



## ARTICLE

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Lisbeth Bergum Johanson  
The University of Tromsø, the Arctic University of Norway  
[lisbeth.b.johanson@uit.no](mailto:lisbeth.b.johanson@uit.no)

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## Using Local Sámi Culture and History to Teach Pupils about Democracy

Lisbeth Bergum Johanson, [lisbeth.b.johanson@uit.no](mailto:lisbeth.b.johanson@uit.no)  
The University of Tromsø, the Arctic University of Norway

### Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate how the use of Sámi local culture and history can promote pupils' democratic education. Teachers in the local community were interviewed because they provided information about how place and region create good opportunities for the use of local history as well as history of the Sámi's with the aim of producing democratic citizens. Analyses of the teachers' different uses of local history such as scientifically, existentially, morally and ideologically in teaching, revealed that local contexts that local history provide can make the past more understandable for the pupils. Local history introduces common practices that enable them to participate in discussions with different and extended presentations of the past. According to the teachers, local history and culture create enthusiasm, participation, understanding, critical thinking and recognition. The teachers also used Sámi culture and history to discuss and integrate democratic values such as equality and diversity. The teachers explicitly used local history to promote local Sámi culture and history, and to build identities and create meaning (in life). Using local history when teaching history can arguably contribute to knowledge about a past that is usable – for instance to produce democratic citizens.

**Keywords:** Use of History; Local History; Sámi History; Sami Culture; Democratic Education; Curriculum

### Introduction

History is currently used in many ways by academia, museums, commercial, political, and non-academic fields (Aronsson, 2004). The education sector though use history to expand pupils' knowledge and to disseminate social values according to norms set by institutions and people in power (Stugu, 2008; Lorentzen and Røthing, 2017; Børhaug, 2017). These norms state that schools shall educate pupils 'to promote democratic values and democracy as a form of government' (Overordnet Verdier og Prinsipper for Grunnopplæringa, 2017, p.8). This directive indicates that schools should be a place where pupils learn and experience democracy by participating in democratic activities and make their own conscious choices in the process of becoming responsible members of society. In addition, critical thinking is especially an important aspect of education. Educators should help pupils apply what they learn about democracy to real life (Sandahl, 2014; Lorentzen and Røthing, 2017). Teaching

local history is one means of helping pupils practice and develop an understanding of democracy (Knutsen, 2014a). Local history can help pupils participate in discussions as they learn to see the same story from different perspectives and through alternative narratives. Moreover, it can help them understand the past because they see stories in the context of their own life situation (Fossen, 2005).

Previous studies have illustrated how and why teachers use local history and the significance of local history for the formation of identity, as well as the relationship between subject curricula, local history and democracy (Bøe, 2006; Hultman, 2012; Fossen, 2005; Knutsen, 2014a; Knutsen, 2014b). However, no one has gathered teachers' perception of how they use local Sámi culture and history in teaching and how their pupils learn about alternative narratives in their immediate present and the recent past in the north of Norway. In this article, I investigate how and why teachers use local Sámi culture and history in lower secondary schools. I then discuss and analyse how this can promote pupils' democratic competence. During the analysis, I apply Karlsson's typologies for the use of history; *scientific*, *existential*, *moral* or *ideological*. According to the four typologies, each use of history meets a specific need and serves a particular function; furthermore, these needs and functions can be linked to democratic competence. *Scientific* use of history deals with discovering, reconstructing, interpreting and verifying, while *existential* use deals with remembering, i.e. providing rootedness and helping us orient ourselves in the past and present. *Moral* use, conversely, deals with exposing the hidden with reconciliation or rehabilitation, while *ideological* use involves the desire to construct, with the aim of rationalising or legitimising history (Karlsson, 2004; Hultman, 2011).

I have interviewed teachers at lower secondary schools in a region with close ties to historical and cultural Sámi traditions and attempted to associate the typology categories with how democracy is taught at schools. By investigating how and why teachers use Sámi culture and local (Sámi) history, I discovered how Sámi culture and history may be used to teach lower secondary children about democracy.

In the following, I outline the main objectives for teaching democracy in schools and explain how the typologies are associated with democracy. Then I describe the empirical context of my work before presenting the methodology and the data material. Following this explanation, I present the findings regarding how and why the teachers use local Sámi culture and history. I conclude with an analysis of how the teachers in my study can use history in light of the typologies presented above.

