

# 9 Self-Reported Experience of Discrimination against Samis in Norway

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## *Summary*

*New research shows that many Samis report experiencing various forms of discrimination. The aim of this chapter is to give updated information on the challenges of discrimination Samis face in Norway. We will survey the occurrence of self-reported incidents of discrimination among adult Samis between the age of 18 and 69 years, study where discrimination happens, identify who discriminates and how an individual might respond to being discriminated against.*

*The figures are based on qualitative data collected in 2012 from 11,600 individuals (both Sami and majority Norwegians), from 25 municipalities in the five northernmost counties in Norway. The study is part of a health and living conditions investigation in areas with Sami and Norwegian communities, called the SAMINOR 2 survey, which was a questionnaire sent out to municipalities in Northern Norway and Trøndelag.*

*In the sample, approximately one in five experienced discrimination. About a third of those who had been discriminated against, say that the incident happened in the last two years. Samis experience discrimination much more frequently than majority Norwegians. Samis with strong Sami ties report the highest incidence of discrimination, both in the last two years and earlier.*

*The most common form of discrimination reported by Samis was ethnic discrimination, followed by discrimination based on gender and geographical affiliation. Sami women reported the highest rates of gender discrimination.*

*Samis experience discrimination in several arenas. The most common is at school, work and in the local community. Additionally, many Samis report discrimination in public, on the internet and at stores or restaurants. Samis, to a greater extent than majority Norwegians, have and still experience discrimination from fellow students, teachers and other employees at school, work colleagues, public sector employees, other ethnic groups (majority population), strangers and other Samis. Even though many Samis experience discrimination, few file reports with The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman (LDO- Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet).*

## 9.1 Introduction

The Sami population is in a unique position compared to other minorities in Norway. On the one hand, they have a long history as a discriminated minority, especially when the Norwegian state had a Norwegianization policy aimed at assimilating Samis into the Norwegian majority culture (Minde, 2005). Conversely, Samis today hold the status of indigenous people with strong legal standing in Norway (Midtbøen, 2015).

Nonetheless, the Samis' legal status does not protect them from facing discrimination. Adult Samis much more frequently report being discriminated against than majority Norwegians (K.L. Hansen, Melhus, Høgmo & Lund, 2008). In addition, discrimination is associated with poor somatic and mental health (K. L. Hansen, 2015; K. L. Hansen, Melhus & Lund, 2010; K. L. Hansen & Sørli, 2012).

Sami policies from the middle of the 1800s until after the Second World War in Norway were based on assimilation. For Samis, this meant that their cultural traditions and language were to be replaced with the corresponding majority culture and language (Josefsen, 2006; Minde, 2005). These policies had an ideological foundation in Social Darwinism, nationalism and security policy (Jensen, 2005). Within the educational system, this was expressed by policies such as instruction only in Norwegian, and the use of the Norwegian cultural identity as the basis of interaction between Samis and ethnic Norwegians (Høgmo, 1986). However, after the Second World War, the Norwegian government changed the direction of its policies on Sami minorities. This change became clear in connection with the steering of Samis' legal rights at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s (ILO-169 and wording in paragraph 108 of the constitution), and the creation of the Sami Parliament.

Even though Norwegianization policies are a part of Norwegian history and former policy, their negative effects are long lasting. It will take time to change the general framework of Norwegian policies, legislation and organization, not to mention myths and attitudes, so that Sami culture, language, traditions and needs are sufficiently considered in fields such as education, work and public service.

Little research has been done on the long-term effects of the Norwegianization process and structural discrimination. Certainly, Norwegianization has had many victims. Colonialization has stolen many Samis' language, culture, and self-esteem and has been the cause of personal trauma (Nergård, 2011). Many researchers and politicians have spoken up to form a truth and reconciliation commission about the political and cultural injustices that Samis have experienced. Norwegianization and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity has led to significant consequences in the living conditions, quality of life and health of many Sami families and individuals in a range of local communities in Norway, likely more than previously thought. We need to know more about how this has affected and still affects the Sami population.

### 9.1.1 Chapter Objectives

Updated information on the status of discrimination against Samis is needed to promote equality and hinder ethnic discrimination. This information can also be used to develop effective measures to prevent discrimination. The aim of this chapter is to give updated information on the challenges of discrimination Samis in Norway face.

Which challenges do Samis face at work, school, in the local community and public sector? Do they face the same challenges with equality and discrimination as majority Norwegians? Alternatively, do Samis and non-Samis face different challenges?

### **9.1.2 The Concept of Discrimination**

This article focuses on personal experiences with discrimination of Samis in Norway. In this article, discrimination is defined as occurring “when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than others because of, for example, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation”. ‘Discrimination’ is a form of unequal treatment which is unfairly justified and is not related to positive discrimination or affirmative action.

Discrimination can be defined as acts and practices which lead to injustice and inequality in power, resources and opportunities across people and groups in society and serves to support systems of privilege and repressive structures (Ferdinand, Paradies & Kelaher, 2015). Discrimination can manifest itself from subtle forms of exclusion and verbal statements to physical acts of violence. Current data suggests that discrimination is an increasing social issues in many countries (Paradies et al., 2015).

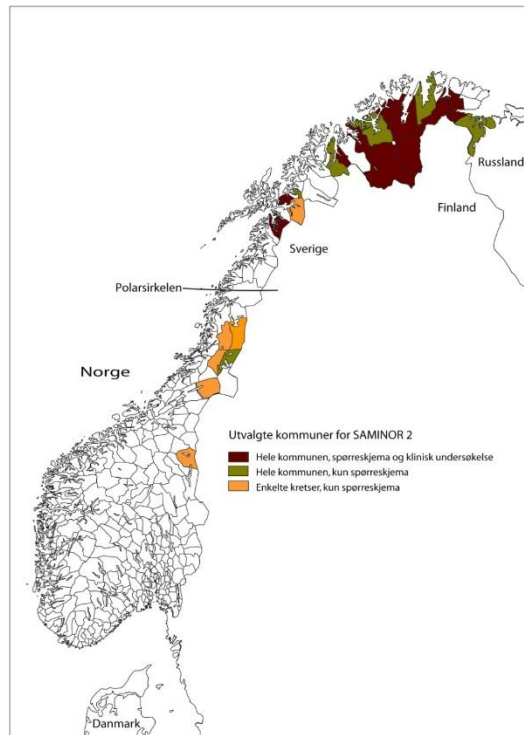
In this study, we have taken a broad approach to self-reported experience of discrimination and included ethnicity, gender, age and geographic affiliation, as well as discrimination based on illness, learning disabilities, religion or faith, physical disability, nationality, sexual orientation and others.

Discrimination can occur at school, work, in the local society, the public sector, other public settings such as shops and restaurants or in the family. The type of discrimination and setting in which it occurs can overlap and mutually reinforce. Samis may therefore face several types of discrimination in several settings at the same time. Discrimination can occur on three levels: *internalized at an individual level* (for example incorporation racist attitudes, beliefs or ideologies in an individual), *interpersonal* (face to face in interactions between individuals), and at the *structural level* (inherent discriminatory effects of social structures) (K. L. Hansen, 2015). In this chapter, we mainly study self-reported interpersonal discrimination (face-to-face interactions) among adult Samis and non-Samis.

### **9.1.3 About the Study**

The figures are based on data collected in 2012 from 11,600 individuals between the ages of 18 and 69 years (both Sami and majority Norwegian), from 25 municipalities in the five northernmost counties in Norway. The study is a part of SAMINOR 2-survey, which was a questionnaire sent out to municipalities with Sami and Norwegian communities in Northern Norway and Trøndelag. See map 9.1 for research area. The research is described earlier in another publication (Brustad, Hansen, Broderstad, Hansen & Melhus, 2014). *Datatilsynet* (The Data Inspectorate) and *REK nord* (The Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics, North) have approved the study.

