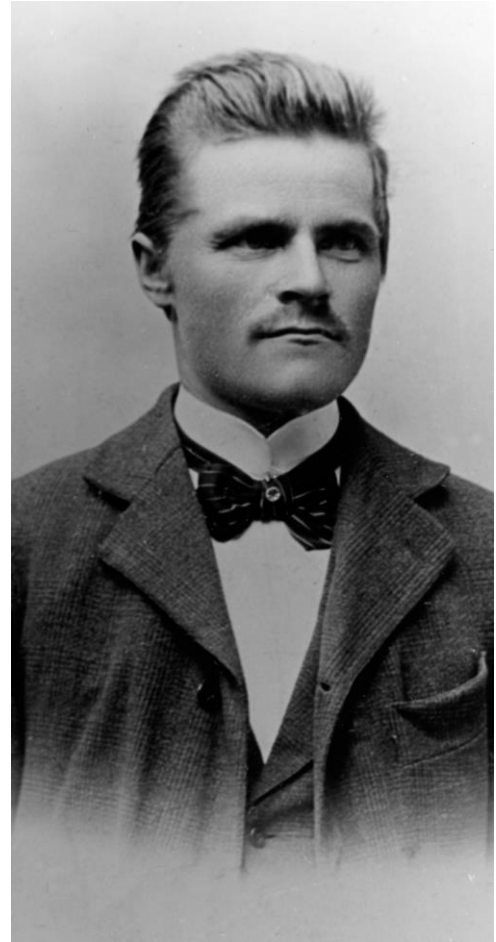


Image 145, Elsa Laula (source <https://kvinnemuseet.no/> access on 9/5/21); Image 146: Jakko Sverloff (source: <https://arkisto.fi/> access on 7/5/21); Image 147: Anders Larsen (Source <https://bibliotek.tromsfylke.no/> access on 15/9/20)

Elsa Laula (1877-1931)⁵³⁷ was born in Dikanäs in Åsele Lappmark in 1877 in a reindeer tending South Sámi Family. She is regarded as one of the most important Sámi leaders of the early 20th century. During her life-time Sámi ways of living had to face great challenges. Her own personal experience deeply shaped her political career and activism. Elsa Laula's own family suffered the tragic loss of Laula's father and brother, who drowned in dubious circumstances while engaging in a battle over the lands with local Swedish farmers. Laula grew up witnessing the erosion of Sámi reindeer tending society at the hands of the Swedish Nation State: the establishment of farms, which took away the best reindeer grazing lands, made reindeer tending more and more difficult throughout the Sámi areas. This transnational phenomenon had heavy consequences on local reindeer tenders and many, impoverished and unable to pursuit reindeer tending, had to abandon their ancestors' way of living.

⁵³⁷ She realized that Sámi cooperation over the national borders was absolutely necessary, and her work also prepared the ground for the coming cultural political movements. (Kleppe Mulk 2014).

Elsa Laula's political activism made her one of the most important Sámi political pioneers and her role in the development of Sámi political consciousness is today widely acknowledged. She strenuously worked to strengthen Sámi unity beyond the borders of the Nordic Nation states and to improve the level of education of Sámi children. Given her activism to support gender equality, she has become an icon of both Sámi quest for rights of and Sámi women's empowerment. Her legacy is still cherished and respected and her image, made famous by photographs easily available online, is now employed in a variety of contexts and has become a powerful symbol of Sámi resistance to external pressures. Her political activism, her feminism and her claims for Sámi unity beyond national borders and beyond individual occupations have to be analysed as part of the wider local historical and political context. She was disappointed by the way Swedish settlers considered and treated Sámi peoples and she was a strong opponent to the social Darwinist attitudes which saw the Sámi as culturally and biologically inferior to the Swedish majority.

The origins of the still ongoing conflicts between reindeer tenders and farmers can be traced back to the establishment of Swedish settlers in Sámi territories. From a legislative perspective, a turning point in the relations between Sámi and Swedish settlers is the 1886 "Reindeer Grazing Act" which laid the foundation of later Swedish Sámi policy. This act drew an existential relation between Sámi identity and reindeer tending (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008) and marked the loss of Sámi private ownership over the lands they inhabited. As the historian Kvist notices «individual pasture rights were made into an exclusive communal right for the Saami villages » (Kvist 1994:209)⁵³⁸ In early 20th century Sweden, the politics towards Sámi peoples was hence characterised by two different attitudes and connected ideologies: the '*lapp skal vaere lapp*' policy and the assimilation policy. The premises of this twofold approach can be traced back to social Darwinism and saw civilization as the major threat to Sámi reindeer tenders who were to be protected through forms of segregations. As a consequence of the assimilation policies imposed upon her own people, Laula had access to higher education and qualified as an obstetrician in Uppsala. She was an advocate of adequate education for Sámi children, regardless of their parents activity, and she was a strong supporter of education in Sámi (Kolberg 2009). She was also the first Sámi woman to have become a writer. Influenced by the early global women's movement (Ragazzi 2015) in her works she applied both the ethnic and the gender perspective (Hirvonen 2008).

Elsa Laula was the daughter of a Sámi reindeer herder from Ljustfjäll, a southern Sámi-speaking area of Sweden. In she married Thomas Renberg, a Sámi reindeer herder from Nordland (Northern

⁵³⁸ For a detailed analysis of the consequences of the "Grazing Land Acts" on Sámi peoples living in Sweden, see Kvist 1994.

Norway). During her political career, Elsa Laula tried to counteract the hegemonizing image of Sámi as reindeer tenders fostered by Swedish policy. While the Swedish State focused on the rights of Sámi as reindeer herders, Elsa Laula dedicated her political efforts to the acknowledgment of the rights of the Sámi as a people, regardless of occupation⁵³⁹ (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008). Today her actions have become symbols of Sámi political activism and her image has become iconic (Heith 2019), a source of inspiration for many artists who, by depicting her, automatically evoke her legacy (see appendix III). Laula has had an important role in the 1910s and 1920s Sámi movements⁵⁴⁰. As the representative of Sámi people from southern Lappmarks, she went to Stockholm to complain about the social conditions endured by her people. Under Laula's leadership, the first organized Sámi women's movement emerged. Her political activism made her one of the central figures of the early 20th century growing Sámi cultural milieu characterized by the emergence of Sámi unions and Sámi newspapers (Persson et al 2017). In 1904, during a meeting held in the Sámi hut at Skansen open air museum in Stockholm, Elsa Laula founded the first known, albeit short-lived, Sámi association: *Lapska Centralförbundet* (The Lappish central association). During the same year, she wrote 'Inför lif eller död? Sanningsord i de Lappska förhållandena' (Facing Life or Death? Words of Truth on the Conditions of the Sámi), a political pamphlet describing the contemporary situation of the Sámi peoples. In this short leaflet, Laula expresses her concerns for the survival of Sámi cultures. Elsa Laula addressed the difficulties Sámi peoples were facing as consequence of the State-led assimilation policies. Within the lines of this text, she also urged the Sámi to fight for the acknowledgment of their rights (Hirvonen 2008, Gaski 2020). In her political writings, she was critical of the implications of the Reindeer Grazing Act, which gave Sámi reindeer tenders grazing rights but did not secure Sámi ownership over the lands they had used since time immemorial. As a consequence, all those Sámi families and individual who, for different reasons and often because of State-led assimilation policies, were no longer engaged in reindeer tending lost the right to use the land. In Elsa Laula's view, all grazing lands should have been property of the Sámi, regardless of their occupation and it was up to them to decide how to employ them. (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008). Elsa Laula understood that, in

⁵³⁹ According to the early 20th century social Darwinist theories, the Sámi people epitomized lower level in the cultural evolution of humanity. The mobile lifestyle of reindeer tenders mirrored a savage state of humankind. Sámi people were considered to be at the antipodes of civilization. Even though State's laws made reindeer tending a Sámi monopoly, the Swedish State's paternalistic attitudes led to a division within Sámi society: For the Sámi who did not engage in Reindeer tending, the State pursued forms of assimilation into the Swedish majority society. According to the *Lapp Skal Vare Lapp* policy, only those who were engaged in reindeer tending were regarded as real Sámi and, hencefor, reindeer tending was the only suitable occupation for them Sámi people active in reindeer tending were to be preserved from the modernization process to which their culture would have not survived. This aim was pursued through segregation (Kvist 1994).

⁵⁴⁰ Not only Elsa Laula but also her husband Thomas Renberg was an important exponent of Sámi ethnopolitical activism. In 1948 Thomas tragically died in one of the most dramatic accidents of post-war Sámi history. On the way back from a meeting in Romsa (Tromsø), the bus on which Thomas was travelling, and that transported other male and female South Sámi activists, crushed in Dunderlandsdalen. In the accident, fourteen South Sámi leaders and political representatives lost their lives (Ragazzi 2008).

order to see their rights acknowledged, Sámi peoples had to be united, regardless of their livelihood. If the state recognized only reindeer herding as a Sámi Activity, according to Elsa Laula «Men and women could and should be fishers and herders, handworkers, traders, teachers» (Kleppe & Mulk 2008).

Elsa Laula's works denounced the growing poverty suffered by Sámi people as a consequence of the marginalization imposed upon them. 1908 marked an important year for Elsa Laula: along with her husband, she founded the 'Brurskanken Sámiske Lag', one of the first Sámi associations in Norway. Two years later, in 1910 she organized the Brurskankens Sámiske Kvindeforening, the first Sámi women's association. This association, aiming at engaging Sámi women in Sámi politics, had a pivotal role in calling the first general Sámi conference, which was held on 6 in Tråante⁵⁴¹(Trondheim in Southern Sámi language) on the 6th of February 1917.⁵⁴²

Elsa Laula's activism transcended the borders of the Nordic Nation States: not only did she organize the 'Brurskankens Sámiske Kvindeforening' in Sweden but she also became very politically active in Norway, where she had moved with her husband who was a reindeer herder in Norldand County. There founded the first Sámi women's association on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, in 1910⁵⁴³: the Brurskanken Sámi women's association in Vefsn in Nordland (Halsaa 2011). The first Nordic general assembly was indeed held in central Norway, in the South Sámi areas. Elsa Laula's activism and her passion for Sámi women's rights prompted the beginnings of a pan-Sámi movement aiming at defending civil and cultural rights (Lehtola 2004). Elsa Laula's political works were deeply intertwined with the emerging Sámi ethnic movement, of whose development she contributed. Since the early 1900s, due to the emerging nationalist feelings sweeping through Fennoscandinavia, Sámi peoples started to organize themselves in activist groups. Elsa Laula was not the only female Sámi

⁵⁴¹ The political overtones have always been relevant at Márkomeannu. For instance, the 2017 edition was focused on the celebrations for the jubilee marking the 100 year anniversary of the Tråante (Trondheim) meeting. It was in Trondheim in 1917 that, for the first time, Sámi representatives from all over Sápmi met to promote a common cause as one people. The commemoration of this historic events consisted of a photo exhibition entitled 'Fortellinger' and a monologue. The exhibition displayed old pictures dating from 1910 to 1925. These old Photographs provided the public with a glimpse of what Sámi life and culture consisted of in South Troms and Northern Nordland at the beginning of the 20th century. The "conversation" was entitled *Hva har gjort for å gjøre Elsa Laula stolt i dag*; (What has been done to make Elsa Laula proud today?) and was led by Johan Martin Steinfjell. Actress Trine Lise Olsen played Elsa Laula. The "conversation" aimed at addressing both contemporary challenges and past events. As it emerges by the brief analysis of the contents of the 2017 edition, the importance of activism and the dialogue between past, present and future was already part of the Márkomeannu agenda.

⁵⁴² Swedish original title: 'Inför Lif eller Död? Sanningsord i de Lappska förhållandena'.

⁵⁴³ Elsa Laula was not the only female Sámi activist to be active at the beginning of the 20th century: in 1920 Laula's college teacher Karin Stenberg published the pamphlet *Dah läh mijen situd* (This Is Our Will). As Kreuger (2018) notes: «Both Laula and Stenberg agitated against the colonial politics of '*Lapp skall vara lapp*' (the Lapp must remain Lapp), which promoted 'authentic' nomadic reindeer herding by the Mountain Sámi in the north while denying the Forest Sámi further south, who are more sedentary, the right to own and exploit their land».

activist to be active at the beginning of the 20th century: in 1920 Laula's college teacher Karin Stenberg published the pamphlet 'Dah lãh mijen situd' (This Is Our Will).

Elsa Laula today represents the fight for Sámi rights as well as for female Sámi empowerment and for this reason she was selected as one of the pioneers at Márkomeannu2118. Similarly, Anders Larsen (1870-1949) was chosen as one of the three *ofelaččat* because of his pivotal role in both Sámi politics and Sámi literature. Larsen studied at the Romsa/Tromsø seminar from 1897 to 1899, he became a teacher and he is remembered as one of the first Sámi writers. He was the editor of the Sámi language newspaper 'Ságai Muitaleaggi' ("The news reporter" 1904 -1911) between, for which he also contributed with original stories and poems. In 1914 he published the novel 'Beaivvi álgu/Beaive Algo' (Dawn or Daybreak), a story about Norwegian assimilation policies and their effects on a young Sámi man. The book epitomizes the struggles faced by Sámi people at the beginning of the 20th century on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. With the novel, Larsen wanted to use literature to counteract the Sámi's sense of inferiority towards Norwegian culture, while at the same time protesting against the common disregard of the Norwegian hegemonic society. For this reason, the conclusion of the novel is marked by hope as the protagonist acquires a new faith in his Sámi identity and language, which, according to Paltto (2010) represents a new dawn for the Sámi as a people and gave the novel its title. Paltto notices that this spirit of the "new dawn" resonates with his contemporary Isak Saba's is poem that was to become the Sámi national anthem. Anders Larsen was also the author of the volume 'Om sjøsamene' ("About the Coastal Sámi") which he submitted in 1949 to Qvigstad, who translated and published in 1950 (Cocq 2008). The festival committee chose Larsen as an ofelaš because of his role of prominence in early 20th century Sámi literary production as well as for his position as a devoted teacher and mentor. Furthermore, in 1918 he moved to Sørvik, a locality not far away from Stuornjårga. The geographical proximity made him an important local figure. Furthermore, Larsen played an important role in Sámi policy since his newspaper provided Isak Saba with a platform for his political campaign which led him to the Storting, the Norwegian Parliament. This is a remarkable feature since Saba has been the only Sámi person to be elected in the Storting since its establishment⁵⁴⁴. In light of Larsens's historical achievement, and the importance he had in valorizing Sea-Sámi identity, the festival committee chose him as a symbol of Sámi pride and self-valorization. His role in the fictitious future reality of 2118 is that of «helping people to unite and stand together against the world power that is characterized by racism and violence » (Márkomeannu 2018). Given the importance of Larsen, the SESAM Centre for Sámi Studies held a conference at Gállogieddi during Márkomeannu 2012, to mark the 100 year anniversary of the

⁵⁴⁴ As a result of cooperation between the Sámi movement and the Labour Party in the county of Finnmark, Isak Saba, was elected to the Storting/Norwegian parliament on a Sámi policy program,

publication of his novel *Beaiveálgu/Daggry*, the first novel ever published in a Sámi language. On that occasion, a spokesperson of SESAM defined Larsen's contribution to Sámi literature as invaluable and his work as *Sámisk pionerarbeid*, pioneering Sámi work (fieldnotes).

The third Ofelas, Jaako Sverloff, was chosen for the historical role he played in the relocation of Skolt Sámi peoples at the end of WWII. A Skolt Sámi himself, Sverloff was the leader of the Skolt Sámi Suenjel Siida during World War II. He first witnessed the destruction of his *siida*'s territory at the hands of the Finnish Arctic Army and then the Russian annexation of the Skolt Sámi areas, among them those of his *siida* (community) which fell within the new borders of the Soviet Union. As leader of his *siida* (community), he helped his fellow Skolt Sámi in the difficult process of relocation in the areas around Aanar/Inari lake. He played a key role in finding a new area where evacuees Skolt Sámi people could live. The choice fell on Sevettijärvi where Skolt Sámi rebuilt their society amidst devastation and cultural loss. For all these reasons, Sverloff came to represent – in the eyes of the Márkomeannu festival organizers – the will and expertise necessary in building a new society out of the destruction and despair brought by war and relocation. In the words of the festival organizers, « He stands for the inner strength of a people, the love of the land and the traditions, and the will to do what is necessary for a group to find a new opportunity to live on » (Anne Henriette 2/3/2021 via zoom).

From both Anne Henriette's interview and the biographical information concerning the lives of Laula, Larsen and Sverloff, it emerges that these three individuals greatly contributed to shaping contemporary Sámi society each contributing with their own expertise. Their role as members and representatives of past Sámi communities is not only kept in high regards but that their work is taken as an example by younger generations who look up at them as model-figures. Their role in the future reality staged at Márkomeannu2118 is to guide their descendants who gathered at Gállogieddi and there have to make decisive choices about their own future is to be seen in light of both Sámi history and the current circumstances. Contemporary Sámi societies are still facing difficulties and challenges similar to those Elsa Laula, Jaakko Sverloff and Anders Larsen had to confront themselves with. Through the festival concept, these challenges were reposed, albeit in an imagined future, in order to foster discussions into what to do under the current difficult circumstances concerning sovereignty in the wider context of Fennoscandinavia.

7.3 Drawing the future: Sunna Kittí's artworks

One of the main means through which the dystopic future of the festival theme was offered to festival goers was visual art. During the interview with the 2018 CEO Ann Henriette, I asked her about the festival choice to have Sunna Kittí, a Sámi artist from Aanar/Inari (Finnish side of Sápmi) as the artist of the year: «Well, we had had our eyes on her work for quite some time and recognized that she was an amazing talent. And we had wanted to book her for years »

This reflection shows one of the main features of the festival, the attention towards young and emerging artists in the Sámi milieu. Sunna Kittí's abilities as a comic artist had already been noticed and the Márkomeannu2118 theme provided the perfect context for bringing out Sunna Kittí's talent in a festival context as well as her deep political and environmental sensibility. Furthermore, the artist had already shown an interest in the themes that were central to Márkomeannu2118, for instance, the merging of sci-fiction and indigenous cultures. As Anne Henriette explains:

When this concept was born, and with her drawing style, and intelligence around the science fiction world, it was clear to us that it had to be her from the start. So she was kind of one of the first names we had written down and decided that she should have the main exhibition. Because, yeah, it was just so clear to us. This gut feeling and also seeing her work. She's such a good artist, and she manages to express something, not just beautifully drawings, but they also express a story

The relevance of this remark lies in the importance the festival committee attributed to the visual elements in conveying the festival concept to the guests. The drawings commissioned by the Festival were to communicate the plot through a sort of storyline divided into ten sequences. It was the ability of Sunna Kittí as a visual narrator and her attention for details that made her works so appealing to the festival organizers. According to Ann Henriette: « every picture is... the longer you look at it, the more it tells you about the world ». The creation of Márkomeannu2118 set of drawings was the result of a collaborative work between the artist and the organizers, both parties exchanging views, ideas and opinions:

Anne Henriette: So we contacted her and we had a couple of meetings talking about the concept and her ideas, and then we kind of just possible ideas, she came up with some sketches. So we had some comments, change some background, and then and then we ended up those 10 like main pieces that we printed out and used for the exhibition.

The art exhibition and Gállogieddi were engaged in a dialogue as the drawings guided the visitors through the physical location as well as through the story they conveyed. By juxtaposing crude images

with the peaceful Márka landscape, Sunna Kittí's art became a visual counterpart to the festival concept and was indeed an integral part of the setting, along with sounds and objects such as the crystals behind the *gieddi* or the tunnel at the entrance to the sanctuary/festival area. An examination of Sunna Kittí's drawings has enabled me to reflect upon the themes she had addressed as well as upon the identity markers she resorted to in order to convey Sámi identity through visual art. The elements she has employed are the same cultural elements (*gákti*, joik, reindeers...) that, according to Kramvig (2008, p 47), were selected during Sámi cultural revival as symbols of Sámi identity. These elements proved effective in conveying identity because they « 'worked' both internally within the Saami population and externally vis-a-vis the Norwegian government and public».

7.3.1 The young artist of the year

Sunna Kittí is a young Sámi artist from the Finnish side of Sápmi. Born in 1989, Sunna Kittí moved from Aanar/Inari to Southern Finland for study reasons. As “the young artist of the year”, Kittí exposed the reproduction of ten of her works of art in the Márkomeannu main area during the festival. The festival leader had specifically commissioned Sunna Kittí with ten drawings. The only request on behalf of the commissioner was that the drawings represented a visual transposition of the festival concept. Sunna Kittí accepted the job and, as stated in an interview, she developed the festival concept according to her own understanding of it:

I was given the topic, and then I developed it. I made a sketch and sent it to the organizers as this is what she does as a commission artist. She [the festival leader] didn't really say anything about the sketches. I had pretty free hands, and they liked everything I did. I figured out the story in her head and drew it. A post-apocalyptic story. A Post-apocalyptic world with a message. I accepted because the concept was interesting. The most interesting premise I had to work on. I received short description for the festival: 2118, the world has gone crazy, nuclear fall, tyrant dictator. From there, I started to work to come up with a kind of narrative. All these pictures, I imagined them as story. A sequence. They follow a chronological order (Sunna Kittí, interview 7/2/2019 via Skype).

To Sunna Kittí, this engaging with the festival concept through art gave her the opportunity to address issues dear to her:

I want to create art that shows that things that happen in those pictures are happening right now. Human trafficking, police brutality, forced slaves, and I can imagine a dictator could do even worse. Forcing people to slaughter their animals, forcing you by pointing guns at you. I put Sámi in these situations. Show that we [Sámi] can't think that bad things can't happen to us. We must imagine that if the world changes a lot and something dramatic happens, none is

safe. I want to warn people that if we let this world turn to shit, we can't expect to remain comfortable. Some people, ok, they are white, but not safe from racism. I now feel safe but it is only because, we have such great societies, minorities can be fairly secure, there is no massive systematic pressure but when you look at the last centuries, my parents and grandparents experienced systematic pressure. With these horrible pictures of mine I wanted to remind to the rest of the world that Sámi people are not untouchable (Sunna Kittí, interview 7/2/2019 via Skype).

As showed by her own words, Sunna Kittí accepted the job because the festival project resonated with her own values. She considered the concept of particular interest and in line with her concerns on environment and democracy.

7.3.2 Visualizing the post-Apocalypse

Kittí created a set of ten digital paintings depicting apocalyptic scenes. Once the drawing were ready, they staff printed them out on big canvases and then displayed them in strategical points in the festival area, hanging them on *lavvu* (Sámi tents), fences, and even on the external walls one of the museum buildings as well as inside one of the museum structures. As for the scenography, these pieces of art did not just fulfil a decorative function. They facilitated the visualisation of the festival narrative, making it not only visible but also palpable and hence, to an extent, real. As stated by Kittí, her digital drawings follow a specific temporal sequence and can be read as a of visual story. Following the development of this visual story plotline, the drawings can be divided in three thematic subgroups. The first set of drawings (images n148, n149, n150, n151) hinges on the violent persecution Sámi people are enduring at the hands of Ola Tjudi. The cruel tyrant does not appear in the drawings but his dark presence is palpable through his dark emissaries. The titles of these drawings are: 'Nuclear fall', 'Police violence/brutality', 'Forced slaughtering', 'human product'. All these drawings present not only visualizations of the festival concept but can also be read as references to Sámi past and present, of which they evoke specific episodes as well as more general experiences endure by Sámi peoples.

For instance, 'Nuclear fall' (image n148) evokes the consequences the Chernobyl nuclear disaster had on Sámi peoples and on reindeer tending as a meat industry (see among al. Stephens1995; Bostedt 2001). 'Police violence/brutality' is intended to show that Sámi people do not and have not engaged in violent forms of protest even when openly provoked (with very sporadic exceptions, for instance during the 1848 Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino revolt and during one isolated episode during the very delicate and tense situations of the Alta contestations in the 1980s). 'Forced slaughtering' (image n151) is described by the author as follows:

The Nordic countries have always had the custom of ensuring that a reindeer herder does not have too many reindeer, in which case the herd had to be slaughtered. For many, giving up their traditional livelihood is difficult and skinning animals is hard work. The dictator does not allocate resources to this task since he can force the reindeer herders to work. When reindeer herding disappears, the area will be freed up to install other industries (<https://madrid.fi/expo/2118/>).

Sunna Kittí uses her drawing as a symbol of both Sámi past and present. The drawing hinges upon a complex set of references that refer to the both past and present. With reference to the past, as Kittí's description openly states, the artwork is a reference to the control colonial government have imposed and implemented upon Sámi reindeer tenders, taking decisions that had terrible consequences on the lives of thousands of peoples. Furthermore, it also refers to specific episodes in which Sámi people had to give up their animals, which were then slaughtered and consumed: during WWII, Sámi people in the Anaar/Inari-/Ivalo area, where Sunna Kittí is from, and in German-occupied territories on the Norwegian side of Sápmi were forced to slaughter reindeer to feed the soldiers. It also evokes a specific judiciary episode that epitomizes the conflict (legal but also epistemological) between some Sámi reindeer tenders and the Norwegian government: the case of that Jovsset Ánte Sara (Reinert 2019). Sara is a young reindeer tender from Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino who has been suing the Norwegian government, which, a few years ago, has decreed that Sara must reduce his nearly by half. If Sara obeys, he will be left with only 75 reindeer, a number way too small to allow him to continue in the profession he inherited. This judiciary case is extremely complex and Sara bases his appeal against the decree in the claim that forced reduction of his herd is unlawful, and would be a breach of Norway's international commitments. As of 2020, two lower courts have assessed the case and, in both trials, the court has ruled in favour of Sara. Nevertheless, the government has appealed on both occasions, bringing the case to the highest and final court. This is only one of various similar cases but Sara's fight against the Norwegian government has become a political issue, also thanks to Jovsset Ánte Sara's sister: Máret Ánne Sara, a Sámi artist, writer, and ethno-political artist. For several years Máret Ánne Sara has been resorting to art to bring visibility over issues concerning Norwegian colonial violence through pastoral governance and her work *Pile o' Sápmi*⁵⁴⁵. On her website, Máret Ánne Sara describes this artwork as follows:

I am making the installation to visualize the dramatic abuse that is happening, but I am struck by the gust of an ice-cold wind. A disquieting parallel appears. A dark history of colonization from North America in the 1800s. I collect the reindeer heads as images of buffalo heads appear. Millions of buffalo heads, piled into great mountains of trophies. A cold wind blows here in

⁵⁴⁵ 'Pile' is a reference to both the pile of reindeer heads/skulls constituting the installation and on the idea that people who keep join in the protest against the decree.

Sápmi as I read on about the buffaloes. About Europeans who almost exterminated the buffalo herd of 50 million animals. The chill deepens. It was a deliberate strategy, ordained from the top. They, the colonists, wanted the land, Regina, as it was to be called—but it was inhabited. The buffalo people stood in the way. The order, the strategy, was simple but effective. Eliminate what the people live off and the people will disappear. The buffalo, bang! Pile o’Bones. I stand here with my reindeer skulls and I shiver with cold. It is no secret that reindeer herders fight a hard battle to protect their pastures against the state’s ongoing push for industry. I try to tie my scarf tighter but I know we are in the way. They want the land, Sápmi as we call it. The reindeer we live from are stacked before me. The state is forcibly reducing the herds, with a model that cuts the threat of future recruitment to herding. The chill is inescapable. *Pile o’ Sápmi* (in Reinert 2019:73).

Máret Ánne Sara draws a connection between the current situation endured by Sámi reindeer tender across Fennoscandinavia and that of the Native Americans of today USA. It is interesting to notice that both Máret Ánne Sara and Sunna Kittu consider the elimination of animals hunted/tended by indigenous peoples’ is, for colonial actors, a way of eliminating indigenous economic subsistence systems. In doing so, they force indigenous to relocate, making the land free for them to do as they please. If the colonists described by Máret Ánne Sara want the land for themselves, the evil chancellor Ola Tsjudi wants it to make the land profitable for himself by installing new industries (depicted in ‘Leading family to safety’, image n154). This last element is of extreme importance since it is actually a strong critique of current pressures put upon reindeer tenders – as the Sara case illustrates – which are also connected with practices of land grabbing (see chapter 8).

‘Human product’ (image n149) presents a symbolic reference to Sámi history. In the upper part of the drawing, in the shade, two sets of hands are exchanging money, a transaction that has as objects the group of young Sámi people that appear in the lower part of the image. Scared, beaten or resigned, each of the persons depicted shows traces of violence. Hands tied behind their back, they are on their knees, gagged with a tissue. They are witnesses to the exchange of money, aware that they are being sold. Such image is charged with violence but the impotence of the characters in front of their destiny as slaves, humans deprived of freedom, is not absolute. A young man in a *gákti* defiantly challenges the situation with his gaze, looking straight into the external observer. He resists as he could, by not letting the situation take over his emotion and by provocatively showing that he will not break, no matter how hard they try.



Image 148: Nuclear Fall, By Sunna Kitt 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).



Image 149: Human product, by Sunna Kitt 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).



Image 150: Police Violence, by Sunna Kitt 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).



Image 151: Forced Slaughtering, by Sunna Kitt 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).



*Image 152: Hiding, by Sunna Kittii 2018
(Courtesy of the artist).*



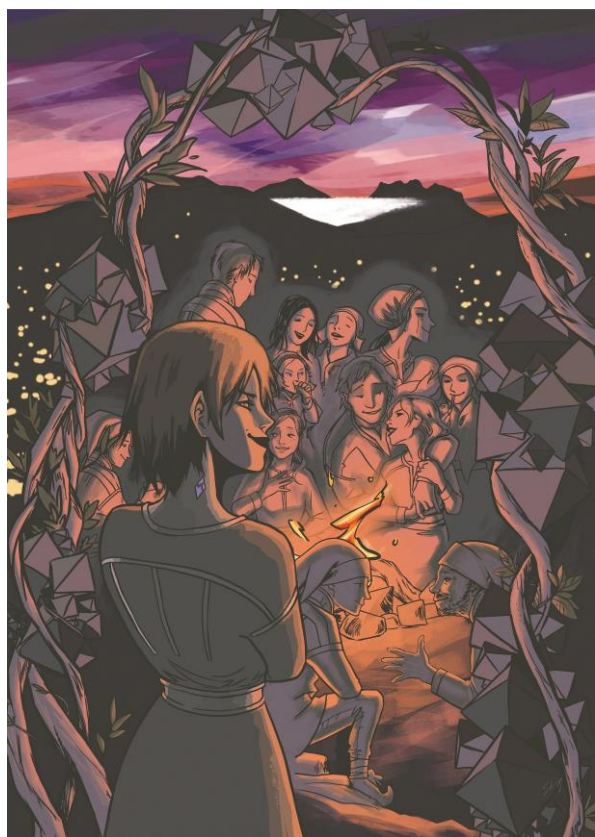
*Image 153: Hiding from Technology, by Sunna Kittii 2018
(Courtesy of the artist).*

The second set of drawings (images n152, n153, n154) revolves around Sámi people's dangerous escapes from the tyrant's brutality and oppression. These images are like a visual counterpart to the videos urging Sámi people to reach Gállogieddi, distributed online before the official festival inauguration. The titles 'Hiding', 'Hiding from technology' 'leading family to safety' are references to the scene depicted in the drawings. These drawings fill the gap between the festival concept and the actual festival, according to the plot a safe haven for the Sámi. They provide festivalgoers with visual tales about the difficult and dangerous escape of "fellow" Sámi of the future while also transmitting a sense of anxiety that plays with the sense of reassurance the last drawings convey and that refer to both Gállogieddi as a future safe sanctuary and Márkomeannu. Furthermore, along with the previous set of artworks, these drawings offer a visualization of the devastations outlined in the plotline but not implemented through the festival scenography.



Image 154: Leading Family to Safety, by Sunna Kittu 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).

The third group of illustrations (images n155, n156, n157) deals with what is going on at Gállogieddi. These drawings have evocative titles such as: ‘Seal hunter’, ‘De-chipping’, ‘All is fine again’. Here the emphasis is on Sámi’s happiness and prosperity away from Ola Tsjudi, a clear reference to indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Furthermore, for anyone who has ever attended a Sámi festival or gathering, their memories – or even photos – of those days resemble the scene depicted in ‘de-chipping’. The sceneries powerfully emerge from the paintings’ background, signalling the importance of the landscape in the visual transposition of the festival concept. Even if to cultural outsiders the landscape elements depicted in Sunna Kittí’s art pieces may just work as backdrop to the actions at the centre of the drawings, for those who are familiar with the local region, it is easy to recognize the references enshrined in the illustrated landscapes: some are natural elements, hills and mountains with their distinctive shapes such as the precise profile of the Sálašoaivi mountain in ‘All is fine again’, the contour of Stuornjårga’s hills in ‘de-chipping’. Others are human constructions like the Arctic cathedral, also depicted in ‘All is fine again’, or the iconic buildings of Harstad’s dock that can be seen laying in ruing in ‘Seal hunter’ These references to local landscapes anchor the situations described in the pictures to specific locations reflecting and portraying, through visual means, the strong bond between the festival and the local territory – and more broadly, the Norwegian side of Sápmi – in which the festival has its roots as well as its future.



*Image 155: De-chipping, by Sunna Kittí 2018
(Courtesy of the artist).*



*Image 156: Seal Hunter, by Sunna Kittí 2018
(Courtesy of the artist).*

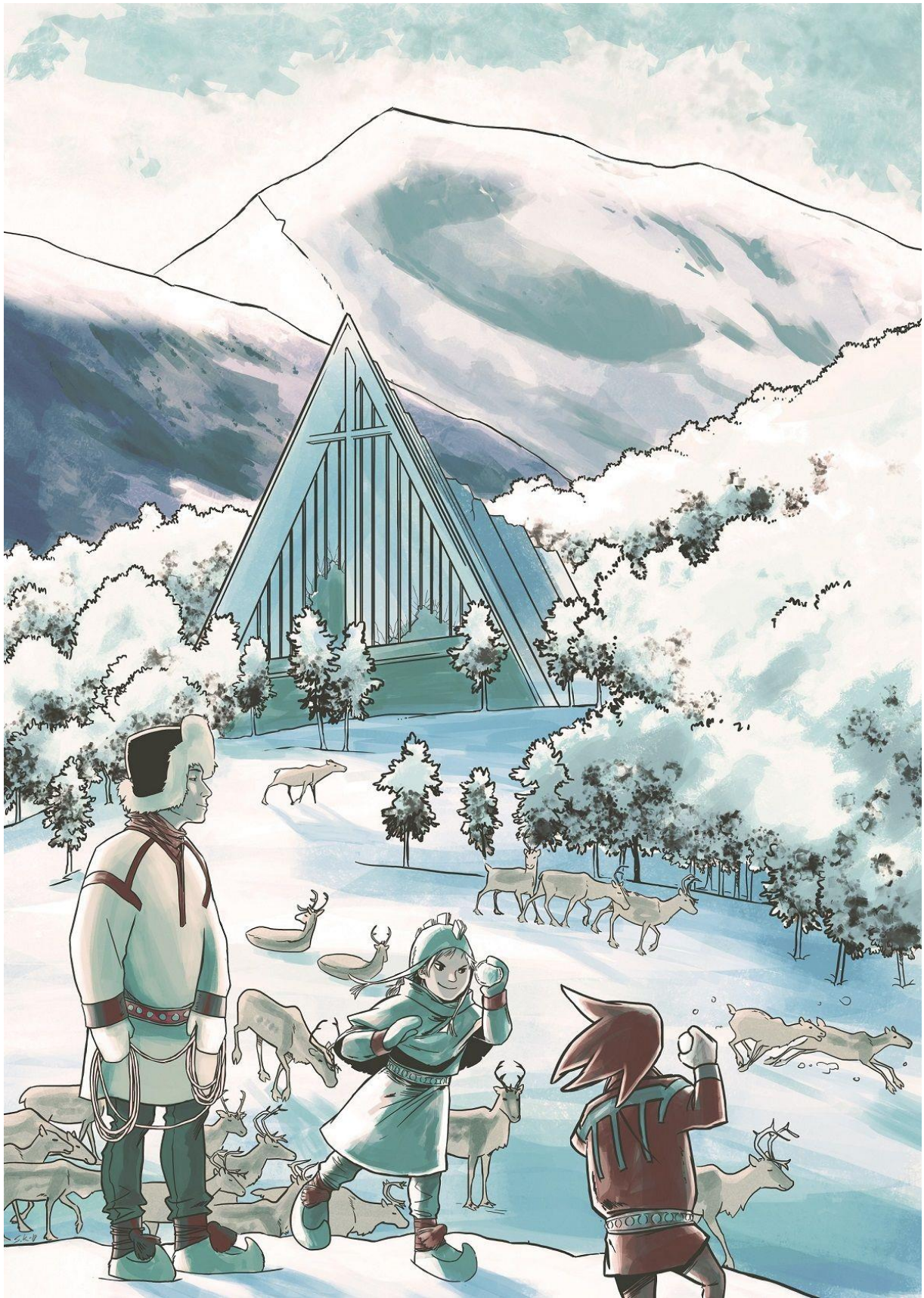


Image 157 : All is Fine Again, by Sunna Kittu 2018 (Courtesy of the artist).

The drawings ‘de-chipping’ (image n155) displayed on the festival site reproduces the very surroundings of the festival, creating a play of mirrors in which the viewer was able to identify the location of the festival with that of the artwork and, hence, project herself into the future depicted in the drawing. This effect is also connected with the drawing’s composition. With the fire at its centre and people sitting around it, the image conveys an idea of cosiness. The woman standing behind the fire, her face slightly turned towards the centre, reduces the distance between the observer and the people around the fire thanks to Kitt’s use of perspective. The viewers have the impression the woman is turning towards them, as if they had just arrived, a reference to the fact that, indeed, the viewers have reached Gállogieddi. By resorting to those visual elements, Sunna Kitt manages to link her paintings, and the story behind them, to the local area, in line with the festival concept. The strength of these drawings lies in the fact that, once removed from the festival areas, the stories they tell would still be inextricably tied to the Márkomeannu region and, implicitly, to the 2018 edition of the festival. At my question about the representation of the Tromsø iconic mountain Sálašoaivi/Tromsdalstinden in the ‘All is fine again’, Sunna Kitt elaborated upon this specific element, describing it and the creative process behind it as follows:

How I got the Idea? I wanted to tie the drawings and the [festival] story to the area of the festival. They [the organizers] definitely wanted to make it seems all the things were happening in the area. For instance, the “Seal hunter” one? The background is the town of Harstad. In “De-chipping” the mountains are those of the festival area, the Márka-Sámi [area]. Now, I could have dressed them with the dresses of the area. But I tend to wear my character as I wear (Sunna Kitt, interview 7/2/2019 via Skype).

7.3.3 Drawing identity

These markers express the cultural affiliation of the characters. The most apparent of these indicators are highly visible markers associated to Sámi ethnicity such as a specific scarf, a *gákti*, or Sámi shoes. They are easily identifiable cultural markers and, unlike language, they are particularly suitable to convey identities in visual representations such as the ten drawings being discussed here. It was Sunna Kitt Herself to elaborate the role of cultural markers in her works.

E: How can you convey Sámi identity through visual art?

Sk: At the Márkomeannu exhibition, all Sámi people were wearing the *gákti* (Sámi costume). I tends to portray Sámi as contemporary [people]. When I have to draw a picture taking place now, I dress them as Sámi people are dressed today. Like some pieces of Sámi clothing or maybe the accessories if not the *gákti*

E. What would you regard as the strongest images associated with Sámi cultures. I mean, in your drawings I can see reindeers and *gákti*. When looking at those, the connection is immediate but...

SK: That's what I wanted, no confusion. I wanted the concept to come out strongly. That they are Sámi people. In retrospective, would have she dressed them differently? No, the *gákti* is very practical costume, very suitable for the [subarctic] environment.

When I asked:

E: Are there other indigenous people depicted in these drawings? Like in the "human trafficking" one?

SK: No, they are all Sámi. The Sámi are like everyone else [in the other drawings]. They are all wearing Sámi [items] (Sunna Kitt, interview 7/2/2019 via Skype).

For people who are not familiar with Sámi cultures, details such as those encompassed by the broad concept of "Sámi items" may go unnoticed. For cultural insiders though - as well as for those outsider who have become acquainted with Sámi cultures - objects such as the *gákti* (Sámi garment) or the *bieksu* (summer shoes) work as cultural references and are easily identifiable, becoming effective markers of Sámi identities. Their efficacy as symbols relies upon the observers' ability to recognize them not only as items but also as objects with social and cultural dimension and as repositories of meanings, histories and stories. For many outsiders instead, the same items, if recognized as Sámi at all, are often perceived as colourful elements that epitomize the perceived and imagined exotic essence of an essentialised Sámi culture.

In light of their strong symbolic character, these objects – often pieces of clothing or jewels – are able to convey Sámi identities both in illustrations such as the ten artworks by Sunna Kitt and in people's daily life. In the Nordic Countries, the most visible of such cultural markers – mainly the *gákti* (Sámi garment), and Sámi shawls – are usually easily recognizable by non-Sámi. The contradictory responses these items that function as identity markers may provoke span from genuine – but at times offensive – curiosity to nasty comments, verbal and even physical harassment. The origins of such responses are rooted in complex interethnic relations in the multicultural context of Northern Fennoscandinavia. Other, less visible or less iconic objects can signal the Sámi ethnic background or cultural affiliation – and hence manifest Sámi cultures – only to those who know how to read them, as Sunna Kitt explains:

It's all in the details, Sáminess is the details, like the necklace, the earrings or the scarf, not just in big symbols... in my works, Sámi can be identified with the clothing

[the characters] are wearing, I play a bit with it, with the symbols behind the accessories!

These objects have a strong symbolic meaning since they embody the survival and the regeneration of Sámi cultures despite the assimilation process. Sámi jewels – brooches but also pendants and earrings – for instance have a strong symbolic meaning for those who wear them. The same applies to Sámi knives and to specific mugs carved out of wood that can easily be mistaken for the more common Norwegian ones. Only a trained eye can recognize when such objects, usually brought hanging from the belt during hiking trips or at festivals, are *duodji* (Sámi handicraft). In the past, these objects were part of daily life and were often produced in the household or traded. Today Sámi artists and designers create these items, finding inspiration from both ancient and modern Sámi cultural elements.

One of the most important identity marker, language, is absent from Sunna Kittu 2018 set of drawings. An element that prevented her from resorting to language as a marker of identity is the difficulties in blending language in its written form with drawing. Nevertheless, there is a deeper reason why Sunna Kittu did not resort to language as an identity marker. Putting her own experience in dialogue with that of many other young Sámi, Sunna Kittu affirms that she had grown up with the language. Having been brought up in a reindeer herding Aanaar Sámi environment, in which North Sámi language was part of her everyday life, language has never been an issue for her. She indeed regards it as one of the most important elements of her Sámi identity. Nevertheless, she was aware that, for many young Sámi language is a difficult topic to address. One of the consequences of assimilation (whether it was imposed or accepted and embraced) has been the loss of language proficiency through a process known as language shift. Since WWII many, in many families, Sámi parents stopped speaking Sámi to their children and a whole generation lost access to their ancestors' native tongue. Consequently, younger generations did not grow up in Sámi speaking environments and today the majority of those who identify themselves as Sámi are not able to understand or speak any Sámi language.

When we were discussing Sámi identity markers, I asked her a provocative question to which she gave me an answer that reflects the importance of the language proficiency issue in Sámi milieus:

E: But so, if you could identify some core features...What would make a Sámi a Sámi?

S K: If I says knowing the language, it would exclude all the people who didn't have the chance to learn it. This approach would bring conflict. I mean, it would be great if

all Sámi could have got the chance to learn and speak the language. But unfortunately this is not the case. It's not their fault. Here for instance [in Finland], Finnish government tried to abolish Sámi languages. They blamed those who spoke them... To be a Sámi is part of the living culture, is to be active and interested [in the culture] and know something about your culture. Participation is important. On the other hand, it is not so important to speak perfect Sámi [language]. If you do not, it is not your fault, your parents may be where ashamed... but it is not their fault either. Supporting your own people is important. Participation [in Sámi cultural life].

When asked about her own Sámi language proficiency, Sunna Kitti examined her background in relation to language:

E: Do your parents speak any Sámi language?

S K: My father spoke Inari Sámi. He knew [it] but [did] not teach it to me. Inari Sámi language was treated badly. Inari Sámi were a minority within a minority. People who spoke North Sámi told people who spoke Inari Sámi “you should stop speaking Inari Sámi, you should speak real Sámi!” My grandmother said that [to him] and that affected my father. Now he is speaking it back again, it is a strong improvement! My mother instead spoke to me in North Sámi. She is from the border with Norway. The [North Sámi] culture is pretty strong there. She had no problem with the language when she was young.

As this extract shows, Sunna Kitti acknowledges that language has both a unifying and divisive character and that, especially in a Sámi context, it would be neither possible nor fair to reduce identity to language. For this reason, she preferred not use any Sámi language to convey ethnic identity in her drawings. Furthermore, identity in her view is much more than speaking the language or wearing a Sámi item. It is connected to involvement in a particular set of culturally specific practices; an opinion that found confirmation almost all my interlocutors and that is widely shared in Sámi contexts. Moreover, open support is also relevant in her view. A way of showing both support and participation is to «Use *duodji* (Sámi handicrafts) and wear handmade Sámi clothes. It is a conscious choice. It enables the display of personal identity but it also supports fellow Sámi producers». This inclusive approach, which focuses on political and social engagement, is also a strong critique of assimilation policies that prevented many from learning the language as a mother tongue.

There is a further element worth been examined since it is connected to widespread debates on Sámi ethnic identity. Sunna Kitti represented reindeers in two drawings: “forced slaughter” and “all is fine

again”. For some, this animal came to epitomize Sámi identity tout court, even if only 6% of the overall Sámi population is engaged in reindeer tending. Kittí’s family, whose reindeer area is in the Aanar/Inari district, belongs to this section of Sámi society. For this reason, reindeers mean a lot to her and to her identity.

E: In the drawing “a new beginning” there are a lot of reindeers...

SK: Yeah definitely, I come from a reindeer herding family, that’s a big part of being Sámi for me. Even if there are Sámi people who have never had reindeers, but for me it is important part of me being Sámi.

Kittí comes from a family of reindeer herders and connects her own identity with reindeer tending. Nonetheless, she is aware of the complexity within Sámi cultures and acknowledges that the reindeer do not represent a part of every Sámi individual or community identities. These reflections are of extreme importance since they bring into light the cultural differences that have become the various ways through which Sámi identity is perceived, performed and experienced. Through a process of essentialisation that selected specific elements pertaining to Sámi cultures making them epitomes of a monolithic Sámi identity, reindeer emerged as one of the most important of such quintessential features of Sámi identity, with devastating consequences for those people who identified themselves as Sámi but never or no longer had reindeer.

