

“Something decent to wear”: Performances of being an insider and an outsider in Indigenous research

Key words: Indigenous research, narrative, performance, interview, context, Sami

Abstract

The point of departure for this article is the commitment in Indigenous research to reflect Indigenous contexts and world views. Based on an analysis of a story from my research, I argue that Indigenous contexts (rather than being things-unto-themselves that pre-exist description) are complex constructions comprised of social structures, historical events, and cultural meta-narratives that are rendered relevant in local interview contexts by both the interviewees and the interviewers. Such contexts are relevant for the interviewers’ performances as insiders and outsiders in interview situations. I argue that as a consequence of applying a performance perspective to Indigenous research, one must accept that the complex question regarding insiderness and outsidership cannot be finalized. Rather, the researcher’s identities are performed continuously in every interview situation.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, several scholars have argued in favor of an Indigenous methodology (cf. Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Smith, 2012). One central point in the Indigenous methodology is that “Indigenous research needs to reflect Indigenous contexts and world views” (Wilson, 2001: 176). Scholars have warned, however, against assuming that a deep understanding

of “a culture” can only be achieved by “members of that culture” and have claimed that essentialism is inherent in such an assumption (cf. Evjen, 2009; Porsanger, 2004). Denzin has voiced concerns regarding the following “profound danger”: “‘If only a man can speak for a man, a woman for a woman, a Black person for all Black people’. If this is so, then a bridge connecting diverse racial and gendered identities to discourse in the public arena cannot be constructed. Democratic discourse is threatened” (Denzin, 2001: 35). Smith noted that between the “desire for ‘pure’, uncontaminated, and simple definitions of the native” and “the desire by the native to be self-defining and self-naming” are “multiple and shifting identities and hybridities with much more nuanced positions about what constitutes native identities, native communities, and native knowledge in anti/postcolonial times” (Smith, 2005: 86). Evjen (2009) demonstrated that defining “the Other” in research on and with minorities is far more complex than simply assuming that “the insider” is a member of the minority group and “the Other” is a member of the majority group. According to Evjen, the definition of “the Other” is contingent on the historical context as well as theoretical and methodological frameworks. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 9) argued for the need to ground the “local” understanding in “the politics, circumstances, and economies of a particular moment, a particular time and place, a particular set of problems, struggles, and desires”.

Bamberg suggested that an orientation toward “how identities are emerging and are managed by use of narratives-in-interaction” (Bamberg, 2006: 146) is a productive point of departure in the field of identity research. In the current article, I reflect on the emergence and management of the interviewer’s identities in research on and with Indigenous people. I draw on personal experiences from my own research on and with Indigenous people, more precisely experiences

from an interview study with elderly Sami in Norway. The interview study focused on the dialogical construction of elderly Samis' identities in life story interviews (ref. Author). Although in publications based on that study I have repeatedly stated that identities are constructed in interview situations in which I was an active participant, I never fully discussed the performances of my own identities. This article is an attempt to atone for some of my sins of omission.

In the present article, I will turn the lens 180 degrees and focus on performances of the interviewer's identities as insider and outsider in Indigenous research. I follow Denzin, who noted, "A performance, such as an interview, is a bounded, theatrical social act, a dialogical production" (Denzin, 2001: 44). Hence, interviews are dialogically produced performances. Furthermore, such performances are "situated in complex systems of discourse" (Denzin, 2001: 26). Bakhtin (1986: 126) noted, "Any utterance always has an addressee (of various sorts, with varying degrees of proximity, concreteness, awareness, and so forth), whose responsive understanding the author of the speech work seeks and surpasses". Identities are dialogically performed in interviews. As noted by Gatson (2003: 25), "The audience for one's identity performances is always already a part of one's authoring, interpreting, and inscribing of those performances". In the current article, I explore how my identities as insider and outsider are performed in a local interview context within the frames of broader systems of discourse.