## Map 9.1 Municipalities Involved in the Study



### 9.1.4 Sample Characteristics

Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in table 9.1. The majority in the sample were women. The average age was 50 years old, and the majority of participants had an average income, an education at the college or lower university degree level and lived in *Distrikts-Norge* (rural Norway). The study is therefore most representative of individuals with these characteristics. A third of participants had a Sami affiliation.

**Tabell 9.1 Sample Characteristics (N = 11 600)**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	5149	44,4
Women	6451	55,6
<b>Age (in years)<sup>a</sup></b>		
18–29	1484	12,8
30–49	4289	37,0
50–59	2933	25,3
60–69	2894	24,9
<b>Household Income</b>		
Low	1633	14,1
Medium	4245	36,6
High	3667	31,6
Very high	1612	13,9
<i>Not answered</i>	443	3,8
<b>Education (in years)</b>		
<7	301	2,6
7–9	1456	12,6
10–12	3090	26,6
13–16	3941	34,0
>16	2599	22,4
<i>Not answered</i>	213	1,8
<b>Residence</b>		
Sami minority area	9179	79,2
Sami majority area	2417	20,8
<i>Not answered</i>	4	0,0
<b>Ethnicity 1</b>		
Sami	3928	34,1
Non-Sami	7577	65,8
<i>Not answered</i>	95	0,1
<b>Ethnicity 2<sup>b</sup></b>		
Strong Sami ties	1372	11,9
Self-reported Sami	1459	12,7
Sami family background	1097	9,5
Non-Sami	7577	65,8
<i>Not answered</i>	95	0,1

<sup>a</sup> Average value  $\pm$  standard deviation.

<sup>b</sup> See section on 9.1.5 for explanation of categories.

### 9.1.5 Definition of Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a group of individuals with a common identity related to a common origin, perceived by others to be a distinguishable by a common language, culture, history and so on. The term entails both subjective and objective aspects. Sami as an indigenous group is included in the term *ethnicity*.

Since there is no Sami registry in Norway, and since this information cannot be collected in a census, the survey included 11 different questions about ethnicity in order to define who was Sami and who not. In addition, this survey wanted to make a differentiated ethnicity variable that could categorize *Saminess*.

**Figur 9.1** The figure comes from the questionnaire used by the SAMINOR 2 study. It shows how the questions on ethnicity were posed.

Hvilket hjemmespråk har/hadde du, dine foreldre og beste-foreldre? (sett ett eller flere kryss)				
	Norsk	Samisk	Kvensk	Annet, beskriv
Morfar:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Mormor:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Farfar:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Farmor:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Far:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Mor:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Jeg selv:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....

Hva er din, din fars og din mors etniske bakgrunn? (sett ett eller flere kryss)				
	Norsk	Samisk	Kvensk	Annet, beskriv
Min etniske bakgrunn er:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Fars etniske bakgrunn er:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
Mors etniske bakgrunn er:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....

Hva regner du deg selv som? (sett ett eller flere kryss)				
	Norsk	Samisk	Kvensk	Annet, beskriv
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....

The first question group concerns which home language you, your parents and your grandparents have/had. The next question concerns your father's, mother's and your ethnic background. The last question is: What do you consider yourself to be? For all of these questions, the answer alternatives were 'Norwegian', 'Sami', 'Kven', or 'other'. Respondents could cross off one or more of the categories for each of the questions.

From these 11 questions, it is possible to make various categories of ethnicity. In this case, we chose to categorize as Sami any participant who crossed off one of the boxes marked Sami. The others were categorized as non-Sami. (For the most part, these participants crossed off Norwegian ethnicity with some also crossing off Kven or other ethnicity.)

### We further constructed three categories of Sami ethnicity:

- (i) *Strong Sami ties*
- (ii) *Self-reported Sami*
- (iii) *Sami family background*

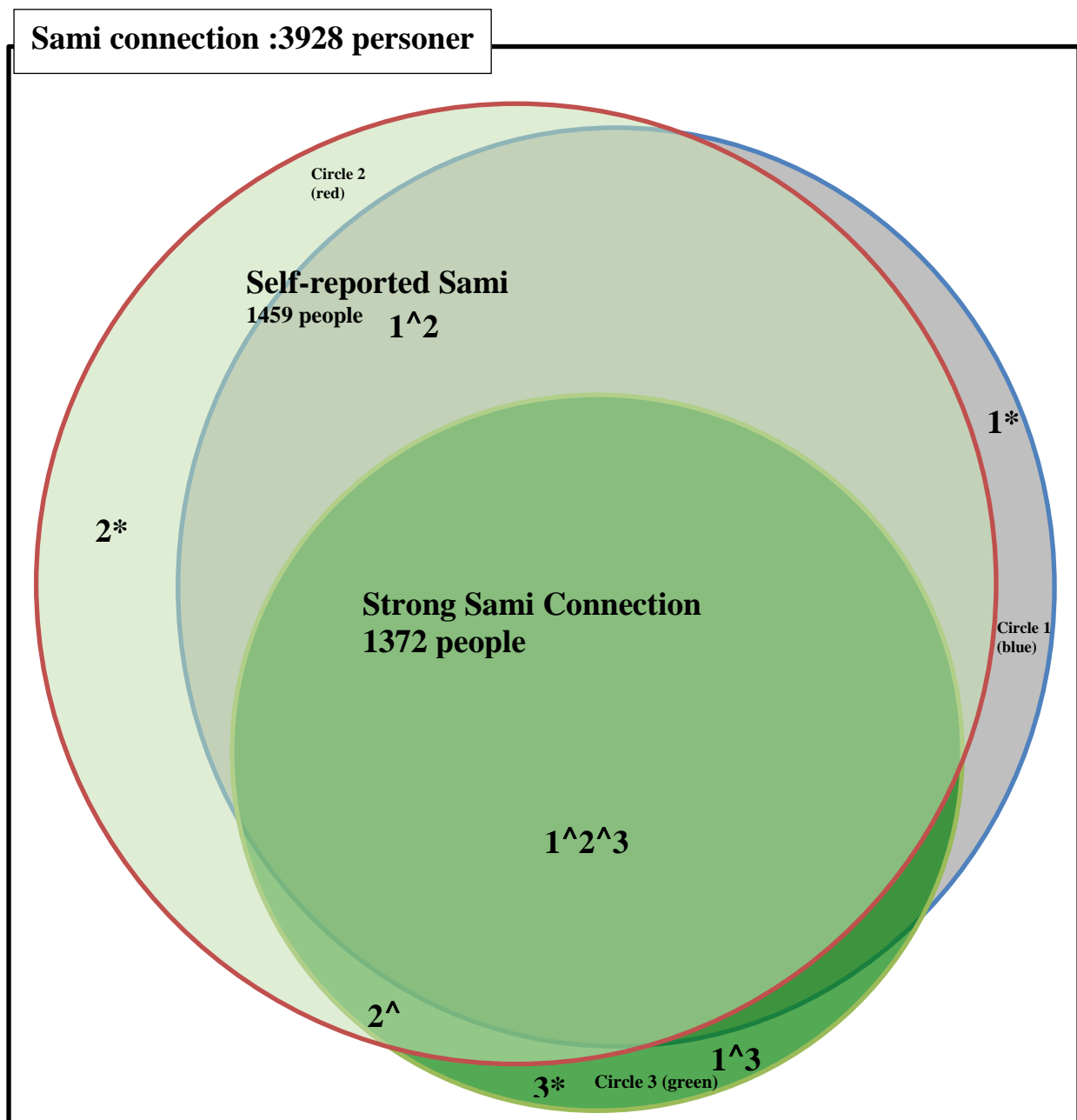
Category 1: 'Strong Sami ties' was made up of people who answered YES to all of the three following questions: 'I use Sami as my home language', 'my ethnic background is Sami' and 'I consider myself to be Sami'. This group is marked in green as category 1 in figure 9.2.

