Women’s movements: constructions of sisterhood, dispute and resonance: the case of Norway

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Beatrice Halsaa, Cecilie Thun and Line Nyhagen Predelli

WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS: CONSTRUCTIONS OF SISTERHOOD, DISPUTE AND RESONANCE: THE CASE OF NORWAY

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October 2008
WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS: CONSTRUCTIONS OF SISTERHOOD, DISPUTE AND RESONANCE. THE CASE OF NORWAY

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October 2008
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is a joint product with Beatrice Halsaa and Cecilie Thun as the main authors. Halsaa is the sole author of the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), of the second chapter on the women’s movement in Norway (Chapter 2), of the analysis of problem representations of the 1970s and 80s (Chapter 6A), and of the concluding chapter (Chapter 8). Halsaa has co-authored Chapter 3 with Line Nyhagen Predelli, Chapter 4 with Nyhagen Predelli and Cecilie Thun, and the chapter on research methods with Thun (Chapter 5). Cecilie Thun is the sole author of the analysis of the problem representations of the 1990s and 2000s (Chapter 6B) and the analysis of claims making (Chapter 7).

Halsaa and Thun have co-edited the Appendix B which provides a mapping of select documents, based on reports by Trine Rogg Korsvik and Kristin Aukland. Halsaa and Thun have written Appendix A, which briefly describes the interviewed women’s organisations in this study. Appendix C consists of topic guides used during research interviews. These topic guides have been developed by Line Nyhagen Predelli, Adriana Sandu, Beatrice Halsaa and Cecilie Thun.

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORT

1.1 Introduction

This report addresses the intersection of ethnicity/race and gender as two basic dimensions in social protest and in public policy. They have emerged as two separate but deeply intertwined policy fields in Europe since the 1970’s, although the timing of their appearance on the political agenda and the particular issues addressed may have differed between countries. The two topics are urgent in contemporary debates on citizenship, inclusion and exclusion in multicultural societies.

The focus here is Norway; the history of organising along gendered and racialised categories in civil society and the state, and the contemporary state of women’s movements with respect to cooperation within and across ethnic divides and claims making. Based on a case-study of select women’s organisations in Norway the report focuses on two major aspects of their activities:

1) Relations between ethnic ‘majority’ and ethnic ‘minority’ women’s organisations in the women’s movement.
2) How women’s organisations use political opportunity structures to influence gender policy and policies on violence against women, and their problem-representations and claims-making in relation to such policies.

The report, which is part of a work in progress, is the first major outcome of strand 1 of a larger cross-country study of women’s ethnic and religious citizenship in Norway, Spain and United Kingdom. The project is part of the EU financed FEMCIT integrated project, and constitutes a contribution to one of the six citizenship dimensions of FEMCIT.

1.2 Research Context

The point of departure for this study is a concern with the mobilisation and inclusion of ethnic minority women and the claims that minority women are marginalised within
the Norwegian women’s movement.\(^1\) The normative challenge is to combine the idea of a participatory democracy comprising gender equality with the inclusion of ethnic diverse groups of women and men. Norway ranks very high on the UNDP’s index of gender empowerment (UNDP 2002) but this is no guarantee against ethnic discrimination. White feminists have ‘been forced to take note of the serious challenge posed by black feminism’, writes Julia Sudbury in her book on black women’s organisations in the UK (1998: 199), ‘and they did not take this criticism without fighting back’. Sudbury also notes that it is possible to revisit women’s history in search of moments ‘when a different relationship between black and white women was glimpsed’ (ibid.: 215). This report goes back in history and brings new empirical evidence - based on interviews with activists - of minority women’s organising in Norway, their critique of majority woman and the response from majority women’s movements organisations.

In line with the FEMCIT project, the report takes a broad approach to women’s citizenship. Firstly, the report looks at practices at the horizontal\(^2\) aspects of women’s citizenship - the relations between citizens in various contexts. The presence and non-presence of cooperation and of conflicts between women’s movements organisations within and across ethnic divides, in short: traces of sisterhood, are discussed. Secondly, displaying the claims making of women’s movement organisations and their resonance in public policy, the report looks at the vertical aspects of women’s citizenship - the relations between the individual and collective agents of change and the state. Here the aim is to identify possible concurrent demands of women’s movement organisations and to discuss various assessments of their potential impact.

In a comparative study of ‘state feminism’\(^3\) dating back to 1995, Norway was ranked among the states with high policy influence and high policy access (Stetson and

\(^1\) For instance claims in the newspaper - from ethnic majority as well as ethnic minority women - that the Norwegian women’s movement is too passive with respect to female gender mutilation and forced marriage, does not support the struggle of minority activists, and that Norwegian feminists should think less about their own sexuality and more about FGM. See also (Salimi 2002).

