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*Membership and Internal Democracy
Immigrant Organisations in the City of Oslo*

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Abstract

Immigrant organisations in the City of Oslo receive support from the government for their daily operation. In order to receive such support, each organisation must be membership-based and have internal democratic procedures. This paper raises the question of how we can understand this combination of support for ethnic based organisations and requirements of membership and internal democracy. It explores the usefulness of two partly overlapping ways of understanding this policy and discusses their interrelationship. Firstly, within the context of the crisis of multiculturalism, the paper discusses whether this combination is based on the aim of strengthening the organisations' procedural commitment to liberal-democratic principles. Secondly, the paper analyses whether requirements of membership and internal democracy can mainly be understood within the framework of the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. By comparing the policy at three empirical levels, the paper concludes that this combination can mainly be understood within the framework of the traditional historical Nordic model, but that there is an ambiguity in this policy related to minority rights.

Keywords

Immigrant Organisations, Multiculturalism Backlash, Nordic Model, Group-differentiated Rights, Local Policies.

Author's biographical note

Marianne Takle holds a PhD in political science. Her doctorate focused on the subject of German migration policy and was awarded by the University of Oslo in 2005. From 2005 to 2007, she conducted research at the National Library of Norway and published a book and several articles about the relationship between nation and library. Since 2008 she has continued to study the EU's migration policy, national migration policy in selected European countries, nationalism and cultural studies at NOVA, Norwegian Social Research. In 2010, she was a Research Fellow at POLIS, University of Cambridge, where she studied the European border control regime. Her articles have appeared in journals such as, 'Nations and Nationalism', 'Nationalism and Ethnic Politics', 'International Journal of the Sociology of Law' and 'Ariadne'. She is currently working on a three-year post doctoral project on how immigrant organisations in Oslo participate in local democracy.

Introduction

Ethnic based organisations in the City of Oslo receive financial support from the government for their daily operation. In order to receive this 'basic support' the members of these organisations must either themselves have been born outside the Nordic countries, Switzerland, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand or be children of people born outside these areas. This kind of support to ethnic based organisations is a kind of group-differentiated rights, common in multicultural policy (KYMLICKA, 2010:37). In Oslo, these group-differentiated rights are followed by certain democratic duties. To receive this support each organisation must be membership-based and have internal democracy with an elected leadership and all members must have voting rights. In public documents, this combination of rights and duties is justified with reference to a normative ideal that immigrant organisations should both be internal schools of democracy for their members and represent the ethnic or national group's mutual interests externally in local democratic processes (WHITE PAPER NO. 39 (2006-2007)).

How can we understand this combination of support for ethnic based organisations and requirements of membership and internal democracy? To answer this question, I explore the usefulness of two partly overlapping ways of understanding this policy and discuss their interrelationship. Firstly, I examine whether this combination can be understood within the framework of the 'backlash against multiculturalism' (VERTOVEC & WESSENDORF eds., 2010). Since the beginning of the 21st century multiculturalism policy has been blamed for widening the gaps between different ethnic groups, and that groups of people live 'parallel lives' that do not overlap by way of meaningful interchanges. This criticism has not only led to the call for social cohesion in increasingly ethnic and religious diverse societies, but also the requirements of a procedural commitment to liberal-democratic principles (JOPPKE, 2004:254). Within the context of the crisis of multiculturalism, I elaborate on whether the City of Oslo's linking of group-differentiated rights to democratic duties could be interpreted as a way of facilitating the integration of immigrants by encouraging immigrant organisations to solve any internal problems through democratic procedures.

Secondly, I examine how this basic support for membership-based local immigrant organisations can be understood within the framework of the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. The central characteristics of the voluntary sector in the Nordic countries are that the organisations have a broad membership base and that they

are internally democratically structured (TRÄGÅRDH & VAMSTAD, 2009; WOLLEBÆK & SIVESIND, 2010). The Nordic model of voluntary organisation is also characterised as a people's movement model, and in the Norwegian context, people's movements have brought broad groups from all over the country into the public domain since the second half of the 1800s (ØSTERUD ET AL., 2003). Following a neo-institutional approach (MARCH & OLSEN 1995; 1998), a central assumption in this paper is that the historical circumstances that led to a specific model are unlikely to change rapidly and that models tend to develop a certain path-dependency or resistance to change. I elaborate on whether the support for immigrant organisations can be understood within the framework of the normative ideals inherent in this Nordic model of voluntary organisation.

In common with multicultural policies, the Nordic model of voluntary organisation is based on the aim to incorporate individuals into society not only as individuals, but also as groups. By examining the City of Oslo's support schemes for immigrant organisations through these two lenses, I aim to go one step further towards a better understanding of the balancing of the justifications for social cohesion that are similar in several European countries and arguments related to national or regional historical traditions (see e.g. ZAPATA-BARRERO, 2010). This balancing is seen in relation to the fact that most European governments have incorporated immigrants and ethnic minorities through a multifaceted and loosely connected set of measures (FREEMAN, 2006). Moreover, the focus on the City of Oslo allows me to concentrate on how policy measures decided at state and local level are implemented in practice at the local level. Oslo is central to this argument as around 30 percent of all immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway have settled in this city. As the main aim with this analysis is to examine the Norwegian state's and the City of Oslo's policy, it will cover neither the migrants' perceptions of this policy nor how they try to overcome an eventual bureaucratic conservatism (VOSS AND SHERMAN, 2000).

The empirical analysis is based on publicly available documents. I examine the support schemes by analysing and comparing studies of the Norwegian authorities' policies at three levels. Firstly, I analyse how the Norwegian government and the City of Oslo articulate normative ideals for membership-based immigrant organisations in *policy statements*. This analysis is based on White Papers, the government's websites and policy documents on integration and diversity from the City of Oslo. Secondly, I examine how the authorities facilitate minorities' voluntary organisation by defining the

criteria which the immigrant organisations must fulfil to receive support through the schemes. I investigate three support schemes administered by the City of Oslo, two of which are from the state and one from the City of Oslo. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) defines the criteria for the state's support schemes, whereas the Department of Cultural Affairs and Education in the City of Oslo defines the criteria for the municipal integration support. Thirdly, I investigate the bureaucrats' *practices* regarding the amount of financial support, which actors and activities they support and which actors and activities they do not find worthy of support. My investigations of the local authority's practice for the allocation of financial support are based on archive studies and presentation of cases from The Unit for Diversity and Integration (EMI) in Oslo.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first two sections present the paper's theoretical and conceptual framework. The first section discusses the relationship between minority rights, membership and democracy within the context of the crisis of multiculturalism, while the second presents the Nordic model of voluntary organisation within the framework of a neo-institutional approach. The third section describes ethnic diversity in the city of Oslo and discusses the definitions of immigrant organisations in the City. The fourth, fifth and sixth sections present the empirical analyses. The fourth section analyses the government's normative ideals for immigrants' participation in the civil society, the fifth section examines the authorities' criteria for providing financial support to the immigrant organisations and the sixth section investigates the bureaucrats' practice in relation to the actors and activities they support.