Category 2: 'Self-reported Sami' were those who answered YES to one or two (but not all three) of the questions mentioned above in category 1. This group is shown in figure 9.2 all within the circles, except for the innermost circle which is category 1.

Category 3: 'Sami family background' was defined as those who reported Sami family background with either language or ethnicity for parents or grandparents, but did not define themselves as Samis. More concretely, these respondents reported Sami as a home language either for their parents or grandparents and/or that their parents had a Sami ethnic background, but they did not view their own ethnicity as Sami, or did not feel themselves to be Sami, and did not speak Sami at home. This group is marked as the white areas inside the quadrangle in the figure.

The categories are mutually exclusive and show a graduated ethnicity variable, where category 1 shows most Sami markers and a strong connection to a Sami background, Sami self-perception and home language. There are 1,372 respondents in this category. Category 2 is the largest category in terms of number of respondents (N=1,459). In this category, most have said that they have both a Sami background and perceive themselves as Sami (55%), but only 8% in this category have Sami as a home language. In category 3, 1,097 reported a Sami family background without perceiving themselves as Sami, defining their own background as Sami or speaking Sami. Figure 9.2 shows a graphic representation of the different ethnicity categories.

**Figur 9.2 Graphic Representation of Ethnicity Categories**



**Sami family background without self-defined Sami connection, 1097 people**

**Explanation of figure 9.2:**

Circle 1 (circle outlined in blue): personally experienced Sami: Refers to those who have answered that they consider themselves as Sami, 2,323 people.

$1^*$  118 people reported that they perceive themselves as Sami, without saying that they have a Sami background and Sami as a home language

Circle 2 (circle outlined in red): Sami background. 2,645 people.

$2^*$  420 people (on the extreme left in the figure, red) say they have a Sami background, but report not perceiving themselves as Sami or speaking Sami at home.

Circle 3 (outlined in green): I have/had Sami as a home language. 1,488 people.

$3^*$  42 people have Sami as a home language without reporting a Sami background or perceiving themselves as Sami.

Frame: All who crossed off one or another Sami connection are represented within the frame. In total, 3,928 people.

Categorization of Ethnicity



Category 1: 'Strong Sami Connection' is comprised of people who answered YES to all three of the following questions: 'I use Sami as a home language', 'My ethnic background is Sami' and 'I consider myself to be Sami'. (Consequently are within all three circles:  $1 \wedge 2 \wedge 3$ ). 1,372 people.

Category 2: 'Self-Reported Sami' are those who answered YES for Sami in one or two (but not all three) questions mentioned above in category 1. This group is all within the circle, except the inner circle which is category 1. 1,459 people.

Category 3: 'Sami Family Background without declaring themselves as Sami' was defined as those who reported a Sami family background, either language or ethnicity of the parents or grandparents, but do not define themselves as Sami (with personally experienced Sami, their own background is Sami or they used/use Sami at home)

Graphically represented by all between the circles and frame (white colour). 1,097 people.

$1 \wedge 2 \wedge 3$ =Category 1.

$1 \wedge 2$ : Those who reported their ethnicity as Sami and consider themselves to be Sami. 805 people.

$2 \wedge 3$ : Those who say that they have a Sami background and had Sami as a home language, but don't consider themselves to be Sami. 48 people.

$1 \wedge 3$ : Those who consider themselves to be Sami, had Sami as a home language, but don't say that their background is Sami. 26 people.

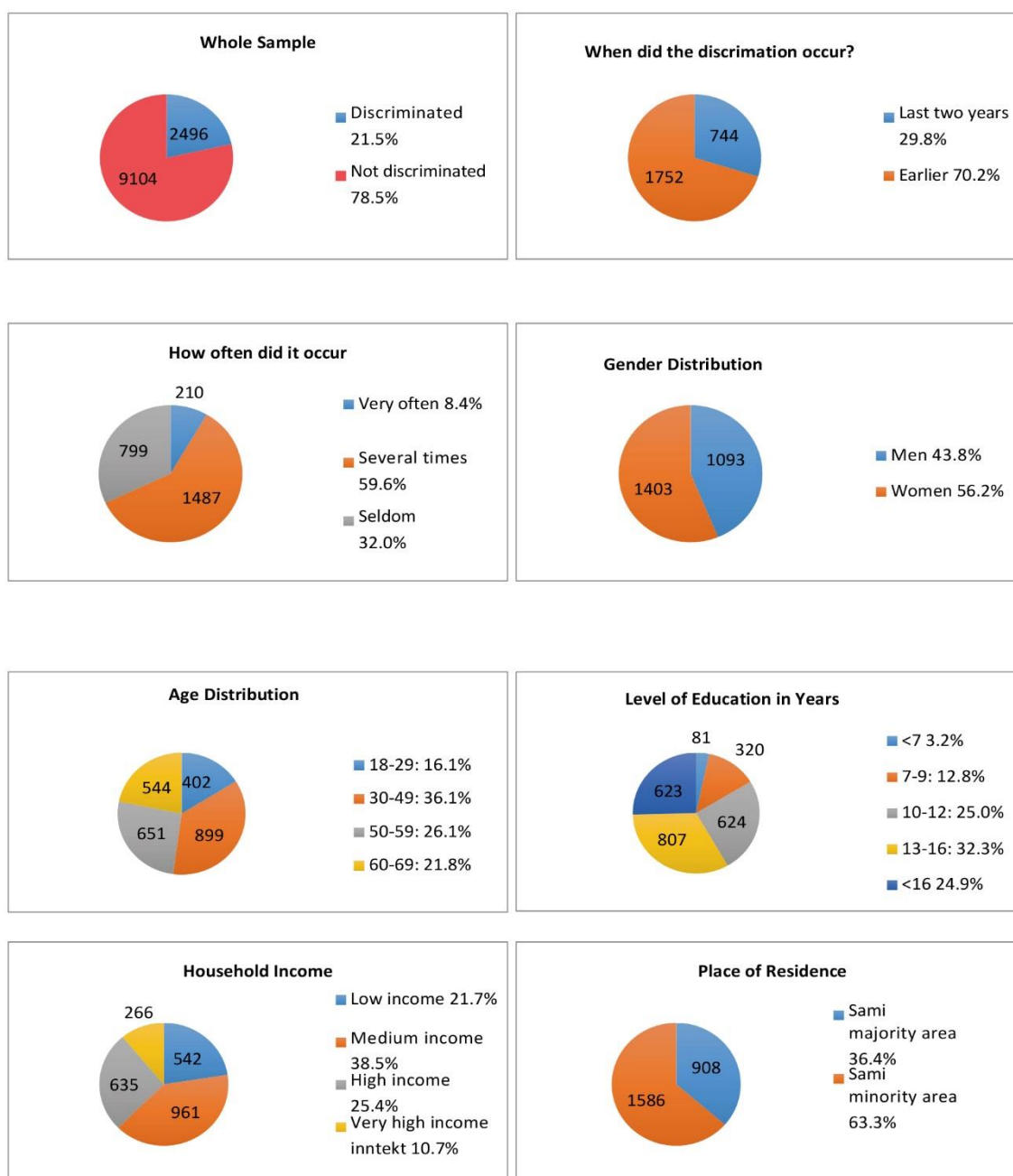
## 9.1.6 Sami Area

We defined the municipalities of Kautokeino, Karasjok, Nesseby, Tana and Porsanger as *Sami majority areas*. In these areas, over 50% of the population reported a Sami connection. The municipalities of Røros, Snåsa, Røyrvik, Namsskogan, Narvik, Alta, Grane, Hattfjelldahl, Tysfjord, Evenes, Skånlang, Lavangen, Lyngen, Storfjord, Kåfjord, Kvænangen, Loppa, Kvalsund, Lebesby and Sør-Varanger were defined as *Sami minority areas*. The reason for this was that in these areas, Sami occupy in a minority position vis-à-vis the majority population.