\(^2\) The differentiation between horizontal and vertical aspects of citizenship is inspired by (Andersen, Christensen, Langberg, Slim, and Torpe 1993): 18.

\(^3\) State feminism was defined as ‘activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's status and rights’: 2.
Mazur 1995), indicating that the women’s policy machinery had developed opportunities for feminist and women’s movements organisations to exert influence on gender equality policies. The study was conducted when ethnic minority women had established but a few organisations, however, and during a different kind of women’s policy machinery. We are curious to see if the assessments of impact articulated by our interviewed activists resemble Stetson and Mazur’s conclusion, and also whether ethnic minority women’s organisations express different views than the ethnic majority organisations. Research has established that the women’s movements attitude to public policy in general varies according to country, due to differences in political opportunities and movement traditions. In Norway and in the Nordic countries, however, women’s movement organisations have sought to influence the political system to a greater extent than similar movements have done elsewhere, Solveig Bergman claims (Bergman 1999). Still, we do not know if this includes ethnic minority women’s organisation.

This report study seeks to fill a gap in the research literature concerning women’s movements in general, and concerning ethnic minority women’s organising, relations to majority women’s movements and claims making in particular. Sustained by new empirical knowledge the report explores the various representations of ‘the problem of cooperation/not cooperation’, the complexity in the organisational landscape and the organisational actor’s strategies in relation to political influence. The issues addressed include ‘women’s issues’ in general, but the primary focus in the interviews has been violence against women.

There is an increasing research interest in exploring ethnic minority communities in Norway, and in issues related to ethnic integration and gender equality. So far, however, little has been done with regard to ethnic minority women’s organising (see however Nyhagen Predelli 2003) and to their contested relations to majority feminists. In general, there has been a gap between women’s and gender studies and ethnicity and migration studies: On the one hand research on equality policies in the Nordic countries has - by and large - been studied from a gender perspective (Bergqvist, Borchorst, Christensen, Ramstedt-Silén, Raam, and Styrtárdóttir 2000), and this perspective has not included ethnic diversities. On the other hand, research on migration and ethnic minorities has focused on issues related to class, the labour
market and the welfare state, and has not included an explicit focus on gender equality (Togeby 2003).

The white feminist movement is not just accused of marginalising ethnic minority and migrant women. It is also criticised for being a middle class movement disguised as a movement for all groups of women. In Norway for instance, May-Len Skilbrei claims that the women’s movements ideas of women’s common experiences and women’s solidarity has excluded some groups of women (Skilbrei 2004). In particular, she holds, academic feminism has moved away from the needs and perspectives of labour class women during the last decade, and their marginalisation should be addressed. Visions of the ‘good life’, motherhood included, differ between women, and gender equality politics seems to have been promoted by well educated women, Skilbrei argues. This report focuses on interviews with women’s movements activists across the ethnic divide without explicitly addressing class.

1.3 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 gives an overview of women’s movements in Norway. The chapter starts with a brief historical outline going back to the 1880s when organised feminism emerged in Norway. A central argument is that conflicts and strife as well as cooperation and alliances are part of ‘normal’ politics in social movements. Some characteristics about the Norwegian state and society are discussed in order to contextualise women’s issues. The main part of the chapter, however, deals with the period since the early 1970s. It thus spans four decades, highlighting central themes of social and political context, women’s activism and institutional arrangement across this period.

Chapter 3 introduces theoretical reflections that ground our study in the existing research literature on women’s movements, gendered citizenship, and multiculturalism. Women’s movements themselves represent the practising of gendered citizenship through women’s mobilisation and activism. On the other hand, women’s movements seek to alter citizenship regimes through challenging,

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4 Chapter 3 is a joint chapter for Work Package 4 reports from Norway, Spain, and the UK.
renegotiating and changing the ways in which citizenship is gendered on arenas as diverse as politics, work, religion, the family, intimate relationships, and so on. Our study seeks to capture both these dimensions of gendered citizenship: how it is practiced by women’s organisations through their aims, strategies and claims-making, and how the dominant citizenship regime and its disadvantaging of women is challenged and contested by women’s organisations. Chapter 3 also offers reflections on our own positions as researchers, and our shifting locations as insiders and outsiders to the women’s movement.

Chapter 4\(^5\) brings in further reflections on the positioning of our research within the theoretical perspectives of political opportunity structures and framing processes. The political opportunity approach puts particular emphasis on the specific socio-political contexts in which social movements are embedded. We discuss both institutional and discursive aspects of political opportunity and how they give rise to both opportunities and constraints for women’s movements in particular contexts. We also argue for the usefulness of discourse and frame analysis in our study of women’s movement actors and their claims-making. In particular, we seek to address the question of women’s movements impact on policy through applying the concept of ‘resonance’ and highlighting the eventual resonance or dissonance between the frames, claims and problem-representations forwarded by women’s movement actors and the policy discourses and political decisions (outcomes) made by national governments.

