



# 5. Conceptualizing Indigenous citizenship: The Norwegian core curriculum and citizenship as shared fate

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**Abstract** This chapter provides a political theoretical analysis of the new Norwegian core curriculum (2017) in the light of different conceptualizations of citizenship as applied to Indigenous and modern state contexts. It shows how the core curriculum incorporates elements from both ‘equal’ and ‘differentiated’ citizenship, and how its statements on identity and cultural diversity are also supportive of a notion of ‘citizenship as shared fate’. The chapter discusses some of the benefits of understanding citizenship as shared fate in non-ideal circumstances, yet cautions against a too straight-forward application of this notion for contemporary Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations.

**Keywords** citizenship | shared fate | Indigenous Sami | core curriculum | Norway

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The new Norwegian core curriculum states the following:

Sami cultural heritage is part of Norway’s cultural heritage. Our shared cultural heritage has developed throughout history and must be carried forward by present and future generations (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 7).

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This chapter discusses some of the background assumptions of this claim from the perspective of political theory, and of different conceptualizations of citizenship as applied to Indigenous and modern state contexts. In particular, it looks at the statements of *Identity and cultural diversity* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, Section 1.2) in the core curriculum and analyzes the extent to which these statements can be seen as supporting different views of citizenship, including equal, differentiated, and shared citizenship. The theoretical starting point of this chapter is thus within political theory, as opposed to curriculum analysis.<sup>2</sup> The chapter utilizes the tools of political theory in order to analyze, as well as evaluate, some of the background assumptions in the core curriculum, and by doing so, also provides further insights into the ways in which the core curriculum can be seen as contributing to the development of the more general understandings of citizenship – and the Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations – in the Norwegian context. While the core curriculum never explicitly subscribes to any one (or more) notion of citizenship, it is clear that the different theoretical models, discussed in this chapter, underpin many of the statements and normative aspirations found in it. Besides being responsive to the common notions of ‘equal’ and ‘differentiated’ citizenship, this chapter argues that, as it stands, the new Norwegian core curriculum can also be seen as partially supportive of a notion of ‘citizenship as shared fate’. This notion recognizes both the differences in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples’ identities and views of history, while aiming to cater for a common understanding of interdependency and cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the non-ideal circumstances of contemporary societies.

The chapter proceeds as follows: In Section I, I outline some of the key elements of the explicit statements of identity and cultural diversity in the new Norwegian core curriculum, and the ways in which these elements can be seen to cater for the development of common citizenship among the Indigenous and non-Indigenous Norwegian population. In Section II, I situate these statements within the broader framework of citizenship theory and assess the extent to which the core curriculum is seen to utilize different understandings of citizenship in terms of equal, differentiated, and shared citizenship. In Section III, I further analyze some

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2 For an overview on the different aspects of curriculum analysis, see Olsen and Sollid, this volume. For an analysis on how the values and principles of the core curriculum are applied locally in the education practices in Sapmi, see Evju, this volume. Another political theoretical analysis of the core curriculum is given by Fjørtoft, this volume. Contrary to the present chapter’s focus on the notions of citizenship, Fjørtoft’s contribution focuses more on the notion of equality, and the ways in which equality of opportunity operates as one of the preconditions for educational justice.

of the benefits of understanding citizenship in terms of shared fate, before providing a political theoretical analysis of the core curriculum as supportive of this view in Section IV. I conclude, in Section V, with some cautionary remarks against a too simplified and idealized notion of citizenship as shared fate in the Norwegian educational context.

## **I THE NEW NORWEGIAN CORE CURRICULUM: VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The new Norwegian core curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) defines the basic value framework for all primary and secondary education in Norway. This value framework is to apply both to the Norwegian mainstream educational institutions and to the ‘Sami school’. The core curriculum defines Sami school as the education and training which follows a parallel and equal Sami curriculum. The Sami curriculum applies in the municipalities that are part of the administrative area for Sami languages,<sup>3</sup> as well as to those pupils who have a right to be taught in one of the Sami languages in the rest of Norway (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 4 – from here on, I refer to the core curriculum by page numbers (p.) or sections (e.g., 1.2.) only).

The core values of education and training, according to the core curriculum, are based on the objectives clause of the Norwegian Education Act (Ministry of Education and Research, 2007). This objectives clause expresses values that are set to unite the Norwegian society, operate as the foundation of democracy, and help us<sup>4</sup> to live, learn and work together in a complex world with an uncertain future. The core values, according to the core curriculum, are based on Christian and humanist heritage and traditions. They are also expressed in different religions and worldviews and are rooted in human rights (p. 6).

In addition to including these core values – explicitly based on Christian and humanist heritage and traditions – the core curriculum describes additional requirements for the Sami school. These include ensuring that the pupils receive education and training based on Sami values and the Sami languages, culture and

3 From 1 July 2020, the administrative areas for Sami languages include 13 municipalities: Troms and Finnmark (8), Nordland (2), and Trøndelag (3).

