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Comments welcome

**STRATEGIES OF CULTURAL SURVIVAL: The Influence of
European Minority Rights¹**

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Abstract

Cultural minorities are in growing numbers making rights claims in national and international fora. This paper is poring over the aspects of identity which are used to justify such claims. I will ask what kind of identities can „survive“. How must a group formulate it's identity claim in order to have access to „cultural survival“? Working with Sami people who form the only European indigenous group, and with the Sorbian minority in Eastern Germany, I realized that international minority rights are not only protecting minorities from state oppression. These rights also define and co-determine which identity claims are possible. This paper focuses on the question posed by minority activists: How can my people survive? My research points out that the activists tend to look for answers in a nationalistic, ethnic-oriented discourse which idealizes homogeneity and authenticity of nations. The activists explain their internal nationalization policies with arguments which are coherent with international minority law: Only the groups that can prove that they have one common language, one descent, one set of tradition etc. as signs of one „collective“ identity are recognized by international law as real minority groups. This paper concludes that if the minority elite wants to claim rights, there seems to be no other alternative for them as to try to nationalize at least the public outlook of their minority.

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Introduction

At the very center of the problem of European national minorities and indigenous people is the fact that these groups are too „civil“, too normal, too educated, and too modern from the majority perspective. „They are exactly like us, why should one part of the population receive special attention or support“, many majority people say (Toivanen 2001). Equal rights and equal opportunities should mean, many mainstream Europeans argue, that the minorities should not get more than all others are getting, „not more than I and my family“ are getting. Thus, it is all about the troublesome concept of solidarity (Anttonen 2000; Klausen & Wolfe 2000).

I would argue, that most Europeans lack understanding of the structural and systemic discrimination of minorities and therefore cannot understand the background of compensation or redress. Open discrimination or racism is more easy to combat; systemic and structural discrimination is not as visible and as easy to target (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988). When it comes to topics like compensation for past injustice, many people have difficulty in seeing why one should compensate persons whose long ago dead ancestors experienced discrimination. Why could one not just apologize on behalf of the state or majority population?³ Would it not be enough to say „let's forget about it and build a better world together“. But when one studies carefully the history of many national minorities, it is extremely difficult to come to a conclusion that forgetting would be a correct way to deal with past injustices. Even more so, when we open our eyes to the fact that the „democratic way“ for liberal nation states to take care of the minorities in their territories often meant that the minority populations started to disappear either physically or culturally through assimilation under a new

³ Actually in the Millennium party of year 2000 many governments apologized for past injustices, i.e., in Canada and Finland (HS 24.12.2000).

„hegemonic rule“. Michael Mann (1999) has called this process the dark side of democracies and says that mistreating a part of the population has always belonged inherently and inseparably to the nation building and democratization process.⁴ In essence, the hegemonic ideals of the nation-state entail suppression and forcing-to-be-silent to make the creation of the nation-state possible (Toivanen 2001). This means, that for the functioning of a democracy, it is important to deal with the „others“, who are not seen as part of the „civil us“. Take, for example, democracies that were established through non-democratic decisions or national cultures that could only emerge after multifarious local cultures were exterminated (Kukathas 1995, 235; Offe 1996).

This all implies that minorities are not only an important but even an essential element of - at least Western type - liberal-democratic nation-states. Here, we might find some hidden reasons for the fact that especially Western European states have been astonishingly weak when they have dealt (or tried to deal) in democratic ways with the rights' claims posed by minority groups. All democracies faced with the question of how to accommodate and settle the violations of liberal rights and the serious human rights violations of the past. There is a growing number of people who bring claims for rights based on ethnicity and culture before the public, the media and finally the courts with the intention of opening up chapters in modern history that can shock by their immorality, injustice and above all lack of democratic values.⁵ My

⁴ Similarly, Christoph Menke (2001) argues that hostility against aliens (*Fremdenfeindlichkeit*) is substantial element of liberal democracies.

