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Negotiating Culture on the Visual Front

An analysis on the cover photographs of Sámi youth magazines

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the cover photographs of Sámi youth magazines depict contemporary Sámi culture. The empirical data consists of the sixty-nine covers of *Š* magazine, from 2000 to 2015, and twenty-nine covers of *Nuorat* magazine, from 2009 to 2015.

The discussion is framed around the fluid tension between local and global influence, that participates in transforming the current indigenous Sámi society. Visual culture is examined as socially constructed to build an argument on the significance of photographs as mediators and negotiators of culture and identity.

The main argument is that the Sámi youth magazines expand and negotiate notions of Sámi culture and identity in their cover photographs. This research serves as a discussion opener on the use of photographs in Sámi media.

Key words: Sámi culture, Sámi youth, indigenous journalism, visual culture, visuality, photograph, magazine, visual sovereignty

Abstrákta

Dát dutkamuš geahččá mán lahkai sámi nuoraid magasiinnaid ovdasiidogovat čalmmustahtte sámekultuvrra. Dutkanmateriálas lea čohkkejuvvon 69 *Š* magasiinna ovdasiiddu jaginn 2000 - 2015 ja 22 *Nuorat* bláđi ovdasiiddu jagiin 2009-2015.

Báikálaš ja globála gaskasaš ealli gealdagas bidjá rámmaid dutkamuša teorehtalaš ságastallamii, mán váikkuhus oidnojuvvo mearkkašahttin dálááigge sámi servvodaga hápmašuvvamis. Visuálalaš kultuvrra geahčaduvvo sosiálalaš struktuvrran, masa vuođđuduvvo argumeanta čuovgagova mearkašumis kultuvrra ja identitehta huksejeaddjin.

Dutkamuša váldoárgumeanta lea, ahte sámi nuoraid magasiinnaid ovdasiidogovat viiddiidit áddejumi sámi kultuvrras ja identitehtas. Dutkamuš doaibmá ságastallama álggaheaddjin čuovgagova mearkkašumis sámi medias.

Čoavddasánit: sámekultuvrra, sápmelašvuohta, nuorat, visuálalaš kultuvrra, visuálalašvuohta, čuovgagovva, magasiidna, álgoálbmotjournalistihka, visuálalaš suverenitehta

Tiivistelmä

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee miten saamelaisten nuortenlehtien kansikuvat esittävät saamelaiskulttuuria. Tutkimusmateriaali koostuu 69:stä *Š* lehden kannesta vuosilta 2000-2015 ja 22:sta *Nuorat* lehden kannesta vuosilta 2009-2015.

Tutkimuksen teoreettista keskustelua kehystää lokaalin ja globaalin välissä vallitseva jännite, jonka vaikutus nähdään merkittävänä nykyisen saamelaisen yhteiskunnan muovautumisessa. Visuaalista kulttuuria tarkastellaan sosiaalisesti rakentuneena, jonka varaan rakentuu argumentti valokuvan merkityksestä kulttuurin ja identiteetin rakentajana.

Tutkimuksen pääargumentti on, että saamelaisten nuortenlehtien kansikuvat laajentavat käsityksiä saamelaisesta kulttuurista ja identiteetistä. Tutkimus toimii keskustelun avauksena valokuvan merkityksestä saamelaismediassa.

Avainsanat: saamelaiskulttuuri, saamelaisuus, nuoriso, visuaalinen kulttuuri, visuaalisuus, valokuva, aikakauslehti, alkuperäiskansajournalismi, visuaalinen suvereniteetti

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1.   Introduction

The Sámi youth of today face a very different society than the earlier generations. Although the Sámi society has been under constant pressure to change for a long time—and the same challenges of cultural, linguistic and land rights persist on a national level—also new pressures and possibilities for identity formation have arrived from the global sphere. Between these tensions, the recognition and representation of Sámi youth becomes indispensable in maintaining a public sphere that the youth can relate to.

However, the current generation also has a somewhat better societal position in comparison to the earlier generations. The Sámi language is taught more in schools and they have a channel of political input through youth organisations in all countries. New artists, writers and activists also keep on developing and enriching the cultural scene. Expressing a Sámi identity is no more something to be ashamed of, but a matter of ethnic pride.

In this research, I will examine the cover photographs of two Sámi youth magazines: *Š* magazine, published in Norway, and, *Nuorat* published in Sweden. I am interested in how they construct and expand internal and external notions of "Sáminess" in the complex tensions of local and global influences. By Sáminess, I am referring to the continuously negotiated qualities that construct the idea of the Sámi. This study does not claim that the Sámi youth magazines represent the real image of Sámi youth. It just recognises their significance as participants in the construction of visual representations in the media. Through this research, I am hoping to contribute to the discussion on the state and significance of visually oriented Sámi magazines and the role of the photographic medium in terms of content, aesthetics and communication.

Previous research on the representation of the Sámi has largely concentrated on majority media (Siivikko 2015; Ikonen 2013; Lehtelä 2007; Hujanen & Pietikäinen 2003; Pietikäinen 2001) and tourism (Lindholm 2014; Petterson 2006; Olsen 2004). Studies on how the Sámi represent themselves have concentrated more on (ethno)political discourses and their manifestations (Valkonen 2009; Pääkkönen 2008; Nyysönen 2007). Sámi journalists and their perspectives have also been the subject of several studies (Markelin, Husband & Moring 2013; Markelin & Husband 2007; Sara 2007), which still amount to a small quantity of studies on how the Sámi

media operates, represents and is received. I have not been able to find studies on Sámi media from the perspective of youth and visual culture, at least not in the languages that are accessible to me. This study then takes on a point of view that has not been explored until now. The lack of research on the subject poses a challenge for building solid arguments on the matter, but I hope that this research will serve as a discussion opener about the significance of visual matters in the Sámi context.

Newspapers, television and social media all participate in the construction of reality by offering us images, narratives, and ideas that shape our understanding of the world, not by merely reflecting it, but by choosing and modifying it, thus constructing it. When we try to make sense of the world around us we selectively use these constructions to build our understanding of reality. Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2012, p. 457) writes that one of the main sites for Sámi identity struggles are the media representations of individuals and groups. Being visible, followed and considered constructs, they are always bound to the networks of power, culture and history. Majority media and tourism – mainly Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian – have notoriously dominated the visual image of the Sámi. Due to the relatively late introduction to the means – namely education and institutional structures – of producing visual images of themselves, the Sámi have been crippled in producing a counter-narrative opposing the image constructed by the majority media.

Focusing only on the representation of photographs—instead of their production or audience reception—is a conscious act, that is motivated by the interest in the photographs themselves, and how they reflect and construct the reality they draw on. The Sámi media is relatively small and mostly poorly financed. The status of photographs as a journalistic tool that is taken seriously is generally low. The Sámi youth magazines seem to make an exception in this case. Their use of photographs is deliberate and thought-out. Clear effort is committed to aesthetics, content and narration. This unique position in the Sámi media alone, makes the photographs worthy of examination and to be taken seriously.

There are two relevant concepts that are there to help me articulate visual negotiation performed by the youth magazines. Those concepts are *myth* and *visual sovereignty*. I use Roland Barthes' (1991, p. 107) articulation of myth as a type of speech, a story that people use to explain and talk about something. It applies to the world of images as well, where people use mental images—visual myths—to understand the world. These myths are materialised for example in advertisements, news, movies and photographs. The concept makes itself relevant when those

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depictions rely on myths that are coercive towards the reality they represent, for example, when distorted myths about the Sámi dominate their visual representation in tourism, majority media, and advertising. Visual sovereignty is a concept that has gained ground among indigenous scholars trying to articulate the methods that indigenous visual producers—directors, artists and photographers—use to reimagine indigenous visual representations from their own perspective. For example, Michelle Rajeha (2013, p. 63) defines it as indigenous "articulations of self-representation and autonomy that engage the powerful ideologies of mass media, but that do not rely solely on the texts and contexts of Western jurisprudence". How it connects to the concept of myth, is that acts of visual sovereignty enter in a visual negotiation of distorted myths by questioning and critiquing them, and by giving presence to representations that adjust them from an indigenous perspective. These concepts are discussed more in-depth in chapters 3.1. and 4.5.

This research builds its theoretical foundations on the intersection of culture, visuality, and indigenousness. This interdisciplinary approach is needed in order to grasp the diverse societal, cultural and political frame that the Sámi youth magazines inhabit and operate in. The ontology of the theoretical approach is twofold. From the context of culture—and how it is constructed—this study leans on the poststructuralist view that meanings are produced in and through the culture we live in; the culture we learn by and reproduce. From the context of the interpreting culture, this study leans on the phenomenological view that even though interpretation is never purely objective, we have the responsibility of interpretation. This does not mean we are unaccountable for our interpretation. Reflexivity and transparency are key assets in this setting.

1.1. Research questions

For examining the cover photographs in the Sámi youth magazines, the following questions are subjected to the research data:

What kind of photographs are there on the covers of Sámi youth magazines?

What kind of Sámi culture/s do the cover photographs of Sámi youth magazines represent?

How does the concept of *visual sovereignty* manifest in the cover photographs of the Sámi youth magazines?

How do the representations of the youth magazine cover photographs construct and negotiate contemporary notions of "sáminess"?

1.2. My position

I am a Sámi from the Finnish side, but I have never lived in the Sámi region. Although I was born and raised in a city, I have always had a connection to the Sámi region through my, and my grandfather's birthplace in Ohcejohka and my relatives there.

Professionally, I am a freelance photographer, which explains my interest in the world of the visual and the photograph. Stationed in Rovaniemi, I mainly work on journalistic assignments covering people, events and stories in Northern Finland, which also include Sámi issues. A majority of my clients consist of newspapers, magazines and publications from southern Fnland, but also local media outlets. What has guided my own interest in the research subject, has been the question how Sámi culture should be represented to the majority.

Before this research project, I had no experience with the Sámi youth magazines, due to the fact that I am not a native Sámi speaker. Thus, it proved challenging to understand the context of some photographs. On the other hand, it has also allowed me to focus more on the photographs themselves.

1.3. Thesis structure

The first chapter included the introduction to the main motives and perspectives of this research. It also contained a description of my position as a researcher.

The second chapter deals with framing the contemporary Sámi society in the fluid tension of local and global, followed by a chapter on the role of Sámi media.

The third chapter follows a discussion of the nature of visual culture and photographs as social constructs, building an argument of photographs as significant participants in the construction of reality. It is followed by a subchapter that introduces the concept of visual sovereignty, which discusses the relevance of indigenous ways of doing and thinking in visual production.

The fourth chapter covers the methodological approach for the analysis. The methodology is opened up with an account on the issue of subjectivity in the interpretation of images. This is followed by opening up the methodological tools used in the analysis. Representation and the semiotic concepts of paradigm, syntagm, denotation, connotation, linguistic message and myth are opened up.

The fifth chapter contains the presentation of the empirical material, a chapter on the characteristics of magazines and their covers, and the actual analysis of the cover photographs. The written analysis is structured to subchapters according themes that stood out in the examination of the data.

The sixth chapter starts with a summarizing of the results, followed by conclusions made about the study.

2.   Framing Sámi society, culture and identity

The Sámi are an indigenous people spread across four countries – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia – that have their own distinct language and culture. The Sámi population is estimated between 70 000–82 000 depending on how it is calculated. 45 000–50 000 reside in Norway, 15 000–20 000 in Sweden, 9000–10 000 in Finland and approximately 2000 in Russia. In Norway and Sweden most of the Sámi people still live in their traditional areas, but for example in Finland approximately 60 percent live outside the Sámi region, mostly in cities. The numbers are only estimates because there are no exact statistics on the number of Sámi people, except for voting registers for the Sámi parliaments, which are the legislative representative institutions found in Sweden, Finland and Norway. The region considered the homeland of the Sámi is called Sápmi, which extends from Central Norway and Sweden across the northern part of Finland to the Russian Kola Peninsula. There are nine different Sámi language groups spread across this area, Northern Sámi being the biggest. (Seurujärvi-Kari 2011, pp. 13–14; Lehtola 1997, pp. 7–8)

The Sámi society has been a major focus for academic research both by Sámi and non-Sámi scholars. For outsiders, its remoteness and mythic characteristics have originally attracted researchers and writers to describe and represent it to the majority. Risto Pulkkinen (2000, p. 41) writes that most of the historical writings on the Sámi are based on depictions made by the majority "explorers". This produced a body of literature—also known as *Lappology*—that formed the basis of Sámi research which produced an image of the Sámi from a majority perspective. In this image, the Sámi were usually seen either as the innocent "noble savages"—that were romanticized for their closeness with nature—or as a primitive, less intelligent race, unable to induce development or sophisticated thinking. Stein R. Mathiessen (2004, p. 28) writes that these hegemonic images reach their influence to this day. Only new forms of labels such as "ecological Sámi" have appeared. Mathiessen writes that:

> *One aspect is that those who are defined as representatives of ethnic minorities are given very limited room for action in our modern, contemporary society. They continuously run the risk of being met with sanctions when their actions are seen as not complying with the expectations that (among the majority population) are held concerning the ethnic minority in question. (Mathiessen 2004, p. 28)*

Commenting and critiquing these representations has kept Sámi researchers busy to this day, without discrediting many of the non-Sámi researchers that have also contributed.

Lehtola (2000, p. 185; 1997, pp. 7, 19) writes that the image of the Sámi as an isolated society was created by the representations in Nordic writings and publicity in general, which has since been partly refuted as the Sámi have had the chance of inserting their own perspective. Sámi people have always lived in-between other cultures, which have brought new influences, challenges and pressures for change. It is natural for the Sámi to have an interaction with the past and the present, which has allowed embracing influences with maintaining their cultural characteristics (Lehtola 1997, p. 7). Having dealt with outsider perspectives to an extent, it has also made it possible for Sámi researchers to focus more on internal matters—where this study also, more or less, situates itself—and in developing an academic paradigm that is based on Sámi ways of knowing.

The Sámi society has gone through rapid development after the Second World War, and the current state cannot fully be comprehended without taking those developments into account. Harald Eidheim (1997, pp. 29–30) writes that WWII marks a significant historical moment in Sámi history, because it set in motion the development of a new Sámi collective self-understanding. The ethno-political movements that have followed, have made it possible to establish rights within their own states and connect their causes to the global context of indigeneity (Seurujärvi-Kari 2011, p. 10). The specifics of this development in the Sámi context—although relevant to this study—are well covered in existing literature (see e.g. Lehtola 2012; Nyysönen 2007; Minde 2005; Eidheim 1997; Stordahl 1997) and will not require an extensive review here. More relevant though, is the operability of such concepts, like modernity and globalisation, in the current state of Sámi society and how applicable they are to the increasing complexity of indigeneity, ethnicity, culture and identity—especially in the case of Sámi youth.

The dichotomy of tradition and modernity

Approaching Sámi culture from an academic perspective has never been straightforward. The ontological and epistemological differences between the Sámi and western academic worldviews have raised multiple concerns on how Sámi-related issues are examined. Many postcolonial and Sámi researchers have stated that western academic research relies on dichotomising approaches which do not coincide with the Sámi, and more broadly, indigenous ways

of knowing. For example, Jelena Porsanger (2011, p. 245) problematizes the common dichotomy of tradition and modernity in researching Sami society, which tends:

> ...to leave indigenous peoples outside the contemporary world, which is considered to be "modern" as opposed to the "traditional" world of the indigenous. This dichotomy tends to make continuity and indigenous epistemologies invisible, and as a consequence, the rich conceptual world of indigenous peoples has no use in research as an analytical tool.

Linda Smith (2012, p. 35)—a Māori academic descending from the Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou tribes—argues that our "colonial history traps us in the project of modernity. There can be no 'postmodern' for us until we have settled some business of the modern". What Smith is referring to, is that indigenous research has already moved beyond this paradigm and it is western academia that should also recognise it.

Critique of this approach is not new though. Joseph R. Gusfield (1967, p. 362) writes that the binary opposition between tradition and modernity dismisses the multiple ways in which social reality is mixed in the midst of rapid change. The ultimate problem of modernity is that it has become an ideology of anti-traditionalism, which rejects the supportive role of the past in the shaping of our present and future. Charles Taylor (2004, pp. 1–2) also points out that non-western societies have all modernised in their own way and those processes cannot be tackled through the concept of western modernity. Instead we should talk about different "social imaginaries"—of which "western modernity" is one—that allow us to perceive the processes of development individually. Taylor underlines that "the social imaginary is not a set of ideas; rather, it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of society." What has probably made it hard to avoid the concept of western modernity, has been its seemingly apparent effects on other societies. It has made it too easy to associate development in non-western societies to the western concept of modernity. Thus, in this thesis—when talking about change, development and influences—I prefer to rely on less problematic terms. Talking just about "multiple modernities" (Taylor 2004, pp. 1–2) or "indigenous modernity" (see Rontziokos 2012) are problematic, because they are not able to fully detach from the western idea of modernity.

What should be pointed out, is that even though modernity has found its way out from the discussion, tradition still plays a significant role in Sámi society, and thus, also in Sámi research. For example, Sámi handicrafts—known as duodji—and traditional livelihoods tied to the land itself are still central to much of everyday life. The epistemic terminological problem persists,

but it does not remove the need to speak about Sámi tradition outside the Sámi episteme. Porsanger (2011, p. 239) explains that

> *...indigenous concepts of tradition do not seem to be related to any kind of "opposition" to something that is "non-traditional". Rather, tradition is understood as a many-faceted entity which is in a constant process of change and which stems from indigenous concepts of time, space and knowledge.*

For practical reasons, the term "tradition/al" is used in this thesis, but more in the spirit of the Sámi conception of it.

Rejecting modernity in all of its forms has amounted to multiple different approaches, which aim to be more sensitive to the specific and contextual nature of sociocultural change and its location. Finding a firm theoretical standpoint has since become—as has societies themselves— more complex. Theories on globalisation, postmodernism, postcolonialism and indigenous knowledge have emerged, and already for a long time, dominated the discussion on change and outside influences in indigenous societies and identities. The various discussions in and between those paradigms are also what constitute the theoretical background of this thesis. As Jukka Nyysönen (2007, p. 27) states that:

> *...no unified theory is sufficient to grasp the multiplicity of indigenous reaction; a contextual, historical and socio-cultural analysis is required ... there is a need to link the levels of analysis, ranging from local to global, in a study of indigenous communities' self-conscious cultural self-identifications.*

The tension between local and global in constituting the indigenous Sámi experience is the reason why a multivocal and interdisciplinary approach is necessary.

Global and local perspectives

One of these tensions, often proclaimed most central, is the question of cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation. Arjun Appadurai (1990, p. 295), a prominent advocate for the case of cultural heterogenisation, states that claims for the homogenisation argument often "subspeciate into either an argument about Americanization, or an argument about 'commoditization', and very often these arguments are closely linked." Appadurai sees that these arguments often fail to acknowledge the various ways how societies tend to indigenise these influences and make them their own. Reflecting on Sámi society, this becomes apparent through our societal structures and social realities from institutions to media and fashion. The

core of the homogenisation argument for Appadurai (1990, p. 295) is that "for polities of a smaller scale, there is always a fear of absorption by polities of a larger scale."