### **Democracy, use of history and local history in education**

Briseid (2012) states that school plays an essential role in educating citizens who can participate actively in a democracy. Teaching democracy involves disseminating knowledge about 'the history of democracy, the selection of institutional schemes, and knowledge about different democratic processes and how these take place' (Stray and Sætra, 2015, p.461). It also involves participation in democratic processes by helping pupils learn 'critical thinking and judgment, and the ability to see an issue from several sides.' (Stray and Sætra, 2015, p.461). Source criticism and verification are key elements in teaching pupils critical thinking. Pupils should learn to evaluate sources of knowledge and consider how knowledge reaches us; additionally, they should learn to think critically about how knowledge is developed (Overordnet Verdier og Prinsipper for Grunnopplæringen, 2017). The ability to maintain a multiperspective view which allows pupils to see events from different angles is an important part of learning about democracy (Eikeland, 2013). An understanding of how established knowledge can change through new knowledge and shifts in values is also vital (Lenz and Nilssen, 2011).

Democratic values such as equality (gender, social, civil etc.) and diversity should be elements of educational practice in all school subjects (Overordnet Verdier og Prinsipper for Grunnopplæringen, 2017; Biseth 2014 in Lorentzen and Røthing, 2017). The purpose of working with democratic values is to learn to live together in a pluralistic society. School should be a place for cultivating diversity while allowing room for individualism; this requires a conscious world view (Stray and Sætra, 2015). Pupils have to learn to recognise diversity in society, which means understanding the importance of equality. Knowledge about Sámi culture and the Sámi as an indigenous people is important in this context. A democratic society protects indigenous peoples and minorities and ensures that indigenous perspectives form a part of the democratisation of school-age children. Teaching in Norway should help pupils gain 'insight into the history, culture, society and rights of the indigenous Sámi peoples. Pupils should learn about diversity and variety within Sámi culture and society' (Overordnet Verdier og Prinsipper for Grunnopplæringen, 2017, p.6). Sámi culture and history are thus an integral part of teaching pupils about democracy and democratic processes.

Thus, democracy in school is not only about knowledge, but also about attitudes and values that need to be experienced. According to Stray and Sætra (2015) and Lenz and Nilssen (2011), it is vital that pupils experience democracy throughout their education rather than simply learning about it (Børhaug, 2017). If teachers use only textbooks, research shows that pupils gain only theoretical knowledge of democracy, but not competence such as critical thinking and democratic practice (Lorentzen and Røthing, 2017). We need to teach pupils how citizenship is practised and used in real life. It might be argued that a practical way to experience democracy is through the use of history. As a subject in school, history is

supposed to create democratic citizens and to stimulate critical thinking and participation in society (Alvén 2017; Lorentzen and Røthing, 2017). Local history (i.e. Sámi history in this study) can offer alternative narratives about the past and the present which have a potential to help pupils understand the connection to society and find ways to be active members of it (Knutsen, 2014a; Fossen, 2005; Hultman, 2011). By using local history, we can challenge narratives found in textbooks and give a more layered and complex picture of the past. Multiperspectivism can be a resource at schools because different reference points for a story provide pupils with more opportunity to get involved and to understand the world (Kvande and Naastad, 2013). This understanding implies that the use of local history can be an essential part of teaching democracy.

### **The use of history: Four categories for understanding the use of history in school**

When I discuss the use of history, I am addressing our ways of referring to and applying the culture of history, which is comprised of sources, artefacts, rituals, customs and historical representations that characterise society (Kvande and Naastad, 2013; Bøe and Knutsen, 2012; Aronsson, 2004). It is a formal concept within academia, scholasticism and cultural heritage institutions, but it also plays a role in commercial, political and non-academic fields (Aronsson, 2004). When pupils use history 'making their own historical interpretation and narratives, we must understand that their use of history will contain moral and political issues' (Alvén, 2017, p.53).

Karlsson (2004, 2007) has systematically analysed typologies in the use of history to reach an understanding of the role of history in society. He argues that there are different needs, uses, users and functions of history. Thorp (2014) calls these uses of history 'what'-uses, but sees a need to examine how history is used. To understand how history is used in teaching, Hultman (2012) applies five of Karlsson's typology categories (2004): *scientific*, *existential*, *moral*, *ideological* and *political-pedagogical*. Hultman (2012) believes teachers actively use the culture of history to achieve specific competence aims in the National Curriculum or to meet specific teaching needs. Four of these typology categories apply to my analyses.

