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WELFARE STATE, INTEGRATION AND LEGITIMACY OF THE MAJORITY: THE CASE OF NORWAY

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WELFARE STATE, INTEGRATION AND LEGITIMACY OF THE MAJORITY: THE CASE OF NORWAY*

Assimilation has in recent years been established as an illegitimate power strategy in most contexts in Europe. Apart from trying to nuance the content of this position, the paper raises questions as to the possible hidden power agenda in the *integration* strategy, or rather, which are the intentional or non-intentional power related implications of this strategy? Who is integrating whom into what kind of society? How are conceptions of nationhood maintained, legitimized and possibly reproduced?

Keywords: assimilation, integration, welfare state, legitimacy, power-relations

1. Introduction

Is the multicultural society¹ a threat to the welfare state and established norms for the good life in Norway? In other words, do individual newcomers and ethnic groups have the power to alter the political and cultural foundation of the liberal-democratic state? In short, what forms of power are exercised when newcomers and minorities establish themselves in the majority society; which institutions represent and exercise power, and which actors pursue what interests through conflict and adjustment? And what is the majority's legitimate power base in democratic multicultural states?

Cultural pluralisation – reinforced by immigration – has had major consequences for the political agenda in recent years. New types of tensions have ari-

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sen – new forms of social and cultural differentiation, and new patterns of inequality. The diversity also reshapes the frame of reference for traditional policy instruments employed by the welfare state: new issues arise that are linked to rights, legitimacy, and policy measures of a general and targeted nature.

I will in this paper discuss public instruments designed to incorporate newcomers and minorities into the majority society – and ideologies underlying such instruments. In principle it is a matter of power relations that are clearly defined in formal terms: the majority population's power to define and establish an inclusion policy for newcomers and minorities, under state auspices via democratic decisions. The majority also has the power to set the premises for change processes in the multicultural society. In much of the research and debate on multicultural societies, the public aim of incorporating minorities into the majority society – when stripped of all rhetoric of mutual responsibility and dialogue – has been viewed as a *hegemonic* project: the majority society has regarded newcomers precisely as newcomers – an external entity that needs to be adapted to the existing society and the prevailing conditions in the best possible way.

The power sphere is however, far more complicated in practice. When someone raises the issue of whether the welfare state is threatened by multicultural immigration, s(he) has already made suppositions to the effect that players other than the state exercise power in this landscape. The majority state is confined and influenced from many quarters. Besides, the majority state is not a homogeneous block, but a multifarious player with conflicting interests and political projects. Hegemonies are, as we have learned from Antonio Gramsci, dynamic entities in which struggles take place to change or shift established power relations.

My hypothesis is that newcomers and minorities exercise power primarily by virtue of their ability to influence the political authorities' *basis of legitimacy*, and thereby exert influence on what kind of policy it is possible to formulate. Both institutional and symbolic power is inherent here. George Schöpflin asserts that power processes associated with the multicultural society increasingly involve the meeting between reason and identity. The visible, or tangible, dimensions in the majority-minority² power relation – explicit procedures and policy instruments – touch not only on aspects of the political processes, i.e. aspects that can be measured in terms of efficiency and functionality. If the objective is stability, predictability and order, other instruments are needed too – instruments that relate to the symbolic sphere and that ensure support for the policy pursued. "Roughly this is where reason and identity meet, at the point where institutions encounter symbols, where the visible parts of society touch the invisible" (Schöpflin 2000: 28). Whether or not this is a sphere that lends itself to governmental action will be examined later in this paper.

My aim here is twofold: to discuss the concrete policy of inclusion implemented by the Norwegian state in the light of inclusion ideologies, and to discuss in more general terms the dilemmas faced by democratic welfare states in their legitimate exercise of power in a situation where the basis for legitimacy is put to the test. Opportunities of Minority players to influence this basis will be a part of the discussion.

2. Inclusion in the form of assimilation or integration

According to Joppke and Lukes, there is nothing multicultural *per se*, but merely specific, context-dependent multicultural problems (Joppke and Lukes 1999: 16). Hence, the way in which immigration countries and their states actually relate to and handle the *meeting* between immigrants and the national population is at centre-stage. What conceptions attach to the encounter, what economic and social factors influence these conceptions, and what policy is developed on this basis? Inclusion of newcomers has been variously conceived in different historical epochs. Of crucial significance for the various approaches is what view leading forces have of society, and the basic conditions for getting societies to function and maintain themselves. Broadly speaking the consensus view, both earlier and at present, is that the majority has and should have the right to protect the economic and social system's conditions for reproduction, or in the words of Michael Walzer: a political community has the right to preserve the integrity of its form of life (Walzer 1983).

But what this might imply in practice is far more controversial. The basic conditions can be given differing ideological significance. Are national identity and national/ethnic homogeneity, for example, a basic condition for reproducing a society's form of life? Or does support for a shared political culture and – in modern democracies – for the principles of the state in its legal and constitutional aspects, suffice? Policy approaches to immigrants and minorities have not been particularly clear in relation to aspects of this fundamental issue, although it is possible to elicit various views from the programmes they represent.

In the current international discourse – and in policy documents – a particular conception dominates as to how immigrants should be incorporated into the receiving society: they should be *integrated*, in due course, into *multicultural states*.

Both modern welfare states and large sections of academia appear to take it for granted that integration of newcomers into multicultural states is both substantially desirable – and achievable. And, moreover, that integration is something qualitatively different from what is termed *assimilation*. In this dominating discourse *assimilation* is defined in a way that deprives the term of all analytical relevance. The term has become virtually illegitimate and therefore

unusable in modern democracies. Assimilation is in this sense regarded as a strategy pursued by many states towards minorities in former times in which violence, repression and other means of coercion were used to bring "deviants" into the majority fold. This type of strategy, employed by among others the Norwegian authorities against the Sami population as recently as after World War II, acted as a negative sounding board when a new strategy on immigrants and minorities was to be formulated at the start of the 1970s. Together with a number of other European states, Norway introduced the concept of *integration*, which was geared to a new age, i.e. it contained a new understanding of relations between majority and minorities. The significance of cultural roots, identity and ethnicity had come into focus in the wake of the political radicalisation that took place at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s. *Integration* as a strategy would not, therefore, do violence to individuals' cultural background, which was to be preserved in a new context.