The Sami

The Sami are indigenous people who live in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. A modest estimate of the Sami population is between 50,000 and 80,000 individuals (Sámi Instituhtta Nordic Sami Institute, 2008). Historically, the Sami were reindeer herders, small-scale farmers,

and fishermen. Today, approximately 10% of the Sami population in Norway engage in the traditional manners of living (Statistics Norway, 2010). In 2000, there were approximately 25,000 Sami-speaking persons in Norway (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2001).

National states with Sami populations have made substantial efforts to assimilate these populations into the majority populations. From the middle of the nineteenth century until World War II, “Norwegianization” was the official Norwegian minority policy (Niemi, 1997). The official assimilation policy was based on a collective representation of the Sami as “a weak and dying race” that could only be “elevated to a higher level” by Norwegianization (Eriksen & Niemi, 1981: 56). According to contemporary opinion, the Sami were a primitive people, and the best course of action was to make them Norwegian. The public assimilation policy was enforced in several social arenas. Proficiency in the Norwegian language was a criterion for buying or leasing state land until the 1940s (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2001). The school system was a central instrument in the assimilation policy, enforcing both strict legal regulation of the use of the Sami languages in schools and extensive use of Norwegian teachers from the south of Norway (Eriksen & Niemi, 1981; Minde, 2003). Furthermore, the residential schools were powerful arenas for the Norwegianization of Sami children (Eriksen & Niemi, 1981). The assimilation policies were paralleled by individual experiences of stigmatization, discrimination, and “everyday racism” (Minde, 2003). Through the first half of the twentieth century, the Sami were marginalized politically and in society in general. However, after WWII, a new governmental policy that was based on the principles of cultural pluralism and Indigenous rights began to emerge (Niemi, 1997). This period was characterized by increased international focus

on the human and political rights of ethnic minorities, implying new opportunities for “Sami self-organizing initiatives” (Eidheim, 1997). During the 1950s, a growing Sami movement began to articulate a Sami identity that was based on the “self-concept of the Sami as being a distinct people who had lived in the area before the present states came into existence” (Gaski, 2008: 220). The recodification of the Sami minority culture played an important role in the ethnic revitalization process, including acts such as labeling the stigmatized Sami language as the *mother tongue* (Eidheim, 1992), reviving the name *Sápmi*, and creating the Sami flag. Furthermore, a general education that was based on the Sami language and increased educational attainment among the Sami contributed to ethnic Sami self-understanding. The 1970s and 1980s evidenced the aboriginalization of Sami ethno-politics and self-understanding (Eidheim, 1992; Thuen, 1995). The Sami movement established contacts with organizations of Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, and Sami people began to view their existence and cultural survival in terms of an Indigenous people’s perspective (Eidheim, 1997). In 1989, the Sami Act was enacted in Norway, and The Sami Parliament was subsequently established. In 1990, the Norwegian government ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 (International Labour Organisation, 1989).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was an aboriginalization of Sami ethno-politics and self-understanding (Eidheim, 1992; Thuen, 1995). The Sami movement established contacts with organizations of Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world; in addition, “ordinary” Sami outside of the Sami movement began to speak about their existence and cultural survival in terms of “an indigenous people’s perspective” (Eidheim, 1997: 37). An *Indigeneity discourse* developed. The Sami “awakening, which implies that the Sami reappraise their self-image,

invents a new context for unifying cultural fraternity, and, gradually, also becomes a new political power element on the Nordic stage” (Eidheim, 1992: 3-4). The “awakening” has been conceptualized as the *invention of a new master paradigm for Sami self-understanding* (Eidheim, 1992), *the creation of an official Sami past* (Schanche, 1993), and a *new public narrative about the Sami* (Blix, Hamran, & Normann, 2013b). Symbols, such as reindeer herding, traditional Sami clothing, traditional Sami music, handicrafts, ecological sensibility, spirituality, and (above all) the Sami languages, were utilized in this process. As Eidheim (1997: 50) stated, “Central aspects of Sami history, language, folklore and life style [were transformed] into signifiers of ethnic distinction and communality”. In the construction of this Sami-Norwegian dichotomy, the Sami culture was described as being different from but equal to Norwegian culture. However, the Sami revitalization process also created “preconditions for cultural insecurity, personal frustration and the generation of new categories of social winners and losers” (Eidheim, 1997: 54). For a considerable number of Sami, especially those who reside outside of *the Sami core areas*, the ethnic boundaries between Sami and Norwegian are blurred. The coastal Sami population was strongly affected by assimilation and stigmatization. In these areas, fewer people currently speak the Sami languages, people may not possess or identify with the dominant symbolic expressions of a collective Sami cultural heritage, and people experience judgment as “second-rate Sami” (Eidheim, 1997: 45). In this manner, the revitalization process also produced Sami-Sami dichotomies. Research has demonstrated that narrow symbolic representations of “Sami-ness” may exclude those who were most strongly affected by the assimilation policies and, consequently, raise the stakes on their claims for a Sami identity (e.g., Blix, Hamran, & Normann, 2013a).