Backlash against Multiculturalism

In recent years politicians and researchers across Europe have criticised multiculturalism. They have attempted to develop new ways to approach increasingly diverse ethnic and religious societies (BRUBAKER 2001; JOPPKE 2004; ASARI ET AL., 2008; KOOPMANS 2010). The debate on the crisis of multiculturalism involves several different understandings of the term. One main distinction is between multiculturalism as a description of a society composed of many different cultures and religions, and as a normative ideal that minorities should be granted special rights in order to strengthen their social participation. The increasing criticism of multiculturalism often emphasises the need to facilitate more interaction between various ethnic and religious minority and majority groups, and the need to create a

shared sense of belonging (BRUBAKER 2001). Political leaders both in countries known for the implementation of multiculturalism such as Britain (GRILLO 2010), and in countries that have never had a multicultural policy, such as Germany (TAKLE 2005), have announced that multiculturalism has failed. In an edited volume on 'the multiculturalism backlash' Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) summarise the many forms of critique against multiculturalism raised since the turn of the millennium. The main form of critique is that multiculturalism fosters separateness among ethnic minorities and that it does not encourage dialogue and cooperation. On the contrary, it encourages groups to focus on their differences rather than on what they have in common and thereby cements the differences. This may, according to the criticism, lead to cultural and ethnic segregation and can be a hindrance to the development of a common political culture.

The critique to which Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) refer is not only directed against how cultural variation is recognised through different policy measures, but also against any accommodation of cultural variation per se. The authors conclude, however, that this criticism has not led to a dramatic retraction of cultural accommodation measures in European countries, but rather to an increased emphasis on integration and the need for an overarching social cohesion within each country. While multiculturalism has mostly disappeared from political rhetoric to be replaced by integration, Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) argue that continuing support for immigrant and minority cultural differences is evident in the growing use of the notions of diversity. They conclude that in many cases diversity policy is interchangeable with multiculturalism.

One main distinction, however, remains important when it comes to practice. There is a new emphasis on diversity policy in which institutions recognise cultural differences as an individual trait rather than treating members of ethnic minorities as parts of bonded groups (JOPPKE, 2004). To understand the relevance of the critique against treating immigrants as members of bonded groups for the financial support for immigrant organisations, it is useful to discuss how multiculturalism is defined and justified in political-philosophical literature (e.g. TAYLOR, 1994; KYMLICKA, 1995; PAREKH, 2006; MODOOD, 2007). Although the advocates of multicultural policies base their arguments on diverging normative ideals for minority rights, they share two important features, which are especially important in a democratic perspective. Firstly, minority rights go beyond the civil and political rights of individual citizenship. Secondly, minority rights are adopted with the intention of recognising and

accommodating the identities and needs of ethnocultural and religious groups (KYMLICKA & NORMAN, 2000:2).

One of the advocates of multiculturalism, Kymlicka (1995, 2010) starts from the point that political life has an inescapably national dimension, which gives a profound advantage to majority nations. A central argument in Kymlicka's (1995:84) justification for group-differentiated rights is that it is only through having access to one's own societal culture that one has access to a range of meaningful options. Although Kymlicka (1995:26) argues that group differentiated rights for immigrants are usually intended to promote integration into the larger society, he does not see these rights as temporary because the cultural differences they protect are not something he wants to eliminate. He also argues that the decision whether to integrate with the host community's institutions must be up to the members of the minorities themselves. Moreover, in a recent article Kymlicka (2010) argues that what he calls the 'master narrative' of 'the rise and fall of multiculturalism' in some respect is based on misunderstandings. Especially regarding immigrant multiculturalism, Kymlicka (2010:47) argues that defenders of multiculturalism must supplement their perceived benefit of cultural diversity and inter-cultural understanding with a fuller acknowledgement of the moral risks involved.

While Kymlicka sees cultural group membership as essential for meaning and choice, Modood's (2007) approach to multicultural politics starts out from the politics of recognition of difference or respect for identities that are important to people. The differences at issue are those that are perceived both by the outsider and by the group members. It is not just some form of distinctness, but a form of alienness or inferiority that diminishes or makes difficult equal membership in the wider society or polity. Modood emphasises that there is a sense of group identity in play, and this is related to a form of subordination or a mode of suppression. The differences in question refer to race, ethnicity, cultural heritage or religious community, and typically differences that overlap these categories as they do not have singular, fixed meanings (MODOOD, 2007:38). He argues that multicultural accommodation of minorities is different from integration because it recognises the social reality of groups and not just individuals at the levels of: identities, associations, belonging, including dispersion, behaviour, culture, religious practice etc., and political mobilisation. These groups might be of different kinds, such as sense of solidarity with people of similar origins or faith or mother tongue, including those in a country of origin. This form of accommodation

should also allow group based cultural and religious practice to be fitted into existing, established majority ways of doing things Modood (2007:48-50).

In contrast to Modood's focus on post-immigrant groups, Parekh (2006:13) aims to define multicultural politics as covering the relationship between different cultural communities including the majority culture. He refers to different cultural communities that have evolved historically and have long collective memories of struggles and achievements and well-established traditions of behaviour. Parekh (2006:162) argues that individuals are born into their cultural communities, and although one might leave the community this can never be the same as leaving a voluntary organisation as one will always retain some of one's community culture.