4 It is notable that the core curriculum utilizes the rhetoric of ‘us’ when defining the core values of primary and secondary education. While I do not intend to analyze the deeper role and meaning of such rhetoric in the document, it seems clear that the usage of ‘us’ is, on its part, aiming to further strengthen the uniting role of education in Norwegian society.

societal life, as well as having a focus on material and immaterial cultural heritage, such as traditional knowledge, *duodji/duodje/duedtie*<sup>5</sup> and the importance of familial relations (p. 6). I will return to an analysis of such differentiated, yet supposedly equal, value bases from the perspective of Indigenous citizenship in the next section. For the rest of this section, I wish to focus on some of the explicit statements on identity and cultural diversity (1.2., pp. 7–8) in the core curriculum, insofar as they are seen to cater for the unity and common sense of belonging within the pluralistic Norwegian society.

As explicitly stated in the core curriculum, '[s]chool shall give pupils historical and cultural insight that will give them a good foundation in their lives and help each pupil to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment' (p. 7). Importantly, the core curriculum recognizes diversity of identities, both individual and collective, in Norwegian society, and aims to cater both for the pupils' diverse identities, as well as their common sense of belonging in the broader Norwegian society. Notably, there is no mention of a 'common Norwegian identity' in the curriculum, but the shaping of each pupil's identity is supported by the encountering of diversity within 'common reference frameworks' (p. 7) constituted by this diversity. The core curriculum recognizes the equal standing of both Norwegian (*bokmål* and *nynorsk*) and Sami (South Sami, Lule Sami and North Sami) languages. It also explicitly recognizes the contributions of five national minorities (Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Forest Finns, Roma, and Romani people/Tater) to the Norwegian cultural heritage and the importance of teaching and training to impart knowledge about these groups (p. 8). The Sami cultural heritage is, however, given a special status in the curriculum, being explicitly described *as part of Norway's cultural heritage*, and as something *all* students (Sami and non-Sami alike) should gain insights into:

The pupils shall learn about the values and traditions which contribute to uniting people in our country. Christian and humanist heritage and traditions are an important part of Norway's collective cultural heritage and have played a vital role in the development of our democracy. Sami cultural heritage is part of Norway's cultural heritage. Our shared cultural heritage has developed throughout history and must be carried forward by present and future generations. (p. 7)

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5 *Duodji* (North Sami) / *duodje* (Lule Sami) / *duedtie* (South Sami) refers to traditional Sami handicraft made with traditional materials and techniques (Store Norske Leksikon, 2018).

Further still:

Through the teaching and training the pupils shall gain insight into the indigenous Sami people's history, culture, societal life and rights. The pupils shall learn about diversity and variation in Sami culture and societal life (p. 8).

These statements, among others, create a picture of Norway that is not only rich in diversity, but where the histories and traditions of both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples are taught to all Norwegians, and where both these histories and traditions are viewed as being part of the cultural heritage of Norway.

## II THE CORE CURRICULUM AND CITIZENSHIP THEORY

While the core curriculum emphasizes the need for common citizenship education, it does not explicitly state which idea – or ideal – of citizenship it subscribes to. One of the interdisciplinary topics described in the curriculum is *democracy and citizenship* (2.5.2.), that aims to provide pupils with knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy and to prepare them for participation in democratic processes (p. 16). The school is to stimulate the pupils to become active citizens, although it is less clear what this citizenship, apart from some procedural aspects of citizen participation, entails. In order to see what kind of notion of citizenship the core curriculum can be seen to support, it may thus be worth looking into some contemporary theories of citizenship, and aim to place the statements of the core curriculum within this literature.

In contemporary political theory, citizenship is often viewed as incorporating three elements: legal, psychological, and participatory (Leydet, 2017). The legal element of citizenship is understood in terms of formal legal status and equal political rights.<sup>6</sup> In the core curriculum, this legal, status conferring element of citizenship is taken as given. The core curriculum does not aim to differentiate between the citizenship status, or citizenship rights, of the pupils, even if it is clear that some pupils in the Norwegian education system (for example, the children of recent immigrants, guest workers, etc.) do not hold the legal status, or citizenship

6 It may be worth keeping in mind that the elements of citizenship status and citizenship rights may also sometimes come apart (see, e.g., Joppke, 2007). The understanding of citizenship status, in the case of Indigenous peoples, has often also not followed an understanding of equal citizenship, as notions of 'Citizens plus' (Cairns, 2000) or 'Citizens minus' (Mercer, 2003) aptly demonstrate. For an analysis on the developments in the understandings of Sami citizenship in the Norwegian context, see Semb, 2012.

rights, of a Norwegian citizen. The participatory elements of citizenship often overlap with the legal elements (e.g., in order to cast a vote, one must also have a right to vote), but the participatory elements of citizenship go beyond the legal sphere. This is also recognized by the core curriculum:

Participating in society means respecting and endorsing fundamental democratic values, such as mutual respect, tolerance, individual freedom of faith and speech, and free elections.