Chapter 5 briefly describes the research methods used in this study, in-depth interviews, and the empirical material on which the study is based, 34 interviews. The chapter also includes a discussion of language and concepts and a note on the roles of the researchers. Further information on the specific women’s organisations that have been interviewed can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a select mapping of relevant documents produced by the Norwegian government and by Norwegian women’s organisations. The mapping focuses on the issue of violence against women and that of racism and discrimination in relation to violence against women, and includes international documents in relation to the Convention

\(^5\) Chapter 4 is a joint chapter for Work Package 4 reports from Norway, UK and Spain.
on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Elimination of Racism (CERD), and national level policy documents. The topic guides used in interviews with various types of research participants can be found in Appendix C.

The next two Chapters, 6 and 7, provide the analysis which seeks to answer the two research questions listed above. The starting point for our analysis is the critique of contemporary white, middle-class women’s movements as ethnocentric and blind to the importance of ‘race’ and ethnicity. Inspired by Julia Sudbury (1998), we seek to understand whether majority’ women’s organisations have embraced and accepted, or resisted and rejected, the interests of ‘minority’ women. We also examine whether ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ women’s organisations have formed alliances in order to influence public policy.

Chapter 6 examines how different women’s organisations within the contemporary women’s movement position themselves in relation to other movement actors, and the implications such positioning may have for the building of alliances and cooperation through ‘strategic sisterhood’. It presents empirical examples of formal and informal networking, cooperation and alliances between ethnic ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ organisations in the women’s movement, thus illustrating how particular problem representations, especially in relation to violence against women, might be strategically shared by different movement actors. The chapter is divided in two parts, Chapter 6A elaborates the interviews with women’s movement activists from the 1970s and 80s, whereas Chapter 6B focuses on the 1990s and 00s. The analysis is mainly based on interviews with activists from membership based organisations. Chapter 6 is based on analysis of discursive political opportunities, inspired by Carol Bacchi’s ‘What’s the Problem approach’ (Bacchi 1999).

This chapter demonstrates the separate organising of minority women from the emergence of their mobilisation during the late 1970s and the presence of controversies between majority and minority women’s organisations. Different and in part mutually exclusive representations of women’s issues as well as lack of trust and respect have not been productive for joint organising and alliances. The contemporary existence of separate organisations for ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ women
seems to be well established, even if there are indications of development towards more ethnically mixed and integrated organisations. Still, we argue that the historical and current divisions within the women’s movement have not precluded cooperation based on strategic alliances to promote specific issues taken up by different movement actors. We argue that symbolic as well as material shared rooms have the potential to foster personal and political knowledge, which are basic preconditions to build trust. Current problem representations and claims-making by different women’s movement actors underline continued differences between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ women’s interests, and also differences between the interests of various groups of ‘minority’ women. The analysis displays that the women’s movement is currently faced with potential new challenges related to issues of culture, faith and belief.

Chapter 7 discusses the political opportunities and constraints that contemporary women’s organisations are faced with in their attempts to influence decision-making processes and outcomes, mainly focused on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism. The analysis here is inspired by critical frame analysis (Verloo 2005), and focuses mainly on contemporary policy processes. The chapter outlines the political opportunity structure and takes claims of a selective inclusion of movement groups as a point of departure (Kjellman 2007). The chapter mainly examines claims-making and problem representations forwarded by movement actors, including professional women’s organisations, in relation to policy proposals. We demonstrate the broad ways in which movement actors try to make a difference, and also elaborate some of the barriers they face. We look at the assessments made by movement actors, civil servants and politicians regarding women’s organisations influence on public policy. The international work performed by women’s organisations and the perceived importance of such work among movement actors and government representatives is examined. We argue that there are signs of increased professionalisation within the movement sector, and discuss the possible negative impact on democratic participation.

Chapter 8 offers some concluding remarks. It also includes a brief section on policy recommendations that have emerged during the course of our study.