In the case of the Márka, by the 1950s only few local families engaged in reindeer tending. As today, the descendants of these families still have herds that roam in the mountains of the area. By the time WWII broke out, the vast majority of local Sámi households had long lived off small-scale farming and seasonal fishing. For two hundred years, they had been dwelling in *darfegoahti* (Sámi turf hut) scattered around the Márka and had slowly built an integrated economy that not only coexisted but also was interdependent with reindeer tending. The practice known as *sytingsrein* is the clearest example of the deep relation between farming and reindeer tending Sámi communities that has in the pre-War Márka economy one of its clearest examples. This integrated economic system is reflected in the Gállogieddi museum collections: in the barn where “forced slaughter” was hung, the owners of the farm used to keep cows, sheep and a horse. These, and not reindeers, were the animals kept by the local Márka-Sámi. During the 2018 exhibition, the second floor of the same building hosted other paintings: an old boat used for fishing in the nearby ocean dominates the wide room where the drawings are displayed. Among them, close to a fishing net and on the top of the boat, stands the picture of a Sámi seal hunter. Sunna Kittí produced this drawing to show the different subsistence strategies the Sámi have long employed, with the clear aim of demonstrating that there is no univocal Sámi livelihood. In these drawings, landscapes too play the role of ‘identity markers’

since they signal the strong connection between Sámi communities and the environments and landscapes of the region they belong to. In light of the elements insofar discussed, Sunna Kittí's drawings force viewers to reflect upon Sámi identity and its different manifestations, with particular reference to the Sea-Sámi and the Márka-Sámi communities. Desolation and hope are central features of Sunna Kittí's drawing and the artist conveys these emotions through the use of colours, shapes, images and symbols. The fact that hope is still possible despite desolation is a key element of this set of artworks: happiness and joy are still imaginable and achievable for the Sámi of the future, provided that they are let to lead their lives autonomously, in their own land, according to their traditional lifestyle, and away from the colonising power embodied by the tyrant or, in these visual representations, by robots and masked chasers.

7.4 A one hundred years long tunnel: soundscape and scenography at Márkomeannu 2118

The enactment of the concept played on the stark contrast between the bucolic environment of Gállogieddi and the post-apocalyptic scenery of the festival narrative.

During the festival days, the whole Gállogieddi premise had become a stage where visitors actively engaged with the scenography, the soundscape and the actors, contributing with their presence and their actions to the implementation of the festival narrative. Natural and artificial elements constituted the scenography, which blended with the museum's building in a dialogue between items purposely constructed for the festival and ancient elements of the farm and the local landscape, producing a scenography embedded in the landscape. The combination of material and symbolic features created a peculiar atmosphere that helped generating the feeling of being in a time removed from the present of 2018. In an interview available on the website of the Norwegian television channel NRK (NRK access on 18/02/19), the festival leader has indeed stressed how important the work of artist Sunna Kittí and that of the scenographer Mari Lotherington were in creating «the feeling of being in the Sámi sanctuary in a post-apocalyptic world». In the following paragraphs, I shall examine such elements to shed some light on the physical and visual aspects of the festival concept. Every element of the scenography and of the soundscape, even though intended to seem natural, was the result of a painstaking work by artists belonging to different fields. Each of them resorted to their own expertise in order to transform the farmstead into a bubble of future Sámi society.

7.4.1 Across the Portal

The first element of the scenography visitors encountered was “the portal”. For security reasons, the festival area was demarcated by fences which constituted a physical barrier with practical

meanings - preventing people without a ticket from entering the festival area – as well as a strong symbolic function: it created the perception of the festival as physically and figuratively separated from the rest of the Márka, making it a place out of space and time. The only official entrance to the festival area⁵⁴⁶ was the portal, an element of the scenography, which was a two and a half meters long structure: a passage that, from the outside, looked like a white long tunnel-like structure.



Image 158: 'The Tunnel', scenography set of entrance to Márkomeannu 2018 (photo by the author).



Image 19: 'The Tunnel', scenography set of entrance to Márkomeannu 2018, interior (photo by the author).

On the inside, the tunnel was narrow, dark, warm and foggy. To reach the other side of the tunnel, festival-goers had to elbow their way through transparent plastic curtains which were moving with the draft running through the tunnel from its opposite openings. The sounds coming from strategically

⁵⁴⁶ Other “hidden” entrances were to be found all over the festival area. Passages through the fences, doors and moving fences that were designed to keep the access to the festival area possible from different directions in case of emergency. Emergency exits were located in strategic locations. Furthermore, the fence was left semi-open in correspondence with the road that connects the cottages on the hilltop above Gállogieddi with the main road downhill. The road was kept open and free from any possible barrier, to guarantee access to the festival area. Such road though was only accessible with cars or other means of transport and was forbidden to pedestrians.

positioned speakers, along with the heavy warm air, the colours and the sound of moving curtains created a slightly eerie atmosphere, augmented by the stark contrast between the bright colours and the fresh and clear air outside and the suffocating environment inside the tunnel.

The passage through the portal had important performative functions inscribed within the coordinates of the festival-plot and which were later explained to festival-goers during the performance that marked the opening of the festival.

The tunnel, ... it was hard. The tunnel was meant to be this kind of entrance to this bubble of a different time. Everybody mentioned it was exactly what it was supposed to do. So it was kind of a complex construction with both the sign inside but also we had four speakers pointing on each side so that you had different layers of sound. Or you would come from the star darkness and then into this. (Anne Henriette 2019)

By walking through the tunnel, moving from the outside to the inside of the festival area, festivalgoers symbolically crossed an invisible line between different temporal dimensions reaching 2118 and becoming part of the concept itself. Hence, they were to play the role of future generations. The temporal dimension merged with the physical element since the tunnel also marked the difference between the disaster-torn outside world and a Sámi-managed bubble of hope and indigenous sovereignty. The portal had – according to the festival concept – the power to deactivate the “chip” implanted in the bodies of all humans. According to the plot, by crossing boundaries between the outside world and the Sámi haven of Gállogieddi, people became free, shielded away from the pervasive control exerted by the evil Chancellor.

Thanks to the scenography, once inside the festival area, the festivalgoers were able to experience a futuristic Sámi-inspired atmosphere throughout the farmyard.

7.4.2 Building the future: the Scenography

The scenography, the work of Mari Lotherington, was constructed by resorting to a vast array of objects and elements, many of which easily recognizable as Sámi, for instance the reindeer antlers positioned across the festival area, in the boat displayed in the barn or in the farmyard. Other elements of the scenography included sonic installations and colorful structures located in designated locations (cfr image n160). Among such structures there were branches painted in white that recalled the ones positioned at the entrance of the festival, along the tunnel.



Image 20a: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018 (photo by the author).



Image 30b: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, of particular relevance the reindeer antler positioned at the centre of a semicircle made of sticks (photo by the author).



Image 40c: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, of particular relevance the reindeer antler positioned at the centre of the boat exhibited on the first floor of the barn (photo by the author).

Not only scenic objects contributed to the construction of the festival stage but also the local landscape and its elements became integral parts of. If reindeer antlers marked the area as a Sámi space, a staged crystal circle behind the boulder signaled the exact spot where past and future, as well as the world of the dead and that of the living, touched and collapsed (cfr image n161). It was there, in a slightly secluded area of the Gállogieddi museum yard that, thanks to «[...] the combination of new quantum technology and the rediscovery of the ancient Sámi belief have enabled society to return pioneers from ancient times» (Márkomeannu webpage), the three *Ofelaččat* reached the Gállogieddi of the future as enacted by three actors playing the pioneers, materializing in correspondence of a crystal circle that represented the quantum bridge and the ancient Sámi wisdom (see image n162).



Image 161a: Artistic reproduction of the theatre performance at Márkomeannu 2018 (art by the author)



Image 161b: The crystal circle art installation set behind the Gallo, Márkomeannu 2018 (photo by the author).

The crystals disposed in a circle might have been inspired by the New Age movement but they can also constitute a further reference to Sámi non-Christian traditions: Turi (1910, in Ligi, 2016) recounts that special crystals were among the objects given as offerings to the *seidi* sacrificial rock. The location of the crystal circle was chosen because of the significance of the *gállo*/boulder in the local Sámi cultural landscape. The *gállo*/boulder is a central element of the local tales and traditions. In the ground under the *gállo* lives an *Uldda*, a creature that belongs to the rich Sámi folklore. A number of local tales tell of the actions of this creature and her interactions with the members of the family who once lived in the Gállogieddi farm. In particular, a story about the *Uldda* is connected with the barn and tells of the activities once performed in the farm and, specularly, by the *Uldda* who live in the underground world beneath Gállogieddi. Stories like that one connects what would usually be considered supernatural (in this case the *Uldda*) with the daily life of those who lived in the farm. For the Sámi of the area though, the existence and the presence of the *Ulda* in the area was not a matter of supernatural entities but a matter of fact and the stories helped preserving the memory of previous inhabitants and their interactions with non-human beings.

Such stories are passed down between generations and are only some of the dozens told in the various farms of the Márka. The tourists who visit the farm during the summer months have the chance to hear some of these stories during the guided tours of the area and while walking the local cultural trail that connects the most important cultural and historical monuments in the Gállogieddi area. Usually stories about the *Ulddatt* are told when coming across a local cultural reference connected with *Ulddatt* stories, for instance, the *gallo* or the old cow spot in the barn. Both places are associated with specific stories about the presence and manifestation of the *Uldda* to the family who inhabited the farm.

The location plays a key role in the theatrical performance as much as it is central to the festival concept. Inextricably intertwined with the events described in the plot, Gállogieddi emerges as a central f/actor in the 2018 edition of the festival. The festival plot was indeed designed and tailored around Gállogieddi which is understood not just as a physical location but as a repository of local history and hence as a thread in the tapestry of Sámi history⁵⁴⁷. All the artists who worked for the 2118 edition of Márkomeannu conveyed messages connected with the festival plot through their arts. This is particularly evident with Sunna Kittí's works, whose visual messages are powerful and relatively easy to decode (cfr paragraph 7.5.3).

Sunna Kittí's works of art, translating the festival concept into images, were hanging around the festival area. Some elements of these drawings had been isolated from the original images and reproduced on items and merchandising associated with the 2018 edition of the festival. A seal-hunter dominated the black cotton-bags used to hide the amplifiers at the entrance of the tunnel. These bags were available at the festival stand for visitors to purchase them and were also distributed for free to the volunteers, along with a festival t-shirt volunteers had to wear as a uniform while on duty. Such t-shirt had, on the back, the label "volunteer" in the local North Sámi idiom while, on the front, a reproduction of two characters of one of Sunna Kittí's drawings: a man and a woman hugging under a rock, fear on their faces. In the original drawing, these two characters were hiding from one of the chancellor's cyborgs, looking for them (image n153).

The scenographers put Sunna Kittí's drawings into dialogue with the scenery by collocating them into strategic positions. One of the drawings, depicting scenes related to cattle animals, had been positioned in the barn. This specific location gave life to the otherwise now empty shed. In the barn were once the family horse and the cows used to spend the night, the posters attracted curious festival-goers. The dark entrance room hosted two big canvases reproducing the drawings entitled 'forced slaughtering' and 'human product (image n149). The crude scenes of both drawings are amplified by the setting. Outside of the barn, the sun was shining, warming the skin and glowing on droplets trapped in the green grass, and the wind blew, bringing the taste of summer along with the breeze. A sense of freedom and cheerfulness pervaded the people chatting and enjoying their time at Gállogieddi. Inside the barn, visitors were sun-blinded, a condition that for a few seconds made it difficult to distinguish shapes and objects. A strong and heavy smell of dust, old wood and hail invaded the nostrils as soon as the entrance door opened and one stepped inside. The natural light penetrated from the windows whose glass were darkened by time, spiders' webs and old dust. This

⁵⁴⁷ Back in the early 2000s, the farmstead was chosen as the location of the festival by the first festival organizers because of its role as a symbol of the local history. The importance of Gállogieddi, remarked by the fact that the farm and its buildings had been transformed in a local museum, resides in its humble yet exemplary history.

environment conveyed different emotions according to the visitors' own background. To me, for instance, it reminded of my childhood summers and the time I spend chopping woods and playing with handmade wooden bows and arrows in my family's barn in the Alps. Nevertheless, in the context of the festival, the whole barn acquired darker tones as consequence of the drawings there displayed. Coming from outside, the first thing eyes were able to distinguish once adapted to the darkness was the "human product" drawing (cfr image n149) exhibited on the ground floor of the barn, in the small area that once was the horse stable. The gloomy tones of the image influence the perception of the barn, which acquired darker tones. In the second, much wider and brighter room where once the sheep and the cows lived, the "forced slaughtering" stood. This dramatic and violent drawing transformed the room in which it was hosted, making it desolate and suffocating. Smilingly, the dark tones and overtones of the slaughtering of reindeer in the second drawing (cfr image n151) are designed to evoke discomfort while also forcing viewers to confront with contemporary issues that have constituted the site of inflaming debates on Sámi reindeer tending in Fennoscandinavian societies. Similarly, the image of the seal hunter (image 156) had found its place on the second floor of the same building, where also 'Nuclear Fall' (image n148) and 'Hiding' (image n152) were exposed (see image 162a and 162b). In that area it is stored the family boat once used for winter finishing. The drawing, hanging over the boat and among fishing nets, transformed the area, helping visitor visualizing a marine environment that was part of daily life of Sea-Sámi communities along the coast of Norway. Canvases exhibited across the festival area, used to help visitors visualize the festival plot and employed as decorations to cover and make dead corners interesting to visitors.



Image 52a: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, of particular relevance the reindeer antler positioned at the centre of a semicircle made of sticks (photo by the author).



Image 62b: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, a reproduction of two of Sunna Kittí's works – “nuclear fallout” and “hiding” – are exhibited on the first floor of the barn above the old carriages (photo by the author).



Image 72c: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, a reproduction of one of Sunna Kittí's works – “leading family to safety” – is exhibited on the first floor of the barn among farming tools. In the background, a reproduction of another of Sunna Kittí's works – “all is fine again” – is hung on the wall (photo by the author).



Image 82d: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, reproductions of Sunna Kittí's works – “police’s brutality” and “hiding from technology” – are exhibited on the first floor of the barn above the boat and the tools once used during fishing trips. (photo by the author).



Image 92e: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, a reproduction of one of Sunna Kittí's works – “leading family to safety” – is exhibited on the outer wall of one of the museum’s buildings tools. In the background, a flag of Sápmi (photo by the author).

7.4.3 Whispers in the sound of Sápmi

If the 2118 stage outer structure, embodied by the tunnel and the protective fences around the area, constituted a visual and physical boundary between the festival area and the outside, from a sonic perspective, space was marked by different sets of sounds. At the entrance of the tunnel, the visitors were met with an unsettling sonic element: a strong buzzing that reminded people of flies. This background noise slowly and almost imperceptibly shifted towards calmer sounds: the chirping of birds charged with other natural echoes infused a sense of peace and calm in the audience. It is apparent that, at Márkomeannu 2018, the soundscape and the scenography constituted core elements of the festival's performance, as Anne Henriette (interview 2019), the 2018 edition CEO, explained:

[The tunnel] was kind of a complex construction with both the sign inside but also we had four speakers pointing so that you had different layers of sound. Or you would come from the star darkness and then into this. You heard bees and birds and like this safe, idyllic paradise like soundtrack. So you have a sound.... What do you call it? sound designer, Anders Rimpý did a really cool job at designing sound... and we talked about it after a festival one of the things so we didn't have time to do that I really wish we had time to do because I think a lot of people miss out that he plays a lot of sound installations around the festival and you could listen to the house and the wood would kind of sing or speak or something. So the tunnel was Yeah, it was exactly that that was it was meant to do, kind of transform and sort of take you away from the time you were in and then Okay, now I admire you. So, yeah, that was one of the main installations to this concept, the tunnel and also the stage and the area. On right with the stage

The prominence of sounds in the creation of a sense of future reminds us of the importance of senses in ethnographic research and in ethnographic writing. The soundscape was indeed a central feature of the festival and through sounds, both natural and artificial, the organizers managed to convey emotions and feelings that contributed with the construction of meanings associated with the festival itself.

The area is at the foot of a mountain, in a hilly area a few hundred meters from the main road. To reach the area, it is necessary to walk up a very steep and curvy trail, which cuts across bushes and woods. The trees shed the festival site and the museum from sight until the visitors reach the meadow. At the entrance of the festival area, the visitors encountered a white and black plastic and metal tunnel. While approaching the tunnel, strange sounds became louder and louder. A loudspeaker positioned at the entrance of the tunnel was disguised behind a festival bag and some branches.



Image 103: Scenography instalment at Márkomeannu 2018, the speaker is hidden by a “Márkomeannu bag” reproducing an element from one Sunna Kittí’s works – “seal hunter” – and the rock serves the function of keeping the cotton bag in place while also contributing to the scenography (photo by the author).

This auditory signal, along with the tunnel, indicated the borders between the normal space and Márkomeannu. Visitors had to walk through the tunnel, bowing their head not to hit the ceiling, to reach the festival areas. Within the tunnel, the air was thick, humid and warm. Elbowing their way through plastic voiles, small yellow lights and wooden branches, the visitors reached the other side. This passageway, marked by a changing soundscape, constituted a figurative passage between real life and the suspended space of the festival. The physical movement between the two extremities symbolized the entrance into a different temporal dimension. From the darkness and humidity of the tunnel, the last layer of voile gave way to the bright arctic summer sun. A cool breeze, drying the sweat on the forehead, reminds the festivalgoers that the nights can be quite cold in these regions. The sight is lost among the hundreds of *lavvu* and tents in the main camp. Smoke and noise rises from the bonfires and *joiks* resonate in the valley among the hills. Everything seems normal until the eyes rest on the small details of the scenography. A male voice, coming from nowhere, starts talking in North Sámi. The sounds first believed to belong to the local nature emerge as part of a sonic installation. And all of a sudden, real life was behind the tunnel and time had collapsed. It was 2118, as conveyed by the scenography and the soundscape.

The festival organizers relied on Anders Ánndaris Rimpi for the challenging creation of a sound design that could reflect and enact the festival concept. Rimpi is a singer, composer and sound-artist

from Gothenburg, whose family roots are from Oalloluokta (midway between Giron/Kiruna and Jåhkâmáhk /Jokkmokk). He he composes music for dance, art, film and theatre stages and his musical production is ascribable to the electroacoustic music genre. He has worked with major Sámi and Nordic institutions Swedish Arts Council, Giron Sámi Teáhter and Hålogaland Teater, Norrlands Operan, Mölndals Chamber Choir and Theater Jaguar. He has also collaborated with numerous Sámi artists such Joar Nango, Matti Aikio and Sigbjørn Skåden, the founder of Márkomeannu (Márkomeannu.no).

Rimpi's soundscape was reproduced on the Gállogieddi premises during the festival. Loudspeakers, installed in strategical points throughout the area, played the music, which then dispersed in the environment. These loudspeakers were integrated with the scenography that had been realized by Mari Lotherington, a scenographer and costume designer who works primarily with performing arts. As stated on Márkomeannu website (<http://www.Márkomeannu.no/sgarat-mhccet-pionerene-vender-tilbake>) she is particularly interested in creating enveloping works, making the scenography interact with light and sound in the physical space. On the festival grounds', the sounds created by Rimpi and Lotherington' scenography were not just dialoguing, they were fused together, creating a sense of space and, through that, of time. This is in line with the analysis developed by the composer and researcher Gary Kendall. In his view, the electroacoustic music is experienced by listeners as « full of significance and meaning, and [the listeners] experience spatiality as one of the factors contributing to its meaningfulness. Perceived sound is always spatial, and spatiality is an integral part of every auditory experience. Sometimes the spatiality is in the foreground of attention and is a primary conveyor of meaning. At other times, it slips into the background » (Kendall 2010:). Electroacoustic music is characterised by hybrid musical units and forms that are similar with the everyday sound objects (Maestri 2018). By blending sounds from nature and from daily life, Rimpi created an art installation characterised by auditory elements that were constant reference to the festival concept and, at the same time, part of his own repertoire. Coming inside the tunnel from outside, the sound of bees and birds was a stark contrast with the outside, which was quite especially in confront with the festival area. The passage across the tunnel was a transition from a silent outside to a noisy inside. The noise though was not annoying but, rather, charged with vitality in contrast to the outside which represented the future. Here we can draw a comparison between the soundscape – also through its absence, the silence – and the messages such soundscape can convey. As in Carson's seminal book, according to the festival plot the silence outside the festival area represented environmental collapse while the noise of birds and insects – the sounds of spring – evoked the vitality of nature preserved at Gállogieddi.

Also local museum buildings and their specific physical features became part of the sonic exhibition. In the upper floor of the barn, a speaker was concealed in an ancient boat. The sound reverberated through the wood of the boat and was resounded through the floor. This sound was almost imperceptible to the ear and, in order to hear it, I had to put my ear against the boat. And yet I could feel it through my feet while walking on the wooden floor or when I touched the walls, as a vibration pervading my body.

These immersive scenic and the sonic installations, modelled upon and adapted to the festival landscape, were designed to convey a specific set of emotions and meanings intended to reflect the position of the audience with regard to the festival concept. These background sounds may have gone unnoticed but they triggered auditory spatial imagery and produced spatial meanings. During the day, by hearing and listening to the sounds played by the loudspeakers, visitors produced sensory memories and images. At night, the festival area was transformed as the concerts started. Then, loud music resonated not only in the meadow but all across the Márka, bouncing on the mountains in a long-lasting echo. The artists started their performance in the late evening and continued until midnight. The performers mixed Norwegian and Sámi, and Sámi words pervaded the air along with the rhythms and sounds of joiks (Sámi chants). The voices of the audience, cheering and singing along, became part of the sonic landscape of the festival. Once the concerts were over, sings and chats, laughs and merriment moved from the stage and bar area to the main festival camps. By then the sun had set and mist covered the festival area. Nevertheless, as night only lasts a couple of hours at those latitudes in that time of the year, the light of dawn was already visible far beyond the mountains. People joined together in small groups and gathered around one of the numerous bonfires lit in the camp, drinking and chatting. All over the festival area, people enjoyed the warmth of the fire and the flames crackling, roaring, sputtering, blazing, snapping, popping and sizzling while people came and went, moving from one group of friends to the other.

Along with the sound of burning wood, the rattling and tilting of beer-tins and glass bottle, along with that people occasionally feeling sick and vomiting characterised the sonic background of this time of the day. The distinctive sound stay-tabs make upon opening a can could often be heard from all corners of the festival site. Joik (Sámi chants) and talks reverberated from the camping area till the very early hours of the morning. At around 6, I heard the last joiks (Sámi chants) fading away in the thin air. By 8 am, the sun was shining in the sky and the tents were already too warm to sleep in them unless people opened them and let fresh air – and insects – in. The chirping of birds and the sound of the engine of a lonely car were, in that time of the morning, the only sounds I could hear. Occasionally, I heard some volunteers exchange a few words, coordinating themselves while going

through their tasks. Sámi, Norwegian and English echoing in the meadow. It was not until lunch-time that the festival slowly came back to life and people emerged from their tents. The sounds resumed slowly and so did the festival life, at the pace of its own guests.

Anne Henriette explained that:

another part of this kind of concept of ours that we didn't fully expand upon on this short weekend was that we kind of imagined there to be indigenous safe bubbles all over the world, many societies that had managed to survive this Apocalypse, and that these societies were connected through Earth, earth, and tree roots. So the roots of trees and plants were like an underground blanket that kind of connected the world and that people communicated through earth and the nerves of plants. So that was also a part of like the theatre performance. And the theatre performance was really kind of thing that was supposed to connect the dots of installations and concepts and, and design and everything.

This analysis highlights the role of acoustic factors in developing people's spatial understandings. The soundscape of the festival guided the audience across time and space. Kendall (2010:228) does indeed outline how notions of space «are acquired and understood through bodily experience»

7.4.4 Playing at the end of the world: *Sángarat máhccet*, the pioneers return

The intersection between theatre and festivals has a long history in Sámi mileux. At Riddu Riddu Festival, as well as at Márkomeannu, theatrical performances have often been part of the festival program and the pieces performed often conveyed political messages. In the case in exam, such political overtones were omnipresent.

At Márkomeannu 2118, a combination of technological and material stagecraft were put in place to represent, enact, and produce a sense of place. Furthermore, the theatre performance of 2018 was meant to be a form of collective role play in which festivalgoers were supposed to impersonate themselves as if they were from the future. The theatrical performance lasted for the four days of the festival, contributing in making it a time out of time. The idea of the festival organizers was to use the performance as a way to enact the festival plot. In particular, the three actors impersonating Elsa Laula, Jakko Sverloff and Anders Larsen were to engage the public in the spirit of the character they impersonated. During the performance which took place on the opening day of the festival, the three pioneers appeared behind the *gallo* (boulder) bringing the past they symbolized to the future in which the play was set, everything in the present of 2018 Márkomeannu festival. It is not by chance that this temporal link was established at Gállogieddi. Just behind the boulder, the organizers had set some crystals to form a circle. It was in that specific location that the different points in time were presented

as coming into contact. Gállogieddi emerges hence as a cultural place which epitomizes the past local Sámi culture, embodied by the farm as well as by the Sámi non-Christian religion and folklore, evoked by the *gieddi* (boulder) were the *ulddat* (non-human entities) are believed to live and which was integrated into the scenography.

And so the theatre performance that's it had kind of different parts during the weekend started with the opening when... when the three kind of spirit guides were where the Sámi people in 2118 had managed to build like a quantum bridge was our theory to bridge the gap with Saivo where were some spirits where it's like the Sámi afterworld, and kind of call these three guides, spirit guides back to guide, to help the society. So each of them had a specific kind of role. And we've chosen we've chosen them to kind of help with a specific theme so and Elsa Laula Renberg was chosen for her ability to kind of you like the people in a in a cause And we also another part of this theatre performance was that that we had installed this installation around on the festival area with like, sound installations that required you to listen to woods to hear noise. And, and they kind of had a tour around these installations, and talked about history and then in the connection to, to earth and woods (Anne Henriette, interview, 19/9/2020, via webex).

An important element connected with this form of participative theatre was a specific session held in the *storlavvu* (the big tent), where all festival-goers were invited to join in a staged debate in which the Sámi of the future were trying to decide what to do next, since Gállogieddi was, according to the play's plot, no longer safe. Ola Tsjudi was coming to take the Sámi and the community had to decide whether to succumb and accept colonial rule or try to flee through the quantum bridge in the hope of finding another world to inhabit.

And then the discussion during the festival, they also have like, a meeting in a big *lavvu* where we have like, those kind of decision-making meetings. Like a "parliament". We went back to history. Research said that, usually when, when issues had to be solved, in [pre-colonialized] Sámi societies, one way of doing it was by sitting in a circle in a *lavvu* with representatives from different smaller societies, or *siidas*. And they kind of had that rule of consensus. So they discussed until they agreed, instead of this voting system that exists in this world. So then the discussion was, "okay, how do we move forward? How do we rebuild? Should we flee the planet?" if you have a quantum bridge, you should also likely be able to kind of build a bridge to other planets or dimensions. Hence the question... "should we stay and build here? and so on and so on?" And, and I don't know, I don't think they agreed on something. But the concept, the important part was that consensus, conversation instead of parties and voting, thinking instead of the kind of democracy way of ruling a society, [it was important] that they discussed until they have an agreement. So we wanted to kind of also play around with that, okay, how, how can we solve things in a society with consensus, can we agree without having to vote (Anne Henriette 2/3/2021 via zoom).

Nihlas, a young Sámi man in his early 20s living on the Swedish side of Sápmi, described the implementation of the festival concept through this participative theatre performance as follows:

N: There was this role playing session that I believe was really funny. Where we were to argue if we were going to leave our traditional lands and go out to space to a new planet, or... Yeah. So it was first the debate. And then they took questions from the audience. And they didn't tell the audience what to do. But some people in the audience they got into got in on their own we were supposed to do when we started arguing with, with the, with the panel about if we would go north, or if we. And I think that was, that was really fun. That was a fun exercise. And it felt like it were discussing systematical questions, it was discussing values. But at the same time, it did it in a really fun and engaging way. And it says it was made up. Everyone could leave us friends. And just yeah, no hard feelings. Yes, I liked it.

Erika: But the point was that whether or not to leave Earth?

N: yeah, to another planet, or think. Or maybe it was a different universe or something. We could leave to a different place where we could be isolated and free from the progress in some society. I think that was there before two things we could choose.

This complex plot was designed to induce participants to discuss possible scenarios, in the attempt to come up with the best possible decision in light of the circumstances and the information available. The dilemma, which is also a transposition of the real life-choices made by Jakko Sverlogg and the Skolt Sámi at the end of WWII, did not have any easy answer. The only two real options were 1) being colonized; 2) leave behind Sápmi – and all the cultural and spiritual connection Sámi have with it – and become colonizers themselves in the attempt to save their life. This second option evokes, albeit in a fictitious form, the experience of many Sámi who left Sápmi because of poverty and stigma and moved to the USA and Canada, where they unknowingly became part of the hegemonic colonial society oppressive local indigenous peoples.

The theatre performance integrated Sámi indigenous decision-making practices and oral traditions into theatrical performance (see Arntzen 1994) and can be framed as a form of contemporary collective storytelling. The theatrical performance's plot gives further depth to the festival plot and evokes themes addressed by Sigbjørn Skåden in his 2019 Norwegian-language novel 'Fugl' (literally, bird). This novel is an example of indigenous futurism and climate-fiction by a Sámi author. The characters are not Sámi – or are not identified as such – the novel raises issues important to humankind as a whole but that have also a counterpart in Sámi history. This feature gives the book a political overtone that would not really be visible if the reader did not know about the author's ethnic background. 'Fugl' tells of a group of humans who, in 2048, emigrate from Earth and try to survive by establishing a research colony where they live for several generations, albeit with no memory of life on Earth due to the actions of some of the characters. In 2147, the precarious life the descendants

of the first immigrants have built – thirty-three inhabitants struggle to survive, and to keep the population up – is threatened by the arrival of other humans fleeing a wrecked Earth. This second migration will pose terrible challenges for the small society developed on the new planet. The existing colony must choose whether to coexist with the alien and technologically superior newcomers, or whether to isolate themselves and guard over their own environment and their own survival. This story – which is further developed in the novel – resonates with our contemporary questions about possible solutions to the climate crisis and shares many points with the Márkomeannu2118 festival plot. This is not surprising since, as Anne Henriette told me, even if he is no longer actively working for the festival he contributed establishing, Sigbjørn was indeed involved in the creative process that led to the festival plot.

7.5 A post-apocalyptic déjà vu: indigenous futurism, an international perspective

In this section, I shall examine the recent literature about Indigenous speculative fiction in order to highlight its most important features. In doing so, my aim is to show the connections between the festival concept and the Indigenous speculative fiction model known as Indigenous Futurisms. This analysis sheds light some of the meanings enshrined in the festival plot and, more broadly, connected with Indigenous speculative fiction as a genre.

7.5.1 The colonial soul of sci-fiction

Stories of adventures have always been part of every human culture but, as early as the second half of the 19th century, new forms of adventure stories were emerging. In such stories it is technology that makes the adventure possible. Tiger identifies in Jules Verne's 54 novels – known in English as 'Extraordinary Voyages' or 'Amazing Journeys' – were among the first examples of science fiction. Furthermore, Tiger draws a connection between this then emerging literary genre and the North American military and civil expansion into the vast "wild west". Even if seat of multiple indigenous cultures, these lands laying beyond the USA constantly shifting frontier were perceived and constructed as ready to be conquered and colonized through a process Tiger defines as the « taming of the frontier » (Tiger 2019:146). The connections between science-fiction and colonial violence are manifold and many are the scholars who have examined how the imperial and colonial violence tropes in science-fiction tie this genre with colonialism (Rieder 2012; Lewis 2016; Medak & Saltzman 2017). Jamaican-born Afro-Caribbean speculative fiction author Nalo Hopkins explains that science-fiction is an intrinsically colonial genre. He justifies his view by drawing the readers' attention towards one of the genre's most familiar and recognizable features: the literary trope of «[...] going

to foreign countries and colonizing the natives... for many of us, that's not a thrilling adventure story; it's nonfiction and we are on the wrong side of the strange looking ship that appears out of nowhere. To be a person of colour writing [and I would add, enjoying] science fiction is to be under suspicion of having internalized one's colonization» (in Medak & Saltzman 2017:142). Medak and Saltzman's reading of Hopkins allows them to highlight the colonial undertones of sci-fiction's narrative structures. In their views, science fiction stories «reflect colonization, conquest, exploitation of, and conflict with other peoples' worlds» (2017:142). Hence, science fiction stories emerge as transpositions into other worlds and temporalities of real histories of colonization in this world. According to this understanding of science fiction, Indigenous experiences of colonization are reflected in the fictional experiences of alien societies that often figure as foes in sci-fic stories. In light of these reflections, Medak and Saltzman consider mainstream science fiction too layered with colonial allegories and metaphors to make it appealing to many Indigenous peoples. In their words, science fiction narrative structures «[...] have too closely mirrored Indigenous experiential realities for many to find the genre enticing » (Medak and Saltzman 2017:142).

In science fiction novels and other forms of expression it is easy to identify transpositions of colonial narratives or allusion to colonial histories. This transposition is often implemented through metaphors and finds expression in colonial *tropoi* such as the *terra nullius* doctrine. Furthermore, as Lewis (2016 in Lidchi and Fricke 2019:100) notes, sci-fiction «tends to reflect a particular set of imperial and colonial biases and prejudices. [...] [As a consequence] recognizable descendants of Indigenous people do not often appear in the settler future imaginary, nor does one see any indication of Indigenous culture[s] as having survived into the seventh generation and beyond». Similarly, Streeby has highlighted that Indigenous peoples and people of colour are repeatedly excluded from mainstream sci-fiction and cli-fiction (2018). As a consequence, in mainstream sci-fi, no recognizable indigenous character nor any discernible Indigenous culture plays a role in the narrative. This exclusion symbolically precludes members of these communities from mainstream imagined futures, reiterating and consolidating the trope of the “vanishing native”.

In the 19th and early 20th century, indigenous peoples have been constructed as, living relics from the past existing in a time removed from otherwise shared modernity. Later, in the course of the 20th century, indigenous peoples were excluded from the western imagery of the future in its technological developments. As there was no space for indigenous cultures in 19th century imagination of the future, there is no space for them in the late 20th and early 21st century western sci-fiction. This exclusion does not mean that Indigenous people do engage with fiction set in or addressing the future. They do so by resorting to the speculative fiction filtered through indigenous lenses. The 2019 special

issue of “world Art”⁵⁴⁸ testifies the growing interest in this emerging topic, at least in the North American context.

7.5.2 Envisaging the Indigenous peoples of the future: Indigenous futurism

The expression “Indigenous futurism” to refer to a specific Indigenous cultural and literary movement⁵⁴⁹ has first been proposed by Dr. Grace Dillon, a scholar of Anishinaabe and European descent currently Professor in the Indigenous Nations Studies Program at Portland State University. She first employed this expression in the subheading of her 2012 ‘Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction’, a volume to which she contributed with a introduction, in which she delineates the potential of indigenous science-fiction as an empowerment tool and its utility in implementing decolonization.

Dillon’s expression Indigenous Futurism is built upon “Afrofuturism”, a cultural, aesthetic and philosophical movement that encompass specific understandings of history grounded – and colonial past - in post-colonial theory and analyse the intersection of technology and African diasporic cultural expressions. The term Afrofuturism first appeared in a 1993 article by Mark Dery evocatively entitled ‘Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose’ (Dery 1994). Throughout the 1990s, thanks to the work of African, African American, and Black diasporic writers, musicians, artists, and activists as well as theorists, and scholars, the term came to indicate a complex critical perspectives addressing the intersections between technology and race through the critical analysis of African and Black diasporic histories and cultural production. By encapsulating multiple modes of art making – literature, music, visual art, photography, performance and multimedia art, film, often articulated through science or speculative fiction - Afrofuturism concentrates on black experiences and issues relevant to the black diaspora. In order to do so, exponents of Afrofuturism envision either alternative places, times, and realities or black futures stemming from and dealing with Afro-diasporic experiences. In both cases, Afrofuturism speculate about realities in which black identity rather than being marginalized is normative. These are the premises upon which Indigenous Futurism developed and this concept today articulates Indigenous perspectives of not only the future, but also the past and present. At the core of Indigenous Futurisms lies a strong critique of the predicted Indigenous people’s absence from the future and their consequent exclusion from contemporaneity. For this reason, even just imagining a future for Indigenous peoples, or in which Indigenous people exist, is and act of resistance against colonialism. In line with this reasoning, as Medak Saltzman

⁵⁴⁸ *World Art 2019 Vol. 9 No. 2.*

⁵⁴⁹ It is not only the author’s ethnic background but also the themes they address and the issues they raise, that frame their works as Indigenous futurisms.

(2017) points out, indigenous futurism(s) counteracts indigenous absence in mainstream speculative genres. This feature was also highlighted by Streeby (2018). Indigenous speculative fiction offers a means of projecting Indigenous peoples not just as individuals but as communities – and hence cultures – in the future: it provides a way of counteracting Western narratives, rooted in 19th century positivist social sciences, that exclude Indigenous peoples from the future.

This element is further connected with another feature that characterised western approaches toward indigenous peoples across the world: not only did western scholars consider indigenous peoples as destined to vanish – and hence without a future – but they also constructed them as lacking a proper past as western scholars understood it. Disregarding indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge and indigenous oral cultures, western scholars considered indigenous peoples as “peoples without history” (Wolf 1982). Here we see a double negation, the negation of the past and the negation of the future, which relegated Indigenous peoples to perpetual temporal marginality (Ginsburg and Myers 2006), as living at the edges of the present and in an atemporal dimension (Fabian 1983). What was the future of Indigenous peoples living in the 19th and 20th century is the present of contemporary indigenous peoples. Their very existence is an act of resistance against colonial attempts of erasing them from the present. Through their very existence, Indigenous peoples across the globe have defied such understandings and, by engaging in Indigenous futurism, they are claiming their space not only in the present but also in the future. Imagining indigenous existence in the future is a both a statement and an act of emotional and intellectual resilience (Medak Saltzman 2017:156)

Indigenous futurisms as a cultural and literary movement is related with and framed within the canons of what usually would be understood as science fiction despite the colonial connotations of this genre. As Lidchi and Fricke explain, Indigenous Futurism(s) « [...] uses the images, ideology, and themes in sci-fiction to envision a future from a Native (Indigenous) perspective » (2019:13). As Gore points out in her review of Dillion’s work, narrative devices such as world-building, slipstreams, anthropologically informed First Contact scenarios and other *tropoi* of science-fiction are at the core of Indigenous futurism through which Indigenous artists envision alter/native narratives about their peoples’ future. Given its multiple expressions and the various ethnic backgrounds of artists and author engaging in this genre, Streeby suggests using the plural form “Indigenous futurisms”. This reflection brings us back to the very term “sci-fi” or “science fiction”. The perspectives brought about by Indigenous Futurists may reflect and encompass Indigenous knowledge systems, (hi)stories, contemporary issues as well as cultural contexts and for this reason their work depart from mainstream science fiction, a genre that, as we have seen, is characterised by strong colonial overtones.

Besides the aforementioned issues concerning the colonial overtones of science fiction, a further problem with this genre lies in the limits imposed by its own name: by resorting to the term “science”, this expression *a priori* excludes all those texts, novels, and artistic expressions that address possible futures without openly resorting to science in the development of the narrative or concept. Given the shortcomings of and the colonial implications intrinsic to science fiction as an analytical category, the expression “speculative fiction” has been proposed as a more suitable and more inclusive umbrella which allows scholars to include in the genre works that would not be included in science fiction *strictu sensu* but that reflect upon about things that really could happen and event that could really occur (Atwood 2011:6)⁵⁵⁰. Streeby (2018) traces the preference in the use of “speculative fiction” over “science fiction” back to Heinlein. It was 1947 when Heinlein made his point on why speculative fiction was a more suitable category for specific kinds of works: in his view, this expression was able to render the genre’s capacity to tackle important issues connected with the future, with travel across space and with life on other worlds. Such issues can be addressed from various points of view and answers to them can be sought in various scientific fields. even if speculative fiction poses questions about these themes in fictitious contexts, these questions transcend fiction and pertains to our future. This is the case of works addressing radically transformed climates and their consequences on life on Earth. Anthropogenic climate change, which is climate change caused by human actions, is already unfolding, manifesting itself in numerous ways. Among its most evident consequences devastating storms, melting ice calottes, sea level rise, and alteration of local environments are already changing the world in which we live. In Streeby’s words, «[signs of impending catastrophic climate change]» are already part of the everyday life of millions of people (2018:4). On a medium and long term, these phenomena are expected to cause a process of mass extinction leading to loss of biodiversity. Given the both the growing numbers of works addressing possible futures characterised by climate change and the importance this works are acquiring, also in light of the climatic transformations currently occurring throughout the Worlds, scholars like Streeby (2018) consider these them as belonging to a new, autonomous subgenre: cli-fi, short for climate fiction.

Anthropogenic climate change is leading to the irreversible destabilization of the global climate system, with unforeseeable but certainly dramatic consequences for life on Earth. Such phenomena are addressed by authors and artists from different walks of life and a growing number of indigenous

⁵⁵⁰ This is an important remark since it brings our attention to the future as a topic of anthropological enquire, an aspect that, as many authors have noticed, has long been neglected in anthropological research due to the future’s intrinsic elusive and unpredictable nature. In recent years, the future as an object of anthropological analysis has attracted the growing interest of researchers as reflected in the growing body of scientific literature on the “future as a cultural fact” (Appadurai 2013) and the fast pace of climate change and the reflections of Anthropocene are bringing the future at the centre of anthropological reflections (see among al. Strzelecka 2013; Augé 2015; Bryant & Knight 2019).

peoples are addressing them in their works. Many of these works can be inscribed within the coordinates of Indigenous futurisms. As Streeby emphasizes, at least since the 1970s Indigenous futurisms have addresses climate change and its consequences on the world and its inhabitants. Lidchi and Fricke point out that « [...] if standard narrative of sci-fiction involve a hypothetical apocalypse, for Indigenous peoples this is recognizably real and personal » (2019:135). As these scholars point out, for many Indigenous peoples apocalypse id not just a terrible possible future scenario but it is also part of their history.

7.5.3 Visualizing worse case scenarios: change the present to shape the future

As of 2021, Anthropogenic climate change has been a source of concern for some decades but Trexler notes that authors started addressing this global phenomenon long before greenhouse gas emissions attracted widespread scientific interest (for a list of authors and titles developing these issues, see Trexler 2015). In Trexler's view, science fiction dealing with climate change share some common core features: they are all set in a distant future, when the catastrophes generated by anthropogenic climate change have already occurred. Nevertheless, as Whyte explains, concepts and narratives of crisis as well as futuristic dystopian apocalypses, foster discourses that often erase ongoing oppression against Indigenous peoples (Whyte 2018).

As Trexler points out, imagining climate change is a daunting challenge because, in his view, it is «impossible to have a direct experience of climate» and the medium-/long term effects of species loss too are difficult to grasp. The incommensurable scale of the oncoming climate disaster is hard to comprehend but climate fiction may enable the public to visualize anthropogenic climate change⁵⁵¹. By envisaging and describing life in a future torn by anthropogenic disasters, climate Fiction has the power to make climate change and its consequences visible to contemporary audience. Among the strengths of futurism(s) Streeby identifies its power in inspiring social movement while also establishing connections among different temporalities and different spaces. “cli-fic”, encompasses a wide range of dystopian interpretations of Earth's near-future devastated by the effects of anthropogenic climate change. Hence, as forms of speculative fiction, climate fictions offers a means to think and reflect upon climate change (Tapuya 2018). through art, activism, and speculative fictions, Indigenous peoples and peoples of colour throughout the world address climate change and have found a way to evoke the future – and claim their presence into it - through performance and imagination. The power of imagination and performance helps people making futures present from

⁵⁵¹ This kind of approach does not just challenge but invalidates the common, albeit often unconscious, Western assumption that understands humans as masters of nature.

an experiential point of view, translating speculations into experiences. This strategy makes the future real and has the power of mobilizing people

By engaging with cli-fiction, imagining indigenous peoples and people of colour in a near-future shaped by climate change, authors and artists belonging to Indigenous peoples and people of color not only engage in speculative fictions and futurism(s) but also address contemporary everyday struggles faced by their communities. Furthermore, by resorting to these speculative genres, authors and artists belonging to Indigenous and people of colours' communities are able to address, and remember, their people's past while also imagining their possible futures. Moreover, speculative fiction allows the public to reflect upon the present and, hopefully, to act in order to prevent the worst from happening.

7.5.4 Exposing inequalities by engaging in speculative fiction

Even if the denounce of the consequences of anthropogenic disasters are the axis upon which speculative fiction revolves, this genre does not deal exclusively with climate change *strictu sensu*. By addressing this global phenomenon, speculative fiction exposes the social inequalities climate change will exacerbate, while presenting implicit and explicit critiques of capitalism, and important warnings about the overconsumption and greed consuming contemporary society (Medak & Saltzman 2017)

Streeby points out that the ramifications and devastations brought about by climate change will have a particularly devastating impact in the global South and in what she calls the "South within the North", i.e. Arctic Indigenous communities. To corroborate this statement, she quotes the word of the president of Canada's National Inuit Youth Council, Maatalii Okalik, who stated that: «Inuit continue to be the human barometer of climate change [...]» having warned «[...] the international community for years that climate change is happening at a rapid pace» (Streeby 2018:109). The multiple impacts of climate change are already bringing drastic changes in the Arctic – as well as in other regions of the world – and such dramatic changes are being experienced by young generations with fears for what may come in the future since climate change is transforming their ancestors' worlds in unforeseeable ways. Scholars (Medak & Saltzman 2017; Streeby 2018;) agree that the consequences of climate change disproportionately affect small island states, coastal peoples, indigenous peoples, local communities, but also women, youth, elderly, poor people, the marginalized and vulnerable. At the same time though, those who are most affected by these processes have excluded from global processes aiming at addressing and mitigating climate change.