The actual term *integration* was evidently not new. It was one of the basic concepts of sociology – originally borrowed from the world of mathematics. Integration as a human process deals with how socialisation, through norms and formation of expectations, contributes to creating social cohesion and societal stability. In other words, how social order is created and maintained. Integration – in the sociological sense – entails the learning of, and adjustment to, society's values – processes that bind the individual to society (economically and socially), creating belonging and loyalty. The opposite of integration is generally considered to be *marginalisation* or exclusion when it comes to individuals, and disintegration or "anomia" when it comes to entire societies. Marginalisation involves the undermining of social and symbolic bonds between individual and society, and results in ineffectual participation and a lack of belonging and influence. Marginalisation is consequently not merely a risk to the individual, but a threat to society as a whole.

All individuals undergo processes of integration or socialisation in order to become functioning members of society. So when we speak of integration or marginalisation of immigrants, it is not a matter of something drastically different from processes all of us have undergone – and repeatedly undergo. No-one is integrated once and for all. These natural and necessary processes become all the clearer when people whose basic socialisation took place in another society are socialised anew – in a new context.

But if we look behind these universal ideas of social order, the question arises of *what type* of order we have in mind. "Integration" and "marginalisation" can mean different things based on different ways of thinking and values, in other words on what type of society it is wished to create and recreate. It is here that the distinction between *assimilation* and *integration* is usually drawn.

In the assimilationist tradition one usually speaks of a process in which individuals grow into a given cultural community – and gradually acquire this community’s norms and values to the point where the individual’s values cannot be distinguished from those of the community. Here the focus is on social control through central community institutions (“moral-forming actors”) such as the family, in the event a religious community, school or local community. If socialisation is unsuccessful, it is often down to the failure of processes that tie the individual to society (Lorentzen 2003).

Within this ideological tradition, which has been especially influential in the United States, immigrant and minority groups are perceived as a number of individuals with a shared problem, namely that of adjusting to a monolithic majority culture. Because cultural belonging is not given emphasis, and the ideal is the culturally homogeneous society, all members of society will – ideally speaking – be treated equally and hold equal rights and obligations regardless of background. At the same time the content of the package of benefits and obligations builds on the majority culture’s view of what is good. Or, it builds on what *parts of* the majority population perceives to be good. Neither does the receiving society contain just one homogeneous set of values. Assimilation as a strategy therefore easily becomes authoritarian. Milton Gordon – an American classicist in the field of migration research – applied the following measure of successful adjustment: once an individual had accepted “the middle class cultural patterns of White Protestant Anglo-Saxon Americans” (Gordon 1964: 72).

If on the other hand one espouses a more liberal, or *value-pluralistic* view of society, new groups can be incorporated by assigning them a position on a par with that of already established groups. By acquiring equal conditions of life or opportunities, groups – including those with very different values – can be woven into society. This type of inclusion is ideally achieved through the development of mutual dependencies between groups, and through the formal establishment of rules to govern rights and duties. This approach is traditionally termed *integration* in the migration literature, and is based on the notion that society is divided into various groups that are part of the totality. Immigrants are regarded as members of ethnic groups, not just as individuals, entailing the conception that it is groups that are to be integrated and not – as in the assimilationist school – simply individuals placed on an equal footing. Individuals also acquire rights associated with the group they belong to (or are assigned to). A public integration policy requires the stage to be set for a number of different cultures when shaping and organising society’s public institutions.

These two approaches embody differing views both as regards what type of society immigrants are to be integrated into, and as regards the content of the actual integration process. Historically speaking there has also been a theoretic-

cal divide between those who believe that "these processes simply happen" (*laissez faire* policy) and those who believe they can and should be managed. The assimilationist school holds that individuals simply adjust to the majority culture over time, either through the agency of an "invisible hand"; or by coercion. In its caricature, assimilation is an impossibility: the societal totality or majority culture also changes, and is a continual product of the influence of the members of the society, whether one likes it or not.

When two ideological edifices are set up in this way, the "choice" must appear simple for decent receiving countries. The integrationist policy developed as a reaction to assimilationist thinking, and has (at least on the ideological level) a culture-pluralistic basis. Integration has become a politics of honour for modern welfare states, and multiculturalism has provided an opening for a positive perception of ethnic differences. The integrationist approach was intended to make peaceful co-existence possible between different ethnic groups within one and the same polity. There are however large and significant ambiguities, antagonisms and dilemmas attached to the integrationist line of thinking.

If we go back to the basic problems I presented at the start – the question of the majority's right to protect its conditions for reproduction – the integrationist line of thinking at once becomes considerably more complex. Michael Walzer's notion that a political community has the *right* to preserve the integrity of its form of life may be diluted if a stream of new groups – which in time become minorities – establish themselves in the nation state, and preserve their distinctive characteristics and forms of life. How much deviation should be accepted, and in what areas? What belongs to the private sphere and what is a public concern? Is it enough for new groups to abide by Norwegian law, i.e. to refrain from directly breaking the law but otherwise follow their own norms for good behaviour? The integrationist approach offers few guidelines for tackling the difficult interfaces between the lawful and the legitimate. Most Norwegians probably believe there *is* something one can call "Norwegian culture", and that it has a legitimate, but changeable, hegemony in present-day Norway, and many probably believe in the primacy of liberal-democratic values over other values – that it is in other words legitimate to force liberal values upon illiberal minorities – that one cannot tolerate intolerance (Walzer 1997). Here too, in the practical sphere, boundaries are shifting throughout. Even if one agreed with Walzer that the majority has the *right* to reproduce its forms of life, i.e. that it has the legitimacy to do so, society changes as a result of cultural pluralisation, so that the actual *basis of legitimacy* changes in the process. Walzer's position may therefore come across as a shout in the dark: the majority has at a given point in time the right to preserve itself, but lacks the *power* to do so.

Integration has become a generic term for complicated processes taking place between individual, group and society. But the nebulous goal of *a multicultural society* is difficult to capture in political action plans, something that Norwegian authorities, among others, have learned. For all that, government instruments have acquired a more concrete form in the course of the almost 30 years that have elapsed since the advent of the integration policy.