[...]

A democratic society is based on the idea that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes. (p. 10)

Citizen participation is thus not simply a matter of casting a vote in elections, but of having *effectively equal opportunities* (see also Fjørtoft's chapter in this book) to participate in decision-making processes under circumstances underscored by values such as mutual respect and tolerance. Importantly, while the formal legal citizenship may thus be viewed as distinctively equal (that is, uniform), the guaranteeing of equal opportunities to citizen participation may also require differentiated treatment or differentiated rights in order to be effectively, albeit not necessarily formally, equal. For example, in order to have effectively equal access to education, people with special needs may need special assistance, or in order to have adequate knowledge of one's cultural background, school curricula may need to be substantively modified. The notion of *differentiated citizenship* has acquired prominence, especially in many multicultural approaches to citizenship that aim to account for cultural diversity within any particular society (see, e.g., Carens, 2000; Kymlicka 1995; Patten, 2014; Vitikainen, 2015).

Acknowledging the diversity and plurality of the ways in which citizenship may be manifested, this notion of equal, yet differentiated citizenship can be seen to operate in the background of the core curriculum in at least two senses.

Firstly, following the Education Act, and its commitment to make it possible for the Sami to protect and develop the Sami languages, culture and societal life, the Sami curriculum is described as a parallel and equal curriculum to the mainstream Norwegian curriculum (p. 4). The endorsement of a parallel, yet equal curriculum for the Sami school reflects the overall need for the Indigenous peoples to have access to their *own* cultural context, along the same lines as the Norwegian majority population. As Will Kymlicka's (1989, 1995) influential account has pointed out, different states and state institutions (including schools and other educational institutions, public offices, courts, governmental media companies; the rules of society in general) have historically been formed and operate in accordance with

the dominant cultural norms and values in society. This, however, creates a systematic disadvantage to those from non-dominant cultural backgrounds, such as, in our present case, the Indigenous Sami. While the so-called cultural majority (the non-Sami Norwegians) have effortless access to their own cultural context (the school curricula, media, legal frameworks, official languages, etc. are all in line with the dominant culture), the members of non-dominant cultural groups, including Indigenous peoples, have no easy access to their own cultural context. The endorsement of parallel, yet equal Sami curriculum for the Sami school is a partial attempt<sup>7</sup> to rectify this situation, as it aims to enable the Sami pupils to have access to their own cultural context, along the same lines as the non-Sami Norwegian majority.

Secondly, the systematic disadvantage, created by the cultural embeddedness of public institutions, is manifested, not only in the unequal access to one's own cultural context, but also in the ways in which the non-dominant groups need to negotiate their own cultural commitments within the cultural frameworks of the majority. The Indigenous Sami living outside Sami territories (including Sami pupils attending the mainstream Norwegian schools) would need to use a substantive amount of time and effort to negotiate their own cultural commitments, norms and languages in a system designed for the non-Sami Norwegian majority, unless certain accommodations, such as differentiated rights, were implemented. The Sami pupils who reside outside the municipalities that are part of the administrative area of Sami languages already have a right to be taught in one of the Sami languages, and the schools, while not following the Sami curriculum in general, must provide access to these rights. Furthermore, the core curriculum acknowledges the ideal of democratic processes and effective equality of opportunity to citizen participation to be inherently dependent on the protection of the non-dominant groups in society:

Protecting the minority is an important principle in a democratic state governed by law and in a democratic society. A democratic state also protects indigenous peoples and minorities. The indigenous people perspective is part of the pupils' education in democracy. All the participants in the school environment must

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7 I say partial attempt, as the upholding of parallel Sami curriculum may not, on its own, do much to rectify the systemic power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Other methods to such effect may include, e.g., various types of differentiated rights, including rights of self-determination (exercised by, e.g., Sami parliaments), special representation rights (e.g., in Finnmark), exemption rights (e.g., in the usage of snow mobiles for reindeer herding purposes), etc. For a historical overview of the development of Sami rights in Norway and the Nordics, see, e.g., Broderstad, 2014; Lantto, 2010; Oskal, 2001.

develop awareness of minority and majority perspectives and ensure that there is room for collaboration, dialogue and disagreement. (p. 10)

While the core curriculum does not thus endorse any particular set of accommodations or differentiated rights for Indigenous peoples, it does commit itself to the inclusion of minority and Indigenous perspectives for all pupils, and views this as a central part of the pupils' education in democracy. This, on its behalf, caters for the pupils' development into responsible citizens (p. 11), and opens the door for understanding citizenship in terms of equal, yet differentiated citizenship, where the protection of Indigenous peoples, their cultures and languages may well require differentiated rights, including Indigenous political institutions (e.g., Sami parliaments), and protected access to education in Sami languages.