In both current discourses and in literature, indigenous peoples have been endowed with a role as defenders and guardians of nature. As Horton highlights, since at least the 1970s numerous environmental movements «persistently casted indigenous peoples as a source of premodern wisdom and spiritual affirmation» (2017:50). Instead of empowering Indigenous peoples, these discourses generalize local indigenous struggles, abstracting indigenous causes and, ultimately removing them from indigenous control (Horton 2017). Indigenous peoples worldwide do not call for actions against polluting or nature-damaging operations in name of an abstract connection with Nature but because such operations are threatening their environment and, in many cases their ways of living or that of their ancestors – as in the case of indigenous peoples living in urban contexts - often posing a threat to the survival of their cultures. Indigenous peoples are actively involved in protests and legal actions against extracting industries, mining and logging companies as well as against land grabbing and various forms of green colonialism. For these reasons, histories and current presents of many indigenous peoples are characterized by conflicts over natural resources with what Lidchi and Fricke define «dystopian consequences» for many indigenous communities (2019:100).

7.5.5 Imagine the future to change the present

Anthropogenic climate change is a serious threat to our world as we know it and it may ultimately result in ecosystems' collapse, species loss and depletion of the environment. The consequences of this changed world will be devastating, spanning from economic crash to radical relocation leading to drastic changes in peoples ways of living.

As Whyte (2018) emphasizes, such devastating features are not new to Indigenous peoples worldwide since Indigenous societies have already experienced many of them in the past and are still living their consequences. This view is shared by other authors such as Callison (2015:42), who points out that, for many indigenous peoples what we perceive as an impending climate crisis «[...] has already occurred» as a consequence of various forms of colonization. As Hickey notes Indigenous futurism finds expression through novels, graphic novels, and visual arts. The enactment of the Márkomeannu2118 festival plot demonstrates that also theatre and performative arts can engage with this cultural movement. Cultural forms such as film, video, music, social media, and performance (in Streeby 2018), all of which find expressions at Márkomeannu, are contemporary forms of indigenous narrative making.

As aforementioned, for many indigenous peoples – Sámi included – the apocalypse concerns the past as much as the future (Horton 2017, Lidchi and Fricke 2019). In the relevant scientific literature produced by indigenous scholars, this aspect is often framed through an intergenerational approach and variations of expressions such as «our present is our past generation's future» or «our lives are

our descendants' past» often appear in indigenous authors' texts (see Claisse & Delvenne 2015; Medak Saltzman 2017; Streeby 2018) and Whyte has employed a variation on this subject in her 2017 article evocatively entitled «Our ancestors' dystopia now: Indigenous conservation and the Anthropocene». Many indigenous peoples have endured radical relocation and concurrent cultural disintegration often accentuated by the disruption of relationship with non-human entities that belonged to or were connected with their ancestral homelands (Whyte 2018). Similarly, for those indigenous peoples who «[...] lost of access to a culturally or economically significant plant or animal due to colonial domination [...]» these animals or plants were not just inaccessible but as if extinct (Whyte 2018:226). It shall also be pointed out that, in some contexts, colonial encounter actually resulted in the almost complete - if not absolute - extinction of «culturally or economically significant» animals or plants with terrible consequences for the local environment and the Indigenous groups inhabiting it. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon is the large-scale killing of the Great Plains Bison in North America at the hands of European settlers (Feir & Gillezeau 2019).

Márkomeannu 2018 edition's focus on anthropogenic climate change makes the festival plot of particular relevance when addressing it through the lenses of Indigenous futurism: the festival plot provided festival-goers with the opportunity to reflect upon the consequences of climate change and consequence social inequalities while also enabling a critique of capitalism. The 2018 festival CEO, Anne Henriette, explains that one of the main purposes of the festival theme was to force guests to think about and reflect upon the role we as individuals have in this critical time in human history:

This future view was kind of an easy way to get people to understand that we made an extreme world where the world is no longer in danger, it is done. But at the same time, it plays on this that... there is only now, either way. So we wanted to challenge people to discuss themes of time and manners of living, quite challenging them and putting them into different kinds of time zones are not the same time they are here now. So it was both practical because it helps in explaining the backstory. But also, a part of our goal with this concept was to inspire guests to discuss deeper things than, than just read through the performance or this art. (Anne Henriette 2019 via Skype).

The urgency seeps through the CEO's words, pervading the argument. The underlying idea is that there is no more time to waste and that actions are to be taken now to prevent the worst from happening, in other words, the 2118 scenario from fulfilling itself like a gloomy prophecy. Despite the bleak prospects described in the festival background text and in the words of the CEO herself, the festival plot is informed by a sense of hope, epitomised by the recovery of indigenous knowledge and the guidance provided by the *Ofelaččat*. Agency and Resilience are the cornerstones of the whole Márkomeannu2118 concept as it envisioned not only the existence of Sámi peoples in the future but

also their flourishing once self-regulation is possible against the odds. The dystopic scenario portrayed at Márkomeannu#2118 is a condemnation of past and present policies and malpractices – whose possible future consequences may be catastrophic – while reaffirming Sámi connections with their land. Furthermore, this festival concept offers a view of indigenous peoples’ perspectives and narratives concerning the connections between colonial violence and anthropogenic climate change, Narratives that, as whyte (2018) explains, are often obfuscated by western post-apocalyptic scenarios. By proposing a Sámi utopia within a Western-made dystopia, the festival-concept constitutes an act of resistance in its own right: the festival’s background story not only challenges but also disproves 19th century social Darwinist theories envisaging the Sámi as relics of a long-gone past doomed to disappear within a short timeframe. The envisioning of a Sámi future at Gállogieddi elaborates on the strength that enabled indigenous Sámi to survive as people despite oppression and enforced assimilation

The political overtones have always been relevant at Márkomeannu. For instance, the 2017 edition was focused on the celebrations for the jubilee marking the centenary of the Tråante (Trondheim) meeting, an event of the uttermost importance in contemporary Sámi history. Nevertheless, by setting Márkomeannu in a dystopian future, the organizers not only have focused on the past and the present but they also have had the opportunity to suggest potential consequences of the current geopolitical turmoil, threats to democracy and emphasizing the catastrophic impact of climate change. As stated on the festival website, the aim was to create a

fictitious reality that forces us to see our own time in another light by giving us the opportunity to create a society from scratch. The audience should be challenged to see their unconscious thought patterns and given truths in another light. The world we create becomes a mixture of a utopia and dystopia (Márkomeannu, access on the 18/02/2019).

These lines resonates with the CEO’s statements and their message was implemented through the construction of a scenography that had both a decorative and pragmatic function. The enactment of a staged future had the purpose of forcing festivalgoers to confront their worst fears: a catastrophic fate that might be ahead of us all. Nevertheless, the wrecked word of 2118 is not physically constructed at or near the festival. It is up the individual imagination of festival-goers to picture this possible future in their own minds. The festival scenography offered hints about the catastrophes described in the concept appears in the festival area through the pieces of Art produced by Sunna Kittu – the festival’s young artist of the year,– dealing specifically with the colonial oppression exerted by the evil chancellor.

The absence of the enactment of dystopic future despite the centrality of such concept in the festival background story shall be seen in terms of presence through absence. Rather than focusing on the negative features of the 2118 concept – pouring resources onto its scenography construction - the organizers wanted to concentrate their efforts (and the economic resources allocated to the festival) on the extolling of the bucolic environment of Gállogieddi. According to the festival concept, Gállogieddi constituted the hidden sanctuary where Sámi people could lead a safe and happy life. By exalting the idyllic landscape, the contact with nature in its multiple expressions, the freedom secured by Márkomeannu as a safe space for Sámi cultural expression as well as for Sámi as individuals, the organizers showed what may become lost if we do not fight to preserve it. The farmyard where the festival takes place became the stage of the festival concept – an indigenous bubble of self-determination - while also embodying all that is at stake due to anthropogenic climate change, oppression, colonialism and exploitation. The nuclear wasteland that lies outside the borders of Gállogieddi /Márkomeannu festival, is an imagined future but, at the same time, the world in which we already live already is such future, albeit *in nuce*, even if we often fail to recognize the seeds of destruction which have already taken roots and feed of our inability to counter-act the destructive tendencies we as humans have initiated.

7.6 Speculative fiction and Márkomeannu2118

The frame of the 2018 edition deeply embedded in the global indigenous struggle for and global concerns over climate change and climate justice. At Márkomeannu 2118, we have an example of Indigenous futurism developed at the intersection among art, ethno-politics and activism. The festival plot and its enactment were meant to raise awareness about climate change and social inequalities, and in this sense the festival is in line with those features that Hickey identifies as characteristic of Indigenous futurism.

Scholars (Streeby 2018; Whyte 2018) agree that Indigenous futurism and, more broadly, speculative fiction have emerged as powerful means for imagining a future that, albeit devastated by anthropogenic climate change, still allows life. In these futures, indigenous peoples across the world not only have managed to survive but also thrive. A recurrent element they identified in Indigenous futurism and speculative fiction is the idea that, in order to thrive in a wrecked world, Indigenous peoples merged ancient Indigenous knowledge and wisdom with new technologies. If we examine the Márkomeannu2118 festival concept, these same elements emerge as central for the development of the plot. Albeit not examined in detail, new technologies and ancient rediscovered wisdom function as the narrative premises for the whole plot. This element substantiate the hypothesis that

Márkomeannu2118, through the festival plot and its enactment, represents an example of Sámi speculative fiction.

The 2118 plot narrative has an intergenerational aspect, which is a form of intergenerational dialogue: at the Gállogieddi of the future, members of the generations to come and those who are gone enter into contact. This means that current generations as well as ancestors and descendants come together – albeit only in a symbolic way – and communicate. As mentioned, the 2118 plot does not merely envisage Sámi survival but as Dillon points out (2016:9) «[...] persistence, adaptation, flourishing in the future». Another element of the festival plot that deserves further attention is the visualization of future Gállogieddi as a bubble of indigenous sovereignty in a totalitarian wasteland (see images n144, n155). This evocative image is symbolically charged as the idea of a bubble entails a primordial concept of separation: what is inside the bubble is separated from what lies outside of it. It's like a "*hortus conclusus*", an area not only separated but also protected from what is happening outside of it. As a private conversation with Geir Grenersen shows (see chapter 4), this idea of a bubble keeping safe Márka-Sámi people from the "outside world" of the Norwegian(ized) coast was an important part of locals' understanding of the Márka. Hence, by imagining the 2118 Gállogieddi as, as a safe haven visualised as a bubble is actually a transposition of local conceptualizations of the Márka adapted to the genre of speculative fiction.

The Gállogieddi of 2118 can be described as a Sámi Enclave in a wasteland. Such wrecked world is ruled by a centralised absolute power, embodied by the tyrant Chancellor Ola Tsjudi. The disintegration, collapse of western democratic institutions and the concurrent political/social/economic and environmental collapse emerge as the premises of indigenous empowerment. In contrast to this tyrannical form of government, at Gállogieddi decisions are taken collegially, and the elders – here represented by the three ofelačcat – offer guidance and knowledge. In this sense, the imagined Gállogieddi of the future resembles pre-colonial Sámi societies and constitutes an attempt to imagine how it would be if decision-making in Sámi contexts did not follow Western's models (for instance, the Sámi parliaments are modelled upon the Scandinavian one) but were based on Sámi practices and values. In the Gállogieddi of 2118, indigenous sovereignty manifests itself through self-determination and indigenous Sámi decision-making models.

8. Chapter 8 Greetings from the Arctic

As illustrated in the foregoing chapters, Sámi communities engage with both internal and external economic and cultural stimuli. As a consequence, Sámi contemporary cultures are as much involved in contemporary issues as any other culture. The environmental-political-social concerns underlying the Markomeannu2118 festival theme embody real and present preoccupations.

In this chapter, I aim to address some such concerns. Although the analysis is perforce not exhaustive; it offers an overview of some of the major industrial and infrastructural developments now unfolding in Sápmi territories at the hands of multinational companies and to the cost of local Sámi stakeholders. An objective of the chapter is to incorporate observations upon current industrial development in a broader temporal perspective while emphasizing how Sámi responses to the capitalism-led erosion of their lands are today articulated not only by means of protest but also through art.

As we have already seen, art has over time become an essential element of Sámi political and social self-expression. This Sámi artistic context is most suitably enclosed in the neologism “artivism” which I deliberately employ as an indication of agreement with the socio-political instances implied by the term.

In the light of these considerations, in this chapter I shall not employ a diachronic approach but rather resort to some examples of both industrial-infrastructure projects and local Sámi reactions.

In the city of Tromsø, many are the postcards sold in local tourist shops. Most of these cards reproduce views of the city or breathtaking arctic landscapes, “exotic” animals such as reindeer or arctic birds, stunning natural phenomena peculiar to these regions of the world such as the midnight sun or northern lights. Almost all of these postcards have similar captions: “Greetings from the Arctic” and “Arctic Norway”. For many visitors, the geographical location stressed in these postcards is at the core of their voyage to these lands. The idea of the Arctic, and the layered meanings associated with it, have become means through which a brandization of this region is occurring. The notion of a remote and enchanted North where uncontaminated nature is the setting for endless days that alternate with frozen nights dotted with northern lights draws tourists from all over the world. Nevertheless, such a softened image of the Arctic clashes with a far less appealing reality where overexploitation of resources and pollution are daily incumbencies local communities have to face. In this context, Sámi peoples have found themselves on the front line of an invisible war many of them are willing to fight to preserve both their rights to self-determination and the Sámi resource-management developed through centuries-long practices rooted in first-hand experience. Climate

change emerges as a central issue whose ramifications are already greatly affecting the lives of local Sámi communities: as a result of capitalistic policies indissolubly connected with it (see among al.: Latour et al.:2018; Stensrud & Eriksen:2019). Arctic communities are witnessing a race for resources, which is deeply intertwined with a recent (re-)militarization of the Arctic⁵⁵². All these phenomena are having devastating consequences on the Sámi indigenous landscape as well as on Sámi cultural-specific activities. I became familiar with these issues through conversations with my interlocutors and also through my attendance at Sámi festivals such as Riddu Riđđu, Márkomeannu and Isogaisa. These events have emerged as cultural arenas where, during festive gatherings, serious issues are addressed, discussed and questioned. Among them, climate change and its multifaceted and ramified natural, social, and economic effects have gained a role of prominence.

In the following chapter, by employing a diachronic perspective I shall address how the Arctic, often perceived and portrayed in globalized media and popular culture as a distant periphery⁵⁵³, is becoming central in international discourses. Such a perspective allows me to examine both etic and emic understandings of Nature as well as concerns about the exploitation of arctic resources.

8.1 Breaking the ice: environment as a hot topic in the Arctic

While carrying out fieldwork in Troms and Finnmark County, I have met people from all walks of life. Many were Sámi, many Norwegians or foreigners. It is not easy to start a conversation with someone you do not know, so I often resorted to the weather as an icebreaker and the same did other people willing to interact with me. After all, in northern Norway, people will always have something to say about the weather. Small talks, as they are called, hiding major concerns. At the time, I did not expect that some of the most interesting conversations I had with my interlocutors started from casual chats on the weather. On a car drive from Olmmáivággi to Tromsø, three young Sámi (two of them are from the Norwegian Side of Sápmi while the third is from Aannaar/Inari in Finland) started a discussion in English on the consequences of milder winters on reindeer tending. The chat, brought up by the sight of a reindeer fence close to the road, revolved around how the change in the snow cycles prevents reindeers from accessing the lichen beneath the ice⁵⁵⁴. This car drive took place ten

⁵⁵² The militarization of the Arctic regions of Fennoscandinavia and the Kola Peninsula are rooted in centuries-long competitions for arctic resources at the hands of the Nordic Nation States and at the expenses of the indigenous Sámi populations. The encroachment of the Nation States slowly but steadily eroded the Sámi control over Sápmi. The militarization of the Arctic reached its acme during WWII (1940-1945) and this state of militarization lasted throughout the Cold War (from the 1950s until the 1990s), with profound and significant negative repercussions on Sámi peoples but also, on the local natural environment.

⁵⁵³ This is an attitude originating in classical antiquity, which that was perpetuated through the centuries and still persists as articles on newspapers and magazines demonstrate. See for instance Gibson's 2016 article for bbc "Why do they love electric cars in the Arctic Circle?", in which the journalist defines Tromsø as 'remote' (Gibson C. 2016).

⁵⁵⁴ At the time, i could not foresee the effects that conversation had on both my research and my personal life. That moments, while we were driving along the Báhcavuotna/Balsfjorden was a true epiphany. The sudden awareness that

days after I first set foot in Tromsø, on the way back from Riddu Riđđu festival. While at the festival, I met up with a friend from Finnmark, a reindeer tender who, by then, was a young man in his late twenties. We spent our time around the bonfire, eating, drinking and chatting with his friends and relatives. Among the various conversations we had, we often ended up discussing climate change and its already tangible effects on their work with reindeers. According to them, things have already changed since they were children and even more so since their parents and grandparents were young. In their views, given the current trends, conditions are not likely to improve. While attending other festivals later that summer and during the next summer season, I realized that this topic and its wide ramifications are part of daily debates in Sápmi and are addressed through a wide range of means. Different institutions organize seminars, workshops and lectures revolving around the arctic environment, the effects of climate change and its impact on arctic environment and societies.

Already during the first week of my first fieldwork period, I realized how deeply climate change is affecting the lives of those dwelling in the Arctic. Through casual conversations concerning the weather, my interlocutors and I touched upon a broad spectrum of topics and discussed about the short and long term consequences of climate change for the local biota. These conversations, and the people's willingness to talk about the various consequences climate change is having on the arctic, informed me on how relevant this topic and, on a broader level, environment are to my interlocutors. During summer 2018, I attended not only Riddu Riđđu but also Márkomeannu and Isogaisa festivals. At all these festivals, in a way or another, climate change was addressed. At Isogaisa, a festival that for at least a decade had been the centre of contemporary Sámi shamanism⁵⁵⁵, fears concerning the consequences of climate change permeated discussions, ceremonies and debates among festivalgoers. As demonstrated in chapter 7, at Márkomeannu 2018 concerns over anthropogenic climate change were at the core of the festival plot and permeated the theme running through the event.

During the Isoagaisa 2018 edition, Nature/Mother Earth and its elements were regarded as agents and considered sacred and in need of protection. During the last decades of the 20th century, Mother Earth has become a key symbol in discourses concerning and pertaining to Indigenous spiritualities. According to Kraft (2009) and Fønnealand (2017), the concept of Mother Earth has emerged in the

climate change is «[...] here and now and it is tangible, and I can only imagine what it means for them and for us all» (fieldnotes) paved the way for a pervasive, growing fear that slowly sunk into me. It was a wake-up call and a spiral of depression which, in retrospective, started exactly then and there but that would have stayed with me until now. The concerns that arose during that seemingly innocuous conversation came back again and again to me throughout my fieldworks, as epitomized by the Márkomeannu2118 festival concept, setting the cornerstone of my research.

⁵⁵⁵ I consciously use the term shaman as distinct from the North Sámi term *noaide* (the indigenous Sámi ritual specialist) as it reflects the terminology employed by my interlocutors. I henceforth acknowledge the importance such term and the fact that the words shaman and *noaide* are not to be treated as synonyms, even though, on some occasions, I heard the term *noide* being used during Isogaisa festival to refer to the main practitioners of contemporary Sámi shamanism.

1970s in the New Age circles and, since then, it has been accepted in popular discourses and in international fora like the UN. Indigenous people are often described and understood in common understanding as having a close and spiritual relation to Nature. This relation is supposedly based on holistic worldviews and ancient traditions whose origins are lost in the dawn of time. Indigenous people have been framed as “her children” and have appropriated this symbol. The premises of this positive association between indigeneity and Nature lie in the reversal of the primitivism paradigm (Mathisen 2005). This association perpetuates the exoticization of indigenous people by juxtaposing their way of life to the one of western cultures. Moreover, the importance of the relationship with nature in defining indigenous identity may foster a sense of alienation among the growing number of indigenous peoples who today reside in major cities or small town⁵⁵⁶ (Valkonen & Valkonen 2014).

8.1.1 A Cry for Help

During the 2018 shamanic Sámi festival Isogaisa⁵⁵⁷, Nature/Mother Earth was a central element of the ceremonial structure of the event. Nature/Mother Earth was connoted as inherently positive but it was also pointed out that natural elements could be dangerous. The menaces posed by Nature were extremely close to the festival, both symbolically and physically. During the summer of 2018, an ‘unusual’ wave of hot temperatures, in conjunction with other circumstances, caused massive fires not only in the South of the country but also in regions of northern Sweden where Sámi families are engaged in reindeer herding. During the festival, this natural disaster has been evoked on multiple occasions. Fire was hence acknowledged as being potentially dangerous. Nevertheless, at Isogaisa, it was also considered as a positive natural element. Fire was the physical and symbolic centre of the festival: the sacred fire was lit at the centre of the Oktagon⁵⁵⁸, the festival’s main structure, during the opening ceremony and was to be kept lit throughout the event.

On the first night of the 2018 Isogaisa festival edition, during the opening ceremony marking the official beginning of the event, four shamans performed an invocation to the four natural elements of the medicine wheel (fire, water, air and earth). When it was her turn, Erena prayed Water, while facing south. Erena, a Maori woman living in Sweden, was the shaman in charge of all water ceremonies since, in her daily life, she who works with water on a spiritual level. While performing her part of the ceremony, Erena made an open reference to the fires then raging in Sweden. She further

⁵⁵⁶ As attested by a considerable body of academic literature (see Pedersen and Nyseth 2013; Hudson et al. 2019; Melhus et al 2020) a growing number of indigenous Sámi people live in urban contexts. In Sápmi, many are the Sámi who live in Tromsø. Outside of Sápmi, Sámi people took up residence in all major Nordic urban/university centres (Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo but also Bergen, Uppsala, Tampere, Turku).

⁵⁵⁷ See chapter 6, paragraph 6.

⁵⁵⁸ The Oktagon is the semi-permanent structure where the main gatherings of the Isogaisa festival take place. It is constituted by four massive *lavvos* (Sámi tents) connected by a further, rectangular tent. At the centre of the whole structure stands the sacred fire, lit on the opening ceremony and extinguished on the closing ceremony.

said that « Earth is burning. It's a circle. Earth does not have enough water», her voice filling and resonating in the Oktagon. She then invoked Water to bring relief to the Earth. It was then added that the fires were a consequence of human actions. The overexploitation of Mother Earth had led to these catastrophes. The destruction caused by the fires in Northern Europe was acknowledged as a direct consequence of human actions over the environment. The great fires in Sweden had been explained as a cry for help from Mother Earth, suffering at the hands of humans. The water invocation, which was already part of the festival schedule, was bestowed with new meanings and was being performed to evoke rain and bring relief when and where needed.

With regards to the fire being a cry for help from mother Earth, I have recorded a similar approach to natural disasters on a social media group page, a Facebook group that works as a virtual meeting place for people interested in contemporary Sámi shamanism. Many of those who attended Isogaisa were active on this platform. In May 2019, a member shared a post on the fires raging in Siberia. The fire was regarded as the reaction of the spirits to the way people relate to nature and living beings. Nature was described as alive and, more specifically, the nature around Lake Baikal (burnt and destroyed by the fire) was regarded as sacred. The post received numerous likes and comments and it can hence be inferred that many other page-users share the same interpretation of the phenomenon. In these cases, the forces of fire – understood as an expression of the power of natural elements – are accounted for their destructing effects but are also understood as either a cry for help or an expression of the sufferance endured by Nature at the hands of the humans.

It is not only among people who practice shamanism that Nature and its expressions are personified and regarded as a living – and suffering – being. The planned mining of a mountain in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord has recently brought back to the public debate the impact of industrialization and pollution on local communities and the environment. During February 2019, local environmental organizations coordinated demonstrations throughout Norway's major cities to protest against the copper mine and against the dump up to two million tons of waste into the fjord, annually for fifteen years. The effects of such waste-disposal on the local population, flora and fauna would be devastating. According to local activists, the waste from the mine would “kill the Fjord”⁵⁵⁹. This expression is reminiscent of the concept of “deep ecology” developed by the Norwegian philosopher Naess⁵⁶⁰ (Little 2009), and constructing nature, in this case the Riehpovuotna /Repparfjord, as living being (fieldnotes, Tromsø, spring 2019).

⁵⁵⁹ This evocative sentence – accompanied by similarly expressive drawings - was written on many of the protesters' banners.

⁵⁶⁰ Naess was deeply touched by the Alta case and he fought against the damming of the river. This experience led him to develop his philosophical movement known as “ecosophy” or “deep ecology”

Not only fire but also other natural elements can manifest themselves as potentially dangerous. Ancient Sámi culture developed in the subarctic and arctic environment and Sámi people's culture was (and still is) deeply dependent upon and adapted to the different seasons and their aftermaths. In Sápmi's northern regions, 300-400 km north of the polar circle, snow is an important element in daily life for up to 8 months, from October to May. Snow can be good (allowing plants and animals to survive the cold winter by covering them and "letting them rest", and enabling humans to move fast over long distances in a short time) but it can also be dangerous. One night, in 2019 at Isogaisa, when the guests were gathered around the fire, R. Kvernmo, the festival leader provided an example of how dangerous snow can be. He did so by resorting to storytelling and to elements of Sámi non-Christian worldviews. Kvernmo shared what happened to some of his relatives while tending their reindeers on their journey westwards from the inner Scandinavian regions of Sweden towards the sea. The group of tenders had almost arrived on the Norwegian coast when, according to Kvernmo, the older of the tenders saw a woman, down in the valley. She made a sign that, among reindeer herders, means "to stop". At a second glance, the "old lady" was gone and no one else had managed to see here. The man allegedly decided to follow her advice, stopping the snowmobiles, and telling everyone to set up a camp for the night, despite his relatives' protests. To them stopping there seemed unwise: they were so close to their destination that they could already smell the salty wind from the ocean. A bit later, an avalanche engulfed the valley ahead of them. The snow would have killed the tenders and their reindeers hadn't they been alerted by the old lady. When questioned about the woman's identity, the old man told his fellow tenders « she was a *noaidigazzi*, a shaman helper. She is a warning » (Ronald Kvernmo's speech, August 2018). According to the festival leader, the event caused commotion in the group of reindeer tenders since they were all aware of having being few meters away from certain death. When the others asked why the spirit had warned them, the old reindeer tender replied that there was nothing to ask about it. They could only respect and thank the old lady. Kvernmo then added that, «Even if we have sophisticated technologies, they [the spirits] are still there and helping us». He implicitly stated that, despite the scientific progresses we witnessed in the last century, we cannot control Nature and we still need the help of the ancient creatures who inhabit it. With these last remarks, Kvernmo reaffirmed the importance of Sámi indigenous knowledge, which cannot be completely replaced by modern technology since it takes into account not only humans and animals but also creatures that belong to neither of these categories. The two are complementary rather than conflicting.

During the festival, a Russian Sámi lady from the Russian side of Sápmi, held in high regards as a shaman by members of the community, explained that the Sámi (in her case, those inhabiting the areas falling within today Russian borders) have managed to survive thanks to the strength derived

from nature. On a broader level, she explained how both ethnographic and historical data show that the Sámi population has been small but stable throughout the centuries. Quoting the words of another guest (a Sámi lady who was nearly 100 old), she said:

everything changes, times go by and so [our] culture is not stable as it was before. And that's because of the industries and companies opening branches in the Sámi territories and the development of new technologies [which affect and change people's lives]. But, despite all these changes and challenges, Nature remains. Nature that helps [them] to live.

The old lady then moved on to express her concerns over those people who have to migrate, especially indigenous peoples who have to leave their ancestral lands to find better living conditions. In the Sámi case, she made reference to fact that:

[...] the Sámi who have to go away from home, moving on new fishing areas or looking for better grazing lands for their reindeers. Another challenge Sámi have to face today, in her view, is the fight to save [their] languages and their cultures. Isogaisa then constitutes one possibility that helps them to learn that the culture of Northern indigenous peoples is coming from the Nature, from what [they] get from nature.

These remark show that, in this lady's view, Sámi peoples share concerns and difficulties with other indigenous groups throughout the world. Referring to a pan-indigenous narrative, and by acknowledging the challenges Sámi people face as shared with other indigenous peoples, she assesses the Sámi right to be acknowledged as indigenous. This is a status that, for a long time, the Nordic nation States denied them and that it is still questioned by many non-ethnic Sámi throughout Fennoscandinavia, as I had witnessed myself.

8.1.2 The Nature of relations

Closeness to Nature is a key symbol in (neo)-Shamanic milieus. The Sámi (neo)shamanic conceptualization of nature differs greatly from the ancient Sámi people's understanding of the environment(s) they lived in. Nevertheless, many Sámi shamans and shaman practitioners stress the strong link between ancient Sámi ways of life and nature, and consider their powers as coming from nature itself. Ancient deities, such as Tiermes (the thunder God), which are associated to natural elements are believed to reflect that ancient close relationship. Nature is extremely important in Sámi (neo)shamanic discourses since it is considered an essential element of Sámi spirituality. Kraft (2015) has outlined how Nature has become a proof of historical continuity as well as of a timeless essence in Sámi identity. Both Nature and identity are indeed central elements of Sámi (neo)shamanism. According to Sámi (neo)shamanic understanding of Nature, Nature is not passive nor subordinate to humanity. In the contemporary neo-shamanic milieu, mostly developed in urban contexts (Fonneland

2017), nature has become an abstract entity: it is regarded as a living being, it is removed from the everyday life and longed for since many of the shaman practitioners live and work in urban environments.

Not only Nature is a crucial element in contemporary Sámi shamanism but, in its various manifestations, it was also an integral part of the “non-Christian” (Kaikkonen 2018) cosmology, where it was not perceived as separate from culture. This western dichotomous approach was not part of Sámi understanding of the world and the very concept of Nature is, as Escobar (1999) has demonstrated, a modern and constructed category. Even if the cultural and religious context has changed, Nature is still relevant in contemporary Sámi cultures. Closeness to Nature is often presented in public discourses as innate to the Sámi and not as an attitude developed through the centuries. This understanding of Sámi Nature relation characterizes current discourses and narratives both within and outside shamanic circles⁵⁶¹. The idea that Sámi Peoples and Nature are inextricably tied to each other is part of a widespread notion according to which indigenous peoples supposedly have a special relationship with Nature. This narrative is today widely accepted among indigenous peoples and in modern environmentalist discourses (Valokonen & Valkonen 2014). Even if today the idea of Sámi as Nature peoples is often viewed positively, it constitutes a dangerous commonplace, which draws on a reversed primitivist paradigm as well as on the myth of an innate ecological wisdom of Indigenous people. If accepted uncritically, these assumptions may perpetuate a paternalistic attitude toward the Sámi, fostering stereotypes (Mathisen 2004).

From a diachronic perspective, in Sámi contexts the individual and collective relationship with nature referred – and still refers – to the local environment rather than an abstract entity. It is a specific mountain, river or pond that people engage with, tell stories about or recognize as a historical site through stories and lived experiences. This special bond and the importance of nature in Sámi cultures derives from the fact that, for centuries, Sámi ways of life and survival were based on a profound understanding of the local environment (Valkoinen & Valkoinen 2014). The Sámi had a deep knowledge of the surrounding environment, had adapted and shaped their lifestyle and highly developed specific skills to survive in those regions. Helander shows that the Sámi relationship with nature «[...]is practical knowledge that is created when perspective and experience encounter local circumstances in practice [...]» and that is transmitted to future generations through storytelling and first-hand experience (Helander, 2000 in Valkonen & Valkonen 2014:31). The close relation with nature is often believed to have been among the factors that enabled the culture to survive suppression, persecution and assimilation. For instance, in the case of the Márka, locals consider the mountains

⁵⁶¹ Cfr Olsen T.A. 2014 for further details concerning the conceptualization of Nature in Sámi Christian contexts.

surrounding the Sámi settlements as a protective element that kept the Norwegian living along the coast at bay (cfr chapter 3 section 10.29). Marja (2018 private conversation), a young Sámi girl who grew up in Finnmark, provided me with an example of a similar understanding of Nature: she ascribes the survival of North Sámi language in Finnmark to the importance language had in managing reindeer tending. People who were involved in reindeer tending could not use Norwegian, Swedish or Russian to describe their environment and their activity with the level of accuracy they needed and that North Sámi could provide. Some concepts, some tasks could be better and more efficaciously conveyed in Sámi and this had allowed, in her view, Sámi languages to be preserved among reindeer tenders more than in other Sámi communities⁵⁶². Similarly, according to a Sámi lady from the Russian side of Sápmi who attended Isogaisa 2018, her close relation to Nature guaranteed her very survival. While at the festival, during a storytelling session, she recounted that, when she was young, her family was too poor to move to a city. Despite their poverty, they had what was necessary to survive: Nature had provided them with all they needed such as food (berries, mushrooms, small game) wood, raw materials to make clothes and tools. Her mother had also taught her how to relate to Nature. A teaching she shared with us: «Never take more than needed, respect it and never spoil it».

Nature, in its multiple aspects and manifestations, has for a long time been a repository of meanings and identity in Sámi societies, even though such meanings have changed through time. Not only it is central to Sámi Neo-Shamanism but, as Olsen (2012) has highlighted, Nature has become a marker of identity in contemporary Sámi Christian contexts. On a more general level, Nature is a key symbol in Sámi self-representation (Valkonen and Valkonen 2014). Today Nature and the environment are central elements in Sámi cultures, ethno-policy, religious and symbolic landscapes (Olsen 2012; Mathisen 2004).

The examples I provided above, extracted from private conversations and from speeches at Isogaisa, show that Nature is perceived as endangered and danger come from human actions. Climate change poses serious threats to the fragile arctic and subarctic environment and biota. Its effects are so dramatic that people living in the North have already perceived changes (for instance in snow and ice conditions, temperatures) between the present and the recent past. Nature is characterized by an intrinsic ambivalence as it is seen as powerful, worth of respect and kind but also as potentially dangerous in its manifestations (e.g.: fire and snow). Practitioners at Isogaisa addressed these issues through storytelling, ceremonies, pilgrimages and roundtables. Even if dramatic ecological changes constitute today a sensitive topic of debate in Sámi communities, at Isogaisa they were framed

⁵⁶² Laur Vallikivi, associate Professor of Ethnology at the University of Tartu who specialised on religious conversion of Arctic reindeer-herders in Russia with a focus on Nenet communities, holds a similar view and develops this topic in his 2013 article “les rennes maintiennent la langue nénése en vie”

through Sámi indigenous worldviews along with elements derived from Naess' deep ecology, principles ascribable to Harner's contemporary shamanism, and UN performative discourses on indigenous people and their supposedly close relations with Nature⁵⁶³. Nature has become embodied in the concept of Mother Earth, often associated to and identified with the non-Christian Sámi goddess Máttaráhkká. In particular, the establishment of the symbolic kinship with Earth considered as the ultimate mother – a concept absent in ancient Sámi worldview – is today incorporated into Sámi shamanic narratives and rituals, as well as during the ceremonies at Isogaisa festival.

Even if I only mentioned them here, concerns over climate change encompass all sectors of Sámi societies and are part of wider debates that touch upon a wide range of issues. As the following paragraphs will show, the consequences of climate change are bringing a new dimension to the resource exploitation of the Arctic, a centuries-long practice. The Arctic, long relegated to the symbolic periphery of the world, is becoming more and more central in the international arena, with dire consequences for the local communities.

8.2 Old horizons, new colonial aspirations

When addressing Sámi societies and the challenges they face today, it is important to bear in mind the (sub-)Arctic geopolitical context of which Sápmi is part. When examining Sápmi within the wider global arctic context, it is apparent that Sámi People will have to face unprecedented challenges because of anthropogenic climate change and the responses that its consequences will trigger. In spite of its exceptional geographic position, and in contempt of centuries of cultural marginalization, the Arctic today is neither remote nor removed from the wider international context. Studies from a vast array of disciplines demonstrate quite the contrary. Nevertheless, the current narrative concerning the Arctic depicts it as a faraway land ready to be discovered and exploited.

In this section, I shall investigate the short- and medium-term consequences of Climate Change in the European Subarctic and Arctic regions in relation to resource exploitation. I shall also address the repercussion such consequences are already having on Sámi cultures. I am aware that this topic is vast and complex and that I will not be able to provide an exhaustive account of the multifaceted phenomena connected with the current climate crisis in the (sub-)Arctic. Conversely, I am also aware that these reflections are relevant to this dissertation in that they are fundamental for the understanding

⁵⁶³ «It must be understood that, for indigenous populations, land does not represent simply a possession or means of production. [...] It is also essential to understand the special and profoundly spiritual relationship of indigenous peoples with Mother Earth as basic to their existence and to all their beliefs, customs, traditions and culture». U.N. sub-commission on prevention of discrimination & protection of minorities, study of the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations 39, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4, U.N. Sales No. E.86.XIV.3 (1986) (Jose R. Martinez Cobo, special rapporteur in Anaya, J. (2005).

of contemporary Sámi cultures: Climate Change affects Sámi peoples directly as well as indirectly and the concerns revolving around its effects permeate every aspect of contemporary and future Sámi societies. The matter is so pertinent that not only was it a frequent topic of discussion between my interlocutors and me – as emerged during interviews and informal conversation – but it is also one of the emerging fields of enquiry in studies concerning both Sámi Peoples and Nordic contexts. The presence of Italian stakeholders⁵⁶⁴ engaged in the ‘race for the Arctic’ represented a further factor influencing my decision to include a reflection over this topic in my thesis. Additionally, the climate crisis that Climate Change is fostering has emerged as one of the most important backdrops of the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu, an event that constituted the starting point of my research journey and influenced the choice of topics I covered in this dissertation. For the abovementioned reasons I have considered it necessary to address, albeit briefly, the impact of Climate Change on the Arctic and consequently on Sámi societies. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that what happens in the Arctic has consequences throughout the world, demonstrating the long-overlooked centrality of the Arctic from both geopolitical and environmental – and, I shall add, cultural – perspectives.

Analysis of discourses concerning the effects of Climate Change on the Subarctic and Arctic environments shows the existence and persistence of a colonial narrative based on a particular rhetoric employing a specific framework based on two interdependent cornerstones: resources and security. These two elements are also the most important features of contemporary policies implemented in the Arctic by sovereign Nation states and international bodies (such as the UN). A further element that emerges as crucial in current and future policies concerning the region is the symbolic construction of the Arctic as a ‘frontier’ – often described as a new one – by major international companies and stakeholders (Bennet 2016). This is a narrative reminiscent of the early modern and modern arctic expeditions’ rhetoric. Such a discourse permeated explorations that, since the 16th century, have fuelled the imagination of many, intrigued by the possibility of the existence of a Northeast Passage. Polar explorers from all of Europe and, later, North America, ventured Northward, among them many Italians such as the famous Umberto Nobile.

In this section I shall provide an analysis of two speeches that represent a vantage point from which to address colonial attitudes towards the Arctic: Icelandic President Olafur Grimsson’s 2016 Arctic Circle Forum opening speech and Mike Pompeo’s official speech as USA Secretary of State at the 2019 Arctic Council meeting held in Rovaniemi. Both politicians structured their talks around similar core elements, conveying a precise image and fostering a specific imaginary of the Arctic. These

⁵⁶⁴ At 2016, Italian energy company ENI was in the process of establishing the world’s northernmost offshore oil field, situated in Norway’s Barent Sea. Commenting on this project, ENI defined the as a ‘new frontier’ Bennett (2016).

speeches are of particular importance given the public arenas in which they were delivered and, hence, the wide public they could potentially reach.

8.2.1 A “new Africa” is emerging from the waters: the Arctic as an international arena

At the opening of the 2016 Arctic Forum, held in Singapore⁵⁶⁵, Icelandic President Ólafur Grímsson⁵⁶⁶ stated: «Until 20 or so years ago, [the Arctic] was completely unknown and unmarked territory, It is as if Africa suddenly appeared on our radar screen».

Even if Grímsson’s remark referred to the size of the areas that the melting ice would make available for humans to exploit them, the analogy Grímsson draws between the Arctic and Africa epitomizes the colonial character of some of the current understandings of the Arctic. Grímsson further noted that:

For investors, there is an opportunity here to take advantage of the impact of climate change [...] We need for this part of the planet a coordinated global effort of where the necessary infrastructure is going to be built and executed. That must be done not in a race of one economic player against another, but in a joint cooperative effort and in a comprehensive way. We can’t in fact have harbours everywhere in the Arctic. We cannot have crucial airports everywhere in the Arctic

Even if he emphasized that the development of the Arctic should combine economic development with environment protection, the latter is secondary – and subordinate – to resource exploitation. Nevertheless, aware of the international players’ different positions on the Arctic⁵⁶⁷, he calls for international cooperation rather than a frantic grabbing of arctic lands and their resources. In his speech, Pompeo also briefly acknowledged the presence of peoples indigenous to this part of the world. Nevertheless, they are not called in as active participants in this new development of the North. Rather are they simultaneously absent as active stakeholders and present as passive elements:

Financial interests but also great environmental responsibility, and have to be respectful of the interests of the culture and the lifestyle of the people who have made the arctic their home.

⁵⁶⁵ As Storey highlights, Singapore has interests in the changing Arctic and, for this reason, it applied for the position of ‘observer’ for the Arctic Circle Assembly. The application was successful despite Russian and Canadian reservations (Storey 2016).

⁵⁶⁶ Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson Singapore Forum Opening speech, 30 December 2019, access on 4/9/20 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9pG4bzN0aE>

⁵⁶⁷ For instance, China is not considered an Arctic Power since it does not meet the set requirements (for example having territories falling within the border of the Arctic) to be regarded as such. Nevertheless, the Chinese presence in the arctic is growing (through research bases and trading routes) and its interests exert an increasingly relevant influence over international policy. Such influence is bound to increase with the melting of the Northern Calotte since, under those circumstances, China would have access to the “Arctic route” even without a port on the shores of the northern seas.

Because, it has been their home, long, long, long before the United States of America, the Federation of Russia, the United Kingdom even appeared on the pages of history. These are people who had the Arctic as their territory. They know it, better than any of us, and we have to be respectful that that is their home, is their territory. [It] has been like that perhaps for millions of years, thousands of years, definitely. And now the world has appeared in their backyard. Now the world has come to their home. And we, all of us who are here today, have to remember that is not our Arctic in the way that governments or other authorities tend to present it. It is in a sense their Arctic but also a global Arctic because what happens there will affect citizens, poor and rich, everywhere in the world.

Conjuring both paternalistic and colonial memories, Grimsson's speech exemplifies some of the attitudes that characterize contemporary arctic policies. The declamation of resources hidden beneath the arctic ice evokes narratives of an exciting, albeit challenging, race for resources that echoes past colonial campaigns. Furthermore, Grimsson's comparison describes the Arctic through a colonial lens by suggesting that the region is empty and ready to be exploited by foreign States and corporations. Without openly acknowledging them as native to the Arctic, Grimsson acknowledges indigenous arctic peoples' presence in these lands from time immemorial. He also recognises their deep knowledge of the arctic environments. Reading through the lines, it is apparent he considers the Arctic as not belong exclusively to them. Employing a paternalistic approach reminiscent of the 'white man's burden' rhetoric, he urges stakeholders to protect the Arctic while developing it because the consequences of the events taking place in the Arctic reverberate across the globe, in both positive (economic) and negative (environmental) ways.

USA Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has employed similar narratives and shares analogous views with the Icelandic Prime Minister. In 2019, Pompeo described the Arctic as a new land of opportunities (Pompeo 2019)⁵⁶⁸ during a speech he delivered to the Arctic Council in the Finnish city of Rovaniemi. Mentioning the USA's purchase of Alaska's territories in 1857 from the Russian Empire, Pompeo reaffirms the role of the USA as an Arctic power:

This is our time to appreciate it [the Arctic] like never before. This is America's moment to stand up as an Arctic nation and for the Arctic's future

He then continues by enunciating the wealth of the Arctic:

Because far from the barren backcountry that many thought it to be in Seward's time⁵⁶⁹, the Arctic is at the forefront of opportunity and abundance. It houses 13 percent of the world's

⁵⁶⁸ Pompeo; M. 2019. Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus. Speech. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/looking-north-sharpening-americas-arctic-focus/>

⁵⁶⁹ Seward was the USA Secretary of State who signed the deal with the Russian Empire in 1857.

undiscovered oil, 30 percent of its undiscovered gas, and an abundance of uranium, rare earth minerals, gold, diamonds, and millions of square miles of untapped resources. Fisheries galore. And its centrepiece, the Arctic Ocean, is rapidly taking on new strategic significance. Offshore resources, which are helping the respective coastal states, are the subject of renewed competition. Steady reductions in sea ice are opening new passageways and new opportunities for trade.

Pompeo's speech encompasses all the elements that constitute the 'new' narrative of the Arctic and resonates with Grimsson's words: the abundance of resources and strategic significance of these areas are central not only for the USA future, but for the world at large. As Arcanjo (2019) highlights, Pompeo's speech constituted a turning point in the Arctic narrative since, for the first time, a US State representative openly addressed the Arctic as a site of geopolitical interest because of its resources. In both Grimsson's and Pompeo's talks, Climate Change is described as an opportunity for accessing an insofar – to them – “marginal” and “unprofitable” area of the globe: the Arctic.

Further analysis though brings to light the fact that the European Arctic had long been as central to European policy and economy, as the Russian and the American arctic regions had been to their respective continents. The economic interweaving between different areas of the World and the Arctic bear witness to the connections between indigenous arctic and other peoples. With regard to this aspect, the most interesting of Grimsson's statements concerns the perpetuation of the stereotype of indigenous arctic peoples as isolated from the rest of the world. By stating that « [...] now the world has appeared in their backyard. Now the world has come to their home», Grimsson erased hundreds if not thousands of years of contacts, relations, migration flows and trade that connected arctic peoples with other groups and societies. Furthermore, contradicting his own previous statements, he denied the history of colonialism endured by indigenous arctic peoples and failed to remember that Southern explorers, tax collectors and Nation States-led organizations had long since come to indigenous Arctic homes, often with dreadful consequences for local communities.

