Otso Kortekangas, *Language, Citizenship, and Sámi Education in the Nordic North*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. 149 pages. ISBN 9780228005698. $29.95 paperback.

Indigenous peoples across the globe frequently have relationships with educational institutions that are painful at their worst and ambivalent at their best. In fact, many of the familiar debates of education in Indigenous communities today go back far more than a century within Indigenous and other historically marginalized communities. In these debates, education emerges as having something of a paradoxical nature, which at once is a colonial tool of assimilation and a potential agent of liberation. Schools have rightly been criticized (both past and present) for actively destroying Indigenous culture, language, lifeways, and knowledge traditions, but they also have served in many communities as powerful tools to advance social equity, cultural sovereignty, and other liberatory purposes. Even today, we debate about whether schools are inherently colonial, if they can be decolonized, to what extent can culturally-responsive and culturally-situated practices assist Indigenous communities. It is within the historical roots of this debate, in the Nordic states of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, that Otso Kortekangas has explored early educational efforts in Sámi communities, and the sometimes heated debates that surround them.

In his work *Language, Citizenship, and Sámi Education in the Nordic North*, Kortekangas turns his eyes specifically toward the diverse experiences that Sámi people—the Indigenous people of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia—have had encountering schools in the Nordic states (while purposefully excluding the dramatically different experience on the Russian side of the border). Kortekangas divides his work into three main chapters (in addition to an introduction and conclusion), each exploring three different national policies toward handling Sámi education—with particular emphasis on the use of Sámi language in instruction. Trained as a historian, Kortekangas' work is methodical and nuanced in presenting the many debates and perspectives of a sizeable array of policy-makers and educators during the early 20th century. The story Kortekangas weaves is expectedly complex, as varying perspectives vie for agency to be enacted through both policy and pedagogy in praxis, during a volatile time in northern Europe.

Indeed, the debate over Sámi language in instruction does not simply divide along simple dualistic lines over Sámi or settler language use, but rather it includes the complicated rationales for Sámi language use. For instance, many Sámi advocated for instruction in settler languages because they believed that settler languages were essential for the economic and social mobility of the coming generations. Or, many settlers advocated for the use of Sámi in schools because limited amounts of Sámi language instruction was believed to be beneficial for a broader assimilation project. Although Sámi people were already committed to keeping Sámi language alive as a way to safeguard culture (paralleling in some ways Finnish and Norwegian nationalist movements of the time), it was unclear at the time whether formal education in Sámi was necessary or even desirable if Sámi was spoken at home. Further complications emerged though the quality of teacher training (in general, settler teachers had more professional training), the traditional economics of local Sámi people (migratory reindeer herders pose challenges to stationary school models), and the linguistic diversity of the north (within the Sámi territories of the Nordic states in the early 1900s, seven Sámi languages were spoken, alongside minority populations of Finnish, Kven, and Meänkieli speakers in Sweden and Norway). This linguistic and cultural diversity was further seen

as a threat to national security as well, and cultivating identity through shared language, economy, and identity figured further into educational policy of the day.

Each nation took different approaches to handling Sámi language in education. In Norway, an active policy of Norwegianization was occurring, but Sámi language was supported in schools only insofar as it served as a tool to promote assimilation into Norwegian society. Finland was defined largely by a policy of neglect, that only superficially supported a "sister" language that was threatened by a larger population (Finnish and Sámi are related languages, and Finns had recently been under the threat of Russification policies). Because of low population density in the north, state schools were slow to incorporate, and the old catechist schools handled Sámi education well into the twentieth century. Ultimately, as Kortekangas suggests, in both Norway and Finland, the ideal outcome from education was to produce farmer-settler citizens who could speak both Sámi and a national language.

Most interesting in this story is the experience in Sweden, where—driven by emerging beliefs in racial hierarchies—Sámi people were legally defined by a single occupation (reindeer herding) in the 1880s. Sámi who had turned to other economic means like farming or fishing were seen as having been "corrupted" from a more "pristine" way of life. The state therefore saw it as their moral obligation to fully assimilate them. On the other hand, reindeer herding Sámi were believed to be racially inferior and in need of protection by a Swedish state from the dangers of modernity. For this reason, Sweden divided Sámi schooling into a system of standard Swedish schools for non-herders, and nomad schools for herders. Using Swedish as the language of instruction, the teachers at nomad schools followed families with seasonal migrations to provide instruction that connected to reindeer herding. Driven by the paternalistic attitudes toward Sámi people at the time, these schools were widely criticized by Sámi people for their underqualified teachers and low educational standards, since Sámi were deemed incapable of learning to proper Swedish standards.

In each country, but particularly in Sweden and Norway, the struggles with designing an educational system led to Sámi resistance movements. The harsh assimilation policies of Norway and the paternalism of Sweden led to a generation of Sámi educators who actively criticized the injustices against Sámi people and took on leadership roles in the early 20th century cultural awakening movement. Many of these figures, like Isak Saba, Elsa Laula, Karin Stenberg, and Gustav Park, remain revered figures today in Sámi history.

Kortekangas' research is outstanding in this volume, and he effectively teaches the debate that occurred among policymakers of the day in all of its complexities. Kortekangas effectively reminds that history is seldom simple, that perspectives on policy debates are always diverse, and that Sámi language use in schools was not such a black-and-white matter as we might regard it today. Still, because the book is framed to look primarily at policymakers and influential educators, and because the book considers language as its primary focus, it tends to neglect the deeply traumatizing legacy these schools left on Sámi culture. While looking at the rationales that create policy is important, so too is it important to understand the long lasting impacts of these policies. Many survivors of all of these schools are referred to as a lost generation, in particular for those children who lived at residential schools, where the cultural disruption was massive and its effects are still being felt today. Accordingly, an abundance of Sámi literature, media, and art even today

grapples with the painful legacy of schools, the abuse levied upon Sámi students from settler teachers and students alike, and the way violence was perpetuated through these schools. While Kortekangas' focus for this work is language of instruction and policy across the three Nordic countries, additional context about the traumatic legacy of schools on Sámi communities would situate this work in a context that readers need to understand.

Overall, however, this work is a methodically researched, timely, and nuanced look at a historical debate over Indigenous language use in the Nordic states. It is useful for scholars who work in Sámi and Indigenous studies, in multilingual studies, and in Nordic history, political science, and education. Because of the historical depth, it would be suitable to teach in a graduate seminar, ideally alongside other works that detail the firsthand experiences of residential school survivors.

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