Defining the Sami is not a straightforward task. The term “Sami” represents several official groups with different Sami languages (in Norway: Northern Sami, Lule Sami, and Southern Sami). Furthermore, the history of assimilation, discrimination, and stigmatization; the co-existence of several ethnic groups in the same geographic area (Gaski, 2008); and the history of interaction and intermarriage among the ethnic groups (Thuen, 1989) have produced a complex ethnic situation. An attempt to define who is Sami is used to determine who is entitled to enroll in the Sami census and vote in the Sami parliamentary elections in Norway. This definition involves two criteria. One criterion is that the person regards herself or himself as Sami. The second criterion concerns the Sami language: the person must speak Sami or have parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents who speak or spoke Sami.¹ In this definition, mastery of the Sami language is closely linked to “authenticity”, actually to such a degree that the criterion is referred to as “objective” (Selle & Strømsnes, 2010). At first glance, this definition appears to be different from the highly contested “blood quantum” rules that refer to the degree of ancestry of an individual of a specific “racial” or “ethnic” group. Nonetheless, elements of descent or “blood” are also evident in the Norwegian criteria for enrolling in the Sami censuses, given the association between individual identities and kinship with Sami-speaking ancestors.

Performing identities in multiple contexts

Both the interviewer and the interviewee are actively performing their identities in the interview situation. From this perspective, narrative identities are not purely individual expressions. Rather,

¹ Originally the language criterion included persons having parents or grandparents who spoke the Sami language. Later, great-grandparents were also included. Furthermore, an additional criterion was added that stated that a person with parents enrolled in the census can enroll.

they are “situated construction[s], produced for and constituted within each new occasion of talk but shaped by previously presented versions and also by understandings which prevail in the wider discursive environment” (Taylor & Littleton, 2006: 23). Both the interviewee’s and the interviewer’s identities are framed and shaped, facilitated and inhibited by the broader stories and discourses that are available in a particular socio-historical context. Frank emphasized that research reports should offer accounts of how researchers and participants affect one another (Frank, 2005). There is a considerable body of research literature that demonstrates the necessity of providing reflexive accounts of the interviewers’ effect on the interview situations and the interviewees’ identity constructions (cf. Bamberg, 2007; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000; Phoenix, 2013; Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2013). In the current article, I focus on how my own identities are performed in an interview situation, how the others present in the situation (the “audience” for my performances) are a part of my performances, and how these performances are situated in broader systems of discourse.

Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach, and Lieblich (2008) suggested that narrators situate their life stories in three spheres of contexts. The intersubjective context relates to the immediate relations and to the interaction within which the identity stories are narrated (2008: 1051). The social field relates to the socio-historical context within which a life was or is lived (2008: 1053). The cultural meta-narratives are collectively shared meaning systems that serve as templates or scripts for individual stories (2008: 1054). Zilber et al. emphasized that the three contexts are interrelated, the boundaries between them are blurred, they are in constant flux, and the relevant contexts are co-constructed by the interviewer and the interviewees. De Fina (2008) also emphasized that storytelling is a type of discourse practice that shapes and is shaped by contexts and that shared

ideologies and stereotypes about social categories of belonging are resources for local identity constructions. She noted that “there are far-reaching connections between the micro and the macro, the interaction at hand, and social roles and relationships that transcend the immediate concerns of interactants involved in local exchanges” (2008: 422). De Fina demonstrated that “a link between local meaning-making activities and macro social processes can be found in the negotiation, at the local level and within the constraints of local practices, of the position and roles of the ethnic group in the wider social space” (2008: 423). In the following section, I discuss my story in light of insights from Zilber et al. and De Fina. I illuminate how my local identity performances as an insider and an outsider were connected to aspects of the local interview situation and various macro contexts.