The *scientific* need (for use of history) deals with acquiring knowledge and discovering and reconstructing history. The scientific function is to evaluate, verify and interpret sources (Karlsson, 2004). Hultman (2012) determined that teachers generally use local history *scientifically* to clarify and specify stories about the past, or they use local history to achieve the formal competence aims for learning source criticism as stated in the National Curriculum. *Existential* use of history implies a need for humans to forget or remember something meaningful. Remembering functions to provide us with roots (rootedness) and to help us orient ourselves in our existence (Karlsson, 2004). History can be used to reinforce our sense of identity. Hultman (2012) asserted that *existential* use of local history is associated with the pupils' own community, at least where teaching is concerned. Teachers use affinity for local surroundings to stimulate familiarity and a desire to learn, or to strengthen the pupils' sense of

identity. For some teachers, our surroundings can tell us something about who we are and where we come from; in other words, the local is associated with the existential. *Moral* use of history is about the need to rediscover, investigate and criticise; expose what was previously hidden; and bring vulnerable groups to light. One can question certain versions of history in this way while emphasising other versions. We can use history to rehabilitate, restore and reconcile. *Ideological* use corresponds to the need for inventing and constructing, or 'using history to construct relevant meaningful contexts to legitimise political power and rationalise historical mistakes by creating stories that diminish the mistakes of those in power' (Karlsson, 2004, p.59). This can mean advocating stories that reinforce or legitimise an ideology or reinforcing stories that question opposing versions of one's preferred story. Its function is to rationalise and legitimise. *Moralistic* and *ideological* uses of history, according to Hultman (2012), are reflected in teaching plans that compare stories and events from various, new perspectives. We have a moral obligation to bring minorities or marginalised groups into the light of history. The state's long-standing oppression of the Sámi people is used ideologically at the same time as it legitimises Sámi history. Local history can provide opposition to national attitudes. It can also legitimise resistance to national attitudes and allow the periphery to come into the light through local perspectives.

Hultman's study showed that local history can be used to teach pupils about democracy. They can find local historical sources and exercise source criticism, and local history can extend or embody stories, provide other or new perspectives, provide an experience of fellowship and identity through rootedness and orientation, and work with values like diversity and equality by talking about issues related to minorities such as the Sámi and other indigenous peoples.

### **The empirical context**

For the interviews, I selected teachers working at two lower secondary schools in Alta in northern Norway, because of the city's solid roots in Sámi culture and history. Alta is historically a multi-cultural municipality, home to Norwegians, Sámis and Kvens. Documents from the 1500s speak of Sámis inhabiting the coastal zones of the Alta fjord before the Norwegians began to settle here in the 1600s (Nielsen, 1990). Spurred by the famine at home, Kven immigrants arrived from Finland in the 1700s. Modernity made its appearance in 1826 when the copper mines were constructed in Kåfjord, just outside of the village of Alta (Nielsen, 1990). Labourers arrived from Finland, Sweden and the south of Norway to work the mines. The 1800s were characterised by modernisation and a so-called Norwegianisation that lasted until after the Second World War and that affected the Sámi people in particular. The consequences were documented in the population censuses, when most inhabitants began to be registered as Norwegians. In 1801, Sámi people accounted for 54% of the population of Alta while 28% were Norwegian and 18% were Kvens (Nielsen, 1995). By 1900,

approximately 69% were registered as Norwegians; conversely, about 10% were registered as Sámis and 21% as Kvens (Johanson, 2000).

In recent times, a conflict that unfolded from 1968 to 1982 put Sámi rights on the national agenda. The Alta Conflict significantly affected the development of Norway's official policies toward the Sámi people. The source of the conflict was a hydropower facility being planned and built on the Alta River, which conflicted with Sámi rights and indicated a need for new laws and a new political body that could represent the Sámi people. The first members of the Sámi Rights Commission were appointed in 1980. Their work resulted in new legislation, embodied in the Sámi Act of 1987. Separate constitutional sections were drawn up in 1988 concerning Sámi languages, Sámi culture and Sámi society. The Sámi Parliament was established in Karasjok in 1989 (Berg-Nordlie and Tvedt, 2017). The parliament symbolised political rights beyond those provided by other Norwegian political documents and institutions.

Alta has continued to play an important role in Sámi culture and history. Alta is home to a world heritage museum in which Sámi history occupies a great deal of exhibition space. The museum is also home to research activities. The rock carvings outside the museum are additionally of great importance. The Sámi Language Center, which also found its home in Alta, works to promote, strengthen and preserve Sámi languages and Sámi culture. The history of the coastal Sámi and local Sámi traditions are primary areas of interest at the Center (Alta språksenter, 2017). Thus, teachers in the municipality have excellent opportunities to incorporate Sámi culture and local history into their teaching.

## **Methods and data**

I chose to interview teachers working at two schools that were close to each other; as a result, the teachers had the same opportunities to use local Sámi cultural and history resources in their close surroundings. The two schools had a total of approximately 700 pupils and were the only lower secondary schools in this area. The teachers taught Social Science (which consists of history, geography and sociology), a subject in which democracy and Sámi culture form part of the competence aims for the subject as stated in the National Curriculum. Nevertheless, the teachers said these topics often arise in many subjects (as the main section of the National Curriculum recommends). To select the participants, I chose one teacher I knew at each school and asked these two individuals for names of others at the school. Only four (given the pseudonyms Anna, Oda, Lena and Marie) of the 29 Social Science teachers accepted the invitation to be part of the research. The sample size is small, but all four teachers had a good deal of teaching experience (from 6 to 21 years) and therefore provided in-depth information about their use of local Sámi history, in addition to how the schools used local history. Thus, the teachers provided information on both their own work and how the schools work with local Sámi culture and history to promote democratic

competence. It was of utmost importance that all the teachers had good access to local history, so they could provide meaningful data.