## 9.2 Characteristics of those who Experience Discrimination

In our sample, approximately one in five (21.5%) have experienced discrimination. Approximately a third of those who have experienced discrimination, say the discrimination occurred the last two years. Age, ethnicity, education, income and residence were all factors tied to discrimination. Samis, people between the age of 30 and 49, with 13-16 years of education, a household income between 301,000 and 600,000 NOK and/or living in Sami minority areas reported they highest number of incidents (figure 9.3).

**Figur 9.3 Characteristics of those who Reported Discrimination**



### 9.2.1 Samis Experience Most Discrimination

Half of Samis (50%) with a strong Sami connection reported having been discriminated against, 34.3% reported that the offence has happened before and 16.5% said that the event happened in the last two years. In addition, self-reported Samis (32.8% in total, 24.5% before and 8.4% in the last two years) reported a high degree of discrimination. In comparison, 14.3% of non-Samis reported discrimination, 9.9% before and 4.4% in the last two years (in the period 2010-2012). Samis with Sami family background reported the highest rate of discrimination that

occurred earlier, but did not have the same number as non-Samis for violations in the last two years (table 9.2). This shows that Samis with a strong Sami connection report approximately four times as much discrimination as ethnic Norwegians (table 9.2).

**Table 9.2 Occurrence of Discrimination (total, before and in the last two years) among Samis and non-Samis**

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<b>Self-Reported Discrimination</b>		
	Total* <sup>1</sup> % (antall)	Before % (antall)	Last two years % (antall)
Strong Sami connection	50,8 (697)	34,3 (470)	16,5 (227)
Self-reported Sami	32,8 (479)	24,5 (375)	8,4 (122)
Sami family background	19,8 (217)	14,9 (164)	4,8 (53)
Non-Sami	14,3 (1085)	9,9 (748)	4,4 (337)

\*1 Reported discrimination either in the last two years, before (earlier than in the last two years) or in other questions about discrimination (unspecified point in time). Total number of those discriminated against = 2,478 (18 cases where we lack information on ethnicity). 739 reported incidents of discrimination in the last two years (5 cases missing information on ethnicity). 1,739 reported cases of discrimination before (last two years) (13 cases of lack of information on ethnicity).

**Table 9.3 Incidents of Discrimination among Samis and non-Samis Distributed by Gender and Residence**

<i>Ethnicity/Gender/Place of Residence</i>		<b>Total*<sup>1</sup></b> <b>% (n)</b>	<b>Before</b> <b>% (n)</b>	<b>Last two</b> <b>years</b> <b>% (n)</b>
<b>Sami Majority Area</b>				
<b>Men</b>	Strong Sami connection	50,5 (220)	36,9 (161)	13,5 (59)
	Self-reported Sami	35,2 (77)	25,6 (56)	9,6 (21)
	Sami family background	24,2 (23)	20,0 (19)	4,2 (4)
	Non-Sami	23,2 (64)	15,9 (44)	7,2 (20)
<b>Women</b>	Strong Sami connection	47,6 (297)	31,4 (196)	16,2 (101)
	Self-reported Sami	32,5 (87)	20,5 (55)	11,9 (32)
	Sami family background	26,4 (28)	22,6 (24)	3,8 (4)
	Non-Sami	28,0 (104)	18,0 (67)	9,9 (37)
<b>Sami Minority Area</b>				
<b>Men</b>	Strong Sami Connection	58,3 (84)	37,5 (54)	20,8 (30)
	Self-reported Sami	31,1 (141)	26,2 (119)	4,8 (22)
	Sami family background	19,5 (76)	14,6 (57)	4,9 (19)
	Non-Sami	12,9 (399)	9,1 (281)	3,8 (118)
<b>Women</b>	Strong Sami Connection	56,9 (95)	34,7 (58)	22,2 (37)
	Self-reported Sami	33,6 (174)	24,5 (127)	9,1 (47)
	Sami family background	17,8 (90)	12,6 (64)	5,1 (26)
	Non-Sami	13,5 (517)	9,2 (355)	4,2 (162)

\*1 Reported discrimination either in the last two years, before (before the last two years) or on another question about discrimination (unspecified point in time). When we stratified according to gender and residence, we obtained two missing values for discrimination, so that we had 2,476 cases in total; 1,737 before and 739 in the last two years.

Sami men and women with strong Sami ties report a high degree of discrimination in both Sami majority and Sami minority areas. Reports are a somewhat higher in Sami minority areas, but only by a significant amount for Sami women with strong Sami ties. The majority population (non-Samis) report higher rates of discrimination in Sami majority areas than outside of these areas (table 7.3).

## 9.2.2 Types of Discrimination

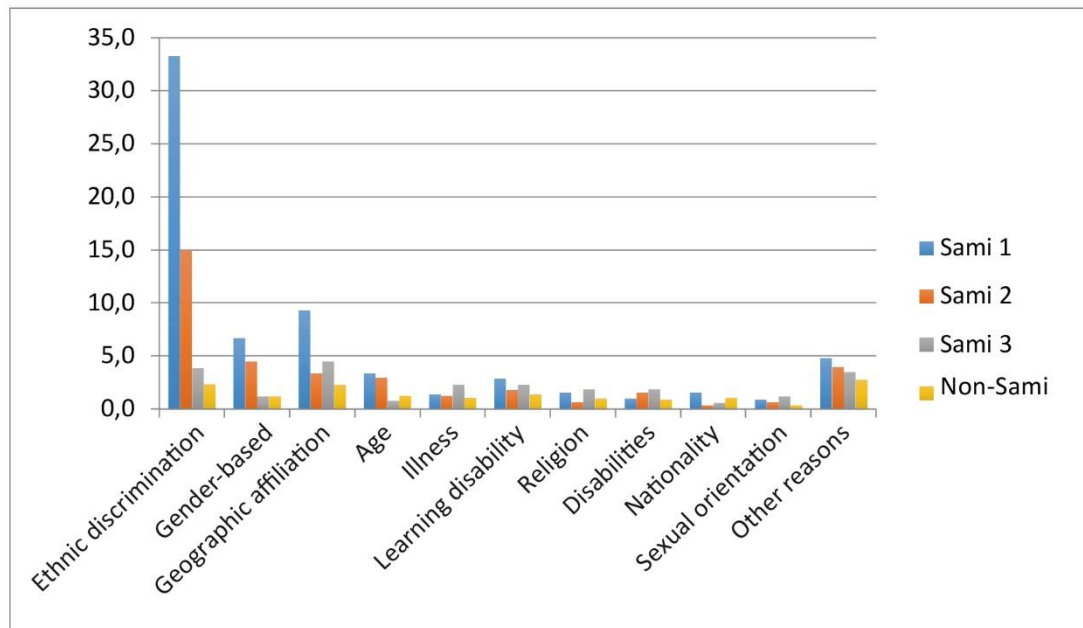
The most common form of discrimination reported by both Sami men and women with strong Sami ties (men: 33.3%, women: 31.9%) and those who self-reported Sami identity (men: 15.0%, women: 17.0%), was ethnic discrimination, followed by discrimination based on gender and place of residence. Women reported a significantly higher rate of gender based discrimination than men, and Sami men and women (with strong Sami ties) reported more than non-Samis (Sami men: 6.7%; Sami women: 11.9% versus Norwegian men: 1.2% and Norwegian women: 2.9%). Samis also reported more discrimination on the grounds of geographical affiliation than non-Samis. Sami men and women reported more age related discrimination than the majority Norwegians. Sami men reported somewhat higher rates of discrimination on the basis of learning difficulties than non-Samis. Sami women reported slightly higher rates of discrimination based on illness than non-Samis (1.6-2.8% versus 1.2%) (See figures 9.4 and 9.5).