A story about lack of language and something decent to wear

Allow me to begin by stating that I identify as a Sami. However, the issues of my ethnic identities are far more complicated than that. One might say that I am a “typical” output of the historical processes described above.

My father was from a coastal Sami family that resided in an area that was strongly affected by the assimilation policies. In this area, the Sami constituted a stigmatized minority. Sami was my grandparents’ mother tongue; however, most likely driven by the best intentions, they did not provide their twelve children with the opportunity to learn the language. At a young age, my father and his siblings learned to conceal their Sami identities, and they were all quite “successful” at being Norwegian. My mother was not a Sami, and I spent the first thirteen years of my life in my mother’s homelands in the south of Norway (i.e., far from what is considered the

core Sami areas in Norway). The only recollection of the Sami that I have from my childhood is the representations of the Sami as an exotic, reindeer-herding people in my schoolbooks and the hunger-striking Sami on the news during “the Alta affair” in the early 1980s². None of these representations resembled my own family. During my childhood, my father did not mention that my grandparents were Sami. My father’s Sami heritage was a secret that he did not reveal to me until late in my teenage years. As a consequence of my well-meaning Sami grandparents’ “success” in raising monolingual Norwegian-speaking children, I do not speak the Sami language. As an adult, my ethnic identities can be represented as “both-and” rather than “either-or”. I can relate quite well to Gatson’s (2003) use of the notion “amorphous”. In everyday life, I find it unproblematic to consider myself as both a Sami and a Norwegian. However, identities are relational and situational. Thus, others may consider my “both-and”-identities as more enigmatic.

My research focuses on the construction of Sami identities, health, and old age in public discourse and in elderly Sami’s life stories (ref. Author). I believe that my ambiguous ethnic identities have influenced my research. My identities have likely contributed to my interest in issues regarding Sami identities in the first place and contributed to my interest in the representations of the Sami in public discourse. Moreover, I believe that my ethnic identities affected the interviews that I conducted with the Sami elderly. It was obvious to all of the Sami-speaking interviewees that I had not mastered the Sami language. Some of these interviewees may have inferred that because I did not speak Sami, I was not a Sami. Some of the interviewees asked whether I was a Sami, whereas others did not ask. When asked about my ethnic identity, I

² “The Alta affair”: Around 1980, the Norwegian government decided to dam the Alta-Kautokeino River despite massive protests from the Sami and the environmental movement that the dam would threaten grazing areas and calving sites that were used by Sami reindeer herders.

answered as carefully and honestly as possible. However, given my ambiguous and fluid position in the Sami-Norwegian and Sami-Sami dichotomies, I do not believe that my responses necessarily settled the matter, as demonstrated in the following story from a specific interview situation.

The woman I was interviewing was in her mid-80s. She lived in an area in which the Sami constituted a considerable proportion of the population. Sami was her mother tongue. However, similar to most Sami in the area, she was Sami–Norwegian bilingual. When we spoke on the telephone prior to the interview, she voiced concerns about conducting the interview in Norwegian. I suggested using an interpreter; however, she preferred to conduct the interview in Norwegian rather than use an interpreter. In my field notes, which were recorded shortly after the interview, I wrote the following:

The lady asks me about my Sami background. Am I a Sami? I tell her about my father's family, that his parents were coastal Sami and spoke the Sami language but that neither my father nor I had been given the opportunity to learn the language. The lady comforts me and says that she thinks it will be easy for me to learn the language as I "have Sami blood in my veins". After the interview, as we are sitting in the living room drinking coffee and eating waffles, one of the lady's nieces stops by to give her aunt some fish. The niece asks where I am working (I guess she assumes that I am from home care services). The lady tells her niece that I am a researcher and that I am interviewing elderly Sami. We chat for a while until the niece has to take off. Upon leaving the living room, the niece turns around and asks me whether I am a Sami. I tell her, as I had told her aunt earlier, about my father and his family, and I apologize for not speaking the Sami language. The

niece states that she assumes that the reason for my interest in these topics is that I am a Sami. Was this an acknowledgement of my partial Sami background? I don't know. The lady accompanies her niece to the hallway. From where I am sitting in the living room, I can hear the two women speaking Sami in the hallway. The niece raises her voice and asks me whether I can hear what they are talking about. I answer that I can't understand what they are saying. The niece says that her aunt just said that she should be careful not to pick the wrong shoes and "take the Norwegian lady's shoes". There, all of a sudden I was Norwegian again! After the niece leaves, the lady and I continue the small talk, the coffee-drinking, and the waffle-eating for quite a while. When I am about to leave, the lady wants me to try on some handmade jackets with a Sami design she has made herself. She says that she wants me to have a jacket like one of those so that I will have "Sami clothes to wear when giving lectures and such". I politely decline her kind offer, and she says that she understands. However, she repeats that I should have some "decent Sami clothes to wear when giving lectures at the university". And suddenly I feel that my partial Sami background is acknowledged again! Why this switching back and forth?

Performing as an insider and an outsider in multiple contexts

Cassell noted that identity work is a part of the interviewing process because "within an interview situation both the interviewer and the interviewee are put into a situation where they must account for themselves, by drawing on the range of available discourses" (Cassell, 2005: 170).

The above story demonstrates that issues regarding the interviewer's identities as an insider and an outsider are not easily settled. The interviewer's identities are continuously negotiated, unfinalized, and open-ended. The elderly woman and her niece were free to consider me as both

an insider and an outsider, i.e., as both “the Norwegian lady” and a person with “Sami blood in my veins”. Because of my ambiguous positions in the Sami-Norwegian and Sami-Sami dichotomies, both options were possible. Doubtless, my lack of skills in the Sami language alone rendered me an outsider. When the elderly woman and her niece were speaking Sami to one another, I was “the Norwegian lady”, and there was no room for me in their Sami-speaking community. However, there were other moments in which my identities as insider and outsider were more negotiable. By all means, I attempted to clarify my ethnic identity. My references to my father’s Sami heritage could be perceived as a struggle to be identified as an insider. And for a while there, when the elderly woman spoke about the Sami blood in my veins and when the niece acknowledged my research interests, I felt accepted as an insider. However, a few moments later, when they were speaking Sami to one another in the hallway, I was “the Norwegian lady”. Then, when the elderly woman wished to give me something decent to wear (i.e., Sami clothes), it appeared as if the door were opening to the inside again. The contexts that were relevant to my local performances as an insider and as an outsider were co-constructed by the elderly woman, her niece, and me within the frames of broader discursive contexts.

According to Zilber et al., the intersubjective context encompasses factors such as the use of language and the intentions and motivations when recounting a specific narrative. In my story, the co-construction of the intersubjective context was initiated prior to the described situation. Lucius-Hoene and Depperman (2000) noted that by the time interviews occur, interviewers and interviewees know details about one another and have made assumptions that have implications for their further interactions. When we spoke on the telephone prior to the interview, the elderly woman voiced concerns about conducting the interview in Norwegian. In this manner, the Sami

language was rendered relevant to the intersubjective context, regardless of the reasons that the elderly woman did not wish to use an interpreter. My lack of skills in the Sami language situated me as an outsider prior to the interview situation. This may explain why I emphasized my grandparents' Sami-lingual competence while I was narrating my family's story. The significance of the Sami language in the construction of my position as an outsider was enhanced by the elderly woman and her niece referring to me as "the Norwegian lady" while speaking Sami to one another in the hallway. The elderly woman's references to me as a researcher who was interviewing elderly Sami was also a significant contribution to the construction of the interpersonal context. Isolated, this statement neither contributed to my performance as an insider nor as an outsider. However, the niece's response to the statement did. After asking whether I was a Sami, she acknowledged my interest in these issues.