3. Immigration to a welfare state

The *welfare state*, the *nation* and the *labour market* are the triangle that has defined the scope for immigration policy in the modern Norway. Since the 1970s and the freeze on immigration the relationship between welfare state and nation has been the main axis in this triangle. The universalistic welfare model – which shuns discrimination on the basis of social background or residence in the country – is in principle inclusive for everyone living lawfully in the country. At the same time the welfare state is a costly arrangement – a scarce and vulnerable good – which has been built up by post-war generations. The welfare state is designed to take care of all who need support within the national boundaries. But, for all that, the system is based on a necessary principle of living according to one's means: if the burdens on welfare budgets become excessive, many may suffer. Immigration to a country that espouses the principle of equal treatment and has an extensive welfare state challenges the population's generosity in the first instance, and *may* in the longer term affect the sustainability of the system itself if the bulk of the newcomers are unable to support themselves. Crucial here is how large a share of those who come are absorbed into productive employment. Thus, equal treatment, responsible state management and welfare policy in social democratic Norway explain much of the orientation of the immigration policy. Controlling inflow into the country – the first gateway to the territory – is a prerequisite for maintaining a society regulated by planning. The fundamentally generous welfare model, which embraces everyone but which can be undermined by excessive burdens, necessitates selection and delimitation in relation to potential new members from elsewhere.

The equality approach and the principle of equal treatment are in a sense the nerve centre of the welfare state's integration project. Equality has both an economic/political dimension and a cultural, social and ideological dimension. Norway has had an egalitarian wage structure, maintained through collective wage bargaining and a tradition of social insurance systems that was designed to give the population economic security regardless of ability to contribute or class background. At the same time the country has had a strong ideological framework as an equality-loving and equality-dictating society whose welfare state tradition and national self-conception have come together in a higher enti-

ty. We find this framework to a greater or lesser extent in other modern welfare states. The equality orientation has been present both in the form of equal access to rights and goods, and in requirements as to *homogeneity*. If newcomers were to have a chance of becoming a part of the community, there was little room for excessive deviation.

The most central precepts for regulation of immigration in Norway – the ideology of equality, state management and welfare policy – have their logical corollary in the integration policy. If this political framework is to be maintained, new inhabitants must be made a part of it. The immigration policy signals a duality: immigrants are not desired at the outset, but if they manage to enter anyway, they must be incorporated in some or other way. And the good state must go further: it must lay the basis for a positive attitude in the population for the integration project to succeed. It must in other words create support for this policy. This is vulnerable territory.

Alongside the nation state's housekeeping we have spoken about so far, Norway's self-conception as a small, fragile *nation* has been significant when it comes to watching over the entrance ticket for people from *other cultures*. This underlying unease has nonetheless surfaced in the public rhetoric to only a small extent, and is virtually absent in public documents on integration. It is a paradox that the dimension that probably is the most controversial – and the most emotive in the population – has received least attention. The discomfort associated with addressing the diffuse nation sphere is probably the reason why politicians and academics concentrated for a long time on newcomers' *rights* and on equal treatment.

Endeavours to incorporate newcomers into the economy and into the constitutional state have become a consequence of the welfare state model. Good welfare states do not tolerate substantial elements of persons or groups that fall by the wayside, that disturb the regulated world of work and burden social welfare budgets. All western European welfare states endeavour, using slightly varying instruments, to incorporate immigrants into working life and the community. In earlier times, receiving countries could wait for *things to settle down over time* – newcomers slowly adapted to the new conditions, at least after two or three generations, and in due course came to be *much like* the new home country's population and changeable way of living. They were in fact *assimilated* – made identical through evolution's own momentum, or were actively pressured into adopting the majority's way of life, such as was the case with the Sami people in Norway. Modern welfare states *do not have time* to let history do the job, nor do they have political legitimacy to pressure anyone too strongly to *become like the majority* over night. That is why inclusion needs to be managed, at the same time as it must make allowance for internationally established human rights,

which include the right for minority members to retain their distinctive cultural characteristics. It is against this background that Norway's integrationist policy has evolved. *Integration* has become a compromise between equality and pluralism – between solidarity and freedom.

Logically, perhaps, a country like Norway might perhaps be expected to favour the most rapid assimilation possible, both in view of the welfare state system and of the pressure to conform in the population. Critics of Norwegian policy may assert that indirect pressure towards assimilation is inherent in the Norwegian approach, and that all concessions to human rights and ethnic diversity – to multiculturalism – are primarily rhetoric. Reversing this argument, it may also be asked whether the state does immigrants a disservice by (formally) encouraging "cultural preservation". Several authors have pointed out that under-communicating the possibility of assimilation to immigrants in fact consigns them to lower strata of the population: As Adrian Favell puts it, "A return to ethnicity or non-western culture can prove to be, what any normative account of belonging would call (given the power and legitimacy 'belonging' bestows), self-disabling, self-marginalizing *deviance*" (Favell 1999: 220). These are controversial matters, and the discussions are made no simpler by the often varying nature of the premises and terms employed.

4. Theory and practice

A fundamental ambiguity of the integration policy is whether the state relates to individuals or groups. Once preservation of ethnic/cultural identity for newcomers to Norway (as to other European welfare states) became a political concern, *group membership* was indirectly introduced as an important variable. "Immigrants" were in part viewed as a large group with special needs, and in part defined in terms of their national or ethnic background. Norwegian integration policy graduated from a teething phase early in the 1970s to a more mature stage at the turn of the century. The fear of impinging on cultural preservation was far greater at the start than later on. In the 1970s it was strongly emphasised that immigrants should choose their preferred form of adjustment themselves. The authorities set the stage for a substantive choice in a White Paper (Report No. 39 to the Storting [1973-74]), and wished to shield immigrants against the forces of assimilation in the community. For example, information was to be given about the danger of assimilation that lay in sending children to Norwegian day care centres: "The danger of such a model (equal numbers of Norwegian and non-Norwegian children in day care centre groups) – even if not intended – is that Norwegian culture and language could dominate by virtue of its majority position in the society, and that facilities for the minority group may be a disguised assimilation that is difficult to protect oneself

against” (Report No. 74 to the Storting [1979-80]: 91).³

Later in the 1980s and 90s the emphasis shifted towards mutual responsibility and the *duty* to participate. An important distinction was drawn at the end of the 1980s in Report No. 39 to the Storting [1987-88]. The authorities now set stricter limits to the freedom of choice that was previously highlighted to such an extent. It was emphasised that immigrants, like Norwegians, had to respect the laws and fundamental values that applied in the Norwegian society. These were given concrete form as democracy, gender equality and children’s rights. It was also pointed out that freedom of choice did not include the right to place oneself outside society, for example by not learning Norwegian or acquiring a knowledge of Norwegian society. At the same time it was pointed out that immigrants should have the opportunity to preserve their own culture. They should not be required to assimilate in order to participate in Norwegian society and to achieve substantive equality with Norwegians. An important dilemma arises here: What aspects of the minority’s culture and religion should be accepted and cultivation encouraged? Norwegian society is built on a series of norms and unwritten rules that its members are expected to follow, but which it is not in itself unlawful to break. Who, then, decides what is acceptable; which inequalities are self-chosen and which are not?