There was no meaningful difference in reporting of discrimination due to religion, disability and sexual orientation. In the Sami population, approximately one percent were discriminated against because of sexual orientation, while the number for religion and disability was close to two percent among Samis.

Another reason for discrimination was nationality. The figures show no difference between Samis and non-Samis.

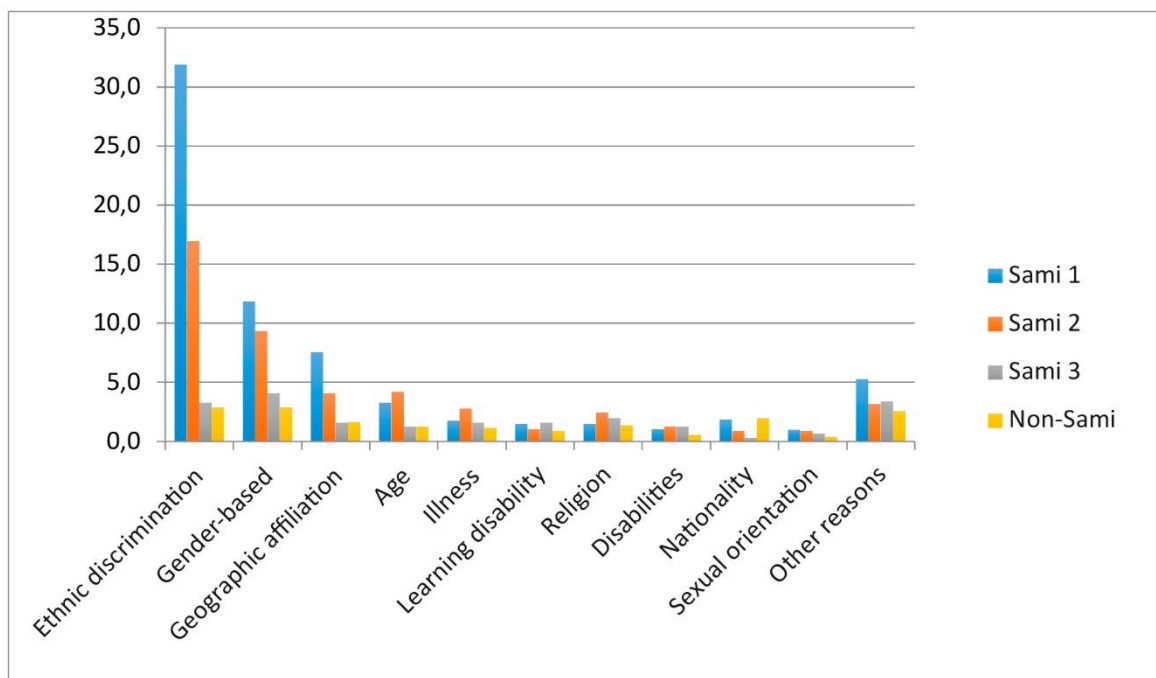
Samis reported also a significantly higher rate of other types of discrimination than non-Samis. These were not collected in the ten categories mentioned above (figures 9.4 and 7.5). Participants has the opportunity to specify other types of discrimination. Many reported discrimination connected to work, their Sami identity (because they didn't speak Sami, were not good enough Samis in others' eyes, or for other questions related to their Sami provenance), and other pointed out that it was because of their homosexuality.

**Figure 9.4 Types of Discrimination Experienced by Samis and non-Samis (men)**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).

**Figur 9.5 Types of Discrimination Experienced by Samis and non-Samis (women)**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).

In total, 66% reported having experienced one form of discrimination, 24% stated that they had experienced two types of discrimination and 7% said that they had experienced three types of discrimination. There was no ethnic difference between Samis and non-Samis with respect to how many types of discrimination they had experienced.

### **9.2.2.1 Comments**

Through the ratification of the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (August 6, 1970), Norway has pledged to prohibit discrimination based on race, skin colour, heritage or national and ethnic origin. The convention was incorporated into Norwegian law through the Anti-Discrimination Act (law June 3, 2005 no. 33) (Nystuen, 1991). The Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, heritage, skin colour, language, religion or philosophy of life. The Act's purpose is to promote equality, ensure equal opportunity and rights and prevent discrimination. The act is applicable to all sectors of society, with the exception of family life and other personal relationships (Lovdata, 2013).

Many Samis experience ethnic discrimination in Norway and many experience this in typically Norwegian-dominated areas (table 9.3). This is in line with earlier research about personal experiences with discrimination of Samis in Norway (Ketil Lenert Hansen, 2011). Ethnic discrimination is the most common form of discrimination Samis experience. Figures show that approximately one in three Samis with strong ties to the community has experienced discrimination because of his/her Sami origin, compared to under three percent of majority Norwegians. This shows that Samis experience ten times more ethnic discrimination than non-Samis. Our data from 2003/2004 agrees with these numbers, which indicates that Samis still experience a high degree of ethnic discrimination in Norwegian society today.

Gender discrimination has been highly prioritized in Norway with the implementation of legislation in 1978. Nonetheless, gender based discrimination is the second most commonly reported form of discrimination reported by Sami men and women. There is no study in Norway about gender discrimination in the general population (Skjeie, 2012). We know little about gender discrimination in the Sami population. Sami women report the highest incidence of gender based discrimination. We can imagine that the fight for equality in Sami society has had to yield to the fight for recognition as an indigenous population, and that the question of equality has not been prioritized until the beginning of this century (Josefsen, 2004). We need more information about why Samis (especially Sami women) report higher rates of gender-based discrimination than the majority population.

Many Samis also say that they feel discriminated against because of their place of residence. This can be the result of geographical or institutional variations which make the situation different for all Samis. For example, Josefsen (2006) points out that government authorities have geographically differentiated which rights particular Samis have (Josefsen, 2006). Our data supports this and shows that Samis who live in typically Sami minority areas report higher degree of discrimination than those who live in areas defined as Sami areas, and have strong protection of Sami institutions, language, values and culture (K. L. Hansen, 2012).

Samis also reported higher levels of age discrimination than majority Norwegians (3.4% versus 1.3%). The difference was not very big, but nonetheless significant statistically. In Norway, the debate on age discrimination has been associated with work. Protection against age

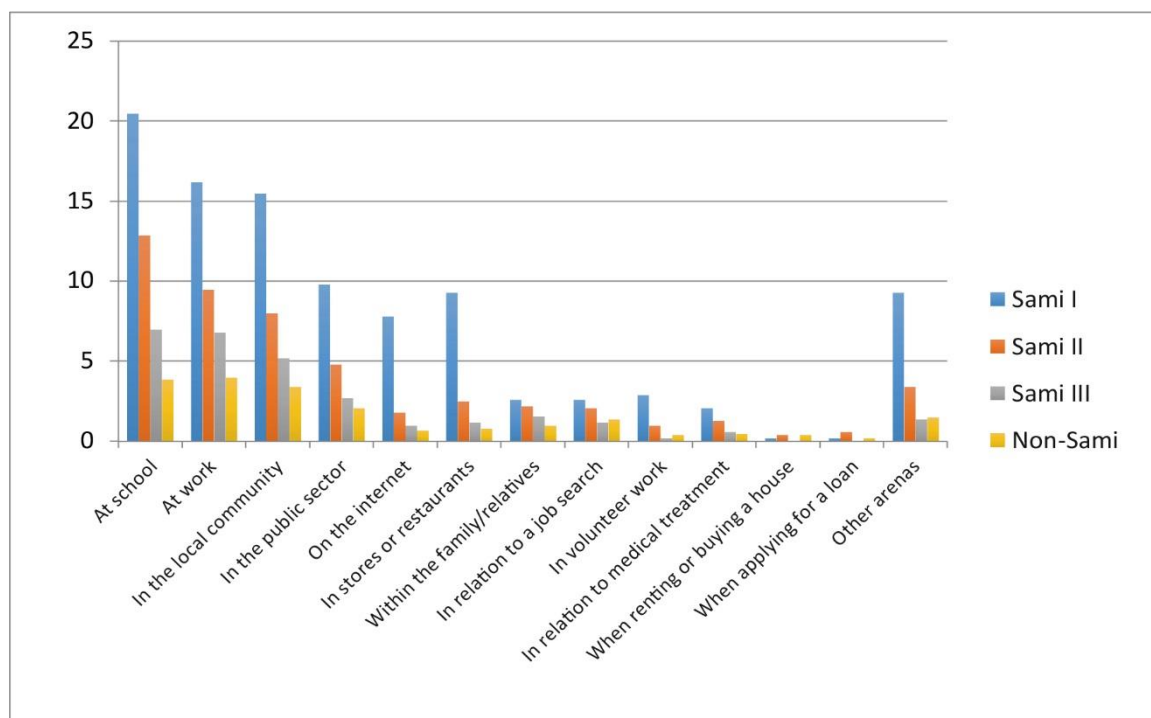
discrimination applies only to work but there is a debate on whether age discrimination should apply to all sectors of society.