In this situation, I drew on my family's history to "account for myself". According to Zilber et al., the social field is the social structures and historical events within which people situate their stories. In my story, the history of Norwegianization was rendered relevant to my performance as an insider. By referring to my father's family as coastal Sami and reporting that my father was not given the opportunity to learn the Sami language, I challenged the potential notion that my lack of skills in the Sami language rendered me an outsider. The elderly woman and her niece contributed to this challenge by referring to "the Sami blood in my veins" and by stating that my Sami heritage was the reason for my research interests. According to Frank (2012: 45), "Stories provide an imaginative space in which people can claim identities, reject identities, and experiment with identities". The history of "Norwegianization" provided such an imaginative space for my identity performances. This dark chapter of Norwegian history is a significant

component of the official Sami history. It is also a component of individual Sami's life stories. The assimilation policies strongly affected the lives of individual Sami. For example, all of the elderly Sami whom I interviewed in the abovementioned study (including the elderly woman in this particular story) attended school during the period when the use of the Sami language in schools was strictly regulated by law, and many of the interviewees had residential school experiences. At present, the history of Norwegianization is also acknowledged as a dark chapter in Norwegian history in the broader spheres of Norwegian society. For example, in 1997, the Norwegian King Harald V gave a speech in the Sami Parliament in which he publicly apologized for the injustices that were perpetrated on the Sami people by the Norwegian national state. The history of Norwegianization was a narrative resource that I drew upon in my performance as an insider. The history of assimilation rendered my personal story credible. The Norwegianization narrative was a component of "the available, socially embedded discursive repertoires" (Tanggaard, 2009: 1507) within which I could tell my story. One might say that I used the Norwegianization narrative to raise the acceptability of my identity as a Sami (cf. Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). The history of Norwegianization provided me with the possibility of being a Sami despite my inability to speak the Sami language. In a sense, I performed as a victim of the assimilation policies although I was not directly exposed to those policies. This illustrates De Fina's claim that the "process of self-construction crucially involves a reflection and recovery of the experience of past generations" (De Fina, 2008: 438). It is also interesting to observe how I used the criteria for enrollment in the Sami census in my performance as an insider. By bringing in my Sami grandparents I actually, consciously or not, referred to my legal right to identify as a Sami.

According to Zilber et al., meta-narratives render local stories coherent and legitimate. Such meta-narratives may be the “shared ideologies and stereotypes about social categories of belonging” that De Fina referenced. As outlined above, an *Indigeneity discourse*, in which certain aspects of the Sami history, language, folklore and lifestyle became signifiers of “Sami-ness”, was essential to the Sami “awakening”. By emphasizing the cultural traits that differentiated the Sami culture from the majority culture, such as the Sami language, traditional clothing, traditional music, handicrafts, and reindeer herding, the Indigeneity discourse was a means of collective identification. The Indigeneity discourse has been demonstrated across a wide range of contexts, such as Sami ethno-politics (Kramvig, 2005; Olsen, 2010; Øverland, 2003), teaching materials in public schools (Andersen, 2003), museums (Olsen, 2000), tourism (Olsen, 2010), the media (Skogerbø, 2003), and policy documents concerning health care services (Blix et al., 2013a).

Within the Indigeneity discourse, ethnic identity tends to be associated with authenticity. In other words, people are perceived as either Sami or Norwegian, and more fluid and ambiguous identities are ignored or excluded. Inherent in the notion of authenticity is the potential for excluding individuals and groups. Johnson noted, “The notion of [black] authenticity implies the existence of its opposite, the fake, and this dichotomous construct is at the heart of what makes authenticity problematic” (Johnson, 2003: 3, citing Regina Bendix). Others have demonstrated that Sami identity tends to be treated as “a question of purity” (cf. Kramvig, 2005). The notion of “purity” could invoke associations with blood quantum. In previous research, I have discussed how individuals’ use of the notion “full-blooded Sami” in reference to themselves raised the stakes on others’ claims to a Sami identity (ref. Author). Other scholars have demonstrated how the blood quantum rule, originally a means of domination, has been redeployed and used by