If minority rights are combined with the requirement of membership-based organisations the issue of membership is a question that must be solved in practice. While the advocates of multicultural policies seem to define membership according to ascribed characteristics (KYMLICKA, 1995; PAREKH, 2006; MODOOD, 2007), an institutionalisation of group membership is commonly based on acquired characteristics. One critique against multiculturalism is that there is a problem of identifying group members related to various kinds of cultural overlap, and that grey zones or hybrids are common for individuals in contemporary liberal democracies (ERIKSEN, 2010). Moreover, there is a fuzziness of all kinds of group boundaries and attempts to institutionalise membership will inevitably exclude some who should be included and include some who should be excluded (TILLY, 1999; LAMONT & MOLNAR 2002). Furthermore, any theory of group-differentiated rights presupposes that group members have at least some identical interests. When a group-differentiated policy is institutionalised in practice it implies the possibility that it might benefit some, and harm others within the group. A common critique against multiculturalism is that there may be internal suppression within the group, and that it is problematic to define a representative leadership and determine who should be entitled to speak on behalf of the group (KILLMISTER, 2011).

In the context of the many forms of critique against multiculturalism, and especially the treatment of members of ethnic minorities as parts of bonded groups, one may ask whether democracy within immigrant organisations could be a way to solve internal problems within the immigrant organisations. A combination of group-differentiated rights with requirements of membership-based organisations and internal democracy means not only that minority rights are linked to duties, but also implies state

interventions in voluntary organisation's internal matters. In theory, the civil society's institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, although in practice the boundaries are often blurred. The City of Oslo's linking of group-differentiated rights to democratic duties might be interpreted as a way to encourage the immigrant organisations to solve any internal problems through democratic procedures. Furthermore, if the normative ideal of a group-based approach to ethnic minority incorporation is not implemented in practice, more individual modes of inclusion might also be understood within the framework of the backlash against multiculturalism.

The Nordic Model of Voluntary Organisation

Central contributions to studies of immigrant integration emphasise that national models of integration are the consequences of specific national histories and institutional legacies (BRUBAKER, 1992, KOOPMANS ET AL. 2005; BOMMES & THRÄNHARDT, 2010). Based on a historical-institutionalist approach Brubaker (1992) traces the origins and development of the institution of citizenship in France and Germany and shows how differing definitions have been shaped and sustained by distinctive and deeply rooted understandings of nationhood. Koopmans et al. (2005) combine an analysis of formal access to citizenship rights with an investigation of immigrants' access to group-differentiated rights used in the debate about multiculturalism. Bommes & Thränhardt (2010:10) emphasise that the way in which states deal with migration is dependent on different courses of state building, how the population is constituted as a national community of citizens and the related design of welfare systems. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that different welfare state regimes lay important premises for the way in which the nation state defines the policy on immigrant integration.

In line with various institutionalist approaches, these scholars explain different countries' migration and integration policies as the result of each country's history, national self-understanding and view of the role of the state. According to a neo-institutional approach institutions can be defined as a relatively stable collection of practices, routines, understandings and rules prescribing appropriate behaviour for specific groups of actors in specific situations (MARCH & OLSEN 1995). Actions involve evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation. The pursuit of purpose is associated with identities more than with interests, and with the selection of rules more than with individual rational

expectations. This implies that at the institutional level, actions follow rules, procedures and identities that are in constant interaction with their environment, and changes are therefore often incremental and based on historical path-dependent ways (MARCH & OLSEN, 1995, 1998).

Accordingly, on the basis of similarities in the way civil society is organised in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, it is common to speak of a Nordic model of voluntary organisation (WOLLEBÆK & SIVESIND 2010). Central characteristics of the voluntary sector in these countries are that the organisations have a broad membership base, that participation in voluntary work is seen as an integral part of being a member of an organisation and that they are democratically structured (BENGTSSON 2004; TRÄGÅRDH & VAMSTAD 2009). Such a combination of voluntary work and membership ensures participants' democratic rights and ownership of the organisation. Membership of organisations provides opportunities to influence the organisations' internal actions and their opinions in the public arena. According to this organisation of the voluntary sector, it is a normative ideal that organisations should be democratically organised in such a way that the actions reflect their members' preferences, and that the membership has the opportunity to speak and to be heard (LORENTZEN, 2004:31).

The Norwegian emphasis on democracy can partly be explained by the fact that civil organizations were established in the same period as when national liberation occurred. Nineteenth-century mainstream popular movements followed the same organisational structure as the political parties. They have been characterised by hierarchical organisation, where local organisations are linked together in regional and national organisations (ØSTERUD ET AL., 2003). People's movements provided local interests in the political centre, and in many cases acted as countercultures. The aim was to create political weight and legitimacy through mass membership, built on a broad social mobilisation. Participation in these movements socialised members into democratic values and gave them training in practical democracy. The hierarchical structures were strengthened after the Second World War. The welfare state emphasised that voluntary organisations should be seen as communities of interest, mediated from the grassroots to central government through democratic processes. The counterculture organisations in Norway have received recognition of their standpoints and accommodation of their cultural differences in the common national institutions. People's movements have focused on issues such as disagreements about language,

resistance to alcohol, religious questions and opposition to EU membership in 1972 and 1994.

While membership-based voluntary organisations have democratic legitimacy through their members' representation, voluntary organisations without membership are based on other forms of legitimacy. In many European countries the legitimacy of voluntary organisations rests on their moral foundation and their ability to turn fundamental ideological ideas into practice (LORENTZEN, 2004). The British charity tradition is, for example, based on the moral commitment of each individual and good deeds to help the needy. The Catholic subsidiary tradition also has a foundation that points to individual practice rooted in moral responsibility (STJERNØ, 2005). These traditions of personal commitment reduce the importance of membership. Organisations without membership often have a centralised decision-making authority, where there are employees in the organisation who have both the real and formal leadership responsibility. Contributions to the organisation are often simply in the form of financial support. This is common in the Anglo-American model of voluntary work, in which individuals are associated with non-profit making organisations as donors and volunteers rather than as members (TRÄGÅRDH & VAMSTAD, 2009; ENJOLRAS & WOLLEBÆK, 2010).