⁵ I personally was deeply shocked when I read about the Native Americans in Canada who stated in public that they were raped and otherwise sexually abused as children in the Christian boarding schools as late as the 60s, or that the Australian authorities were stealing children from their aboriginal parents and bringing them in a government program to boarding schools and children's homes to be civilized - and in too many cases - sexually abused. This is what I mean when I say, many of the violations are still today facts. No, we cannot apologize and forget.

interest is to explore these developments, judicial stakes, and NGO initiatives by minority activists, in most cases together with human rights activists and environmentalists. In this atmosphere, European minorities have found space for new and more effective means of 'cultural survival'.⁶

In the following sections I will introduce the two minorities who offer the empirical base for this paper.⁷ No matter what, this is a challenging task to fulfill since one should not begin by „freezing“ if you want to discuss about a movement (Anttonen 2000). This challenge is nicely illuminated by Peter Elsass in his book on *Strategies for Survival* (1992). He recounts how in the end of the 70s he wrote a book called *Indianerliv* (Indian life) (Elsass 1977) that discusses, among others, the Arhuaco Indians and their way of life in harmony with the nature. Later, he read the book aloud for these Indians and their response was that the book was interesting, but was merely telling what a researcher had wanted to see as „Indian“ life. Elsass then continues, that now that he knows the Arhuaco Indians more intimately, their story has become harder to tell. He can no longer talk about them in a simple or coherent way (Elsass 1992: x). I share this perspective. I know enough and feel uncomfortable with most descriptions and definitions of Sami or Sorbs' identity.⁸ Thus, I will adopt the text that the official

⁶ In this paper I mean with cultural survival a similar process often referred to as „cultural revival“. People representing a cultural minority find means and methods to find recognition and resources for the culture as a people.

⁷ One fundamental difference between majority and minority groups is in their unequal access to economic, social and their so-called „own“ cultural resources. The people who have access to these resources only when they are mediated through one or more other groups are called minorities in this paper (Toivanen 2001).

⁸ Identity should be seen, in my view, as an ongoing process in which belonging to social groups plays a major role. When a person evaluates the meaning of one specific identification for herself, the different institutions she feels she belongs to or accepts as an important source of self-definition provide her with an orientation on how and with which terms to define her belonging. Even an „inter-generational community“ (Kymlicka) does not remain in existence without specific circumstances keeping it existing or helping its „revival“. Amongst other resources, various international institutions create

minority organizations use.

Who are Sami? Who are Sorbs?

Lapland is a vast region in Northern Europe, largely within the Arctic Circle. It includes the Kola Peninsula of Russia, the Norwegian provinces of Finnmark and Tromsö and a part of Nordland, the Northernmost part of Sweden and Finland. Lapland consists largely of the tundra in the northeast and is mountainous in Northern Norway and Sweden. The climate is Arctic and the vegetation is in the Northern parts sparse. The whole area is very rich in mineral resources: Iron ore in Sweden, copper in Norway, and nickel and apatite in Finland and Russia. The forests are also important to the economies of all the Northern states, all states continue to be major owners of land and forest in Lapland (the states have, however, huge problems to legitimate this ownership). Reindeer are essential to the economy and there is a growing tourist industry dominated basically by people not native to Lapland.

The homelands of the Slavic Sorbs, „Sorbenland“, are located in the area of Lausitz in the former GDR, in the East of contemporary Germany. Lausitz spans two 'Bundesländer' Brandenburg (Lower Sorbia) and Saxonia (Upper Sorbia). The area is more or less rural. Agriculture is not modernized enough to support one's family. Brown coal mining has destroyed the natural environment of the Sorbs and continues doing so. There is a double-sided approach by many Sorbs since the mining and power plants have traditionally offered a relatively secure employment in the region. Tourism is a growing, important livelihood but often dominated by non-local investors.

specific circumstances for identity support or identity loss (Toivanen 2001).