Whereas the references to citizen participation in the core curriculum may thus be seen to support a notion of equal, yet differentiated citizenship for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the curriculum also contains various references to the psychological aspects of citizenship: what it means to be a citizen and how one understands ones' belonging to the common citizenry of the state. Within the political theoretical literature on citizenship, these psychological aspects of citizenship have often been understood in terms of common citizenship identity. Following Benedict Anderson's (1983) ground-breaking work, citizenship has come to be understood in terms of shared citizen identity: a shared sense of belonging that ties the members – citizens – of the state together. According to many nationalist (e.g., Miller, 1995, 2000), communitarian (e.g., Sandel, 1982; Walzer, 1983), and republican (e.g., Pettit, 1997) understandings, citizenship entails commitment to certain common norms and values, such as, for example, shared sense of history or religion that binds the citizens together. In circumstances of cultural pluralism, such 'thick' understandings of shared citizen identity have, however, become difficult to sustain. In order to accommodate diversity among citizenry, many liberal and multicultural approaches have adopted a strategy of weakening the traditional understandings of citizenship as shared identity, from the sharing of 'thick' substantive cultural norms and values, to the sharing of 'thin' political values, such as the values of democratic procedure, toleration, and diversity.<sup>8</sup>

The new Norwegian core curriculum clearly incorporates such commitments to shared thin political values. The core curriculum talks of the need to educate and enhance the shared democratic values of mutual respect and tolerance, and

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8 Perhaps one of the most influential accounts of such 'thin' political conceptions can be found in the work of John Rawls (1996). I will come back to a critique of such liberal political conceptions in the light of shared fate theories in Section III.



emphasizes the pupils' need to learn and understand each other's differences as well as our need to live together with different perspectives, attitudes and ways of life (p. 7). Nowhere in the core curriculum, however, are these commitments to the shared thin political values of diversity, tolerance or cooperation described in terms of citizenship identity, but rather as a common framework of understanding within which the pupils' different, both individual and collective, identities are developed. As I argue in the following section, this lack of describing common citizenship in terms of shared (thick or thin) identity has certain advantages, as it caters for an even broader and deeper acceptance of diversity within a society construed of, no doubt, multiple, fluid and contested (personal and collective) identities. Viewed in this way, the core curriculum can also be seen as supporting an alternative notion of citizenship to those of shared identity views, that is, a notion of 'citizenship as shared fate'.

### III CITIZENSHIP AS SHARED FATE VS. CITIZENSHIP AS SHARED IDENTITY

The notion of 'citizenship as shared fate' has been developed as an alternative to the potentially homogenizing and excluding notions of 'citizenship as shared identity'. Following Melissa Williams' work (2003, 2004, 2010), the shared identity theories of citizenship can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, there are the more robust, 'ethnic national' understandings of citizenship that view citizenship in terms of shared ethnicity, language and history, or in terms of a set of comprehensive, e.g., religious or cultural, values shared by the citizenry. Let us call these understandings of citizenship 'thick identity theories of citizenship'. On the other hand, there are also thinner, 'civic national' or 'political liberal' understandings of citizenship that emphasize the political nature of citizenship and the citizenry's shared commitments to the core principles of democratic legitimacy (Williams, 2003, p. 210). John Rawls' (1996) political liberal understanding of citizenship provides a good example of this latter kind. Contrary to the need for the citizenry to share certain sets of substantive, e.g., cultural or religious, values or a common ethnicity or bloodline, what binds citizens together are their shared commitments to certain (thin) political values, such as respect for diversity, tolerance, and a commitment to proper political procedure. The so-called thicker markers of identity, such as shared religion or (somewhat more contestably) language,<sup>9</sup> are no

9 It should be noted that, while the political liberal conceptions aim at bracketing, e.g., religion, culture, and language from being any essential markers of citizenship identity, this does not mean that the political institutions would, or even could (see Kymlicka, 1995) remain neutral

longer viewed as central elements of shared citizenship, but replaced by thinner, and presumably more inclusive political notions.

Importantly, according to Williams (2003, 2004), it is not only the more robust, thick identity theories of citizenship that prove to be problematic in contemporary pluralistic societies, but also the thinner, civic national/political liberal conceptions. Understanding citizenship in terms of shared substantive values, or in terms of common ethnicity or bloodline (thick identity), is clearly problematic, as it excludes or at least marginalizes those members of the political community who may not share the apparent core values of the nation, and/or whose ethnicity or bloodline is seen to be different from the bloodline of the majority. According to such thick understandings of citizenship, the Indigenous Sami would, by default, be relegated to second-class citizens in comparison to their non-Sami Norwegian counterparts.