By referring to 'pages of history', Grimsson implicitly omitted oral histories, thereby denying their authority. Given the fact that until a little more than a century ago Indigenous histories were mainly transmitted orally, Grimsson automatically disregarded their value. Despite commonplaces collocating the Arctic at the fringes of the 'known' World, depicting it as isolated and cut off from the wider European social fabrics, the European sub-Arctic and Arctic regions have never been isolated from the rest of the continent. Even before the Middle Ages, arctic goods such as furs and ivory were bartered and exchanged throughout Europe and beyond. As Ohthere's 9th century CE

account demonstrates⁵⁷⁰, these lands had long been part of intercontinental trade routes. The control over these areas hence meant control over the wealth of their resources. Moreover, the physical location of these lands has made them strategical regions in the international arena. Throughout the centuries, the desire to exert control over these areas led to the establishment of highly disputed borders. For these reasons, since the 17th century, geopolitics has had an increasing impact on the daily life and the social structures of Sámi peoples as well as on that of other peoples inhabiting the area. The emergence of Nordic Nation-States shaped the political geography of Sápmi by fragmenting it through the institution of borders and the imposition upon the Sámi of National citizenship as superior to their ethnic affiliation (Lantto 2010). Centuries-long disputes over the right to Sámi lands were motivated by the desire to control local resources and trade routes, and for a long time the northern borders within Sápmi were highly contested. The strategic centrality of the Arctic lands had already emerged in the 16th century, when the Russian Empire and the Danish Kingdom competed for ascendancy over northern Fennoscandinavia. The strategic relevance of these regions, economically and politically wise, partly motivated Hitler's invasion of Norway in April 1940⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Ohthere was a Norse chief, landowner and bailiff who lived in Halgoland, in today's Norwegian county of Troms-Finnmark. He probably resided near today's Tromsø. He visited King Alfred of Wessex (871–99) around 890 CE. He gave the King an account of his travels and stated that no Norwegian lived further north than he did (*eaþra Norðmonna norþmest bude*). At Alfred's court, his account was written down and included in King Alfred's English translation-adaptation of Orosius's 5th-century 'Seven Books of History Against the Pagans' (Allport 2020). Ohthere described himself as wealthy and powerful. Among his possessions were 600 reindeer and 6 more for personal use. According to cultural anthropologist Ivar Bjørklund (2013), this specific reference has for a long time been misread. In the literature, this passage is often taken as proof of reindeer tending (pastoralism, in Bjørklund's words). Quoting Bately, Bjørklund considers the 6 reindeer not to be decoys but «tame male animals» «kept at the homestead, not allowed to roam free» (Bately in Bjørklund 2013) that were used for transportation. The 600 reindeer Ohthere claimed to own, according to Bjørklund, who relies on previous works by scholars such as Bratrein, were probably roaming free on an island close to where Ohthere lived and were used as food supply or for trade purposes.

Besides the reindeer he owned, Ohthere had around twenty horned cattle, twenty sheep, twenty pigs. The land he owned was poor and he used horses to plough it instead of other animals. This description did not fit with the Anglo-Saxon understanding of wealth so Ohthere had to explain that his main wealth consisted of revenues from taxes paid to him by Sámi people (*Finnas* in the account) in the form of furs and other goods. The Sámi paid him with marten, reindeer, otter, whale, seal, and bear skins as well as whale-bones, walrus teeth and ropes made of skin (Meriot 1986; Storly 1986). The importance of Ohthere's description of his wealth to King Alfred is manifold. It contains one of the earliest-known written accounts of prolonged contacts between Sámi and Norse people and of the goods Sámi peoples paid as tribute (*finneskatt*) to the Norsemen. Furthermore, for a long time it was deemed relevant in the study of Sámi history for its ethnographic information about the 9th-century North Sámi way of living. Ohthere's description of his household in Halgaland seems to provide us with a detailed account of the local economy as well as of the relationship between local Norse groups and Sámi communities in the northernmost parts of Norway. Ohthere's description of Sámi society focuses mostly on different aspects of their economy, omitting other important aspects of their society such as their worldviews and social customs. Such an attitude not only reflects the relationship between Ohthere himself and the Sámi communities he was in contact with but is also embedded in classical narrative paradigms concerning Sámi peoples (cf. Tacitus's *Germania*). Nevertheless, Allport (2020) has recently problematized Ohthere's account, showing that his descriptions of Sámi ways of living are closer to standard 9th-century ethnographic paradigms of Sámi people than to an objective description of the 9th-century Sámi economy as we now understand it thanks to archaeological remains. It is interesting to notice that Ohthere's account provides the first written testimony of the term *norðweg* (Norway).

⁵⁷¹ Besides the economic and strategic importance of Norway, Hitler's expansionist policy in Fennoscandinavia had also deep cultural implications given the fact that Nazi ideology regarded Norwegians as the purest of all Aryans. Through programs such as the *lebensborn* houses (of which 9 out of 24 facilities built outside of Germany were established in Norway), Nazi hierarchs planned to increase the birth rate of the supposedly Aryan population. On the long term, Nazi establishment planned to include Norway in the Third Reich not as a conquered county but as an integral part of the Germanic

(Stratigakos 2020). Similarly, from the 1960s to the late 1980s the Arctic was one of the arenas of the Cold War.

As past Sámi generations had to deal to and come to terms with southern states partitioning their lands, mining them, and using them as military outposts during wars, future generations will have to come to terms with the consequences of today policies concerning both local and global resource management. The Arctic territories are currently undergoing profound morphological changes as a result of anthropogenic climate change. At the same time, this vast region is under intense, albeit underreported, competition for dominance as it has become the physical and symbolic ‘front’ in the expanding global ‘battle’ for resources and security among the Arctic powers⁵⁷². The two phenomena are interconnected, the latter being a consequence of the former.

The frontier concept⁵⁷³ in relation to the Northern regions of the world, reminiscent of literary *topoi* permeating European intellectual understanding of ‘The North’ from Classical Antiquity onwards, was particularly popular in early 20th-century arctic explorations but has now acquired darker tones in light of incumbent climate catastrophes. The application of the concept of frontier to the global Arctic and Subarctic relies on a specific set of notions that portray these regions as unknown and unrestricted *terrae nullius*. The understanding of these lands as ‘nobody’s lands’ resonates with past colonial practices and mind-sets deeply rooted in the denial of complexity of the local indigenous cultures. Even though no human communities live on the ices the Arctic calotte⁵⁷⁴, the Arctic is more than the ices covering the North Pole and the Sub/Arctic is a complex, culturally diverse region where indigenous communities have for millennia dwelled, developing locally specific ways of living.

Bennet (2016) has examined the implications of the revitalization of Turner’s frontier’s concept in arctic contexts. In her view, the uncritical uses of a concept such as ‘frontier’ hinder reflections upon

nation, rebuilding the country and transforming it into a model Aryan society, as Stratigakos explains in her detailed account of Hitler’s delusional dreams of a Nordic empire (2020).

⁵⁷² The use of war-metaphors to describe the current state of tension in the Arctic is grounded in a specific frame employed in both academic journals and popular literature (cfr: Shea’s 2019 article for National Geographic «Scenes from the new Cold War unfolding at the top of the world; Militaries are scrambling to control the melting Arctic»). The war metaphor triggers a specific imaginary that relies upon notions derived from the time of the Cold War (which saw the Arctic as one of the main sites of action and grounds of negotiation) and echoes ideas about the difficulties connected with access to resources in the Arctic environment.

In the case of the Arctic, though, a tense situation, in highly militarized contexts, may actually escalate into war. Another common metaphor is that of the ‘Arctic race’, often referred to as ‘Arctic resource race’. This expression refers to the competition between global entities for the control over natural arctic resources made available by climate change.

At the same time, since 2013, an annual multiple stage bicycle race, held in northern Norway, bears this highly symbolic name that conveys both the idea of speed and that of gain.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/10/new-cold-war-breeds-as-arctic-ice-melts/>

⁵⁷³ this notion was first applied to the US context in the 19th-century by Turner (Turner 1893 -1928)

⁵⁷⁴ Despite that, these areas are not empty anyway since animals inhabit and depend upon the specific arctic environment, the destruction of which would entail the extinction of many arctic species with domino-like consequences for other ecological niches and, ultimately, on the whole of earth.

«[...] motivations for the concept's deployment [...]» and obscure the political «[...] mechanisms that are transforming the image of the Arctic» (2016:2) with all the consequences that such processes entail. Bennet's analysis shows the twofold consequences of the 'new frontier' rhetoric, both based upon a simplified rendering of the complex and world-scale dynamics at play by reducing the Arctic to a new frontier and by relying on early 20th-century arctic expeditions, adventure spirit becomes embedded in this rhetoric. Similarly, the very notion of 'frontier' conveys the core idea of periphery and consequently, as such is the arctic portrayed. Frontiers are revealed to be as material as they are representational (Barney 2009 in Bennet 2016). Nevertheless, as Bennett reminds us, the Arctic is a "globally networked space of extraction" at the centre of an international trade system. And it has been so for centuries, if not millennia. The current resource exploitation in the Arctic and Subarctic is not a recent phenomenon, even though it is now implemented at an unprecedented scale and pace. It constitutes the zenith of more than five hundred years of polar expeditions and growing arctic and subarctic resources extraction, which, conversely, was built on previously existing trade networks. External market demands have been driving arctic resource development as well as shaping local social and cultural practices for centuries⁵⁷⁵. Even though the current resource exploitation is intrinsically different from earlier practices due to the technologies today available, Bennet stresses that the "underlying forces and attitudes" have not significantly changed. Furthermore, the exploitation of the Arctic bears striking similarities with other extraction spaces marked by predatory exploitation such as Mongolia, Western Australia and the Amazons (Bennet 2016). Bennet's analysis of the terminology employed in discourses concerning the Arctic – but relevant also to other contexts – sheds light on the performativity of "resource frontiers" rhetoric to "continued urban growth". Hence, often-overlooked features such as the intertwinement of 'frontier expansion' and exploitation with urbanization emerge as central, albeit concealed, elements of contemporary economy. Analyses such as that of Bennet contribute to the disentanglement of dynamics hidden deep into the capitalistic chain of production. Furthermore, Bennett's reflections draw attention to another important aspect in the exam of arctic exploitation: the centre-periphery dynamics.

The relevance of this dichotomy to the analysis of sub/arctic resource extraction is considerable since political discourses concerning resources (their exploitation and management) are often framed through the relation and opposition between centre and periphery, where the periphery is expendable in the wider context of national and international politics. The relational character of concepts such

⁵⁷⁵ Scholars today agree that large scale reindeer tending, an economic activity long regarded as the Sámi way of living *par excellence*, has developed relatively recently and its development is partially linked to the growing pressure Sámi peoples faced at the hands of Nation States, whose demand for furs, meat and taxation increased around the 19th century. These changes contributed to shape a new Sámi social system (a new more complex *sáida* system) as well as new relations between humans, reindeer and the environment (Bjørklund 2013).

as centre and periphery intersects the cultural history of Nordic imaginary as well as the history of Sámi peoples as it was written by outsiders. Sámi were not only at the fringes of Norse and later Fennoscandinavian societies, they embodied liminality⁵⁷⁶ ultimately coming to represent it. By stressing the central importance of the supposedly peripheral position of the Arctic, the centre-periphery rhetoric permeating discourses over the Arctic is overturned. Since the end of the Cold War, peace in the Arctic, along with technological development enabling the construction of long-distance infrastructures, have introduced the Arctic more deeply into a sophisticated and entangled global supply chain which is at the base of contemporary global economy.

The impact and implications of Climate Change on a World-scale are difficult to foresee but they are already clear enough to frighten us and instil profound doubts about the future of the sub/Arctic and that of humankind as we know it. The future of the northernmost areas of the world is about to take directions unthinkable only a few decades ago. Furthermore, since Climate Change is not a linear process, it is impossible to predict annual variations and place-specific consequences of phenomena such as desertification and rising sea levels. This unpredictability contributes to a growing sense of uncertainty that translates into increased insecurity at a personal and community level both in the Arctic and elsewhere. It also constitutes the premises of current politics of militarization taking place in the Arctic at the hands of Arctic powers. As Sergunin & Konyshov (2017) note, Climate Change is expected to lead to political destabilization in the whole region and the interests at stake are high. Arctic powers like the Russian Federation, the USA and Arctic European countries (among them Norway) are already studying strategies to reaffirm and secure their position in the region. These international powers⁵⁷⁷ are aware of the centrality of the Arctic and of the potential it holds for future economic development: the Arctic is expected to release resources, opening opportunities for the generation of energy, the building of infrastructures, communications, trade routes and resources (fishing, mining, gas, oil) but at a terrible price. One of the imminent consequences of anthropogenic climate change, which is also a premise to the development of the region as envisioned by the arctic powers, is the melting of the Northern Calotte which will allow a cross-Arctic shipping route. Once cargo ships are to cross the Arctic, this shipping route will be the shortest one between Asian and

⁵⁷⁶ A number of scholarly works has been devoted to the analysis of the centre-periphery theory and a thorough exam of this literature is beyond the scopes of this thesis, but the centre-periphery framework is relevant to the study of the European perception of the North and this model can be fruitfully applied to the analysis of how Sámi cultures were perceived by outsiders. Bennet (2016) indeed highlights that « as edges, peripheries, and liminal spaces, frontiers are typically defined in relation to somewhere else, usually a core, heartland or metropole » and, in the case of Sámi cultures, they have too often been examined in relation to a far political and economic 'centre' situated in the South of Fennoscandinavia or even further south.

⁵⁷⁷ In the scientific literature, the term 'Arctic Eight' is often employed when referring to the eight nations that have both strong interests and territories in the Arctic. Five of these countries are 'coastal states' (USA; Russian Federation; Norway; Denmark; Canada) and three are 'non coastal states' (Finland; Sweden; Iceland). In this context, 'coastal' refers to whether or not the states border on the Arctic Ocean (Boulègue 2019).

European ports, cutting costs and accelerating trade. The commercial potential of this route is massive. Similarly massive are the environmental and social challenges these changes will present. While also making the region fully navigable, this climate disaster will have (and is already having) profound consequences on the sub/arctic fauna and flora. Furthermore, as Abate and Kronk highlight (2013), serious social and economic problems affecting indigenous communities are expected – and are already occurring – as consequence of climate change. This is especially true for arctic and subarctic indigenous peoples (Sergunin & Konyshv 2017) since climate change in the Arctic proceeds at double the velocity of that in more southern region of the world. Hence, climate change experts expect profound consequences in the arctic region and on its geopolitics. The ramifications of such consequences are manifold and are likely to exert deep influence over subarctic communities dwelling in the regions closest to the Arctic, with major impact over those groups who are already enduring marginalization, among them the Sámi. Despite a long and complex history marked by successful strategies for dealing with hexogen stress factors, Sámi peoples are likely to face unprecedented challenges in the years to come, as the Márkomeannu 2018 festival concept envisaged.

8.2.2 Where the North-East passage may start and indigenous rights may end: the arctic railway

As mentioned above, the melting of the northern calotte is expected to make the Arctic navigable in a few decades. Governments and stakeholders are aware that, in order to ship goods across this route, it is necessary to have infrastructures available throughout the shipping chain. Harbours, docks, roads and railroads will be necessary to load, unload, and transport goods on the mainland. These infrastructures will have to be built in nodal points deemed suitable for the purpose. The Finnish and Norwegian government are working on one of such infrastructure: the so-called Arctic Railway connecting the Barents Sea with the rest of Fennoscandinavia. Discussions over this railway have raised the concern of both Sámi institutions and private citizens. Sámi communities fear the massive consequences the implementation of this project would have on the local environment. This railway is ought to connect the port-town of Kirkenes (Sør-Varanger, Finnmark) to Rovaniemi (Finnish Lapland). There is already a functioning railway between this city and Helsinki, the Capital of Finland. Hence, in Finnish discourses, the Arctic Railway is presented as the last link in a chain connecting the whole country. The construction of the 507 km Arctic Railway will not only establish a connection between Kirkenes and Rovaniemi but it will also connect the Barents, Murmansk, Bothnian and Narvik train stations, contributing to the development of the local Nordic infrastructures. The effects of this project though reach way beyond the northernmost parts of Europe. Through the already existing railway network, the construction of the Arctic Railway would also establish a connection between the Arctic and the Mediterranean. This route would constitute a new

Eurasian transport bridge that could widen the current cargo transport links between the Far East and Europe by ideally connecting Beijing and Bruxelles thorough new multimodal transportation possibilities and by circumventing present shipping routes. These developmental plans could have massive consequences on the European economy and its trade system. It is difficult to grasp the magnitude and the ramifications of these projects and how deeply they are intertwined with climate change. As mentioned earlier in this section, the arctic corridor across the northern calotte will be accessible once portions of the North Calotte will have melt. Its implementation is hence a direct consequence of anthropogenic climate chance. The railway proponents claim that this new train connection will possibly help reducing air pollution: by resorting to trains to carry goods, there should be a decrease in road transports and hence in the emissions of CO₂. From this perspective, this project may appear as a positive and ecologically sustainable infrastructure taking advantage of climate change consequences. Nevertheless, this argument obscured the negative impact this infrastructure would have on the local environment and on the human and animal activities that there take place.

Even if supporters of this project highlight the positive effects of railway shipping on CO₂ emission, they fail to address a further element in this complex context. The Arctic Railway as an alternative to existing global routes is meant to transport not only goods imported from the East to Europe but also those extracted in loco. Extraction of natural resources in the northern regions of Finland, Norway, Sweden as well as in the Kola peninsula is an important part of the respective national economies despite the potential biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation caused by extracting industries. Forest logging is particularly relevant in the region (Vihervaara *et al.* 2010), and so are mines that fall within the borders of Finnish Lapland (Suopajärvi 2015) as well as those on the Norwegian, Swedish and Russian side of Sápmi. Because of its geological conformation, Sápmi is rich in minerals and the discovery of precious metals led to a frantic gold rush already in the late 19th century. People from the south of Fennoscandinavia migrated in the lands inhabited by the Sámi in the hope of finding precious minerals, with long-lasting consequences for the local Sámi communities (see for instance Forsell, 2015, on the development of the town of Kiruna). Today both the mining and the forest industries rely heavily on road networks and both these productions would benefit from the construction of a railway. If new mining projects will be implemented in the future, there will be an increase in the production of minerals. Consequently, there will be a rise in the demand for transport. In these regions, often portrayed and treated by central governments as peripheral, the realization of adequate Infrastructures could play a decisive role in the local economic development.⁵⁷⁸. The

⁵⁷⁸ The interests at stake are huge. Not only Nordic mining companies are interested in the hidden resources of Lapland. Canadian, Australian and British firms are working to gain the permission to operate in the area. Furthermore, Chinese state companies are willing to invest in the Arctic railway project, the so called Polar or Arctic silk road. Once the railway

narrative revolving around the positive economic consequences of the railway is counterbalanced by the railways' negative social and environmental implications. The railway not only would enable corporations to extract and export massive amounts of raw materials out of Sápmi⁵⁷⁹ but it would also affect a vulnerable ecosystems as well as the cultures of local Sámi communities. Hence, objections against this planned railway are based on both cultural and environmental concerns since the Implementation of the project will have a strong impact not only on the local economy but also on the arctic environment and on Sámi society⁵⁸⁰. Through their protests, the Sámi living in Finland, united by the motto “our land, our future” have found their way into major international newspapers such as the Guardian (2019)⁵⁸¹.

Mining activities, logging, and other industrial enterprises as well as the construction of an arctic railway raise deep concerns among the Sámi populations and such concerns are expressed in public and political arenas (for instance through the Sámi parliaments) and are also addressed through arts and performances, as I shall explain in the following paragraphs. With reference to the Arctic Railway project, during the 2018 edition of Riddu Ridđu festival, in Gáivuotna / Kåfjord, a seminar was held to raise awareness about and discuss the effects of the Arctic Corridor. Petra Laiti, the leader of the Finnish Sámi youth organization expressed the fears gripping her community. Voicing these worries, Laiti brought to a wide public the potential consequences of the railway⁵⁸². During the debate, speakers presented both the positive and negative outcomes this infrastructure may bring to arctic communities in Finnish Lapland and in the Kirkenes area. For instance, there is a tangible possibility new mines may be opened, providing new job opportunities while, at the same time, further compromising the local environment. During the debate, speakers and the public engaged in discussions on whether – and how – Sámi cultures and industries could benefit from the railway project, if and how such an infrastructure could be carried out in an appropriate manner, if it could be implemented while also preserving the affected Sámi communities and whether it could provide a tool for prosperity and positive development. It clearly emerged that participants were often perplexed at best, and wished and deemed necessary the active involvement of the Sámi Parliament as well as Sámi business organizations and communities. In their view, community-participation would ensure

will be operative, trains could carry goods offloaded in Norway through Finland and towards key European markets (Lim 2018) (Cheng 2019), improving Finland's logistical position and importance in Europe.

⁵⁷⁹ It is legitimate to wonder whether local populations would economically benefit from these resource exploitations by being included in the production chain and in the sharing of revenues or not.

⁵⁸⁰ For instance, the Arctic Railway line would disrupt Sámi reindeer tending routes and would cause massive problems for the reindeer industry.

⁵⁸¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/23/battle-save-lapland-want-to-build-railroad>

⁵⁸² Even though a Sámi festival with a public is constituted mainly by Sámi, Riddu Ridđu attracts each year thousands of visitors, many of which do not identify themselves as Sámi. The majority of the festivalgoers is from Fennoscandinavia even though there is a growing number of guests who reach Gáivuotna / Kåfjord from continental Europe and beyond.

that the project meet the requirements set by Sámi communities, empowering them and protecting their best interests. The use of the Norwegian expression *mareritt* (nightmare) throughout the debate, when referring to the railway project, revealed the profound concerns this infrastructure causes in many of the people directly or indirectly affected by it.

It is extremely interesting that such a difficult and sensitive topic was discussed during a summer cultural festival. The debate revealed some of the most important, albeit often not immediately visible, features of Sámi cultural and social gatherings. At first sight, festive events such as Riddu Riđđu are joyful, cheerful occasions for people to gather, celebrate and enjoy summertime with friends, listening to music, and sleeping immersed in the landscape. Nevertheless, these events are inherently political from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective and debates such as the one revolving around the Arctic Corridor remind us of the origins and aims of festivals such as Riddu Riđđu, a characteristic that can be identified also at Márkomeannu.

From a southern viewpoint, what is happening in the arctic may appear far removed from everyday life. The geographical distance between the Arctic and southern locations, where many decisions concerning this region are taken, fosters an idea of remoteness that can be traced back to the travelogues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Our world though is deeply interconnected, with seemingly innocuous activities triggering large-scale consequence distant from where the activities were originally taking place. Furthermore, apparently environmentally friendly choices may actually have deeply negative consequences for local communities, for ecological niches and for the environment on a larger scale. In light of these reflections, and even though it primarily affects the local populations, mainly Sámi and Finnish communities, the construction of a train connection between Finnish Lapland and Sør-Varanger is relevant to Europe as a whole, given the ramifications of this project. Reflecting on my positionality, I realized that, despite the physical and cultural distance between myself and those involved in the protests against the railroad here examined, my interest in this issue was partially led by my personal experience which, in turn, enabled me to relate to the protesters. This arctic infrastructure resonates with debates inflaming the political arena in Italy. There are many parallelisms between Sámi concerns over the Arctic train line and the mobilisation against the construction of a high-speed rail line between Torino and Lyon (TAV), with a train line tunnel running through the western Alps, an infrastructure that would constitute the central traffic corridor between Italy and France. As it is the case with the Arctic Railway, the TAV project is part of a wider international development plan. The Turin-Lyon line is indeed only one section of the European Union's Trans-European transport network and a segment of the Lyon-Turin-Trieste-Ljubljana-Budapest railway axis in the Trans-European Rail network (Armano et al 2013). As was

the case with the arctic railway, this project has raised strong criticism among the rural communities living along the planned railway and among the wider national public. Even if both the TAV and the Arctic railway projects have met with strong resistance from the local population, in the TAV case, there have been episodes of civil disobedience. In Italy, the opposition against the TAV has developed into an organized movement known as the “NO-TAV” and police violence has been recorded in connection with uprisings nearby the construction sites (Pisani 2017).

Despite the physical distance between the alpine valleys and the tundra of central-eastern Sápmi, these two cases show the difficulties faced by local communities having to deal with big corporates’ interests or developmental plans designed regardless of local interests. Even though both train lines are advertised as positive environmentally friendly actions, they both have serious consequences for the local environment in terms of pollution, disruption of native economic activities, and threat to localized ecological niches. The case of the Arctic corridor though is more intimately connected to climate change since its own realization is dependent upon a massive ecological crisis in the Arctic.

8.3 The dirty side of the (not so) clean near future

In Northern Norway, the immediate effects of anthropogenic climate change are already part of daily life for hundreds of people. These effects include changes in seasonal average temperatures, the thickness of the ice, and the amount of snow falling during winter. Other phenomena connected with climate change are actions and policies implemented to mitigate climate change itself. In recent decades, Norway has developed infrastructures devoted to the production of ‘clean energy’. Policies aimed at increasing the wellbeing of the overall population may have negative impacts on local communities, especially those already marginalized by state and local policies as well as decades of structural violence. This is the case of many Norwegian wind-farms and dams that transform the energy produced by water and wind into supposedly clean electric power. Many of these infrastructures have been built in areas regarded as marginal by the state but considered central to Sámi cultures and economies. The development of the infrastructures has not only disrupted or destroyed local ecological niches but also, in many cases, hindered Sámi cultural and economic activities such as reindeer tending. The realization of massive projects such as wind-parks entails a level of pollution of the area during and after construction.

I shall provide some examples of how wind energy production may have negative effects on local and ecological systems: the first link in this chain of pollution is the industrial production of the Eolic turbines. The second is the transportation, both by sea and over land, from the factory to the port of destination. Then there is transportation from the port to the installation site, a process entailing disruption of local traffic and road-damage. Furthermore, the land used as the turbines’ erection site

will no longer be suitable for pasturage, and the local population may fear leakage into the hydric system, including drinking water and mountain streams and ponds from which the fauna drink. Besides, polluted waters would all eventually flow into the sea, contributing to the pollution of the fjord (see Lu et al. 2019). A further problem, once the wind-farm starts working, is acoustic pollution from the rotation of the turbines. Reindeer tenders fear consequences of acoustic pollution for the animals, which could include fleeing and reduced reproduction rates. Yet another issue is the risk of birds perishing by flying into the structure. Again, low temperatures may produce icicles on the blades which, when they become detached, may injure or even kill animals. To prevent this from happening, warming systems have to be implemented and fences and warning notices and have to be erected, as they usually are, on windmill parks. A relevant problem though is that reindeer cannot read. Then the energy produced must be stored and conveyed through copper wiring, and copper extraction presents its own ecological challenges, as the case of Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord demonstrates. This is just a brief overview of the ‘dirty side’ of ‘clean energy’. Despite technological advances, pollution is still inherent in the production of energy.

8.3.1 Ellos Riehpovuotna

In this section, I shall examine some of the main features of the debate about the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord mine. I first encountered protests against this mine during my fieldwork research (particularly during the protests held in Tromsø in February 2019) and I followed its development through texts and statements released by some of the groups mobilised against the mine.

The hi/story of the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord copper mine, and that of the protests against its (re-)opening are of great anthropological interest for numerous reasons, among them the impact the mine could have on local society, and the socio-cultural implications of the environmental consequences of mining. However, social responses to the threat of a new mine are also important from another point of view: that of Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord is only one of the numerous mines that national and international companies have opened or intend to open in the ancestral territories of the Sámi. The entire Sápmi, precisely because of its geophysical and morphological conformation, is rich in mineral resources. This wealth, though, most often not only was no benefit to Sámi communities but it was also detrimental: expropriated lands, urban development interrupting reindeer transhumance routes, pollution, and various other ramifications of these phenomena are just a few of the consequences brought about by big infrastructures. When addressing the mining of Sápmi, it is important to employ a diachronic perspective because mining in Sápmi is not a recent phenomenon (Espiritu 2015). Nevertheless, even though both the Sámi and the hegemonic populations had been aware of the mineral resources hidden under the tundra for centuries, mining has become increasingly important

in the last few centuries through a process of continuous and inexorable erosion of Sámi rights to land and its management as well as the use of its resources.

Protests against mines lead to reflection on the multiple and interrelated ramifications of mining in Sámi territories. In fact, they highlight the ecological consequences of these infrastructures as well as the impact they will have on the local economy, which is based on the use of natural resources (mainly fishing and reindeer meat production) (Dannevig and Dale 2018). Most of all, they force us to examine the issue of Sámi rights in general. Analysis of the history of mines, of the involvement of the Sámi population in the exploitation of resources – which often had as its counterpart the exploitation of Sámi labour – and that of protests against, and initiatives in favour of, mines throughout Sápmi constitute a relevant and interesting field of investigation: these phenomena are all different but interrelated manifestations of the colonial past (and present) of Fennoscandinavia, a past which is too often denied or obscured.

A striking example of how the mines epitomize colonial history in all its facets is the city of Kiruna (Swedish Sápmi). This important urban centre only sprang up at the turn of the 20th century in response to the demands of a growing mining infrastructure. The whole city developed, economically and materially wise in a function of the mine. It is a product of the exploitation of resources and, at the same time, risked disappearing because of overexploitation. It is so integrated with the mine that it is physically sinking into it. The mine has developed to such an extent that it has undermined the foundations of Kiruna. For this reason, the entire urban centre is undergoing a relocation and reconstruction process so that it can continue to exploit the mine safely (Overlund 2019). Mines are very expensive infrastructures to open and maintain and, for this reason, their operation often follows market trends. The following is a common pattern in Fennoscandinavia: if the cost of extraction and treatment of a certain quantity of metal is lower than the market price of the same quantity, then one invests in the extraction by reopening old closed sites. When the value of the ore mined decreases, and therefore the profit margin is reduced, the sites are closed. This fluctuation leads to a lot of pollution and little socio-economic stability in the regions where these infrastructures exist. Furthermore, since the skilled labor is mainly foreign, the mines contribute marginally to the local economy. There are many other associated problems, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to address them as my goal was to offer a contextualization to debates about the (re-)opening of the mine in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord.

In the light of the multiple problems associated with them, mines are most controversial projects with a potential to divisive communities. In these contexts, the sustainability topic is of particular relevance. As Espiritu points out, sustainability can mean different things depending on the

stakeholders' point of view. What an enterprise consider sustainable may not be considered as such by the community. Different needs create different perspectives. Furthermore, not only environmental, but also economic sustainability needs to be considered. Esperitu highlights this aspect by comparing two different sets of choices made by two similar communities in two similar contexts: the copper mine in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord and the gold mine in Kautokeino. Her analysis demonstrates that indigenous interests are not monolithic but may be informed by different needs (Espiritu 2015). The Northernmost areas of Fennoscandinavia is a multicultural context in which people with different ethnic backgrounds have coexisted for centuries: Sámi, Scandinavians (Norwegians and Swedes) Finns, Russian, and Kven and, in recent centuries, continental and extra-continental immigrants have lived mostly on the shores of today Norway and Russia. In the case of mining activities, sections of the involved communities are affected differently depending on their past and present relationship with the fjord: since the fishing industry is no longer dominant among Norwegian, families with a fishing tradition are not very concerned about the mining; on the other hand, descendants of settled coastal Sámi may, as the Norwegian, be less concerned about the environmental impact on the fishing – the main activity of their ancestors – but, unlike ethnic Norwegians, they more concerned about the effects on the local ecosystem. This is because of their cultural and social ties with Sámi reindeer tenders whose reindeer have their summer grazing lands in the Fjord area. It is not surprising than that it is the reindeer tenders who are the most opposed to mining. The mine negatively affects grazing lands, and particulates cause reindeer (and human) diseases. To this already complex context, further complexity arises from holidaymakers who own cabins in the area and are often opposed to mining. The decisional power of various stakeholders varies according their numbers and social status, with the result that the opinions of those most opposed to the mines are also those least considered (Reinert 2016). As demonstrated, public discourses about mining infrastructures illustrate community dynamics, adding importance to the study of the social aspects of mining in Sápmi. As Dannevig and Dale show (2018) responses to (re-)opening mines may not be uniform within a community. Nevertheless, at least in the case of Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord, which Reinert (2016) describes as a local manifestation of capitalism, the community united around the waste issue. Such issue revolves around the way the Norwegian private company Nussir has decided to deal with the mine tailings.

Nussir has acquired the rights to exploit a copper site in the Kvalsund area, at the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord mine, where the Riehpovuonjohka River flows into the sea. This is an important water basin and it is a protected Salmon River, where these animals go for spawning. The Kvalsund area is not just a spawning ground, with consequent strong fishing traditions, but is also a

nodal point in local animals' migration routes since both fish and reindeer transit there over the year (Reinert 2016). The mine had already been operational between 1972 and 1978 (Espiritu 2015) and, over the years, about 3 million tonnes of copper were extracted. The waste from the extraction processes was dumped into the fjord. The Fjord became a tailing deposit, with negative consequences on the local biota. An estimated 2 million metric tons of mining waste is expected to be dumped into the fjord each year, for at least 15 years, from the new mine. Furthermore, the impact of the mine on the landscape affects not only the fjord's waters and the inner parts of the mountain but also the landscape as can be seen in service roads slag hips, ventilation shafts, service buildings. Although Nussir has conducted impact assessments and has committed to taking mitigation measures against negative consequences for the local environment, many have voiced their concerns either in local/national media or through protests. Those protesting against the mine (whether or not are Sámi) are environmental campaigners and/or Sámi rights advocates (Reinert 2016).

The multilingual motto «Ellos Riehpovuotna! Leve Repparfjorden! Let Repparfjord live!/Long live Repparfjord» dominates the environmental campaign against the reopening of a copper mine on the mountain of Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord in Kvalessund, Hammerfest municipality (Troms og Finnmark County, Northern Norway). First in North Sámi, then in Norwegian and last in English, these words position the protests against the mine not only geographically but also culturally. Albeit formally in Northern Norway, the Fjord is – as the North Sámi words suggest – fore and foremost in Sápmi. At the same time, the issues concerning the reopening of the mine not only regard Northern Norway/the Norwegian side of Sápmi but also Sápmi as a whole as well as the international community. The call for international mobilizations is suggested by the use of English. The phrase evokes other protests such as the Alta uprising and the Ellos Deatnu (Long Live Deatnu) movement (see Chapter 6.5.6). It inscribes the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord demonstration in a long line of battles for the protection of local environmental and socio-cultural niches.

The same motto is employed in the title of a programmatic document available online and compiled by scholars engaged in Sámi and Religious studies. “Ellos vuotna! Teologalaš vuosttaldeapmi - Repparfjorden teologisk opprop- Repparfjorden Theological Statement”. My interest in this document is twofold: the contents of the text provides a perspective over the perception and cultural construction of the effects of the mining activity in a Fjord environment. It also offers an insight into what Religious scholar Jorunn Jernsletten defines “Indigenous Sámi theology” (Jernsletten, 2010; see also Olsen 2012), whose main features are an ecological approach to Christianity and a strong influence – and incorporation – of Indigenous Sámi non-Christian worldviews. The document also grounds environmental protests against the copper mine in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord in a wider

debate over pollution and exploitation while framing them through spiritual (non/Christian) lenses. Scholars Sjøberg, Grau, and Guðmarsdottir wrote the text which is available online at https://www.opprop.net/ellos_vuotna. The Northern Sámi text is accompanied by Norwegian and English translations.

To corroborate their positions, namely that the various elements of nature are in continuous dialogue with each other and with humans, the proponents of the statement use Christian theology and indigenous authors. In particular, quotations from the Bible are accompanied by reflections of the great Sámi poet Áillohaš. Non-Christian Sámi visions and Christian perspectives blend one into the other, supporting each other. Indigenous knowledge systems are integrated into the Christian one, to which they constitute a repository of meaning.

In the text, some of the arguments against the mine are based on an indigenous reading of events occurring in the vicinity of the prospective mine:

When this [that the mine would be open again and its waste would be dumped in the fjord] became known, the fjord spoke to us with a clear voice: A *morša* (walrus) moved its large body to a stone near the beach and showed itself to curious onlookers for several days. The walrus positioned itself right between two mountain tops with the same name (Gumpenjuni, Ulveryggen, in English Wolfback) on each side of the fjord. The proposed fjord dumping site is located near the entrance to Veaignisvuotna (Fæg fjorden, Duskfjord). Might [the] Walrus have been sent by its Máddu to pass on a message to us? But are we willing to listen? (Sjøberg L. M., et al. 2021)⁵⁸³

The implications of the authors' line of reasoning are multifaceted: by integrating some of the characteristics of indigenous Sámi cosmologies into their Christian understanding of Nature, they show that, in their view, Christianity and Indigenous Sámi worldviews are not in contrast to each other but engage in a continuous dialogue, each element reinforcing the other. The urge to protect the fjord is traced back to both to Christian perspectives, and indigenous worldviews, as the reference to the Máddu of the *morša*/walrus indicates⁵⁸⁴.

The Máttut (pl. of Máddu), the female ancestors of all living species, take on central importance in the authors' construction of the argument. The authors delineate some of characteristics of the Máttut by explaining their functions in relation to the environment. In Sámi worldviews, the Máddu protects

⁵⁸³ The whole text is available at https://www.opprop.net/ellos_vuotna Sjøberg L., Marion Grau, M., Guðmarsdottir S.,

⁵⁸⁴ The figure of the Máddu is addressed in detail in Chapter 4.

her offspring and the environments in which they live. As the text specifies, the offending of a Máddu implies consequences.

According to the authors, protection though it is not an exclusive prerogative of the Máttut. If the Máttut look after their children, humans are to provide protection to the environment as a whole. They have a Christian duty to protection, which is framed as a Christian calling. Protection though does not mean that human activity is to be avoided but that it is to be carried out with respect. For instance, the dynamics of hunting and fishing in the fjord are conceptualized through the notions of mutual gift and circularity: animals are agents who decide to give themselves to men for the sustenance of the latter, but only if humans ask respectfully to be fed. Animals – following biblical indications– are here to teach humans how to respect not just God but its creation and, in Sámi worldviews, respect is shown by asking for permission to hunt and kill. Similarly, respect is shown by avoiding to leaving traces of one's passing. The proposal of dumping waste in the Fjord contradicts this principle and it also goes against the idea that humans shall tend to God's creation. The fjord, regarded as a living entity, emerges as a personification of the local ecosystem while, at the same time, it is juxtaposed with the garden of Heaven. This is because, according to the authors, creation manifests itself through biodiversity, of which the fjord is an example. Humans have, in the authors' view, the duty protect biodiversity since Nature itself is a manifestation of God. Interconnectedness, a feature of indigenous non-Christian Sámi worldviews, is here described as inherent to Christian thought too.

The arguments of the text shift between two levels: the spiritual-theological and the political one. They also draw on scientific assessments that foresee a negative impact of the mining on the fjord. The oppression of the Sámi people and their lands, epitomized by the destructive consequences of a mine in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord, is described as a further example of the oppression of indigenous peoples and their rights. According to the authors, the construction of the mine would be a further example of green colonialism and imperialism that would take life away from the fjord and its inhabitants, both humans and animals. The critique of capitalism and its ramification is here proposed within a spiritual framework that is based on both Christian and non-Christian premises.

The efforts of those who fought to prevent Nussir from reopening the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord mine seem to have been rewarded: as of October 2021, Nussir temporarily suspended its operations in the wake of the numerous protests and mobilizations by Sámi/Environmental organizations. Mobilization on sight and by remote was crucial to this achievement. Protests all over Sápmi – such as the one I attended in Tromsø – and across Fennoscandinavia resonated on the internet, on official web-pages as well as private accounts on social media-platforms such as Facebook, Instragman and Snaepmi (a Sámi Snapchat account).

8.3.2 Norwegian windmill forests on a Sámi *Varrj*⁵⁸⁵

In recent decades, many companies, both national and international, have applied for permission to reactivate old mines and to open new ones in a sort of race for minerals throughout the whole of Sápmi. Many local, national, and international organizations have opposed these projects through forms of protests often expressed through art. Similarly, concerns have been voiced through channels such as newspapers denunciation and social media. Some cases have even been brought to court. Occasionally judges have ruled in favor of Sámi concerns, and against the mining companies (see for instance Spangen et al 2015; Dahlberg-Grundberg, M, & Örestig, J. 2017; and, on the Gallok court case, see Rosamund 2020).

The opening (and re-opening) of mines throughout Northern Norway – and more generally in Fennoscandinavia – is connected with the fact that several major wind power projects are now being launched in the areas Sámi people have inhabited for millennia. Norway, one of the world’s leading oil exporters, aims at switching to ‘clean energy’ in the coming decades, in the hope of reducing its CO₂ emissions. The mining of copper-rich Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord Mountain is in line with Norway’s plans to develop more environmentally-friendly energy production. Copper is sought after since it is essential for the electrification of the country: this metal is a core element for conducting and distributing wind-produced power. Despite the indispensability of copper in generating and distributing ‘sustainably-produced’ energy, the mine in Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord would pollute the whole fjord as well as the nearby reindeer grazing lands. At the origin of such ecological disaster lies the management of the mine’s waste, which would not be purified and stored but dumped untreated in the fjord. According to current Norwegian regulations, the company operating the mine does not have the legal duty to process the waste. Dumping untreated waste in the fjord though would bring destruction to the local ecosystem. In other words, both sea and land animals would die, and so – as people shouted during protests in Tromsø in March 2019 – would the fjord.

In central and northern Norway there are numerous infrastructures connected with the ecological shift in energy production. Some of them are already operational while other are either in the making or at the planning stage. In the case of wind farm, such infrastructures are to be located in areas that meet specific criteria: elevation, isolation, wind-orientation, accessibility. What makes a location appropriate for a wind grids also happens to be what made it suitable for reindeer tending. Of the many wind farms dotting Northern Norway, none has escaped the opposition of local Sámi

⁵⁸⁵ *Varrj* in one of the numerous North Sámi words for ‘mountain’.

stakeholders. One such controversial infrastructure is the Kvaløya Wind Park, a wind power station built on Sállir/Kvaløya to provide local and nearby areas (among them the city of Tromsø) with ‘clean energy’. The park is only one many examples of infrastructures that disproportionately affect Sámi communities by damaging them both economically and culturally. This wind farm, completed in 2020, has had disastrous consequences on the local environment as well as on reindeer-meat production. Far from the coasts where Norwegian fishing industries are located, the area designated for the erection of massive turbines is a windy mountain plateau (Kvitfjell-Raufjell) facing the ocean. To an untrained eye, the area might seem empty, marginal, wild. Yet those spaces have for centuries been shaped by human and animal activity: the power plant lies precisely where a Sámi family has its grazing lands. The present site of the wind-park is extremely suitable to its purpose because of the strong winds blowing from the ocean. For the same reason, the reindeer instinctively choose the same area for calving: The cows deliver their calves at those spots which the strong ocean winds have cleared of snow since early spring. The indigenous Sámi terminology referring to the various areas of Sállir/Kvaløya mountains describe those same areas according to the features relevant to Sámi reindeer-tending and hence it reflects the function each part of the island fulfills in this activity.

Sámi place-names referring these two mountains, when translated into Norwegian become Kvitfjell and Raufjell. Kvitfjell means White Mountain while Raufjell means Red Mountain. These names enshrine specific features of the respective mountains, suggesting their reindeer -tenders

Raufjell is so called because it is where the snow is first swept away in early spring, whereas Kvitfjell is so called because it is the first to become snow-covered in autumn. This means that the mountains are used by the reindeer at different times of the year and for different purposes, rendering them fundamental to these animals’ survival throughout the seasons. Each area fulfill a separate function in the reindeer natural cycle. As we can see, in this case indigenous Sámi terminology not only describes the natural features of a given place but also implicitly hints at the possible use such features allow for. As mention though, what made these mountains so suitable for reindeer to prosper is also what makes profitable to wind power developers.

The windmill park we are discussing may have such an impact on the local reindeer herd and the local environment, from its construction to its future maintenance, that reindeer tending may no longer be feasible on Kvitfjell and Raufjell mountains, at least not as it has been practiced hitherto (see Vistnes et al. 2001).

Even though the windmills produce ‘relatively’ clean energy, their construction has led to an imbalance in local ecologic niches already damaged by external factors. The Nordlys Company, in charge of the construction and management of the facility, has guaranteed that, upon the wind-park’s

completion, animals will come back to these grazing lands and the sound of the fans will neither frighten nor threaten for them. Despite these reassurances, the Sámi family whose grazing lands have been negatively affected by the wind park is skeptical. They have fought for years against this project, albeit with limited success, arguing their case in different arenas. Their story has even reached the Italian public through an article published in La Repubblica daily newspaper (Brera 2019).



Image 164a: a woman in front of a part of a wind turbine's tower is posing to show the width of its diameter (photo by the author).



Image 164b: reindeer resting near a wind farm on Sállir/Kvaløya (pictured available on the Facebook homepage of the Mot vindkraftindustri på Kvaløya/against the wind power industry on Kvaløya group)

The Kvaløya windmill park, as well as the Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord mine, shows the contradictions of contemporary (in this case Norwegian) society in which there is a high demand for more sustainable energy production but, in order to achieve this, there is the strong risk of perpetuating the marginalization and disregard of both the Sámi knowledge system and culture and Sámi economic activities. The Kvaløya windmill park project on Kvitfjell-Radfjell Sámi grazing lands epitomizes new forms of marginalization perpetuated in the name of ‘development’ presented as ‘progress’⁵⁸⁶. These examples show the environmental and cultural implications of economic choices branded as ecological. This delicate environment symbolizes a cultural, geographic and ethnic boundary and it shows that, despite centuries of contact, Norwegian society is still failing to understand and respect Sámi cultures. Echoing past policies of oppression and suppression, these processes of silencing obfuscate Sámi knowledge systems and perpetuate cultural and epistemological subjugation. Furthermore, they force us to reconsider how clean is “clean energy” and at whose expenses and for whose benefits it is produced. The Kvaløya windmill park and its implications for the local ecosystem as well as for the reindeer tending community constitutes one of the various examples of the manifold ramifications of the current ecological crisis. Through the lens of this case, it is possible to address a wider phenomenon recurrent in Sápmi: the incommunicability

⁵⁸⁶ According to this understanding of the notion of progress, localised environmentally-damaging initiatives are justifiable, sacrificing the needs of local communities in the name of ‘the greater good’.

between indigenous and State perspectives. Sámi indigenous standpoints are made invisible, silenced and marginalized by the Norwegian state.

A further issue that is worth mentioning is that not just ‘green’ power but also profits are obtained at the expense of Sámi communities. Scholars refer to this process as ‘green colonialism’ (Greaves 2018, Normann 2021). Besides the aforementioned ecological issues and ethical concerns posed by the construction of “clean energy” production centres, a further problem connected with the installation of infrastructures emerges: State institutions often fail to acknowledge Sámi systems of knowledge and epistemologies. Furthermore, authorities often overlook the fact that infrastructures such as Windmill Parks on reindeer tending may have such a serious impact that in specific locations this economic activity and cultural practice, possibly incapable of adapting to the new circumstances, may therefore disappear along with indigenous epistemologies connected to the local landscape (Helander-Renvall 2010). Consequently, and also as consequence of the clash between different understandings of the relation between humans and the environment, the realization of similar massive infrastructures may have negative consequences on the relations between many people who identify themselves as Sámi and Norwegian Institutions as well as the Norwegian public.