The ca. 70.000⁹ Sami people feel not just Norwegian, Swedes, Finns or Russian.¹⁰ The ca. 45.000 Norwegian, 16.000 Swedish, 7.000 Finnish and 4.000 Russian Sami also want to keep their minority identity vital. Today the different Sami groups are collectively recognized as the only indigenous European people. It is said that all of Lapland has belonged to the Sami people beyond the memory of mankind. There is growing scientific evidence that the ancestors of Sami were actually legal landowners of the area which is today owned and controlled by the Nordic states and not only nomads using the land without much understanding of property rights (Korpijaakko-Labba 1989; 1994). Today, there are nine different living languages. Many of these languages, however, have only a few speakers and there are serious concerns that just one or two of the languages might survive over the next generations (Pentikainen 1995). Even in their traditional homelands the Sami constitute a minority. In the 1990's the Sami languages and culture have gained a secured status in the legislation of all Nordic countries.

Sorbs consider themselves as the first inhabitants of their homelands even though they are not legally entitled by international law to call themselves native or indigenous people (Mahling 1991: 7; Sorben - Ein kleines Lexikon 1989: 10). Historical sources show that they already inhabited the Lausitz area before the Germans arrived slowly starting by the 6th Century (Kunze 1995: 9; Kasper 1990, 1991). Both names the Sorbs and the Wenden are used to describe the group and today they form a minority even in Lausitz (Oschlies 1990). There are about 60,000

⁹ These numbers are highly politicized and vary between 50.000 and 100.000. Pentikäinen 1995a. Marjut Anttonen (2000: 46) describes with a concept „fight for souls“ how minorities have to try to maximize their membership numbers.

¹⁰ It is important to note that the Sami are active in national politics and organizations and have gained same education as the majority people. Many of them feel very much attached to their nation states. At the same time, today's official Sami way of talking about Lapland is not to refer to states but just to speak about regions. The Nordic countries do not have border control and the people in the North can pass easily from one country to another.

Sorbian people. Ca. 15,000 people have an active knowledge of at least one of the two Sorbian languages (Krüger-Potratz 1991: 87). The language spoken in Brandenburg is more closely related to Polish, and is called Lower Sorbian. The other language, spoken in Saxony, is related to the Czech language and called Upper Sorbian. The development of special language and cultural rights started during the GDR regime. Today, the Sorbs enjoy extensive legal protection (Domowina Information 2/1994).

In Norway and Sweden the reindeer husbandry is considered a Sami way of supporting one's life. In Finland everybody living in the reindeer husbandry area is allowed by law to practice the profession.¹¹ After the OSCE Document in Copenhagen 1990¹² more emphasis has been given to the importance of member self-definition. However, the identification with the minority is quite variable: Some persons recover their "lost identity" and start connecting with the minority population while others know about their ancestry being Samish and even master some Sami language but still cannot find a reason to identify with the organizations. Discriminatory policies and practices against Sami people have a long and powerful history.

You cannot find a single Sorb anymore who does not speak fluent German (Spieß 1995). Industrialization and strong assimilationist attitudes have succeeded. Through the efforts of the Nazi- and GDR-regimes, the Sorbs managed to stay attached to their „other“ identity. Some of the activists were (and are) also active in German social and political institutions. German politicians with a Sorbian background have been central in creating Sorbian institutions.

The four national Sami organizations which form together the

¹¹ Since Finland joined 1995 the European Union this right would have expanded to all EU citizens would Sweden have not negotiated the protocol No 3 on the Sami people which seeks to continue the reindeer husbandry monopoly.

¹² Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's convention.

Sami Council have to be seen as the keys in the identification process. Basically only the people who accept the identity politics of the main organization can really live as minority members. Others, even the ones who feel "Sami" but who do not accept the formal institution of Sami identity, have to adapt to the majority of the minority.

The most important Sorbian organization is called 'Domowina'. The goal of this organization is to establish a cultural basis for Sorbian existence that can be used to fight against assimilation on a linguistic and cultural level (Elle 1995a, 475). There is also a variety of smaller Sorbian local organizations and clubs that are mainly subordinate to the Domowina (Stiftung für das sorbische Volk 1994). Since 1999 the Foundation for Sorbian people is an independent foundation which takes care of financing the minority. In recent years there have been many attempts in schools and kindergartens to reactivate the Sorbian languages (FAZ 10.8.2000).