International comparison shows the Nordic countries are characterised by a large voluntary sector. This is primarily due to voluntary work being larger in scope than in other European countries. In the Nordic countries, around 60 percent of an organisation's income is generated by voluntary work, while in many other European countries this share is only around 35 percent (WOLLEBÆK & SIVESIND, 2010:16). There is, however, a trend apparent since the end of the 1990s, where membership-based organisations' positions in Norwegian civil society are being weakened (ØSTERUD ET AL., 2003). By comparing results from 2009 with findings from previous studies from 1997 and 2004, Wollebæk and Sivesind (2010) conclude that there has been a gradual transition in the Norwegian voluntary sector away from the people's movement model with its emphasis on membership towards philanthropy.

Nevertheless, as a normative ideal the membership-based, democratic and hierarchical model of voluntary organisations has vitality. This way of coordinating civilian activities has, according to Lorentzen (2004), become a distinctive Norwegian matter, tradition bound and convention-driven, and in many ways beyond debate and critical reflection. The perception that voluntary organisations serve as schools of

democracy is therefore widespread (BROCKMAN & ROGSTAD, 2004; HAGELUND & LONGA, 2009; BAY ET AL., 2010). In line with this model, members develop skills and commitment that are important both for the organisations and for democracy. One may ask whether the immigrant organisations can be juxtaposed to how the Norwegian counterculture organisations have been cultivated and administered within the framework of civil society. Through voluntary work and membership-based organisations various groups have had the opportunity to promote issues and gain influence in Norwegian democracy. They have simultaneously been included as a part of the state system. Accordingly, the way the Norwegian government and the City of Oslo link the requirement of membership and internal democracy to local immigrant organisations might be understood as a path dependency in relation to the Nordic model of voluntary organisation.

Immigrant organisations in Oslo

There are 500 000 immigrants in Norway, and in addition 100 000 people were born to parents who have immigrated to Norway. Immigrants in Norway have come as refugees, as migrant workers, for education or through family reunification. Two out of ten immigrants have lived in Norway for more than 20 years and four out of ten have lived in the country for only four years or fewer. Just over 50 percent of the Norwegian-born with immigrant parents have a background from Asia, Africa and Latin America, and only 17 percent are 20 years old or older. As most immigrants choose to settle in cities, around 170 200 people living in Oslo are immigrants or Norwegian-born with immigrant background. This represents around 28 percent of the population, which is far above the national average of just over 12 percent. The proportion of immigrants in Oslo is much higher than in other Norwegian municipalities (STATISTICS NORWAY, 2012). By comparing Oslo with other cities in Europe, North America and Australia with a high immigrant percentage, we can see that several cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Miami, Los Angeles, Sydney, Melbourne, Amsterdam, New York, Montreal and Washington have a higher proportion than Oslo. Within Scandinavia, Oslo has a slightly higher proportion than Copenhagen, but lower than Stockholm and Malmö (STATISTICS NORWAY, 2009).

There are various ways to define immigrant organisations: in relation to membership, issue or interest. Depending on which definition is applied, there are between 300 and 1000 immigrant organisations in Norway (MELVE, 2003). Common

traits of immigrant organisations in Norway are that they can be characterised by grass-roots involvement and local organisations that are mainly established on the basis of social purpose, to protect ethnic and religious identities (PREDELLI, 2006). There are around 10 nationally based immigrant organisations in Norway, which in various ways concentrate on ethnic minorities' interests, and they receive support from the state. These organisations are not membership-based and are therefore not seen as representative of the immigrant population in democratic terms (NØDLAND ET AL., 2007; ROGSTAD, 2007).

This study concentrates on the 283 registered local immigrant organisations in Oslo. To receive support the organisations must be registered, and 209 organisations received financial support within the framework of various support schemes in 2011 (some of them received from more than one support scheme). The immigrant organisations are mainly nationally or ethnically based. The largest amount of immigrant organisations originating from a single national group come from Somalia (34 organisations), the second largest group originates from Pakistan (28), followed by groups from Turkey (16) and Sri Lanka (11). The two largest groups reflect the largest immigrant groups in Oslo. The four largest immigrant groups are from Pakistan (21 203 people), Somalia (11 572 people), Sweden (10 311 people) and Poland (9 302 people). The country groups differ with respect to the cause of migration, when most people in a group came to the country and the proportion who have Norwegian citizenship, religious affiliation etc (OSLO STATISTICS, 2012).

All foreign nationals aged at least 18 years and who have been registered as resident in Norway for the last three years prior to election day can vote in local elections. These political opportunity structures seem to be decisive for the outcome of the local election in 2011. At the local election candidates with an immigrant background won 27 percent of the seats in the local parliament in Oslo, mirroring the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in the city.

Policy Statements: Ambiguity

Analysis of the government's and the City of Oslo's policy statements regarding the immigrant organisations reveal an ambiguous policy. In the latest White Paper no 39 (2006-2007) regulating the Norwegian voluntary sector, the government applies a broad understanding of democracy in a discussion of different types of voluntary organisations' democratic participation. This White Paper concludes that membership-

based organisations have a stronger democratic function than non-membership-based organisations. It argues that membership-based organisations have democratic functions both in terms of what they are and what they do. In this White Paper the government emphasises that membership-based organisations have both internal and external democratic functions. The government's ideal for the internal democracy is in line with the Nordic model insofar as the organisations' missions, activities and priorities should reflect their members' preferences. To achieve this ideal, the government stresses the organisations must have a democratic decision-making structure, which ensures the members can influence their organisations.

Furthermore, this White Paper no 39 (2006-2007) concludes that voluntary organisations and networks that are not membership-based lack democratic governance and thereby have a more limited democratic function. The authorities, nevertheless, believe these organisations or networks can contribute to democratic decisions by setting the agenda, by contributions to the public debate and by influencing stakeholders in relation to public policy. This ranking of the various forms of voluntary organisations in relation to their democratic function puts the Nordic model for voluntary work at the top of the ranking list.

This approach is also the basis for the policy statements supporting the inclusion of immigrants in civil society. According to the White Paper the goal of providing support to local immigrant organisations is to promote more civil and political participation:

“The grant does not support the organisations' identity building and activities that promote a common identity as immigrant or as member of an ethnic or national group. When the government supports local immigrant organisations that are built around a sense of belonging to an ethnic or national group, it is because it is important to have a position and a community that supports the participation in the civil and political life. Voluntary organisations are also important meeting places, where social participation is an intrinsic value beyond the organisations' primary purpose. Organisations provide identity, belonging and self-confidence. These are often important preconditions for a person's participation in social life. Not least for newly arrived immigrants, such organisations can act as supporters and door openers to the Norwegian society.”(WHITE PAPER NO. 39 (2006-2007), CHAPTER 19.3).