8.3.3 *Girjáivuohta* (diversity)

In order to avoid generalizations and essentialization, I shall here make clear that the Sámi are not a homogenous nor monolithic community. Diversity in opinion among its members characterized contemporary as well as past Sámi societies. As of today, there are Sámi who support projects and infrastructures such as windmill parks and mines and many among the Sámi are engineers, public officials and businessmen, some of which may even be involved and engaged with projects other members of Sámi society may condemn⁵⁸⁷. The opposition to the development of infrastructures such as the ones here addressed has led to the development of a harmful stereotype: that Sámi peoples oppose change and innovation, consequently, they are rendered as hostile to environmental and ecological sustainable innovations, which, in turn, can be seen as the latest development in a long line of narratives that portray the Sámi as a monolithic group that resisted modernity, change and development, because they were generically unable to do so, since they were primitive. These commonplaces had disastrous consequences, laying the ideological foundations of racial policies and, henceforth in Norway, enforced assimilation. Interpretations of the supposed hesitancy in embracing modernity is symptomatic of a deeply flawed understanding of the socio-political context within which Sámi actors had to navigate. It furthermore denotes a paternalistic and patronizing attitude

⁵⁸⁷ For instance, the 2015 Golden Aja project carried out by Sámi author and cultural worker Sigbjørn Skåden and artist-architect Joar Nango.

from the hegemonic society towards Sámi peoples as a collectivity. The implicit premise upon which such attitude exists and persists is the presupposition that the Sámi are:

1. A uniform and almost monolithic group⁵⁸⁸, where no individual voice exists, with no space for nuanced or dissident opinions⁵⁸⁹
2. Unable to understand the benefits brought by modernity and hence unaware of what would, ultimately, good for all, them included – an assumption loaded with paternalistic tones reminiscent of the “white man burden” rhetoric
3. Expendable if the circumstances require so, as in the case of the Sállir/Kvaløya windmill park or as in the case of the village of Máze (cfr cap 8 n8)

What these paternalistic attitudes fail to grasp is the complex context – often marked by unequal power relations and structural violence – within which those Sámi who oppose the construction and development of infrastructures have to deal with. They reduce the nuanced complexity where multiple and layered factors are at play, to a simplified dichotomy whose extremes – representing the modern Norwegian on one hand and the Sámi to the other – can be inflected according to multiple combinations such as:

modern – pre-modern

future-oriented – backwards

innovative – conservative

complex – simple

sophisticated – uncivilized

serious - trivial

The list could be expanded but what is relevant to highlight is how such dichotomized representations run deep beneath the surface in contemporary Fennoscandinavian societies, having concrete consequences such as the devaluation Sámi cultural expressions (image n102b)⁵⁹⁰.

⁵⁸⁸ In order to avoid essentializing perspectives, it is important to highlight that the hegemonic – in this case Norwegian – commonplaces are not shared by the Norwegian population tout court. As within the Sámi society, also the ethnic Norwegian segment of the Norwegian population is heterogeneous, with different political views, and many are supportive of the instances forwarded by Sámi stakeholders.

⁵⁸⁹ A stereotype that is as harmful as common as explained by Anne Henriette, the CEO of the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu festival. See chapter 4.

⁵⁹⁰ There have been numerous examples of belittlement, mockery and ridiculization of Sámi cultural expressions through discriminatory practices such as advertisement campaigns. The 2019 Joikaboller (joik meatball) or the 2010 Kiwi-kofta cases are just two of such episodes. In both cases, the strong negative public reaction led to the companies changing their advertisement policy. It is worth noticing that the meatball has been sold under the name Joikakake for 60 years. When the brand announced they would change the packaging, there were high expectations that this would lead also to a change

8.3.4 *Alta Sakken* (The Alta Case)

The current Sámi responses to the building of infrastructures such as windmill parks or railways in the Arctic resonate with the 1980s protests against the damming of the Alta River, an episode that changed forever the position of Sámi people in Fennoscandinavia. The demonstrations against the construction of a dam over the Alta River, in the Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino region constituted a turning point in the Sámi ethno-political movement, and in the Norwegian policy towards the Sámi. The controversy first arose in 1968, when the Norwegian state-owned energy NVE Company proposed to harness the water resources of Finnmark by building a hydroelectric power plant. According to the original scheme, the impact on central Finnmark-Sámi people and their livelihood would have been massive: Máze, a Sámi village midway between the town of Alta and the village of Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino (Finnmark) would have been inundated by the dam. Moreover, the new water basing would have affected the reindeer migration routes as well as the wild salmon fishing. Even if the Norwegian government renounced this first NVE plan in 1973, in 1978 the Norwegian parliament voted again for the regulation of the Alta river waters. The 1978 project entailed the exploitation of Sámi lands and natural resources and hence it was met with strong political resistance among many locals, which soon received the support of Sámi from all over Sápmi. This resistance took the form of massive protests in Stilla, by the Alta Fjord, and in Oslo, with episodes of civil disobedience shaking the Norwegian public opinion.

In 1982, the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled in favour of the government, leading to the completion of the dam by 1986. Upon the construction of the dam and the power plant, Sámi organized opposition ceased. Even if the Sámi did not manage to have their claims heard, and even though their attempt to prevent the construction of the dam met with a failure, the Alta controversy led to a new definition of Sámi collective identity. According to Seurajarvi-Kari, this redefinition of Sámi identity was built on the dichotomy between majority (them) and minority (“us”, the indigenous Sámi) which emerged during the Alta conflict. As a consequence of this event, aspirations of the pan-Sámi advocates were realised: during the 1980 Sámi Conference held in Tromsø, a Sámi manifesto was adopted. This programmatic proposal stated that the Sámi were a “separate ethnic group with its own territory, culture and social structure” (2005:11). The consequences of the Alta dispute are epitomised in the recognition of special rights to the Sámi first in Norway and later in Finland and Sweden. Since the

in name. these expectations were let down once the new packaging was released. The dissatisfaction of Sámi stakeholders, voiced by the Norwegian Sámediggi (Sámi parliament), ultimately led to the brand acknowledging the discriminatory nature of both the name of the product and the design of the logo. Similarly, the strong reaction against the ridiculing use of the *Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino gákti* (Sámi costume) in a celebratory event marking the anniversary of the supermarket chain led to public apologies. <https://www.nrk.no/Sápmi/delte-meninger-om-kiwi-kofta-1.7289193> <https://www.nrk.no/Sápmi/samegutten-og-joika-navnet-kan-bli-fjernet-1.14994080> .

1980s, also by virtue of their status of indigenous people, the Sámi have been granted special rights in Sweden, Norway and Finland while in Russia they are recognised as ethnic minority but they do not enjoy any special right. The Sámi claim for these rights is part of a wider project, which aims at reclaiming and revitalising Sámi culture by increasing self-awareness and a sense of community identity among Sámi people. The Alta episode, albeit traumatic, enhanced the visibility of Sámi peoples, of Sámi cultures and politics across Sápmi and beyond. Nevertheless, the Sámi shared Sámi identity that emerged from the *Alta Saken* (the Alta case) was an identity hinging upon reindeer tending, leaving all other expressions of Sámi identity under-represented and, to an extent, under-valued. The strong emphasis on reindeer tending cultures was determined by various factors, among which the fact that the Maze village was a reindeer tending village. This specific Sámi identity, which was also the Sámi identity non-ethnic Sámi more easily recognized as “authentic” Sámi.

Furthermore, only a few years before the Alta demonstrations, the Sámi community had sought recognition as Indigenous from the international Indigenous community. At first though, the Sámi indigenous identity was highly controversial among other indigenous groups. Sámi people were perceived as too “white”, too wealthy and, in addition, too privileged compared to other indigenous peoples to be recognized as such. It was only after the great Sámi artist Áillohaš/Nils-Aslak Valkeapää performed a joik that other Indigenous delegates recognized the Sámi as fellow indigenous peoples (Minde 2003). It was in that context that the establishment of an essentialized pan-Sámi identity took place. This pan-Sámi identity overlooked local specificities and focused on an already dominant narrative of Sámi cultures as based on reindeer tending, with a consequent homogenizing effect, was perceived as functional for obtaining recognition in international public and political arenas. It was this Sámi identity that became preponderant at Alta and, thanks to the media exposure the demonstrations enjoyed, it became pervasive and performative. As a consequence, it had a negative effect on all those Sámi who did not conform to the Sámi reindeer tending cultural paradigm, among them the Márka-Sámi community, who later fought to show that Sámi identity has many possible declinations.

The Alta case, which I have only briefly examined here⁵⁹¹, has so deeply affected the Sámi imaginary that references to this event often emerge in Sámi artistic expressions, both visual and musical. Britta Marakatt-Labba wool embroidery on linen *Garjját* “The Crows” (1981) is one of such

⁵⁹¹ Much has been written in Scandinavian languages as well as in English about the unravelling of the events of Alta as well as the ramifications – cultural, ethnic, political, social – that still today are perceivable in Fennoscandinavian and Sámi societies. Since the early 1980s, the topic has been addressed from various academic standpoints and has attracted the attention of many scholars. Among the first English academic works on the Alta case stand Paine’s 1982 article «Dam a river, damn a people. Saami (Lapp) livelihood and the Alta/Kautokeino hydro-electric project and the Norwegian parliament». One of the latest monographs on this topic is Guttorm’s 2020 «Let The River Flow - An Eco-Indigenous Uprising And Its Legacies In Art And Politics», edited by Harald Gaski. (for more on the Alta case, see: Steinlien, 1989; Somby, 1999; Minde, 2003; Briggs, 2006; Stephansen, 2017.

powerful examples (image 164)⁵⁹². Marakatt-Labba produced this embroidered history painting while living in Máze, during the protests against the Alta River damming. The piece of art itself can be considered as a visual and lasting form of protest and denounce.



Image 165. Britta Marakatt-Labba Garjját (1981)

In 1994, the famous Sámi joiker (singer) Mari Boine composed the joik (chant) *Máze* to celebrate Sámi resistance against the dam. The lyrics in North Sámi read: *Čáppa Máze, golle Máze. Čáze vuollái áigo bidjad Máze girku, Máze skuvlla.*⁵⁹³ The reference to the Alta damming is clear and strong and, more than ten year after the Alta protests, this *joik* bears witness to the importance of this event in Sámi contemporary history and ethno-policy. In 2018 the young artist Ella Marja Haetta Isaksen, from Deatnu (Tana) in Finnmark, took part to the Norwegian musical contest "Stiernkamp" (a franchising of *The Voice*). She performed the Joik *Máze* dressed with the Deatnu *Gákti* (Sámi costume) and, in the end, she won the competition with Mari Boine sitting among the audience.

The resonance of the Alta protests and the cultural and political meaning this episode became bestowed with, has reached a global public in 2019, when Disney released the sequel of the film *Frozen*. *Frozen* itself incorporated elements of Sámi cultures as one of the main characters is a Sámi himself and joiks constitute part of the soundtrack. If the first film was a revisited version of the Danish writer Hans Kristian Andersen's *Ice Queen*, the sequel revolves entirely around Sámi-inspired themes and Sámi worldviews – tamed to be appropriate to global audiences' tastes – intermingle with

⁵⁹² Around 1979 Marakatt-Labba joined the Sámi Artist Group, a collective of Sámi artists and activists founded in 1978 in Máze. The group's founding members were Sámi artists who were either already famous or that would have become so in the years to come: Aage Gaup, Josef Halse, Berit Marit Hætta, Trygve Lund Guttormsen, Hans Ragnar Mathisen, Ranveig Persen and Synnøve Persen.

⁵⁹³ Beautiful Máze, Golden Máze, they wanted to put the church at Máze and the school at Máze under water (my translation).

plot-driven stories. With the unravelling of the plot, the audience finds out that the two main protagonists, Elsa and Anna are the daughters of the King of Arendelle (a fictional Scandinavian kingdom) and of a Northuldra woman. The Northuldra are a fictional revisitation of the Sámi non-human beings known as Ulda, also called Gufithar. Besides this aspect, the central element of the plot is a dam over a river. According to the plot, this dam was built by the Scandinavian king to weaken the powers of the Northuldra people. Even if to an audience removed from a Sámi informed context the reference may be lost, the whole film in the end revolves around the allusion of the building of the Alta river Dam. As Fonneland demonstrates (2020) the Alta case was not the first large-scale exploitation of Sápmi natural resources at the hands of colonial companies but it constituted the beginning of an organized resistance to these practices⁵⁹⁴. Nevertheless, as the examples I provided concerning Riehpovuotna/Repparfjord or the Sállir/Kvaløya Windmill park demonstrates, environmentally-damaging infrastructures are still being built despite the concerns voiced by various sections of Sámi society.

Despite the scale of the infrastructure and the multifaceted consequences on the local environment, these infrastructures reveal the local articulations of global dynamics. The Arctic Corridor is emblematic of a much wider net of interrelated, underlying forces deeply embedded in capitalism. These forces are going to influence future policies and may bring challenges many of which are currently difficult to foretell, even though some of these are already unravelling. Militarization of the Arctic is among the most visible of such challenges. Even if it is not a new phenomenon (see chapter 3), the scale of the current militarizing activities, originating during WWII, is likely to have major and long-lasting consequences for the local arctic populations. Even though Sámi peoples first experienced systematic war in their territories during the 20th century, they were not new to bloodsheds and traumatic events. On the contrary, the collective memory of these events proved important in framing contemporary challenges by grounding possible answers in Indigenous epistemologies, as I shall explain later in this chapter.

For centuries, the Arctic and Subarctic regions of Europe and Easter Russia, as well as the Barents Sea have been a meeting place between different peoples belonging to a number of different ethnic groups. Along the Barents coasts, exchange of goods finally developed, in the 18th and 19th century, into the Pomor trade⁵⁹⁵. In the Kola peninsula, Sámi and Slavic groups had long lived side by side

⁵⁹⁴ Sámi organizations devoted to the promotion of Sámi rights though have a long history and, already in 1917, the first Sámi meeting was held in Tråante/Trondheim.

⁵⁹⁵ The Pomor trade originated as a barter trade between Russian settlers on the coasts of the White Sea (the Pomorians) and the inhabitants of the North Norwegian coasts (from Bodø northwards). The Pomor trade is attested from at least the 1740s and lasted until the 1917 Russian Revolution. As the contacts established between Russian and Norwegian speakers, a new pidging language developed: the Russenorsk.

while southern regions of today Finland, Sámi peoples had for centuries been in contact with Finnish and Karelian tribes. Similarly, in central and southern Scandinavia, contacts with Germanic tribes predates the Viking age.

Contact between Sámi peoples and their neighbours brought wealth as well as conflicts, mainly over resources and routes control. Such tensions are reflected in Sámi folklore and are epitomized in the Čuđit⁵⁹⁶ stories. In the recent years, these stories have been bestowed with new meanings and have become important symbolic tools in dealing with crisis, such as the exploitation of Sápmi resources at the hands of national and international corporations or the green-washing of environmentally-damaging infrastructures.

8.3.5 Čuđit leat fas Dappe⁵⁹⁷: from past enemies to contemporary foes. Storytelling, joiks and modern artistic media as forms of empowerment

As delineated in chapter 7 (section 7.2.1), the Čuđit legends have become a repository of meaning in contemporary Sámi context. In 2018, the staff of the Sámi festival Márkomeannu has decided to name the future evil chancellor of the festival plot Ola Tsjudi (Tsjudi is an alternative spelling of Čuđit), aware that such name would evoke in Sámi audience a specific set of emotions grounded in Sámi history and folklore. The figure of the Čuđit has become an important element connecting contemporary Sámi experiences to Sámi past and Sámi oral traditions. These figures of Sámi folklore, the enemy of the Sámi par excellence, have now been re-semantized and today artists resort to these foes to symbolically represent the new collective enemy, in its various manifestations. In 1987 a major film *Ofelaš* (“The Pathfinder”) – Nils Gaup, Norway - brought a Čuđit legend on the big screen. The script was based on the Sámi oral tradition and, through this story, the director managed to bring not only a Sámi film to Hollywood but, most importantly, a Sámi story based on Sámi narratives and Sámi worldviews⁵⁹⁸. In the film, the villains – the Čuđit – menaced Sámi society. Different layers of meaning characterise the film and the story could be read as a condemnation denouncing colonial attitudes on the side of the Nation States at the expenses of the Sámi. Set in a time prior to the Christianization of Sápmi, the presence of the Sámi non-Christian worldviews helped unifying Sámi

The term Pomor comes from the Russia/Norwegian preposition по/på «by» and the Russian term мóрьe «ocean»;
For a detailed account of the Pomor trade, see Shrader, T. (2017).

⁵⁹⁶ Čuđit is the plural form (nominative) of the North Sámi word Čuđe. In English, Čuđit is often spelt Chudit or Chudes
⁵⁹⁷ ‘the Čuđit are back’

⁵⁹⁸ Thomas A. DuBois (2000: 255) has examined *Ofelaš* as both an artistic entity and as a product of Sámi cultural revitalization where a «[...] careful construction of an image of Sámi culture» is intended to reconnect Sámi people with their own cultural heritage while, at the same time, it aims to disseminate knowledge of the Sámi people outside of Scandinavia.

communities through the indigenous ritual specialist, the *noaide*. The film was performed almost entirely in Northern Sámi language while the Čuđit, all dressed in black, spoke a synthetic language. To North Sámi speakers, this unintelligible idiom reinforced the Čuđit alterity; to non-Sámi speakers, it was either the dubbing or the subtitles that conveyed similar – but most likely not as strong – feelings of alienation. In 2016, the Sámi Joiker Sofia Jannok released a *joik* entitled "Čuđit" and she translates Čuđit as colonizer. On the day of the release (18/12/2016), Sofia Jannok wrote her Facebook webpage⁵⁹⁹:

[the song] ČUĐIT is about the colonizing power. Still it is ending with hope: the yoik of the *noaidi* who heals the wounds and keeps the fire alive. I am glad it was chosen to the official soundtrack of the series *Midnight Sun* (find it on iTunes), where I yoik the melody when acting as the *noaidi*

ČUĐIT (colonizer)⁶⁰⁰

Never empty, she was never wild

Stolen cruelly away from her child

Taken care for thousands of years

In seconds she is ruined seas to seas

Burned my brother 'cause he knew how to heal

Turned my sister to think he wasn't real

I could fill an ocean with all my tears

but to you I'll show no fear

You're hiding my life

Eating it alive

Vicious wish

Filthy fist

⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/sofijannok/posts/new-songmy-latest-single-release-from-this-fall-i-could-fill-an-ocean-with-all-m/10155895171653849/> access on 13/10/20

⁶⁰⁰ (Lyrics: Sofia Jannok. Music: Henrik Oja and me. Translation: Siri K Gaski. Lyrics and translation available at Sofia Jannok's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10155895171653849&id=371276148848)

*flattening, crushing,
shackling with iron,
covering us with mining
Plunderers woke Stealing yoiks
Wearing your gákti
means dealing with beasts
It's hard to quiet them,
the offenders get rich
They don't understand
they take from our hands
Mother is out of sight
and the fires die out
Duojár of tundra
Braidings of truth
With sinews of kin
our elders, our youths
yoiking
skiing
Though the shoe bands are firm
distress untwines them*

Sofia Jannok's Joik shows the strength of indigenous Sámi cultural elements and how useful they can become in contemporary discourses. As repositories of meanings, these elements constitute important symbolic resources employed by Sámi artists and activists to vocalize contemporary concerns by resorting to indigenous frameworks. The Čudit stories can indeed provide symbolic resources in dealing with contemporary issues. Similarly, the work of the anonymous Sámi artist and

activist group Suohpanterror⁶⁰¹ provides us with a further example of the contemporary reframing of Čuđit narratives and symbolism. In one of their protest posters, Suohpanterror issued a poster reproducing an image of a Čuđe from a scene of the 1987 film *Ofelas*⁶⁰² (image 165).

As Cocq and DuBois (2020) highlight, the Suohpanterror artists resorted to this easily recognizable image of the Čuđit, establishing a link between the contemporary mining exploitation of Sápmi and the Sámi storytelling tradition. This poster in particular, reproduces the image of a Čuđe. Here depicted as a cruel enemy that plunders, and kills the Sámi in the past. As Cocq and DuBois explains is inspired by the 1987 film by Nils Gaup but, gives a contemporary reading to the Sámi traditional legend of the Čuđit employed to address contemporary issues.

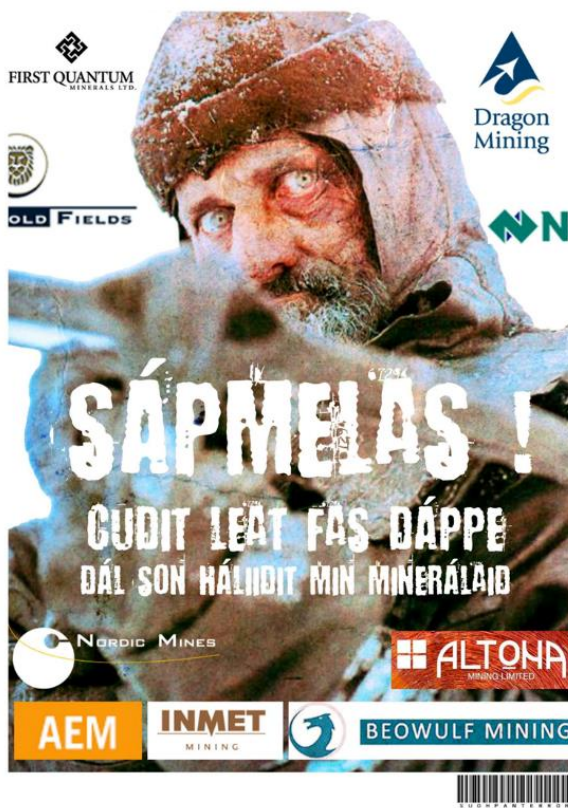


Image 165 Suohpanterror's Čuđit poster



Image 166: Suohpanterror's Gallok mine poster

⁶⁰¹ Suohpanterror is an anonymous Sámi artist/activist group active since 2012. With its provocative art-activism, based upon so called “disturbance” art posters, community art and performative action, Suohpanterror challenges stereotyped conceptions and representations of Sámi cultures. The name the collective has chosen for itself is a witty pun since it employees the English word “terror” with *suohpan*, the North Sámi word for lasso.

The collective’s work has gained the attention of the public as well as that of art critics in the Nordic countries and at an international level. Suohpanterror has been exhibited in numerous solo, street and group exhibitions in Sápmi, the Nordic countries, Europe and in Australia.

<https://suohpanterror.com/>

⁶⁰² This North Sámi word means “pathfinder”, which is also the title of the English version of the film

The poster reproduces a frame from Gaup's film where a Čuđe man points a crossbow at the viewer, looking at her through the camera. The blurred background highlights the face and the eyes of the Čuđe⁶⁰³. Interestingly, the logos from mining companies that are exploiting Sápmi resources on the Swedish side of Sápmi dots the poster in the background.

The text at the centre of the poster reads "*Sapmelas! Čuđit leat fas Dappe, Sal son haliidit min mineralaid*". Cocq and Dubois translate it as « Sámi people! The Čuđit are back and they want our minerals». According to Cocq and DuBois, this poster constitutes an important visual link that refers to both the traditional Čuđit legends and the actual lines from the 1987 film, the Pathfinder, providing the viewer with a reading of the condition of exploitation into Sápmi. This understanding of the poster and its message resonates with the emic reading of the poster. Jan Ivvár Smuk, a young Sámi activist and politician who is also a reindeer tender, has commented on the Suopanhterror Facebook page to this poster with the following statement:

«Skewers and shields have been replaced with directives and laws, and the armour has been replaced with a suit. At the forefront of the Čuđit Army comes Trond Giske on horseback, followed by his faithful armaments in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (my translation)⁶⁰⁴».

As in Sofia Jannok's joik, the message of the Suopanhterror poster is, in my opinion, twofold: the mining of Sápmi is not a new form of exploitation of Sámi people but the extensive methods through which it is performed are indeed new, a modern counterpart to the Čuđit raids. Nevertheless, as the Sámi defeated the Čuđit in the past through their knowledge of the local landscape, the implicit message conveyed by the resort to the Sámi-Čuđit framework is that they can do so today.

When referring to the Čuđit, Sámi artists and activists resort to narrative structures and lexicon that originates in ancient Sámi worldviews but that emerge as suitable in contemporary arenas as they encapsulate the centuries-long struggle for survival and self-determination. The Čuđit stories are important oral documents that bear testimony to the menace Sámi people perceived and the sufferance they endured through the centuries as the hands of their neighbours. If the Čuđit – i.e. the groups

⁶⁰³ The Suopanhterror poster of the Čuđe bears resemblance in the way it is designed to another poster from the same artists' collective: This poster too is a reference to the mining of Sápmi at the hands of major international mining companies. Here the artists deal with a specific mining action by the Beowulf Mining plc in Gallok/Kallak. Beowulf Mining plc is a UK registered exploration and development company that focuses its activities in the North of Europe. Having acquired the mining licence in 2006, since the early 2010s Beowulf has focused on the Gallok/Kallak mine along the Lule river, in Jokkmokk Municipality. A warrior representing the company menacingly points his sword at the audience. In the background, behind an army of soldiers carrying spears, reindeer graze the hill. Furthermore, the sword reflects the image of reindeers. These posters are emblematic of the Suopanhterror artistic and political commitment. Suopanhterror's posters convey important messages through symbolic images, which often draw on pop-culture icons, and are characterised by several layers of meanings.

⁶⁰⁴ *Spyd og skjold er byttet ut med direktiver og lover, og rustningen er byttet ut med dress. Framst i cude-hæren kommer Trond Giske⁶⁰⁴ ridende, fulgt av sin trofaste væpnere i næringsdepartementet.*

Sámi identified as such – posed a contingent threat, foreign wars fought in Sámi territories brought more systematic crises in Sápmi. All the aforementioned examples demonstrate that Sámi artists and activists are today relying upon the ancient Čuđit stories, although reframing, them to express and voice the concerns over resources exploitation in Sápmi through Sámi lenses. The figure of the Čuđit represents a form of symbolic continuity between the threats of the past and the threats of the present. this element connects the past and the present that threaten the survival of the Sámi people in the present and therefore in the future. Art in its multiple expressions and manifestations has re-proposed these enemies using these figures to denounce neo-colonial practices in contemporary contexts. As the example of the Čuđit demonstrates, selected cultural elements from Sámi past and from Sámi folklore have become important means of addressing contemporary issues faced by Sámi peoples throughout Fennoscandinavia. Numerous artists often resort such selected elements, making them dialogue with contemporary situations in order to denounce colonial practices or other form of oppression as well as to claim a space for Sámi people in the present and in the future. Thanks to the work artists from various disciplines, art – through artistic criticism (Berg & Lundgren 2020) and art activism – has become one of the most important ways to express concerns, fears and hopes about the future of the Sámi people.

Sofia Jannok's programmatic song 'We Are Still Here' enshrines in its own title the idea that the Sámi not only do not accept oppression but also resisted colonial assimilation policies and still exist as a people, an idea that, by defying colonial expectations of Sámi peoples as relics of the past doomed to disappear through art, epitomizes indigenous efflorescence. This message is conveyed in the lyrics as well as in the song's music video, which portrays Sámi artist Anders Sunna creating an artwork centred around the themes addressed in Jannok's song also by resorting to Sámi political iconic images, such as that of Elsa Laula (see images n167a, n167b, n167c, n167d, n167e, n168)⁶⁰⁵.

⁶⁰⁵ In chapter 7, I have examined Elsa Laula's political role in early 20th century Sámi political activism. Elsa Laula worked to denounce the poverty suffered by Sámi people as a consequence of the marginalization imposed upon them and her activism transcended the borders of the Nordic Nation States. Through her actions, Elsa Laula has become a symbol of Sámi political activism and a source of inspiration for many in the Sámi community, especially artists. Her image has become iconic and Sámi artists by depicting her, automatically evoke her legacy. Anders Sunna has portrayed Elsa Laula in a number of works and, through her iconic figure, has used his art to address many aspects of colonialism in the Swedish state's relation to the Sámi.

Conclusions

I. Themes and objectives

The main theme of this dissertation is a voyage through various expressions of contemporary Sámi cultures and values as well as an investigation of their roots in the past. This thesis retraces my own learning experience as a PhD student trying to grasp the complexity and multivocality of Sápmi. Furthermore, this thesis hopes to delineate at least part of the multiple layers of meanings embedded in and epitomized by Sámi festivals. Looking back at my experience as a researcher in Sápmi, festivals such as Márkomeannu and Riddu Riđđu have represented a privileged entry point into contemporary Sámi cultures and their socio-cultural dynamics. Festivals are indeed like prisms condensing Sámi cultural expressions in a small space and for a short time while simultaneously amplifying them by endowing them with visibility.

The topics I have addressed comprise methodological reflections about ethnographic research in an indigenous context (chapter 2), Italian perceptions of Sápmi and Sámi through the lens of Italian travelogues, publications about Sápmi by Italian scholars as well as contemporary films produced in the Nordic countries and released in Italy. I also delineated the context and content of a previously unknown booklet in which the story of a Sámi family who emigrated to Italy in the late 18th century is narrated (chapter 2). Conscious of the importance of historical context for understanding contemporary phenomena in Sápmi, I decided to examine recent Sámi history, focusing particularly on World War II, because for many Sámi communities this is a cultural watershed marking a stark change in lifestyle and hence constituting a break with the past from a linguistic and cultural point of view (chapter 3). After this analysis I proceeded with an analysis of the Márka-Sámi region – already introduced in the section on WWII – from a diachronic perspective (chapter 4). The following chapter (chapter 5) deals with local place-names as sites of ethnic confrontation in the Márka and addresses the establishment of three important Sámi institutions in the same area. The following chapter (chapter 6) provides an overview of festivals as social phenomena in Sápmi, focusing on three annual events, one of which takes place in Oimmáivággi, another in Loabák and the third in the Márka. The next chapter (chapter 7) talks about the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu festival, addressing its contents and its specific features. The last chapter (chapter 8) offers a commentary on episodes connected with environmental exploitation in the Arctic context, which is changing fast due to anthropogenic climate change, bringing Sápmi and its people at the centre of global dynamics of an unprecedented scale. Through the analysis of Italian travelogues and examination of the sub-Arctic in recent warfare as well as analysis of the imminent race for resources, this thesis helps to challenge stereotypes that construct Sápmi as isolated from the rest of the world. My analysis of Italian travellers' experiences

in the land of the Sámi shows that, albeit far away and difficult to reach, Sápmi was not only imagined but also visited by Italians at least since the 16th century.

The idea of Sápmi as remote and removed from global dynamics is further dismantled by the strategic centrality of this area during WWII. Furthermore, the centrality of the whole Arctic region is becoming more and more apparent in recent decades, with anthropogenic climate change posing environmental, social and economic challenges directly involving this area and its peoples, and affecting them disproportionately when compared with other geo-cultural regions of the world. The prospective exploitation of Arctic resources will have a long-lasting impact on arctic cultures and environments, with consequences that are currently difficult to foresee and dreadful to imagine.

A further element that I would like to emphasize is the constant tension over the centuries between heaven and hell, utopia and dystopia with which the Arctic has been invested. The sub-Arctic appears as the place of the imaginary and the imaginative to those who reach it or hear about it: it is either a pristine primitive paradise, where kind and child-like people live oblivious of the wider world, or a desert inhabited by wicked humans; if not both. For the local population these images had very concrete repercussions: for instance, the idea that in the extreme north of the Scandinavian Peninsula lay the door of Hell has fuelled an imaginary that mixed the exotic and the diabolical, with the result of a further exoticization of Sámi cultures. As demonstrated in Chapter 8, the idealization of the Arctic is an ongoing process. Current narratives concerning this region see it either as an empty space whose resources are ready to be exploited like a white Eldorado – an approach deeply imbued in colonial narratives – or as the site where the future of Earth is anticipated, with the melting ice sheets – and the large-scale consequences this phenomenon will trigger – looming over humanity and having in the Arctic peoples humanity's cannon fodder. Both these narratives exclude local indigenous peoples, precluding from them the opportunity – and the right - to speak for themselves. In light of these reflections, my aim with this thesis has been to show that Sámi peoples' self-representations – through politics and arts, which have in Sámi festivals a privileged site of expression – emerge not only as an act empowerment but also as an act of resistance against forms of symbolic marginalization such as those delineated above.

I chose the Márka as the primary site for my research because it is there that the Sámi festival Márkomeannu originated and still takes place. Attendance to this festival as a volunteer in 2018 inspired me, and led me to investigate the cultural and political context, which lies beyond these four days of celebration. The exam of this festival, its origins, its ideological grounds, and the long-lasting impact it has on both Sámi and Fennoscandinavian societies, offered me the opportunity to investigate a wide array of intertwined topics and provided me with the chance to address not only the festival

but also other topics connected with it. The analysis of different elements pertaining to the festival led me to address a wide variety of topics and issues that converged at Márkomeannu, but which are also part of Sámi people daily life for the good and the bad. In particular, I decided to focus on interconnected issues that were all enshrined in the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu festival, as I believe that they not only provide important clues about current Sámi issues but also offer thought-provoking insights into the festival's function as a Sámi cultural arena where political issues are addressed, discussed and negotiated.

The theoretical framework which informed the thesis, and that functions as a symbolic frame into which the topics covered in the various chapters are put into dialogue, is that of indigenous efflorescence, a concept addressed in detail in chapter 6. This concept proves to be especially suitable in contexts like the Márka and, more broadly, Sápmi. On various occasions, I had the opportunity to observe how the past has become for many a repository of meaning and a source of dignity where it was once a cause of stigma. As a result, local and collective pasts are becoming important means for local communities working to shape their own Sámi futures. In this respect, analysis of the Márkomeannu2118 festival plot reveals precisely the intersection between past and future in the present.

This thesis contains many references to Sámi Art. The analysis of various Sámi artistic expressions has enabled me to illustrate indigenous perceptions of, and reflections upon, the colonial experience Sámi people endured and still suffer. Art, in its multiple forms, helps to visualize contemporary subtle forms of colonization that permeate the interaction between Sámi and Fennoscandinavian nation states. By this means, it also gives form to otherwise amorphous forms of subjugation. I first became acquainted with Sámi Art at Riddu Riđđu and Márkomeannu in 2018. From then onwards, I slowly started to realize how much art has represented not only a means of expression for the Sámi but also a form of empowerment. It no accident that Sámi festivals are privileged platforms where Sámi Art finds a home. In the 1970s and 1980s art was a crucial instrument in the fight against the damming of the Alta river. Since then, it has never ceased to be a powerful tool to combat oppressive policies, as the recent case of Pile o 'Sápmi epitomizes. Not only has art been an important instrument against colonial attitudes on the part of the nation states, but also against power asymmetries within Sámi cultures. Art has been the voice of those who had for a long time being kept silent. Both art and festivals have proved to be sites of contestation against hegemonic narratives concerning Sámi cultures. They are also *loci* of social internal (re-)organization and sites of cultural (re-)production.

I soon became aware that, as Lowenthal efficaciously demonstrates (1996, 2005), also in Sápmi selected elements of the past have become repository of identity by endowing it with new meanings.

The goddess Sáráhká is emblematic of the intersection between past and future in the present. She was the goddess of fertility and today represents Sámi female empowerment. Her image – modelled upon the symbols found on ancient Sámi drums – has become part of contemporary Sámi iconography, being portrayed in clothes, on objects, becoming a theme in visual art and being tattooed on one's own body, in an act that incorporated the past by inscribing it into one's own skin. The fact the first Sámi kindergarten in the Márka was named after her indicates the importance, which was attributed to her in a community where Sámi non-Christian spiritual practices were no longer performed even though some of them were still observed. By naming a kindergarten after the goddess, the families involved symbolically entrusted their children to her care, fostering a connection between the past -embodied by the goddess – and the future -represented by children -. This is only one example of the continuous conversation between past and future where the latter is firmly grounded in the former.

In this respect, the essence of indigenous efflorescence as future-oriented has often emerged in the cases I have addressed in the thesis, with reference to both the Márka and the festivals. As the kindergarten named Sáráhká Sámemánák aimed at raising a new generation of Sámi children who could feel confident in their Sámi identity thanks to the positive environment provided by the kindergarten itself, so the establishment of the Gállogieddi museum aimed at preserving local history for future generations to cherish their past. Similarly, a cultural centre like Várdobáiki, with its numerous activities targeting both the elderly and the young, is determined to protect the local Sámi identity by encouraging people from all generations to cherish it. In so doing, it ensures cultural continuity in the region. The most striking instance of future-oriented indigenous efflorescence is, in my opinion, Márkomeannu itself, as it encompasses many of the elements fostered by the abovementioned institutions. Originally intended to foster a positive attitude towards the Márka-Sámi culture and identity, over the years the festival has become a major site of cultural renewal and today stands as a bastion of Márka-Sámi cultural pride. As a festival, it also enshrines the future-oriented dimension intrinsic in indigenous efflorescence. When the festival founders first organized Márkomeannu, they were in their teens and early twenties. At that age, their main objective was to free the local Sámi identity from a stigma that they themselves often experienced. In the long term, they succeeded in making the Márka-Sámi identity not only visible but also prestigious. A consequence of this is that, now that they are in their late thirties and early forties, their own children can experience Sámi identity with pride.

By employing a diachronic perspective, I addressed the process of indigenous efflorescence as it played out through the generations. When the mothers started the kindergarten and Sámi education

in the school at the same time, they did so in order to provide their children with a strongly positive self-perception as Sámi. They could not foresee how, in the course of few decades, their grown-up children, armed with pride in their Sámi identity, would establish a Márka-Sámi festival designed precisely to celebrate this identity. Over the next two decades, festivals provided an arena for children born in the Márka to experience Sámi culture at its best. Simultaneously, youth and adults – as well as some elderly – from other regions of Sápmi joined the festival in a public celebration that, though a circular process, contributed to valorising local as well as pan-Sámi cultural identity. As of today, the children of those who once were children are attending the festival, with the result that three generations converge at Gállogieddi in shared moments of identity celebration. All of this acquires even more importance in the light of 19th and early 20th century colonial predictions of cultural extinction. By their very existence, Sámi people today defy and defeat this projected course of events. This becomes even more relevant when we consider the theme of the 2018 Márkomeannu festival, which constituted a sort manifesto of indigenous resilience and resistance.

Such features were framed within a tale of a dystopian near future world where everything had been destroyed as a consequence of colonial greed and capitalistic myopia. In this future wasteland, the Sámi had found refuge in a protected area within their ancestral homelands. For the sake of the festival, the location of the Sámi haven was Gállogieddi. This tale is inscribed in the genre of indigenous futurism – which can be expressed in various ways, such as visual arts, theatrical performances, narrative literature, music and festivals – which, in itself, epitomized indigenous efflorescence. By envisaging indigenous peoples thriving in the future, indigenous futurism not only offers ways of coping with the present, but also of standing up for indigenous rights for the generations to come. For all these reasons, Márkomeannu2118 can be regarded as a locus of resilience and resistance and an arena for politically-engaged cultural activism.

II. #Márkomeannu2118: an imagined future inspiring a research into the local past and present

One of the sites where I carried out fieldwork is an area commonly known as Márka (Márku in the local language). I visited the Márka on multiple occasions, and I focused my attention on a specific location within this geo-cultural area: Gállogieddi. Furthermore, I devoted my attention to a specific timeframe: the end of July, when Márkomeannu festival takes place. The festival itself became the core of my reflections and the base upon which I started the investigations that ultimately led me to designing and writing this thesis in the way I did. The choice to focus my fieldwork research on a festival – a topic that has a long tradition in cultural-anthropological enquiry – was grounded in the awareness that Márkomeannu plays a pivotal role not only in the Márka but in Sápmi as a whole.

Since each local community – and the Márka-Sámi one is no exception – is situated within a larger regional and national context, in order to situate my research, I have focused also on the Márka’s historical and cultural contexts. As many other Sámi communities, the Márka-Sámi people were deeply affected by assimilation processes. The Márka-Sámi culture has traditionally been based on small-scale farming, with few cattle and sheep per homestead. The Márka-Sámi culture being addressed in this thesis is that of the communities living on the Stuornjárga⁶⁰⁶ Peninsula, in the Ofoten region, on the border between the Nordland and Troms-Finnmark counties. Until a few generations ago, these Márka-Sámi people spoke a local variety of the Jukkasjärvi North Sámi dialect (Kejonen 2020). Scholars (Storm 1993, Evjen 2007) have identified the origins of the Márka-Sámi culture in the merging of Sea-Sámi communities with reindeer-herding families who, in the late 18th century, decided to settle in the areas they had used for centuries as summer grazing lands. In the late 18th century, upon permanently settling in the area of Stuornjárga - today also known as Márka - and upon merging with sedentary Sámi groups, reindeer herders slowly shifted from an economy based on the management of reindeer herds to a new locally grounded farming culture. The Márka-Sámi community adhered to the Laestadian faith,⁶⁰⁷ but it also preserved specific cultural features bearing testimony to Sámi non-Christian knowledge systems. The memory of this recent past and the connections between Márka-Sámi culture and the Márka area is embedded in place-names, in the landscape and in the buildings dotting the hills and mountains of Stuornjárga. As it happened in many other regions of Sápmi, during the state-led assimilation process major changes occurred in the Márka-Sámi fabric of society. Sámi place-names were replaced by Norwegian ones and their use in public records was forbidden, leading to the erasure of the Sámi presence from the maps. This enforced obliteration of Sámi toponyms implicitly denied the knowledge connected to places and conveyed through place-names (Helander 2014). As Norwegian names became the only acceptable ones in formal documents, families were forced to take Norwegian surnames. In the course of few generations, parents started speaking Norwegian to their children to ensure they would not endure the same difficulties they had undergone at school. Ancient activities, grounded in Sámi worldviews or practices, were relegated to the private sphere or, as in the case of the joik (Sámi chant), completely disappeared in the area. In such contexts of cultural oppression, while some members of the community embraced a Norwegian identity to escape the stigma associated with anything identifiable as Sámi, others maintained their Sámi identity, which, according to my interlocutors, never

⁶⁰⁶ This Sámi toponym translates as “big peninsula” and refers to a stretch of land between today Skánit/Skånland-Tjeldsund (Troms) and Evenássi/Evenes (Nordland).

⁶⁰⁷ Laestadianism is a Christian movement inspired by the teachings of Laestadius, a Lutheran pastor whose mother was Sámi. Laestadius had worked as a pastor in Northern Sweden from the 1840s to 1861. His peculiar interpretation of Lutheranism quickly spread among the Sámi through their reindeer tending network of contacts.

completely disappeared from the area. Given the individual and collective different responses to Norwegianization, state-led assimilation has been a leading factor in the fragmentation of the Márka-Sámi society, a phenomenon whose consequences can still be perceived today and those events like Márkomeannu or institutions like Gállogieddi try to counterbalance.

In recent decades, as in other regions of Sápmi, members of the Márka-Sámi communities have implemented practices aimed at valorising the local Sámi culture, hoping to counteract the eroding consequences of a century-long cultural oppression that had relegated their culture to the private sphere. Nevertheless, the local society was heavily divided, with some members not being willing or able to acknowledge the Sámi past (and present) of the area. People who identified themselves as Norwegians often opposed initiatives carried out by local Sámi activists, resulting, in some cases, in open confrontation. It was in this context that local Sámi activists and politicians engaged in a multilevel struggle. They were fighting discrimination against Márka-Sámi identity and culture at the hands of local Norwegians (living along the coast), the Márka people who did not identify as Sámi (although their own families had Sámi background and strong connections with the Sámi cultures), and the hegemonic reindeer tending culture.

The analysis of the elements of this struggle – the festival concept, its premises, its implementations and the connections the festival concept has with wider indigenous artistic expressions and indigenous climate-fiction – led me to “unpack” the various discourses that informed the festival organizers when they developed the 2118 theme. Such discourses lead to reflections upon past and possible future wars, upon climate change, upon pollution, upon totalitarian drifts, and ultimately upon an increasingly threatened world while also introducing me to various elements of Sámi non-Christian worldviews as well as to eminent figures of the Sámi recent past. They also lead me to exam the local past in order to understand why a festival like Márkomeannu has represented such a watershed in the community. The exam of Márkomeannu and its ideological premises gave me the chance to examine the history of Sámi resistance against assimilation policies through the lens of the local Márka experiences. Through the lenses of a culture that endured colonization, Márkomeannu#2118 envisions a Sámi future shielded away from the downfall of humankind, in a haven built upon the implosion of the colonizers’ society. In this dystopic eutopia, at Gállogieddi Sámi cultures are the basis of existence. Besides reaffirming the Sámi presence in the present/future, this concept articulates contemporary concerns about climate change, especially in arctic contexts. Epitomizing indigenous agency and resilience while embodying hope, Márkomeannu#2118 symbolises indigenous creativity and politically engaged cultural activism, embodying a contemporary form of collective storytelling that both challenges western understandings of apocalypse and calls for action against climate change.

For all these reasons, Márkomeannu can be regarded as locus of resilience and resistance and an arena for politically-engaged cultural activism.

Although some of the topics may at first sight appear loosely connected with Sámi festivals in general and with Márkomeannu specifically, upon deeper examination the connections among them become more evident, showing the relevance of employing an approach that takes into consideration a multiplicity of factors in studying a single phenomenon. When I started this research, I intended to examine contemporary Sámi shamanism. For this reason, upon reaching Northern Norway, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork where I felt confident of finding people practicing forms of shamanism. The most suitable physical and symbolic place I could think of was the Isogaisa festival, which I had read about in the literature. This led me to attend other festivals before going to Isogaisa. These experiences changed my perception of Sápmi, causing me to reconsider my initial research question. Attending both Riddu Riđđu Ridđu and Márkomeannu convinced me that an investigation into Art and Culture festivals would prove to be a much more significant academic experience, given how important these festivals are for most Sámi people, in contrast to Isogaisa, which at the time was not highly regarded by the majority of my interlocutors. This was only one of the reasons why I consciously shifted the focus of my fieldwork onto other festivals, particularly Márkomeannu. Even if Isogaisa was an important arena for people practicing contemporary forms of shamanism, a consistent body of literature already existed, making it a highly documented – and investigated – event. Márkomeannu, on the other hand, attracted my interest for various reasons and, while carrying out a literature review of this festival, I realized that very little had been written about this event, especially in comparison with the extensive literature about Riddu Riđđu. Given all these reasons, I decided to focus on Márkomeannu with the aim of bringing to light the specificities of an event that was very little known outside Sámi circles. In this case, my initial aim was to address Márkomeannu as an expression of Sámi collective Márka-Sámi identity. My research question revolved around not only the genesis of the festival as such but also its ideological premises and its practical consequences for the Márka and its people. This objective brought me into contact with a local history, which was both traumatic and complex. Although specific to the local area and its social dynamics, this local history was reflected in many communities throughout Sápmi, enabling comprehension of dynamics, which were relevant to the whole of Sápmi. In its specificity, the Márka has been subject to processes connected with colonialism which constituted recurrent patterns identifiable in the whole of Sápmi and beyond. What is interesting is to address how these patterns interweaves with local dynamics, producing unique social contexts. This approach assists understanding of why, given similar premises and enforced policies, different communities developed in different, unique, ways weaving Sápmi into a complex and rich tapestry where every part shows a specific articulation of Sámi identity. In

this complex context, a growing number of Sámi institutions (established and run by Sámi) such as Sámi museums, cultural and linguistic centres as well as festivals have emerged across Sápmi, contributing to subverting colonial narratives by disseminating knowledge about Sámi cultures on the Sámi's own terms. In line with this reasoning, it is important to highlight the importance of self-representation – through arts, festivals, cultural as well as political institutions – as a form of empowerment and self-determination.