When it comes to discrimination based on sexual orientation, 0.7-1.2% of the Sami population have experienced this, versus 0.4% of the majority population. The difference between Samis and non-Samis is not statistically significant. However, in the open-ended questions, quite a few Samis answered that they have experienced discrimination based on their homosexuality. Recently, there has been a spotlight on taboos in Sami society, and homosexuality has been one of these themes. In the debate, many claimed that it is more difficult to be a homosexual Sami than a homosexual Norwegian because of the double stigma that comes from being a minority and a homosexual. (NRK Sápmi, 2016). Homosexuality has been extremely taboo and shameful in the traditional Sami society (NRK Sápmi, 2013).

### **9.2.3 Where does Discrimination Happen?**

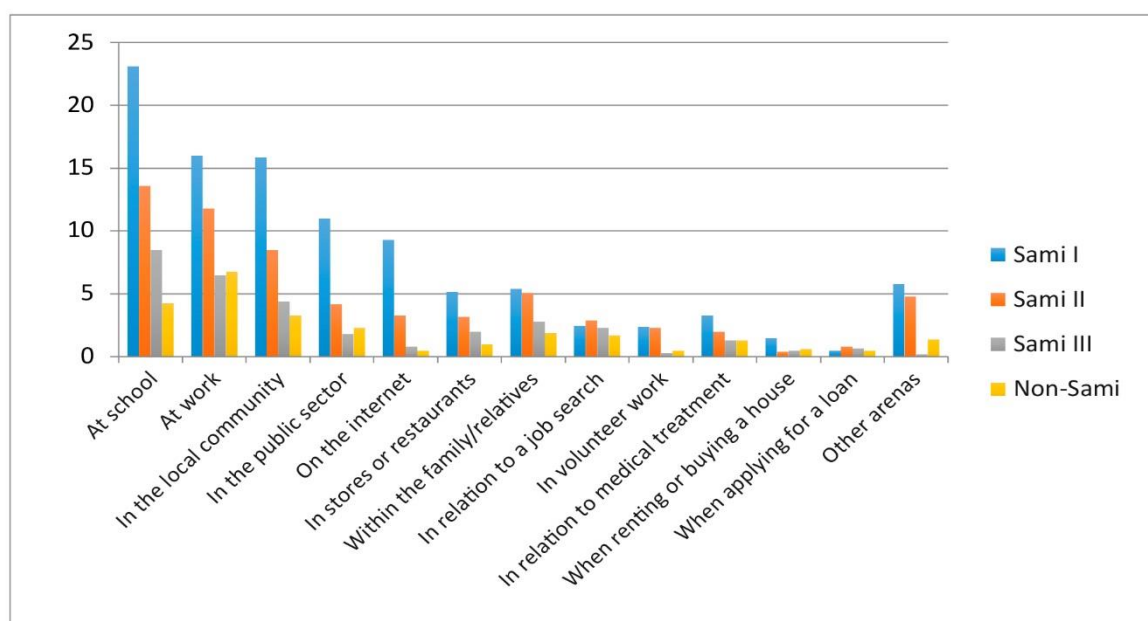
Samis experience discrimination in many arenas. The most common arenas are school, work and local community. Around one in five Samis with strong Sami ties has experienced discrimination at school or in connection with education, compared with around 4% of non-Samis. Samis also report more discrimination at work and in the local community than Norwegians do. Further, many Samis report incidents in public, on the internet and in stores or restaurants. More Sami men than women with strong ties report incidents in stores and restaurants (9.3% versus 5.2%). Digital discrimination was also reported far more frequently among Samis with strong Sami ties than non-Samis. Samis experienced more discrimination in a family setting, volunteer work and while receiving medical treatment than non-Samis. However, it must be pointed out that there were few who answered that they had experienced discrimination in these last three areas. Few reported incidents of discrimination while seeking work, buying a home, in the rental market or applying for a loan (less than 3%) (both among Samis and non-Samis). One can therefore say that discrimination in these areas is a minimal problem in Norway. However, Samis experienced far more frequent discrimination on other areas than the 12 mentioned. There is no big difference between men and women regarding where discrimination happens (figures 9.6 and 9.7).

**Figure 9.6 Where does discrimination of Sami and non-Sami men happen?**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).

**Figure 9.7 Where does discrimination of Sami and non-Sami women happen?**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).



### **9.2.3.1 Comments**

NOU 2015: 2 – *Å høre til – Virkemidler for et trygt psykososialt skolemiljø* (Belonging - Measures for a safe psychosocial school environment), presents data from *Elevundersøkelsen 2014/2015* (Student Survey 2014/2015) and *Folkehelseinstituttet* (The Norwegian Institute of Public Health) that shows the portion of students who are insulted and bullied in Sami areas is higher than in the rest of the country (Djupedal, 2015). The fact that our survey shows that school is the social arena where most Samis experience discrimination supports these recent findings. This raises a serious question about whether the requirements of paragraph 9a of Education Act 9a (Lovdata, 2015) of a good psychosocial environment at school, free of bullying is being fulfilled in Norway for Sami children and youth. Even though we work hard to prevent bullying at schools in Norway, with several anti-bullying campaigns (Olweus, 2009; Roland, 2014) going on over the last three decades, none have focused on the prevention against indigenous peoples and minorities (Minton, 2014). These anti-bullying programs have not been adapted to Sami culture and identity. Cultural sensitivity is an important element which should be prioritized in future anti-bullying campaigns and interventions against discrimination at school.

The workplace was the most common arena where non-Samis experienced discrimination and the second most common arena for Samis (after the educational sector). In total, 7.5% of the sample experienced discrimination or insults at work – 11.5% of the Sami population (all three Sami groups as a whole) and 5.6% of the non-Sami population (regardless of gender). Earlier studies in Norway have shown that the incidence of bullying at work was around 2-14% (Nielsen et al., 2009). Our numbers lie within this span and show that discrimination at work is an even greater problem for Samis than non-Samis. Employers should work actively, purposefully and systematically to promote equality and prevent discrimination within their establishments.

Samis experience further discrimination in the local community, in public and at stores or restaurants, far more frequently than non-Samis. These findings suggest that Samis face more prejudice, discriminatory remarks and insults in the public sphere than majority Norwegians. This can again limit their opportunities of democratic participation in the welfare society in terms of equal access to social and public services and goods.