However, while the thin identity theories of citizenship are set to escape some of the most obvious difficulties of thick identity theories, they too may be potentially exclusionary and marginalizing. Note that the thin, civic-national/political-liberal conceptions still require citizens to be committed to a certain set of (thin) political values, as well as to the political institutions supposedly governed by these values. Creating substantive conditions for citizenship in terms of the endorsement of a particular set of (thin) political values and their corresponding institutions, however, marginalizes those participants of the political community who, for whatever reason, may not be willing to give their full endorsement to these values, or to the institutions supposedly governed by these values. In societies characterized by long histories of distrust (such as, e.g., settler colonial states), such requirements may indeed be too demanding.

In opposition to the understanding of citizenship in terms of shared (thick or thin) identity, the notion of 'citizenship as shared fate' focuses, not on people's shared commitments and endorsement of a particular set of either substantive or political values, but on a realization of the interconnectedness and interdependency of different groups of people that tie their fates together (Williams, 2003, pp. 229–233, 2004, pp. 103–109). These interconnections can be of various kinds, including cultural (tying a particular historical-cultural community together),

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with respect to these. For example, it is impossible for institutions to function without a common language, and, even if the official languages may be extended to also include Indigenous and minority languages, it is clear that the choice of the common institutional language(s) will necessarily have an effect on both the public conceptions and practices of language in society. For specific discussions on the role of language in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations and education, see several contributions to this volume: Belancic; Harvey; Johansen and Markusson; Ninkova; Olsen; Outakoski; Sollid.

institutional (tying members of a particular political community, e.g., the state, together), and material (tying a variety of groups and, presumably, the whole of humanity to one another [see Williams, 2010]). In the current, state-centred system of political organization, it is these webs of interconnectedness that tie people living within a particular political community (e.g., the Norwegian state) together, and also provides a sufficient bond for them to cooperate, without there being a need for the sharing of any particular set of substantive – or political – values or identities. All they need to share is the realization of their interconnectedness and interdependency within a political community (state) that ties their fates together, and, by virtue of this shared fate, also creates a need for them to work, in one way or another, with one another.

It should be noted that although ‘citizenship as shared fate’ is here portrayed as an alternative to the theories of ‘citizenship as shared identity’, it does not exclude the possibility of people organizing themselves in terms of collective identities, nor is it against the idea of identity groups as being politically relevant, for example, as a basis for discussing, deciding, or promoting the interests of one’s identity group. Like the shared (thin) political identity views of citizenship, ‘citizenship as shared fate’ aims to account for deep diversity within the political community by allowing people to keep their distinctive group identities and commitments to their own cultural, religious, linguistic, etc. norms and practices. Contrary to the shared political identity views of citizenship, ‘citizenship as shared fate’ does not, however, require people to form a shared political identity, nor a shared political loyalty that would, in cases of conflict, override the other group identities or loyalties. Although ‘citizenship as shared fate’ requires a shared realization of the interdependency of different groups within a particular political community, and a practical realization that this interdependency also requires some form of cooperation, these realizations of shared fate are substantively weaker than the requirement of a commitment to a shared political project underpinned by shared political identity and loyalty.

Before assessing in more detail how the Norwegian core curriculum can be seen to support this notion of citizenship as shared fate, let me say a few words about the potential benefits of understanding citizenship in terms of shared fate rather than shared identity.<sup>10</sup> Firstly, as described by Williams (2003, 2004, 2010), ‘citizenship as shared fate’ is, first and foremost, a pragmatic and forward-looking notion of citizenship that allows for a certain degree of disagreement in the different groups’ understandings of history and the legitimacy of the status quo. While some knowledge and common understanding of the past may well be necessary

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10 I have elaborated on these benefits in more detail elsewhere, see Vitikainen (2021).

for any respectful cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, it is also important to acknowledge that the two parties may nevertheless hold somewhat different views on how this history has unfolded and the present situation come about. By focusing on the present, and directing their views to the future, the two parties will allow for some disagreement in their views on history while simultaneously realizing that the premises of today will, by necessity, have an effect on their future cooperation. Let us call this the *non-normative status quo* benefit that allows for reasonable disagreement among the different groups' views of history, without sacrificing their willingness to cooperate.

Secondly, it would seem clear that 'citizenship as shared fate' requires far weaker commitments for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to commit themselves to a common citizenship identity, or loyalty to the existing institutional structures, than the alternative shared identity views of citizenship. Contrary to these views, citizenship as shared fate does not require citizens to prioritize their common (in this case, Norwegian) political identity over, e.g., their Sami Indigenous identity, nor does it require the Indigenous (or non-Indigenous) peoples to vow their overriding loyalty to the prevailing mainstream institutions over, e.g., the Indigenous political institutions. This benefit – *no requirement for dominant identity or overriding loyalty* – is important, as Indigenous peoples may well have good, historically grounded reasons not to prioritize their Norwegian citizen identity over the Indigenous Sami identity, or to vow overriding loyalty to those mainstream political institutions that have, many times in the past, not treated them well.