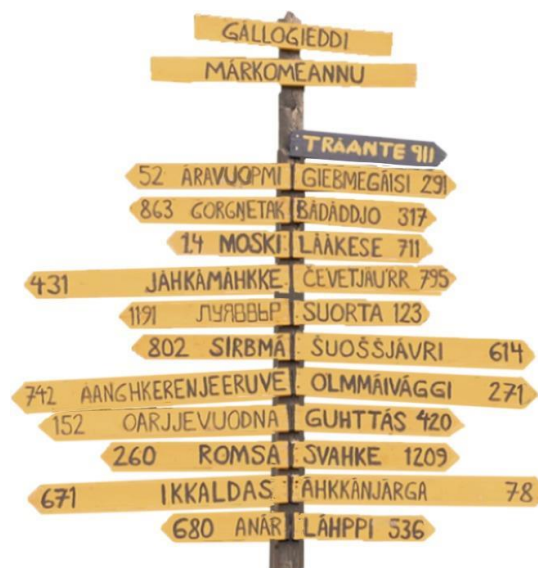
III. Concluding remarks and undecided futures pointing to new (research) directions

Throughout this thesis, I have covered numerous interrelated topics. Besides offering a review of Italian perceptions of Sápmi based on travelogues – some of which, such as those of Carlo Vidua, have until now only been partially examined in relation to Sápmi – spanning over four centuries, this work has also brought to the readers' attention a previously unknown document that proves the presence of a Sámi family in Southern Italy in the late 18th century. By examining and contextualizing this document, the thesis provides new insights into Sámi mobility in late modern Europe prior to 19th-century organized living exhibitions. Furthermore, this thesis is the first work that thoroughly examines the Márkomeannu festival by addressing the specific cultural and historical context of the Márka while also putting it into dialogue with other Sámi festivals, in particular Riddu Ridđu and Isogaisa. By resorting to indigenous efflorescence as an analytical framework, this thesis has analysed various Márka-Sámi cultural, educational and ethno-political initiatives. By showing the deep connections between the Márkomeannu festival and such initiatives, this thesis has highlighted how the festival, and local cultural projects and ethno-political actions, constitute different expressions of contemporary (Márka-)Sámi cultural efflorescence. All these initiatives are intrinsically oriented towards a collective Sámi future since the instances they forward are designed to ensure a better life for future Sámi generations. This feature was at the core of the 2018 edition of Márkomeannu and of its festival plot, which perfectly epitomized the future-oriented nature of contemporary Sámi cultural and political initiatives. Analysis of the 2018 festival plot has also demonstrated how selected elements or figures of the past have become important repositories of meaning in contemporary Sámi political and cultural discourses, a feature reflected in contemporary Sámi art.

As highlighted in Chapter 8, Sápmi is at the centre of international dynamics that are still difficult to fully grasp. This last chapter of this thesis is at the same time a conclusion of the thesis – since it covers the main topics discussed at the Sámi festivals I took part in – and a window on the future that is already taking shape in the temporal and economic-political horizon of which Sápmi is a part. The chapter is devoted to examining a series of phenomena that are currently occurring in the Arctic, and

in Sápmi in particular. The development of the themes outlined in this last chapter can offer important perspectives on contemporary Sámi society and on the challenges that it - as well as many other societies in the world - will have to face in the years to come as a result of climate change, the related mitigation policies, and also as a consequence of the predatory exploitation practices that are already taking shape in the Arctic contexts.

The themes I have addressed throughout this thesis allowed me to come into contact with a wide array of emic and etic cultural perceptions and representations of Sámi cultures. My hope for the future is to deepen the analysis of Italian imageries about Sámi peoples and how such imageries were fostered and reinforced through travelogues, children's books and other printed materials between the 17th and the early 20th centuries. I am confident that the analysis of the unpublished materials produced by travellers and scholars (Vidua and Mantegazza in particular) will offer important insights into Italian perceptions about Sápmi and, in the case of Mantegazza, into the construction of knowledge about indigenous peoples in late 19th-century Italy, when anthropology as a discipline was emerging. Another element that deserves further analysis is the booklet '*Istoria di un Lappone*'. It was not possible – due to Covid19 restrictions – to study the original booklet held in the Saint Genevieve library in Paris or to carry out archival research in Naples and Spain. Such research would allow a further contextualisation of the booklet and a deeper analysis of its contents. As mentioned in the thesis, Covid-19 is having a tremendous impact on peoples' lives throughout the world and such impact reverberates in all spheres of life, festivals included. For this reason, I deem it relevant to examine the effects of the pandemic on Sámi festivals. Such analysis would offer important perspectives on the impact of Covid19 on contemporary Sámi society, aware that it will take time to grasp the full scale of the effects of the pandemic on individuals and communities alike.



A. Glossary

1. Specific expressions and concepts used in the dissertation

Joik: a Sámi cultural specific form of music, characterized by a reciting singing style, repetition and variation based on short formulas and special vocal techniques. Joiks are considered as one of Europe's oldest forms of folk music. Joiks vary greatly across Sámi cultures. In English this term can be spelt 'joik' or 'yoik'. In the Nordic Languages it is usually spelt 'joik'. In the Sámi Languages, joik is: *luohti* or *juoiggus* (North Sámi), *vuolle* (Lule Sámi), *vuelie* (South Sámi), *leu'dd* (Eastern Sámi languages) (see among al. Graff 2004)

Gákti (South Sámi: *gáptoe*; Lule Sámis: *gáppte*): Upper part of the Sámi garment, the term came to indicate the whole garn. It is can be made with various materials, often wool. The colors vary and so do the decorations, according to the wearer's place of origin.

Siida: social unit/local community comprising of a small number of extended families and their territories. Historically, Sápmi was organized into dozens of *siidas*. The *siida* governance system allocated lands and resources to the use of individual families. The *siida* governance was never formally repealed but rather, increasingly overlooked and eroded. In the 19th century, the *siida* structures had been undermined to a point that the imposition of the settler colonial administrative system was relatively easy. The imposition and reorganisation of colonial borders in Sápmi also played a role in the erosion of the *siida* system.

2. Recurrent non-English terms

a) North Sámi (unless otherwise specified)

Sámi	English
Árbediehtu ⁶⁰⁸	traditional knowledge
Áŋku	Anxiety
Beaska	Winter fur coat
Boazodoallu	Reindeer tending
Davvi	North
Diedda	Applied art
Dievvá	hill or round mound
Duottar	Tundra, mountains
Gaisa	Mountain
Gakti	Sámi garn
Gallo	Boulder
Gállohat	Winter shoes made of reindeer fur
Gieddi	Meadow
Goahti (pl Goađit)	Turf hut known in English as turf-hut, is a stable structure, made of wood and covered with turf (Sjølie, 2013).
Gufihtar	Chtonian beings
Guoika	Rapids/Falls
<i>Hvisset</i>	Toilet
Jávri	Lake
Johka	River
Komager	Sámi summer shoes
Lavvu/Lavvo	Sámi temporary structure usually translated as tent
Luohiti Joik	Sámi “chant”

⁶⁰⁸ *Árbi* means heritage and *diehtu* knowledge. *Árbediehtu* « [...] clarifies knowledge as both information and the process, emphasizes different ways to gain, achieve or acquire knowledge. The concept indicates indissoluble ties between the past, the present and the future, which is validated by *árbi* ‘heritage: inheritance’ » (Porsanger 2010, 435).

Lihkahusak	unintentional body movements arising during Laestadian celebrations
Luhkka	Outer hooded garment, part of winter clothing, made from thick wadmal
Lulli	South
Máddu (pl Máddut/Máttut)	The great mother of specific animals
Meacci	Nature as in far from settlements
Meannu	Chaos, party, mess, riot
Mearrariika	Land by the sea
Morša	Walrus
Njannji	partner
Nuvttot	winter boots
Ofelaš (pl Ofelaččat)	Pathfinder
<i>Ráfi</i>	Peace
Samediggi	Sámi parliament (in Norway)
Sámegiella	Sámi language
Sápmelaš (pl Sápmelaččat)	Sámi (individual who is Sámi)
Sápmi	The ancestral homeland of the Sámi peoples
Siida	Indigenous Sámi organization units
Suohpan	lasso
Tjudi	The foes and enemies in Sámi story-telling tradition
Uldda (pl Ulddat)	Chtonic being
Várri	Mountain
Vuohtna	Fjord
Vuopmi	forest

Čirga	diarrhea
Čiermmis	Goosebumps

Table 1; North Sámi terms used in the thesis

b) Norwegian and Swedish

Norwegian or Swedish	English
Fornorsking	State-led assimilation process ⁶⁰⁹
Friluft Museum	Open air Museum
<i>lapp skal vara lapp</i>	‘Sámi should be Sámi’ (Swedish segregation policy targeting reindeer tending on the Swedish side of Sápmi)
Riksdag	(Swedish) Parliament
Samelov	The Sámi law
<i>Sjamanrådet</i>	The Shaman Council
Skrømtkveld	Frightening Evening
Storting	(Norwegian) Parliament

Table 2; Norwegian and Swedish terms used in the thesis.

⁶⁰⁹ Nordic settler colonialism

c) **List of Sámi associations, political parties mentioned in the thesis**

Abbreviation	North Sámi	Norwegian	English
	Gáivuona Samenuorat	Kåfjord Sameungdom	Gáivuotna Sámi youth
SSN	<i>Stuornjárgga</i> <i>Sámenuorak</i>		Stuornjárga Sámi youth
	Márkomeannu Searvi		Márkomeannu Association
IBBS	Iinná ja biras sámiid searvi	Hinnøy og omegn sameforening	
NSR	Norske Samers Riksforbund	Norgga Sámiid Riikasearvi	Norwegian Sámi Association
SLF		Samenes Landsforbund	the Sámi National Association
		Sjamanistic Forbund	Shamanic organization
		Arktisk Sjamansirkel	Arctic shaman circle
	‘Siida Isogaisa’	Isogaisa Sjamanrådet	Isogaisa Shaman Council

Table 3: List of Sámi associations and political parties mentioned in the thesis.

B. Locations in Sápmi mentioned in the text

Sámi place-name	N/S/F/R place-name	typology	Side of Sápmi
Ábeskovvu	Abisko	Village	S
Áhkánjárga	Narvik	City	N
Áltá	Alta	Town	N
Álttáeatnu	Altaelva	River	N
Áravuopmi	Vassdalen	Valley	N-S
Badje-Duortnus	Övertorneå	Town	S/F
Bájl gielda	Pajala	Municipality	S
Beahcán	Pechenga/Petsamo	Region	R
Birtavarri		Village	N
Bovelajávri	Nordelva/Pålvatnet	lake	N
Čáhcesuolu	Vadsø	town	N
Čohkkiras	Jukkasjärvi		S
Dielddanuorri	Tjeldsund	(former) municipality	N
Duolbá	Kvitforselva	River	N
Dundorajohka	Øverelva	River	N
	Bardufoss	Village	N
Duorga	Snubba	Village	N
Duortnus	Torne	Town	S
Duortnosjávri	Torneträsk	Lake	S
	Dyrskueplassen	Field	N
Evenássi	Evenes	Village and municipality	N
Eanodat (Aan. S: Iänuđâh)	Enontekiö	Village and Municipality	F
Gárasavvon	Karesuando	Town	S
Gállogieddi	Myrnes	Farmstead	N

Guovdageaidnu	Kautokeino	Town and municipality	N
Hárstták	Harstad	City	N
Iinnasuolu	Hinnøya	Island	N
Kárášjohka	Karasjok	Town and municipality	N
Rivtták	Gratangen	Municipality	N
Roabavuotna	Grovfjord	Village	N
Skánit	Skånland	(former) municipality	N
Skánik / Skearri	Evenskjer	Village	N
Stuornjårga	Lavangseidet	Peninsula	N
Snoalta	Kvitfors	Area in the Marka	N
Salsojavri		Lake	N
Loabák	Lavangen	Municipality	N
Lofuohta / Váhki	Lofoten	Archipelago	N
Máze	Masi	Village	N
Muoná	Muonio	Village	F
Muonájohka	Muonio älv	River	S/F
	Olderdalen	Village	N
Ohcejohka	Utsjoki	Town and municipality	
Olmáivággi	Kåfjord	Municipality	N
Rahkka	Bjerkvik	Town	N
Riehpovuotna	Repparfjord	Fjord	N
Romssa	Tromsø	City	N
Sáltejavri	Saltvatnet	Lake	N
Skoaberjávri	Skoddebergvatnet	Lake	N
Storjohka	Storelva	River	N

Ufuohtta	Ofoten	district	N
Veanskkejávri	Svenskevatnet/Kjerkhaugvatnet	Lake	N
Vilgesvarri	Blåfjell	Mountain	N
Vuoskkojávri		Lake	N
	Trondenes	Old parish and former municipality	N
	Foldvik	Village	N
	Tornedalen	Valley	S
	Sommervatnet, Nordvatnet Lavangsvatnet Langvatnet	Lakes	N

C. List of recurrent abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation/Acronym	Explication
F	Finnish
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IBBS	Iinná ja biras sámiid searvi / Hinnøy og omegn sameforening, Hinnøy and surrounding Sámi association
cli-fic	Climate fiction
K	Kven
SLF	Samenes Landsforbund, the Sámi National Association
NAOB	
NIKU	Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research
NESH	The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities
NVE	Acronym of the Norwegian Norges vassdrags- og energidirektorat (Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate)
NS	North Sámi
NRK	Norsk rikskringkasting, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
N	Norwegian
NSR	Norgga Sámiid Riikasearvi, Norske Samers Riksforbun, Norwegian Sámi Association
NSR	Northern Sea Route
POW	Prisoner of war
R	Russian
S	Swedish
SESAM	The Centre for Sámi Studies at the University of Tromsø
Sci-fic	Science fiction
WCIP	World Council on Indigenous Populations
WWII	World War II
UiT	University of Tromsø (Universitet i Tromsø)

D. List of Images⁶¹⁰

- 1) *Image 1*: North Sámi teaching materials from the textbook series *Váriin, Vákkiin, Vuonain* (North Sámi). These textbooks were published by ČálliidLágádus publishing house. The textbook series' title can be translated as "On the mountains, In the valleys, By the fjords". This textbook series has been developed by authors and North Sámi language teachers Toril B. Lyngstad and Edel Monsen. 12 books series has been designed for students who are learning North Sámi as a second language in primary and lower secondary school (photo by the author).
- 2) *Image 2*: 2018, Gállogieddi: this map of the Stuornjárga area displayed at Gállogieddi shows the area's old administrative division into 3 municipalities: Tjeldsund, Skanland and Evenes. Its original function was to signal relevant cultural heritage sites in the region. The site n 10 is the Gállogieddi farm-museum. (Photo by the author).
- 3) *Image 3*: Dr. Roche's "tweet" problematizing discourses about "endangered languages" credit: Gerarld Roche, <https://twitter.com/gjosephroche/status/1204582968745844737>
- 4) *Image 4*: bilingual (North Sámi and English) Toilet sign at Márkomeannu, Gállogieddi 2018 (Photo by the author).
- 5) *Image 5*: The island of Thyle, detail from Olaus Magnus's 1539 *Carta Marina* (public domain).
- 6) *Image 6*: The selling of wind to fishermen. Detail from Olaus Magnus's *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* original caption: *de magis et maleficis finorum* (1555:119).
- 7) *Image 7a*, detail from a broadsheet: *Auß Lap vnd Liefflandt* (1632). Currently held in the Bavarian State Library, Munich. The image is reproduced in Foster (2012). *Image 7b*, detail from a leafet of unknown origin, early 17th century. The man on the left, holding a rifle and carrying a bow and a sword is identified as a Lapp. *Image 7c*, from a broadsheet: *Seltzames Gespräch: So in dem Königl. Schwedischen Lager zwey frembde Nationen/ als ein Lapländer mit einem Newen aukommenden Irrländer/ von den jetzigem Zustand und Kriegswesen gehalten/ etc.* (Stetin, Schröter, 1632). The soldier in the centre, dressed in a furcoat, holding a sword and carrying a bow in identified as a Lablenter, akterbatuve spelling of Lapplanter/Lapplander, i.e. a Sámi, The image is reproduced in Foster (2012).
- 8) *Image 8*. *Carta Marina* by Olaus Magnus 1539, creative commons.
- 9) *Image 9*: *Nordkarta* by Andreas Bureus, 1626 (held at Kungliga biblioteket), map dedicated to Gustav II Adolf and Queen Maria Eleonora.

⁶¹⁰ Unless otherwised specified, the photographs that appear in these thesis were taken by me during my 16 month fieldwork in Sápmi.

- 10) *Image 10a*: Detail from Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina (1539)* Men in fur-coats riding reindeer and chasing an enemy army with bows and arrows and cudgels. *Image 10b*: Woodcut from Olaus's Magnus *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*. The image shows the army of Tengild, the king of Finnmark. Some of the soldiers are riding reindeer, while other are skiing. The two buglers are on foot. The soldiers are called Birmanians in the original text (1555:130).
- 11) *Image 11*: Men in fur-coats on skii. Two of them hold a bow and arrow while the third holds a spear and carries a sword. In Olaus Magnus's *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555:134). The original text describes them as «*ferocissime gentes*» and «*Scrifinnes*».
- 12) *Image 12*: Detail from Olaus Magnus's 1555 *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555:144) Sámi people's archery training. The Sámi are recognizable as they wear fur-coats. The original caption reads: *De Instructione Saggitandi*
- 13) *Image 13a, 13b, 13c* Details from Olaus Magnus's *Carta Marina 1539*, Sámi men and woman hunting on skii (notice the tents in the background of image 13.c).
- 14) *Image 14*: Sámi peoples (two men and a woman) hunting on skis Detail Olaus Magnus *De Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* 1555, original caption reads *De Venatione Lapponium* (1555:146).
- 15) *Image 15*: A Sámi in a fur-coat, wearing fur gloves hunting with an arrow on skis, detail from Andreas Bures *Orbis Arctoi Nova et Accurata Delineatio* 1626 creative commons.
- 16) *Image 16*: "Lapps' costumes" Jan Luyken, costume book 1676.
- 17) *Image 17a* Buerus's 1626 map, detail, the Sámi settlement of Jåhkâmåhkke (LS) also known in Swedish and Norwegian as Jokkmokk (here written Iokomuka). A *lavvu* (Sámi tent) or *goahti* (turf hut) symbolize this Sámi winter settlement. *Image 17b*: Buerus's 1626 map, detail, the town of Duortnus/Torneå (here written Torne). *Image 17c*: Buerus's 1626 map, detail of the Duortnus/Torne Lappmark and its water system. The lake Torne Trask (Torne Tresk in the map) is visible in the right left corner. From the lake, the river Duortnus/Torne Flode descend till it reaches the Gulf of Bothnia, where the town of Duortnus/Torneå (here written Torne, at the centre of map n20) is represented with a church and other buildings (in contrast with the representation of the *goahti* (turf huts) symbolising Sámi settlements.
- 18) *Image 18a*: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed along with two Sámi men and two Sámi Children. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads «*Guido Puccio con in suoi "amici" Sámi*» (Guido Puccio with his Sámi friends). *Image 18b*: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi settlement. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads: «*Campo di nomadi Lapponi*» (nomadic Lapps' camp). *Image 18c*: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi settlement. The photo was taken

in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads: « *La tipica capanna dei Lapponi* » (*Lapps' s typic tent*). In the text, Puccio refers to this “hut” with the epithet “the Doria palace of the Tundra” (*Il palazzo Doria della Tundra*).

- 19) *Image 19a*: Italian author Guido Puccio photographed a Sámi man posing with a few copies of *La Tribuna Illustrata*, the newspaper Puccio worked for and in which he published the reportages from Sápmi. The photo was taken in the Duortnosjávri/Torneträsk area – Laimolahti – in 1932. The original caption reads « *Anche in Lapponia si legge... La tribuna!* » (In Lapland too they read *La Tribuna!*).
- 20) *Image 20*: *Istoria di un Lappone*, 1832 frontispiece.
- 21) *Image 21*: Monument to the Skolt Sámi and the Finnish people who were forced to leave the Beahcán/Petsamo region after WWII and fled as refugees in Ivalo. The Sámi identity is conveyed by the typical Sámi cradle, the Sámi shoes and the *gákti* (Sámi garment) worn by the woman. Avveel/Ivalo (photo by the author, 2016).
- 22) *Image 22, 23*: Reindeer and a soldier near an aircraft. (<https://ww2aircraft.net/>).
- 23) *Image 22, 23*: Reindeer and a soldier near an aircraft. (<https://ww2aircraft.net/>).
- 24) *Image 24*: A Soldier and a reindeer on a frozen lake near Nautsi village, on the Finnish side of Sápmi. The man may be Sámi or might have purchased the leather shoes from a Sámi (source SA-kuva)
- 25) *Image 25*: A reindeer is kept at lead by a Sámi man. Another Sámi man is talking with soldiers in arctic camouflage suits (source SA-kuva).
- 26) *Image 26* *Karášjohka/Karasjok*, 1945. Sámi women and some cattle share the living space where once the family house used to stand. Only the chimney survived the Nazi fire (<https://www.kvinnehistorie.no/artikkel/t-5966>).
- 27) *Image 27*: Italian Newspaper's article '*La Finlandia Guerriera*' (the fighting Finland) '*La Domenica del Corriere*' vol 4:42, 21-27/1/1940
- 28) *Image 28*: *The beacon-man* Cover of '*Domenica del Corriere*' 17-23 December 1939; Text by War correspondent Indro Montanelly; illustration: Beltrame.
- 29) *Image 29*: War Scenes from Finland, Cover of '*Domenica del Corriere*' 21-27 January 1940. Finalnd War Scenes, a reindeer-drawn Finnish supply column, during a surprise attack by Soviet aircraft. (illustration A. Beltrame).
- 30) *Image 30*, The war in the Arctic, '*La Domenica del Corriere*', 27 September 1942 (Illustration A. Beltrame) The war in the Arctic -surrounded and taken by surprise by German soldier on the Murmansk front, a reindeer-drawn Soviet-sledge battalion is completely annihilated.
- 31) *Image 31*, Cover of the July 1943 edition of '*La Domenica del Corriere*', the reindeer convoy.

- 32) *Image 32*: Article entitled The reindeer mobilization, appeared in 'La Domenica del Corriere' on 11 July 1943.
- 33) *Image 33*: Newspaper's A little people at the fringes of war. Do you know the Lapps? 'La Domenica del Corriere' 1942.
- 34) *Image 34*: Monument to the soldiers who fell at the front. Reindeer are commemorated alongside soldiers. Murmansk (www.sva.no/).
- 35) *Image 35*: Home-made waymark signaling the location as a site of the *kultur-vandring* (cultural hiking). The presence of the flag of Sápmi signals the Sámi profile of the event.
- 36) *Image 36*: one of the locations selected for the 2019 *kultur-vandring*.
- 37) *Image 37*: Panel-board set up at Grovfjord old school during Grovfjordagen 2019. The event organizers hung reproductions of posters, documents, images, and proclamations dating back to the Second World War (photo by the author).
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Appendices

Appendix A

Márkomeannu Festival's posters

In this appendix I include all the available Márkomeannu posters, in chronological order. The 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2017 2018 and 2019 posters are discussed in chapter 6 while the 2012 poster is analyzed in chapter 5.

2001



Image 100: 2001 Márkomeannu poster (photo by the author).

2002

No festival was held in 2002

2003



Image 101a: Márkomeannu 2003 posters (photo by the author).

2004



101b: Márkomeannu 2004 posters (photo by the author).

2005

WIMME
MARIT HÆTTA ØVERLI
TORGEIR VASSVIK
ELIN KAVEN
MÁZEMÁFIA
SÁMI JIENAT
DEANULUOHTELÁVLUN

MÁNÁIDMEANNU • TEÁHTER
MUITALUSMEANNU • KURSSAT • SEMINÁRAT
ČAJÁLMAŠAT • DATNEFILBMÁFESTIVÁLA

Márkomeannu 2005

25.-31.07.

Gáalogietti sámi musea, Evenášši Gáalogieddi samiske museum, Evenes
www.markomeannu.no +47 950 12 686

Image 102a: 2005 Márkomeannu 2005 poster (image courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2008



Image 99: Márkomeannu 2008 poster (photo by the author).

2009



Image 171: Márkomeannu poster 2009 (Image courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2010



Image 172: Márkomeannu poster 2010 (Image courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2011



Image 173 Márkomeannu poster 2011 (Image courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

Sámi festivála Evenáššis ja Skániin

GAÁLLOGIEDDI
26.-28.07.2012

52 ÁRAVUOPMI	GEBMEGÁISI 291
863 GORONETAK	BÁDÁDDJO 317
711 LÁÅKESE	MOSKI 1,4
431 JÅHKKÅMÅHKKE	ČE'VETJÅU'RR 795
1191 ЛУЯВВВР	SUORTA 123
802 SIRBMÁ	ŠUOŠŠJÁVRI 614
742 ÅANGHKERE	OLMMÁIVÁGGI 271
152 OARJJEVUODNA	GUHTTÁS 420
260 ROMSA	SVAHKE 1209
671 IKKALDAS	LÁHPPI 536
680 ANÁR	ÅHKKÁNJÁRGA 78

MÁRKOMEANNU

Sofia Jannok | Ann Jorid & Ámmun | Duolva Duottar
 Transjoik | Max Mackhé | Ángelit | Ánnámáret Ensemble
 Lovisa Negga | Hanne Grieg Hermansen
 Mearkkalaš Mara & Dávástus | Gáfegohppu ja sálbmagirji
 Eirik André Skrede | Anna Kråik | Cecilia Persson
 Albmi Adventures | Liddno Adventures
 Ánte Mihkkal Gaup | STORSTÅLKA | Skániid girjie
 KOLT Márkomeannu | Marion Palmer | Rawdna Carita Eira
 Ellos eatnu! | Anders Larsen 2012 | Niko Valkeapää

Image 78, Márkomeannu 2012 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2013



Image 103: 2013 Márkomeannu poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2014

Not available

2015



Image 105: Márkomeannu 2015 poster (photo by the author).

2016



MÁRKOMEANNU
28.-31.07.16 | EVENÁŠŠI | SKÁNIK

**AGNETE JOHNSEN • ELLE MÁRJÁ
ÁGY • FELGEN ORKESTER • ARVAS • AMOC
MARJA MORTENSSON • RAVGGON
TROUBLEMAKERS • NUORAIÐ SESSIONS
ANJA STORELV • IVAR MURBERG
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Image 106: Márkomeannu 2016 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden).

2017

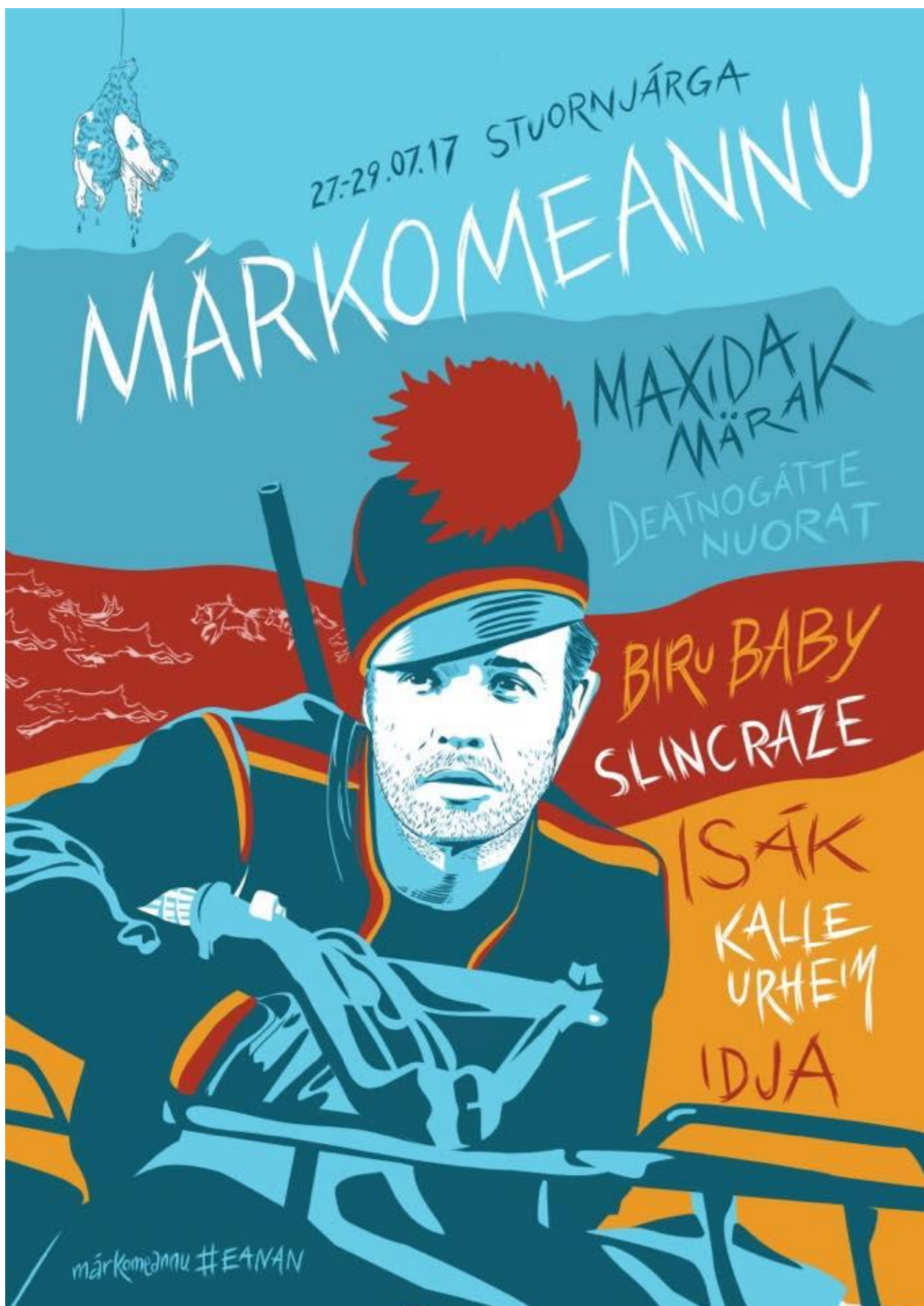


Image 107a: Márkomeannu 2017 poster (courtesy of Sigbjørn Skåden);

2018



Image 108b: the Márkomeannu 2018 (photo by the author).

2019

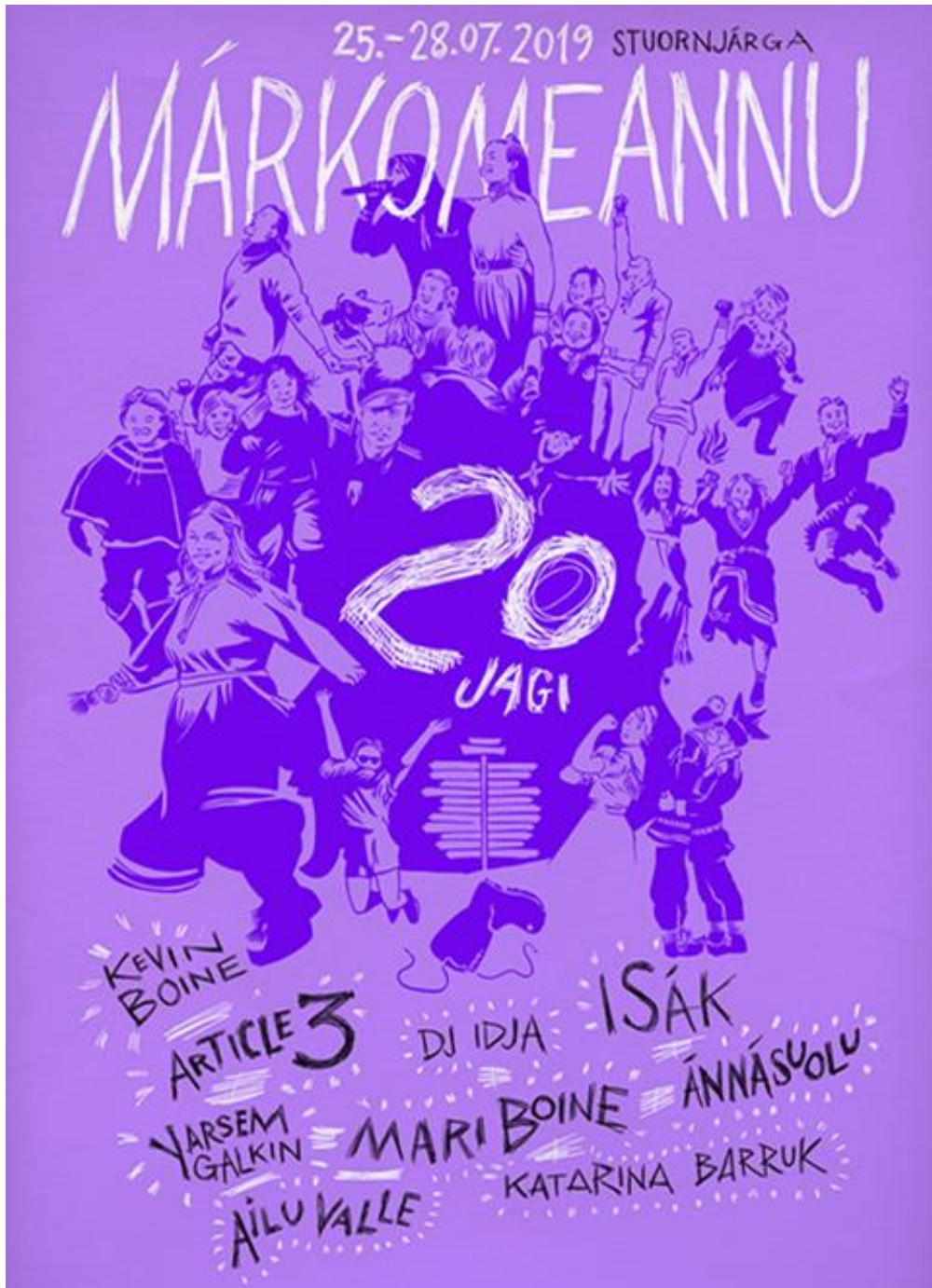


Image 109b: Márkomeannu 2019 poster (<https://rostkommunikasjon.no/>).

Appendix B

Interviews

accompanied by a short biography of the interlocutors

In this section I report some of the interviews I made during my field research. In particular, the interviews reported here are those whose extracts are quoted in the thesis. Some interviews took place remotely due to the pandemic but also due to the distances within different locations in Sápmi. Nevertheless, most of the interviews took place in the city of Tromsø. Four of the interviews took place at the festival site. In general, I have always tried to carry out the interviews not during the festival but at a later time, in order to give my interlocutors the opportunity to enjoy the event without the stress of the interview. At the same time, during the festivals I have had many informal conversations whose contents I reported in my field diary. On the basis of these informal meetings, I later elaborated the themes of the semi-structured interviews. These interviews were usually carried out in offices or public places such as libraries or bars, all locations selected by my interlocutors. The interviews that I report in this section are those that also appear in the thesis, some are more extensive than others based on the circumstances and needs of my interlocutor. Some interlocutors preferred that I not record the interviews and that I only take manual notes, others instead asked to be able to view the interview before I used it for the thesis, still others asked to be able to supervise the extracts cited within the thesis. Each interview is preceded by a short bio of the interlocutors. The information I reported – all disclosed by my own interlocutors – allow the readers to better understand the life experiences of the interlocutors.

Anne Henriette

Anne Henriette is a young Sámi politician (born in 1993) from the Marka. Since 2017 she has been a member of the Sámi Parliament, elected for the Norwegian Sámi National Association from the West Sea constituency. She is also a staff member of the Sámi Council, where she works in the Cultural Unit. She was the Márkomeannu festival producer in 2018 and she is currently a member of the Sámi parliament for NSR.

interview 27/10/2019 via Skype Torino-Alta

Erika: So, may I ask you, the Tunnel, it was the very first thing I noticed when I got there. I mean, that anyone noticed I guess, since it was so, how to say, it? Visible?

Anne Henriette: Yes, the tunnel, well, it was kind of a complex construction with both the sign inside but also we had four speakers pointing so that you had different layers of sound. Or you would come from the star darkness and then into this. You heard bees and birds and like this safe, idyllic paradise like soundtrack. So you have a sound.... What do you call it? sound designer, Anders Rimpý did a really cool job at designing sound... and we talked about it after a festival one of the things so we didn't have time to do that I really wish we had time to do because I think a lot of people miss out that he plays a lot of sound installations around the festival and you could listen to the house and the wood would kind of sing or speak or something. So the tunnel was Yeah, it was exactly that that was it was meant to do, kind of transform and sort of take you away from the time you were in and then Okay, now I admire you. So, yeah, that was one of the main installations to this concept, the tunnel and also the stage and the area.

E: so, they were part of the scenography. But what about the drawings? Sunna Kittí's drawings... how did you end up having her drawing and exhibiting them at the festival?

A-H: When this concept was born, and with her drawing style, and intelligence around the science fiction world, it was clear to us that it had to be her from the start. So she was kind of one of the first names we had written down and decided that she should have the main exhibition. Because, yeah, it was just so clear to us. This gut feeling and also seeing her work. She's such a good artist, and she manages to express something, not just beautifully drawings, but they also express a story. So we contacted her and we had a couple of meetings talking about the concept and her ideas, and then we kind of just possible ideas, she came up with some sketches. So we had some comments, change some background, and then and then we ended up those 10 like main pieces that we printed out and used for the exhibition.

Interview 2/3/2021 via zoom Torino-Alta

Erika: Ok, so, to start, can I ask you about the festival concept and the theatre performance, the implementation of the 2118 festival concept...

Anne Henriette: Yes, sure. So the theatre performance, that's... it had kind of different parts during the weekend started with the opening when when the three kind of spirit guides were where the the Sámi people in 2118 had managed to build like a quantum bridge was our theory to bridge the gap with Saivo where were some spirits where it's like the Sámi afterworld and kind of call these three guides, spirit guides back to guide, to help the society. So each of them had a specific kind of role. And we've chosen we've chosen them to kind of help with a specific

theme so and Elsa Laula Renberg was chosen for her ability to kind of you like the people in a in a cause And we also another part of this theater performance was that that we had installed this installation around on the festival area with like, sound installations that required you to listen to woods to hear noise. And, and they kind of had a tour around these installations, and talked about history and then in the connection to, to earth and woods

E: this festival concept for Márkomeannu 2118 is quite elaborate and complex... but, it was even more complicated than that... wasn't it?

A-H: Yes, another part of this kind of concept of ours that we we didn't fully expand upon on this short weekend was that we kind of imagined there to be indigenous safe bubbles all over the world, many societies that had managed to survive this Apocalypse, and that these societies were connected through Earth, earth, and tree roots. So the roots of trees and plants were like an underground blanket that kind of connected the world and that people communicated through earth and the nerves of plants. So that was also a part of like the theatre performance. And the theatre performance was really kind of thing that was supposed to connect the dots of installations and concepts and, and design and everything.

E: thank you, really. And what about the idea of setting it in the future?

A-H: This future view was kind of an easy way to get people to understand that we made an extreme world where the world is no longer in danger, it is done. But at the same time, it plays on this that... there is only now, either way. So we wanted to challenge people to discuss themes of time and manners of living, quite challenging them and putting them into different kinds of time zones are not the same time they are here now. So it was both practical because it helps in explaining the backstory. But also, a part of our goal with this concept was to inspire guests to discuss deeper things than than just read through the performance or this art.

E: a guy from Jokkmokk told me he took part to this kinda of discussion... i was outside the lavvu but i didn't understand Norwegian back then so i did not really get, i mean, the idea ok but the things they were discussing... can you tell me something about the lavvu performance?

A-H. Yes, the Storlavvu meeting... that was, the discussion during the festival, they also have like, a meeting in a big *lavvu* where we have like, those kind of decision-making meetings. Like a "parliament". We went back to history. Research said that, usually when, when issues had to be solved, in [pre-colonialized] Sámi societies, one way of doing it was by sitting in a circle in a *lavvu* with representatives from different smaller societies, or *siidas*.. And they kind of had that rule of consensus. So they discussed until they agreed, instead of this voting system that exists in this world. So then the discussion was, "okay, how do we move forward? How do we rebuild? Should we flee the planet?" if you have a quantum bridge, you should also likely be able to kind of build a bridge to other planets or dimensions. Hence the question... "should we stay and build here? and so on and so on?" And and I don't know, I don't think they agreed on something. But the concept, the important part was that consensus, conversation instead of parties and voting, thinking instead of the kind of democracy way of ruling a society, [it was important] that they discussed until they have an agreement. So we wanted to kind of also play around with that, okay, how, how can we solve things in a society with consensus, can we agree without having to vote.

E: this is very interesting indeed. So many interesting things to examine... and the idea of the quantum bridge and the three people from the past... But what did you want to convey?

A-H Well, that was also what we wanted to kind of challenge our audience to not only attend the festival for you know, the... not only for like music and partying and socializing part of it, but also kind of provoke some thoughts around this, okay, how, what would Sámi art be what is the safe place for us and also kind of build up under this resilience that we see in a lot of indigenous communities to kind of at the same time, remind ourselves that we could kind of survive anything. But that really kind of start a conversation on the festival on on among the The answer in in these topics with art and governance and in the society and how we can kind of uplift each other instead of instead of criticize, what what I think often happens in in a minority societies or indigenous societies that have been simulated is that we have this internalized hatred that we are very kind of, we are like, we have this internal police, we are very fast that actually kind of arresting each other if we feel that we step over the line and the lines are fine, but the majority society, when we kind of kind of

E: why did you choose the topic for the 2018 edition?

E: but I was wondering, why did you choose this topic for the 2018 edition?

A-H: Well, I think it started, well, we have, the Márkomeannu has like a program committee that sets the program each year and we started out with like our initial annual meeting. And then the idea kind of spread we saw that in in Sápmi, at that time, we had just started having more and more of these anonymous artists. So we have had, I think the first one was Ailu Valle, which also premiered in Márkomeannu a few years 15, I think. And we started talking about why and how this would kind of look in a more dystopian world. And then we also wanted to do kind of, I had a vision of wanting to do the festival that kind of had a theme, because we had seen in 2016 when ,when Márkomeannu did the queer poster, that entire festival kind of developed into a theme and the artists kind of took it to heart and we had the feeling that kind of stood together all the program posts, we wanted to do a proper like concept festival. We landed on this. I think it was both because of the anonymous artist kind of things starting to, to come more and more to the stage in Sápmi. And and we also talked about how would Sámi because Sámi art has often been kind of by like, majority society Fine Arts experts, they set the Sámi art is kind of easy and always kind of reactive. And like protests art is kind of what all we have. So we, we were kind of, provoked by, by that, and also talked about how, how would really Sámi society be if it didn't have to kind of fit into a majority of society? How would we got burned ourselves? How would the art look if there wasn't kind of the constant need to protest? So out of that will be ok. And then we were also talking a lot about climate change and the world kind of going to shift to this kind of that I think it was kind of a mood all over the place in 2018. And then, in retrospect, it has gotten worse. If we wanted to kind of play around with that thought. And also, it was the year after the big 100 year Jubilee in Trante that, so we were playing around with, how can we kind of incorporate also some history into this? And then we have this, okay, this old kind of mentors coming from the spirit world to kind of help us so it was kind of it grew into that from many factors. But beneath the one thing to kind of play around with, how would it look if we, how would the Sámi parliament, for instance, look into if it didn't have to fit into kind of a western world? And how would the artists respond, and also this, this idea with the safe bubble around the festival, that it was kind of a safe place. So we wanted people to kind of have the experience of going into a place where this is kind of our place and land. Yeah. I think if I, that that's what at least what fell into my mind. I was like, only three years ago, we planned it. So yeah, it does,

E: may I ask you about the name of the tyrant? I mean, it is a pun but, can you explain it to me in more detail?

A-H: Well, it was kind of kind of a fun reference for us because I'm on the norwegian Side. So beside often, when, when the majority person kind of talks about, like a, like a representative for the Norwegian society, it's all or all like Norwegian. So the first name comes from that all lies kind of like this definition of like colonizer first name, and then tsjudi is, was kind of, like a hint of the history of, of the, to the people that used to raid Sámi villages before. So we kind of wanted a name that had some fun puns to it, but also with some some historical references that can be like played with. So that's why it's Ola Tsjudi, the we didn't, we didn't kind of put a lot of talk about it, but we wanted it to be a pun. And so it was also kind of a bit funny, even though he was like a dictator, evil dictator, controlling person. like I said that Ola, first of all, it's Ola Nordmann, Norwegian, male, white guy, standard kind of name they use when they talk about that demographic. So. So it was so clear reference to kind of contemporary issues and colonization. So we wanted the name to kind of when you hear it, then you automatically kind of know that this is not, this is the enemy. Or this is kind of the force that's trying to exploit us.

E: that's just amazing. It is really like a cultural reference for insiders! But, can you tell me why you selected Elsa Laula, Anders Larsen and Jakko Sverloff?