The normative ideal is clearly that immigrant organisations should both be internal schools of democracy for immigrants and represent the ethnic or national group's mutual interests externally in local democratic processes. The main aim to

facilitate increased democratic participation seems to reflect a path-dependency in which the government follows the traditional Norwegian way of organising the voluntary sector. Moreover, with this policy statement the government combines the Nordic model of voluntary organisation and minority rights. A similar mediating role of immigrant organisations can be seen in Sweden and Finland (BENGTSSON 2004; BOREVI 2004; KUGELBERG, 2011; PYYKKÖNEN, 2007).

Regarding minority rights there is an ambiguity in the Norwegian policy. In Norway, the government does not perceive the strengthening of a common identity as an immigrant or as member of an ethnic or national group as an end in itself in the way scholars such as Kymlicka (1995; 2010) emphasise, but rather as a useful means of integration in the majority society. This combination of requirements of membership and minority rights can therefore be seen as instrumental. This instrumental approach is also confirmed by the way in which the Ministry of Children and Equality (BLD 2012) aims to recruit more people with an immigrant background to voluntary organisations and activities so that minorities are able to participate in civil society on an equal footing with the majority. Although this emphasis on the need to compensate for immigrants' disadvantages combined with a recognition of groups is central to multicultural politics, these policies are not necessarily intended to strengthen a minority's culture but rather as a means of individual modes of inclusion in the majority society.

This confirms the conclusion made in previous studies that Norwegian White Papers on immigrant integration say little or nothing about the recognition of minority groups' own cultural traditions (GRESSGÅRD, 2005; ENGEBRIGTSEN & FUGLERUD, 2009). Although minority rights are included in the Norwegian policy both with regard to national minorities and indigenous (Sami) people, group-differentiated rights are not a central part of the policy on immigrant integration. Accordingly, Engebriksen & Fuglerud (2009: 24) state that in Norway cultural diversity is understood as an individually based diversity. Moreover, by studying Norwegian White Papers from 1974 to 2006 Bay et al. (2010) find two distinct institutional policy discourses on the role of immigrant organisations regarding immigrant integration. One is part of the immigrant integration policy and emanates from the ministries responsible for this, today this is the Ministry of Children and Equality. The other is the wider discourse on voluntary organisations and civil society, for which the Ministry of Culture and Church affairs is responsible. The authors find that over time the integration discourse has changed from seeing the immigrant organisations as a means in

themselves to becoming potential means to achieve the authorities' goal of a well functioning diverse society. This change is, according to the authors, consistent with the general Pan-European retreat from multiculturalism (BAY ET AL., 2010: 306). In contrast, the authors find that within the voluntary sector discourse, the immigrant organisations received particular attention with regard to their significance for immigrant integration. This attention is, however, based on an ambiguous approach in which the strengthening of a minority's culture is seen as a means of inclusion in the majority society

A similar approach can be found in policy statements at the local level. Following a racially motivated murder in Oslo in 2001, the City Council adopted an ethical document in which the Council took a positive stance towards cultural diversity (EMI, 2011). The City Council formulated a long-term awareness-raising campaign called OXLO - Oslo Extra Large. The ethical document covers ten statements on how to make the city more tolerant. These statements say, for example, that every inhabitant is of equal value, that citizens with different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds share the same fundamental rights, duties and responsibilities, and that fighting Nazism, racism and intolerance is about protecting society's most fundamental values: democracy, freedom, safety and security.

While these policy statements reflect an emphasis on individual rights and duties, the City of Oslo's policy on immigrant integration is also based on membership and democracy procedures. This is reflected in the Board of immigrant organisations in Oslo. According to policy statements the board is an important measure in the City's integration policy, as it serves both as a common platform for immigrant organisations and as a bridge between immigrant organisations and the municipality of Oslo (EMI, 2011). However, only membership-based and democratically structured immigrant organisations in Oslo can participate in the Board. Although the membership-based model lays important guidelines for the City of Oslo's integration policy, this is not mentioned in policy statements. This implicit application of a membership-based model might indicate that there is a certain path dependency where the City of Oslo combines the Nordic model of voluntary organisation and minority rights. However, similar to the government, the local administration does not emphasise the strengthening of a common identity as an immigrant or as member of an ethnic or national group as an end in itself. Both the government's and the City of Oslo's policy statements reflect an emphasis on individual modes of inclusion in the majority society.

Policy-Making: Criteria for Providing Support

The ambiguity found in policy statements is reflected at the policy-making level. The City of Oslo administers three types of support schemes for immigrant organisations or networks in the city. The state provides two of them, and for these two the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) defines the guidelines for support. One is the state's 'basic support' for the operation of local immigrant organisations, and the other is the state's 'activity support' for voluntary activities in local communities. The third form of support scheme is 'municipal integration support', and for this the Department of Cultural Affairs and Education in the City of Oslo defines the guidelines. All of the three support schemes are administered by City of Oslo. The Unit for Diversity and Integration (EMI) in Oslo is responsible for distributing the financial support according to applications and to ensure that this support is used for its intended purpose (EMI, 2011).

The three types of support schemes have different objectives, target groups and criteria for support. Consequently they provide diverse guidelines for immigrants' democratic participation. The main distinction is between on the one hand, the state's basic support, and on the other hand, the state's activity support and the municipal integration support. The differences between the support schemes reflect the two main political strategies: (i) the requirement of membership-based and democratically structured organisations and (ii) the requirement of cooperation between several ethnic or national groups. While the first strategy includes incentives to establish ethnically based voluntary organisations, the second has incentives to prevent segregation and increase cooperation among such groups.

(i) Membership-based Organisations

The target group for the state's basic support scheme is membership-based immigrant organisations in local communities. Government subsidies are distributed across the country, calculated according to the counties' share of the country's immigrant population. The government defines the immigrant population as the number of foreign-born persons who are permanently resident in Norway, and who were born outside the Nordic countries, Switzerland, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - and their children. Given that one in three immigrants in Norway lives in Oslo, the city manages large parts of the state's support scheme for local immigrant organisations.