Now, knowing something about the two minorities, it is time to turn to the next question: What kind of identity is accepted? Let's have a look at the process in which identities are recognized. It is important to note that national minorities should be understood in the national frames in which they emerged as minorities. There are of course enormous differences in the identity resources of Sami and Sorbs but it is - actually not that surprisingly - relatively easy to find striking similarities in the approaches chosen by the Sami and Sorbian activists in order to claim a distinctive identity.

What kind of identity is allowed and accepted?

In the following, I would like to describe a few identity-based arguments used by Sami and Sorbian activists when they claim

specific rights or acts of restitution for their communities.¹³ These arguments - as I will discuss later - are widely accepted as legitimate. This means that at least European states and European public sphere consider these demands as worthy of being recognized. Simultaneously, these arguments are strongly supported in international minority rights treaties and are used as legal instruments to define what a minority has to be in order to be a 'real' minority.

Stolen history

A common insistency that the wrongs of history should be corrected is one factor bringing minority people together worldwide. Many minorities claim a distinct history which should get finally written. The truth is that in the history of European nations states, attention is seldom paid to the „losers“ of nation-building and democratization processes.

During the national romantic era, international interest toward a nomadic folks and smaller nations grew. This interest meant that many scholars went to the home regions of the Sami in Lapland and the Sorbs in Lausitz and collected whatever they found worth of studying: drums, raw materials for handicrafts, or even scullers from cemeteries. In this way, the whole material cultures of minority peoples were transported to cities and museums abroad.¹⁴ Thus, the history of minorities was often written by scholars who analyzed the collected materials and listened to only a few selected members of groups. The people themselves had little or no

¹³ Very similar arguments are used by many other minority groups all over the world.

¹⁴ In 1995 in Inari, Finland, an awkward ceremony took place: 77 skulls taken by delegations in the beginning of the 20th century were returned and blessed in an official funeral (Lehtola 1997, 16).

influence on the way their histories were represented.

It is not just about material culture, however. One especially tragic policy separated thousands of children from their parents and forced them to attend boarding schools in order to become „civilized“. Many of these children say today that the state authorities stole their childhood.¹⁵ This has been a widely used practice in the course of modernization by most nation-states, including Finland and Germany. Dramatic changes occurred as the young generation spent nine months a year away from home. During the school months, the use of non-modern „home languages“ was prohibited and children had to speak even with their siblings in the majority language.

Both the Sorbian and Sami people were discriminated against as ethnic groups. As was the case with many European minorities, these people were often denied the citizenship of states in which they lived and had no access to a whole range of professions because of their minority background.¹⁶ For a long time, the Sorbs were defined as peasants who were incapable of civil work. The Sami people were stereotyped as a group of ignorant alcoholic reindeer herder. Later, a growing interest in minority cultures led academics to collect minority languages and describe the nature of cultures that seemed on the verge of disappearing.¹⁷ The Sami were defined as a nomadic people with no understanding of individual rights. In this way the Northern nation-states legitimized their take-over of Sami lands and their declaration of these territories as state

¹⁵ This expression was - as far as I know - first used by Australian Aborigines who were stolen from their parents and brought to boarding schools and children's homes.

¹⁶ Even 1264 founded Marienstern monastery recruited exclusively the ruling class (margraves, bishops, abbots, knights and vassals) from among German conquerors. First written evidence of banning of Sorbian language is from year 1293.

¹⁷ Sorbian academics founded a academic society already 1847 and they took part in the writing of Sorbian history. Sami had not that much influence in the way history presented them before 1930s.

property. Another way for making a minority disappear was employed by the East German regime: The state supported some aspects of Sorbian culture and used them in (Marxist-Leninist) folklore festivals. The Sorbian people no longer recognized their own traditions.