Even though the teachers gave in-depth information about the research question, this study cannot be representative for the schools in northern Norway. Nevertheless, the aim of this study was not to generalise, but to obtain knowledge that other academics can learn from and hopefully use to develop this knowledge further. Furthermore, my goal was to provide knowledge and understanding about how and why local history can aid in teaching about democracy, which could perhaps serve as a source of data for future research. This study is thus explorative because it aims to explore a phenomenon that there is little research on (Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen, 2010). Hence, this study offers a description that provides the opportunity to analyse the main characteristics and the phenomenon of study (Berg, 2004).

Prior to the semi-structured interview, the teachers received an interview guide so they could prepare their thoughts and responses. The guidelines stated some specific questions concerning *how* and *why* they use local history, the local community and their surroundings to teach Sámi culture and history. They were asked how they teach and work with democracy in the classroom and how this is linked to Sámi history and culture as well as how and why they think local history can contribute to learning about democracy. The interviews were recorded on tape and later transcribed. They lasted from 40 minutes to 90 minutes. The transcriptions were sent to the teachers who wanted to read them, so they could check the accuracy of their responses. Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Nilssen, 2012) asserted that the credibility of interviews and the quality of the study that follows only improve if the respondents are permitted to check and verify their responses. Although there were few respondents, the validity of my results improved 'when participants [were] permitted to review their responses' (Chaiklin, 2011, p.137).

Data were thus selected according to the questions of how and why the teachers used local Sámi history and culture, and the findings were later categorised according to their answers. The resulting categories were: Sámi arts and handicraft (*doudji*), the Norwegianisation of the Sámis, examples of local Alta history, the use of the local museum, and democracy. These categories gave good opportunities to analyse the answers in accordance with the different use of history; scientific, existential, moral and ideological.

### **Findings: How and why do teachers use local Sámi culture and history?**

When asked how they worked with local Sámi culture and history, Oda and Anna said they used an interdisciplinary approach based on specific themes and they worked with different local projects and in collaboration with the local museum. Lena stated she did not apply an interdisciplinary approach, but Marie used an interdisciplinary approach in her own subjects.

Lena and Marie also collaborated with the local museum and brought in specialists on Sámi *doudji*. Additionally, teachers expressed that they have used visits to the Sámi Parliament as part of their work with local Sámi history and culture. All the teachers have brought in or visited experts on Sámi history and culture on different themes.

The main reason for using local culture and history from their surroundings is that information is lacking in the Social Science/history textbooks. Teachers expressed that pupils need more knowledge and understanding of the Sámi culture and history. Oda said, 'I don't use the textbook at all. No, I think the textbook fails to cover the topic adequately.' Marie agreed that the textbook failed to say enough about such topics. She expressed a belief that pupils can learn to see the big picture by starting to learn from a local vantage point. Anna also argued that it may be:

'easier to start learning about things that are close to home. [...] Yes, I think it is much easier to learn if a pupil thinks an issue is relevant to his or her friends or family. [...]. So, we try to use local associations in the classroom.'

However, the teacher with the least experience stated that she used the textbook extensively. For her, the textbook provided a sense of security because she felt she did not know enough about local history.

### **Sámi arts and handicraft (*doudji*)**

Marie said a lot of her pupils' work in Social Science and English was based on a large wall mural (graffiti art, by the Sámi artist Anders Sunna) on the wall of the school. The artwork aims to stimulate debate around Sámi rights. Marie used the mural as the basis for discussing Sámi culture and gave the pupils tasks related to the mural. She explained, 'We ask pupils questions to get them thinking and to get them to draw parallels with the rest of the world.' Anna said they made graphic prints in Arts and Crafts class based on Sámi symbols, figures and magic drums, while Oda had her pupils sew leather key fobs in the tradition of the coastal Sámi. Lena said she brought artisans to the school to teach about Sámi traditions and to lead pupils in making traditional *duodji* handicrafts. The pupils helped make small outfits for dolls based on traditional clothing (*gákti*) worn by the Sámi. Oda stated that she often used *duodji*. In fact, she explained, 'The *doudji* of the coastal Sámi is especially important to me, so I try to implement it in my teaching. I want them to experience it, hands on.' She said:

'Many pupils only know about the most typical outfits with colourful borders (traditionally from Kautokeino), but that was not the tradition in our community. We have other traditions for decorating our outfits. [...] Yes, we also worked with mica decorations [...]. They learned to sew leather and embroider using mica techniques. [...] They still say things like: "Oh my; did they really use that? We

have never seen that.” It is our responsibility to show them the diversity of Sámi culture.’