At the start of the 1970s the group focus was strong: ethnic minorities were to be protected against the majority. On the other hand the welfare state needed identifiable groups to relate to that could be captured through public measures. Later in the process the relationship between individual and group has become more ambivalent. The signals from immigrant quarters take two directions. On the one hand, established immigrants and their descendants wish to be regarded and treated as individuals. On the other, claims are made to protection by virtue of belonging to a group – first and foremost by religious minorities, but also based on themes such as language, political representation and special arrangements in working life. In addition, the majority has increasingly directed its attention at the individual’s right to protection against the group – protection against the cultural group of which the individual is a member, or to which the individual has been assigned membership in. In the first instance this has to do with minority women’s right to choose a life in line with ethnic Norwegian women. This is a field in which what may be termed a substantive power struggle is under way in Norwegian society – a struggle for what on both sides are regarded as fundamental values. In several areas this power struggle touches on themes that are not captured by the legislation. Although we have an equal status law in Norway, and although Reports to the Storting (White Papers) establish that gender equality is not a subject for negotiation in multicultural Norway, the conflicts are difficult to grasp – partly because the “victims” do not always

clearly state what they want.

The interplay between gender issues and religion seems to be at the very core of the multicultural conflict. The majority society's boundary-setting is in evidence in issue after issue – albeit controversially – but in a more systematic sense the conflict lines remain undercommunicated.

5. What should be the glue binding the multicultural society together?

If some aspect of society is threatened or at stake, then there is something to defend. Someone has an interest in defending what is under threat. The cultural pluralisation of society therefore indirectly puts the focus on Norwegian self-conceptions and values that at least parts of the population have traditionally prized. Factors that have been more or less collectively adopted as valuable and important have contributed to keeping society together. They have created a necessary cohesion or stability in the political system and in society. But *what* is it that creates cohesion and stability – the "glue" – in modern democracies? And what, if anything, is it about the multicultural element that creates problems? The question refers back to the schism we presented by way of introduction. Are the problems a matter of procedures or content? Are the constitutional state and democracy enough, i.e. should immigrants merely be integrated into the political system, or does the existing nation impose demands for cultural conformity? Or must a new, shared cultural platform – a new *community*, or a new conception of nation that transcends the very idea of nation – be created? What "core values" does the majority wish to defend, and what interests do they represent? And not least, what power do governments and politicians have to manage and plan in this field?

It is customarily held in modern political science that a state is more stable when based on a certain homogeneity, a form of collective reason – often understood as a *national* community, a community framed by the nation state.⁴ "The capacity to enforce rights depends on a sense of community that creates a recognition of such rights and a willingness to sacrifice for their achievement", writes Noah Pickus (1998: 117). This is not least an important explanation for how welfare states are possible: costly collective arrangements require confidence and solidarity in *something* raised above individuals and small groups of the community. They require reference to something overarching, predictable and stable. In this context immigration highlights aspects of our democratic welfare states and their tacit dependence on a certain cultural and national homogeneity – in order, indeed, to be in any kind of position to launch principles of equal worth and tolerance in a comprehensible and acceptable way. Here the multicultural community premises the existence of a certain cultural consensus.

Freedom to choose presupposes that someone has already chosen in favour of this freedom. Democracy premises a common meta-ideology: a loyalty to the principles and institutions of democracy. Freedom cannot be divorced from the virtues that maintain the system.

After multicultural immigration to the western world grew in scope, the importance of the ethnic-national element for such cohesion came increasingly into question.⁵ The glue in the form of national identity was toned down in favour of a community based on democratic and constitutional principles. Jürgen Habermas, with his concept of *constitutional patriotism*, is probably one of the most profiled authors in this context. Habermas himself refers to Ernest Renan's famous words to the effect that *a nation's existence is a daily plebiscite*, where the community of citizens, according to Habermas, achieves its identity not through ethnic-cultural characteristics, but through *practice*, where the members of society exercise their democratic rights of participation and communication (1995: 127). According to Habermas, constitutional patriotism sharpens awareness of the diversity and integrity of the various forms of life that coexist in a multicultural society. National identity is not at centre-stage. The diversity of forms of life requires, on the other hand, all citizens to be socialised in a shared political culture (1995: 133). In other words, all groups within the state must be moulded to take responsibility for, and identify themselves with the constitution.

In the United States a basis has largely been taken in this nation-state line of thinking. Undivided loyalty to the American constitution and its values is required of its citizens, at the same time as each individual and each group is free to choose cultural group belonging and life practice, so long as this does not conflict with the constitution. The state can, for example, not support one religion above others. Gerd Baumann argues that the strong national feeling in the USA is a result of its multinationalism: "It is the multiethnic hybridity of many American citizens that is used to argue for a shared neoethnic endorsement of national unity. If everyone's ancestry were "mixed", then everyone's present identity would be the same: superethnically American" (Baumann 1999: 34). According to Ulf Hedetoft (Christiansen and Hedetoft 2003), the secret of American multiculturalism is that it is played out under an umbrella of trusting and highly homogeneous support for the basic values of the constitution: values and historical narratives that are collectively understood as "manifest fate". This common fate paradoxically supports the belief in the individual as society's sustaining force. Belonging in this society requires an unconditional acceptance of this particular form of "democratic nationalism". With such an approach to the nation, a few million new immigrants do not represent a threat to the nation's "soul".