The right to define and represent ones own history has become crucial issue for all minority right activists. Minorities need to be able to demonstrate a clear continuity as 'a people'. This is due in part to the fact that more and more minority members have entered universities and been able to critically review the way their histories have been written. Partly however, this trend has been supported by various international minority rights documents which stress that the aim to protect groups who have their „own distinct history“. The rewriting of a minority's own history often has emancipative and therapeutical effects since it explains how the people ended up as a minority in the first place. By rewriting their histories, the members of a minority can better understand the external pressures under which their ancestors lived.

Insisting on traditionalism as a way of life

All cultural minorities claim that they represent a more traditional way of life than the majority population. Indigenous peoples have had to interpret their adaptation to modern culture in terms of traditionality and uninterrupted continuity. For the Arctic Sami, snowmobiles or cell phones are valuable instruments of survival in the extreme natural conditions in which they live. Yet, the use of such modern instruments is a double-edged sword. On one hand, minorities require the use of modern tools and instruments to 'survive'. On the other, opponents of minority rights often instrumentalize such use in order to demonstrate that

minorities are 'inauthentic'. As a result, the minorities are often forced to „hide“ the use of anything 'modern'. In Lapland, for example, the majority population does not believe there is anything traditional left in the native way of life. Traditionalism, for them, requires a total absence of innovation and adaptation.

Like the Sami, the Sorbian activists emphasize that „you cannot find it [authentic traditions] by the German people but we still keep many of our old traditions alive“. It is clear that the Sorbian activists in Bautzen live a fully modern life and therefore they always want to send every academic interested in the Sorbs to the country side to meet with their „professional minorities“ (Toivanen forthcoming), to such people who have as their profession to work as representatives of traditional way of life. The concept of a „traditional way of life“ is even more central to the identity work of Sami activists than for the Sorbian ones. Various ILO and UNO documents define indigenous people and cultural minorities by using the concept of authentic traditionality, which emphasizes the right to maintain their ancient traditions, practices and cultural values from generation to generation. As an example, the Article 5 of Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) states: „The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.“

The fact is that traditional means of livelihood cannot support a family any more. The animals upon which Sami hunting depend are either increasingly endangered or protected under EU's Natura 2000 program. Nevertheless, hunting continues to be a symbol of native land use, often performed in a fabricated, perhaps even theatrical, way. The situation has become much worse, according to Pekka Aikio, now that many governments have started treating

reindeer husbandry in the same way as cow herding. Today, only 10 percent of the Sami are still reindeer herders. Overall government interference in the native way of life has made it impossible for any minority to continue not even the very little bit of traditionality one would like to carry on with. Interference in these cases, for example, has included not only direct urban planning policies regulating the living conditions in peripheries.

Homelands

The homeland is one concept which is very important when a minority claims a distinct identity. It connotes not only a clearly defined area of land but also the emotional relationship to a specific territory. A national minority is by definition always attached to a more or less clearly determined area. The members don't have to be born in the homeland, and they don't have to have lived there. Indeed, they may even know that they would never like to live there. To be recognized as a 'real' member one needs only to say that one feels deeply attached to that specific homeland.

Homelands of many minorities are seldom physically on the same territories where their ancestors lived or even where their parents were born. Almost all native groups have experienced replacement, exile during wars, forced move because of states interest to dig for minerals or need of timber. In many cases, the traditional lands have been overfloated because a power plant has been built. The homeland - or reservation - need not to be where one was born or raised, but it forms a extremely powerful symbol of identity when the land claim for that specific area has been made - even when not yet approved by the state. Among other developments, the ILO 169 document created some more „space“ for Sami and other indigenous activists to insist even more forceful territorial

rights. This document stresses the importance of minority participation in the political process which influence strongly their living conditions. The European Language Charta emphasize in a similar manner how states accept cultural autonomy of national minorities on a on minority's living region.