E: So. each of them had a specific kind of role. And we've chosen we've chosen them to kind of help with a specific theme so Elsa Laula Renberg was chosen for her ability to kind of connect the people in a in a cause. Jakko Sverloff... He was chosen, because of his ability to rebuild a society... because he was part of the Skolt Sámi that were driven out of their homes and forced placed in a completely new and not really good place for them to start a new society that he kind of managed to. He's kind of a symbol of the resilience, the resilience of the Skolt Sámi people. So he was chosen for his, his, his forcing kind of rebuilding something from ashes. Larsen was a local, local person and he was the one who wrote the first Sámi novel if I'm not wrong, *Beaiveálgu*⁶¹¹. And he talked a lot about the Sea-Sámi culture and how that was on the coast of Sápmi, how they lived, how they worked with the conflict, how the colonization had been there and with the identity part. He wrote very good [pieces] about identity. So he was chosen for his ability to make people able to be proud of identity or have like, a language to talk with. Jakko Sverloff, he was chosen [as the subject of a theatrical performance held at Márkomeannu], because of his ability to rebuild a society, because he was part of the Skolt Sámi that were driven out of their homes and forcedly placed in a completely new and not really good place for them to start a new society. But they kind of managed. He's kind of a symbol of the resilience, the resilience of the Skolt Sámi people. So he was chosen for his kind of ability to rebuild. something from ashes

E: I would like to ask you now about, well, this whole Covid pandemic has brought to light some issues and when you think of Sápmi, divided by national borders, the impact on the pandemic made the structural violence so visible, all of a sudden. Can i ask you what do you think about it?

A-H: it most important to remember in the climate of the entirety of the northern part of these countries in the spring and summer was that in Norway, we even had like this, *sørlig karantene*, quarantine for people coming from the south. And the and the national borders were closed. So a lot of the smaller Sámi communities didn't really want people together. At least not people traveling to these small vulnerable societies. So I think Márkomeannu, as well as the main festival, they did that out of respect for the Small society there. And they have the children's festival in August I think. So for like the local children to make sure that something at least

⁶¹¹ Bæivve-Alggo (1912)

happens locally. So as I see it, I think, in the perspective of COVID it's hard to imagine it being done in another way, when, when locally nobody wants any kind of big events now, yes. Because even if you if you made a concert and kind of say it was for local people, there was no way of guaranteeing that people wouldn't travel in and you would most staff would have to travel there either way.

E: yes, it would have been very dangerous to have so many people from everywhere in a place like Evenes... where the infrastructures are, well... not like those of major cities, and the population who lives there, many elderly people... it would have been a hazard...

A-H: So yes, no, it would have been very dangerous. Somewhere when people were afraid, of course, and are afraid of COVID. I think that it could be, I think it would be much more sensitive to take the opportunity of, I think the opportunity, I haven't myself been a part of the festival the last year, but I think that the opportunity in Oslo was kind of opportunity that were given to them, and they took it and did the best they could out of it.

E: and what do you think about the impact of Covid on festivals? I mean, the impact has been massive of course but, from your perspective?

A-H: I think that the Sámi society is so dependent on these meeting places. So to go another year [without Festival], I think both mentally for the Sámi people, we need to meet and have a place where we are the majority and to kind of get to enjoy our pop culture because because that isn't a natural part of the majority societies culture yet. And I also think that for instance, the Duodjer... when there are no markets now, so they don't get to sell their products. So it kind of hits both artists and the audience. It hits handcrafters it hits everyone in the Sámi society when the meeting places are shut down.

With all the Sámi festivals, you know, we are so dependent on the national borders being open. Because it's very, very difficult to imagine Sámi festival with only participation and artists and staff from one side of the national border. Usually all the time and festivals, they have staff and artists and audience and everything from like, all over Sápmi. Yes. So I think waiting to see how the pandemic evolves and I think either way, as I have understood this, we still have quite a way to walk before we are back to normal. So, I'm of course hoping.

E: In a way, the Pandemic showed the real nature of borders, made their power apparent. It was like, bringing the attention back to the divisive potential of borders, even here, with the nordic international trade and cooperation system...

A: [Before Covid] we didn't really think so much about how the national borders really affect us. But what I think the COVID19 pandemic has really awoken some reflection inside me exactly on how the national borders are kind visibly forcing us into, like a system of existence that we have. They have been there now for so long that we have kind of learned to coexist and how to kind of work around the borders. But now that the borders that we are used to being open, at least between Norway, Sweden and Finland, are close, I think it has also made us aware of how locked out the Russian side of Sápmi has been for a long time. Now, it's, it's equally hard to get to Finland and Sweden, and we have families that live close to borders that are split into people. If this was to happen, for instance, in Norwegian families, there will be outraged if they were not able to see their family for like a year. And so and there are so many kind of layers also to the national border. For one, it's it makes like that we always talk Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish Russian side of Sápmi southmead, instead of being able to talk just us about Sápmi, yes, it forces us to have three Sámi Parliaments, it forces us to work with not only the taxation rules in one country, but in three or four countries. It forces us with the

Russian side to work with visas. So I think we haven't really reflected upon how much administration goes into actually existing within this life. Yes. And that that really has kind of been brought to light.

E: but, do you think now people, i mean, non Sámi people in Fennoscandinavia, will start grasp the problem? Of the borders imposed upon you i mean.

Anne Henriette: you would think that this would have brought a new awareness to the government's but it doesn't seem it does. No, I must say, I find very little understanding in the governments and I think that, like, for instance, the reindeer herders, many of them are dependent on being able to move across the border lines up here North the herds going for winter, and summer grazing and so on, and I think even for them, there has been quite a lot of work into them actually being able to kind of do their job without having to quarantine. I think it's a wake up call also, for Sápmi to, I think the COVID pandemic has, has really shone a light upon how, how much of the colonization is still going on and how also all the injustice that's around them, the injustice and also that people are kind of because of the borders being closed, I think we are communicating maybe even more across the borders now than we did before the pandemic and I feel like it's kind of this, this wave of kind of cross border cooperation in like in another scale and has been before because we naturally want to fight off this feeling of being divided. so important for us to feel like one and now we are really kind of really been shown that we are divided by the national borders and we have tried to find ways to do something about that.

E: Luckily enough, there are the media. Sorry, luckily enough, you have the social media and the internet. And zoom. it's really like it made all the difference, I guess.

A: Yes. it does. And then Sámi society and organizations are really, really good at using them. And then again, you have that both the national media, but I think also we have, maybe, yeah, because they have also been kind of working inside the borders. So Sámi media, Norwegian side, right above, Sámi things on the Norwegian side. And the same with the other Nordic countries. And which is also kind of a paradox when you when we always say that we are one people in four countries that we all got, at the same time, we have kind of been so used to the borders that we have, we have just unconsciously, kind of become divided.

Erika: So, to go back to the 2018 edition, may I ask you about “resilience”? I noticed the posters with Resilience written as a graffiti on them? why did you chose this word?

Well, it is a word but it is what it means that matters. To us, it is like,... well... We are kind of taking back the power to define ourselves, cuz' ... So we're kind of taking back the power to tell the story ourselves and also taking back the power to kind of and ending this trauma loop that has been, there we have been given by the years of assimilation, colonization. Resilience? Is a way to understand that we have the power to, to separate, to separate the bad emotions in the loop, from the experience so that we can kind of break free from this pattern we're in, and the Sámi society these days are really, really working on some really structural difficult things that maybe before people have been trained to kind not to lift because of the fear of being stigmatized. [...] but we are finally taking the power to talk about these things and try to change them and I think this “resilience” is kind of the “resilience of heart”, this “resilience of soul” that we understand that that we Sámi, the Sámi culture is wise, Sámi culture is not damaged. It's just the patterns we were forced into [that are damaging]. And Márkomeannu has my opinion is... I feel so privileged to have been able to work with the festival because there's such

a collective consensus in this that, Márkomeannu dares to make a political standpoint, there's to lift this difficult subject, [that it] is not afraid to be stigmatized. So there's really strong resilience in the festival, to define the truth by our own souls and hearts and not be not be confined or boxed in by, by the system we live in. And of course, it applies on layers upon layers, it also applies to the Sámi people and not accepting for all the way down to the Alta action in the 1980s, to now that we have this, this copper mine in Kvalessund, so if there's a resilience in the people that I'm really proud of, and that I think is one of the core values to the Sámi people, [them^l being so strong. We are really, the Sámi people are, if you want to call it if you.. If you compare it to other indigenous cultures and minorities, the Sámi have... yeah, we are not the culture that has the worse state, right now. The Sámis are *Ofelaččat* in the indigenous world. They fight for international indigenous rights and so on. So I think this resilience kind of plays into all layers.

E: and, what does it means to you?

A-H: I think resilience is kind of just a signpost to something that is innate in minority cultures, or people that have to kind of die out there that are forced to take a stand point towards identity and awareness, and nature and society and system structures. And I think there was definitely that we are able to put a word on it. Okay, it's probably because we are highly educated. But I think I think the words are just name tags on something that already exists. And we are able to kind of make do in the system, because we have been forced in and chosen to kind of learn the system, to be able to take back the power to not be a slave to the system anymore. And the Sámi, the semi people are one of the most educated indigenous peoples in the world, if not the most educated people. So and that has been so important.

(Anne Henriette, Interview, 19/9/2020, via webex).

Emma Skåden

Emma Skåden is a Marka-Sámi woman in her late 30s at the time of writing this thesis. Emma grew up with her mother, father and older siblings – Sigbjørn and Magnus – in Lantedjevva/Planterhaugen in the Marka. She was active in the Marka-Sámi community, first in the local Sámi youth organization *Stuornjárga Samenuorat* and later with the organization of *Márkomeannu*. She has worked as an editor and collaborator with her mother Asbjorg Skaden's publishing house *Skaniik Girjie*. Emma attended university in Tromsø, from which she holds a masters in Anthropology. She currently lives in Tromsø, where she works for the *Samediggi/Sámi Parliament*.

Interview 15/9/2019, Tromsø

Erika: So, thank you for your time.

Emma: no problem. So what do you want to talk about?

Erika: well, I have so many questions... but, let's start from the beginning... well, the *Márka* is quite a very popular concept. Yeah. And people don't really agree over data., can you help me out with it? Of where the *Marka* is...

Emma: of course! [laughing] borders? or how long it is? just where it is? when I think, when I say *Márka*, I mean, the small villages or whatever you can call it but the small places that stretch from one point to another, is that in the... well, up there were sort of where, where where the valley. Yeah, on the hills. Yeah, you have to drive it.

Erika: Yeah. But like, What does *Márka* mean to you?

Emma: What do you mean? What it's like?

Erika: Is it a way of living, a kind of community? Like, is it geographical? Is it...

Emma: it's both it's well, it's, it's what this is a geographical thing. But it's also. Yeah, it's a community. And it's an identity to be fair (Emma Skåden, interview, 3/2/2021, Tromsø).

Erika: But you have always used this word, *Márka*. Yeah. to define the area.

Emma: We might have used *bygda* like, you know, village like, but still *Márka* is. Yeah. But still, *Márka* is more specific. Because Yeah. And also, it has been really, it's earlier, it's been really negative thing, you know, like being a *Márka*, a *Márka Same* or *Márkalapper* has been really like a negative. Oh, yeah. Oh, you're from *Márka*. You know, because that's always like, sort of where the Sámi have been, if that's been living Sámi in the area, it's always in there. It's never been, you know, by the coast or by, you know, the municipalities. You know, the main center, and it was like, well, you've been there...

The *Márka* is quite big and you know, you don't always meet everybody from the other side of the border you know, you have the municipality border and the county border as well. If you want to, you can actually like never meet the people on the other side because you know, when you go to school you have your friends there.

I definitely know better my side of the *Márka* [the area falling within the borders of Troms County]. I went to school on that side. And the people I went to school with and I interacted more with were from that side. I do know the other side as well. I often went to visit those places.

Youth schools would go for school trip, the kindergarten would go out there and you know, cook some sausages or other food. Yeah, in the in the fall, when it got dark, we'd have something called "story night" or "scary night", where you actually just went up and then sit

and listen to the old days or you know, the elders talking about scary stories, and then you'd be really fucking scared.

Erika: do they still organize these scary night?

Emma: Now... it's not anymore. But you know, I think that's also why we all had a really good relationship with that area

Erika: and what about the Sáráhká Sámemánák... why did your mother and her sister started it?

Emma: I think the goal when they wanted to start this kindergarten was to, to let us kids grow up, or go into kindergarten and grow up with the Sámi culture, and language to an extent. But yeah, but just to feel safe, to have a safe space where we can do that without, you know, it being weird, or it being something else, or something different or something, as it maybe would have been in or not, maybe it wouldn't have been, and was in the kindergartens that were at that time, because where, where were the kindergartens at the seaside? And that, that goes for both, you know, Skanland and Evenes, for both the municipalities. [when the kindergarten was established] it was at about the same time that there was the starting of the actual education. or the Sámi language education. So that was also a same, almost the same point. Yeah. In 1987, or something like that when my mom and some others actually started to claim and wanted to start, like the Sámi kindergarden at home, firstly, and also the education, the Sámi language education. And mom had met Mari Boine. Like, once, when I think it was them, they were students or something here in June. So like, they're both originally teachers.

In my mom's generation when they when they fought for the rights, you know, they did really, you know, fought for rights, they fought for, like, you know, being able to give us an education in the Sámi language, being able to have Sámi kindergarten, it was it was basic rights, basically, it was more. Not, no, no, but you know, it was it was sort of well, yeah, should have been, but yeah. And so that was a hard it was hard political struggle. And so, the front's were really like, really hard. And so the discussion was also really, really bad. It was read as really a terrible, terrible discussion going on in both newspapers and you know, everything.

The *fornorsking*, the Norwegian assimilation, deeply affected people, the generation of [our] great-grandparents. My grandfather and grandmother though... they were never in the closet, they had no shame on who they are. But they did not speak Sámi to my mother, my uncle and aunts. They learnt the "kitchen Sámi", the Sámi spoken with the elders, with the visitors and also when they didn't want kids to understand. And the kids did not let their parents know they understand [the Sámi language]. It was the heart's language

And also the fact that after the war, you were supposed to, then, you know... we [the Norwegian State] built up this sort of national level thing. And everybody was supposed to be given a chance. And, you know, so was a lot of focus on that. On being all the same [i.e. Norwegian]. And also, prior to that, of course, was the assimilation process, which was really, really strong and hard. on, you know, our grandparents and great grandparents generation, so that sort of, of course, that stayed with them as well. And that follows a follows many generation.

This was back in the 1980s. and also the '90s. You know, basically but still 80s mainly. So everybody then at that time, [...] sort of was like "Sámi equals politics" or saw "me as Sámi sort of equals fighting" or I don't know, it was really like that, and it was in many ways.

But when Márkomeannu started, yeah, it was politics for sure it was politics. Of course it was. But still now, you know, when a few years went by it, it sort of changed to be more like, you know, oh, Sámi isn't jist... "doesn't have to mean that it's politics" or, or, you know, "fighting for rights" or arguing or something like that. Sámi here now is just, you know, enjoying music or enjoying culture or meeting people. And that's what Márkomeannu has done in this last couple of decades, this last 20 years. [This is] what we have done, and what the next generation, as I call the next generation of the crew, has done. We've, oh, what's called in english... you know, made it a little less dangerous or not dangerous. No, but it's called before earlier. Less demanding or less, you know, it's not that scary, or less scary for people to actually be Sámi. I don't know, in lack of better words to prefer, but it's less scary for people to join in or to, you know, hear the Sámi [language]. I don't know, it's, it's sort of normalized, More normalized, I guess. From being from being, you know, an identity for just some people, for some families of like activists, who were really in the front, it's become sort of a more normal thing for kids nowadays, or for people, and to get a new gakti, for either Márkomeannu or to, you know, actually be a part of Márkomeannu, not just coming there to sort of drink and fight. Something people probably still do. But you know, there's assholes everywhere. That's just how it is, but but from, you know, from going to actually to actually embracing it more, you know, to embracing the Sámi culture more and not, or their Sámi identity more and not being afraid of, sort of, Okay, if I now say that I'm a Sámi, or ,hey found out I own a gakti. I'm going to have to go into the fight is like putting on, you know, an armored suit. But it's not anymore, you know, to put on to put on the gakti now. You know, it's not the same as when we did it when I did it. When we did us youngsters 30 years ago, it was almost like, you know, it actually almost felt like sometimes do when you put on the gakti, you put on your armor, and you have to have, like, you know, you have to have your guard up. Because then you most likely have you have to have some sort of fight verbally or, you know, something, but now it's not. And I think maybe that's what a lot of people also felt. I don't know. But now it's not bad anymore. At least not for more it still is, you know, it's not picture perfect, but it's better and it's so good achievement for something started as a small local event

Erika: And what about the museum? Gállogieddi? How was the place selected?

Emma: I think it was due to the one that owned at the time, Martin Myrnes. he contacted IBBS. He's Cato's [one of the founders of Márkomeannu festival] Grandad. So he was, you know, he was the owner of it. And then yeah, I think he had the idea of, yeah, he wanted to some maybe something too, and then he contacted IJBS. And then they sort of fell in the boat for it. So that's, I think, why it's just, it's always depends on the person's initiatives. And that museum is so important for us, in the Márka. Because, before the museum was started, it was sort of like...the only thing you saw was one thing in Finnmark, you know, but now, well... [thanks to the Gállogieddi museum] things are changing.

Erika: in the Márka reindeer herding is not part of the local Sámi culture, isn't it?

Emma: Yeah, it is [not our way of being Sámi]. So that's what I say to most of us. But to some, yes. The reindeer herding life is really rare. Especially to most of us, especially up in Márka. None of us doing it, except for my cousins. But they do it on the Swedish side of the border. That's from their dad. He is from a village on the Swedish side. So for them, they have like, one feet in each sort of boot, but they do also see the other way of being Sámi]. They've grown up in Márka, and also in their father's village where they have the reindeer on the Swedish side. That's [the idea that Sámi have to have reindeer to really be Sámi] also a thing I think that our parents' generation wanted to change, you know, to change the meaning of Márka-Same the meaning of, you know, that it wasn't a negative thing, but you can't use that

as a, you know, an insult anymore. You shouldn't do that. And then we, we took it further, we were really proud of it [the Márka-Sámi culture]. We always, always would be like, well, what kind of Sámi are we then we're like, we're Márka-Same. We are Márka-Sámis. And everybody would be like, What the fuck is that? And we're like, and then we're sort of explained something? Well, you know, we don't have reindeers. But we are like, but, you know, we had in common was our grandparents' [way of living]. They had like, a combo thing, you know: they had farms with sheep and cows. And then in the winter, they'd go on Lofoten havn, fishing. It was a huge thing to actually do, then back in the days. So yeah, and we were really like, focused, on that. We're really focused on pointing out the fact that you can be a Sámi and not knowing upside down on a fucking reindeer but I know exactly how to do this and this, tend the cows over the calf. So with the sheep or, you know, stuff like that. I know how to use the tractor really fucking good. This is Sámi culture and this is also a Sámi identity and thing, it's not, you know, just what you see on TV or just, you know, just the reindeer

Not that we meant that the reindeer is not very important because it is really important for, you know, for most Sámi, but and also for our great, great grandparents, they were, you know, they had reindeer, they were of real importance. But to us, it's what to most of us it's never been. And it was because that's not that's not what a Sámi.

Well, the stereotypical Sámi would have for the festival, gakti from Kautokeino or Guovdageaidnu. And had reindeer. And I had neither. Nor the language at some point. So, yeah, I guess I probably feel the pressure a lot because people would expect me to be like a card-picture. And I was like, No, nothing like it. Which was also one of the points of the festival. Yeah, why we always would have like a focus on a cow instead of a reindeer. We'd never have... if we would have a new logo, with an animal in it, it would most definitely, not be a reindeer, because we were really obsessed with it. It would be a sheep or a cow.

You see, it is like... our parents, or our parents' generation, wanted to put us, well put Márka back on the map. And we wanted that to.

Erika: well, you quite managed!

Emma: mhm, you know, we tried. I guess we did. Yes, you can say that.

Erika: and why did you select Gállogieddi as the festival location? Why did you choose to have the festival there? I mean, it is a lovely place but a bit complicated to have a festival there... you can see that you really wanted to have it there... that it was important...

Emma: Yes... well, mhm.. but also, I think, I don't know. I think it was someone that said once, I can't remember that, well. Something like, well, to use this old place, like museum or an old place for this kind of thing, like our festival and all, So I can't remember who it was who said it, but someone said once, then well, knowing that these ancestors, they are our ancestors... I think maybe, you know, that they are proud of the kids starting a festival because they understand that. They've understood by now that the youth didn't start this festival to be able to have a new place to party, they started it because they want to show how proud they are about their Sámi identity and thus also how proud they are of their ancestors, and they're, so to say, taking it a step further, I guess. And that's also the thing that in my mom's generation, when they when they fought for the rights, they did really fought for rights, they fought for being able to give us an education in the Sámi language, being able to have Sámi kindergarten, It was basic rights, basically, or so should have been, but yeah. And so that was a hard political struggle.

And we knew it was an important place with a lot of history, a delicate place, under many points of view. But we promised to treat it [Gállogieddi] with respect. And we really meant it. Because this wasn't a place that was, you know, just a place for us. As I said, we all had a relationship to it, and a good one. And we, yeah, we didn't want to disrespect anyone living or the dead, or the, the ones living there, but you can't see. Especially those! We didn't want to, you know, piss them off. So, yeah, so we, I don't know, but that was our idea. And it worked.

Erika: and what does Gállogieddi mean to you?

Emma: Gállogieddi has always been to us us that started it [Márkomeannu], [Gállogieddi] has been an important place, that meant something for us. It's the farm itself, it's a museum now, but the farm itself was originally... you see, the last persons that lived there was the grandfather of some of the guys that started the festival, you know, and everybody had like, some sort of relationship to it. And in the '80s, the Sámi organization, well, not not the youth organization, but you know, the, the one that started in the 70s or 80s, IBBS, they started to restore it together with the owner at the time, who was the granddad's of well, some of the crew and Runar's granddad's for example, to restore it to be like a museum. So so they did that and, and we've always sort of been there and like, a lot of us has been guides, as summer jobs up there, like and have been guides up there. And a lot of thing would happen up it's go look at Gállogieddi, when we were kids, they'd be like well, different sort of things happening. Like youth schools would go for school trip, the kindergarten would go out there and you know, cook some sausages or Yeah, in the in the fall, when it got dark, we'd have something called story night, where you actually just went up and then just sit and listen to the old the old days or you know, the elders talking about scary stories, and then you'd be really fucking scared.

I think that's also why we all had a really good relationship with that area. And, and we wanted to, when we realize we had to move the festival from a different place [Dyrskueplassen] because it wasn't really practical anymore. It wasn't. If you wanted to grow, we couldn't have it, where we had it. So we started to think about options, and I, I can't remember whose idea it was. But we were, everybody agreed that Gállogieddi would be a really nice spot for it. Really, really nice. But then the problem was, of course, that it's a it's a museum, and you know, you're gonna have to deal with that. But we still didn't manage to come to an agreement with the Evenes municipality, who are the ones that sort of managed the museum. But also, there's an owner who had a saying. So at that time, the museum had a board, which consisted of the municipality of course, but also some locals and the owner, So all we had to do really was to get the museum board on site. And that was a really huge problem, because, well, they were our parents [Laughing]

Erika: so it was all in the family?

Emma: or among relatives or, you know, because I think at the time, the board consisted of, well, someone from the municipality, obviously, and then there was the owners, or someone representing the owners of the museum, which was the old family who lived there... it was like, Cato's mom or uncle or something. I think it was Cato's uncle, he is the one that sort of inherited the ownership from, from his dad. So yeah, and then it was someone from the Sámi organization who were also like, "well, the kids want a festival. don't they?". So, you know, it wasn't really a vote. But we, we promised to treat it with respect. And we really meant we really want to do it, because this wasn't a place that was, you know, just a place for us. As I said, we we all had a relationship to it, and a good one. And we, yeah, we didn't want to disrespect anyone living or the dead, or the, the ones living there, but you can't see, those especially we didn't want to, you know, piss them off. So, yeah, so we, I don't know, but that was our idea. And it worked. But,

you know, we didn't have for the first couple of years, we didn't have like, the stage. The stage wasn't there. And the, you know, the tent where we had the food wasn't there. And the ones you know, where the sound people are, wasn't there. So what we did every year was ok. But we had to build it, build it, every year. We put the stage on the you know, you've been there so you know, where you stand and look at the stage and then you have on the on the right side, you have this sort of old platform where the crew usually stands. So yeah, that was the stage for. Yeah. So we just use to this sort of building things!

Erika: wow, this is amazing. But I was wondering... why did the old Stuornjargga Samenuorak ceased to exist and you made a new Márkomeannu association? I mean, it was still the same people working there?

Emma: We were like, you know, the local youth when we started the festival, and then at some point, we saw that we had to... change that because we [as a festival] couldn't be connected to just one political organization. And that's because the festival wasn't to be that kind if political. The point of the festival was the political thing. But it didn't have to be exclusively political. So we had to detach the festival from the association, the political association. So we did that. Because we, thought that it will be more inclusive. For others who maybe didn't, I don't know, feel like being an asset? Or were not [affiliated] with NSR. Because It was the point of the festival? Sort of, not that not that kind of political if I can say it was, yeah, it's a cultural festival. With a strong political statement, of course. But cultural.

Erika: And now? You said you are no longer involved in the festival's organization even if you still are, to an extent... but well, not in the staff.. how was it? To...

Emma: it was, it's difficult letting go in that sense of, well, "and now what?" Oh my God, it's almost like oh, "who's my kid dating now?" It's almost like feeling like " Who is this person that my kid is dating?". It's actually like that. I've had that feeling this year [2018] to be fair, because the producer is not from Márka.

Erika: but you said you were happy with their work...

Emma: Yeah. And I'm really, really proud of it. And that's also something that I sort of, I've thought about a lot. Yeah, we should be proud of it. And that's what I said, we we are, we're proud of it. You know, the founding mothers and fathers are proud of it. And I'm also really proud of the next generation because most of them are not from the Mara. They do not have any connections at all. Yeah. The only connection they have is that they were involved in the festival before.

Erika: And they managed to keep it like, as Márkomeannu is!

Yes. And then they know exactly. So once I saw how they worked, I was like "Oh shit", but at the same time, I was like "okay", but I know, Even though you know, they, they've joined in after I sort of left, but still I knew that they had been in the crew for some years. And I thought, Okay, well, then they know. Yeah, they know how to do it. Or they learned. Yeah. And they know also the meaning of the festival and I think... well, they would understand how not to ruin this. And they did. So, yeah, I'm really satisfied. And I'm so glad to actually see that other people, like, from the outside [form outside the Márka] can have the same, or I don't know but more or less, the same feeling towards the festival as all of us. So as we, you know, the old bunch, still are here to help, but also, of course, leeting them doing things their own way. Which, you know, they have to do, they can't really always do things as we did. As long as they have, you know, as long as the spirit is that, as long as this sort of basic thing is there, it's ok. It's like

remodeling your house, I guess, you know, at some, some of it is still there, as long as you can recognize it. Because what I've heard many times is that it didn't really do now is like a man who managed to stay loyal to itself. That's not the data that I bought. It's more like an impression people gave me but also that it has become more than it once was. Also, for people not from the Márka. People who do not belong there came all the way from Sweden, from Finland. So it managed to become like a pan Sámi event. Yeah, being from marginal like, to pan-Sámi

Erika: thank you Emma, really. It has been really inspiring. I will switch off the recorder now...

Interview 11/5/2020, Tromsø.

Erika: So, I would like to ask you a few things... you told me that at some point parents in the Márka stopped speaking in Sámi to their children...

Emma, Yes... indeed. Well... It was mainly during the war and in the afterwards. They did not teach the language to my mother. She wasn't alone... in other families it was the same. And for the same reason as them. Her identity and value as a person... The reason for them choosing not to speak Sámi to, to Mum, you know, it's just because both just the way it was supposed to be. I don't know, they didn't really well. I don't know. It was just after the war, they were supposed to be good Norwegians. And also, maybe they thought, well, it'd be better for them to learn Norwegian properly. I don't know. So they did that instead.

Erika: and how was in the Márka during the war?

Emma, well, mhm... it wasn't like in Finnmark. It wasn't like that. You had the Germans, with all the war. The war was there but we didn't have the burning, no. I think that stopped, in the north of the county. So... but even though, you know, they still felt the war, of course, but... not to that extent. Our places and our things were not burnt. We didn't have that. Or... they [small laugh], they didn't have that. My grandpas' generation

Erika, and the Márka, I mean, last time you explained it to me but I was wondering, how is it to grow up there? During your childhood I mean, how was it?

Emma: well, yes... Márka, is small growing up there sort of. At the same it is not. It is quite big. You know You don't always meet everybody from the other side of the border. You know, we have the municipality and the county border as well. If you want, you can actually like never meet the people from the other side[...].

Erika: But the Márka itself... I mean, I find it difficult to frame, with people... they talk about Evenesmárka, and then the Márka [...]. Is it like... two different entities?

Emma: it is. Márka is the general sort of thing. Like, it's from Evenesmárka to... Nipen? Evenesmárka is one of the... because you have... Evenesmárka, Kvitfjos, Myrnes, Storelva, Snotta, Trossemark, husfjor, Planterhaug, [...inaudible], Eirikjura... all of those are Márka.

Erika: mhm

Emma: and Evenesmárka is one of them. It's the name of like one of sort of places In Márka.

Erika: but that side of the river [indicating the Norland side of the river on a poorly hand-made map I made on a piece of paper] is all Evenesmárka or...

Emma: No no no... no no... is Evenesmárka, Storelva, Myrnes, Gállogieddi... it depends, it depends on whom you ask how much you sort of... cut it up.

Erika: ok, so I can go and look for them on the map. It is much easier...

Emma.... Yeah, yes. Evenesmárka is like a huge pileup for a lots of... like... south of Myrnes... or south of, well, I don't know... I don't really know what they call them, in general term. I have small like... so someone can say, but it's more like...

Erika: an umbrella term?

Emma: nooo, it is more the farm's names... the old farms name you know... where you have the houses over there so there are loads of them... I do not know all of them, to be fair.

Erika: and on this side you said Kvifirs?

Emma: Kvitfors. Yeah.

Erika: Planterhaugen which is the farm where you grew up...

Emma: Yeha, or where we are from.

Erika: And the farm was... Lillegarden

Emma: yeah, lillegarden. And then, I don't know... it's lots... Trossemark, Eirikyura, you can find them on the map, to be fair... I think if you just find the sort of Planterhaugen, you'll see... cus it's lot... and I know that side better because, you know... I turned on that side, because that's the municipality where you are from and you know, the schools are, because when I went to school I went on that side and we had the school... and that's why I know that [side] better than the other side.

Erika: Thank you Emma, it was really helpful.

Emma: no problem! Nice chat.

Erika: indeed.

Isalill

Isalill is a young Sámi woman from Kirkenes, Sor Varanger. She born in the late 1980s and she was raised in Kirkenes. She later moved to Tromsø and Oslo to attend university. She studied teaching education and North Sámi, a language she did not learn as a child. A trained teacher, she has worked both in Oslo and Tromsø as a teacher. She also collaborates with NRK Sámi and with Sámi cultural institutions such as Riddu Riddu. she has organized North Sámi courses for beginners and she has also been the leader of Tromsø Samenuorat.

Interview, 17/9/2019, Tromsø:

I: it's definitely a subject [of discussion], like... now we, my family, live in one of the few houses that wasn't burned down. So... but I didn't grow up there. And yeah, and my grandmother's or my grandfather's house, the house where he was born and raised, they [the withdrawing German army and the Russian air force bombing the town] didn't burn that either. And I think that's just a coincidence, because I think they [the Germans] just didn't have the time. And my grandfather, he was like, 12-13, during the war. So he had a lot of memories from it. He didn't talk a lot about it when he was alive. But my... my grandmother has told me a lot of stories about, about him during the war, so it's quite, it's a very, it's an important part of... like... our family's history.

E: He didn't have to move away from Finnmark?

I: No, they weren't evacuated, as far as I know. And I think that was because they had the farm. And a lot of my grandfather's brothers worked on the on the sea as on these big ships all around the world. So a lot of them weren't even based in Finnmark during the war and after the war. In the 50s and 60s, my grandfather worked on the sea as well. So he was traveling a lot. So they weren't evacuated, like, but I think a lot of things like... kinda survived in Kirkenes. I don't think a lot of people were evacuated, because we were on the Russian border. And the Russians were kind of in control right after the war, and they provided food and help. So I think Kirkenes was... that part [of Finnmark] was kind of ...

E: you were so close to the battlefield.

I: Yeah, it saved us. It really did. Like, we say that Norway was freed from the Germans in '45. But Kirkenes was freed half, like half a year before, in '44, the fall of '44, the Russians came and liberated Kirkenes and Sor Varanger. So, and they brought a lot of infrastructure and was able to like build... the build the town making it a functioning society again. And they brought food and supplies from Russia. So I think I actually think that was part of the reason that my family wasn't evacuated.

E: the way you talk to about the Russian army... it seems like a different way of looking at it, compared to other stories, like in Finland or today...

I: yeah, really different. Totally. They are [to us] saviours, our friends and neighbours. So I've never grown up with Russia as a menace. It was just, it was just a hard place to get to, but it wasn't really like they were strangers. The only reason we weren't visiting because it was because it was expensive and difficult to get the visa. But my little sister She lives there now in Kirkenes and she's traveling, she has this this border visa. So she goes there like every other month, sometimes just for a day and sometimes just for shopping.

E: thank you Isalill, really...

Lemet Máhtte

Lemet Máhtte is a young Sámi man born in early 2000. He grew up between Guovdageidnu/Kautokeino and Bjerkevik. During Summertime he worked as a guide at Gállogieddi. He currently works and lives in Tromsø. He has been granted an important prize for his work with North Sámi language: in eight months, he translated the famous online game Minecraft into North Sámi, making it available to young Sámi children in their own native language (see <https://www.nrk.no/Sámi/lemet-mahtte-20-oversatte-verdens-storste-spill-minecraft-til-Sámisk-1.15068639>)

Interview, 27/7/2019, Gállogieddi:

Erika: so, do you know anything about the family who lived in this house?

L-M: well, there are many stories, some nice stories, other sad one... like, there was actually an accident on one of the fishing trips. And one of the people from the farm, the father or the son fell out of the boat and drowned. And only by chance, he floated to the beach and were able to bury them. Because if people drowned, they often were not able to get the body. So, they have a very empty casket. He had this *beaska*, the winter coats, and it had some air inside of it. So, it just floated. Because if people drowned, they often were not able to get the body. So they have a very empty caskets which he had this *beaska*, the winter coats, and it had some air inside of it. So it just floated.

E: oh no, that's so terrible

L-M: yes... very sad. But at least he came back.

E: yes, a relief for the family.

L-M: indeed.

E: and the museum, are these the original buildings the family used to live in?

L-M: yes, except the *goahti*, that was built a few years ago, for the museum.

E: so, what is the *goahti* being used for now? The one here at the museum?

L-M: well, it's used for those kind of activities. But also just people that live in the area can use this. So it has a use. That's why it has furniture. Because it's just more efficient for today's standard.

E: and, have you ever used it?

L-M: yes! When we came here, And I used to participate in this children's group that was an activity group for children. And we spent two nights here. Not to sleep. But we were here two nights with fire food made in the oven, telling stories...

Magnus:

Magnus is a young man in his late 20s (at the time of writing). His family is from Salangen, not far from the Márka. He does not self-identify as Sámi but has family connections with local Márka-Sámi Sámi culture. He lived in Oslo and Tromsø. He studied at Tromsø university and worked for Norwegian environmental organizations. He was the 2019 Márkomeannu CEO. Prior to this working experience, he had been part of the festival staff for many years.

Magnus, interview, 11/2/2020 Tromsø

Erika: So, Magnus, do you think the staff from the previous editions, like Emma, accepted you, even if you were not from here, from the Márka like them? Do you think they appreciated your work for the festival?

Magnus: Yeah, she approved of us. Even though we're not from, from the area. Of course, it's difficult because it's in a festival like this, it's a lot of traditions that you need to try to keep track on. It's tradition in the way they do things, that's not written down anywhere. It's just need to know them or us so long if you can't remember to ask someone if like, is this a thing we used to do? And also it's like knowing people in the area is extremely important. Like we need someone to drive a tractor, who can we call to do that? I have no idea. I just know the guy I rent the house from and the people that's already in the festival doing stuff. So it's also things like that then knowing like, where things are, it's an old house, a couple of kilometers from the festival where we have stored all our mattresses and like pillows, and tools. And I did not know where. Yeah. So it's a lot of like small things that you just need to learn to ask about. But it's I think it's gone it's gone really well. And I haven't heard, none has told me to me at least that they're not happy with the work and that's it's coming from people from outside

E: I would like to ask you something about a poster, the one with the black olimpic athletes dressed in a gakti....

M: oh, yes that one. When was it... was it 2014, 15?

E: I think 15

M Yes, 2015, definitely. Yes, so, the poster?

E: yes. Well, last Summer, at Márkomeannu, this guy from France, we were having a stroll around the festival area and then he told me that he didn't like the poster. He thought it was... how to say it, well, inappropriate. A form of cultural appropriation. That the Sámi struggle and the civil rights movement for black americans cannot be put on the same level... we discussed about it. I told him I thought it was a pun you know, knowing the festival, but he was skeptical. So, I was wondering, what do you think about it?

M: It's definitely like a play of other symbols. But I wouldn't call it like cultural appropriation. I think it's kind of of global way to show resistance. That's what's being done. Well, of course, like this. Yeah. I don't know anything about the story for that poster. It was before I joined the festival, but I was in the cavva when they made the poster. This is obvious. I'm thinking like, American civil rights movement. Okay, it's fine for me if people think that. But we've tried to make a debate with the posters.

Marion

Marion, at the time of the interview, in 2019, was a young woman in her late twenties. Originally from Deatnu/Tana, she was enrolled at the law faculty of the university of Tromsø. She was also active as a political representative of the Sámi youth association.

Interview, 13/7/2019, Olmmáivággi:

Erika: why are these festivals important to you? What do they mean to you?

Marion: Well, they mean, it's a place to, to be Sámi without much... without much question. So it's a very comfortable setting. And of course, it's a time to party and connect with people, and reconnect. And well, it was a place to develop that, that this is Sámi culture for me, I always look at the fashions for the *gákti*, how they are developing, and what kind of new handicrafts are... are popping up and new vendors. And this [Rissu Riddu] is also a place to meet all the new Sámi people that I haven't met before. So it's also a place to develop the future.

E: How long have you been working for this festival?

M: I think I joined this staff ... mhm, I do not remember... a few years ago? No, not a few maybe like five years ago. So before, I wasn't the staff. I don't I think, I just worked for mockumentary two years, for just one year, being talking about the backstage area. And then I had a position... I was a project manager for one of their projects. And then I think I started working for it too maybe.

E: I've heard that a few years ago, the festival was not really appreciated by some of the Sámi communities. But I've also heard that things are starting to change now that it has been 20 years and more.

M: Yeah, the only thing I've heard, because I'm from the outside (non from Gáivuotna), so of course, I don't get all the, all the information, but what I've heard is that they're a very Christian [Laestadian] community not very fond of the festival. And that, I guess, makes sense. Because it's, there's a lot of partying [at the festival] and just, yeah, maybe a lot of things that a very pietistic or conservative Christian society doesn't like.

Mathias

Mathias is a young Sámi man in his 20s at the time of writing this thesis. His family is from Ofuohta region and he has worked at Gállogieddi as a summer guide.

Interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi:

Erika: so, I would like to start with the war. Do you know any story about the war in this area?

Mathias: I, obviously, wasn't alive during World War II, I only have to rely on stories from my family about the World War here. In Finnmark, the Second World War had crushing consequences for the Sámis there, with them forced to move south. And by doing that, we're able to kind of norwegianize themselves. But in this area, you didn't really have the same thing. You didn't have the Germans there. They never burnt down this part of Norway.

E: and your family during the war? Were they here or did they have to leave? The men, were they sent to the front?

M: well, my grandmother was six. And the war ended when she was 11. So her early childhood... most of early childhood was Second World War. But you know, I know another uncle my from my father's side, his family, they were obviously, they were a lot older than the grandmother because they were their 20s and 30s already, and they kind. And they forcibly the source said they can't just move on with their lives. I mean, some sometimes a bombed plane would crash. But that was just how it was no. Though a lot of people, a lot of people from my family actually escaped to Sweden and quite often travelled through Áravuopmi in Rahkka/Bjerkvik.

My grandfather on my father's side, he was forced. He was forced into military force [service]. I mean, forced not exactly forced but, you know... conscription was back then... [it] was confusing, [being] conscripted into military. He didn't work locally but he went south, but I can't recall those details... I believe it was Sweden. When he was conscripted. I'm getting a little bit lost in the details. But I mean, the reality was that he didn't, even though he was conscripted into the military, [he] didn't really fight the war here. He kind of fought it south in some place in southern Scandinavia instead (Mathias, interview, 27/7/2018, Gállogieddi).

E: and where is Áravuopmi exactly?

M: You have Rahkka/Bjerkvik here, up the ocean here, to Gratangen coming from there. And then there's a valley. Okay, in the mountains there is Áravuopmi. And that's a Márka-Sámi... Márka-Sámi live there. I mean, Márka-Sámi, in the sense that they are Márka-Sámi, not that they belong to Márka. And also, a lot of people had relatives in Áravuopmi, so quite often you could just escape through Áravuopmi to get to Sweden because it's... you know that, the valley kinda goes right into Sweden, you can just travel to Sweden by just moving through the valley. And once you get over the mountains you are in Sweden, it's like your way through to them.

I had a great-uncle who was forced to work... the Germans wanted him to be to be forced to work at an airstrip. I think. I can't recall exactly what he was talking about. But anyway, he was they wanted him to participate in forced labour, at least some of my grandmother told me that he escaped to Sweden. And in Sweden, he was forced to participate in lumbering I believe it was okay. So, so my grandmother said that instead of being... instead of participating in forced work, to just move to Sweden sort of forced work there instead. Now that again, that's a story in the family.

And his brother also... sort of... his brother was supposed to be conscripted into the military. But he, I think he escaped. He managed. He was lucky.

E: wow, that's great. And, what do you think about this place here, this museum?

M: well, this museum here, it is just so important. People from the Márka now have something to prove there are Sámi in the area, not just a showcase though, it was important to spread information about the Sámi living in the area. And that's what this museum does!

Nihlas

Nihlas is a young man, born in early 2000s, who spent his childhood and early teenage years in Stockholm. He then moved to Jåhkåmåhkke/Jokkmokk, where his father is from and where he manages a successful Sámi shop. When he was younger, Nihlas has been harassed in the streets of Stockholm for wearing a Sámi hat. Nihlas is a performer, joiker and *duodj* (Sámi handicrafts) maker. He doesn't currently speak Sámi fluently, but he wishes to learn it to a proficiency level.

Easter 2019, Guovdageaidnu:

Erika: And how did you know about Márkomeannu?

Nihlas: Well, I think my father told me about it many years ago, when I was quite small. And then we went to, to Márkomeannu I think when I was 14 years old or something. Maybe it was even before that. Yeah.

E: So you have been at Márkomeannu already. 2018 was not your first time?

N: No, I've been there. I've been actually in Márkomeannu. I've also been an artist on the stage. Oh, yes. And I've been performing. Yeah. And I enjoyed that as well. Yeah. It was a couple of years ago. Okay. Yeah. And I was also a presenter on the stage. And then the one year we were there with store Stalka [a company belonging to Nihlas' father and based in Jokkmokk], with our company, we had a band weaving course in traditional bandwidth. Yeah. And then I also got artists' and backstage passes and stuff, but I don't know how artistic we were. I don't know... but it was fun. I think I've been there four or five times now. Or six...

E: so you are a frequent flyer.

N: Yeah. Yeah. Experienced.

E: So you have seen it? Through the years?

N: Yeah. And we've felt the test changes or your impression. I mean, the thing that I really like about Márkomeannu is that it's, it's a Sámi, it's a Sámi festival. I mean, literally. It's an indigenous festival in its own regards, but Márkomeannu is Sámi festival, and everyone who works here are Sámi people. And it makes it like a kind of safe space. It's like you don't need to, to explain yourself, you don't need to. And for me who've been living a lot outside of the geographic area of Sápmi in Stockholm, it's harder to find the community. We have Sámi community in Stockholm but it's it's not as frequent and not as intensive as a festival would be with only Sámi people for a couple of days. And I really enjoy spending time in that in the intensive Yeah. And last year... Oh, I was actually not planning to go to my friend. Okay, but why not? Then I don't know. I think I had other plans on somewhere I was working. But then I felt like well, why the heck not I should go to Márkomeannu? So I I flew up to Jokkmokk. Because all my tents and stuff was, was there. I went to Lulea, and then I rented the car. And I traveled to Jokkmokk to get all my stuff. So I ended up there. It was nice. It was so warm last year. Yeah. I met some old friends. I mean, that was really fun (Nihlas, interview, Guovdageaidnu, Easter 2019)

N: There was this role playing session that I believe was really funny. Where we were to argue if we were going to leave our traditional lands and go out to space to a new planet, or... Yeah. So it was first the debate. And then they took questions from the audience. And they

didn't tell the audience what to do. But some people in the audience they got into got in on their own we were supposed to do when we started arguing with, with the, with the panel about if we would go north, or if we. And I think that was, that was really fun. That was a fun exercise. And it felt like it were discussing systematical questions, it was discussing values. But at the same time, it did it in a really fun and engaging way. And it says it was made up. Everyone could leave us friends. And just yeah, no hard feelings. Yes, I liked it.

Erika: But the point was that whether or not to leave Earth?

N: yeah, to another planet, or think. Or maybe it was a different universe or something. We could leave to a different place where we could be isolated and free the the progress in some society. I think that was there before two things we could choose. But now, i m sorry, we have to go or we will be late.

E: yes, you right. Takk, Nihilas, really. Ollu Giitu.

Runar Myrnes Balto

Runar Myrnes Balto (born in 1987) is a Sámi politician. Since 2017 he has been a member of the Samediggi/Sámi Parliament. He was elected to the Norwegian Sámi National Association from the West Sea constituency. Balto was head of the Students 'and Academics' International Aid Fund in 2010. He has studied social science development studies at the University of Oslo. He lives between Evenes and Tromsø. In 2017, he was, along with Mikkel Eskil Mikkelsen, the first open gay man elected to Samediggi.

Interview, 24/4/2019, Tromsø:

Erika: So, may I ask you about “resilience”? What does that mean it on the posters with Resilience written as a graffiti on them?

Runar: was sort of the point of the festival. And that was, that was how I understood it. The idea [of the festival concept, i.e. 100 years in the future the world is almost destroyed but Sámi people managed to survive] is that even though even though the world is going to hell, the Sámi manage to survive. It is sort of ... it's sort of part of our national story, I would say that it's pretty incredible that Sámi culture, and language still have survived that extreme pressure of assimilation and shame that has been over [them] for so many, so many generations. That's something I find really astonishing. And that's, that's sort of what the resilience means, for me.

E: and to you? What does it mean to you?

