

Parenting Style Differences Between Sami and Norwegian Children



Reindeer Transparent
Background [digital
image]. Retrieved
from [available](#)

Sápmelaččat - thisisFINLAND [digital
image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

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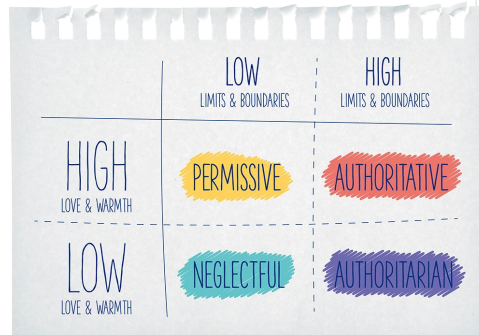
Seamless looping high definition video of
the Norwegian flag waving on a flag pole
with luma matte included. Flag has an
accurate design and a detailed fabric texture
with partial transparency [digital image].
Retrieved from [available](#)

Hello! My name is Francesca Asmus, and today I will be talking about the differences between the native Sami people, and Norwegian people that now make up the majority of the area. On the left there is the flag of the Sami people along with a reindeer which plays an integral role in their religious beliefs. On the right is the Norwegian flag, which is probably far more familiar.

Introduction

➤ **What are the different parenting styles?**

- **Permissive, Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Neglectful**
(Mgbemere B., Telles R. 2013)



- **Why is it important?**
- **What groups are being studied?**
- **Sami and Norwegian**

Parenting Styles- Do you have one?-
Happy Families [digital image]. (2016).
Retrieved from [available](#)

So what are the different parenting styles and what do they mean?

There are four different parenting styles, three of which were defined by Dina Baumrind, and one which was defined based on current research (Mgbemere B., Telles R. 2013). Each type is based on key differences in levels of control and limitations, as well as levels of warmth and care for the child. The type most commonly agreed to be the most beneficial is the Authoritative parenting style that incorporates a high level of demand and control of the child with a high level of warmth and love. This usually involves setting strict rules while also being flexible and understanding of the child's own needs and wants. The Permissive parenting style involves high warmth and love combined with very low demands, in which the child typically overpowers the parents' own authority. Authoritarian parents display high demand and control, but with little warmth and love, typically ordering the child with strict rules without compromise or understanding. The more recent parenting style, the Neglectful parent, involves low control and love. This style describes parents that have no rules or love for the child. Neglectful parents generally don't care about their child whatsoever, not even enough to set any expectations.

Understanding parenting styles is important to parents of every nation, because it can be challenging to know whether a person is "parenting correctly." While the parenting styles must also depend on child temperament, observing the differences between cultures and the common perception of child behavior from each culture may shed insight into which parenting style is most beneficial to the culture.

In this case, I studied the Sami and Norwegian people. I then compared their parenting

styles, and perception of childhood misbehavior to observe any patterns. However, to start with, let's just describe what makes each culture unique from each other.



Norway Political Map [digital image]. (2019). Retrieved from [available](#)

Norwegians

- **Population: 5,312,191** (The World Factbook: Norway 2018)
- **Languages: Bokmal Norwegian, Nynorsk Norwegian**
- **Religions: Evangelical-Lutheran**



Norway is TOO White According to the President of the Jewish Community in Oslo [digital image]. (2014). Retrieved from [available](#)

Norway is located in northern Europe, on the opposite side of Sweden. The population is fairly large, and the number shown (5,312,191 people) excludes the Sami people that may live in the same area (The World Factbook: Norway 2018). Almost all of the country of Norway is Norwegian, and thus the most popular languages include Bokmal Norwegian, and Nynorsk Norwegian. The other languages of Sami and Finnish are minorities within the country. Norwegians tend to practice an Evangelical-Lutheran religion, with other christian sects making up most other minorities within the country. Although the location is very similar, the Sami people have a distinct culture that is separate from the Norwegians.



The Sami languages in Norway, Sweden, and Finland- Maps on the Web [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

Sami

- **Population: 80,000 to 100,000** (Sami in Sweden 2018)
- **Languages: Eastern Sami, Central Sami, Southern Sami**
 - **Distinct further divisions**
- **Religion: Sami Indigenous religion** (Holloway, A. I. n.d.)
 - **Animism, shamanism, polytheism**



Rare photos of indigenous Sami people of The Nordic Areas [digital image]. (2017). Retrieved from [available](#)

The Sami people are a part of the indigenous population that make up their land known as Sápmi, this land stretches across northern areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Their population is estimated to be much smaller than the Norwegian's population size, and it is much less precise (80,000 to 100,000, that's a whole 20,000 people difference) (Sami in Sweden 2018). The Sami were at one point nomadic, many of which were reindeer herders matching their routes of the reindeer during all times of the year.

There are three main languages of the Sami: the Eastern Sami, Central Sami, and Southern Sami. These three are further subdivided into other dialects, with Central Sami's division into Northern Sami being the most prevalent. The languages are generally genderless and very specific to the environment (for example there are over 300 words for snow).

The Sami religion is an accumulation of Animism (belief that every creation has a soul), Shamanism, and Polytheism (Holloway, A. I. n.d.). There are many spirits and gods that make up the different aspects of the religion. The Mother, Father, Son, and Daughter are the most important religious figures. The shamanistic part of their religion involves worship with rhythmic drumming and yolking (chanting). There is also the belief of an afterlife called Saivo, which is a wonderful, abundant, bountiful land that frees people from their harsh lives before their death.