The homelands of Sami ancestors became huge water reservations, plant sites, or mines of nickel or resources for state timber companies. During the second world war, the Sami were forced to move away from Lapland for a one to three years exile, and almost nobody was able to return to exactly the same houses or even villages. The concept of the homeland should be understood as metaphorical: For many Sami people home is not the small piece of land on which their house stands. In Finland a reindeer-herding family often only owns or rents from the state a very small piece of land on which the house stands. But a homeland means for many the entire tundra environment. Non-Sami habitants have been more successful of becoming landowners in all parts of Lapland.

During the years of mining in Lausitz, the inhabitants of 110 villages have been forced to move (Heckmann 1992). These people have been removed to suburban high houses, and lots of aspects of life and work in a village changed dramatically due to these developments. Many former everyday activities were reintroduced in the new residence area as „folklore“ and common traditions. People often felt alienated by these reinvented traditions which were especially encouraged and favored by the East German regime. For Sorbian people the fight over the village of Horno against coal mining industry, as a kind of last bastion, has now become a symbol for the right to a homeland.¹⁸ At the same time, Horno was not so much ‚Sorbian‘ as it is now when the battle started...

Enormous and catastrophic effects of massive oil, gas, timber,

¹⁸ One can follow the battle of the village of Horno against German state. See www.horno.de.

mineral and metal extraction threaten the existence of the native people and national minorities everywhere. It is amazing how little influence the minority groups have even today over issues regarding essential aspects of their life: industries exploiting the land on which they live, pollution including noise pollution¹⁹, displacement, structural changes leading to total unemployment. All recognized minorities make strong territorial claims, drawing maps of identity and showing the persistence of a distinctive identity in a given region. Regionalism and Euro-region policies are very popular among all European national minorities.

Biological belonging

Genetic or biological belonging is a widely accepted identity claim. To give an example, it is considered totally normal if a Sami representative says in an interview with the New York Times that it is too bad that the Sami don't form a visible minority (18.3.2001).²⁰ The identity-based claim (or should I rather say: the different justifications for a distinct national identity) easily lead to a combination stressing ancestry and territory. When one is among diverse minority people and asks the following questions: What do you need to be a real member of the group X? Do you need to speak the language? Do you need to be able to dance the dances, prepare handicrafts, tell stories, herd reindeers, fish in traditional ways? You will hear the answer: No. What do you need then, you ask then the normal members of the group (you don't get

¹⁹ Here I am thinking in the first place of the Innu in Labrador and low-flying.

²⁰ DNA-studies seem to indicate that Sami and Finns are genetically „different populations“ (Carpelan 1996: 10-14; Savontaus 1995). For some Sami activists this information is an important statement meaning „We are not Finns, Swedes or Norwegian, even the genetic studies prove this“ (Interviews FS24).

the same answers from intellectuals of the movement)? The bottom line of the answers is that you need some blood. You need ancestors. And when asking, how much „native“ blood you need, one comes to the conclusion that just a drop of it is enough. Without some evidence that you happen to have that drop you seldom have an access to the group.

I am thinking of, i.e., the membership criteria set up by the Organization for Security and Cooperation which has dealt extensively with minority right questions (see OSCE, Copenhagen 1990, Moscow 1990, Helsinki 1992). OSCE (1993) stated that a minority member has to have a self-identification as a minority member. This is, however, not the way the members of many minorities are counted. One can deny the membership and say, I don't want to be a member of this minority. But, the others say, he does not want to be a member but he is. He just has problems to accept his identity. Another person tells that she is a member of the minority. But, many other members of that minority oppose by saying that she would like to be but she is not. Her political views are too radical, and besides who knows what her mother's biological background really was... I could continue long with these examples I was confronted with on my field trips. Ethnicity can be described in many ways but as a political tool it is easily deduced to ancestry.