Oda stated how she would tell her pupils, ‘Here is something that was commonly used in Alta in the past, which helped them relate to what they would make, and they showed more interest.’ In groups, they discussed topics like Sámi clothing traditions and language. Oda said one group that worked with Sámi clothing traditions:

‘had to do some real in-depth research. What kinds of outfits exist out there? Is it an all-purpose garment, or does it say something about who you are? [...] And they talked about the origins of the Sámi language, which branch of language it belongs to. Are there different Sámi languages, and what variant do the people around speak?’

Anna and Oda talked about a fashion show they put together on the Sámi National Day. Oda said, ‘So we had [...] a Sámi catwalk, where we displayed national outfits from surrounding areas from the coastal Sámi, from Karasjok, from Kautokeino.’

### **Norwegianisation of the Sámi**

All the teachers discussed the Norwegianisation of the Sámi people. The state’s policy toward the Sámi was particularly harsh on the Sámi living along the coast of Finnmark (Gaski 2012). Marie used the mural (graffiti art) to inspire questions among her pupils and asked them, ‘How would you feel if your language was taken from you? How would it feel to be in a situation where you did not understand what was going on?’ Lena said her pupils were shocked when the class talked about ‘how things used to be [...]. They were not allowed to speak Sámi back then, it was a shame to be Sámi, and they were not supposed to look Sámi.’ Oda said textbooks are often written by people living in southern Norway, and she believed one could still find examples of Norwegianisation in the textbooks.

She expressed a need to incorporate the most recent knowledge about the Sámi people and the coastal Sámi into schoolwork. She explained, ‘Being a Sámi is so much more than herding reindeer or the colourful outfits from Kautokeino and Karasjok that we see in pictures.’ She said people are using the Sámi *kofa* outfit more now than they did 10 or 20 years ago and that her pupils talk about it in the classroom. She added, ‘Perhaps there was not much knowledge or information available about the coastal Sámi 20 years ago.’ She said she hoped to be able to give her pupils a greater understanding of the diversity of Sámi culture through learning. The teachers stated they attempt to do this by showing the pupils how Sámi names were altered to become Norwegian names in the population censuses at certain periods, which is one good example of Norwegianisation. Oda said they tried to put this kind of information into a larger context:

‘Yes. Let’s take one example: Why was it important for the state to send Norwegians into eastern Finnmark? What threats existed there? And then we talk with the pupils about what that must have felt like. How has that influenced the nation’s history? For example, I showed a couple of Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) news clips recorded in Alta in the 1970s, where a man stands there saying the municipality of Alta is not traditionally Sámi territory, and the people who live here do not think of themselves as Sámis. And now we know what we know today. [...] Of course, the pupils immediately see what is wrong.’

### **Examples of local Alta history; the Second World War and the copper mines at Kåfjord**

The Second World War and the Sámi were of particular interest for Marie. She taught her pupils about ‘how they moved their reindeer herds across the border to limit the Germans’ access to food, and they slaughtered the animals there. The Sámi also helped people escape.’ She said this surprised her pupils. They did not know the Sámi participated in resistance movements against the Nazis. Marie explained that they talked about the Second World War so the pupils would be aware of the Sámis’ participations in the resistance – not only the Norwegians were heroes.

Oda and Anna talked about one of their interdisciplinary approaches to teaching, in which they focused on how society changes over time. They chose Kåfjord and its copper mines from the 1800s as the focus of their teaching, using the site as a culture bearer to discuss and work with local history. These teachers highlighted the importance of telling the pupils about the Sámi girl who found the first pieces of copper ore and about the Sámi people who worked the mines. They visited the local cemetery, and Oda said, ‘This year, we worked on how we can read the gravestones at the cemetery, [...] to see where the different people are buried, i.e. those with higher social status and those with lower status. Could ethnicity play a role in where people were buried in the cemetery?’ Anna said they looked at the graves of those who were beheaded in Alta after the Kautokeino rebellion<sup>1</sup>, which provided pupils with more information about a story they had heard many times before. For example, they had already seen the film *Kautokeino Rebellion*, and Anna had already taught the pupils about the revivalist priest Lars Levi Laestadius in Christianity, Religion and Worldviews class (KRLE) and the rebellion’s relationship with Revivalism.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kautokeino uprising of 1852 involved some militant members of the Laestadian revivalist movement who were Sámi. They rebelled against extrinsic (non- Sámi) power and influence in Kautokeino. The uprising ended with the whipping of a priest and the death of the local merchant and sheriff (Berg-Nordlie, 17 September 2017).