 Appadurai states that the global cultural economy can no longer be explained according to worn-out centre-periphery models, but according to complex and overlapping disjunctures between economy, culture and politics. Appadurai proposes five relational dimensions of disjunctures to explore the global cultural flow: "ethnoscapes", "mediascapes", "technoscapes", "finanscapes" and "ideoscapes". Extending Benedict Andersons (1983) concept of "imagined communities", Appadurai calls these dimensions building blocks to what he calls "imagined worlds", which are inconsistently constructed in the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups around the world. Ethnoscapes refer to the movement of people across cultural borders from a perspective that displays ethnic communities as mobile and fluid instead of stagnant. In the Sámi context, this connects to the extending geographical, cultural, and occupational reach that has accelerated. Mediascapes represent the many forms of media that increasingly participate in constructing our world, and as in the case of this thesis, through created and disseminated images. They "tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those that experience and transform them is a series of elements out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives." (Appadurai 1990, pp. 296–299)

Ideoscapes can also be seen as concatenation of images, but they are political in nature and refer to the movement of ideologies and counter-ideologies that operate most explicitly in the sphere of state power in its control and influence. In this disjuncture, for example the ethnopolitical actions of the Sámi and their representations are situated. Technoscapes, then again, refer to the advances of technology that allow new extended forms of cultural exchange—both internal and external—in leaps that can be highly unpredictable (Appadurai 1990, pp. 297–300). Unpredictability is an understatement considering the current rate at which technology shapes our communication. Being closely connected to both ethnoscapes and mediascapes, its relevance in the field of media is becoming more and more significant.

Appadurai's scapes are their own kind of construct, but they offer a decent approach to global developments and their effects on Sámi society, which have for a long time been in reach of global influence. Nevertheless, the aspect of local is maybe more relevant in the case of Sámi society, as that is where the quest for equal rights from the Sámi perspective has met most opposition (see e.g. Valkonen *et al.* 2014). What must be remembered here, is that the purpose of discussing global and local is not to create a dichotomy between them, but to bring out the

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multifaceted reality that exists between them. On the subject, Lehtola and Länsman (2015, p. 80) write that:

> *...it is often supposed that the routes of international trends to national and local implementations are straightforward or even unidirectional. On the opposite, there seem to be multiple variables for these processes to succeed or to fail. Besides of local variety, there are different contexts also inside of the Nordic countries, from cultural traditions of different Sámi groups to national Sámi policies in each country. Thus, global trends have always been absorbed and adapted in multiple ways among the Sámi, depending on their usefulness and applicability in local context, including relations to other ethnic groups.*

Mike Featherstone (2005, p. 176) writes that global is commonly seen in opposition to a local culture, which is usually characterised as closed social space, where people engage each other directly in relationships that are deeper than less local social spaces. Also, locality is relational depending on the context where it makes itself relevant. Meeting a person of the same nationality on the other side of the world can invoke our sense of similar background, our feeling of "us" against "them", in the global context where we are geographically situated. Locality can also be surfaced when we relate our sense of locality—its characteristics—with someone from another culture with the same awareness of locality. Thus, just like global, local is relative to the context where it is made relevant.

Indigenous sense of locality is often perceived as stronger than that of non-indigenous, as the word itself is inherently tied to a strong connection to specific lands or areas. Also, usually the small number of people belonging to the same indigenous group can generate a "feeling" of locality on a social level. Locality is therefore experienced on a geographic and social level. Conceptions of locality cannot be explicitly bound to ethnicity, since locality can be tied to different social imaginaries than that of ethnicity. Although, their conceptual similarities exist, as Richard Jenkins (2008, p. 45) states that "the communal, the local, the national and the 'racial' are to be understood as historically and contextually specific social constructions on the basic ethnic theme, allotropes of ethnic identification".

Following that, indigenous locality is also a preconception that should not be taken for granted. Many contemporary indigenous societies—like the Sámi—have become partly diasporic through urbanization. A strong local connection holds true in the core Sámi regions, where life and livelihoods are built around its environment, community and history. Nyseth and Pedersen

(2014) state that the Sámi population has increased dramatically in cities outside the Sámi region. This has generated a new social group of Sámi that have either moved or have been brought up in a city. It is a heterogenic mix of people from different Sámi regions and backgrounds, and with varying connections to their home region, their own identities as Sámi and expressions of it. Being infrequently researched, the construction and nature of an urban Sámi identity is only beginning to take shape. It may be problematic to speak of a social group in relation to all the Sámi in cities, since most of them hold their Sámi identity private, or express it only with relatives or when visiting the Sámi region. But it can be applied for those that have taken it up to build, socialise and express their Sámi identity in the urban setting. Some of the Sámi have started calling themselves City-Sámi, which has come to serve as a statement of cultural persistence outside the Sámi region. This category seems to be attractive for the more educated population. as Nyseth and Pedersen (2014, p. 146) sum up in their findings: "they typically have a university degree, they are organized in Sámi associations and they regard themselves as global cosmopolitans supporting the international indigenous movement."

I have made an effort to outline the contemporary Sámi society in the complex tensions of the past and present, local and global. No amount of pages would be enough to fully grasp it, since it truly has become "fuzzy", as James Clifford (2013, p. 69) writes about the indigenous experience:

> *This fuzziness suggests a certain open-ended historical dynamism. People are improvising new ways to be native: articulations, performances and translations of old and new cultures and projects.*

What we are dealing with then, is an evolution of broader terms by which people define themselves as indigenous or Sámi. The same processes are ongoing inside individual indigenous societies such as the Sámi, where people find creative new ways of expressing their ethnic identity.

2.1. The Sámi media

On ethnic minority media, Simon Cottle (2000, p. 2) writes that:

> *...the media occupy a key site and perform a crucial role in the public representation of unequal social relations and the play of cultural power. It is in and through representations ... that members of the media audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who "we" are in relation to who we are not.*

In addition, the media also serves as a site for affirming social and cultural diversity, where notions of imposed identities and power relations can be challenged, negotiated and opposed.

Through its existence, the role of journalistic Sámi media has been crucial in the construction and development of Sámi society. Coming from a purely oral culture where the range of communication was limited mostly to the local social sphere, Sámi media has acted as bridge of communication between different Sámi communities, a platform for the revitalisation of language and negotiation of identity politics. Radio has been the strongest medium in all countries. The national broadcasting companies in Norway, Sweden, and Finland have been the main source of Sámi news media in the form of jointly produced 15-minute TV-news broadcast *Ođđasat*, that is aired in all countries five days a week (Pietikäinen 2008a, p. 176; 2008b, pp. 22–24). In addition, Finnish *YLE* has had their own five minute *Yle Ođđasat* TV-broadcast since 2013. Internet has also become a major platform for written news.

Considering the heritage of oral culture, it is not surprising that radio has been the strongest medium, while especially press media has struggled with financing and lack of subscribers. Currently in print are *Nuorttanaste, Ságat, Ávvir* and *Š* from Norway, *Samefolket* and *Nuorat* from Sweden and *Anaraš* from Finland. *Nuortanaste*, *Ávvir*, *Š* and *Anaraš* are published in Sámi languages, whereas *Ságat* is mainly in Norwegian and *Samefolket* and *Nuorat* are mainly in Swedish. In January 2017, a new weekly magazine, *Sámi magasiidna*, started its publication.

The Sámi media has been widely researched in terms of language use, which is considered one of its preliminary duties. The role of visual journalism in Sámi media is rarely mentioned, which indicates its value both in the eyes of readership and research. This might also be due to the relatively minimal efforts Sámi media invests in their visual output. Aside from the youth magazines, the role of the photograph is usually secondary to text, except maybe in *Samefolket* and *Anaraš*, which both operate also in the genre of magazines.

The Sámi media can be described as transnational, minority language and indigenous media—which are all overlapping in their definition—giving an indication of the complex nature of Sámi media landscape. Sámi media is transnational in its operation over national borders and

in its interest in global indigenous issues. The status of Sámi languages is in a minority position in relation to majority languages in all states and indigenousness is a site where contestations of rights, culture, and identity are constantly negotiated. Just as the loose concept of indigenous has brought various peoples of similar experiences under its definition, indigenous journalism has also revealed similarities between different indigenous peoples. Brendan Hokowhitu (2013, p. 102) writes that "The development of Indigenous-controlled media has largely occurred because Indigenous peoples have witnessed their misrepresentation and non-recognition by others." The journalistic media—just as literature, music, movies and research—has been seen as one of the key sites for asserting an indigenous perspective. It not only provides a counter-narrative against misrepresentations by the majority media, but also allows a creative implementation of culturally specific ways of working and representing.

Lia Markelin (2003, pp. 9–12) writes that the Nordic majority media representations of Sámi issues have generally been regarded as problematic. From existing research, Markelin has recognised four reoccurring tendencies in how the Nordic "mainstream" media represents the Sámi. First is the underrepresentation of the Sámi in mainstream media outlets. Secondly, when they are represented, the topics seems to revolve around certain reoccurring themes that the majority media find interesting[1]. Thirdly, the Sámi are often positioned against the majority—favouring the majority—when majority interests are at stake. The fourth tendency has to do with the reputation of majority media in producing stereotypical or essentialising representations, that have occurred most in entertainment and movies, but also in news covering cultural issues. These tendencies seem to be similar to most indigenous communities with regard to their majorities. In summing up the findings, Markelin suggests that many of the problems of mainstream media coverage on Sámi issues can be explained by the nature of western media as "conflict" driven, constrained by time and dogmatic in their journalistic practices. A more superficial problem might be just the low level of knowledge of and contacts with the Sámi society. A relevant reason why Sámi media should also address majority audiences.

John T. Solbakk (1997, p. 172) emphasises the Alta conflict in the turn of 1970-80s as a historical site where Sámi media played an essential role in its defence for demonstrations against the Norwegian government. It also launched a discussion on the difficult double role of the Sámi

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[1] This comes up for example in Heli Lehtelä's (2007) article on photojournalism on Sámi issues in Lapin Kansa newspaper in Northern Finland, where photographic coverage of Sámi was rare in economic and political sections, whereas their coverage was rather high on cultural coverage.

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journalist "as both the defender and critic of Sámi society". Photographs had an essential role in delivering a visual record of the demonstrations by photographers such as Niillas A. Somby and Harry Johanssen. An especially controversial case was an attempted detonation of a bridge, where Somby lost his hand. This resulted in an iconic photograph created together with Johansen, where Somby's severed hand was placed on the book of Norwegian laws. This is an early example of how photography has been used by the Sámi to assert their position journalistically and politically. (Lehtola 1997, pp. 74–77)

What any media needs to establish, is a visible space, where it is seen and acknowledged. Michael Meadows (2005, p. 37) argues on the relevance of indigenous "public spheres", that are a distinct from the from the public sphere of majority media. He suggests that:

> *...indigenous public spheres should not be understood in terms of a non-dominant variant of the broader public sphere. Although they develop in close proximity to—and with a great deal of influence from—mainstream society, they should be seen as discrete formations that exist in a unique context as the product of contestation with the mainstream public sphere. While they operate within a dominant context, it is their "indigenousness" that is the defining characteristic. ... They enable indigenous people to deliberate together, to develop their own counter-discourses, and to interpret their own identities and experiences. (Meadows 2006, p. 38)*

The Sámi youth magazines certainly construct such a space. But as Sámi media have institutionalised, the use of photographs has been left with a rather conservative role. The Sámi youth magazines seem to have taken up addressing this. The use of photographs comes out as intentional and often provocative. When it comes to research, the Sámi youth magazines have been left in the dark. You can hardly find them mentioned in academic texts. In the entire Sámi media, they appear as a specialized medium with regard to the larger Sámi audience. Being targeted for the youth, their status as serious publications might be questioned by the more mature. Nevertheless, their clear investment in visual output separates them from the majority Sámi media, which gives less attention to visual storytelling. The youth magazines' provocative, assertive and negotiating manner of using images gives a platform for examining the use of photographs with a Sámi (youth) perspective.

3.   The social photograph

Visual culture, its production, products and reception, have persistently offered challenging questions on how they are defined and how they communicate. In studies of visuality and visual culture, Johanna Sumiala-Seppänen and Matteo Stocchetti (2007, p. 11) write that the history of Western visual inquiry was long subjugated by the assumption of the linguistic model as the fundamental signifier of meaning in social interaction. This created a paradigm that saw the visual dimension operating according to the same principles as the linguistic dimension. What has followed since the 90's—the pictorial turn (see Mitchell 1994) as a significant turning point—has been the re-evaluation of visuality and visual culture from a less linguistic point of view. This has amounted to a field of research that:

> *...in all its variety, is an attempt to take seriously the recognition a) that the late modern project is most effectively achieved by privileging image, vision and visuality, b) that the visual image is socially constructed and it has the capacity to change its relationship to external reality—a discovery linked to invention of other (constructed) realities, and c) that it is necessary to seek new ways to analyse articulations, reception and production of visuality in these virtual realities. (Stocchetti & Sumiala-Seppänen 2007, p. 11-12)*

Photographs as social constructions, and the pursuit for understanding them in specific cultural contexts, are approaches that also demarcate the underlying ideas behind this research project. Also, what can be seen in the theoretical construction of this study, has been an adaptation of views from multiple fields of academic—both western and indigenous—thought. As the field of visual research has matured—which is not to say that is has become any more coherent—it has become used to a creative use of interdisciplinarity. Leena-Maija Rossi and Anita Seppä (2007, p. 11) write that interdisciplinarity has been seen as necessary in the study of visual culture, because no conventional field of research offers a broad enough range of concepts and methods for understanding the multiplicity of the visual world.

For the sake of not drowning in the endless questions about what is an image or a photograph—which have been covered extensively from multiple angles (see e.g. Rose 2012; Evans & Hall 1999; Mirzoeff 1998; Mitchell 1994)—this chapter focuses more specifically on the questions of how images communicate. Is the visual a universal language that communicates transcendentally, or does it form "language barriers"—or scopic regimes that guide our perception as

proposed by Martin Jay (1988)—that generate unique visual culture that can only be understood in the cultural sphere within which it has been created? The question ties in closely with the concept of visual sovereignty—discussed further in chapter 3.2.—which is based on the idea that visual culture can operate and develop from an ethnic cultural source into a form, which operates as an empowering, post-colonial force against the hegemony of images produced by outsiders.

As is usually the case with arguments that delve into polarities, the most solid approach seems to surface from in-between. What studies on the subject have concluded, is that a naturalistic visual experience—stripped of from the cultural coding that is attached to it—remains as an undesirable approach in the study of images. Although, that does not mean that our visual perception is entirely controlled by culture. Mitchell (2002, p. 170) argues that it is one of the myths surrounding visual studies, that visual culture would be socially constructed all the way: "Visual culture is the visual construction of the social, not just the social construction of vision. The question of visual nature is therefore a central and unavoidable issue, along with the role of animals as images and spectators." Mitchell demonstrates the natural dimension of our visual perception by an exercise he calls "showing seeing". Based on an old pedagogical ritual of showing and telling, he has imposed it for his students as an assignment, where they have to explain visual culture visually to an imagined audience, that has no preconception of it (Mitchell 2002, pp. 176-179). As crudely as the exercise works in practice, it demonstrates some of the underlying visual functions that also guide our perception from a natural point of view.

Jay (2002, p. 268) has also wanted to put some brakes on the enthusiasm surrounding the relativist accounts on the differences in visual cultures and perceptions by asking the question: "what is the role of the visual in either confirming or transcending what has to be called cultural relativism?" More specifically, Jay questions whether the scopic regimes that reside in different cultures are different enough to make claims about the incommensurability of images:

> *...if it can be shown that no allegedly distinct and integrated culture is really coherent and boundaried, none able to police its borders successfully against pollution from without, none organized like living organism, then the idea that different cultures produce incommensurable views of the world cannot logically hold. (Jay 2002, p. 273)*

In the scope of this thesis, I see no contradiction in concurring with these views. Regarding Sámi culture, we can return to Lehtola's (1997, p. 7) remark, that like for any culture, it has

always been natural for Sámi people to absorb new influences, only with a healthy dialogue with the past. This position also inevitably influences the sphere of visual culture, especially as the technology that has come to dominate visual culture, has arrived from outside. What the discussion at hand does not touch on though, is the hegemony of images that western perception produces and the significance of postcolonial visual forces that oppose it. It is easy to argue for a more transcendental understanding of visuality, when the visual culture it produces is dominated by such a major cultural force.

Regarding this, Christopher Pinney (2003, p. 202) has explored how local visual traditions mediate modernity in ways that are independent from and critical of European modernity in a manner:

> *...in which local photographic traditions creatively deform the geometrical spatializations of colonial worlds. Postcolonial photographic practices give rise to a "vernacular modernism"; images that project a materiality of the surface ... In these practices the surface becomes a site of the refusal of the depth that characterized colonial representational regimes ... What might be termed "colonial" schemata positioned people and objects deep within chronotopic certainties as the sought stable identities in places from which they could not escape. "Postcolonial" practice negates this, however, by sitting its referents in a more mobile location on the surface.*

Thus, on a more general level, it can be argued that the relativist claims of distinct visual cultures, can operate as sites where the hegemony of western visual culture is resisted. Such pursuits can be justified by the sheer need for a diverse range of visual expression in photography. For example, Fred Richin (2013, p. 51) has criticised the global direction photojournalism has been taking:

> *In the field of photojournalism, the visual vocabulary has particularly stagnated, with national contests rewarding many of the expected clichés, and international competitions and some of the well-meaning workshops establishing standards, mostly implicit, so that work by indigenous photographers comes to resemble imagery by foreign standard-bearers.*

Consequently, there seems to be a real need for the extension of visual thinking, both in terms of the local and the global. Although, such evolutions of visual practices—as Pinney argued for—can be challenging to induce, as Stephen F. Sprague (2003, pp. 257-258) has found in his study of Yoruba photography in West Africa. The local photographers there rarely focused on taking documentary photographs. Instead, they preferred to use studios, which produced images

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that seemed to lean on the cultural values of the Yoruba. Some photographs were even used in traditional rituals, where they replaced some of the original figurative art that had been used. The study suggested that societies with a strong affiliation with figurative art, possess the aesthetic values and the need for representation that can be fulfilled in a photograph. Additionally, societies that have their aesthetics values invested more in decorative art and design, were less likely to see any use in the medium of photography. Incidentally, this would also be the case in the visual culture of the Sámi.

3.1. Visual sovereignty

Through the rise of indigenous media, indigenous scholars have made attempts to define its nature in contrast to the majority media. One of the main efforts has been to promote the structural and aesthetic form of indigenous expression in media that stem from indigenous ways of knowing and thinking. Discussions around the ideas of sovereignty, self-determination, and resistance have given birth to such concepts as an "indigenous paradigm" by Rauna Kuokkanen:

> *The need for such a paradigm is manifold and is connected to the deconstruction of the consequences of colonialism. Colonialism and imperialism have exploited and dispossessed Indigenous peoples everywhere in the globe for hundreds of years ... The powerful colonial institutions, whether educational, social or economic, have also colonized people's minds which has led to internalized colonialism and the acquisition of "white lenses" (hooks, 1992:1)-Western values, ways of thinking and world views. In this way, these subtle forms of colonialism have made many Indigenous individuals devalue their own culture and anything that is connected to it. (Kuokkanen 2000, p. 412)*

The concept of an indigenous paradigm relates to the topic of this chapter in its implementation in indigenous visual production—an idea of visual sovereignty. Visual sovereignty is a relatively new concept, and thus suffers from a lack of a coherent definition. The origins of the term can be traced back to Jolene Rickard's (1995) call for expanding the notion of sovereignty to the field of culture. It has since been embraced and developed further under subtitles such as videographic sovereignty, cinema of sovereignty, and photographic sovereignty, among others

(see e.g. Raheja 2013; Bauerkemper 2010; Wilson and Stewart 2008; Lewis 2006; Tsinhnahjinnie 2003; Singer 2001).

Naturally, arts and cinema have been the main interests in the scope of visual sovereignty, as they are the most open-minded to new forms of expression. For this thesis, I wish to expand the notion of visual sovereignty to the domain of journalistic photographs. The reason behind this is to integrate a theoretical element that allows a more empowering interpretation of indigenous journalistic imagery. Next, I will go through some of the definitions and applications of visual sovereignty in order to strip the term of some "connotational baggage" and to express how it serves the subject of this research.