Language

During one trip to Bautzen, I attended a party at the Sorbian Institute. At the table next to me, there were some older Sorbian activist men sitting together with one young man of whom I knew that he was born in West Germany and had no Sorbian ancestors. He

had learned many languages and spoke fluent Upper Sorbian. The whole table spoke in Upper Sorbian very vividly until the young man left the room for a bathroom visit. In that moment the bunch of activists changed the language and the chat continued in German until the young man entered the room again. The table spoke again in Upper Sorbian (Toivanen forthcoming). This young West-German told me that the activists of the Sorbian movement appreciated his engagement a lot but at the same time did not consider him being one of them. To have no Sorbian ancestors means not to be able to understand the „real“ Sorbian identity. Some of the Sorbs even said that they find it awkward that somebody voluntarily joins a minority: „these are not questions of choice“, these people argue often (interviews).

During my field work in Germany as well as in Lapland, I often observed language shifting depending on the situation: Who happened to be listening, who left the room or who entered it. The people who were not of Sami or Sorbian origin are always seen to some extent as outsiders even though they would be perfectly capable of speaking the minority language. Persons who only have one Sorbian (or Sami) parent or even grandparents and who have poor or even no knowledge of Sorbian language are easily seen by the activists as members of the „community“, perhaps as lost members who now are reunifying with their „real“ identity. One might conclude by saying: language is an extremely important symbol of an identity. At the same time, it does not mean that one needs to speak the language. One does not even have to be interested in learning it. But one needs to accept the power of the ideology along which one nation speaks one language. My research indicates, that to be accepted as a minority member, the knowledge of the minority language does not matter that much, one's blood relationship actually matters much more. Nevertheless, all documents on minority rights define minorities as having a genuine culture and language

to protect. (Examples) And, all national minorities stress the importance of maintaining „their minority language“. The word language is then in most cases used in singular. The fact that most minorities have two or more languages to preserve is seldom addressed in public. I wonder how much this behavior is influenced by the minority rights documents which protect minority groups who has ‚a distinctive, traditional language‘ (in singular).

Allowed and accepted identity

Irrespective of in which part of the globe they reside, indigenous groups and national minorities share similar ways of addressing identity-based claims. Seemingly, thus, there is a strong tendency by all the minority movements to accept a special set of identity claims. Claims which are based on material emphasis essentialism and folklore seem to have more realistic chances of ‚survival‘ in the modern world. The minorities (I mean the activists) who stress the combination of the identity aspects I have discussed above, are very much aware of the strategic value of the arguments they utilize. They know that rightly posed claims and arguments can help to find access (and finances) to ‚cultural survival‘. By this I mean that the minorities who stress in their right claims a national entity which is based on a common history stretching „beyond memory of mankind“ or on „thousands of years old“ traditions, territory in which ancestors have „always“ lived, genetic distinctiveness „separating their nation“ from other nations, and one „common“ language which is distinct from other languages, can look positively to the future. Minority groups stressing these factors in their self-definition (or politics of identity) are widely accepted as authentic minorities, ‚real‘

peoples.

When understood in its broadest sense, 'tradition' is certainly one of the strongest bases for an identity claim that modern states and transnational organizations are prepared to accept as legitimate. Liberal-democratic - or western - organizational forms are seen as modern in contrast to 'traditional' forms of group organizing. Today, however, associations and organizations - the more internationally active the better - are critical to the existence of all modern cultural minorities. The minorities are as modern as everybody. The nation building hegemonies introduced the 'Herderian', nation centered model of social group to all, including the minority groups which were struggling against assimilationist policies. The only way for cultural survival was always to imitate the hegemonic norm.²¹

Of course, it is important to keep in mind that not even the smallest group is homogeneous. In every interest movement there are inner battles about the content and direction of the politics of identity. The internal identity struggles include the battles about who belongs to the minority. The question is often framed to find out who is allowed to share the resources which the state provides or the restitution for the past injustice. The question: Who belongs to the minority?, evokes also questions about who decides what the minority wants and what kind of compromises or agreements it might want to aim for. There are enormous difficulties inside all movements to find a common nominator and build a single identity-based claim together. That is, this has to do with the fact that all members of the minority community also have other