Indigenous people to exclude individuals and groups from claiming Indigenous identities and rights (e.g., Palmater, 2011; Pascale, 2008; Villazor, 2008). Nonetheless, it is thought provoking to observe how I, who has worked analytically with these issues from a post-constructivist perspective for several years, am also affected by the stronghold of the cultural meta-narrative about “blood”. I realize that I did perceive the elderly woman’s references to “the Sami blood in my veins” as an acceptance of my claim to a Sami identity, and I am left wondering whether I would have exercised a more critical distance to the references to “blood” if the lady had used my blood as a means of exclusion rather than inclusion.

As Frank stated, “Collective narrative identifying is effective because it engages and develops individual narrative identifying” (Frank, 2010: 62). However, dominant collective narratives may also narrow the imaginative spaces in which individuals can claim identities. “The stories that people know set the parameters of what they can imagine as their own to hold” (Frank, 2012: 46). Within the frames of the Indigeneity discourse, I ran the risk of being judged as a “second-rate Sami” (cf. Eidheim, 1997), or even a “half-blood”, when performing a Sami identity. Because of my Norwegian upbringing, the lack of a Sami mother tongue, and the lack of “something decent to wear”, I did not possess the central idioms of the Indigeneity discourse. The cultural meta-narrative or macro context of the Indigeneity discourse did not provide my personal identity story with “coherence and legitimacy” (cf. Zilber et al., 2008). I did not “fit” into the “shared ideologies and stereotypes about social categories of belonging” (cf. De Fina, 2008). However, the story demonstrates that the elements of cultural meta-narratives are not absolutes; rather, they are drawn upon in local identity performances. My Norwegian upbringing and Norwegian mother tongue were modified by the elderly woman’s statements about the Sami blood in my veins.

Furthermore, my “Norwegian” appearance was modified by the woman’s generous offer of the handmade jacket. In this sense, she was inviting me to become an “insider” precisely by activating and negotiating central elements of the Indigeneity discourse such as the “question of purity” (the blood in my veins), the Sami mother tongue, and traditional Sami clothing.

Identities such as a Sami identity are not merely “put on” as “something decent to wear”. As Kraus (2006: 109) noted, “People do not simply choose affiliations, they have to negotiate them with others and are positioned within them by others”, and “belonging must be negotiated, tested, confirmed, rejected or qualified again and again and not simply shown”. My affiliation as Sami was not for me to perform independently of the elderly woman and her niece. Rather, I was continuously negotiating this affiliation according to the elderly woman’s and her niece’s acceptance of it. Moreover, the story demonstrates Phoenix’s (2013: 74) claim that “‘local contexts’ (meaning the immediate context in which the interview takes place, including the interviewer-interviewee relationship) and wider, societal contexts are inextricably linked”. Local identity performances are practiced in multiple contexts. In the current text, I present and discuss the contexts separately; however, in an interview situation, the contexts cannot be separated. Rather, the contexts are interrelated, and the boundaries between them are blurred (cf. Zilber et al., 2008). Furthermore, the story demonstrates that the interactants in a particular situation “talk with different voices because narratives are dialogical and multivoiced” (Tanggaard, 2009: 1501). In our joint efforts to define me as an insider, the elderly woman, her niece, and I drew on different available discursive or narrative resources. Whereas the elderly woman drew on elements of the Indigeneity discourse (such as the Sami blood in my veins and traditional Sami clothing), I mainly rested my identity performances on the history of Norwegianization. I could

not imagine a Sami identity as mine to hold within the frames of the Indigeneity discourse. Consequently, I resorted to the history of Norwegianization. The elderly woman, however, offered me the possibility of a Sami identity by applying elements from the Indigeneity discourse in the local intersubjective context. With this offer, she acknowledged the relevance of the history of Norwegianization to my identity performances. In this sense, the elderly woman's activation of the Indigeneity discourse was a response to my activation of the history of Norwegianization. This demonstrates Bamberg's claim that narrative "intends to affect the audience because the worst that can happen to a narrative is that it remains 'responseless'" (Bamberg, 2006: 141).