Rickard viewed sovereignty as a border that shifts indigenous actors from objects to subjects in the struggle against the image laid upon them by the majority media. Blalock, Lopez, and Figari (2015, p. 87) bring forth Rickard's visually sovereign way of looking at images:

> *Rickard urges readers of historic images (especially Native readers) to move beyond the anthropological, geographic, and ethnocentric intent to create more empowering interpretations and to understand photographs as a constructed space. For Rickard, to practice decolonization and assert sovereignty in reading images requires opening one's mind to "see the compression of multiple realities" of subject, photographer, and viewer.*

By this, Rickard opens up a whole new approach to colonial images. She constructs a kind of ideology of looking at colonial images that focuses on their potential for revisiting, re-signifying and recreating them. In that sense, visual sovereignty is more about acts of visual sovereignty as Loretta Todd (2005, p. 107)—a Métis Cree Canadian director, producer, activist, storyteller, and writer—invokes with her questions:

> *Have we truly decolonized our imaginations when it comes to how we represent ourselves in media—both in the aesthetics and content of our stories? Have we internalized the images made of us, the idea of "us" by the colonizer—from the camera angles to the editing to the music? Are we their tour guides or even recruiters into their world view? Or is it with subversive intentions, as acts of sovereignty, that we take up the camera and signal forth our presence and our stories?*

Todd's questions touch upon the most complex challenges for visual sovereignty in indigenous visual journalism. For example, on one hand there is no distinct history of Sámi figurative image production to lean on, and on the other hand it provides the freedom to construct it. The case is

somewhat similar to that of Sámi literature, which had to be invented by the writers themselves, drawing on the influences of Sámi storytelling. But the transition from Sámi decorative visuality and design to journalistic photography might be even more difficult, as was suggested by Sprague's (2003) findings on Yoruba photography in Africa.

Also, placing visual sovereignty in the sphere of production, Kirstin L. Dowell (2013, p. 2) defines it "as the articulation of Aboriginal peoples' distinctive cultural traditions, political status, and collective identities through aesthetic and cinematic means". Dowell thinks that the pursuit for indigenous aesthetics is a relevant one, but highlights that also the production itself is crucial for understanding acts of sovereignty. The production process is more that the mere product of it; "it is a process through which Aboriginal social relationships can be created, negotiated, and nurtured" (Dowell 2013, p. 3).

Visual sovereignty raises a relevant question on how much indigenous media relies on the readymade models of majority media and how much effort it puts into injecting them with indigenous models. This is not an easy task because most Sámi, for example, have already become accustomed to consuming journalism in established forms of media. Veli-Pekka Lehtola and Anni-Siiri Länsman (2012, p. 32) have also taken an interest in this direction of development in Sámi research, media and arts. Lehtola and Länsman write that the continuing institutionalisation of research, media, and arts has led them to operate more according to their own operational policies. This poses a challenge to the examination of these fields, because they cannot be anymore perceived only under the most common premise of "building of Sámi national identity".

Especially indigenous cinema and its research have welcomed the idea of visual sovereignty with open arms. Indigenous people all around the world have grabbed cameras to tell their stories as they see them. A good example is the first full-length Inuit film *Atanarjuat* (The Fast Runner), on which Michelle Rajeha (2013) bases her argument on visual sovereignty. Raheja sees visual sovereignty as a strategy that opens up possibilities to examine production of indigenous visual representations that reimagine "Native-centered articulations of self-representation and autonomy that engage the powerful ideologies of mass media, but that do not rely solely on the texts and contexts of Western jurisprudence" (Raheja 2013, p. 63). Rajeha sees that the film *Atanarjuat* addresses these possibilities on all fronts. For example, by imitating old anthropological films on the Inuit, the film makes a statement by appropriating the genre that once focused their gaze on them.

Basically, what visual sovereignty stands for in the scope of this thesis, is the negotiation of indigenous culture, presence, style, narrative and rhetoric in the visual public sphere. Moreover, it is a negotiation with the pre-existing imagery produced both by the Sámi and the majority. Acts of visual sovereignty are imagery that participate in this negotiation. In this sense, visual sovereignty is closely tied to Barthes' concept of myth, which is covered in chapter 4.5.

4. Methodology

In order to understand how photographs communicate, and construct meaning in a specific culture, we must understand the language of images and their content. Images or photographs are often referred to resembling a language. Reijo Kupiainen (2007, pp. 39–40) writes that visual texts are understood by the cultural codes or rules from within which they are produced and consumed. A reader of images needs cultural competence to understand the content of the image and visual literacy to understand how that content is constructed. Therefore, visual–or photographic–literacy is an ability to look beyond the surface of the image, to understand the meanings behind their visual order and become aware of the power relations and structures that are attached to them (Seppänen 2001, pp. 192–193). Nonetheless, the researcher must always acknowledge that subjective experiences and culture cannot fully be detached from one another.

Visual literacy is a necessary ability in reading images, but it is helpful to have conceptual tools that aid in understanding them. This thesis builds its methodological toolkit on semiotics, specifically on the writings of the Roland Barthes. Semiotics stands for a broad field of methodologies and theoretical views with various approaches that make it seem complex at first hand. Daniel Chandler (2007, pp. 2–3) writes that the most basic definition of semiotics is that it is "the study of signs". Signs in this context can be anything that we use to construct our communication. Signs can be the words we use in our speech, the hat we put on our head or the smile we put on our face. Basically, anything that communicates meaning in some form. John Fiske (1990, p. 40) writes that semiotics has three main areas of study when it comes to signs: the signs themselves, the codes or systems that are constructed using signs and the culture (or cultures) where these signs and codes operate.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to how signs are constructed, one formed by Charles S. Peirce and the other by Ferdinand de Saussure. I will present Saussure's model, since Barthes' semiotic concepts are largely based on it. In Saussure's model, a sign is constructed of two dimensions: a *signifier* and a *signified*. The signifier refers to the external appearance of the sign, for example the moon in the sky or a lake in the woods. The signified is a dimension that contains the mental concept of the sign, which is somewhat the same to everyone who share the same culture and language. In the case of the moon in the sky, we attach the mental concept of the moon to its sign when we look at it. Saussure calls this process *signification*, which is

how we create understanding of signs (Fiske 1990, pp. 43–44). The signifier and the signified are both bounded by the culture that creates and gives them meaning. Thus, the researcher must always be aware of the cultural context in the interpretation of signs and their signification.

Saussure's main interest in semiotics was in the use of language, but it was Barthes who developed Saussure's ideas into the world of the visual and made semiotics one of the most popular methods of analysing photographs. Even though the analysis of photographs play a marginal part of Barthes' work, his writings have had a huge influence in how photographs are studied. Barthes was interested in how society produces stereotypes which are consumed as "natural" constructions (Seppänen 2005, pp. 110–111). This is the main reason I choose Barthes' semiotics as the main method of visual inquiry. He was more interested in revealing and criticising stereotypes or myths, but I do not see a problem with making use of it also in the reverse. In the case of my data, I will examine how the photographs try to criticise and break certain stereotypes.

In the following sub-chapters, I will first focus on reading photographs from a phenomenological standpoint, which opens up the presence of subjectivity in the reading of photographs. Next, I will go through the concept of representation, followed by chapters on the semiotic concepts I make use of. These semiotic concepts include ideas of syntagm and paradigm and Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, linguistic message and myth.

4.1. On the issue of subjectivity

The analysis of images is something that seems to always raise suspicion when someone brings it up in discussion. How can someone claim to interpret photographs when many people would read them differently? How could this amount to valid research results? Although, the same question could be asked about almost on any qualitative research.

The question underlying this doubt is the recurring question about objectivity and subjectivity. The basic expectation of academic research, and especially journalism, has most commonly been that of objectivity. For addressing the question of objectivity and subjectivity in relation

to this study, phenomenology offers some ideas that I find relatable. Dermot Moran (2000, pp. 2–4) writes that:

> *Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer.*

In almost direct opposition to the preceding naturalistic philosophies, it laid ground for such movements as structuralism, post-structuralism and deconstructionism—schools of thought—which have their fingerprints all over the theoretical part of this thesis as well.

What phenomenology has to do with all of this, is that it provides some interesting takes on the relationship of objectivity and subjectivity. Phenomenology's conception of objectivity-for-subjectivity suggests that "subjectivity must be understood as inextricably involved in the process of constituting objectivity" (Moran 2000, p. 15–16). For example, from this perspective it can be only credible for journalism to claim for aiming at objectivity and that the objectivity we trust in the media has gone through a subjective filter. This acts as an ontological note for the reader of this thesis as well. In the execution of this research, my subjectivity inevitably plays a part in the reading of the photographs. Thus, I suggest, that my ethnicity and my profession should not be considered as advantages or barriers, but as my qualities as a researcher. Because I believe that when those qualities are kept transparent, the reader is in a fair position to evaluate the results.

4.2. Representation

Susan Sontag (1984, p. 13) writes that although photographs in some sense truly capture reality, they are still always renditions of reality, much like paintings or drawings. Photographs confine our three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional plane and give it an impression of factuality. The taking and presentation of photographs is never an innocent act. As much as it stands for shedding light on something, it stands for leaving something in the dark. Thus, a photograph always shows the subject from a single point of view.

In this sense, a photograph is always a *representation* of the subject, which is one of the most useful terms for understanding the relationship between reality, and a photograph depicting it. Seppänen (2005, p. 78) writes that the visual world appears very differently depending on whether we understand representations as reflections of reality or as reflections that construct reality. The first case poses only the question whether reflection is actual, whereas the second case makes us question what kind of reality the representation constructs and how it is constructed. The constructionist approach of the second case is what this research leans to in the understanding and use of representation.

Representations are also not static in their nature. Stuart Hall (1997, p. 61) prefers to refer to representation as a *process*, because of its social, cultural and historical nature. For us, a representation of a photograph from the early 1920s is likely to be very different than it would be for a contemporary of that time. Therefore, when we examine representations, we should be conscious of the collectively shared meanings that are attached to them, although we can never be aware of them all.

Above all—as Douglas Kellner (1997, p. 71) writes—representations are political, because of the power they carry with them. We live in a world where the media offers visual representations that individuals use to form their worldviews, identities, gender roles, socio-political views and actions. Those that hold power to access and control those representations, also hold power to shape societies. Kellner calls this the *politics of representation.*

In the indigenous and Sámi contexts of this research, the politics of representation is a very relevant aspect of the function of media. In today's globalised media scape, it is not insignificant, who controls the visual image of ethnicity and identity.

4.3. Paradigm and syntagm

Communication is all about making choices. The simplest way to exemplify this is to think about the numerous words we can use to construct our speech or writing to communicate what we intend to convey. The same applies for taking photographs. We can use lighting, camera angle, cropping, composition, lenses or post-processing to show the subject in different light.

I rely on the semiotic concepts of paradigm and syntagm, that are used to reveal these choices we have in visual communication and its outcome. A paradigm is a set of units where one can choose to use only one unit. These units must have something in common so that they can form a specific paradigm. The most common example of a paradigm is the letters of an alphabet. In order to form words, we have to choose the letters we want to use. Syntagms are compositions that are formed according to our paradigmatic choices. In this case, words are syntagms of our paradigmatic choices of letters. In the same way, sentences are syntagms of our paradigmatic choices of words. (Seppänen 2005, p. 128; Seppänen 2001, p. 181; Fiske 1990, pp. 57–58)

When applied to photographs the same applies again, only that the choices we make are not as clear as with letters or words. Photographs are syntagms that are formed through our paradigmatic choices about what tools we choose to make the photo, how we frame our photograph, and how we present the photograph. If we alter the paradigmatic choices of a photograph, also its syntagm is altered. Paradigmatic choices are also not only about what we choose to use, but also about what choose not to use. (Seppänen 2005, pp. 128–130; Seppänen 2001, pp. 181–182)

What this semiotic couple offers for this research, is a tool precisely for looking at the choices that have been made in the photographs—and the choices that have been left out. The ideas of paradigm and syntagm are also tightly connected to the following concepts about denotation, connotation, linguistic message and myth.

4.4. Denotation, connotation and the linguistic message

Barthes (1961, p. 15) sees a published press photograph as a message that is "formed by a source of emission [production], a channel of transmission [publication] and a point of reception [audience]". The source of emission is the operation that contains the acts of the photographer who frames and edits the photos, which is followed by the actions of the editorial staff in the form of choosing, positioning, and captioning the photo. The point of reception are the people that read the publication. The channel of transmission, then again, is the paper itself, where the photograph plays its role as part of the complex communicative whole in a co-operation with

the headline, layout, text and captions. Also—as emphasised by Barthes—the name of the paper plays a significant role in the channel of transmission since it can influence in the way a photograph is read (Barthes 1961, p. 15). For example, we interpret a photograph differently when it is published in a majority media as opposed to indigenous media.

This division made by Barthes has become an established approach in the studying of published images. For example, Gillian Rose (2012, p. 16) states that "[i]nterpretations of visual images broadly concur that there are three sites at which the meanings of an image are made: the site(s) of the production of an image, the site of the image itself, and the site(s) where it is seen by various audiences". Methodologically, Barthes sees that studying the source of emission and the point of reception requires a purely sociological approach, where the subject of examination are human groups, their motives and attitudes, and their behaviour in the social world within which they are connected (Barthes 1961, pp. 15–16). The channel of transmission requires a separate method that precedes the sociological analysis. This preliminary method focuses on "the immanent analysis of the unique structure that a photograph constitutes" (Barthes 1977a, pp. 15–16). In other words, it focuses on the photograph as an autonomous structural entity which has to be decoded before sociological analysis can follow.

For the structural analysis of the photograph, Barthes developed the concepts of denotation and connotation. Denotation is the apparent "natural" meaning of a photograph, whereas connotation is the cultural "reading" of a photograph, which depends on the reader's cultural understanding and background (Barthes 1977a, p. 17). Drawing on the ideas of Louis Hjelmslev, Barthes attached the ideas of denotation and connotation to Saussure's model of signification. Quoting on Chandler (2007, p. 140):

> *The first order of signification is that of denotation: at this level, there is a sign consisting of a signifier and a signified. Connotation is a second order of signification which uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified*

An example of this formation of meaning could be a photograph of a tree for example. In the first order of signification we recognise the form in the photograph as a tree from its signifiers: the trunk, branches and leaves—the denotative information. In the second order of signification, we attach the tree in the photograph to our understanding of the world; we connote for example the type of tree, the time of year and our personal experiences with such trees. Connotation is the order of signification that is likely to produce more variance in comparison to denotation.

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A commoner, for example, connotes the tree differently from a carpenter, who connotes the tree's properties and values in a different way. Another connotative level could be the way the tree has been photographed. What mood does it convey with its choice of colour or angle? The connotations of a photograph are, thus, in direct relationship with the paradigmatic choices made in the taking and presentation of it.

This division between denotation and connotation has not been unproblematic. The attitudes towards it have been conflicted, both from other semioticians and Barthes himself, who went from emphasising the significance of denotation in his earlier writings (Barthes 1977a; 1977b), to concluding in his later writings that denotation might only be connotation disguised as denotation (Chandler 2007, p. 138, 140). Either way, the concepts of denotation and connotation have established themselves as maybe the most used tools in analysing photographs (Seppänen 2001, p. 182), which is partly why this research also relies on it. Connotations are especially relevant in the reading of photographs, since they can reveal hidden meanings that may appear natural. This is, of course, hugely dependent on the reader's ability to identify them, although a photograph can never be exhausted of its connotational potential. Furthermore, Barthes highlights that a published photograph is usually always in contact with another communicative structure, the text—or the linguistic message—that supports it:

> *The totality of the information is thus carried by two different structures (one of which is linguistic). These two structures are co-operative but, since their units are heterogeneous, necessarily remain separate from one another: here (in the text) the substance of the message is made up of words; there (in the photograph) of lines, surfaces, shades. (Barthes 1977a, p. 16)*

Thus, both structures must be analysed separately before any conclusion can be made of their co-operation.

Barthes (1977b, pp. 40–41) makes a distinction between two different kinds of linguistic functions: anchorage and relay. Anchorage is the type of text that repeats the denotative message of a photograph; it reassures the reader of the content of a photograph. By doing this, it also directs and confines the perception of the reader towards the connotations that the text implies. Barthes writes that anchorage is a text that makes the reading of a photograph lazier by offering a ready-made statement of its content. Relay—in Barthes' opinion—is a rarer species in the case of press photographs.

> *[In relay] text (most often a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis.* (Barthes 1977b, pp. 41)

In other words, a relay text does not control the reading of the photograph but rather gives it another level of connotation, which broadens the perception of the reader. These both can also operate simultaneously in the same text, which also makes them difficult to separate. For this research, anchorage and relay provide necessary tools for dealing with headlines and texts in the cover photographs of the youth magazines.

4.5. Myth

Closely connected to the concepts of denotation and especially connotation is Barthes' idea of myth. Myth operates on the same second order of signification beside the concept of connotation. For Barthes (1991, p. 107), myth is a type of speech, a kind of message that is used to talk about something, or as Fiske (1990, p. 88) phrases it more clearly:

> *A myth is a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature ... [it] is a culture's way of thinking about something, a way of conceptualizing or understanding it.*

When talking about myth as speech or a message, it does not mean that it is confined to the use of language. It can be used to describe any type of communication (Barthes 1991, p. 108) as in the case of this study: photographs. For example, an advertising photograph promoting Finnish Lapland might be a beautiful landscape of seemingly untouched wilderness. It relies on the myth—possibly possessed by potential tourists—of Lapland as uninhabited nature that has not been affected by human activity. A more general and more naturalised myth could be the gender roles we perform without much questioning them. Barthes' use of the word myth is actually a bit misleading as pointed out by Fiske (1990, pp. 87-88):

> *[Myth as a word] refers to ideas that are false: 'it is a myth that...' or 'the myth that Britain is still a major world power'. This normal use is the unbeliever's use of the word. Barthes uses it as a believer, in its original sense.*

Therefore, myths are established meanings, conventions and things considered self-evident. They are history transformed into nature, and our communication relies heavily on them. It is in the nature of a myth to hide its origins to make it seem universal, which makes them hard to identify. They are distortions that have their own historical and cultural background. (Seppänen 2005, p. 112; Fiske 1990, p. 89) Myths are like good lies that always have a touch of truth to them. And that is the problem that they introduce us with: if we cannot identify the myths that are there, they are the ones that end up guiding our judgement.

Myth is one of the most relevant terms considering the subject of my thesis, since much of Sámi media is about balancing out the coercive myths that come from the outside. This is due to the empowering and counter-narrative functions of indigenous journalism in Sámi media. Empowering in a way, that it provides the Sámi audience an internal discussion of the myths that exist, and counter- narrative in a way that it asserts a visual statement against the stereo-typical representations from the majority. The way indigenous media essentially differs from majority media, is its subordinate position in relation to it, which forces it to deal with not only internal perceptions, but also extensively with external perceptions. In this sense, myth is closely tied to the earlier introduced concept of visual sovereignty, which could be described as acts that participate in the negotiation of certain myths that exist.

5. Analysis

The data of this research consist of the cover photographs of two Sámi youth magazines: *Š* magazine and *Nuorat*. They are the only Sámi youth magazines in existence; none are produced in Finland or Russia. *Š* magazine is published in Norway by *Iđut*, which is based in Igeldas, Billávuotna in the municipality of Porsáŋgu (Ikkaldas, Indre Billefjord in Porsanger). It has been published since 1993, and it is published five times a year. It is written mainly in North Sámi but has also articles in South and Luleå Sámi and Norwegian. The current editor-in-chief is Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell. Included in the data are all of the sixty-nine covers of *Š* magazine from 2000 to 2015, of which sixteen—that stood out from the range of covers—were chosen for deeper analysis.