The major issue is whether Habermas's system-patriotism suffices as glue in a European context, where countries have traditionally focused to a greater degree than in the USA on national homogeneity as their bulwark. Or whether, at least, it would take time to "educate" the populations in a new way of thinking. Someone must have a stake in this education, and have the power to carry it through. Differing power constellations arise depending on whether the state perceives itself to be culturally hegemonic or pluralistic; on whether minorities are regarded as alien cultural elements, or as a constituent part of the state as in the USA and Canada.

In any case, if the legal norms of a democracy are not anchored in the population through an established set of values, such norms will over time be impoverished – they will gradually be exhausted of substantive content (Lorentzen 2003). If, for example, the Norwegian state is to educate the population in constitutional patriotism, this must at the very least be acknowledged as a strategy and goal. Integrationist thinking and the public perception of multiculturalism in Norway has so far only implicitly signalled where the Norwegian state stands in this field. The glue in Norway is evidently perceived by most people to be something more than the constitution and the constitutional state. The glue is what provides legitimacy and trust between the rulers and the populace. From this it goes without saying that when, over time, the composition of the population changes and value pluralisation comes about, something also happens to the glue. New groups gain representation in the democratic institutions, and new groups carry weight in terms of setting premises for policy developers.

A symptom of the inconstancy and definitional fragility of the "core values" is that it is virtually impossible to agree on what these values are. If one asks oneself what values the Norwegian state is unconditionally willing to back up with force, one ends up with the state in its legal and constitutional aspects, alongside – somewhat more vaguely, and more controversially – the policy of equal treatment, the welfare orientation, the school subject Christianity, Religion and Life-view ("KRL"), marriage based on love, and the Norwegian language. Apart from the Norwegian language and possibly "KRL", none of these items is specifically *Norwegian*, but it does not necessarily deprive them of status as core values. It is more difficult to grasp the implications of the great story of Norway as a nation and for what end it should be used.

If, like Rawls (1993), one is concerned with how to create fair and just modes of collaboration between citizens who are free, but who nonetheless espouse fundamentally different values, one needs to be concerned with *the conditions under which persons from different cultures and groups can have confidence in one another*. The question is whether a national framework is needed to create such conditions – and, if so, what is implied by the national aspect. The mul-

ticultural state is also dependent on a framework for its existence – a kind of nation concept that embraces ethnic groups and other groups by appealing to a sense of responsibility and cohesion within a delimited entity. Minorities are dependent on the majority community's glue to guarantee any special rights they enjoy. It could even be said that a new type of *nation building* is needed to bring this about. The educational mission in the wake of Habermas's constitutional patriotism may be such a process.

The Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka, with his positive and optimistic view of multiculturalism in liberal states, is another leading theorist in this field. Kymlicka's position is of particular interest here, since his works have in fact set the premises for policy development in a number of countries – among them Norway – and for this reason have played an important part both in ideological and practical terms. At the same time Kymlicka's line of thinking clarifies the unavoidable dilemmas inherent in integrationist thinking.

6. Integration, multiculturalism and minority rights

Will Kymlicka's philosophy and recipe for multicultural, liberal states have Canada as their starting point. His main argument and rationale are based on a distinction between what he terms *nation building minorities* (national minorities) and *immigrants* (ethnic minorities). National minorities – especially those that have been repressed earlier in their history, or involuntarily incorporated in another nation state – should have a right to build their own nation, within a liberal-democratic state superstructure. The main purpose of this type of minority rights is to give particular groups access to "their own culture", which is termed "*societal culture*". This type of culture strongly resembles what we usually associate with a *nation*, and which Kymlicka defines as "*an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history*" (Kymlicka 1995: 18). The nationalist movement in Quebec is a prototype representative for this type of nation-building minority, which according to the author has legitimate claims to a number of special rights.

Immigrants on the other hand are placed in quite another position, and according to this line of thinking do *not* have a claim to equivalent group rights. Nation building is neither desirable nor advisable among immigrant groups, Kymlicka points out, and argues both in terms of practice and principle: immigrants or *ethnic minorities* are regarded as so culturally complex and so dispersed in terms of settlement pattern that *nation building* would be difficult to achieve. However, his main argument is that immigrants, in contrast to national minorities, have *chosen* to break away from their original culture, and are therefore expected to become members of the national community that already ex-

ists in their new home country. Immigrant groups should have rights to expression of identity, and should be granted what he terms *polyethnic rights*. These rights are of quite another calibre than national rights, being of the same type as Jews' and Muslims' exemption from opening-hour regulations, and the Sikhs' right to abstain from wearing motorcycle helmets. The main task for the societal majority is to see to it that immigrants are incorporated through language training and by combating prejudice and discrimination. The task is to provide *fair terms of integration* (Kymlicka 2001: 30), and this has more to do with assigning general civic rights than rights targeted at particular groups.

Since Norway's ratification of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a minority hierarchy has been formalised in Norway which essentially follows the logic of Will Kymlicka's thinking. In February 2001 the status of national minorities, which in Norway are defined to include Jews, persons of Finnish stock in northern Norway, Gypsies (Rom), Romanies (Travellers) and persons of Finnish stock in south-eastern Norway, was formalised through a number of rights. The Sami people are a national minority within the meaning of international law, but they have in addition status as an *indigenous population*, with appurtenant special rights. The point of establishing minority rights in addition to the general human rights is to improve the opportunities of members of minorities to preserve, reproduce and develop their group identity – so long as this identity does not run counter to human rights (Lundberg 1998). Human rights are based on the individual, and are therefore regarded by many as inadequate for preserving cultural groups.⁶ Persons belonging to religious, language or ethnic groups can, through minority rights, invoke a right to preserve collective values. The central elements of such a policy are such persons' right to organise themselves as a group; to use their own language; to practise their religion; to preserve and reproduce their traditional culture, i.e. to exercise control over the content of the education of coming generations. They also have the right to influence decisions that affect them. On the other hand, minorities have to adapt to the universal human rights and undertake not to challenge the state's territorial integrity (Lundberg 1998). However, minority rights are also based on the individual. It is a matter of rights "for persons who belong to minorities" (Report to the Storting No. 15 [2000-2001]: 19), but these rights only give meaning when linked to a group community. On the other hand, it is stated that membership of minorities should be voluntary. Belonging is based on self-definition and exit should be possible. Report No. 15 to the Storting states explicitly (p. 16) that measures to preserve the national minorities are intended as compensation for the policy of Norwegianisation pursued earlier in history, and the Report opens with an unqualified apology from the Government for the gross abuses afflicted on the Ro-

many people *by or with active support from legal Norwegian authorities* (p. 11), and apologises in general for the way in which all national minorities have been treated (p. 12). Where the Jews and Romany people are concerned, the Government has made collective reparations, and the Report also opens the way for all minority members to apply for individual compensation. The Government also takes the opportunity to state that Norway has always been a multicultural society, and that cultural diversity enriches the nation. The term *multicultural Norway* is used both descriptively and normatively.