Thirdly, the two first benefits – non-normative status quo, and no overriding identity or loyalty – bring forth a third benefit allowing for multiple political spaces and citizenships that do not need to be in opposition to one another. Let us call this the *plurality of citizenship* benefit. Indigenous peoples can, in accordance with the understanding of 'citizenship as shared fate', be citizens of *both* the modern state (Norway) *and* the Indigenous nation (Sapmi). This dual citizenship need not be hierarchical, nor need it include an inherent conflict of identity or loyalty, as citizenship is no longer understood in terms of overriding (substantive or political) identities or loyalties to the political unit to which the citizenship is attached. This possibility of multiple citizenships also has the benefit of being in alignment with international law and the right of Indigenous self-determination (see UNDRIP, 2007; ILO, 1989), and provides for the possibility of citizenship not only of modern states, but also of self-determining political units within, and possibly transcending, these states.

## IV CITIZENSHIP AS SHARED FATE AND THE CORE CURRICULUM

Having discussed some of the benefits of understanding citizenship in terms of shared fate, I now turn back to an assessment of the core curriculum as supportive of such view. In the following section, I further present some words of caution against a too simplified understanding of citizenship as shared fate in the Norwegian educational system.

As stated earlier, the core curriculum pays a fair amount of attention both to the need to cater for the pupils' development into active citizens, and for the development of their individual and collective identities. These two strands (active citizenship and identity development) do not, however, intersect, and the core curriculum avoids (whether deliberately or not) any expressions of common Norwegian identity or citizen identity throughout the document.

Instead of discussing 'Norwegian identity', the core curriculum does, however, discuss 'Norway's cultural heritage' and 'Our shared cultural heritage', supposedly constituted by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritages. The curriculum also refers to 'common reference frameworks' via which the pupils' individual and collective identities are supposed to develop, alongside their sense of belonging and solidarity within the broader Norwegian society (p. 7). All this, it should be noted, would seem to point towards an understanding of citizenship in terms of shared fate rather than in terms of shared identity. According to the core curriculum, the Norwegian history includes both Christian and humanist heritage and traditions (pp. 5–7) *and* Indigenous Sami cultural heritage (p. 7), and the pupils are explicitly supposed to learn of both as inherent parts of Norway's cultural heritage. This 'shared cultural heritage has developed throughout history and must be carried forward by present and future generations' (p. 7).

It is important to note at this point that the two above-mentioned cultural traditions ('Christian and humanist' and 'Indigenous Sami'), while being both part of the cultural heritage of Norway, are not viewed as merging into one common history or identity. On the contrary, the core curriculum recognizes the distinctiveness of the two traditions and the role of these traditions in shaping the existing democratic institutions. While the Christian and humanist heritage and traditions are seen to have played 'a vital role in the development of our democracy' (p. 7), Sami cultural heritage is not accorded such status, even if it has been part of Norway's cultural heritage in various other ways. While I do not wish to draw any normative conclusions from such claims (it is, after all, empirically true that the Norwegian mainstream political institutions have been shaped by the Christian/

humanist traditions, and may even have been at times hostile to the Indigenous traditions), it is important to note that this description already incorporates certain power imbalances between the two groups. I will come back to these power imbalances in my cautionary remarks in the final section of this chapter. For the time being, it suffices to say that such power imbalances, while implicitly present in the wordings of the curriculum, are not explicitly mentioned or addressed in the curriculum. On the contrary, the core curriculum notes the distinctiveness and legitimate differences between the two groups and aims to cater for these differences by arguing for a common framework of reference via which the two groups can understand each other and ‘live together with different perspectives, attitudes and views of life’ (p. 7). The development of pupils’ identities (individual and collective) is inherently tied to a respectful, and equal, encounter with other world views:

The experiences the pupils gain in the encounter with different cultural expressions and traditions help them to form their identity. A good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity (p. 7).

Rather than merging the Christian, humanist and Sami cultural heritages and traditions into one, the core curriculum thus praises their coexistence, viewing such diversity as a strength rather than a weakness.

There are various connections between this view and the notion of ‘citizenship as shared fate’. First, the core curriculum at least *aims* not to make any substantive, normative claims about the historical relations between the two groups, but acknowledges that both groups have played a part in Norwegian history and continue to do so at present. This coincides with the *non-normative status quo* benefit that also allows a certain level of disagreement in the two parties’ views of history, without sacrificing their willingness to cooperate.