### **The local museum**

The teachers said they have taken their classes on visits to the local museum. Oda and Anna said they took their pupils there during the Kåfjord project when they were taught about the copper mines. They saw the exhibition called *La elva leve (Let the River Live)*, and they talked about the Alta River conflict and the dam. They have also taken their pupils to the rock carvings outside the museum. They also saw an exhibition called *Na, maid dál?* at the museum last year. The exhibition explained how Sámi national costumes were used in the past and continue to be used in the present. It displayed items which had been returned from Oslo, where they had been for many years. Oda said, 'The pupils saw what life was like back then and compared it with how things had become.' Marie helped develop a project for the Cultural Rucksack programme (a national programme for arts and culture in schools that involves school projects), which they called *I and the Others*. The goal was to raise pupil awareness. Marie said:

'Where do we see signs of Sámi culture in Alta now? We used pictures as a means of expression. They were a bit surprised [...]. They learned that these things are not just for others. We see them everywhere in society, and in ourselves. It allows pupils to think about the idea of *the Others* and how we treat other people. What attitudes do we have about others?'

### **Democracy**

When asked how and why they used Sámi history and culture to work with democracy, Marie said they used the wall mural at the school to talk about the Sámi Parliament and the election. They also worked with the topic of indigenous peoples, human rights and the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention on human rights. Marie's pupils visited the Parliament building once. Oda said they discussed the importance of the Sámi Parliament. She said they talk about its structure and she explains why they elect people to the parliament. 'We also talked about the Tråante 2017 celebration<sup>2</sup> [...]. That was when we showed the films that the Sámi Parliament made [...]. But we can do be even better.' The teachers expressed a desire to do better at using local history to interpret sources and engage pupils in source criticism. However, Oda explained how they asked the pupils questions about what they thought would have happened if Norwegianisation had not occurred. Additionally, she stated they asked the pupils to interpret the images of the rock carvings (at the Alta museum) in terms of Sámi culture. Oda stated:

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<sup>2</sup> The Tråante 2017 festival is a celebration of the first Sámi national meeting that was held in Trondheim in 1917. It is a celebration of the '100-year struggle for democracy, justice and diversity. Tråante 2017 aims to commemorate and communicate Sámi traditions, Sámi culture and Sámi history from a centennial perspective. The centennial celebration aims to engage the population and to stimulate participation and commitment in democratic development' (Tråante, 2017).

'We also ask whether the pupils can identify signs of ancient settlers in our surroundings, i.e. when did the Sámi people arrive? When did they first arrive? Have they been here forever? Are there any signs in the rock carvings that indicate the existence of Sámi culture?' [...] And then many pupils say: "Yes, there are reindeer here! We see signs of herding and hunting. Do you think that has anything to do with it?"

The teachers, furthermore, discussed democratic values. Both Lena and Anna spoke about the consequences of Norwegianisation in the north and the effect it had on equality. Marie was interested in human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. She expressed a belief that learning about human rights would make pupils think more about what was happening around them and help them draw parallels to what was happening elsewhere in society. She spent time in class working with her pupils to prevent negative attitudes toward others. Oda pointed out how vital it is to be open to diversity. She viewed local history as the key to learning about oneself and one's own culture as well as helping pupils gain a better understanding of the world around them and see themselves as part of a local and global community.

Oda stated, 'Knowledge is often the key to tolerance, to a sense of identity.' Oda mentioned that, when her pupils worked with the topic of Sámi culture and history, they asked why they needed to learn this. She said, 'It also has to do with developing a personal identity, to get them to ask essential questions like, "Who am I?" Or, "Does this have anything to do with me?"' Oda and her pupils used local topics to talk about identity, and she often heard of pupils going home and asking, 'Is anyone in our family Sámi?' She said that one of the pupils who participated in Sámi culture and history class decided to wear the Sámi outfit at her confirmation because she learned her family had Sámi roots. According to Oda, pupils ought to 'bring this conversation to the dinner table and perhaps research a bit about their own identity etc. [...] We want our pupils to ask questions and be curious.' To establish an understanding of what the Sámi people had to undergo throughout history, especially learning about the current situation compared with the past is necessary. 'Unfortunately, we still hear negative things being said about Sámi people and their culture.' Oda stated that she thinks it is important 'to be able to share information about Sámi culture and local Sámi communities, and spread knowledge about significant things, especially in this region.' She continued, 'And if one knows that maybe this happened to one's own, what they had to go through, at least it makes one think and wonder.' Lena stressed that Sámi people are still being bullied because of their origins. She believed the topic can be discussed in the school subject KRLE because equality is a key concept in the subject curriculum.