The content of the minority policy – preservation of language, culture and identity – is operationalised to cover in research and documentation, museums, media, as well as modes of organisation that promote dialogue and raise awareness – especially in the health sector. All in all it is a matter of small sums in terms of financial transfers (NOK 2.6 million in 2000). The national minorities also represent *small* groups. While registration is unreliable, they are estimated to involve 1,100 Jews, 10-15,000 persons of Finnish stock in northern Norway, 300 Rom, a few thousand Romanies and a few hundred persons of Finnish stock in south-eastern Norway. The number of Sami persons is also highly uncertain, but is usually put at somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000.

The Framework Convention is the first legally binding multilateral agreement on protection of minorities. Since it proved impossible to agree on a binding definition of *national minority*, status allocation is up to the discretion of the national authorities. There was however a consensus on two factors: the groups had to have a long-lasting and "original" association with the territory. In practice *long-lasting* has been interpreted to mean "at least 100 years". And minority members must as a rule be citizens of the state to which the group is connected. These criteria omit "new" immigrants of many generations, i.e. immigrants who came to Norway after the end of the 1960s.⁷

Hence, on paper, minority policy in Norway places itself in a rights hierarchy à la Kymlicka: the indigenous population on top, followed by national minorities, and at the bottom – immigrants or ethnic minorities. The majority and the national minorities have the right to preserve their *societal culture*, immigrants have to adapt – with some concessions to so-called *polyethnic rights* of somewhat uncertain duration. This represents a concretisation of the *integration policy* which is not normally done explicitly, and which in Norway highlights the following thought-provoking situation: the country now accommodates (in 2001) ethnic minorities (immigrants) which altogether comprise a far larger number of persons⁸ than the national minorities (including the Sami), and which are regarded by the majority population as culturally far more different than many of the national minorities. Immigrants are to be *integrated* – i.e. they should in theory have the opportunity to preserve their own culture, but they

receive little *specific* support for this, while, on the other hand, national minorities, who have in fact through several generations been integrated – or rather assimilated through coercion – are now to be encouraged and granted rights and financial support for cultural preservation.⁹

Integration policy involves however, far more than cultural preservation, and over the past 30 years Norwegian authorities have gradually developed more extensive measures for promoting inclusion in the society – economic, organisational and political. It has also gradually become clearer that general instruments will as far as possible be used to achieve the objectives – i.e. special measures for immigrants will be avoided. However, the cultural preservation dimension is in fact a constituent element of the very concept of integration, although in the final analysis it is unclear what this implies.

Will Kymlicka's multiculturalism is far clearer in relation to immigrants: they are required to learn the majority's language, and to acquaint themselves with the country's history and form of government. He emphasises that all inhabitants of a country are required to do their best to maintain central institutions, and he also finds it reasonable that newcomers should in fact be *pressured* into becoming part of the societal culture (2001: 54). With Kymlicka, self-preservation has a greater legitimacy than with Habermas. But with Kymlicka the majority's legitimacy rests on a fundamental premise to the effect that society is *pluralistic* at the outset, with varying elements of groups – ethnic/religious and others – that are different from the majority. Pluralism is guaranteed by the liberal-democratic state and balanced and limited by linguistic and institutional cohesion (2001: 25). With Kymlicka *culture* is explicitly regarded as "thin" (limited to cohesion based on liberal-democratic principles) in contrast to a "thick" definition – where the population's cohesion is based on ethnic-national belonging.¹⁰ Hence newcomers must be *pressured* into becoming part of a diverse and liberal context – they must be turned into a part of a modern and tolerant pluralism. It could seem as if *assimilation* into this tolerant complexity may be the result, if success is achieved.

Although Norwegian authorities have been inspired by Kymlicka's theories in formulating the new minority policy, they are far less explicit when it comes to the majority's legitimacy in terms of imposing demands on immigrants. The weaker, or more ambiguous, demands that Norwegian authorities impose on immigrants may paradoxically be a reflection of another view of society and national culture. Vague requirements and expectations in the multicultural field may be a result of a far "thicker" understanding of national culture, represented at least in parts of the population: that there *is* something that is distinctly Norwegian, and that this is something that is difficult for newcomers to absorb. But if this "thicker" conception of nation actually helps to preserve newcomers'

and minorities' own group affiliation, what then is the long-term goal? How *long* is one expected to retain this subgroup affiliation? And how long is the minority as such envisaged to last? In other words – are multicultural states permanent structures, or are they just stages on the way to an ethnically complex society without minority formations? Is, therefore, *integration* merely a *postponement* of a long-term assimilation process? Although the conditions for *assimilation into pluralism* are better in countries that have never been monocultural (either in real or ideological terms) than in a country like Norway, pluralisation of the Norwegian nation puts the assimilationist line of thinking in a new light: if society as such changes character in a more multicultural direction – if that which is "typically Norwegian" acquires a more diverse and internationalised content – *all* inhabitants will be socialised, natives and newcomers, in new ways. In fact everyone must be assimilated in the best meaning of the word into a more open and in value terms more varied society. We believe it is possible to retain this perspective without ending up in an American *melting pot* ideology. It is a matter of extending concepts of the nation state within a new context that is internationalised and heterogenised, not of creating a new, monolithic alloy.

7. State power to what end?

The rest of this paper is devoted to issues related to the conflict-ridden power sphere represented by integration policy. To what extent has the state power to implement the integration project – to create a democratic, smoothly functioning multicultural society? And, on the other hand; do individual immigrants and immigrant groups have the power to influence the *basis* for integration – the premises for the project?