A precondition to receive basic support is that the immigrant organisation has a democratically elected leadership, and all members who have paid membership fees are eligible to vote. The allocation of support is based on the number of "eligible members". Because some organisations have cheated with members lists, the authorities requires information about exactly how many members there are in each organisation. Since 2010 that means members who have paid the annual membership fees in the previous year by bank transfer from the individual's own bank account to the organisation's account and who permanently live in Oslo. The state also requires a membership list attached to the application. The list must include each member's name, date of birth and address and a journal that documents the payment from each member. Whereas child and youth organisations must have at least 20 eligible members to receive support, adult organisations must have at least 100 eligible members. All organisations that receive basic support should be able to document that they have been in operation for a minimum of two years, and they must be registered in public records. The immigrant organisations must submit annual reports, which give a brief summary of all the activities the organisation has conducted during the previous year, such as annual meeting, board meetings, member meetings or other activities for members and externally oriented activities that are not exclusively directed towards its own members. All these requirements have led to protests by several organisations, and the local unit administering the support schemes arranges courses regularly to give information about how to fulfil the requirements (EMI, 2011).

With this support scheme the authorities combine the Nordic model of voluntary organisation and minority rights not only in policy statements, but also at the policy-making level. In line with the Nordic model, the organisations receive support in relation to the number of members, and the guidelines emphasise the importance of internal democracy. One can find the same pattern in Sweden, although there seems to be a gradual change towards an emphasis on how well the activities are found to facilitate integration (BOREVI 2004; KUGELBERG, 2011:273). Since these immigrant organisations in Oslo give ethnic or national groups the possibility of maintaining their culture, this policy strategy is also a form of multicultural policy. Although the normative ideal for this policy strategy is that immigrant organisations should be internal schools of democracy and represent the ethnic or national group's mutual interests externally, existing research shows that this is not always the way it turns out in practice.

Several studies on immigrant organisations in Norway show a gap between the government's normative ideals associated with membership-based organisations and how immigrant organisations participate in voluntary work. Firstly, several researchers document that the authorities relatively rarely bring immigrant organisations into the formal decision-making processes through discussions, dialogues and consultations (ROGSTAD, 2007; PREDELLI, 2006, 2008; NØDLAND ET AL., 2007). It thus appears that the authorities do not follow their own ideals of inclusion of immigrants. Secondly, studies show that immigrants are relatively active in voluntary work, but they are less likely to be members of voluntary organisations than the majority population (ENJOLRAS & WOLLEBÆK, 2010). It may therefore appear that immigrants are included in voluntary work, but they are seldom members of the organisations they work for. Thirdly, research shows a trend in which the voluntary sector in Norway is still vital, but that there is a declining level of membership and participation in voluntary organisations (WOLLEBÆK & SIVESIND, 2010). It may appear that immigrant organisations follow the trend one can observe in the majority population's participation in the voluntary sector in Norway.

Finally, and possibly most relevant for the critique against multiculturalism, studies of local immigrant organisations in Norway conclude that the majority of organisations are concerned with caring for their own identity, and that they have little contact with other organisations or with public authorities (PREDELLI, 2008; NØDLAND ET AL., 2007; HAGELUND & LONGA, 2009). This could mean that membership is important within the organisations, but does not have the external democratic function the authorities want. It may also indicate that the immigrant organisations separate those on the inside from those on the outside. Rogstad (2007:113) concludes that the local ethnic organisations not only build a wall between the majority and minority groups, but also close the immigrants within their own ethnic groups. In contrast, some Norwegian studies (BAY ET AL. 2010), and studies of immigrant organisations in other European countries, show that immigrants' participation in ethnic organisations leads to greater political participation in the majority society (FENNEMA & TILLIE 2001; JACOBS & TILLIE 2004). However, more recent studies argue that membership of ethnic organisations leads to greater political participation in a majority society, but only if combined with an open political opportunity structure in the form of various group rights (MORALES & PILATI 2011). These recent studies' emphasis on the importance of group rights might support the City of Oslo's combination of the

Nordic model of voluntary organisation and minority rights at the policy-making level. However, over time, the Norwegian government and the City of Oslo have increasingly emphasised cooperation among several ethnic or national groups.

(ii) Cooperation between ethnic or national groups

Since 2009 the purpose of the state's 'activity support' scheme has been to create meeting places for people with different ethnic and national origins. Although this has been central to the criteria for this support scheme, the previous criteria were more vague on this point. While the target group for the 'basic support' comprises exclusively immigrant organisations in local communities, other voluntary organisations, immigrant networks, private and semi-public bodies can apply for activity support. As the purpose of the state's activity support is to facilitate the creation of meeting places in local communities, this support is only granted to activities where two or more ethnic or national groups work together. There are no requirements for membership (EMI, 2011).

Also the City of Oslo's 'municipal integration support' prioritises applicants who have an inter-cultural profile, involving contacts and activities among several ethnic or national groups. This means that the municipality supports cross-cultural co-operation rather than only one single membership-based immigrant organisation or one ethnic group. The support is allocated in accordance with priority areas in Oslo's integration and diversity policies. The contemporary priorities are measures that can help to strengthen the position of children and young people with minority backgrounds in schools, measures that can increase participation in the workplace and in society and measures that promote inter-cultural relationships and activities (EMI, 2011). The target groups for this support scheme are voluntary organisations in Oslo and enterprises arranging activities with an approved social purpose. The municipality requires the organisations or enterprises to specify in their application how the activities are in accordance with democratic values such as equality and tolerance within the framework of OXLO (CITY OF OSLO, 2012).

The creation of meeting places for people with different ethnic and national backgrounds is also central to the City of Oslo's integration and diversity policies. This applies especially to the initiatives in the eastern parts of the city, where the proportion of immigrants is high. One central aim is to establish physical places where people can meet. In a study of diverse ethnic networks in a city district in the eastern part of Oslo, Ødegård (2010) concludes that meeting places may contribute to lowering the threshold

for participation in a traditional Norwegian context. This emphasis on cooperation can also be found in cities like Berlin, where several immigrant organisations cooperate with organisations in the majority society (HUNGER ET AL. 2011), and several of these organisations do not have a register of their members (YARDAKUL 2009).