The findings above show that teachers have used local culture and history for different reasons. It is thus interesting to analyse the findings in relation to scientific, existential, moral

and ideological uses of history and see whether the different uses of history can promote pupils' democratic competence.

### **Discussion: Scientific, existential, moral and ideological uses of history in schools**

In this part, I apply Hultman's (2012) interpretation of Karlsson's (2004) typology to analyse the different ways local history is used in teaching and how it can promote pupils' democratic competence.

#### **Scientific use of history**

This study indicates that the participating teachers (as in Hultman's study) consider local history to be valuable when trying to get pupils to relate to history and to make the stories more understandable. This would be categorised as a *scientific* use. Thus, we can say that the teachers use the culture of history to cover *scientific* needs, which encompasses exploring, discovering and reconstructing history. Conversely, they may use history as a means of evaluating and interpreting sources. Pupils discover, investigate or interpret sources and stories when they investigate Sámi clothing traditions, when they learn about the Sámi languages or when they interpret signs and symbols on rock carvings or the mural at school. Pupils also interpret and investigate when they are asked to say something about what the story might look like if Norwegianisation had not occurred, or why it was vital for the state to move Norwegians to eastern Finnmark and how this influenced history. The questions posed are reflective and require critical thinking, which is part of learning about democracy at school. The teachers stated that letting pupils ask questions about history helps them become reflective citizens. Nevertheless, the teachers expressed their shortcomings in the use of local history and interpreting and verifying sources. This is something they all would like to improve on.

The teachers also use local history to teach pupils to see a story from different sides or to clarify the facts. They have textbooks which can be used for comparison, but – as one teacher pointed out – the textbooks tend to present viewpoints from a *Norwegian* perspective, originating from the south. This statement may be interpreted to indicate the teachers think the people who write the textbooks are not very concerned about Sámi issues and do not include enough facts about Sámi history and culture in their textbooks. Folkenborg (2008) confirmed this in his analysis of Norwegian textbooks in history and Social Science. Norwegian textbooks are characterised by a nationalist ideology, with the Norwegian national identity as the crux. As Lorentzen and Røthing (2017) pointed out, if only textbooks are used, pupils get only theoretical knowledge of democracy, but not competence such as critical thinking and democratic practice. In this study, it seems that more experience gives teacher the competence to move away from the textbook. The least experienced teacher indicated that she relies on the textbook extensively. If we really want to help pupils learn about

democracy, Knutsen (2014a) stated that it is important to include many stories from local history, both present and past. As a result, pupils can participate in discussions from various standpoints and offer opinions that differ from national perspectives or stories that emanate from the south, which the pupils do not recognise. The different representations of history that are available to the pupils at the museum (like the exhibitions *Let the River Live* and *Na, maid dál?*) can help pupils expand their views on history. This is also true during class visits to the cemetery, to the Sámi Parliament, and to Kåfjord to hear stories about the copper mines in the 1800s as well as when pupils listen to stories about the Sámis during the Second World War. Movies like *Kautokeino Rebellion* are part of local history and can help expand their narrative. Stories that are more local are shown through costal Sámi handicrafts which are not available in the textbooks. Stories that are merged to provide a more comprehensive and differing picture of the past and stories that can be compared with other stories and be subject to source criticism can be included in the scientific use of history, which can help pupils discover and construct history via local viewpoints and perspectives.

### **Existential use of history**

We can recognise the *existential* use of local history in the pupils' community or surroundings. This is where pupils come into contact with stories that can have an impact on their personal identity (Fossen, 2005). Similar to Hultman's findings, we see how these teachers use their surroundings to stimulate a desire to learn, to help pupils relate to history and – not least – to associate local history to identity. Oda said they use local stories to stimulate a sense of identity, which is something pupils ought to talk about with their families at dinner. Pupils should ask questions about who they are and where they come from. Sámi history (especially the coastal Sámi, who have a historical connection to this area) is the main topic of classroom work, which includes Sámi culture embodied in language and handicrafts. In one of the projects in the Cultural Rucksack programme for arts and culture, *I and the Others*, the teachers try to teach pupils that they are not so different from others and that they can associate themselves more with Sámi culture through photographs taken around Alta. The teachers try to promote Sámi culture as something to be proud of. This is evident when they tell their pupils about the young Sámi girl who found the first copper ore at Kåfjord or that the Sámi were also resistance fighters during the Second World War. Using more materials on the coastal Sámi when teaching also helps bring the place closer to Sámi traditions and culture.