The first question – about the state's power – is problematic because the *goal* is so unclear. The goal is negatively defined: it is *not* assimilation, and the means for achieving adjustment are *not* pressure and coercion. The actual integration policy is developed through the ordinary democratic procedures, and is adopted by the Storting and implemented by the Government.

Integration policy in Norway has been relatively clear-cut as regards *procedure*, but less clear-cut in relation to *content*. The principle of equal treatment applies to the maximum extent; immigrants and minority representatives have (virtually all) the rights and obligations of Norwegian citizens. Where individuals' life world is concerned, however, the policy is unclear. There is a significant tension here between equality and pluralism. How should the state see to it that persons who 'focus on preserving their cultural affiliation and organisation actually enjoy the same opportunities to advance economically and socially.

According to the integrationist strategy (insofar as the term is appropriate),

minorities should be allowed to keep their life world in peace. They should be allowed to preserve the culture they brought with them, their "original" culture. However, putting these principles into practice collides with another sphere, i.e. the majority population with their own social attitudes, social structures, power relations and interest conflicts.

Obligations in relation to the equal-treatment principle and human rights at the state level do not necessarily correspond with attitudes in the population. Feelings and attitudes in the majority population towards newcomers may be of great significance to the *meeting* – to the actual course of incorporation. In this social sphere, well-intended integration measures may fall on arid ground. It is here that the *limits* to state control are most tangible, and where the demand to "become like us" – *to adapt* – can live its own conflict-ridden life. It is generally here that the "national core values" are given free rein, through layers of accumulated *common sense*, as a matter of course. Paradoxically the demand to "become Norwegian" may highlight the impossible nature of the project: it is not necessarily possible to *learn* core values in the eyes of the population. *Become like us, but do not delude yourself that you can become one of us!* (Borchgrevink 1999). If such attitudes are dominant in the majority population, the process of inclusion will take several generations.

How then does one create good citizens? How can *governments* ensure that inhabitants are responsible rather than greedy and short-sighted? That they are tolerant rather than discriminating and excluding? How can governments promote a feeling of membership and belonging and combat alienation? How do governments foster cohesion among the inhabitants rather than aloofness and hostility?

The endeavours to include immigrants have their basis in a combination of moral and political obligations. Loyalty to fundamental democratic principles and respect for human rights – as well as self-interest; the recognition that a society cannot function smoothly if a large section of the population is marginalised and socially excluded. There are complex issues to be weighed up in this policy field. It is difficult today to separate the Norwegian self-conception from ideals of equality and the welfare state. The equality ethos has become a "core value" in the Norwegian population, something regarded as "typically Norwegian" and worth defending – at least as an ideology. The equal-treatment principle and the associated justice approach are on closer examination imprecise quantities, also susceptible to social context. After immigration gathered momentum, these conceptions were re-interpreted and their legitimacy tested. The authorities need to strike a balance between exercising *fair terms* in keeping with human rights principles and moral considerations, while listening to "popular sentiment" in order to retain legitimacy, and to avoid parts of the majori-

ty beginning to act like a threatened minority. Moreover, the majority is not a block. Individual groups may have "objective" interests in keeping a group of people at a low level of integration. Employers may profit from immigrants being content with poorer pay and working conditions than Norwegians.

The authorities put forward *genuine equality* as a goal of successful integration. This is in keeping with Norwegian welfare policy whose goal is to smooth out differences in the level of living. In other words to prevent differences in social and economic background from being of significance for individuals' achievements in society. An immigrant should ideally be able to achieve the same standard as Norwegians in terms of employment, housing, education and use of social services. While these are important measures in central areas, the measuring tool nonetheless has its background in the Norwegian majority population's mode of living and its definitions of a good life. Since the goals contain values that are prized by Norwegians, immigrants who live in an approximately like manner will often be regarded as integrated, and, conversely, disparities are interpreted as signs of integration problems. Here the notion of equality shifts from dealing with equality of access to goods or rights to dealing with uniformity of way of life.

At the same time there is also a question in Norway of *which* social groups should be the benchmark for comparison. Should immigrants in Norway be measured by some sort of middle-class standard, or should they achieve the same standard of living as Norwegians in similar jobs? What, in the event, is the moral position if immigrants are only offered jobs that Norwegians no longer want?

There is an important tension here in the Norwegian welfare state's integration ideology: the good state's policy of equal worth and genuine equality faces a society which is incontrovertibly marked by class differences and social inequality. The state is supposed to "integrate" immigrants based on an idea of equal opportunity in a society that far from manages to abide by the same ideals in relation to its native inhabitants. The "power plot" in multicultural nation states is that ethnic minorities are offered rights and cultural tolerance in exchange for their acceptance of the basal principles of law and order. They are viewed as "culture-bearing" groups that need to be integrated through a public sphere that offers participation and will convert them from immigrants to citizens. They need to be fitted into a nation state that will be recreated to withstand cultural diversity – the state acquires a new face, and the major stories a new content. This is, according to Adrian Favell, an elite project – the reproduction of an ideal of a national political *community* which conceals class relations and conflict with a therapeutic, *top-down* story of multicultural harmony and unity (Favell 1998).

8. The dialectic of power

I asserted by way of introduction that newcomers and minorities in Norway today primarily exercise power through being able to influence the basis of legitimacy of the political authorities. In this context it is a matter of integrating several social forces into a new compromise between various parts of a multicultural society. Diversity is redefined as a good for society, and new forms of political identity are created with a focus on the *citizen* rather than the *immigrant*. New contacts are forged with individual representatives and organised interests among immigrants to bring their own representatives into parties and public institutions. The authorities and the democratic system simply cannot overlook groups of immigrants and minorities once they reach a certain size, and they have political rights. The parties must take account of new voter groups, both by adapting their policies, and by including representatives from minorities in their organisation. This process is under way in Norway, although many would assert that it has made little headway. There are relatively few immigrants and minority members who use their voting rights,¹¹ and the parties have done little to include minority representatives in positions of genuine power. But it can be argued that the immigrant population nonetheless influences the basis for the state's legitimacy through changed conditions for the power of definition, by setting the agenda for the social debate in new ways. The media focus on immigration and the minority population is evidence of a social significance that exceeds numerical size. Elite representatives among immigrants have in due course actively contributed to changing the agenda through organisation and public discussion. These types of influence are exercised on the system's premises – they are actions carried out by actors with defined interests within a democratic context.