Nuorat magazine is a religiously and politically independent magazine from Sweden. It is published by *Nuorat Ideell förening*, a NGO based in Jåhkkåmåhkke (Jokkmokk). The content is written in Swedish and North, Luleå and South Sámi. The current editor-in-chief is Pia Sjögren. *Nuorat* has been published since 2009 and the data includes all of the twenty-nine covers until the end of 2015, of which six that stood out, were chosen for deeper analysis. *Nuorat* magazine was preceded by *Sáminuorat*[2], published from 2002 to 2008 as a membership magazine for *Sáminuorra*, a Sámi youth organization from Sweden.

Youth magazines have been in the shadows when it comes to academic research—not to mention Sámi youth magazines—considering the potential influence they have in shaping the worldview of the young. Studies on youth magazines in general, often seem to focus on the negative influences they might have on youth, for example in matters like sexuality, self-image, and drug abuse. The general take on youth media seems to reflect a custodial setting where the older generation expresses concern for the psychological vulnerabilities of the younger generation. The concern is, of course, often pertinent since the media directed towards the youth is usually orchestrated by the older generations themselves.

What might have become clear by now, my interests are in the visual world and how it shapes us and our understanding of the world. That is why this research focuses on the range of visual representation that the covers of *Š* and *Nuorat* magazines present to Sámi youth. Primarily, I

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[2] Sáminuorat then again was preceded by Sáminuorra magazine, published from 1971–2001.

chose to study the youth magazines because they stood out visually from the rest of Sámi media. Traditional daily media rarely puts an effort into their visual side in terms of narration and aesthetics. Usually images are used only in a neutral, informative, and illustrative manner, where their role is secondary to the text. I could have chosen to study all the photographs in the magazines but that would have expanded the data to be too broad for a deeper analysis. Reading through the magazines, I came to the conclusion that the covers are sufficient in representing the range of visual content of the magazines. Covers are considered to receive the most effort in the production of magazines.

Although all the cover photographs are included in the data, I will not go through all of them individually in the analysis. The covers that were selected for analysis were the result of an inductive method, which resembles close reading. By viewing and reviewing the covers I arrived at some categories that brought out the essential subject repertoire. I chose the photographs of which I wanted to do a deeper analysis through saturation in order to secure a maximal variety of subjects and styles. Topics of duodji—Sámi handicrafts and fashion—Sámi public figures, sexual minorities, acts of taking a stand and urban environment and influence stood out as distinct categories. The structure of the analysis is meant to generate form and to develop a better basis for later discussion. To avoid immoderate compartmentalising and labelling, I try to create a dialog between the different categories with the concepts I use. I have also applied quantitative methods to help create an overview of the photographic style of the covers and how they represent gender on a purely quantitative level.

The individual analysis of images is conducted using the semiotic concepts introduced in the previous chapter. To recap, the concepts used are denotation, connotation, linguistic message and myth, including a take from the aspect of visual sovereignty in relation each photograph.

As discussed in chapter 4.1. on the issue of reading photographs, my own subject-position will inextricably play a part in the interpretation of images. I actualize my analysis as a social scientist, a photographer and a Sámi. These vantage points provide a basis for my interpretation that I do my best to utilize to their full capacity.

The next subchapter is meant to map out and give and overall view of the characteristics of magazines, its genre and its cover. It is there to give an impression of the field of journalism that the Sámi youth magazines inhabit, also taking into account the unique position they have in comparison to fully commercial magazines

5.1. Characteristics of the magazine genre and its covers

In the world of journalism, magazines have almost always been a genre that has relied heavily on visual communication. Lasse Rantanen (2007, pp. 17–24) writes that a magazine is a platform, where image and text are allied to create a dramaturgic journalistic narrative, that has its own unique style. A "good magazine" is then born out of the collaboration of text and image, that are put together in a layout where they complement each other. In a way, this description does not differ from that of a newspaper, but in a magazine, the visual side has a more significant role and the final product is usually more thought out.

Maija Töyry (2009, p. 129) writes that in contrast to newspapers, magazines are generally created around a specific style, subject matter, and perspective according to an imagined audience, which is constructed according to an assumed reader potential. Töyry cites Tim Holmes' (2007) statement, that in academic research, newspapers are often studied as a culturally more significant medium than magazines. What Töyry is referring to is that research has revealed that newspapers and their publishers have greater influence as producers of political power, cultural meaning, and social change. This perspective might have something to do with the difference of audience between the mediums. Newspapers reach a wider audience and tackle usually with broader issues, whereas magazines are usually targeted to a specific, more homogenous audience. The amount of influence seems to be connected to the heterogeneity of the audience and the platform of the newspaper as a forum for political, cultural, and social negotiation. Then again, Töyry also cites David Abrahamson (2007), who asserts that in comparison to TV and radio, magazines are especially strong in shaping sociocultural reality instead of just reflecting it. (Töyry 2009, pp. 129-130)

The constructed hierarchy between the mediums is a bit problematic, because the genre of magazines is diverse and generalisations on their lesser influence on reality seems superimposed. Newspapers can be considered to be a more unitary genre, where such generalisations are more justifiable. Magazines have to be examined more individually, because lifestyle magazines, client magazines, and community magazines, all have their own characteristics and level of influence (Töyry 2009, p. 130; Rantanen 2007, pp. 17–31). The amount of influence itself is hard to measure, but at least with magazines, it is easier to identify where that influence is targeted. Furthermore, in the context of indigenous media, the rules imposed on the hierarchies

of influence and audiences can be different from those of majority media. This is because the quantity of media content is lower and the demand is higher.

Another reason for these superficial arguments might be the low attention academic research has given to magazine research from a sociological perspective. As Töyry (2009, pp. 131–132) points out—citing Sammye Johnson (2007)—most research on magazines is non-public studies conducted to serve the needs of marketing and advertising. Despite that, academic research has developed some traditions in the field. Firstly, on the question of "what is a magazine?", second-ly on how magazines reflect and represent culture, and thirdly the future of the medium. The scope of this research touches on all of these questions in examining what a Sámi magazine is and how it represents Sámi culture and where is it headed.

What seems to be often emphasised in the visual aspect of magazines—especially the cover—is its role as the "salesman" of the publication. Rantanen (2007, pp. 33–34) lists selling, guiding the reader, and storytelling as the three main visual objectives of magazines. Caldwell and Zappaterra (2014, p. 42) write that visuality also has the task of building an identity—a brand—for the magazine, which makes it possible for the desirable readers to relate to it. The im-portance of selling the magazine does not only refer to getting people to buy it, but getting people to actually read it. This is because many magazines are not necessarily sold, but are delivered straight to, or within the reach of, the desired audience. This is also the case with the youth magazines in this research, of which at least *Š* magazine is delivered to every Sámi stu-dent in Norway from the 8th grade upwards.

The objective of guiding the reader points to the role of the visual to act as a guide through the structure and content of the magazine before even properly reading it. Images, layout and typography are orchestrated as a whole, that aims not only for comprehension, but to an experi-ence (Rantanen 2007, pp. 36–37). Many majority magazines have over time found out which things work and which do not. For example, this can be seen in their homogenous visual style of Woman magazine covers

The objective of storytelling is maybe the most challenging task for the visuality of a magazine. The storylines in the magazine have to be translated to a visual language so that the content is conveyed even before reading the text. A reader usually scans through the magazine and rarely reads everything. Good visual storytelling allows the reader to find what is relevant. (Rantanen 2007, pp. 38–39) Here also, photographs play the main role in constructing the visual narratives

for the reader. This puts emphasis on the role of the photographer and editorial staff, who choose the photographs and make the layout.

The hierarchy of these visual objectives depends on the community of practice and the roles of individuals in it. A photographer usually puts storytelling first where as a marketing manager focuses on the sales aspect. The scope of this study focuses mostly on cultural, journalistic, and artistic perspectives. The reason why a commercial approach is less relevant, is because the youth magazines in question cannot be described as purely commercial. They both have little, if any, advertisements in them, which indicates that they are financially well-supported. This means that they are less pressured to act on financial demands. This does not mean the visual objective of "selling" is irrelevant, because it contains the aim of grabbing the attention of the reader. In that sense, calling it only selling is a bit misleading.

Rantanen's visual objectives for the magazine relate to ideas about information design. Tapio Vapaasalo (2000, p. 53) writes that visual design is important for a magazine because it is the only interface for accessing its information. For a magazine, it is important that the information is communicated to the reader quickly and efficiently. The reader must understand the message and create a personal connection with it as quickly as possible. We encounter and ignore thousands of visual messages every day and magazines have the task of capturing the attention of the reader with the promises made by visual design.

The most important page—also in the scope of this thesis—is the cover of the magazine. It is the face of the magazine and the first thing that catches the attention of the reader. Thus, the cover is most challenged by the visual objectives of a magazine (Rantanen 2007, p. 87). Although magazine covers have been acknowledged as important by magazine professionals and financial beneficiaries, academic research has taken relatively little interest from a sociological perspective. Sammye Johnson (2002, pp. 7–8) sees that magazine cover research deserves more attention, since they: "not only offer information about what's inside a particular issue, they also provide significant cultural cues about social, political, economic, and medical trends". Magazine covers are a mixture of journalism, art and advertising, that all offer different approaches to studying them. Their reflection and representation of reality require knowledge about the culture they are read within, which creates requirements for the researcher. Historicity also poses a challenge for researching covers of different time periods, since the meanings they hold take different forms depending on who reads them and when.

When the cover is stripped from its requirement of just "selling" it receives a certain amount of freedom. It gains potential to operate more on the grounds of journalism, art and also politics. It could be depicted as—especially when it takes a stand—the visual counterpart to the editorial of magazine. It states what is important in the magazine and maybe in the society at that moment. This setting allows to perceive the cover as a potentially powerful influence in part of the society it reaches. I would argue, that the Sámi youth magazines operate more on the levels of culture and politics—more specifically cultural and lingual sustenance and revival, and ethnopolitics—than their majority counterparts. First of all—although I have found no data on it—the Sámi youth magazines do not have the same kind of financial dependence on advertising and subscribers. They are supposedly supported by the Sámi parliaments in both countries, which grant them independence in pursuing their ambitions based on different values than just selling. They also have no competition in the field of Sámi youth magazines. Although, they do have to compete with majority youth media and the Internet for the attention of their desired audience, which is not a small task. In this context, their competence in the interpretation of their own society is evaluated by the readership, and beyond that, the people that are responsible for their funding.

5.2. Quantitative approaches to cover style and the representation of gender

To map out what style of photographs the two magazines favour in their covers and how gender is represented quantitatively I have created two tables. The purpose of this was to give an overview of what kind of photographs the youth magazines use in their covers. Figure 1 showcases a chart on the range of shot sizes used in the youth magazines.

Figure 1: Percentual varience in shot sizes in the cover photographs. Sixty-nine covers of *Š* and twenty-nine covers of *Nuorat*. Based on Table 1 in Appendix 1.

Both magazines use only people in their covers with the exception of four *Nuorat* covers. The figure also indicates that both magazines favour medium close-up to full shots in their covers, mediums shots being clearly the most common. *Nuorat's* cover photographs focus slighty more on medium close-ups and illustrations without people, whereas *Š* magazine makes more use of close-ups and collages.

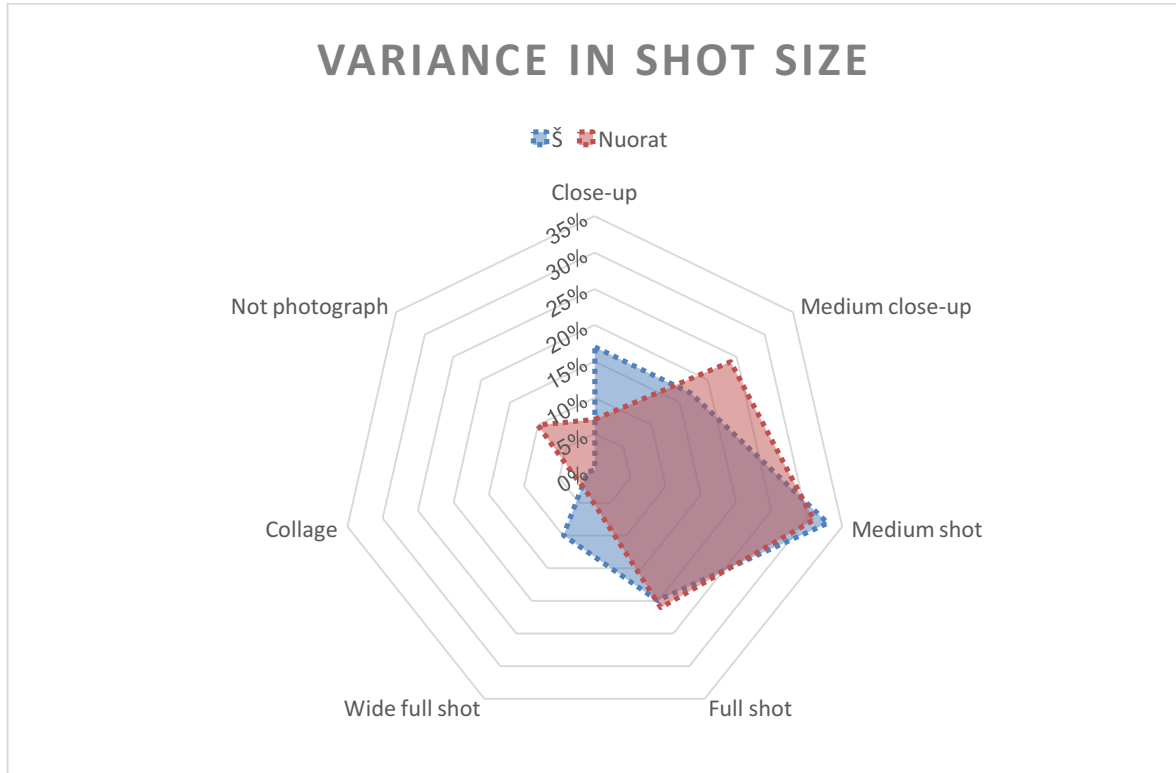Figure 2 presents a chart on how the subjects of the photographs vary according to gender.
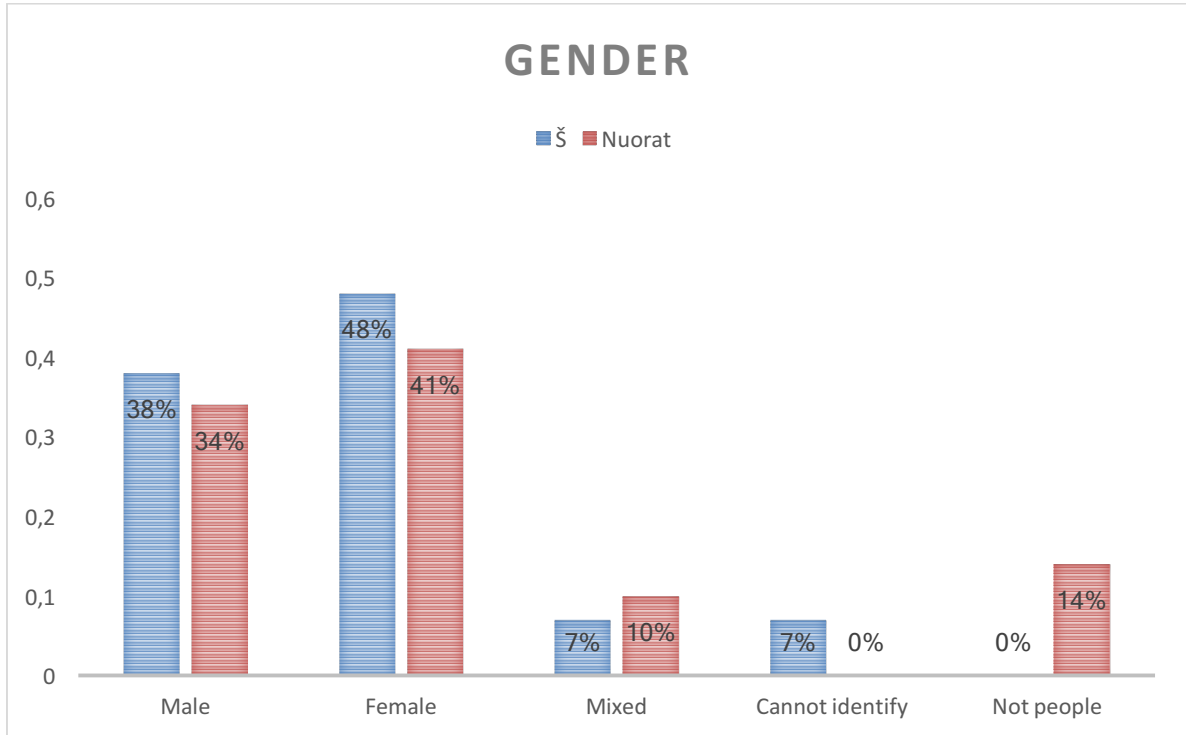
Figure 2: Representation of gender in the cover photographs. Sixty-nine covers of *Š* and twenty-nine covers of *Nuorat*. Based on Table 2 in Appendix 2.

Here we start to see some differences. Both magazines favour individuals in their covers, which is common in magazine covers in general. An interesting figure is the clearly larger quantity of females in the covers of *Š* magazine. This indicates two things: either Sámi women are more active in their public presence or the magazines favour women for their own reasons. Also, *Nuorat* has a larger percentage of females in their covers, but the quantity of issues is also lower, which makes even small differences show up in the percentage division.

5.3. Expanding the boundaries of duodji

One of the topics that stood out in the photographs of both youth magazines was the theme of duodji. Handicrafts is something that has remained relevant in Sámi culture to this day. Traditionally, duodji was based on practical needs, that demanded functional and useful clothing and tools made from materials that were readily available. Aesthetics has also always been a part of duodji, but as the role of Sámi artisans as artists has risen, artistic expression has become much more valued. Helena Ruotsala (2011, pp. 344–345) writes—citing Appadurai (1985) and

Pedersen (2003)—that material objects are assigned meaning only by the qualities and motives attached to them, and they tell about the community they are used in. In Sámi culture, these definitions become concentrated especially in the use of cultural garments, gáktis, in which regional location, and even family, are communicated through their style and various details.

Duodji was a theme that was present in most of the covers in some way, as about half of the covers in both magazines contained some form and quantity of duodji. When it was present, it took various roles in its representation. Most often, it was represented as fashion or design, but it also served as an ethnic marker or an act of resistance. It was also present in the completely adopted craft of tattoos. Here, I will focus on the ones that had duodji as the main subject.

The linguistic messages often used to signify duodji—besides itself—were fashion and design, connoting the western conceptions of contemporary aesthetics and trends in clothing and accessories. But as discussed in the theoretical part, duodji is something that goes beyond the western concepts of fashion and design. Isolating it merely as such would be an understatement to its significance.