However, all of this information comes from those outside of the Sami culture, which seems like an unfair representation.

Sami



[umea2014]. (2013, May 29). *My People- The Sami people* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZIU7KEis3w>

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For more information about the Sami people, I wanted a source that was made by someone from the culture. I think that this video is a good way to capture the people of the culture and how their past traditions have influenced their modern lifestyles. A lot of the sources that I found were not made with any Sami people involved, and I didn't want to unintentionally silence the culture that I was studying.

Sami



Sami People- the indigenous people of the north [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

➤ Key differences

(Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004)

- **Lower Social Class**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Collectivist versus Individualistic**

There are obviously distinct cultural differences between Norwegians and the Sami people, but what are the implications of these differences that may impact parenting style?

The socioeconomic status of Sami people tends to be lower, especially those that continue the traditional work of reindeer herding (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004). Sami people are typically labeled as a separate ethnicity based on their background, however no genetic basis for the differences have been attributed. The nature of the Sami people tends to be observed as a more collectivist culture as compared to Norwegians. They tend to emphasize the nature of the community over individual beliefs. Such traits may influence the decision of the parents to treat their children a certain way.

Sami versus Norwegians

Sami (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004)

- **More Permissive**
 - **High autonomy, same expectations**
- **Co-sleeping common**
- **Socially Independent**



A Sami Family [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

Norwegian

- **Less Permissive**
- **Co-sleeping less common**
- **Less expectant of bladder control**



Norwegian Family Flashcards on Tinycards [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

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In a study contrasting the differences in parenting styles between the two groups, there are significant differences (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004). The study observed that the Sami families sampled tended to show higher trends of permissive parenting, allowing their children to have a higher degree of autonomy. With this parenting style, however, the families still held their children up to the same standards of the Norwegian families. With the few regulations of their permissive parenting, there were higher rates of co-sleeping and unscheduled feeding in Sami families. Sami children were observed as being more socially independent, however just like the expectations of the child, the physical independence did not differ much. Although, it was also noted that Norwegian treatment of children tended to be less expectant of the physical independence of bladder control (they have more leniency for potty training).

Sami versus Norwegians

Sami (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004)

- **Physical Punishment more common**
- **Emotional control**
 - **Supernatural beings**



A Sami Family [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

Norwegians

- **Do not encourage retaliation**
- **More tolerant of aggression**



Norwegian Family Flashcards on Tincards [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

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Although both groups show low incidence of physical punishments, the Sami people have a higher tendency towards physically punishing children (which is interesting considering their more permissive nature) (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004). The emotional control of Sami children is at a higher incidence, especially incidents of threatening with supernatural beings to trick children into submission. Most of these methods are enacted because Sami parents believe they are preparing their children for a harsh future.

For childhood aggression, Norwegian families are less likely to encourage retaliation against peers. However Norwegians were generally more tolerant of physical aggression, jealousy, and expressions of anger (temper tantrums) in childhood. The individualistic nature of Norwegians has some influence on joint ownership, as Norwegians tend to show less care for values about sharing with others.

Sami versus Norwegians

Sami (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2000)

- **Girls vs Boys**
 - **Problem behaviors**
 - **Freedom and autonomy** (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004)



A Sami Family [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

Norwegians

- **Girls vs Boys**
- **Differences not attributed to ethnic groups**

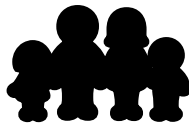


Norwegian Family Flashcards on Tincards [digital image]. Retrieved from [available](#)

There are significant differences in observed problem behaviors in a separate study, especially those in regard to gender (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2000). What is important to note, is that these differences are not due to any ethnic influence, so all of such findings from this study were due to cultural or other environmental factors. In Sami families, the mothers tend to identify more problem behaviors with their daughters. The opposite is true for Norwegian families, Norwegian mothers tend to identify more difficulties with their sons. This may relate to the autonomy granted by the parents, as in Sami families, boys tend to be given more freedom (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004). With more freedom, the parents may simply see their sons as often as their daughters, and may therefore have less difficulty with them.

Conclusions

- **What was learned?**
 - **Individualism versus collectivism** (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004)
- **Potential implications and consequences?**
- **What other studies should be done?**
 - **Checkups on families**



Although there are some incidences of more individualistic traditions for autonomy within the Sami culture (Javo, C., Rønning J. A., Heyerdahl S. 2004), there are higher tendencies towards collectivist traditions of co-sleeping and group harmony. Sami people align more with other native cultures, such research suggests that native cultures have a particular but unique form of parenting style. A parenting style that is both encouraging of autonomy while also emphasizing a group dynamic. This type of parenting style was not covered in Baumrind's original study, and is important for developing further understanding into the subject. We should consider the implications of these studies when defining characteristics for parenting to avoid being too western-centric. The hypocritical findings suggest that the western findings may not accurately represent a global population. The Sami parents were somehow both permissive and more likely to use a physical punishment. These findings seem to suggest opposite ideals, yet both exist simultaneously. Whether or not these parental methods are useful may warrant further study. Checking up on the children later on in their lives may provide more insight into the implications of the unique type of Sami parenting.

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