Second, the core curriculum encourages, or even celebrates, the pupils’ formation of their individual identities, and thus avoids the controversial claims for the citizens to form a common, even overriding identity as (primarily) Norwegians. While the curriculum advocates the acquiring of knowledge from each others’ perspectives, this is only for the creation of common frameworks of reference and solidarity that connect each individuals’ identity into the greater community and historical context (p. 7). The pupils can, and are also encouraged, to develop their individual identities without this creating a conflict with their sense of belonging to the broader Norwegian society. This coincides with the second – *no dominant identity or overriding loyalty* – benefit.

Thirdly, while the curriculum avoids talking of the concrete arenas of citizen participation, it is clear from the outset that some form of pluralism into the political arenas is permitted. The municipalities that are part of the administrative area for Sami languages are to follow a parallel and equal Sami curriculum, and the Sami pupils residing in the rest of Norway are to have access to their rights as Sami. This coincides strongly with the *plurality of citizenship* benefit, where the Sami pupils are set to develop their skills of citizen participation, not only in the broader Norwegian political spaces, but also in distinctively Indigenous spaces of political interaction.

## V CITIZENSHIP AS SHARED FATE AND THE CORE CURRICULUM: SOME CAUTIONARY REMARKS

While there is no doubt that the understanding of citizenship in terms of shared fate has certain benefits as it is expressed in the core curriculum, I believe some words of caution are in order. As described above, the curriculum paints a picture, in line with the notion of citizenship as shared fate, of a Norwegian society where the cultural heritages and contributions of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are recognized as part of the cultural heritage of Norway. The pupils' individual identities and their development into active citizens is further nurtured by this recognition of diversity, cooperation and mutual respect. As a document for the values and principles of primary and secondary education, the core curriculum thus provides an idealized picture of Norwegian society, where each pupil – and citizen – has equal opportunities to express themselves, to participate in decision-making processes, and to nurture and develop those aspects of their individual and collective identities that they wish to develop. The different groups, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are set to work together and cooperate under the ideal circumstances of equal opportunities and mutual respect.

However, such an understanding of citizenship as shared fate may not always be able to recognize, let alone correct, the historically embedded power imbalances that often continue to affect the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (see also Vitikainen, 2021). Even if both parties were to recognize that their fates are interconnected, and that they thereby need to work together under the conditions of tolerance and mutual respect, this does not, as yet, guarantee that their cooperation would happen on fair terms. Recall that the notion of citizenship as shared fate allows for reasonable disagreement on the events of history, as well as on the legitimacy/illegitimacy of the present situation (the non-normative status quo benefit). While the two groups are thus set to work together, they may

also continue to view their past and present relations differently, including the conditions under which they would (or could) cooperate on equal terms. For example, if the majority Norwegian population (including mainstream political institutions) were to view the past treatment of Indigenous peoples as already fully rectified, and the present status quo as just, there may not be many grounds for the strengthening of Indigenous voices in decision-making processes, or for the amending of public processes (including school curricula) for Indigenous representation.

This, of course, is not the case. That is, it is not the case that the majority Norwegian population (including mainstream political institutions) would view the past treatment of Indigenous peoples as already fully rectified. Nor is it the case that they would view the present relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as fully just. However, even under such favorable<sup>11</sup> circumstances, understanding citizenship in terms of shared fate may, unless properly amended, help to hide, rather than expose, some of the persistent power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Recall that, citizenship as shared fate is a primarily pragmatic and forward-looking notion that aims to cater for different groups' cooperation under equal terms. As such, it may be prone to view the present situation, while far from ideal, as still constrained by an idealized set of normative rules of tolerance and mutual respect. However, even if such normative constraints were to apply, the past and present power relations between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples remain. Returning to the Norwegian context, while much progress has been made, the Indigenous Sami nevertheless continue to live in a situation where they must have their voices heard in a system that, for decades, was not willing to hear their voices on equal terms. Furthermore, in current political circumstances, where the Sami self-determination is still subject to and conditional on the willingness of the 'host'-states to recognize such self-determination under state jurisdiction,<sup>12</sup> the Indigenous Sami also continue to be more dependent on the will of the non-Indigenous majority than vice versa. After all, the political self-determination of the non-Sami Norwegians has never been conditional on the recognition of the Norwegian political institutions by the Sami, while the Sami political self-determination, including the Sami parliament,

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11 By 'favorable,' I mean simply that the two parties (Indigenous Sami and non-Sami Norwegians) have at least a minimal agreement on the direction and persistence of disadvantage as related to the Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations (not that the persistence of such disadvantages would create favorable conditions for cooperation).