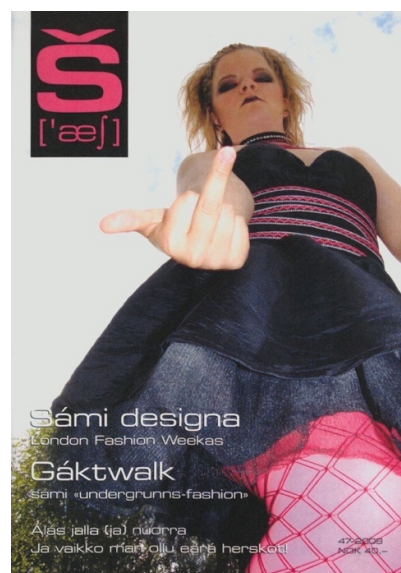### 5.3.1. *Š* magazine 47-2008: Punk Sámi fashion

Figure 3: *Š* magasiidna cover (2008, no. 47, photographer: Karl-Fredrik Teigen)

On a *denotative* level, the cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 3 depicts a young woman showing a middle finger at the camera. She is photographed from a very low angle and in an

almost full body composition. Her left arm and leg and the right leg from the knee down are cropped out. The subject is wearing a black dress that leaves her shoulders and chest bare, with black-pink-silver band going around her waist several times. She has pink patterned stocking and a black-silver band on her neck. Her hair is blond and she has dark makeup on her eyes and lips. The background is a cloudy sky with green tree branches in the bottom.

The main *connotation* that comes forward in the cover photograph is that of rebellion. The subject is basically showing the middle finger to the viewer, but the viewer can also interpret it as being aimed at something instead of someone; which makes it more like a statement about dressing and behaving. Rebellion is also a connotational element in the dressing, hairstyle, makeup and facial expression of the subject. The combination of black and pink in the gákti, the dark heavy makeup, the messy hairstyle and especially the pink stockings rely on the visual connotations of *punk*—the subculture often linked with features of resistance, rebel and breaking of rules. The emphasis of lighting on the pink stockings and the hand holding the middle finger act as shocking elements that provoke the viewer. The low camera angle also intensifies this connotation by placing the viewer in a lower position in relation to the subject. Of the *linguistic messages* in the cover, "Gáktwalk" is the one that refers to the cover photograph. The placement of the linguistic message "Sámi designa" can be misinterpreted to refer to the cover due to its connotational similarities. Gáktwalk makes a linguistic play with the words "Catwalk" and "Gákti", combining the ideas of a fashion show stage with the Sámi garment. The subhead "Sámi 'underground fashion'"[3] reroutes the connotations of the headline back to the cover photograph, by framing the content of the photograph.

On a *mythic* level, the photograph plays with myth of a Sámi womanhood and dressing, which both have their own conventional ways of depiction: the Sámi woman as a well behaved individual and the gákti as a form of dress that is bound by tradition. The rebelliously acting subject, the strong makeup and the unconventional gákti form a representation that acts as a statement against conventional visual representations of Sámi women and dressing. To me, this negotiation with the myths of womanhood and dressing, acts as a form of *visual sovereignty*, where an alternative representation of Sámi womanhood is asserted. This is done in the context of Sámi clothing design, where certain traditional rules of design also exist.

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[3] Translated by the author from: "Sámi 'undergrunns-fashion'"

5.3.2. *Š* magazine 49-2008: A catwalk in the mountain

Figure 4: *Š* magasiidna cover (2008, no. 49, photographer: Ánne Biret Anti)

The cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 4 *denotes* a woman walking in the snow carrying two animal heads from their antlers. The photograph is a full-body shot, and only a small part of the subject's feet is cropped out. The woman is wearing a long black jacket or a dress with a wide strip of white fur in the front, that extends from top to bottom. On her head, she has a pointy hat that is made from the same fur as in the jacket. She has black shoulder-long hair that comes down freely under the hat. She has black trousers or stockings and reindeer shoes on her feet. The photograph taken from a slightly low angle and the background consist of bare snowy ground and a blue sky. The horizon line—which is in level with the reindeer heads—is a steep slope which makes it seem crooked. The subject is looking forward over the camera to the opposing horizon. Her facial expression is fairly neutral except for the slight squint in her eye which makes a small wrinkle in her forehead.

In a cultural reading, the photograph *connotes* a combination of absurdity, that is connected to the context it is presented in. There are several *linguistic messages* in the photograph of which the main headline "Catwalk on the mountain[4]" is concerned with the cover photograph. As in Figure 3, the linguistic message makes reference to the stage and event where fashion models

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[4] Translated by the author from: "Catwalka duoddaris"

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present clothing. In the case of the cover in question, the metaphor is stronger because the subject is walking and the mountain makes a connotation of a catwalk stage. The choice of clothing also connotes ideas about catwalks and fashion shows. The unusual design of the clothing and especially the reindeer heads she is carrying connote the kind of "strangeness" and "peculiarity" that people are used to seeing in fashion shows. It connotes a kind of experimentation with clothing and fashion. The white fur, the reindeer heads and the background connote the Sámi elements in the subject.

In relations to the *myths* that are present, the photograph addresses the myth of Sámi dressing in a similar way as the cover in Figure 3. This is also done in the context of fashion. The reindeer heads on her hands could also be a reference to a mythic Sámi spirit, Máisá, who is a protector of the predators. She has been depicted as a deceivingly beautiful woman who lured reindeer herders away from the herd so that predators could attack them (Vuolab 2002, para. 66). If this connection holds true, the combination of fashion and Sámi mythology serve as an act of *visual sovereignty*, where Sámi mythology is brought in the sphere of dressing and fashion. Still, the connection remains somewhat superficial, and the realm of fashion absurdity dominates the connotative range.

5.3.3. *Nuorat* 02-2010: Summer Sámi fashion

Figure 5: *Nuorat* cover (2010, no. 2, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

Sámi fashion was also a recurring theme in the cover photographs of *Nuorat* magazine. On a *denotative* level, Figure 5 depicts three young people—two female and one male—posing for the camera. The photograph is a full body shot. The man is standing in the centre with the women on each side of him. The left woman is a bit further back from the camera, while the woman on the right side is a bit nearer. All the subjects are looking at the camera. The background is solid pink, being only affected by the shadows of the subjects.

The clothing on the subjects is a bundle of solutions. The woman on the left is wearing a black piece of clothing on her shoulders and a white t-shirt with a vertical print on it. On her feet, she is wearing blue denim shorts, black patterned stockings and white leather shoes with black laces. On her right wrist, she has a wide blue canvas wristband with a two-coloured zigzag pattern on it. She has brown hair that are on a ponytail and drop-shaped silver earrings. The man in the middle is wearing a white beanie with a grey pattern on it, a white t-shirt with a red-blue-green print on it, a string necklace with a rectangle silver plate on it, a wide white leather belt with some red on it, brown pants and black sneakers. He also has a wristband on his left wrist which is blue, with brown on the sides and white patterns in the middle. The woman on the right is wearing a cap with orange letters "HP" on it. She has a grey short-sleeved dress on—with coloured patterns on the shoulders—and a blue belt on her hip. She has rectangle shaped silvery earring showing on her left ear and a silver bracelet with several jewels hanging from it. The man in the middle is standing straight to the camera, whereas both women have their bodies turned slightly towards the man. The woman on the right is holding her left hand on the man's right shoulder, and her right hand is holding the man's right arm. The man has his right hand's thumb in the pocket while the left hand is holding his belt from the middle. The right woman then again, has her right hand on the man's left shoulder and her left hand is hanging loose.

In a cultural reading, the *connotation* of the photograph leans on the anchoring *linguistic message* "Summer fashion special[5]". It refers to the cover photograph and repeats the photograph proposal of trendy summer clothing. Overall, the photograph is filled with symbols, gestures and signs that could be described endlessly. The style of experimenting with clothing, the gestures, the background and the facial expressions all connote the style and aesthetics of mainstream fashion magazines. This is combined with the inclusion of Sámi symbols that come out

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[5] Translated by the author from: "Sommarspecial mode"

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in the clothing and accessories: the luhkka-like[6] garment and the shoes on the left woman, the South Sámi gákti-style t-shirt, the belt and the pants on the man, and the bracelet on the woman on the right. Also, the other garments show elements of Sámi influence, like the t-shirt on the woman on the left, the beanie on the man and the dress on the woman on the right.

On a *mythical* level the photograph plays with the idea of Sámi fashion presenting it in style reminiscent of mainstream fashion magazines. This kind of hybrid use of mainstream aesthetics and Sámi symbols was already introduced in the cover photographs of *Š* magazine, but *Nuorat* seems to take it further in this case. Where the cover photographs of Sámi fashion in *Š* presented the subjects in a more "natural" outdoor environment, the cover of *Nuorat* presents the subjects in a studio setting. The studio environment isolates the subjects visually and culturally. The pink colour in the background connotes the same unconventionality as do the clothes on the subjects. In this context, it connotes youth, experimentation and also, majority magazine methods of grasping the attention of the viewer with a bright colour. The backgrounds solidness isolates the subjects from a cultural context, making the viewer focus on the subjects and their clothes.

Much in in the same manner as the covers in Figures 3 and 4, the photograph negotiates with the rules of dressing. The concept of *visual sovereignty* manifests itself in this same negotiation, by claiming visual presence for Sámi youth fashion. But is it relevant to consider the relevance of visual sovereignty in this matter? A question that is relevant also for the previous covers of *Š* magazine. Is the representation more about Sámi fashion taking influences from western high-end fashion, or is it just fashion playing with Sámi symbolism? Going deeper into the subject would require defining what is "good" in Sámi fashion. Here the question has revolved more on what has been considered acceptable and appropriate. The aspect of questioning stereotypical representations of Sámi dressing is obvious. What comes out more though, is an internal negotiation on dressing and fashion.

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[6] A Sámi garment that usually extends to waist level.

5.3.4. *Nuorat* 02-2012: Sámi nieida

Figure 6: Nuorat cover (2012, no. 47, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

Nuorat's cover photograph in Figure 6 depicts a young woman in a full body shot, looking at the camera. On a *denotative* level, the photograph depicts a Sámi female model posing for the camera as an exhibit of the outfit she is wearing. She is wearing a beaded headpiece, a white and red dress that extends above her knees. On her chest, she has a silver brooch. On her feet, she has black high heels with red bands on her ankles. Her legs seem to be bare, but the a slight glow in her legs suggest that she is wearing see-through stockings. The background consists of a concrete wall and a gravel ground on under her feet. The subject is slightly askew to the right in relation to the camera.

In a cultural context, the subjects posture and clothing generate the primary *connotations*. Not in any hierarchic order, the subjects gákti, her bare legs and her facial gesture are the first thing that grab the attention of the viewer. The way the subjects is subtly "flirting" with the camera, is connotes the visual rhetoric of majority fashion magazines. The bare legs, combined with the flirting look, generate connotations of sexuality. Usually, a gákti extends much further. The gákti and the "shoelaces" (*vuoddagat*) are the Sámi emblems found in the photograph. Their style, placement and combination with the bare legs support the connotation of sexuality. The beaded headdress and high heels refer to external influences in relation to conventionality. Also,

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the concrete wall behind the subject connotes a constructed environment, as opposed to the outdoor environment in example Figure 4.

The *linguistic messages* in the cover make direct connections with the connotations of the photograph. "Sámi girl" and "Gákti aesthetics"[7] both operate as anchorage to the photograph in question. Although, further inspection on the contents of the magazine reveals that the cover photograph is more of an "illustration" for the issue in question, rather than referring to any specific article.

On a *mythic* level, the photograph plays with the ideas of Sámi sexuality and gákti style, in a context that again combines it with "urban" and "western" influences. The recurring theme of this "hybridity" forms a representational pattern of Sámi fashion in the tension of these two worlds. Where this photograph maybe differs from the others, is its braver representation of sexuality trough the showing of skin. Why this is relevant, is that the showing of skin—particularly of certain body parts—is still somewhat frowned upon by some of the more conservative people in the Sámi society. The cover photograph thus also comments on the myth of a Sámi girl/woman as an individual that is required to be modest and virtuous. *Visual sovereignty* manifests much in the same manner as the cover photographs before. By expanding notions of gákti style, sexuality and womanhood, the photograph negotiates those myths in the tension of internal expectations or restrictions and external possibilities.

5.4. Public figures

Public figures are probably the most common used subjects of youth magazine covers in general. The media has always taken an interest in the lives and thoughts of artists, athletes, and other celebrities, usually reflecting the interests of their audiences. Sámi youth magazines do not make an exception to this rule. Sámi Public figures were the subject of a large part of the covers of both Sámi youth magazines. Quantifying the exact number of public figures in the

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[7] Translated by the author from: "Sámi nieida" and "Gákteestetihkka"

covers is problematic, since it would require defining who amounts to a public figure, but here I will focus on six covers—five from *Š* and one from *Nuorat*—that fall within the category.

5.4.1. *Š* magazine 76-2014: Juoigannásti

Figure 7: *Š* magasiidna cover (2014, no. 76, photographer: Kenneth Hætta)

The cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 7 *denotes* a young man posing in front of a wooden red painted wall. The man has black hair and a light dark skin. He is wearing a brown leather jacket with the zipper open. Underneath, he has a garment coloured with red and blue, and a silver-gold brooch on top of it. The subject is looking at the camera and his posture is a little bit tilted to the left from the camera.

The photograph generates *connotations* on many levels. The first level of connotation—if that is achieved—happens at the level of identification. The photograph and the *linguistic message* "The Yoiking star: Jon Henrik Fjällgen, the new Sámi pop celebrity"[8] operate as an anchorage to connect the viewer to person in question. In reference to yoiking star and the new Sámi pop celebrity, the linguistic message refers to Fjällgren as the winner of *Talent Sweden (Talang Sverige) 2014* music competition show. The style of the photograph itself can be attached to an established way of depicting celebrities in magazine covers, where a tight portrait is combined

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[8] Translated by the author from: "Juoigannásti: Jon Henrik Fjällgren, Sámi ođđa popbeakkálmas."

with a studio strobe to induce high contrast and saturation. The lighting creates a kind of spotlight that makes the subject pop from the image. The facial expression and the posture of the subject also support this connotation to a certain level. The subject is thus posing for the camera in a very stylistically appropriate way. His leaning posture and the way he is looking at the camera underneath his eyebrows make the subject appear mysterious. The style of gákti underneath his jacket indicates that he is a South Sámi and the brooch on his chest is a *risku,* a Sámi jewel. The paradigmatic choice of leaving the subject's gákti underneath the leather jacket connotes ideas about layers that extend beneath the surface. For me, the leather jacket represents a stylistic choice that is only meant to emphasise the gákti underneath. The partly visible gákti represents something that is closer to his heart—a second skin—that works as a powerful visual message of the subject's identity.

On a *mythic* level, there are several aspects to be found. Firstly, there is the common level of ethnic homogeneity of race that is questioned by representing an individual, who is born in a different part of the world, but adopted by a Sámi family. The photograph thus extends the range of representation of Sámi appearance. As a by-product, it then takes a stand on the question of race and ethnicity, by asserting that ethnicity is built on the culture that you are brought up in. The point I made about his gákti as "a second skin" supports this assertion. This is also the level where *visual sovereignty* manifests itself, by providing an extension to the representational range of young Sámi and making an assertion on the visual appearance of Sámi in the contemporary heterogenic society. Secondly, there are the myths that people build around public figures, which are often intentionally supported by the subjects themselves. These myths are generated by the high demand of knowledge on public figures and the lack of it. The way the photograph represents the subject as mysterious, enhance the myth of the individual as unreachable, someone beyond common people.

5.4.2. *Nuorat* 03-2012: Rap artist

Figure 8: *Nuorat* cover (2012, no. 3, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

In Figure 8, similar kinds of paradigmatic choices are in play in the depiction of ethnicity. On a *denotative* level, the photograph is of a young man crouching on the ground, leaning on his knees with his arms and looking straight at the camera. The composition is a full-body shot taken from an upright position. The background consists of ground covered with rusty metal junk. The sunlight illuminates the background and casts a harsh light on the right side of the subject's face and neck. The artificial or reflected sunlight illuminates the subject from the front. The man is wearing a black leather jacket and a necklace with several jewels hanging on it and a wide belt with silver ornaments on it. His trousers are black with white vertical stripes on them. On the subject's right hand, there is a leather rope wrapped in a loop. The photograph is dominated by the subject's posture and intense confrontational gaze at the camera. The paradigmatic choice of the camera angle emphasises the posture and makes the ground work as uniform background.

In this photograph—like the photograph of Fjällgren in Figure 7—there is an interesting combination of Sámi symbols and influences of popular culture that guides the viewer's *connotations*. The Sámi style jewels on his necklace, the Sámi belt and the reindeer lasso on his

hand connote a cultural connection to Sámi culture. The black leather-like jacket he is wearing—and the way he is wearing it—generate a connotation to early American hip-hop culture[9]. The leather jacket itself does not produce this connotation, but the Adidas-symbol and the linguistic message on the chest generate the connotation. Also, contributing to this connotation, is the way he is wearing the Sámi jewels on his neck, his posture and serious facial expression. The cover has several *linguistic messages* that refer to the content of the magazine, but none that point to the cover photograph itself. However, on the level of identification, the subject of the cover is Ailu Valle, a Sámi rapper from Finland.

The representational choice of a Sámi rap artist touches on the common *myth* of a Sámi artist as an ethno- or joik-artist. Of the genres of music that Sámi artists have adopted in the recent decade, rap is one of the more popular. The genre of rap music itself has been acquired by many ethnic groups all around the world in different ways, but especially individual artists in indigenous groups have gravitated towards its expressional style. The representation then leans on a combination of myths about rap artists and Sámi artists. From the aspect of *visual sovereignty*, the photograph operates in a way that has already started to establish itself in the formerly analysed cover photographs: by borrowing, combining, and reformulating in internal and external influences, the photograph gives visual presence to newer forms of Sámi musical authorship in the Sámi visual mediascape.

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[9] Run DMC for example has been considered as a Hip Hop -group that made Adidas garments iconic in hip-hop culture (see e.g. Blount Danois 2010)

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5.4.3. *Š* magazine 78-2014: Hip-hop queen

Figure 9: *Š* magasiidna cover (2014, no. 78, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

Š magazine uses similar kinds of cultural references in Figure 9 in representing a female Sámi hip-hop artist. Only in this case, no Sámi symbols are found. From a *denotative* standpoint, the female subject in the photograph is composed in a medium body shot with a pinball machine in the background. The subject is wearing a white cap on her head, blue denim overalls, a blue denim top and a light grey zipped college hoodie. She has a golden necklace that reads "happy", a nose-ring and large round earrings. A part of blue and purple fabric that look like boxers can be seen on her left hip. She has black braided hair that descend on her chest from the left. She is holding onto the cap with both of her hands.

The primary *connotations* of the photograph stem from the subject itself; her posture, facial expression and clothing. They mediate a visual message of a young confident woman, who is connected to hip-hop culture based on her clothing. There are three headlines with subtitles in the cover operating as *linguistic messages*. The top linguistic message "Maxida Märak" is the one that refers to the cover photograph and operates as an anchorage for identifying the subject. The subtitle "The first Sámi hip-hop queen"[10] informs the subject as the first successful female

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[10] Translated by the author from: "Sámi vuostaš hiphop-dronnet"

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Sámi hip-hop artist. The linguistic message therefore connects the subject to Sámi culture, although the context of the magazine also does that. The linguistic message creates a connection between the word queen and the subjects cap, which can be read as a kind of metaphor for a crown. The word queen is also often used to describe a very successful female hip-hop artist. Other cultural references to hip-hop culture are a plenty. The glossy sticker and straight peak of the cap indicate a "fitted cap", that is commonly used in hip-hop culture. Also, the way she is using denim fabric, overalls and even the glimpse of colourful boxers, refer to hip-hop fashion and style. The lighting brings the subject into a kind of spotlight that connotes ideas of being on the stage. Her gesture connotes confidence that derives from the subject's facial expression and the way she positions her arms. The background remains somewhat disconnected. To me, the flipper machine does not support the general message of the photograph, but serves only as an illustrative background.