### **9.2.4 Discrimination and Social Media**

Digital bullying has increased in Norway between 2000 and 2010 (Roland, 2014). A 2008 study conducted by Læringsmiljøseneteret (The Centre for Learning Environment) in Stavanger concludes that traditional bullying affects approximately twice the number of people as digital bullying (Auestad, 2011). International studies have found a weak tendency for girls to be exposed to digital bullying more frequently than boys (Parker-Jenkins, 2011). This study used the term discrimination ‘on the internet’ for digital bullying. Samis self-report a significantly higher number of incidents of digital discrimination than non-Samis. Younger Sami respondents (aged 18-29) frequently reported experiencing digital bullying. More than one in five Sami youth aged 18-29 with strong Sami ties reported experiencing discrimination on the internet. Among non-Samis, we found no gender differences, but among Samis we found that digital discrimination was reported more frequently by women than men, regardless of age (data not shown in tables).

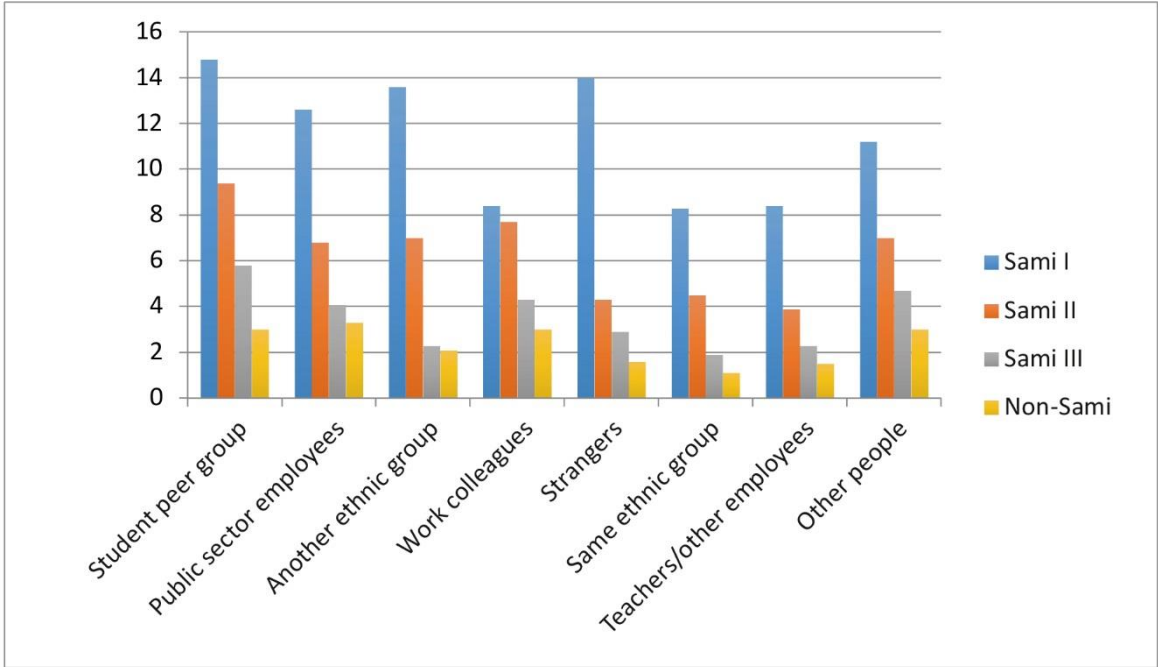
We know little about digital attacks or hate speech experienced by Samis in Norway, as these have not yet been researched or studied in a qualitative approach. We know from media (TV,

radio, newspaper and internet), that many Samis experience offensive comments, hate speech and prejudice, as well as stereotypical portrayals of Sami culture and identity in comment fields on the internet and on various websites (Ketil Lenert Hansen, 2012).

### 9.2.5 Who Discriminates?

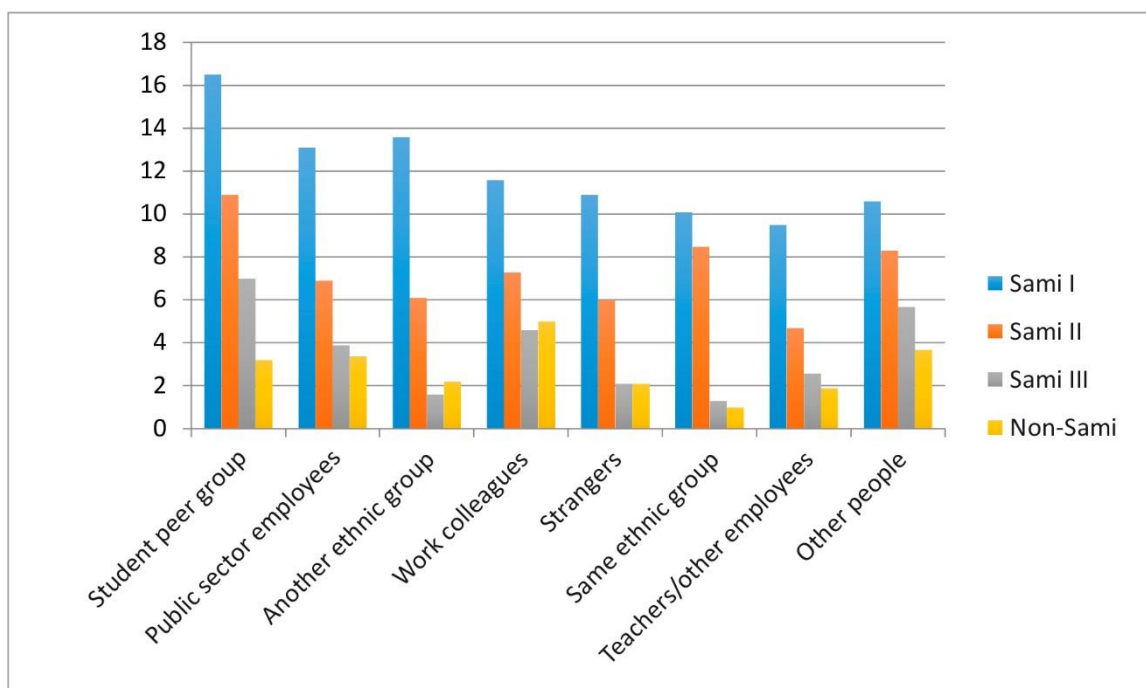
Samis with strong Sami ties and self-reported Samis have experienced much more discrimination from fellow students, teachers and other employees at school, other ethnic groups (majority population), strangers and other Samis than majority Norwegians. In addition, many Samis report offences from public servants and work colleagues. Non-Samis report most discrimination by work colleagues, fellow students and public servants (see figure 9.8 and 9.9).

**Figure 9.8 Who discriminates against Samis and non-Samis (men)?**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).

**Figure 9.9 Who discriminates against Samis and non-Samis (women)?**



Explanation of figure: Sami 1 = Strong Sami ties, Sami 2 = self-reported Sami, Sami 3 = Sami family background. Non-Sami = Norwegian. The table is based on the whole sample (N=11,600).

### **9.2.5.1 Comments**

Since many in the survey report discrimination at school, it is not surprising that fellow students were the most common bullies reported. More surprising was that so many Samis reported offensive comments by teachers or other employees at school.