Showing the consequences of Norwegianisation and how this affected the Sámis' sense of identity in the north also seems to be important to the teachers. We see this in the lessons where teachers share census records in which Sámi names were changed to Norwegian names and show 40-year-old news footage from NRK with a man who stated that Sámi culture in Alta was not prevalent. The pupils react strongly to these stories, and they point out obvious mistakes. The teachers also recognise that it is much easier to teach pupils about a

topic when they can relate to events which they recognise in their surroundings. As Fossen (2005) said, local factors are a better resemblance to the pupils' own life situations. Anna explained that local history and using local factors in teaching makes it easier for pupils to understand and learn. Letting pupils practice a subject, rather than simply acquire knowledge, makes the subject more relevant (Solhaug, 2012). One's surroundings and the local environment are essential because the pupils can relate to them on a personal level, and the teachers can use those elements as a starting point for further learning.

### **Moral and ideological use of history**

The *moral and ideological* uses of history are evident when we use history to rediscover, to reveal what has been hidden or to invent and construct by making things meaningful. This allows us to make comparisons and to gain new perspectives. Teachers can use movies and visit historical places and sites of important historical events, especially when the information to be acquired here differs from that stated in textbooks. Working with a community that is changing and developing, such as the people and places around Kåfjord, would provide pupils with relevant and meaningful experiences. As Kvande and Naastad (2013) stated, historical reference points can at the very least provide better opportunities for involvement and understanding. Events from history that highlight the long-standing struggle against oppression can be worked into teaching by bringing pupils to the cemetery to see how gravestones differ according to social status. The facts about the Kautokeino rebellion would probably be more evident as the human remains of those who were executed after the uprising were laid to rest at the cemetery. The unknown and undisclosed stories about heroic Sámi resistance during the Second World War could be told to show the diversity of the Sámi people, which would also highlight the positive aspects of indigenous peoples and their rights – not to mention human rights in general. Hultman's (2012) study corresponds quite well here, as it seems the teachers feel a moral obligation to teach young people about minorities and marginalised peoples. The girl who chose to wear a Sámi kofta at her confirmation is a good example that their approach is working in terms of helping pupils make connections. The unique aspects of the coastal Sámi pointed out by one of the teachers is also a good illustration of this. The coastal Sámi who lived along the coast and fjords suffered greatly from Norwegianisation. Many Norwegians settled in this area and eventually expropriated fishing grounds and land plots (Gaski 2012). The lessons teachers incorporate into their teaching plans about how the state contributed to the oppression of the Sámi people is also *ideological* use of history, which legitimises Sámi history in the process. One critical aspect of learning about democracy is understanding the importance of protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. As Oda stated, 'We should be open for diversity. Sámi culture and history are incorporated into the National Curriculum in many subjects, so we have a responsibility to include this in our teaching.' The project *I and the Others* can help raise pupil awareness about diversity in their local community. The pupils can reflect on who the others are and whether we are really so different from one another. Pupils will learn that Sámi

culture can be found everywhere, in their local communities and in society as a whole – it is a part of them.

## Conclusion

In this study, teachers used local history and culture in arts and crafts when working with the Norwegianisation of the Sámis, with local historical examples, or with the concept of democracy. They also visited the local museum. According to the teachers, the main reason for using local history is that textbooks do not cover what the pupils need to learn. Through local history, pupils get to see the bigger picture, which is also a good starting point for different themes. This study has shown that several multidisciplinary approaches that emphasise local perspectives are being used by teachers to create positive learning situations. According to Stray and Sætra (2015), teaching plans that incorporate local information, places and practices help pupils learn about democratic processes through activities that promote participation. Pupil participation stimulates more understanding and more interest when the pupils recognise themselves in situations. Even if the teachers think they could improve in some areas where the use of local history in teaching is concerned, it is obvious that they see the benefits of using stories and experiences that are right outside the classroom to stimulate interest and to promote active participation and recognition among pupils. Still, we see that the more experienced teachers use local history more than less experienced teachers do.

This study has some limitations. For example, the low number of participants makes generalisation difficult, but as stated earlier, the goal is to learn, to understand and to obtain knowledge about how local Sámi culture and history can be used to promote democratic competence. Although the boundaries between the typology categories used in my analysis are not crystal clear, many of the approaches addressed in this article are quite similar to Hultman's study. Teachers can use Sámi culture and history from their local community *scientifically* to create alternative, expanded and new stories about Sámi art, culture, traditions and history that are not necessarily found in textbooks. Sámi culture and history can provide pupils with the opportunity to see things from other perspectives and provide them with alternative viewpoints to discuss what they learn. They can work with source criticism by studying rock carvings, or they may ask reflective questions about Norwegianisation. They employ *existential* use by talking about and discussing the concepts of equality and diversity, at the same time as they associate these to local Sámi culture and history. Local history can stimulate a sense of identity, rootedness and orientation in existence. The *moral* and *ideological* uses of history are seen in the teachers' apparent desire to emphasise the local Sámi community, mostly the culture and history of the coastal Sámi. The use of local Sámi history and culture can thus be recommended for educational practices.

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