In this case, the photograph plays with the *myths* about Sáminess on the level of womanhood and authorship. On the level of womanhood, the photograph negotiates an extension to the general image of a Sámi woman. A woman who is free to express herself through the influence of hip-hop, in the context of contemporary Sámi and majority society. Even from the standpoint of hip-hop, it is fairly rare that a female artist takes a similar role, that is usually acquired by men. This brings out the negotiation on the myths around female authorship in music, where there is also a clear divide between more masculine and more feminine roles. By adopting a more masculine role, the photograph then takes part in the negotiation about gender roles. The aspect of *visual sovereignty* is maybe more complicated in the case of this photograph. On one hand, the photograph operates as an act of visual sovereignty, where the portrayal of Sámi women is re-evaluated. On the other hand, it is executed solely through the borrowed visual signs of hip-hop culture. It becomes a question whether the use of Sámi symbols is necessary for visual sovereignty. In my view, the mere use of Sámi symbols does not amount for visual sovereignty. It is more about how they are used.

The analysed photographs of Sámi musicians share a similar emphasis of the subjects as persons to be looked up to. They rely on the myth of an artist as mysterious non-commoners that are successful individuals in the context of Sámi artists. They negotiate with the mythic image of stereotypical Sámi artist on the aspects of ethnicity, authorship and womanhood. The covers in Figures 7 and 8 share the combination of Sámi and pop culture symbolism, whereas the covers in Figures 8 and 9 both rely heavily on iconic references to American hip-hop culture. In spite

of these similarities, the subjects are still framed distinctively according to their specific backgrounds.

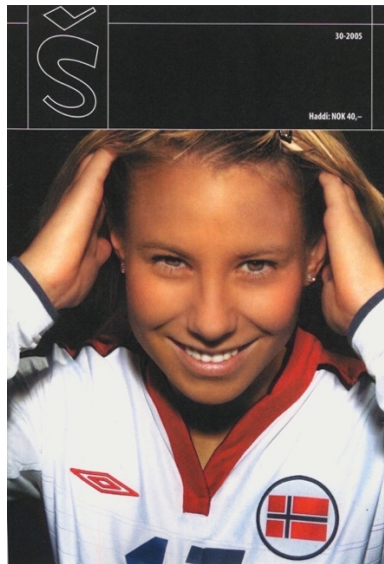### 5.4.4. *Š* magazine 30-2005: Female athlete

Figure 10: *Š* magasiidna cover (2005, no. 30, photographer: Kenneth Hætta)

Athletes were another distinct subject of public figures on the covers of the youth magazines. The cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 10 *denotes* a girl subject posing for the camera wearing a sports jersey. There is no text included in the cover, so the photograph operates solely on a visual level. This invites the reader to understand the image without a *linguistic message*. The photograph is a close-up shot that confines the subject and makes the viewer focus on the symbols, facial expression and especially the eyes. The girl is smiling and looking at the camera. Her eyes are brown and her hair is blond, with some dark hair in the roots. The camera angle is from a slightly downward looking perspective. The background is black. She is wearing a white V-neck shirt with red on the seams. There is a logo and a flag on her chest, with a symbol partly showing under them. Her hands are up on the side of her head with her fingers going through her hair.

The photograph mediates its message through the paradigmatic choices of clothing, gesture and facial expression. The initial *connotation* raised by the photograph, is that of a female athlete. The model of the shirt connotes a sport of some kind, where the Umbro-logo can be understood

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as a reference to football. The Norwegian flag connotes her nationality. Through these symbols and messages, the photograph connotes a young female football player. Her gesture and facial expression form the second connotational dimension. Her gesture—pulling her hair back with her hands—raises questions about how she is depicted. The gesture—combined with the smile and the look—generate overlapping connotations of innocence, seduction and flirtation, properties that are not unusual in the representations of women in magazine covers. On the other hand, the photograph could be read as representing the abstract notions of joy, adolescence and beauty, qualities often associated with young girls.

From the standpoint of *myth*, the photograph retells the myth of women athletes in its interest on superficial qualities. The subject is represented in favour of her looks, and the jersey remains as the only indication to sports. Also, the gesture she makes supports this claim in its similarity to, for example, hair product advertising. The aspect of visual sovereignty is harder to pinpoint in this case. The photograph does give visual presence to a female Sámi athlete, but it relies heavily on visual rhetoric that does not question or extend the way female athletes are depicted.

5.4.5. *Š* magazine 34-2005 & 67-2012: A skier and a fighter
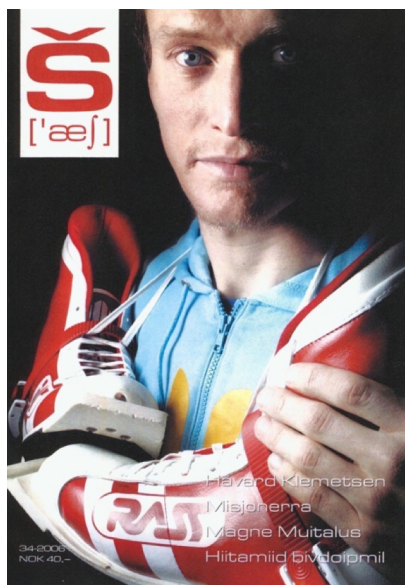

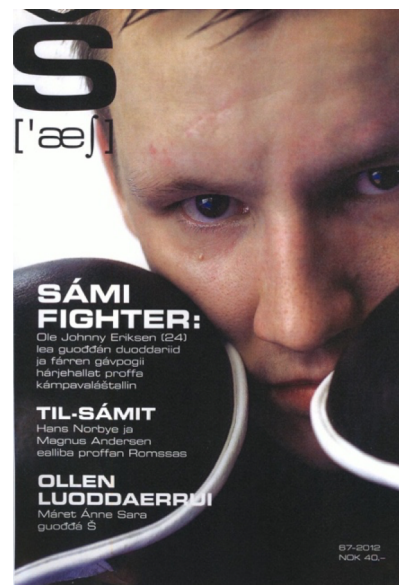Figure 12: *Š* magasiidna cover (2006, no. 34, photographer: Kenneth Hætta)

Figure 11: *Š* magasiidna cover (2012, no. 67, photographer: Bente Bjercke)

The two other covers in Figures 11 and 12 with men athletes as subjects have a similar kind of visual structure—this time accompanied by linguistic messages—which makes it justifiable to analyse them together. The cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 11 *denotes* a close-up shot of a man with ski jumping boots hanging around his neck. The man is looking at the camera. The background is black, with the subject being light from the left in an almost ninety-degree angle, leaving the right side of the face almost black.

The second male athlete in the cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 12 is depicted in a somewhat similar manner. The photograph *denotes* a tight close-up of a man looking at the camera, with black gloves in the foreground. The background is bright white and the soft light coming from the left illuminates the subject somewhat dimly.

Figure 11 makes a *connotation* of an athlete based on the use of ski jumping boots that are hanging on his neck. This operates as an aid to the identification of the subject, who is a well-known individual. The *linguistic message* of "Håvard Klemetsen" in the first row, acts as an anchorage that helps identify the subject. Thus, the subject can be recognised through two visual and one linguistic message in the photograph, all of which rely on cultural knowledge. The photograph relies on these connotations to deliver its message, which suggests a portrait or a profile story of the skier Håvard Klemetsen. The choice of lighting connotes a portrayal of the subject in a dramatic manner. The facial expression and the look in his eyes relaxed and calm, that connotes an experienced and confident person.

Where the cover of Håvard Klemetsen relies on the use of ski jumping boots for identifying the subject matter, the second cover in Figure 12 of a male athlete relies on the *connotation* raised by the boxing gloves, representing the sport in question. The *linguistic message* "Sámi fighter"—underlined by its placement on the glove—works as an anchorage reflecting the connotations of the photograph. Using the English word "fighter", instead of a Sámi language counterpart, connects the viewer to the universal meaning of the word. The subtitle "Ole Johnny Eriksen (24) has left the mountains to and moved to the city to practice professional martial arts[11]" extends the anchorage, answering questions about the background and story of the sub-

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[11] Translated by the author from: "Ole Johnny Eriksen (24) lea guođđán duoddariid ja fárren gávpogii hárjehallat proffa kámpovaláštallin"

ject. Where the cover in Figure 11 connotes the notions of experience, confidence and composure, the cover photograph in Figure 12 mediates connotations of endeavour, aggressiveness, and challenge, all of which contribute to the visual message they supposedly aim to deliver.

On a *mythic* level, both cover photographs of male athletes operate similarly to the first cover photograph of the female athlete (Figure 10). Only this time, by retelling the myth of male athletes as serious, respected practitioners of their sport in contrast to the more superficial representation of the female athlete. In the cover photographs of Sámi athletes, there are no apparent visual markers that point to Sámi culture, other than the magazines themselves (except the linguistic message of "Sámi Fighter"). The Sámi athletes are thus depicted visually only as athletes, although the magazine itself always frames them in a Sámi paradigm. All and all, some of the same problematics that came out with the aspect of *visual sovereignty* in the photographs of the female athlete, are also raised in the case of these covers. This poses an interesting question on how the youth magazines represent Sámi athletes. Why is it that they are not depicted with Sámi symbols like almost half of the covers? Maybe it is because in the case of Sámi athletes, there is no need to underline the ethnicity of the subjects, because it is already underlined by the frame of the magazine itself. There is also a certain kind of pride connected to representing successful athletes that are considered to represent "us" on a national or international level. Sámi athletes themselves are actually pretty rarely represented in this scale, which gives the magazine credit for just depicting them—when we dismiss the way they are depicted. The question then revolves around the concept of visual sovereignty, and how and where it is applied. When we approach a border where it is more difficult to apply, one must be aware of the value it gives some ways of expression in contrast to others.

5.5. Sexual minorities

The visibility of sexual minorities has steadily risen in the media over recent decades, as legal and societal perceptions of the group have improved. In relation to this development, also Sámi sexual minorities have started becoming more visible. For example, Sápmi Pride[12]—which was

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[12] Sápmi Pride is a continuation of the global Gay Pride movement, that has become visible in from their peaceful protests for the rights of sexual minorities.

held for the first time in 2014 in Giron, Sweden—has been part of this development. This became apparent also in the coverage of the Sámi youth magazines. Particularly *Š* magazine gave it space in their covers. In the twenty-eight issues from 2010 to 2015, four had a cover photograph that featured sexual minorities. *Nuorat* magazine had one cover on the subject in its whole range of issues. Here I will analyse all of the covers that touched upon the issue, since there seemed to be variation in their representations.

5.5.1. *Š* magazine 55-2010: Bonju
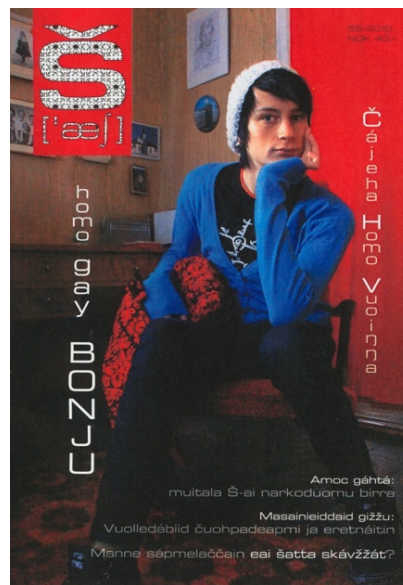
Figure 13: *Š* magasiidna cover (2010, no. 55, photographer: Máret Ánne Sara)

On a *denotative* level, the cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 13 is a full body shot of a young man sitting on the chair. He has a white beanie on his head, with black medium long hair coming underneath it. He is wearing a blue knitted jersey with a black t-shirt underneath, that has red on the collar and a logo on it. He has dark blue trousers and black sneakers on his feet. Under his right arm, he is holding a red and black patterned pillow or a blanket. On the background, there is a corner of a room. On the left side, there are several images: one of a Sámi woman, one of a group of children, one of a house and a smaller on with a someone on it, a drawing of a boy and a round ceramic image. Underneath them is a wooden desk with a radio and some other items on it. There is a bright red curtain on the right side and a red and black patterned

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carpet on the floor. The subject is resting his chin on his left hand and looking at the camera with his head tilted slightly towards the left. Both his knees are bent a little bit inwards.

The photograph itself is an interesting take on the subject. For representing homosexuality, it relies on several distinct and subtle means. The posture of the subject raises the first and most distinct *connotation* about homosexuality. The way the subject is leaning his head on his left hand and the way he is dressed are the most obvious of these qualities. This is enhanced by the tilted knees and shoulders, the way his left arms wrist is twisted and the subtle bend on his little finger. The *linguistic messages* are written vertically on the left and right side of the subject. The headline says "homo gay BONJU"[13] on the left and on the right, on top of the red curtain: "Express/show Gay Spirit"[14]. The linguistic message on the left presents the viewer with three different words that refer to a homosexual person and anchorage the subject matter of the photograph. On the right, the linguistic message connotes a statement for sexual minorities. It makes its statement on two levels: on a literal level and on a referential level. Literally, it encourages Sámi sexual minorities to express themselves. On the other hand, it refers to a letter combination ČSV, an expression initiated by the Sámi ethnopolitical movement that was born out of the struggles against the Alta dam in Máze. The letter combination has had many articulations as for what it stands for, but the basic message has remained the same. Currently the most common articulation is "Express/show Sámi Spirit"[15], as a symbol for resistance and empowerment (see Hætta Kalstad 2013; Stordahl 1997; Mathisen n.d.). The linguistic message in the cover makes use of this by continuing its legacy of redefinition; this time modifying its message to empower Sámi sexual minorities.

The look on the subject's face is difficult to contain without considering the posture. Even though the subject's facial expression is rather neutral, there is an intensity in his gaze that is generated by the totality of the photograph. It connotes a kind of boredom, but at the same time, confrontation. The way he is holding the red and black pillow under his right arm connotes a kind of security for the subject under the viewer's gaze.

The red colour plays a significant role in how the photograph is experienced emotionally. It is utilised especially on the curtain, the *Š* logo and the pillow, but also on the chair and the carpet. The colour red is thus spread out to all sections of the photograph. The tone of the red is rather

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[13] Bonju is North Sámi and means it means "queer" in english.
[14] Translated by the writer from: "Čájeha Homo Vuoiŋŋa"
[15] Translated by the writer from: "Čájet Sámi Vuoiŋŋa"

bright. In the western world red is said to represent passion, anger and love. In this case, it somehow provokes the viewer. In a complete contrast to the red curtain, the desk and the wall on the left contribute a calmer element in the photograph, although it is disrupted by the red *Š* logo. The photographs, drawings and items on the background represent history, family and home, that connote sites of security and safety. But via the photograph's other elements, they could also be viewed as sites of restlessness, suppression and fear.

From the standpoint of *myth,* the representation of the photograph leans heavily on mythic ideas about male gay people as feminine. This comes through especially in the subject's posture and appearance. Secondly, and here there is a risk of tripping-up on terminology, but the photograph gives visual presence to a member of a group that is also considered to be somewhat of a myth— only in the more common use of the word—in the Sámi society. From the standpoint of *visual sovereignty*, the photograph enters in an interesting negotiation—the negotiation on the visual presence of gay Sámi people, and how they are represented there. The cover comes out as a clear statement—underlined by the linguistic messages and their connotations—for gay Sámi people's right to exist and be visible. From this perspective, the cover photograph exhibits a good example of an act of visual sovereignty, especially in the context of an internal discussion.

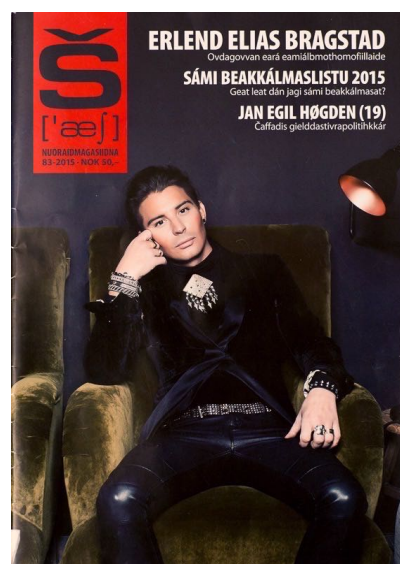### 5.5.2. *Š* magazine 83-2015: A queer role model

Figure 14: *Š* magasiidna cover (2015, no. 83, photographer: Kenneth Hætta)

Five years later, the cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 14 takes a slightly different kind of approach to a homosexual subject. On a *denotative* level, the cover photograph is of a man sitting in an armchair looking at the camera with a neutral expression on his face. The photograph is almost a full shot, leaving only the part of his legs out of the picture. He is wearing an all-black velvet jacket with a black polo shirt underneath, and leather pants. He has silver rings on both hands, a silvery studded leather belt on his waist, a silvery spiked wristband on his left arm and several thinner silvery wristbands on his right arm. Almost in the centre of the picture, there is a diamond shaped Sámi brooch on his chest. He has black, medium length hair that is combed back. His eyes are dark brown and the skin on his face looks like it has some makeup on it. He has an earring on his left ear and the right ear is behind his right hand. His head is tilted slightly to the right supported by his right arm. His left arm is laid on an arm rest and his legs are spread wide. The armchair that he is sitting on, is made of dark green velour. There is a dark blue wall just behind the chair. Next to him on the right, a part of a stool that presumably holds a table lamp that sticks out from the edge of the picture is visible. The lighting is low-key, which comes from the dark surfaces that dominate the luminosity of the picture. His face and hands are white, creating a contrast between the light and the dark.

The primary *connotation* from the photograph is that of a "well-groomed" man. The *linguistic message* reads: "Erlend Elias Bragstad: A role model for other indigenous homosexuals"[16], which names the subject and presents him as a homosexual role model for other indigenous sexual minorities. The depiction of the subject supports this portrayal on many levels. The most apparent of those are the makeup, the studs and spikes on his accessories and the leather pants. The act of spreading his legs—which even creates reflection of light on the stretched leather on his crotch—connotes masculinity and manliness. The posture of the subject—leaning back on the chair with his head against his arm—connotes a relaxed confidence that has a confrontational effect.

The brooch on his chest is the only Sámi symbol in the photograph. It draws the attention of the viewer due to the way it is framed by the torso of the subject. It also resonates with the other silvery accessories, creating a connection with the belt, wristband and rings. On one level, also the small light spots on his eyes make a connection with the silvery accessories, where their clarity is enhanced by the overall darkness of the photograph.

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[16] Translated by the author from: "Erlend Elias Bragstad: Ovdagovvan eará eamiálbmohomofiillaide"

When compared with the previous photograph (Figure 13), the whole impression of the photograph in question is very different, although the same *myths* of homosexuality are accessed and negotiated. Whereas the previous photograph had a contradictory passively aggressive impression, this photograph connotes a certain confident harmony, which comes out in the use of calm tones and the subjects posture. Visual sovereignty manifests much in the same manner as the previous cover in Figure 13: by giving visual presence to a minority within a minority, the photograph extends the range of visual representation of Sámi youth.

5.5.3. *Š* magazine 75-2014: Forbidden love

Figure 15: *Š* magasiidna cover (2014, no. 75, photographer: Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell)

There was also one cover photograph in the *Š* magazine about female homosexuality seen in Figure 15. *Denotatively*, the photograph is a full body shot of two women holding hands on top of what looks like a frozen lake with snow on top of it. Both of the subjects are looking at the camera standing straight towards it. The woman on the left is wearing a gákti from the Kárášjohka/Ohcejohka/Deatnu (River Deatnu area), and she has a belt and a red scarf on her shoulders. Her hair is free and it is affected by the wind a bit. The woman on the left is wearing a *niqab,* which is a full body outer clothing worn by women in some Islamic traditions. The background consists of the lake ice, a small patch of land in the horizon and the sky, which is partly cloudy.