Concluding remarks: Insider or outsider - Why do we care?

A reader who is interested in narrative inquiry may recognize that the heading of this section is inspired by Bamberg (2006). I took the liberty of paraphrasing Bamberg because I believe that his points are of crucial relevance to the topics of the current article. In the present article, I am not interested in "a narrator who is self-reflecting or searching who s/he (really) is" (Bamberg, 2006: 144). Rather, I am "interested in narrators who are engaging in the activity of narrating" (2006: 144) "with all its situational stake and interest" (2006: 144). The issue is not whether I *am* a Sami / an insider. Rather, the issue is how my identity as a Sami / an insider is "emerging and [...] managed by use of narratives-in-interaction" (2006: 146). However, why is the performance of my identity as an insider or outsider in Indigenous research of interest? Why do I care?

A simple answer to those questions is 'because it matters'. An interview is not "an information gathering tool *per se*" (Denzin, 2001: 24); it is not "a mirror of the so-called external world" or "a window into the inner life of the person" (2001: 25). Rather, meaning is created and performed in

interviews. As an interviewer, I actively participate in this meaning-making. The stories that people tell are recipient designed (Riessman, 2008). Phoenix noted that “narrators actively set up their entitlement to talk by warranting themselves through particular types of experience and positioning themselves in specific ways, which include anticipation of what they assume the interviewer wants to hear or will approve” (Phoenix, 2013: 82). I believe that this applies to both interviewees and interviewers. Interviewers also actively set up their entitlement to talk or to ask questions by making “claims to category entitlement” (Phoenix, 2013: 79). In my research concerning Sami elderly, my lack of language skills and, in that sense, my appearance as an outsider may have prevented some of the interviewees from telling certain stories. However, my ambiguous position in the Sami-Norwegian and Sami-Sami dichotomies may have created the potential for other stories to be told, e.g., stories about “multiple and shifting identities and hybridities” (cf. Smith, 2005). My ambiguous and enigmatic ethnic identities may have lowered the situational stakes for the Sami elderly who also ran the risk of being judged as “second-rate Sami” within the Indigeneity discourse.

Denzin has noted that “the reflexive interviewer gives special attention to those performances, spaces and sites where stories criss-cross the borders and boundaries of illness, race, class, gender, religion and ethnicity are told” (Denzin, 2001: 30). In the present article, I attempt to pay focused attention to such performances. In our eagerness to “reflect Indigenous contexts and world views” (cf. Wilson, 2001), we must be careful not to utilize stereotypes and fixed, essentialized descriptions of “the Other” as though Indigenous contexts were solely things-unto-themselves that pre-exist description. Rather, we must acknowledge that “Indigenous contexts” are complex constructions. They consist of social structures and historical events, such as the

history of Norwegianization of the Sami, and of cultural meta-narratives about belonging, such as the Sami Indigeneity discourse. These social structures and historical events are activated and rendered relevant in local contexts by both interviewees and interviewer. Moreover, we must acknowledge that “Indigenous contexts” are relevant not only for the performance of interviewees’ identities but also for the interviewers’ performances as an insider and an outsider in interview situations.

As a consequence of applying a performance perspective in Indigenous research, one must accept that questions about insiderness and outsiderness cannot be finalized. Rather, the researcher’s identity is performed in every situation. I follow Andrews, who noted the following: “Maybe those of us who live and work between cultural boundaries are forever destined to be ‘out of it’ or, perhaps more accurately, simultaneously occupy the contradictory positions of insider and outsider. Our narrative research – in terms of what we choose to explore and how we make sense of the phenomenon we observe – is at least partially a product of our narrative identity, which is itself located at the intersection of different cultures” (Andrews, 2007: 509f). Rather than perceiving this as a methodological problem to overcome, we should consider it an opportunity for the co-construction of new insights. To do so, researchers must dare to expose their unfinalizedness and admit to themselves and their readers that they, similar to the interviewees, are continuously engaged in identity performances.

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