²¹ National cultures are based on an ideal of eliminating difference or transforming difference into a form that is considered harmless to the construction of the state. Thus, those who represent difference (i.e. suppressed elements, outcasts, non-members) can use mimesis as an identity-building strategy. The mimetic "taking-off" can be seen as adaptation: a stranger seems to learn the way to become "one-of-us". If the "stranger" is seen as somebody trying to adapt, she is often seen as harmless and it becomes easier for the members of a hegemonic state to accept this person (Toivanen 2001).

kinds of commitments, have experiences outside of the native groups, and have their personal or even selfish hopes for the future.

Cultural survival in Europe

This paper reviewed various aspects of identity which are used to justify and vindicate the claims of national minorities and indigenous peoples. What kind of identities can „survive“ under pressure from national majorities and 'modernization'? How can a groups formulate their identity claims in order to secure "cultural survival"?

I have argued that minorities who carefully combine a mixture of history, traditionality, ancestry, and homeland in pursuing legal and political claims will most probably have the best chances of being accepted by the European states and international community as real and authentic minorities, worthy of national and international protection. International organizations and minority rights have a powerful role in defining the space in which minorities search for cultural survival. Some of the strategic tools used by minorities-for example, in the areas of minority rights - are derived from the European legal context, while others derive directly from jurisprudence developed at the international level. The differences between the two are essential:. On one hand, European conventions and recommendations are more precise and actively support minority ,nation building'. On the other, international conventions are less concrete, and leave more space for regional variation - variation which is often welcomed by many minorities.

I want to end this presentation by portraying both how state policies influence minority 'nation building', as well as how

powerful the influence of state and interstate organizations is in transforming minorities in ,undivided, real nations'. I hope that I can illuminate this process with the following case study, based on the Sami. Today, none of the Nordic states consider a Sami state desirable or possible. However, the states support the development of Sami nationalism, i.e., through their cooperation in the Nordic Council. The Nordic Ministers on Sami Issues in the Nordic Council and the presidents and chairmen of the three Sami parliaments from Norway, Sweden and Finland, met in November 2000 in Karasjok, Norway. They agreed upon a common goal of offering the Sami Parliaments full membership in the Nordic Council. The Sami people have, since the early 70's, had membership on their political agenda, but have not been successful until now. One of the key membership conditions stipulated included in the agreement required the three Sami organizations to form a single representative organ standing for the whole ,Sami nation'. It is no exaggeration to say that the general influence of the Nordic Council on the institutionalization of the Sami has been great. The national Sami parliaments were initially established because the Nordic Council wanted to give a 'face' to provide Sami activism institutional recognition in every country. Participation in Nordic affairs as well as various funding requests needed to be mediated by the new representative organ. Soon, every country had its own Sami parliament. Now, however, the different Sami organization need a new transnational organization which represents the Sami collectively. Today the Sami share a very clear vision about the direction which they want go as an "undivided nation". This is particularly surprising when one considers how little in common the different Sami associations in every country have had in the past.

I would argue that especially European organizations treat minority movements as if they were monolingual and monocultural, homogeneous entities that should be „preserved“ for the coming

generations. This attitude is reflected in the identity politics of all minorities! They imitate the „minority criteria norm“ we see in various diverse documents of minority rights documents in order to be eligible both for support and for the ,official ' right to exist' (which also includes funding).

It seems to me that liberal democracies know how to deal with specific kinds of national constructions. European states support certain aspects minority identities. Some identity claims are immediately taken seriously while others are immediately refused. Similar hierarchical organization of state and minority organization may serve mutual understanding. Comparing minorities in their European and national context provides us with a hidden key to understanding why minorities look increasingly like miniatures of the states in which they live. Many European minorities are not only defining their self-understanding with nationalistic attributes but are also seriously interested in memberships in diverse international organizations like the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN or the EU as separate, i.e., 'regional nations'. National minorities way to cultural survival - at least in Europe - goes by imitating a hegemonic nation state norm.

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