12 Notably, this dependency is also recognized in international law, incl. UNDRIP, 2007, that describes not only the obligations of states towards Indigenous peoples, but also maintains the ultimate authority and sovereignty of the existing state institutions (UNDRIP, 2007, esp. Art. 46.1.).



continues to operate firmly under the broader legal frameworks of the Norwegian state. Far from being an ideal speech situation where the cooperating parties could bring their views forward under conditions of equality, the whole structure of cooperation continues to be heavily power laden and thus inevitably distorts the communication and cooperation between the Indigenous Sami and the non-Sami Norwegian majority.

Such persistent power relations, while not explicitly recognized by the core curriculum, may nevertheless be found in some of its rhetoric. As mentioned in the previous section, the core curriculum gives very different roles to the Christian and humanist heritage and traditions on the one hand, and the Indigenous Sami traditions and heritage on the other. While the Christian and humanist traditions are described as having played a vital role in the development of democracy (p. 7), no such status is given to the Indigenous Sami heritage or traditions. A similar disparity is apparent in the Objectives clause of the Education Act, stating that 'Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, and on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity' (p. 5). While such values thus form the very basis of the education system and are considered to be fundamental in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, no such centrality is given to the values of Indigenous Sami traditions. On the contrary, the same values are said to be 'values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights' (p. 5).

When discussing the cultural heritage of Norway – 'the values and traditions which contribute to uniting people in our culture' (p. 7) – the curriculum again makes a subtle, yet noticeable difference in its treatment of the Christian and humanist heritage on the one hand, and Sami cultural heritage on the other. While the 'Christian and humanist heritage and traditions are an important part of Norway's *collective* [my emphasis] cultural heritage', the following is said of the Sami cultural heritage: 'Sami cultural heritage is *part of* [my emphasis] Norway's cultural heritage' (p. 7). Not an important part, nor, indeed, something that could be called *collective* cultural heritage, pertaining across the whole Norwegian society. While the curriculum then goes on to talk of 'Our shared cultural heritage' (p. 7) (without specifying its exact reference), it has already made clear that both the role (centrality) and the breadth (applicability) of the two heritages – Christian/humanist and Indigenous Sami – are viewed as different. While the Christian and humanist heritage remains the main, historically embedded, collective tradition to which *all* Norwegians are seen to be tied to, the Indigenous Sami traditions remain secondary and marginalized. No doubt, the Sami cultural traditions are recognized as part of the cultural heritage of Norway, and thereby also something that

all Norwegians should have knowledge of, although they do not break through to the collective memory of everyone, nor are they accorded any central place ('vital role') in the development of Norway's cultural traditions and heritage. While, historically speaking, there are of course differences in the roles that the Christian/humanist traditions on the one hand and the Indigenous Sami traditions on the other have been accorded, the core curriculum may not only be thought of as stating historical facts, but also as delivering future aspirations (after all, it is about values and principles, not only of historical empirical findings). In this sense, the subtle difference between the centrality and applicability of Christian/humanist and Indigenous Sami traditions may be seen as referring not only to the past, but also to the present and future understandings of the roles of the two traditions, thus also perpetuating the secondary and marginalized role of the Sami traditions in the Norwegian educational context.

In order to be clear, my intention here is not to argue that the Indigenous Sami heritage, as described in the core curriculum, should – normatively speaking – also be viewed as secondary or marginalized in the senses described above. Nor is my intention to say that such differences, and marginalizing effects, in the presentation of the two traditions in the curriculum would have been intended. For the purposes of this chapter, I give it the benefit of the doubt that these wordings do not represent the actual normative aspirations of the core curriculum, but can be viewed as unfortunate and unintentional formulations written in a context where the unequal power relations, while undesired, nevertheless continue to affect the ways in which such sensitive issues are communicated. This is important also in light of the notion of citizenship as shared fate as supported by the curriculum. Recall that the notion of citizenship as shared fate aims to cater for Indigenous/non-Indigenous cooperation under the normative constraints of equality and mutual respect while recognizing both the differences and interconnections of the two groups in question. And indeed, the core curriculum does its best in providing an ideal basis for such cooperation, aiming to strive for an understanding of citizenship that recognizes both the differences and interconnections between the Indigenous Sami and non-Sami Norwegians. It is not, however, entirely capable of shedding some of the old preconceptions and hierarchies attached to the two groups.

This is not, however, necessarily a bad thing. Catering for an understanding of citizenship as shared fate, and striving towards a fruitful and mutually respectful cooperation on equal terms also requires that the power relations and inequalities between the two groups are explicitly acknowledged. While it is doubtful whether the curriculum indeed manages to do so, it does nevertheless manage to provide a relatively desirable and inclusive picture of the end product to which the pupils'

citizenship education should be striving towards. While the core curriculum can thus be applauded for its efforts to achieve equal and mutually respectful cooperation between the Indigenous Sami and the non-Sami Norwegian majority, it must also be acknowledged that the present structures – contrary to the idealized picture painted by the core curriculum – are still far away from such ideals, and any efforts for such ideals must take these non-ideal circumstances into account.

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