Similarly to the reaction in several European countries (VERTOVEC & WESSENDORF, 2010), the fear of segregation seems to have influenced Oslo's policy on immigrant organisations. Both the state's activity support and the municipal integration and diversity policy facilitate a form of participation in civil society that must be distinguished from membership-based organisations. This is a type of activities in civil society that we have seen the government perceives has a weaker democratic function than membership-based organisations. As these schemes neither encourage democratic schooling inside organisations nor democratic representation, they are not in line with the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. In contrast, the aim of these two support schemes is to integrate immigrants into the larger society, and cooperation among several groups and the creation of meeting places are seen as more important than including organisations in democratic structures.

Policy Practices: Local Diversities

While national models of integration might structure policy statements and policy-making, practices at the local level tend to be far more diverse than most policy models would suggest. The City of Oslo's practice for these three support schemes is reflected in: (i) economic priorities, (ii) actors who receive support, (iii) type of activity supported and (iv) what kind of actors and activities the authorities choose not to support.

(i) Economic priorities

Over the last four years there has been a gradual reduction in the financial support the state has allocated to the basic support and activity support schemes in Oslo from NOK 5.1 million in 2008 to NOK 4.2 million in 2011.¹ Accordingly, there has been a reduction in funding for the basic support to local membership-based immigrant organisations from NOK 1.5 million in 2008 to NOK 0.7 million in 2011. The funding of about NOK 2.7 million to the state's activity support in Oslo was, however, fixed

¹ On the 29th of February 2012 the value of Norwegian Kroner NOK 100 is around GBP 11,3 and EUR 13,7. <http://tux.aftenposten.no/calcFrame/start.htm?id=16>

throughout the period to 2011, and then it increased to NOK 3.0 million. The municipal integration support scheme shows a corresponding reduction in funding from NOK 4.9 million in 2008 to NOK 3.0 million in 2011.

The reduction in support shows at least two things. Firstly, the state and the municipality of Oslo have gradually reduced their funding for this type of measure to integrate immigrants in the city. Secondly, the reduction shows that the City of Oslo gives priority to maintaining funding for activities in which several ethnic groups work together rather than to support the operation of a membership-based immigrant organisation. This is not in line with the government's normative ideals in the White paper no 39 (2006-2007) that membership-based voluntary organisations have a stronger democratic function than organisations that are not membership-based. It may thus appear that the authorities are less likely to transfer the Nordic civil society model to ethnic-based immigrant groups. The economic priorities in the support schemes suggest that the Norwegian authorities consider it more important to enable groups with different ethnic backgrounds to work together, thus preventing segregation, rather than to strengthen immigrants' participation in local democracy.

(ii) Actors who receive support

To study the City of Oslo's practice in relation to the actors they grant support to, it is useful to distinguish between: a) membership-based immigrant organisations in Oslo that are registered in public records, b) immigrant networks that are not based on membership and c) the majority society's voluntary organisations, networks and municipal entities.

As shown above, the three support schemes have different target groups. The state's basic support goes exclusively to membership-based organisations, and the number of organisations that have received grants has fallen from 39 recipients in 2008 to 19 recipients in 2011. This must be seen within the context of an overall reduction in the number of applicants from 56 to 26 over the same period. As the number of immigrants in the city has increased in this period, the reduction in the number of applicants may reflect the stricter requirements to document the members' details and a reduction in the immigrant organisations' beliefs in the possibility of receiving support. Nevertheless, the gradual reduction in the number of organisations that receive support suggests this membership-based way of supporting immigrant integration is not prioritised in practice.

The target groups for the state's activity support are the voluntary organisations in local communities (including immigrant organisations and immigrant councils), individuals and public or semi-public units. Of the 94 actors who received activity support in 2011, 42 were membership-based immigrant organisations, 23 were various forms of immigrant-based networks, while 29 of the recipients represented the majority society. This implies that that in more than 40 percent of the cases the support was given to membership-based immigrant organisations and might be understood within the framework of the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. However, to receive this activity support the immigrant organisations had to cooperate with other ethnic or national groups. This practice is in line with government's normative ideals to not support immigrants' identity as a group, but rather their participation in Norwegian civil society and cooperation with other ethnic groups. The same pattern can be observed in the municipal integration support scheme. Of the 96 actors who received support in 2011, 50 recipients were membership-based immigrant organisations, 31 were various forms of immigrant-based networks, while 15 of the recipients represented the majority society.

The practice that about 30 percent of the recipients of state activity support represents the majority society may indicate a desire for control over the activity. The majority society's participation is even more evident in the municipality's integration support. Although only about 15 percent of actors who received support represent the majority society, they participated in many activities in cooperation with immigrant organisations or networks. While the state's activity support only provides guidelines for cooperation between different ethnic or national groups, the municipal integration support also sets guidelines for cooperation with local government units. Cooperation between public units and immigrant organisations and networks is a prioritised field within Oslo's integration policy, but it is emphasised that local units cannot apply for support (EMI, 2011). The requirement for cooperation is one of several forms of control, or what Pyykkönen (2007) calls 'techniques of government' in a study of similar requirements in Finland. Similar forms of control can be found in Sweden (KUGELBERG 2011). In Norway, Finland and Sweden, the authorities set strict requirements for registration, accounts and reporting.

(iii) The type of activity supported

The three support schemes have different profiles in relation to what kinds of activity they prioritise. According to how voluntary organisations or networks can have different forms of democratic participation (BROCKMAN & ROGSTAD, 2004), it is useful to distinguish between how the support schemes emphasise the strengthening of immigrants': (a) cultural participation and identity, (b) subject knowledge in certain areas and (c) political participation in political decisions.

The basic support to membership-based immigrant organisations includes contributions to cover the organisation's operating expenses, such as office equipment, office supplies, computer equipment, telephone, rent, measures for its own members and travel. This scheme consists of support calculated according to the number of members and to the rental fees. The main criterion for support is the number of members, and the only criterion related to activity is the distinction between children's and youth organisations, which includes members from 5 to 17 years, and adult organisations. Studies of local immigrant organisations in Norway show that the most common activities are national celebrations, events and parties, as well as cultural activities such as singing, music, theatre, film and dance (PREDELLI, 2006, 2008; ROGSTAD, 2007; ØDEGÅRD, 2010). This implies a strengthening of the immigrants' culture and identity. Although immigrant organisations differ from country of origin and have different goals, they are nevertheless similar in the way they organise various cultural activities. It may seem that the social and cultural setting is more important than exactly what they are doing (NØDLAND ET AL., 2007).