The primary connotations of the photograph come from the subjects' clothing and act of holding hands. The gaze of the subjects is very confrontational, which comes not only from their look, but from the whole setup of the photograph, which is clearly intentionally organised. The *linguistic messages* of the cover are written on top of the sky. The lowest one, "Forbidden love"[17], is the headline referring to the cover photograph. The subhead states "Anti-homosexual law. Illegal 'Sámi parliament'. Read about the daily life of the Russian Sámi."[18]. The linguistic messages inform the viewer about the motives of the cover photograph. The main headline acts as an achorage for the cover photograph, telling the reader that the photograph is about an illegal or forbidden relationship. The subheading then again acts as a relay, informing the reader that the photograph is only an illustration for an article about the situation of the Russian Sámi. The first two statements in the subheading act like the headline. They make statements about the state of something, until the third sentence in the subhead informs the reader that the story is about the daily life of the Russian Sámi. The couple in the photograph generate connotations of difference, togetherness and resistance, which make a statement against the "gay propaganda" law legislated in Russia at the time. This law made it illegal to publish content that promoted homosexual relationships as positive or normal. Also, the background behind the logo of *Š* is in the colours of a rainbow, connoting support for gay rights. That would also explain why the photograph has no Russian Sámi as the subject. The subjects are depicted against a typical northern landscape that connotes the geographical location which is similar to the Russian side.

Provocative photographs often rely on strong polarities that aim at shocking the viewer. The photograph in question draws on the polarities and *myths* of ethnicity and sexual orientation. The photograph plays with the image of a young conventionally dressed Sámi woman by contrasting it with the conventionally dressed young Islamic woman in the context of homosexuality, which serves again as an example of *visual sovereignty*. The visual polarity is used to make a statement of gay rights, this time in the context of the situation in Russia. The photograph follows the previous covers (Figures 13 and 14) in their visual rhetoric of supporting gay rights. This time, the style is just more direct and polarising, and relies on female subjects.

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[17] Translated by the author from: "Lobihis ráhkisvuohta"
[18] Translated by the author from: "Anti-homoláhka. Lobihis 'Sámediggi'. Loga Ruošša sámiid beaivválaš dili birra"

5.5.4. *Š* magazine 73-2013: A Transsexual Sámi

Figure 16: *Š* magasiidna cover (2013, no. 73, photographer: Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell)

The cover of *Š* magazine in Figure 16 is rather rare even in the majority media; the subject of transsexuality. On the *denotative* level, the photograph is a full body portrait of a person leaning on a glass wall, looking at the camera. The subject is wearing a grey hoodie with the hood on his head and a black unzipped jacket on top, that has some logos on it. He has patterned black and white pants and black leather boots. He has black medium long hair that is combed to the right side, and two piercings through his bottom lip. The posture of subject is static and he is smiling slightly. The background consists of pavement on the bottom left corner and a glass wall, that reflects the subject, the sky and the horizon with blocks of flats.

The photograph itself brings up a *connotation* of a young person in an urban landscape. The photographs topic is revealed by the *linguistic message* in the bottom left corner that reads "Chris Nikolas". The subheading below it states: "Sámi. Transsexual. A man in a woman's body"[19]. The headlines act as anchorage that inform the viewer on the topic of transsexuality. The appearance and clothing of the subject also support this connotation. There are no Sámi symbols in the photograph, which sets it apart from the other depictions of sexual minorities in

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[19] Translated by the author from: "Sápmelaš. Transexuella. Dievdu nissongorudis."

Š magazine (Figures 13-15). The reflection on the glass wall acts as a powerful metaphor of the duality of genders that occupy the subject.

On the level of *myth*, the photograph—much like the other representations of Sámi sexual minorities—plays with the ideas of gender, sexual orientation and more specifically trans-sexuality. It offers an image of a young Sámi that belongs to a very small minority inside a minority. From the aspect of *visual sovereignty*, the photograph participates in extending the range of visual representations of Sámi youth.

5.5.5. *Nuorat* 05-2012: Coming out

Figure 17: *Nuorat* cover (2012, no. 5, photographer: Anna-Maria Fjällstöm)

Nuorat magazine had also one cover that touched on the subject of sexual minorities. The cover photograph in Figure 17 *denotes* a young female subject looking at the camera in a close-up composition. There is some frosted snow on her jacket, hair, hood and eyebrows. Her hair is brown and her eyes are brownish green. She has a piercing on the left side of her bottom lip.

The primary *connotation* stems from the subject's face, where her eyes connote a kind of hones-ty and modesty. They dominate the photograph, while everything else works as a frame to them. The confrontational gaze of the subject is intensified by the close-up perspective, which brings the subject close to the reader, intensifying the kind and open expression on her face. There are

several *linguistic messages* in the left corner of the cover, of which "Coming out"[20] is connected to the photograph. It connotes the idea of "coming out of the closet" in the context of homosexuality, which has become a general saying about going public on your sexual orientation. The linguistic message acts as an anchorage, guiding the connotations of the photograph to the desired direction. "Coming out" is a statement of confidence in one's own sexual orientation and a request of approval for it. The photograph shares this message when combined with the linguistic message and without it, the photograph would be much more open to interpretation.

From the aspect of *myths* that are present, the representation of homosexuality operates on similar way that the covers of *Š* in Figures 15 and 16 did. The visual rhetoric of *Nuorat* in this case is only much more indirect and more conservative. The photograph itself does not put out a self-explaining statement about gay rights, but presents the viewer with a person, leaving it to the linguistic message to explain the topic. From the standpoint of *visual sovereignty,* the photograph presents itself like many of the others. It does expand the notion young Sámi and their representation in the mediascape, but does it in a much more conservative manner.

The representations of sexual minorities in the youth magazines took on myths about ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation through similar and distinct ways. All of the photographs commented on the situation of sexual minorities in Sámi society as in need of recognition, thus negotiating a right for their visual presence. The quantity of sexual minority subjects leaned heavily on the covers of *Š* (Figures 13-16), whereas *Nuorat* had only one cover (Figure 17). The cover photographs of *Š* also had a much more direct and stating visual rhetoric in comparison to the subtle way of *Nuorat's* cover. Although, considering that *Nuorat* had only one cover on the subject, the comparison falls short.

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[20] Translated by the author from "Om at komma ut"

5.6. Taking a stand

The theme of taking a stand in its different forms was one of the topics that arose from the bulk of Sámi youth magazine covers. The quantity of such covers was minor in comparison to some of the other themes, but those covers stood out clearly as statements.

5.6.1. *Š* magazine issue 22-2003: Demonstration

Figure 18*: Š* magasiidna cover (2003, no. 22, photographer: Kaja Baardsen)

The cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 18 *denotes* a group of people walking towards the photographer. There are three main subjects in the group: two male and a female. The man on the left has short hair, glasses and a beard and he is looking forward over the camera. The composition crops out his right arm from his shoulder and his legs from the waist down. He is wearing a red scarf and a dark-grey gákti turned inside out, and he is holding his hands on his belt. The man in the middle—walking behind the two other main subjects—is also wearing a dark-grey gákti turned inside out. He has long curly hair and he is looking at the camera with a serious look on his face. In his hands, he is waving the Sámi flag, that extends outside the photograph onto a space next to the *Š* logo. The woman on the right is walking parallel to the man on the left, wearing a red gákti turned inside out. She has brown hair attached the back of

her head, silver ring shaped earrings, a small silver *risku* on her chest and a red and yellow fabric belt on her waist. There is also a fourth and a fifth person walking behind the left male and the female subject that are showing only partly. The background is a city street with blocks of flats on both sides of it, and a blue sky in-between. Several pedestrians can be identified behind the main subjects. On the left side, there are three flags of Norway hanging from the building wall.

The main focus of the cover photograph is in the three persons walking towards it in a setting, that *connotes* a demonstration of something. The gáktis the subjects are wearing are turned inside out, which connote a traditional Sámi way of protesting or expressing resistance. The photograph is focused on the protesters and their action, leaving the environment in a secondary role. The foremost subjects' behaviour connotes a peaceful demonstration, which derives from the calm facial expressions and postures of the nearest subjects. This also forms a contrast with the more restless imagery of demonstrations that we are used to seeing in majority media. The man waving the flag in the middle is what draws the attention of the viewer with a slightly more aggressive—almost angry—facial expression. The flag he is waving in his hands, makes a connection with the smaller Norwegian flag in the right, which brings in the national context of the demonstration. The photograph operates independently without a *linguistic message*, making again demands on the viewer's knowledge on the matter.

In its representation of a demonstration, the photograph leans on the Sámi *myths* of silence and peacefulness in expressing resistance, combining them with the myth of demonstrations on a global scale: the visual myth of people walking on street for a cause. The subjects in the photographs are represented as calm, and confident. The gáktis turned inside out connote the Sámi way of silent resistance, where a visual message is used to express a protest. The reliance of the photograph's representation on Sámi myths—read Sámi ways of doing—in its visual rhetoric, could be described as an example of *visual sovereignty*. On the other hand, the photograph could also be described as a very ordinary documentation of a protest. Also, with the absence of a linguistic message, the identities of the protestors and the cause are left unnamed. Here is also where my knowledge runs short. When the names and context of the protesters is left out, the viewer identifies the subjects only as protesters of some cause. Of course, this kind of "hook" is sometimes used to get the viewer interested to find answers inside the magazine.

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5.6.2. *Nuorat* issue 03-2013: Kallak protest

Figure 19: *Nuorat* cover (2013, no. 3, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

Another depiction of a protest is represented in the cover photograph of *Nuorat* in Figure 19. The photograph *denotes* a medium shot of a young woman making a gesture at the camera. She has brown curly hair and she is looking the camera with an intense look. She has two earrings, a nose ring, a lip piercing and several silver rings on her fingers. Like in the previous cover in Figure 18, she is also wearing a gákti that is turned inside out. The background has some rope with some red and blue ribbons hanging from it on the left. On the right, there is part of a handwritten sign.

The photograph *connotes* an act of resistance by a Sámi woman—and more specifically through identification—the hip-hop artist Maxida Märak on the level of identification. The cover has several *linguistic messages* written on the bottom. The first one, "Life on the line during the uprising in Kallak"[21], is the one concerned with the cover photograph. It makes a statement by underlining the severity of the protest against mining in Kallak. The gesture she is making, gives birth to a connotational chain, that extends itself to an iconic image of female power. It has its roots in J. Howard Miller's iconic American WWII time poster *We can do it!* (1943) (Figure 20). It was made to empower the women in the United States of America to keep on working hard while the men were at war. Since then, it has been most promptly implemented

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[21] Translated by the author from: "Med livet som insats under upproret i Kallak"

by, for example, the feminist movement. In the Sámi context, the poster was quite recently re-modified in the artwork *Suohpangiehta* (Suohpanterror 2013), displayed in Figure 21. The cover photograph of *Nuorat* makes use of this connotational chain by attaching it to iconic imagery of resistance that has relevance also in the Sámi ethnoscape.

Figure 20: *We can do it!* (Miller 1943)

Figure 21: *Suohpangiehta* (Suohpanterror 2013)

On a *mythic* level, the photograph touches on the myths of resistance, womanhood, ethnicity and power from multiple aspects. Sámi female resistance is coined through a Sámi public figure, connected to iconic imagery, that lead from expressions of Sámi pride, art, and resistance to myths about national propaganda and patriotism. This iconic nature is, thus, put into use in a contemporary Sámi context in a way that rarely takes such clear form. From the stand point of *visual sovereignty*, the cover photograph serves as an interesting example. In the context of protesting against the Kallak mine, the photograph reinterprets the aesthetics and rhetoric of the iconic image to the extent of actually critiquing the ideologies behind the original image itself, which were based on promoting industrial labour for women in the wartime United States.

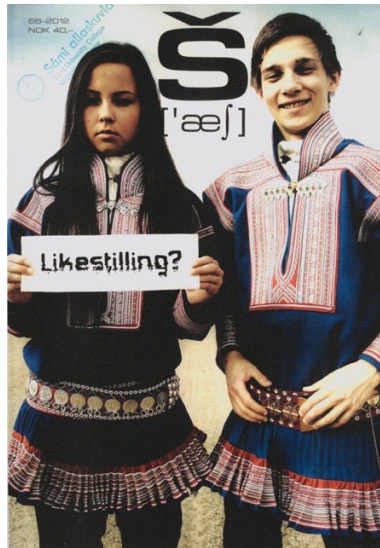### 5.6.3. *Š* magazine issue 66-2012: Gender equality

Figure 22: *Š* magasiidna cover (2012, no. 66, photographer: Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell)

Another form of taking a stand—targeted more towards the Sámi society—can be seen in the cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 22. The photograph *denotes* a medium shot of a girl and a boy standing next to each other wearing the same kind of gáktis. They are both looking at the camera. The girl has a very serious expression on her face while the boy is smiling. The girl is holding a sign that says "Equality?"[22]. The boy has his hands positioned on his belt. The background consists of a blown-out sky and a ground that seems like a gravel road. The lighting is natural and is coming from the top left, in a way that it sheds light on the boy's face and torso. The girl is positioned so that she is left in a kind of shadow.

Compared to the previous representations of taking a stand (Figures 18 and 19), the photograph in question does not document an act of resistance, but it constructs one. The photograph *connotes* an act of resistance in the form of criticising gender equality. The girl is depicted in a male Guovdageaidnu(Kautokeino)-style gákti—which as a style, connotes the most masculine of gákti styles—and she is left in a shadow with a bitter expression on her face, while the boy is depicted in the light and wearing a male gákti with a smile on his face. Also, his hands—which are positioned on his belt in a relaxed manner—connote a kind of contentment with the

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[22] Translated by the author from: "Likestilling?"

situation. The *linguistic message* "equality?" anchorages the photographs connotations to the realm of gender equality. Without it, the photograph could also be read more as a statement about gender roles and the rules of dressing. The linguistic message asks the viewer whether gender equality exists, while the photograph states that it does not.

From the perspective of *myths*, the photograph plays with the myths of gender roles in Sámi society, which also appeared in the representations of sexual minorities in chapter 5.4. By questioning the role of gender, dressing and equality, the photograph acts as a statement on those internal matters. As a contribution to the internal negotiation of gender roles, I claim that the photograph works as an act of *visual sovereignty*. The male gákti is used to negotiate with the pre-existing imagery of Sámi women.

The cover photographs of taking a stand ranged from a conventional documentation of a demonstration to clearly stating arguments on behalf of something. Issues that the covers addressed were that of mining (Figures 18 and 19) and gender equality (Figure 22). In their visual statements, they addressed the myths of resistance, power, and gender roles. A fine example of visual sovereignty came in the depiction of demonstrations, where the symbolic visual message of the gákti turned inside out was used. A gákti was also used to visually demonstrate gender equality by having a woman wear a male gákti.

5.7. Urban environment and influence

One of the distinct topics that arose from the cover photographs depicted activities and matters that addressed Sámi people in an urban context or an urban influence in a rural context. A big part of the current Sámi population lives in cities where they carry out their relationship with Sámi culture in different ways. Also, urban influences have for a long time had an effect on the activities in non-urban areas. These cover photographs illustrate the relationship between urban and rural Sámi by offering glimpses into a variable range of Sámi ethnoscapes between them.

5.7.1. *Š* magazine 81-2015: A Soldier in the King's Guard

Figure 23: *Š* magasiidna cover (2015, no. 81, photographer: Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell)

The cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 23 is an interesting illustration of a Sámi individual in an urban context. The photograph *denotes* a wide full body shot of a man standing in front of a building. The subject is facing and looking straight at the camera with a smile on his face. He is wearing a dark-blue soldier's uniform with a trumpet in his left hand. His right arm positioned next to his body and his legs are straight, with his feet turned outwards. The background in the photograph consists of a gravel ground, stairs to the building, the yellow building itself and a blue sky. There is a flag waving in the air on the top of the building. Several people are sitting on the stairs and walking around in the background.

Initially, the photograph *connotes* a person that is a member of the royal guard for the King of Norway. The connotation is complemented by the trumpet that indicates his role in the guard. The connection with the royal guard is supported by the background which has the Royal Palace of Oslo in it. The platform of the magazine already contains the assumption that the subject is a Sámi, which is confirmed by the linguistic message. The *linguistic messages* in the cover are all positioned in the bottom. The lowest linguistic message, "Johan Daniel Hætta Turi: A soldier

in the Royal military band of Norway"[23], is associated with the photograph. Its headline names the subject, while the subheading anchorages the content of the image without leaving much unquestioned. The way the subject is portrayed connotes a positive approach. The subject reflects a certain positivity and pride in his position. He is also portrayed as an individual separated from his troops, which are usually represented as a group. The photograph connotes both Sámi pride and Norwegian pride. This separates the photograph from all the other covers, where the nationality is rarely present. Or maybe this is not exactly nationality, but more the relationship to the Royal House of Norway. Any deeper analysis would require a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Royal Family of Norway and the Sámi.

The representation of the photograph touches on the *myths* of nationality, monarchy and Sámi livelihoods. In the context of nationality, the photograph negotiates a visual space for national pride as a part of Sámi identity. Thus, the photograph disrupts conventional representations of Sámi people, opening up a space, where an alternative accepted occupation of a young Sámi is presented. This negotiation is one form of *visual sovereignty*, where the concept of Sáminess is expanded according to the expansion of the urban Sámi diaspora that is going on.

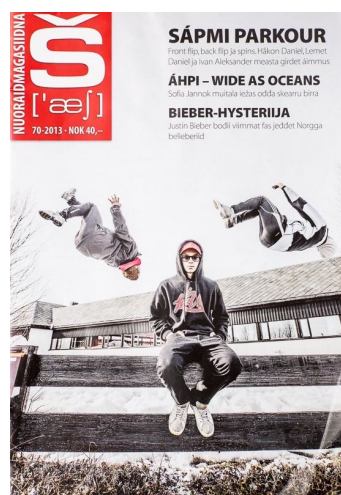### 5.7.2. *Š* magazine issue 70-2013: Sápmi parkour

Figure 24: *Š* magasiidna cover (2013, no. 70, photographer: Niels Ovllá Oskal Dunfjell)

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[23] Translated by the author from: "Johan Daniel Hætta Turi: Soalddát Norgga Gonagasa drilla- ja musihkkakompaniijas"

The cover photograph of *Š* magazine in Figure 24 *denotes* a wide shot of three subjects. In the middle of the photograph there is a boy sitting on a fence looking straight at the camera. Left and right of him are two other boys that are in the air doing backflips. The person in the middle is wearing white sneakers, dark jeans, a hoodie with a logo on it, a red cap and sunglasses. The boys next to him are wearing similar kinds of clothing. The posture of the boy in the middle is relaxed. He is sitting on a fence, with his hands in his pockets, thumbs sticking out, and looking at the camera. He has a very neutral look on his face. Behind the subjects, there is a one-story building that extends throughout the whole frame. The ground is covered in snow.

In a cultural reading, the photograph *connotes* an urban sport in a Sámi context. The headline states: "Sámi Parkour: Frontflip, back flip ja spins. Håkon Daniel, Lemen Danie ja Ivan Aleksander almost fly in the air"[24]. The *linguistic message* anchorages the subjects and the activity in the photograph informing the viewer on the topic of parkour, an urban sport where people use man made infrastructure for acrobatic maneuvers. The boys are wearing clothes that connote the style of dressing in parkour. The background connotes an urban environment, but the style of building refers to the town of Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) on the basis of my own knowledge.

The *mythic* ideas that the photograph contains, revolve around tension between Sámi and urban activities. The representation deviates from conventional representations of Sámi activities in the environment in question. By expanding on the notion of Sámi activities in a more or less urban environment, the photograph operates as an act of *visual sovereignty*. Also, the sport itself connotes a kind of freedom from rules and regulations. It is practiced outside the institutions of sports activities and is practiced independently inside its own values and ideologies.