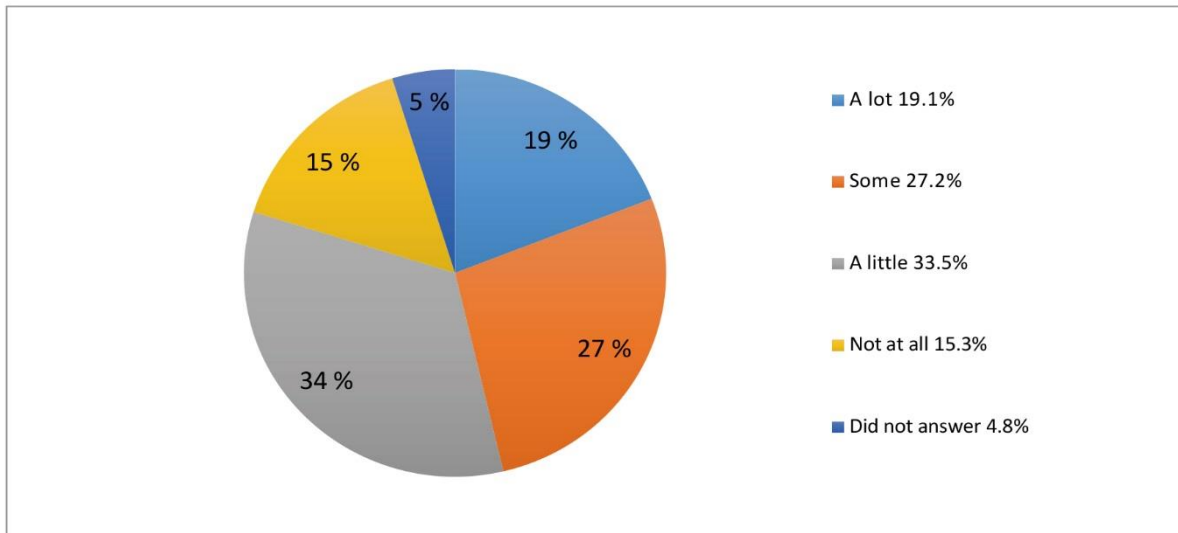
Being different is a call to discrimination and bullying and as a minority, Samis are vulnerable (Høgmo, 1998). Many Samis experience discrimination by majority Norwegians and strangers. These offences happen in various arenas of society. After fellow students, the most common bullies that Samis face are public servants and colleagues.

Many Samis experience discrimination by other Samis. This must be seen in connection to Norwegianization and the resulting shame associated with being Sami. Shame over Sami culture is maybe one of the most difficult and important barriers to revitalization and decolonisation of individuals, families and local communities (Nergård, 2011). Many Samis have lived through the assimilation of their identity and language over the last three generations (Høgmo, 1986) and this has led to a denial and suppression of Sami identity and culture (Høgmo, 2011). Høgmo has pointed out that the strongest Sami discrimination occurs in Norwegianized Sami-Norwegian communities, and that people with Sami backgrounds are often the ones carrying out the discrimination. He points out that this is a reaction to the attitude in the majority society: derogatory comments about Samis take attention away from one's own Sami background (Høgmo, 2005). These complex social and psychological factors can help explain why so many Samis in this study experience offences from their own Sami group.

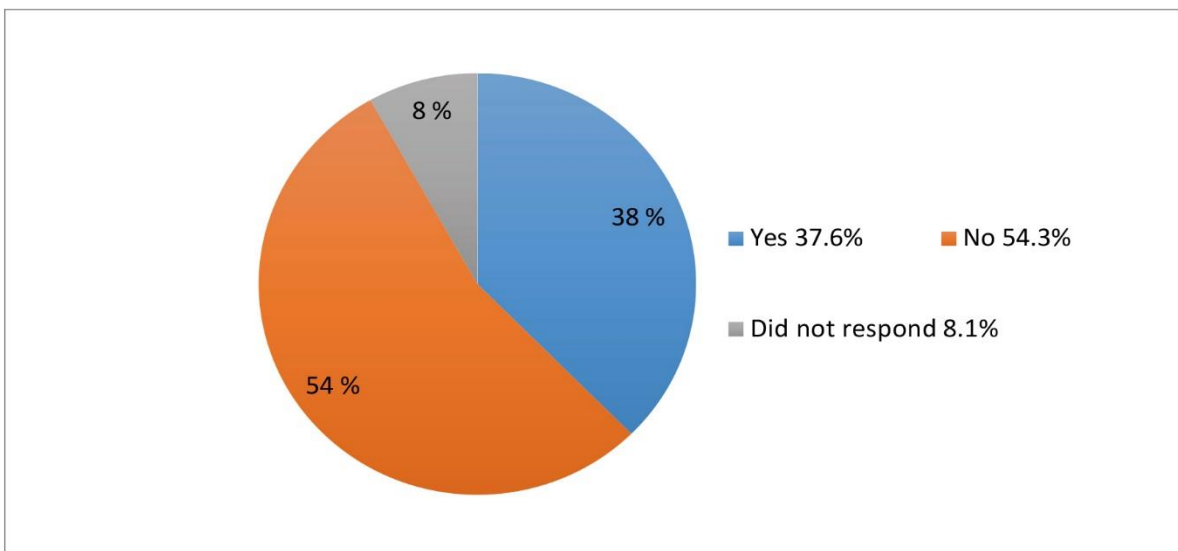
## 9.2.6 Resilience against Discrimination

Research shows that self-reported experience of discrimination is associated with mental and physical health problems (K. L. Hansen, 2015; K. L. Hansen & Sørлие, 2012). A fifth of the sample reported that discrimination affected them a lot (table 9.10) and we know from earlier studies that this group is potentially exposed to health problems (Paradies et al., 2015).

**Figure 9.10 How affected by discrimination are you?**



**Figure 9.11 Did you do something to end the discrimination?**



We also know that those who did something to end the discrimination emerge with better health than those who do not. In our sample, 38% said that they did something to stop the discrimination. One can suppose that this group is most resilient to the negative health consequences that discrimination can inflict (figure 9.11).

## 9.2.7 Few Samis Report Discrimination to the Equality and

### Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman

Even though many Samis experience discrimination, few have contacted the The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman (LDO- *Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet*). In our sample, only 1.8% (45 people) who reported having experienced discrimination had contacted LDO. There can be many reasons that Samis do not contact LDO for help. One of these can be tied to Sami norms and traditions where one should appear strong and not ask for help outside of the family when one is faced with hardship (Bongo, 2012; Kuokkanen, 2015). Cultural and linguistic barriers may also be reasons for Samis not to seek help regarding personal experiences with discrimination.

## 9.2.8 Multiple Discrimination

Samis experience discrimination in several arenas or settings much more frequently than the majority Norwegian population. This means that Samis more often than non-Samis report that discrimination occurs in more areas of society at the same time, for example in an educational context and/or work environment, local community, public sector, in stores/restaurants and/or on the internet. The fact that Samis experience discrimination (most often because of their ethnic background) in several areas of society at the same time, and from both known and unknown people, can be understood in relation to the concept of cumulative discrimination. This term refers to discrimination that accumulates across spheres or arenas. Cumulative discrimination in one part of society can contribute to reduced opportunities in other areas (Arnfinn & Hilde, 2016). For example, discrimination at school can affect results at school and in the long run, opportunities in the labour market. These processes are seldom illuminated by research because they often focus on single arenas such as school or work and therefore miss connections between them.

## 9.3 Challenges and Recommendations

Many Samis experience various forms of discrimination in Norwegian society. We know that the most common form of discrimination is ethnic discrimination and that they face these offences in various arenas of society: in educational contexts, work, in contact with public services, in stores, restaurants and increasingly in social media, which in the last three years has developed into a new arena for discrimination of Samis.

Discrimination against Samis is a social problem. It has been documented through research over the last ten years (Ketil Lenert Hansen, 2011). Nevertheless, there is little systematic research exploring equality and the discrimination challenges that Samis experience in Norway, for example at school, work, local community and in social media. There are many more reports about immigrants (Midtbøen, 2015). Norwegian authorities should establish a system to monitor the extent of discrimination the Norwegian indigenous population encounters in the different social arenas, especially at school, work and local community. In this chapter, we have looked at some of the challenges of equality and discrimination that Samis encounter in Norwegian society. There are still large gaps in knowledge about discrimination and bullying of Samis which future research should shed light on, especially on areas that concern Sami children and youth.

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