R: For me, it means like a kinship with other I know that I can talk to any indigenous person in any part of the world and I will have a similar experience or we can have a similar story about our family or culture, like the cultural expressions are the same even when the languages aren't the same. Music isn't the same, but the story is always the same. It's a story of oppression and resilience. In some cases more brutal than others, but at like an ideological core, but it's usually this, we're oppressed for the same reasons. And we fight for the same reasons. And we meet the variations of the same problems.

The thing is, was that when we had to come up with ideas for 2010, it was 10 years [that people had been working on the festival]. You have the same people having worked with the festival but relatively few new people. Basically, the whole arranging of the festival was done by the same people, and so by the time after the festival 2008, people were really really tired of our work. It was really exhausting and with no fresh people... we hadn't really started recruiting anyone from the younger generations at that at the time. So we were under the impression that since we really were so tired we just assumed that nobody else would want to do it either again [work for the festival]. We didn't dare to ask... like they never asked for help. So the mood really was that okay, we just gonna do this year's festival events and then we'll see. We were starting [the organization] at Easter 2009. [It was then that] we really started planning the festival. So by Easter we had a meeting, like a crisis board meeting. Back then, we were not even sure whether we were gonna do this [the festival]. Well, no, not before Easter. This is how it is. Nothing was planned by them. So, what are we learning? We decided to make the festival like we managed to do it. Yes. 2009 and that is why we chose the fly [for the poster]. Yes. And I love that because that's the one of the year I was in charge.

E: Thank you, Runar, really. It has been fantastic to hear you talk about this.

Sigbjørn Skåden

Sigbjørn is a Márka-Sámi man in his early 40s at the time of writing this thesis. Sigbjørn has been one of my key interlocutors. Born in Tromsø in 1976, he spent his childhood with his family in Lantedjevva/Planterhaugen, in the Márka, where his mother Asbjørg Eriksen Skåden was from. There, he – along his late cousin Torgrim – was the first pupil to be able to access Sámi language education. He was a founding member of the local branch of the Sámi youth organization *Stuornjårga Samenuorat*. While a teenager he worked at the local open air museum as a summer job. He then moved to Tromsø to attend University, where he was active in the university Sámi youth association. He also attended the University of Oslo jointly with the University of Tromsø, where he obtained a degree in Literature with a thesis on Sámi literature and the University of York, where he graduated with a Masters degree in English literature. Since a young age, Sigbjørn has been working, first along with his mother and other relatives and later on his own, to projects aimed at valorizing the local Sámi culture. Upon graduating, Sigbjørn lived for two years in the town of Guovdageaidnu where the majority of people have strong connections with reindeer tending. He has developed a nuanced understanding of the reindeer tending society, into which he was not born, and of Guovdageaidnu society. Since 2004 Sigbjørn has collaborated to numerous artistic projects, has edited various books about the Márka, the Márka-Sámi language as well as local Sámi place-names. He has published novels in both North Sámi (one of such novels was written in the Márka-Sámi language) and in Norwegian and his work as an author has been recognized at both the Sámi and the Norwegian level as well as in international contexts.

Interview, 14/02/2019, Tromsø.

Erika: so, just to have an idea, has the festival always taken place where it is no?

Sigbjørn: well, no. or yes but now. It was still in the Márka but not at Gállogieddi. At the beginning the Festival took place down at the airport, for practical reasons... there were already some infrastructures... it was easier. But after two years we moved to Gállogieddi. That's a place that is close to our identity. Even if it is a bit unpractical place for a festival. But it was a way to introduce the festival guests into our local history. And also local peoples were able to feel connected [to the festival through its location]

E: and how did you end up organizing Márkomeannu?

S: we wanted to be a festival. I mean, we were aware of *Riddu Riddu*. We've been there at *Riddu Riddu* on sand, what they were and, and, but we were also impressed by the by the effect that had on the local community to make a festival. During our childhood, you know, Sámi, Sámi stuff had always been kind of, not necessarily but for, for people who were part of the Sámi education was kind of just extra work things you didn't get, like the like didn't get so much that felt like a profit, you know, from having Sámi education. So, a festival is a way to, to make local people feel gratified, for people did some Sámi education, who learn a bit language or know a bit the language, to make them feel as they get some profit, non just extra work or school or it's a fun thing. So that was part of it, but also that it was a possibility to show Sámi identity in a friendly way, with a friendly Sámi face... that's because in the 80s and early 90s, you know, it was like... Sámi politics became a more and more outspoken

part of the local politics. But it was also very controversial still back in 99, when we started, you know, it was very controversial in many ways. So, so we wanted to, you know something fun, something smiling, not just angry people wanting place names on signs and stuff like that, which he of course did, but you know, it kind of do it in another way (Sigbjørn Skåden, Interview 14/2/2019 Tromsø).

Interview, 21/2/2019, Tromsø

E: so, last time you mentioned some place-names in the area... I am curious about them. Can me tell something about these place names? Are they really like, descriptive of the place they are connected with^

S: Yes, They are descriptive over the landscape, which is very, very common. But there are some very different stories about “this is why. Why that? we have a small waterfall just... at the river and not so far from where I grew up is called the six finger waterfall because one of the women who fell into it came from the six Finger Family which was a family which had a tendency of getting children with six fingers so it was called the six fingers river, for instance, that's one story. Just close to that recess. The story of something is called... ah, what's the English...? but it is like like the “revisiting children meadow”.

E: revisiting?

S: children unwanted children are set out... to... put out to die. Because they're not they're not... [they are] born out of wedlock and will be, in Sámi mythology, around. In Sámi tradition they may return because they are not baptized return and the crie so... also in some places you would hear children crying.

E: These places have a name?

S: Yeah, yeah. So one of the fields close to... or close to that waterfall has one of those names is called back in that Eapparasjalga which means like the, the field of unwanted or, you know, children returning for instance, I mean, it's just some examples. Yeah. I mean, most examples aren't that interesting, but it's still it's still you know, it's it gives you It connects you to quite directly to the history of the whole old district.

E: But it was like... these places got these names because there they used to hear the children crying or because it was the

place where they used to put out the children?

S: I guess I guess maybe it was going to go back to that reference. But but that's that's like a place where you can hear They will come and you will have to be aware because they're

dangerous. Those capes are danger to you if you don't treat them [in the right way] rather than... you know...

S: Another Sámi place-name in the area is Stuorjohka – Storelva. Stuorjhka was the old name, before, in the early 1900s. Now it is on the other side of the river. It is the border river!

E: This one river which is like the border area, what is it called?

S: Storelva. that's what it's called. Storelva, is the border river

E: I see... well, thank you so much.

Interview, 7/9/2019, Tromsø.

E: Well, today I would like to ask you again about place-names... but i would like to understand a bit better the road-sign issue... I have seen that at Olmaivaggi they had a lot of problems when they introduced the bilingual signs and you told me that, in the Márka, is still a process in the making. Can you tell me a bit more and how this issue is connected with the Festival? Like, the waymark near the stage and the 2012 poster... I mean, they are quite programmatic statments...

S: Sure. Mhm, it's complicated. Back in 2011-2012 there was a big debate also even in Tromsø, So there was a big debate about some of the names and places. Some of these places that we've put here [pointing at the 2012 Márkomeannu poster, image 4.24] are towns that they were debating about. So that was what they did they also have same place names. Of course not not this case itself. In 2011. There was this big, political issue, you know, that was still the local kommune elections And Tromsø used to have the labour Party. I think just before the election they decided to include Tromsø in the Sámi language area officially, to apply to get to be part of the Sámi language area which also means that you're supposed to have road signs as they were supposed to say Romssa [Tromsø].

The right side [party], went to the election saying that “if you like us, if you vote for us, we're going to reverse it [the inclusion of Tromsø in the Sámi administrative area]. It became a really nasty debate. I thought Tromsø would be... well, better than that. I think everyone was shocked... Including, the guy who did become the new mayor from the right party. He was shocked to hear what was said in those days-

It was a huge debate, a really nasty and huge debate before the election in 2011. [Pointing at a framed poster in his office] And this poster, of course, was the year we started working on the idea of it's to the opposite. We didn't know, it wasn't only Tromsø... it wasn't both of these places, they have this really nasty debates back in 2011. You know, those days... At the same time, we were working on the idea for that poster [pointing again towards the framed poster],

of course. It was just after the election. Yeah, I felt like, like that was an issue, that it was interesting or important to address [it] somehow.

E: and so you built the waymark that year?

S: yes, and made the poster. It's like a famous icon of Narvik, so we sort of colonized... colonized the Narvik icon, there was a guy in the staff who has grown there in Narvik] and was being irritated... I guess about the Narvik mentality. Yeah, he suggested that we made a solid version of it because they one in Narvik shows the road to Moscow St. Petersburg, New York, Berlin, Tokyo. We made our Sámi version of it. just small Sámi villages from the point of view of the place [Gállogieddi].

Sigbjørn: So Suortá... that's what Sortland that's, in Vesterålen. They were similar to us...or just some history of... it's been, it's been, it's kind of not too far from us, you know, but it has been invisible. Sámi history has just been very invisible there. It has become more visible just the last five years. Sirbma is a small village in Tana. I think it's Sirma in Norwegian. Almost the same name. Šuoššjávri is close to Kautokeino or Karasjok. Šuoššjávri is a little bit... little bit on the border... between the Kautokeino and Karasjok Kommune's border. This is like yeah it's like a border in village... with the border... there is a half of Šuoššjávri in Kautokeino and half in Karasjok. [When we had to choose what to include, we decided that] instead of having one of the small villages we just picked this one where people are divided [by the border]... Åanghkere is not a village it's in the South Sámi area. It's an important gathering point, is like their [south Sámi] main gathering point, just like a church for the relational church gathering. This is like a huge cultural meeting point for the south Sámi. It is like the main event of the year and not everybody cares about the church party anymore but... as I say that's it, like a huge meeting point. The place, it is called Åanghkere in South Sámi. Olmmáivággi of course is, you know...[the place where Riddu Ridđu takes place] which is the tip of the cape to Riddu Ridđu. and we are related to Riddu Ridđu somehow.

[...] so Guhttas is a border place that is just both in Sweden and Finland so it's, it's the same. It's a variation two parts of the river outside of Karesuando. So that was to point to it, just the National Water being drawn into the middle of a village kind of

E: ... cut in half by the national border.

S: So one part is Finnish, one part is Swedish. the river, but this same version, both sides of the river used to be the road kind of but also so the focus somewhere

E: and do you know any of the etymologies of these names? Like, Áhkánjárga. Do you know what does it mean?

S: I do not know about it [the etymology of the Sámi place-name Áhkánjárga -Narvik-] but you know, there are people who say that Sámi names like Hárštá are just like a Sámi-fication of the name, of the Norwegian name, Harstad. [...] but Áhkánjárga just is you know, Narvik is just a peninsula, so it is the name of the peninsula. so this one way you know, Narvik it is not really the name of the city itself. And, Narvik... some people say that Narvik has derived from Sámi, from *njarga* (peninsula). And Áhkánjárga. It could be consistent with *njarga*, peninsula. Like Stuornjárga or Unjárga. So that's Narvik okay. It's that's the normal interpretation of the Sámi name at least. Yeah. There are names that have actually been translated into Norwegian, that I think have been kind of translated into Norwegian. A local name for the place [Narvik] is Tattenes. Tatte is like north not Norwegian way of saying it's like a tough lady. Or like a lady who can make who can you can stand on her own feet or here. So look at the nes, the peninsula. And you know, there are some mountain formations that there have got some features, the looks like [an elderly lady], that might look like one.

Interview, 11/5/2020, Tromsø

E: so, may I ask you, to start, where the Márka is?

S: the Márka? Well, its... Sigbjørn Skåden: [...] its... Secluded up in the woods. There was no proper road [running through the Márka and connecting the area with the coast] until the 1950s. The bad roads saved the Sámi identity. The Márka was really discriminated in those times. The Márka was a bit inaccessible to others, there were few and bad roads. There was no proper road because people in the *commune* did not want to spend money in the Márka. A Márka person had never been nominated to be high enough in the *kommune's* political positions. My grandfather founded a Márka Party. My grandfather was the first Sámi to be elected in the *kommune* board. In the same *kommune* there were people who were earlier connected to Sámi cultures and lost their [Sámi] identity sooner. It was woods and hills. It was secluded.

E: Where is the Márka exactly?

S: How to explain? the Márka is the area between the airport and the school. Márka as such is more like a general term. Márka means “up in the outside forest”.

E: But is Márka a Sámi word?

S: Not as such but Marku has become a Sámi name. There are though many Sámi names in the area. For instance, Lantdievva or Planterhaug. This is an interesting place-name. Back in the old days, people from the Márka used to get vaccinated on that hill. A doctor would come on that hill on a given day and people had to be there on that day and time to receive the vaccine. It was on that hill that the doctor would “plant” a vaccine.

E: is there any oral memory of the time when your ancestors settled in the Márka? Did anybody go down in history?

S: mhm... I do not know, I do not think so. Well, there are a couple of people... Like Dundor Heikka and then, well, there is Bealjehis Jovna. You know, he was like, a sort of ancestor to all of us. With his children all over the place. He was like a forefather for the people of the Márka

E: mhm, was he a real person or more like a mythic one?

S: no no! he was real! He lived a few centuries ago. I think... at the end of the 18th century. And also Dundor-Heikka, was a famous bear-hunter, and he too also had, like, a lot of kids, many children in the Márka. And most of us are related to him, through him

E:: Do you know any story from the Márka? Like those parents tell their children, or that children tell among themselves?

S: In the Márka I know there are some horror stories but, you know, it wasn't like... soldiers didn't really settle up in the Márka but rather down by sea . there were so much soldiers by the sea... and I did a project once where I interviewed my grandmother about the war and she... I don't know, she had an idea [of the war] you know... but it didn't seem to affect them especially. They were poor before the war, or... not poor but they didn't have much. I mean they were self sufficient kind of farms. They didn't have [much]. Anyway so that sort of big difference... I mean the difference wasn't that huge so yeah, it didn't seem to affect them [too much].

E: and childhood stories?

S: I guess the most prominent story, that kind of story, in my childhood was about the Big Frog. For my generation, growing up, Čuoppomáddu was the big one. But you know, there are the kind of Eahppar [stories] which... [tell of] children [who] are left left to hunt. As a child, I think my mother grew up with those stories more than I did. So, so as a child, I can't remember. But Čuoppomáddu... It is just a common story that every child in the Márka was told, even though... even though they weren't supposed to be Sámi they were told about this creature with a Sámi name Čuoppo, Čuoppomáddu which is the Mother of Frogs. That's what's called in the Márka. it is like this... like the Finnmark North Sámi in a slightly different way. We pronounce it like this. In our local dialect

E: Did your mum tell you these stories in North Sámi or in Norwegian?

S: Well I normally heard it most in Norwegian I think. But the name was in Sámi, the name was in Sámi, it was always in Sámi in every family. Everybody knew [Čuoppomáddu stories] even though they weren't supposed to be Sámi. Now I do not know if people tell Maddu stories anyway, any more...

E: Do you tell these stories to your child?

S: yeah. Yeah, of course. These stories... when you start telling these stories, parents kind of start when when you're old enough to be walking on your own and stuff like that. So they say Čuoppomáddu lives in that up here and you start telling Čuoppomáddu stories because you're,

you do not want your child to go down to the river on its own or down to the to the and of course water and they can drown

E: to keep kids away!

S: i guess... So Čuoppomáddu is like a big frog, like in between half a meter and the meter. She is huge. She chases people. If they if they if it gets you to take and I just strangle you because it's got strong arm so it goes for your neck. And it also has poisons which could spit poison. So we used to be quite afraid of her.

E: I'm curious about like maybe springs or pieces that are to be respected in a certain way. Or not.

S: Not like Yeah, not like I mean no, when you mean religiously or like spiritually

E: yeah, some sort of sacred ritual they must be chanting sacred. Well,

S: at least not outspoken. I mean, I mean, we knew that we knew about this space and you would, you were told not not to be fucking with the water sources and water But the best one wasn't was not like specifically this is a holy place. no we were told not to not to mess with not to throw stones and stuff.

E: So you think it's more related to the fact that you shall not pollute source of water? And in that respect,

S: it might be. that's speculation but yeah, it's fair to, fair to say I guess that that's the reason that wouldn't be the same so how does the sacred holy, just say that you're not supposed to be I'm not supposed to throw stones or mess with waters

E: wow, this is really interesting... and about stories, is there any memory of war in the area? like war stories?

S: sure. Actually, there are some war stories about this prisoner who escaped into Márka and the Márka people would hide, hide this czech. This check war prisoner escaped from the Germans. this person was always... he was sitting in different barns around the Márka. These are materials that are good for study! there's one rumor that he saved himself barely because, guess what! He was sitting there when they [the germen soldiers] came upon this farm [where he was staying]. He was to disappear. These people who hide him warned him when the Germans were in the area so that he could take them off. But that time... the only place when German came and were unexpected, there was not enough time to hide him. So their grandmother, the grandmother of the people who were living there, she acted senile or acted like she was seeing things. and she had these huge skirts that they used to have back then, very long skirts. So he hid under her, well, her skirt, between her legs you see, and she sit there,

pretending to be senile now while they wanted to search the house. Oh yeah, and he was just there. So on my father's side of the family, it's more like the system itself was kind of different stories. Being in a war fighting

Private conversation 13/9/2019 Tromsø

During an informal conversation⁶¹², while going through the photos of the first editions of Márkomeannu, Sigbjorn pointed at a few pictures and, smiling, said:

This is one is from before Márkomeannu... the first festival area we had, before the festival we had to clean up... they have cows there so we made a deal with the local farmer, that if he removed the calves on the festival weekend, because it wouldn't be good for the cows either to be around, we would put back everything as it was. But until the festival started here the cows were walking around! The festival people shoveled away cow shift from the place. It was one of the main jobs of the first editions. We had shovel it because the cows have been there for some time in the days before we rented the place.

⁶¹² Sigbjørn agreed I quoted this private conversation in the thesis.

Sara

Sara a young woman in her early twenties from Gáivuotna, currently living in Tromsø where she is attending university, studying at the UiT nursing school. She attended a one-year intensive course in North Sámi language at UiT. She has been involved with Riddu Riddu since she was a child and, since she was a teenager she worked as a volunteer first and later as a member of the staff. Members of Sara's immediate and extended family are cultural activists who have been involved in the founding of Riddu Riđđu, a local Sámi gathering that later developed into one of the most important Sámi festivals, recognized also at a national and international level.

Interview, 13/10/2019 Tromsø

Erika; So, may I ask you about your home village, after the war? How was the situation there? And did you think war did have an impact on Sámi people in the area?

Sara: Well, as you know, almost all of Kåfjord was burnt down. And, and that was very bad too, because the end all of our customs, the national costumes and the duodji and everything was burned down. They lost everything. So when we, when my parents, and then yeah, my uncles and everyone started to realize that they were Sámi. Mm hmm. It was so hard for them to find, like an old *gakti* they could go from to make a new one. Yeah. So they didn't know how anything looked. And they just tried to reconstruct as good as they could. But it was very hard. They didn't have any material. And also, even things that didn't get burned down the Sámi themselves were not making because they didn't want to be... well, Sámi... yeah.

E: but they managed in the end! That's amazing. And how was it, when they started using Sámi things again?

S: My mother told me a story that one of her friends started wearing *gakti*. And she was taking it on her child also. And that was in the 1990s. And a lot of people in Kafjord were asking: do you really want to put the *gakti* on your child? Are you sure about that. Because she could easily get mocked, and it can be really bad for her. But luckily, she took it on her [wore] anyways, and really showed that this is our identity, the *gakti*. But it's so sad that they have to go through all of this from their own [people].

E: and about the Sámi language? That they stopped speaking it after the war....

S: I think it's so sad because I have also been speaking to my cousins about it. And it's very hard to explain, but when I was hearing Sámi before I knew how to speak it and understand it I felt like I belonged, with that language. It's very hard to explain, but I felt so sad that I didn't know how to speak my great grandmother's language, I felt like I lost a part of my identity. So therefore, also, it was so important for me to take it back and learn [teach] it to my children when they will come.

E: did you study it at school? Before univ I mean...

S: I had Sámi language education from the first to third grade. But then I quitted. I quitted because I felt like I was an outsider. Because I was like, getting picked up in my classroom. And I saw it easy to go into this class [with no Sámi language education] instead. So yeah, but then again, after high school, I started again, just a year. And then this year, I have been studying Sámi at University. Just to really learn it. So I have been, yeah, you see just focusing on the language. And the next year, I will go to nursing school.

E: Wow! nursing school.

S: Yeah. I am excited! Yeah.

E: So you took like, one gap year to study the language [Sámi language]?

S: Yeah, I really wanted to learn it, since I was in high school, to learn it. Then, that looks not so good. Like, I can communicate with others. So now I'm way better. But I still need to practice alone. Yeah, it's very hard.

E: But do want to use it also in your nursing career? you want to be a nurse with Sámi as your working language?

S: mhm mhm [nodding] Because here in North Norway, they have a big problem with that. We don't have enough Sámi speaking nurses and doctors. And therefore it's very important to me, that especially the younger generation, when they get older, they start to forget a little bit Norwegian, and they go back to Sámi. And a lot of older people have been mistreated, right? Because that the nurses didn't understand what was wrong with them. So they were given the wrong pain medication. M Yeah, so definitely I want to do something about it.

E: So you didn't grow up speaking the language?

S: No. not at all. Because my, my great grandmother, she spoke Sámi. Right before my grandfather came along. She stopped speaking because of you know... So we didn't learn it. And then my mom didn't learn it and now I do.

E: that's great. Thank you Sara, really, for sharing this with me.

Sunna Kitti

Sunna Kitti is a young Sámi artist from Aanar/Inari (Finnish side of Sámi). Born in 1989, she lived in Aanar/Inar until she moved to Tampere where she studied geology. She is a self-trained comic artist who has collaborated with Sámi institutions such as the Finnish Sámi Parliament. In 2020, her first comic book *Jiehtanasa Iđit* (published in 2021 in Norwegian under the title *Jettens Morgen*). In 2018 she was Márkomeannu's artist of the year.

Interview 7/2/2019 via Skype Tromsø-Tampere

Erika: so, I would like to ask you, what did you want to express with the Márkomeannu exhibition?

Sunna Kitti: I want to create art that shows that things that happen in those picture are happening right now. Human trafficking, police brutality, forced slaves, and I can imagine a dictator could do even worse. Forcing people to slaughter their animals, forcing you by pointing guns at you. I put Sámi in these situations. Show that we [Sámi] can't think that bad things can't happen to us. We must imagine that if the world changes a lot and something dramatic happens, none is safe. I want to warn people that if we let this world turn to shit, we can't expect to remain comfortable. Some people, ok, they are white, but not safe from racism. I now feel safe but it is only because, we have such great societies, minorities can be fairly secure, there is no massive systematic pressure but when you look at the last centuries, my parents and grandparents experienced systematic pressure. With these horrible pictures of mine I wanted to remind to the rest of the world that Sámi people are not untouchable.

E: well, this is quite a thing. And your work is really impressive. It really conveys the message! But, may I ask, how was the creative process behind it?

SK: well, I was given the topic, and then I developed it. I made a sketch and sent it to the organizers as this is what she does as a commission artist. She [the festival leader] didn't really say anything about the sketches. I had pretty free hands, and they liked everything I did. I figured out the story in her head and drew it. A post-apocalyptic story. A Post-apocalyptic world with a message. I accepted because the concept was interesting. The most interesting premise I had to work on. I received short description for the festival: 2118, the world has gone crazy, nuclear fall, tyrant dictator. From there, I started to work to come up with a kind of narrative. All these pictures, I imagined them as story. A sequence. They follow a chronological order

E: that's amazing and your are is just... amazing. But, how did you get the idea for this series of drawings? The story they build?

SK: How I got the Idea? I wanted to tie the drawings and the [festival] story to the area of the festival. They [the organizers] definitely wanted to make it seems all the things were happening in the area. For instance, the "Seal hunter" one? The background is the town of Harshtad. In "De-chipping" the mountains are those of the festival area, the markeaSámi [area]. Now, I could have dressed them with the dresses of the area. But I tend to wear my character as I wear.

E: How can you convey Sámi identity through visual art?

Sk: At the Márkomeannu exhibition, all Sámi people were wearing the *gákti* (Sámi costume). I tends to portray Sámi as contemporary [people]. When I have to draw a picture taking place now, I dress them as Sámi people are dressed today. Like some pieces of Sámi clothing or maybe the accessories if not the *gákti*

E: What would you regard as the strongest images associated with Sámi cultures. I mean, in your drawings I can see reindeers and gakti. When looking at those, the connection is immediate but...

SK: That's what I wanted, no confusion. I wanted the concept to come out strongly. That they are Sámi people. In retrospective, would have she dressed them differently? No, the gakti is very practical costume, very suitable for the [subarctic] environment.

E: Are there other indigenous people depicted in these drawings? Like in the "human trafficking" one?

SK: No, they are all Sámi. The Sámi are like everyone else [in the other drawings]. They are all wearing Sámi [items] (Sunna Kittu, interview 7/2/2019 via Skype).

It's all in the details, Sáminess is the details, like the necklace, the earrings or the scarf, not just in big symbols... in my works, Sámi can be identified with the clothing [the characters] are wearing, I play a bit with it, with the symbols behind the accessories!

E: But so, if you could identify some core features...What would make a Sámi a Sámi?

S K: If I says knowing the language, it would exclude all the people who didn't have the chance to learn it. This approach would bring conflict. I mean, it would be great if all Sámi could have got the chance to learn and speak the language. But unfortunately this is not the case. It's not their fault. Here for instance [in Finland], Finnish government tried to abolish Sámi languages. They blamed those who spoke them...To be a Sámi is part of the living culture, is to be active and interested [in the culture] and know something about your culture. Participation is important. On the other hand, it is not so important to speak perfect Sámi [language]. If you do not, it is not your fault, you parents maybe where ashamed...but it is not their fault either. Supporting you own people is important. Participation [in Sámi cultural life].

E: Do your parents Speak any Sámi language?

S K: My father spoke Inari Sámi. He knew [it] but [did] not teach it to me. Inari Sámi language was treated bad. Inari Sámi were a minority within a minority. People who spoke North Sámi told people who spoke Inari Sámi "you should stop speaking Inari Sámi, you should speak real Sámi!" My grandmother said that [to him] and that affected my father. Now he is speaking it back again, it is a strong improvement! My mother instead spoke to me in North Sámi. She is from the border with Norway. The [North Sámi] culture is pretty strong there. She had no problem with the language when she was young.

E: In the drawing "a new beginning" there are a lot of reindeers...

SK: Yeah definitely, I come from a reindeer herding family, that's a big part of being Sámi for me. Even if there are Sámi people who have never had reindeers, but for me it is important part of me being Sámi.

E: Thank you, Ollu giitu

Tor Åge

Tor Åge Vorren (Røst kommunikasjon) is a Tromsø-based designer who has collaborated with Márkomeannu since the early 2000s. even if he does not self-identify as Sámi, members of his immediate family are of Sámi descent and his grandmother came from a local Sámi community. He grew up in a town near to the festival and is a friend of the festival founders, with whom he often visited the area of the Márka.

Interview, 5/6/2019, Tromsø

Erika: how did you end up working on posters?

Tor Åge: Yeah, I am from from the regions, okay. No, I'm from from Narvik, the city. Okay. So, my friend is from Gállogieddi. Okay. Yeah, he's his mother was born there. So yeah, the grandparents there. so I have been there some sometimes before there was a festival there. So but but only as a friend. So I knew them and then and I was I lived in Tromso too and worked as a designer. So I so they asked me if I wanted to do a cultural themed designs. Yeah, I think they felt that I knew the region, I knew them, I am there every year, in that same area,

E: you go back to Narvik?

T-Å And I have a cabin that is not far from Márkomeannu

E: So, you do not identify as Sámi?

T-Å: No, I have some Sámi heritage but it's something that my grandparents did not talk about. My great grandmother, I would call her a Sámi, but not it's kind of not official. So they choose another side of the family tree to focus on, which was Finnish, so they recognized the Finnish heritage. I think they migrated here because of starvation. Tere was a large migration of Finnish people back in the 1800s. So, on my mother's side I have both Sámi and Finnish blood. So, um, but on my father's side, he is from Lofoten and they were mostly from southern Norway. But, but I grew up in this area in Narvik. But it was taboo to talk about, I remember my grandmother, when my friend chose to wear Sámi gakti she was almost exaggerating how she thought that was ridiculous. Because she wanted that kind of erased it, not embrace that, from which came from. But she did not want to talk about it. Yeah. So that's, that's difficult for many people. And then when you're, when you have a mixed background, but I think that that's why a lot of people can identify with Sámi people without identify themselves as Sámi. So you understand the cultural background and you and if you have some of the same heritage

I was not involved in the design of the first poster from Márkomeannu. The first poster was kind of an art-piece, made by an artist from the area. And I think they used that poster two times. So yeah, the first poster was was already there when I started working with them. And I had used this poster twice, I think. they identified with this image, but they didn't want to reuse it and they wanted to make it more modern, but they still wanted to keep the image like so. So I made this image in the sky. So the idea was to use the image of Márkomeannu in the natural environment. So the first two years was based on this image. And the idea of making this image appear as a pattern on a stone, or on on the tree. So the next year it was on a tree. And that pattern on the tree was photoshopped to, to give you this image of this happy Sámi man, of course a reference to the original painting. As I mentioned, the challenge was that they wanted something new, but they still wanted to keep the image of the small Sámi man in some way.

And so I did make him as the logo for the festival. So when they sign contracts and stuff, they just use that as a logo as well. But every year, the festival has its own profile. So it's changes. But still, you can still tell it's a Márkomeannu festival. Yeah. You know, the style is changing.

E: I see, like here. Can you explain me this poster, for example [the 2006 poster]?

T-Å: yes, you see, this is different from the ones before, with the Márkomeannu men. So then we have to focus more on the farm. So we wanted to say: "You don't have to be you don't have to be reindeer herder to be Sámi" o so this this cow is a farm animal but we did it in a kind of like this dance trance style like disco style with the with the still in in red and blue and yellow, like Sámi colors. Here for instance, is yet different. In 2016 they wanted to do, like, something on the line of the Russian propaganda posters from the 50s or like the Finnish tourists posters from the 60s. And that's the idea of the references that inspired me within this genre. So, in the end, it's a nice kind of 1950s-1960s tourists posters. So, this is beautiful, this composition. this big tree-section as the sun and trees through shadows. It's an open composition with the sun in the center, and the persons here. And I wanted to do it as wood carving look. and then said they liked it, and they wanted these mountains from the area so those mountains are the mountains around the Márka. So the people there would recognize the mountain. And then they wanted the persons in the person to be to male Sámi people kissing. Okay, I think that's a great idea. So then I did the illustration for that: the one person to the left wears the *kofta* from the Márka, the one from the right wears a *kofta* (the Norwegian word for *gákti*, the Sámi garment) from Kautokeino I think. And later, for instance here [2017 poster] I just think that just wanted to have the diversity. So now we have the more straightforward Sámi a man hunting and keeping the reindeer safe, and it's in the nature so they want the mountain to be recognizable in the background. They are the mountains around Márkomeannu, the same silhouette. you can recognize them if you squeeze your eyes.

E: oh, yes... there, well, yes, they are like the hills around the area. And what about last year? Did you work for the festival last year too?

T-Å: mhm, yes, in a way. So, the thing is, they wanted to use all my resources to try to make something different. They used the budget in another way, so they've toned down the poster last year. last year, they tried to do something radically different with the marketing of the festival, it was linked up to the performance. So the marketing was a part of the performance as well. And this was on the social media with the video, and postings and involvement of the artists. So they were reporting from 2118. In the future, yes. Yes. So this was a very demanding concept. [...] And then, in the last minutes, they realized, 'Oh, we do need a printed poster as well'. So people don't think it's not happening. So the printed, the physical poster is also important. I think they figured that out so that so they did, they just used the teaser poster and got that printed, so they can have physical appearances in the area. So the poster played at a smaller part in the marketing [compared to previous editions]. I worked as a consultant on marketing, on the social media strategy and on how they should communicate this concept that was very complicated, and has a very complicated way of reaching out. They [the festival organizers] wanted to use the artists as ambassadors for the concept. So the artist had to be 100 years in the future, I'm talking about the message. So it was a very complicated, very complicated, so they wanted to use all my resources to try to make this, so they used budget in another way, they've toned down the poster last year.

Torun

Torun, a women in her late 40s from Gáivuotna, was among the members of the Sámi youth group Gáivuotna Samenuorat, which started the Riddu Riddu festival in the early 1990s. Torun moved to Tromsø in her 20s and she studied history, sociology, and pedagogy at UiT. She currently works at the “Senter for nordlige folk” (the centre of the the Northern people) where she holds various postions and where she is the *webredaktør* (web editor).

Interview 30/9/2019 Tromsø

Torun: I live half here [in Tromsø] and half there [In Kåfjord] but I have a big family there in Kåfjord also, and friends. and of course Riddu Riddu and I do not know, to be a Sámi, I don't know if it easier [to be a Sámi] there in Kåfjord or here in Tromsø, but of course it's... well, I grown up there. And here I learned about my past. Yeah, I mean identity, you know? When we went to primary school [in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord], we didn't know that we were Sámi people, we didn't know that our community was Sámi at all. So, so that was with my friends in Riddu Riddu in that time started to investigate. In a way we became students in terms of time and we learnt a lot about our own community. We didn't learn before... we learned from school, from university and from other Sámi people we met around.

Erika: And... When did you Study in Tromsø? And you came here [to Tromsø] to study at university?

Torun: First time, let me see... 1990 1989? Yes. I did study history, sociology, and pedagogy.

E: And you learnt about Sámi cultures more here in Tromsø than in Kåfjord?

T: Mostly, but actually, we were a group of people who, in a way started to, to investigate. Investigate is a little strange word. But... but yeah, we did to research about our past. Because we started to hear that are you from Kåfjord, you are Sámi... But for people in Manndalen, I think they were they did know that they knew about their background. And you can say that. They were not proud of it. They were ashamed. So then we had, we started to have we had a group of people and some from Manndalen, some from Ordedalen. Some from Birtavarre. And we stayed here in Tromsø and we also had, we started this organization, this youth organization in in Kåfjord. In Manndalen, I know if you heard about it, is *Gáivuona Samenuorat*. You heard about it. Yeah. They started Riddu. We were very active, also in Tromsø we started to have this kind of.... We used to laugh about it sometimes that it's here in Tromsø [that] we started Riddu Riddu actually because we had the collective. we lived in big house together with many people and we started to have some concerts. Yeah. We played football against people from the city. And so in a way we started here, but of course it was. But of course then this *Gáivuona Samenuorat* that started it was more organized so to say. It was in I think it was 1990 or 1989 or '90, something like that. The Riddu Riddu started first time it was 1991. it was just a little little party in the woods. With barbecuing... [laughs]

E: and it was there in Gaivuotna, wasn't it?

Yeah, it's the same place. Well not, not exactly where we first actually had it but in Manndalen, yes. But then, the first time, it was up in the woods, where we have barbecuing and have some music, and drummers. Actually they were from, from Africa! They also have played in our house in drums. And for I think not for everybody Riddu Riddu was a question of Sámi

identity or background or wanted to, show that we are Sámi people. I think for someone it was more to be in this youth organization, it was also to be more political, it was not a question about environment and things like that. And for some people it was to do something to, yeah, so, it was both political and for some people it was about identity and showing the background. And hope, hope. because in Kåfjord, as you already know, I guess it was very difficult in those times to say that you are Sámi people. Some people knew there were some anyway, they didn't say like you did it. But our parents knew they were Sámi. I must say my grandparents knew they were so me and my father, also my father, he is what you call "a child after second World War". Okay, so when he grew up, he didn't learn anything about his background because my grandparents didn't want to show their Sámi identity or background, as they were ashamed. But my my uncle who was 10 years older than my dad, yeah, he he spoke Sámi language fluently so it kind of something happened after the Second World War. So my father never has talked about it at home and not my uncle either after the war because he also was ashamed. But he had learned the language but he, he didn't want to... I guess my father he knew but it was nothing to talk about. So in the beginning they were very skeptical, my parents also skeptical about this. Imagine Yeah,

E: Is your mom from the same cultural area?

T: Yeah, yeah. She's from but she has more Norwegian ancestors. But my father is Sámi from both sides his mother and father. My mother also has many Sámi people [in her ancestry] but not so. So close.

E: But was from the same cultural are?

T: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. From Kåfjord Yeah. So it was a lot of discussion in family and all around the society and you know in all the Ordedalen what worse to be some and then in Manndalen because Ordedalen more... you know... what is the translation? well, you know the word *fornorsking* [assimilation]? Yeah.

E: So it was stronger there?

T: Yeah. stronger and

E: what do you mean it was stronger. How could that happen?

T: I think that Manndalen, Manndalen was quite isolated for so long. To know only got all these institutions schools. Yes. And Norwegian teachers and yeah, so it was the language. I think in Manndalen, they kept the language much longer because they were so isolated. There was no road you know, around there. they have to take a boat to go, go to Manndalen, for example. Not before 1972 So, so they kept their culture much longer. I think that's the reason. Mostly to come with the boat. Yeah.

Erika: why do you think they decided to frame it as indigenous?

Torun: I don't know. You can see that the sea Sámi culture was very different from Sámi people from Indre Finnmark. And they have more, they were more... they didn't doubt their identity in a way. But we have to in a way try to find and try to reconstruct our identity in a way, because we lost it. So I think for us it was to include... other indigenous people gave us some more confidence in a way because the history was so much the same.

E: How was it to be a Sámi in Manndalen before Riddu Ridđu?. Was it difficult? Was it possible to be a Sámi before Riddu Ridđu.

T: It was possible. Did you know we didn't have in this time, we didn't have any like symbols like today with Gakti and clothes and...

E: and when was it? was it in the 1980s?

T: in the end of the '80s and beginning of the '90s. And of course, it was very much... a lot of conflicts around this. So, as I told you, there was discussion, in the in families all around and maybe one member of family was Sámi and one was not. So it was it was very tense and just difficult, very difficult. And for example, in Ordedalen, you couldn't go to the pub without being you know, haunted or like you are, you come here, you are Sámi and you come here, and you joik, you know, and they called, they called us plastic Sámi people.

E: why?

T: Because they, they saw that, or they want to think I will say that we, we want it to be some because it was kind of modern than in the way it was not really. But it was, I don't know, for them we were not "real Sámi" people, because also because we lost our language, you know, and then and it in the middle of the 1995-95, Lyngen Kofta I think , you know, gakti was reconstructed, and I remember I used it in Ordendale on the 17th of May, in 1996, around there. And the first time I used it, I was so proud. But I was the only person on the 17th of May, you know, it's the National Day, who had this clothe. So in a way I did it in a protest. And it was very difficult. And some people said, "ah, look at her. So ugly, look at this ugly clothes", [laughs and the the tone becomes suddenly serious] it was difficult. So it took a time to get us to, to these clothes, to us that.

E: So in the first Riddu Ridđu, you were not wearing the gakti?

T: no...not in the first.

E: Because now it's like one of the main things you see at Riddu Ridđu is that everyone.

T Yeah. So you see a lot of thing happens this year. And for our children, you can say like, Sara, it's, it's it's not a question. It's she, she doesn't have to look for identity. For anything, she is just natural. Everything is natural. So when I tell her about this, this time or this period, she can't believe it.

E: So you did that for your children?

T: yeah, you can say we did for the children, for our children.

Torun: with my grandmother, when she was when she got old, she got dementia. . Then she started to talk a lot. I always heard her talk Sámi language, also Finnish language, she could [speak] tree language. But then she started to ask "Why can you speak Same languages? Why?"

E: oh, can I write it?

T: Yes, yes, you can write it. Okay.

E: So she was your grandmother?

T: my grandmother.

E: When was she born?

T: She was born, let's see... in 1889.

E: and she could speak many languages?

T: Yeah. Like Finnish, Norwegian, and the Sámi language of course. but back then, a lot of people in our community could. So it was quite, as they say, a multicultural society. Not everybody did in this society, but she did. But I think of course, same language, she spoke that better.

E: And when she got dementia? was it like Alzheimer?

T: Not like that, but like a book and kind of get from age when you are old. Yeah. And then she started, she could not understand why we didn't speak same and just she preferred to speak Same herself.

E: And were there other people who were able to speak with her in Sámi

T: No... I guess her oldest son but I don't know if they did. I don't know if he wanted to, to do that. I guess they did. We just didn't hear.

E: But could you hear your grandmother speaking Sámi when you were young?

T: Yeah

E: So you knew without knowing?

T: Yeah, it was a kind of, we call it the kitchen language, you know? When they didn't want anyone to understand, or hear what they were talking about.

E: But then you did hear, and understand...

T: a little bit, but not so much. I guess my father understood more... But it was kind of exotic, but we didn't think about it. It was like it was natural. Older people talked like that. How strange. So it's things like that when we got older and started university and heard about and then we understood that we are we are living in biggest Sámi community actually in Norway.

E: and how did the other local people take it? That you were taking the culture back?

T: you know, a small community like Kåfjord when there are so many people. are so angry with this Sámi culture at all, they didn't want to identify with it. And when you know when the community had this sign, Sin mi language people felt like they are pushing on them, "they are forcing us to become Sámi people "you know. So, so it was very difficult to be popular to live there at all. So of course Riddu was this place where we could relax and be without problems and meet other people w with the same background. And then, it became bigger and bigger. And, of course, I remember it was, I guess, in 1995, when we have Mari Boine, you know, she was the biggest, Sámi artist. And also, well-known internationally. So we didn't have so many sea-Sámi people, you know, artists from our own areas. So we, we also started to look for our identity in other Sámi areas like Finnmark. And you know, and so, I think when Marie Boine came, you know, she brought more status and with more Status, you known, more people come. and more status. It was a very special year that year. I think it was the first year when it was called Riddu Riđđu also. but of course, for other culture, like other indigenous people, it's also important to come to a place where you can be yourself, and you can express your culture and respect and accept for your culture.

Appendix C

Interview consent form sample and information sheet

Interview: Consent Form

Research project: "Cultural revival among Sami people in Northern Norway: festivals, spiritualities and cultural creativity"

Researcher: Erika De Vivo

Research Participants name:

We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Under European law, ethical procedures for academic research require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and to be made aware of how the information contained in their interview will be used.

This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained as none but the researcher Erika De Vivo will have access to the data collected throughout the interview. The researcher will keep records of the interviews in a secure location accessible only by the researcher. The records will be kept until publication and a reasonable time thereafter, in accordance with University regulations.

One copy of this document will be kept together with the research records of this study. Also, you will be given a copy to keep. The interview will take roughly one hour and it will take place at a place of your choice/via skype. Would you therefore read the accompanying **information sheet** and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded (if you allow so) and a transcript will be produced
- If you wish so, you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- The transcript or contents of the interview will be analysed by Erika De Vivo
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Erika De Vivo
- If you wish so, any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be

anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed

- The actual recording will be destroyed after being transcribed

Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

2 I understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please mark the box of the statements that you agree with:

- I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
- I do not wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
- I agree to be quoted indirectly
- I agree to be quoted directly (with my name associated to the quotation).
- I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) or no name is used.

By signing this form, I agree that:

I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I do not have to take part, and that I

- 1) can stop the interview at any time;
- 2) The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;
- 3) I have read the Information sheet;
- 4) I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
- 5) I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;
- 6) I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future;
- 7) I am over the age of 18 years and have been given a copy of this form.

By signing this form, I agree that the contents of the interview may be used in:

- Academic papers and academic publications
- Presentations at academic conferences/lectures/seminars
- The final thesis submitted by Erika De Vivo in partial fulfilment of the requirements of her PhD program
- Further publications

All data collection and handling will comply with EU legislation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. The collection of personal data as part of this research will adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation No 2016/679.3

Contact Information

This research is carried out under the supervision of Professor Lia Emilia Zola and it is part of Erika De Vivo' s PhD research (PhD program in Psychological, Anthropological and Educational Studies, University of Torino). The University of Torino grants the researcher a scholarship. The researcher certifies that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this research.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Researcher: Erika De Vivo

Full address: Department of Cultures, Politics and Society; University of Turin, Lungo Dora Siena 100, Torino

Tel: 0039 3774726824

E-mail: Erika.devivo@unito.it

You can also contact the candidate' s supervisor:

Candidate' s supervisor: Lia Emilia Zola

E-mail: lia.zola@unito.it

Professor Pier Paolo Viazzo:

E-mail: paolo.viazzo@unito.it

Participants Signature Date

Researchers Signature Date

Information sheet

Dear prospective participant,

This information sheet is designed to give you an outline of my the research project you will be ask to be part of, and the implications for the participants involved. The title of this PhD project is “Cultural revival among Sami people in Northern Norway: festivals, spiritualities and cultural creativity”. This PhD research is focused on contemporary Sami spirituality and festivals as expressions of the current Sami cultural revival in Norway. I will devote particular attention to the current valorisation of Sami culture. I will address the role and the meaning of Sami festivals (Riddu Riddu, Markomeannu and Isogaisa) by looking at the experiences of festival volunteers and participants. I will also address the ethno-political implications of contemporary Shamanism among the Sami people living in the urban centres of Northern Norway. I would like to examine the traditionalization processes as well as the legitimation strategies employed by Sami activists as well as by those who practice Sami contemporary shamanism. In doing so, I wish to examine the historical backgrounds, the context and the current developments of current Sami ethno-policy as well as Sami contemporary shamanism.

Given your experience and involvement with _____ / _____, it would benefit my research a great deal to have your opinion on some issues I am looking at.

Participation to this study is free and voluntary. The participants can decide to withdraw from the interview at any time. We do not anticipate that there is any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

The interview will take roughly one hour and it will take place at a place of your choice/via skype.

If you accept to be interviewed, I will ask you a few questions concerning your involvement in contemporary Sami cultural revitalization. In particular, I would like to ask you about your experience of Sami festivals or your experience with Sami spirituality. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained as none but the researcher Erika De Vivo will have access to the data collected throughout the interview. The researcher will keep records of the interviews in a secure location accessible only by the researcher. The records will be kept until publication and a reasonable time thereafter, in accordance with the University regulations. The results of my research will be presented in seminars, presentations, workshops and conferences. Presentations will be offered also in Norway. The results will also be published in academic articles, academic publications and in the PhD thesis submitted at the end of the 3-year PhD program in Psychological, Anthropological and Educational Studies at the University of Torino, Italy. This study has been approved by the ethical committee of the Unviersity of Torino. If you would like to have more information or clarification over this research, you can contact the researcher

Erika De Vivo at the following email address Erika.devivo@unito.it or via phone at 0039 3774726824