In relation to the state's activity support around 60 percent goes to activities that aim to create meeting places, networks, contacts and interaction between different ethnic groups, including the majority society. The goal is often to get to know each other's cultural and ethnic backgrounds through cultural and sports events. This can be football matches, cooking, music, dance and other presentations of cultural traditions. In the same way, around 25 percent of municipal integration support goes to this type of cultural and sports events. These are activities that are intended to strengthen immigrants' culture and identity.

The Municipal integration support prioritises activity that aims to increase the immigrants' subject knowledge in certain areas in 60 percent of the cases, while this is supported in only 30 percent of the cases within the state's activity support scheme. This type of subject knowledge can be discussion groups, seminars, courses or information meetings that have a more far reaching objective than simply to facilitate the

establishment of meeting places where various ethnic groups, including the majority society, get to know each other's cultural traditions. The activity includes discussions/seminars/courses related to anti-discrimination, crime prevention, health measures, schools and education, employment, job search tips, conflict management and knowledge about an individual's rights in Norwegian society. These types of initiatives can strengthen the immigrants' handling of their challenges in Norwegian society. The measures can easily be seen as a way in which the majority educates the minority, and as a means to compensate for disadvantages the immigrants have because the majority culture defines all public institutions. They cannot necessarily be interpreted as a policy of recognition of differences (MODOOD, 2007).

It is interesting that none of the three support schemes gives priority to activities in which the authorities enable immigrants to gain increased political influence, such as election information, information about the parties' ideological platforms, media training, seminars on community and participation, training in community participation, organisational knowledge or training in how public institutions work. This type of activity is supported in only about 10 percent of the cases, both through the state's activities support and municipal integration support. The City of Oslo seldom supports activities that make immigrants better qualified to participate in political activities through these support schemes. This practice might indicate that cultural activities are prioritised both by the City of Oslo and by the ethnic organisations.

(iv) Actors and activities that are not supported

An investigation into the actors and activities the City of Oslo chooses not to support may shed light on the priorities from another angle. The guidelines show some priorities. One is that religious groups cannot receive support as they are funded by the state. We have also seen that the immigrants must have come from areas outside the Nordic countries, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Since 2009 an exception has been made for immigrants from other countries in Europe. This implies that the main target group for these support schemes are immigrants from outside the Western liberal democracies. An important restriction on the applications for the state's basic support is that it does not grant support to more than one ethnic or national group in each local community. However, in practice the City of Oslo does not follow this guideline strictly, as there are several groups from each country that receive support.

It is also interesting to note what kinds of applications are rejected. In 2011 the City of Oslo received 26 applications for basic support and 7 of them were rejected. The same year Oslo received 122 applications for activity support and 28 of them were rejected. In relation to the municipal integration support Oslo received 124 applications and rejected 28 of them. Some of the reasons for the rejections are that the applications do not meet the requirements defined in the guidelines for support. For example organisations that are not membership-based will not receive basic support, while activities that do not involve several ethnic or national groups do not receive state activity support. In such cases, the refusals are justified by referring to the failure to fulfil the criteria for support. The main reason for rejection is, however, lack of documentation. A review of the case files for applications to EMI shows that the administration tries to collect the required information. These efforts may indicate that support schemes in practice have an important function not simply as 'schools in democracy' but rather as schooling in Norwegian bureaucracy.

This schooling is not the same as the socialising of individuals into the democratic values emphasised in the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. In the Norwegian context this is based on hierarchical organisation where local organisations are linked together in regional and national organisations. These links between levels may create political weight and influence from the grassroots to the central government through democratic processes. In contrast to the Nordic model of voluntary organisation, the government only supports membership-based immigrant organisations at the local level, and not at regional or national levels. While the local immigrant organisations are membership-based, the national immigrant organisations are expert groups that are neither related to the local organisations nor membership-based (NØDLAND ET AL. 2007). This shows that immigrants are recognised as ethnic groups at the local level, but not at regional and national levels. Even though the government's support to local membership-based immigrant organisations could be understood within the framework of the Nordic model of voluntary organisation, not all aspects of this historical tradition are followed in practice.

Conclusion

The Norwegian state's and the City of Oslo's strategy to facilitate the daily operations of membership-based ethnic immigrant organisations is a kind of minority right and has certain traits of multicultural policy. The requirement that these

immigrant organisations must be membership-based and have internal democratic procedures can, however, mainly be understood within the framework of the Nordic model of voluntary organisation. This combination of the traditional historic Nordic model and minority rights seems to follow a path-dependency based on the historical strength of this model in Norway.

The policy is, however, ambiguous. According to policy statements the support to local immigrant organisations built around a sense of belonging to an ethnic or national group is not meant to strengthen their identity as immigrant groups. The aim of this policy is rather integration in the majority society, and this is consistent with the general European retreat from multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the strengthening of group identity will still be the most likely outcome as long as the support is given on the basis of ethnic or national background. This tendency is also confirmed by several studies of immigrant organisations in Norway.

By comparing three empirical levels, I find that this ambiguity at the level of policy statements is reflected at the both the policy-making level and at the level of practice. Both the Norwegian state and the City of Oslo have a tendency to prioritise cooperation among two or more ethnic groups over basic support to membership-based ethnic immigrant organisations. This shift in priority can be found in the way policy statements emphasise the role of immigrant organisation for integration in the majority society, in the increasingly strict criteria for membership and in practice regarding economic priorities, and in which actors and activities receive support. My analysis of practice at the local level shows that the activities supported are mainly directed towards cultural participation and subject knowledge, while political activities are seldom supported. This practice might indicate that these support schemes first and foremost are seen as identity policies, and not as a means of integration into the local democratic process. This is also confirmed by the practices where persons with an immigrant background are recognised as ethnic groups at the local level, but not at regional and national levels as they would have been if one followed the Nordic model of voluntary work completely. The outcome is a fragmented landscape of small, local membership-based immigrant organisations with internal democracy, but with weak political influence in the larger society.

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