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[24] Translated by the author from: "Sápmi Parkour: Frontflip, back flip ja spins. Håkon Daniel, Lemen Danie ja Ivan Aleksander measta girdet áimmus"

5.7.3. *Nuorat* 04-2009: Urbanity

Figure 25: *Nuorat* cover (2009, no. 4, photographer: Pia Sjögren)

The cover photograph of *Nuorat* in Figure 25 presents the viewer with an urban Sámi subject. On a *denotative* level, the photograph is a medium close-up of a girl who is looking at the camera. She has blond dyed hair and the hair on her forehead is cut short and dyed in pink and black. She has heavy makeup on her eyes, red lips, a piercing between her chin and her mouth and several earrings. In her hair, she has a black hairband that has steel spikes on it. The background is pretty blurred, but some kind of a building can be recognised from it.

The photograph *connotes* a female subject from an urban environment. The heavy makeup, the hair and the accessories are the details that contribute to this connotation. The cover has several *linguistic messages* but none of the refer to the cover photograph. Without the linguistic message, the viewer is left solely with the photograph for making sense of it. In my view, the primary connotation indicates an urban environment, which is slightly supported by the background, thus connoting a Sámi subject that comes from a city. The photograph has no Sámi symbols, but again, the magazine itself produces the assumption that the subject is Sámi.

From the perspective of *myths*, the photograph represents a strong contrast to the stereotypical image of a Sámi, and even most of the covers in both youth magazines. The myth of an urban individual is strongly connoted through the appearance of the subject. It constructs a represen-

tation of a young Sámi that does not rely on common cultural Sámi markers of an ethnic identity. Much like the photograph of the Soldier in the Royal Guard in Figure 23, *visual sovereignty* is manifested in expanding the categories of belonging in the range of young Sámi identities.

5.7.4. *Nuorat* 03-2015: Sámi Tattoo

Figure 26: *Nuorat* cover (2015, no. 3, photographer: Carl-Johan Utsi)

Another representation of an "urban" activity is depicted in the cover of *Nuorat* in Figure 26. The photograph *denotes* a black and white medium shot of a young man and a young woman posing for the camera with tattoos on their bodies. The subjects are not looking at the camera. The man on the left is positioned sideways to the camera and he is looking to his right past the camera with a neutral expression on his face. His hair is attached to the back and he is wearing a dark tank top. His neck and his right arm are covered with tattoos and he is holding his hand on the womans's back. The woman is also positioned sideways to the camera and with a small smile on her face, she is looking at her own fist which is held under the man's chin. She is also wearing a dark tank top and she has an earring on her left ear. Her hair is hanging free behind her back, with a single braid of hair going over her left ear and around the back of her head. She is also covered in tattoos. The man's tattoos include a branch on his neck, a mountain landscape on his shoulder, a heart with the text "ieddne" under it, three symbols with crosses on them on his elbow and a knife on his arm. The woman tattoos include a rose on her hand, a

combination of tree needles and intestines on her elbow, intestines behind her shoulder and several smaller patterns on her arm and one on her cheek.

The photograph *connotes* the use of tattoos in an illustrative manner in a Sámi context. The photograph presents the viewer with two subjects that have tattoos. Or turning it around, the photograph presents us with tattoos that are presented on the subjects. The *linguistic messages* of the cover a situated in the bottom left corner. The top one, "Sámi Tattoo" can be easily connected to the photograph. The linguistic message reminds me of the cover of *Š* magazine about parkour (Figure 24). That also had the topic of a practice that came outside Sámi culture, and it also was simply labelled with the prefix "Sámi". All of the tattoos connote an influence from Sámi symbols, items or landscape. Also, the one linguistic message "ieddne" is southern Sámi, which means mother. For me the postures and the action in the photograph connotes manners of modelling, which comes out in the static "set-up" nature of the subjects.

From a *mythic* standpoint, the photograph mediates the influences of majority and Sámi culture. In representing the making of tattoos in a Sámi context, the photograph introduces the viewer to an adapted mode of expression, a hybrid of tattoos and Sámi symbolism. From this aspect, it is also set apart from the other photograph in this chapter, where Sámi symbols were absent. *Visual sovereignty* could thus be said to manifest in both the subjects themselves—or their tattoos—and the photographs act of presenting them, as they incorporate Sámi symbolism in an external form of expression.

The representations in this chapter addressed the myths nationality, monarchy, and urban Sámi, depicting a strong contrast to conventional Sámi imagery. They reflect the current processes of Sámi diaspora in urban environments and the influence of urban phenomena in the Sámi area. In giving presence to these forms of identity, activity and livelihood, the photographs operate on a level of recognition in terms of visual sovereignty.

6. Discussion

This thesis set out to examine the cover photographs of Sámi youth magazines—*Š* magazine from Norway and *Nuorat* magazine from Sweden—in order to find out what kind of photographs are there, what kind of Sámi culture do they represent, how does the concept of visual sovereignty manifest in them, and how do the photographs construct and negotiate contemporary notions of "Sáminess" in the ethnoscape of Sámi youth. The theoretical scope of this study concentrated on the perspective of Sámi indigeneity in the complex tensions of local and global influences.

Included in the research material, were all of the sixty-nine covers of *Š* magazine from 2000 to 2015 and all of the twenty-nine covers of *Nuorat* from 2009 to 2015. Twenty-two of these covers—sixteen from *Š* and six from *Nuorat*— were chosen for deeper analysis as the result of an inductive method, that produced distinct categories of subject matter. These categories served for structuring the analysis. The topics that stood out were duodji as fashion, public figures, sexual minorities, statements and an urban context or influence. Through saturation, I ended up with photographs for closer analysis that represented the greatest variety of subjects and styles. The closer analysis of the cover photographs was conducted using the semiotic concepts of denotation, connotation, linguistic message and myth. Based on my observations, the aspect of visual sovereignty was then reviewed in relation to the cover photographs. Also, a quantitative approach was subjected to the range of shot sizes used and the representation of gender.

6.1. Summarizing the results

Almost all of the cover photographs depicted a person or a group of people. Only one photograph and three illustrations did not include a person, all of which were in *Nuorat* magazine. The shot sizes of both magazines leaned mostly on close-ups to full shots, where medium shots were clearly used most. Differences between the magazines on this matter were minor. Where

Š magazine focused more on wide shots and close-ups, *Nuorat* had a larger percentage of medium close-ups and covers that weren't photographs. Gender was represented slightly differently in terms of quantity. Where *Nuorat* had a quite even distribution of gender, Š focused slightly more on depicting women in their covers. As Töyry (2009, p. 129) states that magazines are usually planned according to the desired imagined audience; in this case, the Sámi youth. The visual style of the magazine follows this motive, in building an identity for the magazine for which the readers can relate to (Caldwell & Zappaterra, p. 42). The focus of the Sámi youth magazines in the depiction of people, and a relatively wide representation of gender, can thus be seen as a pursuit for relatability with their imagined audience.

Denotation, connotation and the linguistic message

On a denotative level, the cover photographs in both magazines relied almost entirely on subjects posing for the camera in backgrounds and settings that varied. In the depictions of duodji for example, *Š* magazine relied on a more natural environment, whereas *Nuorat* used almost explicitly a constructed environment along with artificial lighting. The use of duodji and Sámi emblems was present in roughly half the covers of both magazines with variable visibility. It took the most visible role in the cover photographs on fashion and when the covers took stand on something. A less apparent role it took in the form of earrings, necklaces and other emblems worn by the subjects. It was mostly absent in the cover photographs on athletes and urban phenomena, although on the cover photograph on Sámi tattoo in Figure 26, it appeared in a new adapted form. This gives an impression on the instances that the youth magazines make use of duodji. Its use in the covers on fashion is quite self-explanatory, but its use in the photographs of taking a stand reflects duodji's use as an ethnopolitical element. In the photographs of athletes and urban subjects, its use comes out as less relevant. Of course, these are only the polarities of its use, as in-between, it was used on various subjects and topics. Although, the polarities do imply the expressive role duodji has acquired in contrast to the convention of functionality.

From a cultural context, the photographs generated *connotations* on various levels. In my interpretation, the representations of fashion connoted ideas of rebellion, absurdity, experimentation and sexuality in their hybrid use of Sámi dressing influenced by high-end majority fashion. The photographs of "celebrities" exhibited a similar use of hybridity, along with a visible influence of mainstream celebrity culture. This was apparent especially in the photographs of Sámi hip-hop artists (Figures 8 & 9), where the subjects' apparel connoted

influences of hip-hop culture. In my interpretation, the photographs on sexual minorities connoted homosexuality playing with masculine and feminine gestures, postures, and clothing. A request for approval was communicated through confrontational representations that also connoted uncertainty, suppression, and fear. In the cover photographs of taking a stand, the symbolic use gáktis was very apparent. The gáktis turned inside out connoted the act of resistance combined with the context of demonstration. In a statement on gender equality a male gákti—together with the use of lighting—was used to represent the unequal position of women. The representations of taking a stand leaned heavily on visual connotations. For example, *Nuorat*'s cover photograph of Maxida Märak in Figure 19 formed— through the subject's gesture—a connotational chain all the way to an iconic image of empowerment (see Figure 20). The depictions on urban influence and setting connoted the relationship of Sámi youth to urban activities, style and monarchy. In *Š* magazine, those representations manifested in the depiction of a Sámi member of the Norwegian Royal Guard (Figure 23) and the depiction of an urban sport—parkour—in a rural Sámi setting (Figure 24). *Nuorat*'s representations connoted the urban element through the depiction of Sámi tattooing and a subject whose appearances connoted an urban person.

The *linguistic messages* in the cover photographs—when used—operated mostly on the level of *anchorage*, which according to Barthes (1977b, pp. 40–41), usually guides the associations of the viewer by binding the image to a certain reading. In the photographs on fashion, the linguistic messages of "catwalk", "fashion" and "design"—often used with the prefix "Sámi"—concurred with connotations of fashion in general. The prefix "Sámi" was used in a lot of cases where non-Sámi phenomena was depicted in a Sámi context. Along with fashion, examples of this were "The first Sámi hip-hop queen", "Sámi fighter", "Sámi tattoo" and "Sápmi parkour". Where the covers of public figures relied on the expected linguistic messages of names, the covers on sexual minorities used "homo", "gay", "bonju", "transsexual" etc. to convey the subject matter that was being dealt with.

Myths

On a *mythic* level, the cover photographs started to showcase their negotiation with stereotypical depictions and conventional manners of representation, which enclose the parameters of Sáminess into still persisting romanticized or undermined categories of "primitive", "close to nature" and "mystic" (see Mathiessen 2004). But these are only the myths that might exist in majority perceptions. More prominently, the cover photographs argued with internal myths

such as womanhood, dressing, ethnicity, authorship, sexual orientation, sexuality, gender roles, rurality, urbanity and nationality.

The representations of duodji addressed with the myths about dressing, womanhood, and sexuality in the context of fashion, asserting for example new forms of gákti aesthetics. Myths on gender were also negotiated in the representations of sexual minorities and gender roles. The representation on sexual minorities entered in a negotiation surrounding myths about gender and sexual orientation. But they also relied on myths such as gay femininity in their argument. Similarly, myths on gender were also retold in the representations of Sámi athletes, where the men (Figures 11 & 12) were depicted in a masculine, serious manner, while the female athlete (Figure 10) was depicted as girly and less serious, connoting ideas of adolescence, innocence, and seduction.

In the case of Sámi artists, the representations negotiated with the myths of Sámi authorship and ethnicity, by depicting new genres of Sámi music and ethnic background. Although, the style of the depictions also relied heavily on common representations of celebrities as mythic and unique. The photographs on urban influence and setting negotiated with the myths about livelihoods, free-time activities and urbanity. They constructed representations that do not rely solely on the common cultural markers of a Sámi ethnic identity. On the other hand, some of them relied on common urban myths—such as urban clothing style—in their representation of an urban individual.

Visual sovereignty

Coming from a strategy of negotiating with myths and describing the efforts of visual production from Sámi perspective, I introduced the concept of *visual sovereignty*. In Rajeha's (2013, p. 63) words, visual sovereignty stands for a strategy that reimagines "articulations of self-representation and autonomy that engage the powerful ideologies of mass media, but that do not rely solely on the texts and contexts of Western jurisprudence". As an extension of this definition, I saw visual sovereignty as a visual negotiation of pre-existing mythic imagery—both mental and material—that exist in both Sámi and majority society. Additionally, on a purely visual level, I claim that visual sovereignty can manifest in visual acts that use a culturally specific visual language and aesthetics. This though, is a much more ambiguous quality to contain.

On a more general level, many of the cover photographs could be described as acts of visual sovereignty since most of the analysed cover photographs were invested in broadening the range of visual representation of Sámi from a Sámi perspective. One aspect, that visual sovereignty manifested was in the visual negotiations of myths that they addressed. Most clearly it came apparent in the cover photographs on taking a stand and in fashion, where gáktis were visually used to negotiate the myths of dressing, womanhood and gender, invoking a discussion on how they are depicted. In the demonstration photographs (Figures 18 & 19) visual sovereignty manifested in gáktis turned inside out and a powerful gesture of the subject in Figure 19. A gákti carries a strong visual language along with it, which was also made use of in the representation of sexual minorities in Figure 15, where a conventional Deatnu style gákti was contrasted to conventional niqab to provoke the issue of gay rights in Russia.

Although the use of Sámi symbols is often used as a strong visual statement, the absence of it does not rule out an act of visual sovereignty. In fact, giving visual presence to subjects that do not rely on such symbolism can also be seen as acts of visual sovereignty. For example, in the photographs on sexual minorities and urban phenomena, the photographs gave visual presence to subjects that are usually less represented. At the same time, the photographs constructed new categories of belonging in the Sámi public sphere. I claim that this extension of represented categories is important, as Kuokkanen (1999, p. 96) writes that the significance of mental images to identity building is surprisingly extensive. Both ethnocentrism and discrimination generate stereotypical impressions, which are usually impossible to adapt to and lead to people dismissing their own identities, experiences and realities. This can be subjected to both internal and external ethnocentrism.

6.2. Conclusions

Based on the results, I found out the cover photographs in Sámi youth magazines are very similar to their majority counter-parts in their use of close composition portraits of people, but their visual content and style showcased the distinct cultural setting they operate in. In their output, I claim that the covers of the Sámi youth magazines offered a representational range that expanded and questioned notions of young Sámi identity, culture and role. This came very

apparent in comparison to majority news representations of Sámi people (Siivikko 2015; Ikonen 2013; Lehtelä 2007; Hujanen & Pietikäinen 2003; Pietikäinen 2001), and especially representations found in tourism (Lindholm 2014; Petterson 2006; Olsen 2004), where the covers of Sámi youth magazines constructed a much more diverse and heterogenic range of depictions. This came apparent also in contrast to the representational range offered by the Sámi ethnopolitical movements (see e.g. Valkonen 2009; Pääkkönen 2008; Nyysönen 2007), which has pursued to highlight the "difference" of Sámi ethnicity from their majorities relying a representational range that construct that difference. In the internal negotiation of Sámi identity and culture, such strategies can even have negative influences, as their applicability to the various range of indigenous experience might not be sustainable. Or as Clifford (2013, p. 71) writes: "Across the current range of indigenous experiences, identifications are seldom exclusively local or inward looking but rather work at multiple scales of interaction". That is why the extension of visual representation is necessary, especially in the internal Sámi mediascape. What must be pointed out though, is that in their strong commitment in providing extensions to the representational range, the youth magazine covers seemed to underrepresent still relevant traditional livelihoods and practices; reindeer herding, fishing etc.

Meadows (2005, p. 38) wrote that indigenous public spheres develop with and take influence from the mainstream society, but they should be seen as "discrete formations that exist in a unique context as the product of contestation with the mainstream public sphere". This aspect could also be seen in the public sphere that the youth magazine covers operated within. The influence of majority magazines—their style and format—was apparent, but so was the distinct way those influences were adopted to represent subject matter from a Sámi perspective. In comparison to other Sámi media, the youth magazine covers constructed a visual space where a photograph operates not only as an illustration, but as an aesthetic narrative that has the power to state, give presence and negotiate on a cultural level.

The validity of this study was based on the theoretical framework, that framed the Sámi society in the complex tensions between the local and global, indigenous and majority. The aim was not to underline these tensions as dichotomies, but as ranges of experience, where contemporary indigenousness and Sáminess is negotiated in a fluid manner. I claim that the covers of Sámi youth magazines pursued to represent this fluidity, by creating new categories of belonging where identity can be expressed more freely. These newer categories of belonging surfaced especially in the representations of sexual minorities and urban individuals and activities. Those

photographs constructed Sáminess by operating creatively in a space of global and local influences, introducing individuals and phenomena that reside there. For example, Figure 13 was a fine example that contained the conflict of Sámi culture and homosexuality. Also, the covers of Sámi hip-hop artists in Figures 8 and 9 constructed a glimpse to this in-betweenness.

From the perspective of a visual culture, it can be argued that it is challenging to point out distinctive Sámi visuality in the youth magazines. Such distinct visual language manifested itself more in the subjects themselves, than in the visual rhetoric of the photographs. Although, it can be questioned whether it is meaningful to separate the two. What became more relevant, is the postcolonial visual space—similar to the one Pinney (2003) argued for—the cover photographs constructed, where some claims of visual sovereignty could be made. The concept itself has yet to mature to its full potential, and its ambiguous qualities made it more difficult to implement than I initially presumed. It became most apparent in the visual negotiations of myths and in the visual presence it gave to underrepresented subjects. It is true that these qualities could also be discussed without the concept of visual sovereignty, but the value of it lies in its capability to empower and motivate indigenous visual productions. As there is little heritage of figurative visual storytelling in Sámi culture, the visual culture of telling stories with photographs remains to be constructed. This requires platforms like the Sámi youth magazines, which offer a channel for visual production made by the Sámi themselves, of themselves.

As this was one of the first attempts in examining photographs produced in Sámi youth media, it serves more as a discussion opener about Sámi visual production. There is only so much you can cover in an MA thesis, which left the exploration superficial on many levels. The cover photographs alone, could amount to a wide range of other approaches, let alone the content in the magazines. Also, the lack of research on Sámi youth brought down the range of phenomena this study could examine.

Further research on the continuously diversifying indigenous Sámi experience is needed to better grasp the visual material it produces. Future research should address the sites of production and audience in relation to the youth magazines. How are they produced and what are the underlying professional and ethnic values and ethics that guide their production? It would open up the experiences and perspectives of Sámi photographers and editors on the notions of visuality and visual representation. Audience studies would be particularly interesting in shedding light on how the Sámi society experiences the representational visual range that the youth magazines

offer. Answers to questions about how well they reflect reality and what their value is from the reader's perspective would be valuable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Table 1. Cover photograph shotsize:

Cover type	*Š*	*%*	*Nuorat*	*%*
Close-up	12	17%	2	7%
Medium close-up	12	17%	7	24%
Medium shot	23	33%	9	31%
Full shot	14	20%	6	21%
Wide full shot	7	10%	1	3%
Collage	1	1%	1	3%
Not photograph	0	0 %	3	10%
Total	69	100 %	29	100 %

Appendix 2.

Table 2. Representation of gender in the cover photographs

Gender	*Š*	*%*	*Nuorat*	*%*
Male	26	38%	10	34%
Female	33	48%	12	41%
Mixed	5	7%	3	10%
Cannot define	5	7%	0	0%
Not people	0	0%	4	14%
Total	69	100%	29	100%