However, persons and groups can also exercise power by circumvention or sabotage – active attempts to evade control. This may be through forms of counter-power strategies or silent obstruction. According to Hilde Lidén, Gypsies in Norway, for example, have used "alien-ness" as a power strategy vis-à-vis the authorities, thereby withdrawing from the public view. Gypsies have not had access to traditional positions of power in Norway, but have gained the opportunity to define game rules under conditions that are important to themselves. Targeted measures and their legitimising of *ethnicity* as a basis for concerted action have given Gypsies the opportunity to define premises vis-à-vis the authorities (Lidén 1990).

All strategies for control initiated by rulers force counter-strategies from subordinates, asserts Anthony Giddens. Regardless of the extent of the rulers' superiority, some momentum is given to the weaker party. Even the most dependent and inferior person has the opportunity to acquire scope for autonomy.

This is the *dialectic of power*, according to Giddens (1985: 11). Power presupposes compliance on the part of subordinates, but the latter can also initiate counter-actions and various types of sanctions, as formulated by Hegel in the master-slave dialectic. Power is the food of conflict: all forms of governance have openings that can be exploited by subordinates to influence the basis for action. Conflicts can therefore have an *integrating* effect, and are often necessary in order to bring about societal change.

Friction, resistance or sabotage in the form of maladjustment or criminal offences by parts of the immigrant population challenge the welfare state's need for stability and order. The authorities must therefore, to some extent, also take account of and "hear" marginalised and perhaps "sabotaging" members of society. Immigrants compel the state to widen its repertoire of policy instruments. The state's interests in a smoothly functioning society set premises for how "deviants" can be treated. These are familiar issues to welfare states in general. According to Claus Offe, the welfare state contributes to keeping majority-minority conflicts under control by handing out rights and goods: "the democratic legislative process can yield results which have the potential of homogenizing and reconciling the citizenry, thus validating the conditions of democracy in a circular process of democratic self-consolidation, fostering democracy through democratic means" (Offe 1998: 122). After 30 years of multicultural immigration the government authorities in Norway probably consider Offe's co-option position to be somewhat optimistic.

Integration policy's concessions to *preservation of minority cultures* widens the scope for more or less active counter-power strategies in relation to the majority community's dominance. In multicultural corporative states individuals wield power more effectively through belonging to a group. Individuals are therefore to some extent also consigned to groups in order to acquire influence. This opens the way for internal power strategies between and within minority groups. Hence the construction of group identity among immigrants and minorities as part of an interest-based conflict resembles the interest struggle that characterises most political arenas. Since the state plays an important part in the allocation of goods, competition among minority groups for recognition and transfers is likely.¹² This creates fertile soil for individual power strategies within groups. Leaders of minority groups may have a personal stake in ensuring that ethnic basis and group structure change as little as possible. They may become practitioners of what Michael Ignatieff calls "the narcissism of minor differences" (Ignatieff 1999). This may in turn run counter to the members' interests in improving their life situation in relation to the majority community. The right to retain one's culture must have its parallel in the right to escape one's ethnic belonging.

In any case, adjustments between minorities and the majority population are conflict-ridden processes. At base it is a matter of creating good, properly functioning communities for all members – new and old. But in our more heterogeneous societies the content of *the good* is a matter for negotiation in entirely new ways. And, as in other bargaining situations, it is a power issue. Economic power and the power to define. We are now back at our starting point: it is a question of the citizens' welfare and a question of belonging and identity in relation to the changeable nation. New multicultural states are groping for good symbols for the new diversity. The traditional national symbols have lost aspects of their force and legitimacy in confrontation both with internationalisation and immigration.

At the same time the Norwegian welfare state and tradition of governance set their own agenda. The *integrationist ideology* calls for an ample portion of liberality towards minorities in their effort to maintain the culture they brought with them. But at the same time the minorities demand protection against being devoured by the majority society at the first crossroads. And individuals can call on the state for protection against their own minority: circumcision and forced marriages have prompted minority women to seek protection in the institutions of the majority. Everyone calls upon the state, and it is the state that is criticised when things go wrong. A multicultural policy today premises a strong public power both at the central and local level that is prepared to intervene directly in the life of the community to realise egalitarian multicultural ideals, but that is at the same time willing to tolerate a vibrant, ethnically diverse civil society.

However, many multicultural welfare states have experienced the limited opportunities for control in this terrain. The state has neither the answers nor the instruments in important multicultural contexts.

NOTES

- 1 Multiculturalism/multicultural – are diffuse terms. Often used – for example by the authorities, both descriptively and politically: the terms both describe a more diverse society and denote a political strategy for a new type of society. In the present context they are used indicate that Norwegian society has acquired greater ethnic diversity, and a broader register of cultural expression. "Multiculturalism" as a political term will be analysed in the further discussion.
- 2 The term "minority" will, unless otherwise specified, be used as a generic term for recent immigrants and more established ethnic groups. Later in the chapter the difference between national minority and ethnic minority will be discussed.
- 3 Thanks to Anniken Hagelund (Institute for social research, Oslo) for this point.
- 4 See Miller 1995, and not least Føllesdal 2000 for a sound discussion of Miller's standpoint.
- 5 Habermas 1995, Kymlicka 1995, Kymlicka 2001, Schöpflin 2000.
- 6 See for instance Baumann 1999.
- 7 It is also emphasised by the ministry that there is no question of the immigrants at any point receiving the same rights as national minorities (conversation in January 2001).
- 8 At the start of 2000 the immigrant population from non-western countries totalled about 184,000 persons – 65% of the entire immigrant population.
- 9 There is of course wide variation between individuals and groups when it comes to actual integration or assimilation, also among the national minorities. Minority status has also been very differently received by the various groups, and there are also conflicts within the group as regards this allocated status.
- 10 Kymlicka's notions of thin culture are rather unclear, however, inasmuch as he concurrently speaks of a *national* culture, which is *complete*. It is also unclear whether he regards national minorities' culture as thick or thin.
- 11 Only 39 per cent of non-western immigrants voted at the local elections in 1999 – as much as 20 percentage points lower than for the entire electorate (Bjørklund and Kval 2001).
- 12 It is hardly a coincidence that national minorities tend to dislike multicultural programmes (Kymlicka 1995).

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