2.1 Introduction

When the first women’s rights organisation was established in Norway, The Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights (Norsk Kvinnesaksforening) in 1884, the founding mothers and fathers disagreed on basic priorities and formulations. They could not unite on the hot issue of education, and they were deeply divided on the importance of suffrage (Moksnes 1984; Hagemann 1999). In fact, one of the pioneers - Gina Krog - soon established The Women’s Suffrage Association (Kvinnestemmerettsforeningen) (1885) to demand suffrage on equal basis with men. Strategic discords were not wiped out, however, and a new break-off resulted in the National Suffrage Association (Landskvinnestemmerettsforeningen) (1898). As these examples illustrate, women’s movements were contested and diversified from the outset, so also in Norway. Different groups of women have mobilised for dissimilar concerns. They have coped with internal tensions and ambiguous, shifting, inconsistent and sometimes conflicting demands. Also, suspicion has been cast on women’s organising from the outside, for wanting legitimacy as a group, or for approaching the wrong addressee with the wrong claims at wrong times.

The women’s movement’s historical legacy of internal strife and organisational splits was manifested in the differentiation between the organising of bourgeois and labour class women; in the differentiation between the ‘women’s movement’ and the ‘feminist movement’ (Tripp and Ferree 2006); in the various ideological strands of the feminist movement, and in the separate organising of ‘black’ and ‘white’ feminists. Rather than comprehending the diversification of the women’s movement as something extraordinary, or negative, our take is that struggle and strife is what should be expected from any political movement. Politics is about conflicts of interests, values and ideas - it is about the struggle to influence and change the social order according to one’s own needs and interests. Obviously, women are not more likely to agree on political issues than worker’s or men or any other complex social group. A history of the women’s movement, therefore, is a story of diverse aims, claims and strategies.

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6 The chapter is based on Halsaa 2001 and 2004.
On the other hand, feminism is also a negotiated collective identity (Rupp & Taylor 1999). Feminist disagreements are played out within a social movement consisting of women, and some men, who regard gender as a basic category and are concerned with changing gender hierarchies in order to improve women’s situation. Rupp and Taylor find it useful

‘as Gamson (1991) has suggested, to outline collective identity as three embedded layers: organisational, movement and solidary. The organisational layer consists of identities constructed around networks or groups that may or may not be part of a larger movement. The movement layer is broader and subordinates individual organisations to the larger cause. Finally, movements may or may not be based in even broader solidary identities - such as gender, race, class and ethnicity - derived from people’s social locations. These layers may be, but are not necessarily, closely integrated.’ (ibid.: 366).

Politics is also always about mobilising support in order to accomplish political ends, it is about negotiating viable compromises and about framing issues in ways which foster legitimacy, trust and influence. In consequence, women’s and feminist groups have endeavoured to unite forces whenever possible, to merge their resources in informal or formal alliances or support systems. Sometimes these efforts have succeeded, and we will observe umbrella organisations or mass movements in support of distinct issues. Violence against women is one such example, whereas prostitution illustrates an actual issue which splits the women’s and feminist movements. Also, women’s and feminist movements may invite strange bedfellows, if these are believed to support their ends. This is also a ‘normal’ way of doing politics, for instance when religious groups and radical feminists united forces in a so-called ‘black alliance’ in order to stop pornography during the 1980s.

Politics being about interests, influence, power and rational choice does not preclude it from also being highly emotional and personal. The strength of a social movement is also partly a product of its talent for attracting enthusiasm, joy and hope. Crests of social mobilisation are usually characterised by creative leadership, high spirits and expectations. These are not fostered in isolation, however, but in complex interplays with the surrounding state and society.
This chapter presents an historical outline of the women’s and feminist movement in Norway, including the mobilisation of minority women - migrant or ethnic minority feminists and women belonging to the national minority. The aim is to contextualize the discussions in Chapter 6 of the contested relationship between the majority and minority feminist movement - horizontal dimensions of citizenship - and in Chapter 7 of the ways in which women’s movements activists have raised demands and tried to make an impact on public policy - vertical dimensions of citizenship. Rather than presenting a complete history of the movement, we have tried to describe some of the most important issues, claims and responses. Also, we have wanted to illustrate changes in the feminist landscape within a national and international political context. The ambition has been to point out some features of Norwegian political history that are important for understanding the institutional and discursive political opportunities and problems confronting feminist and women’s movement activists. After a section summarising some of the distinguishing characteristics of Norway, this chapter outlines the movement since the 1970s chronologically according to issues.

2.2 A General Historical Outline

Norway is one of the small nations of the world with respect to the number of inhabitants. The population of 4.6 millions used to be rather homogeneous, and not well-off. The population has been transformed from one of relative deprivation to a very affluent one, due to the discovery of vast oil reserves in the North Sea in the 1960s. Norway is a member of NATO, but not of the EU, due to referendums in 1972 and in 1994. However, Norway is deeply integrated in the economic and political system of EU via the EEA Agreement.\(^7\) Norway has been under Danish (1380-1814) and Swedish (1814-1905) supremacy, and was without a significant agrarian based noblesse or upper class when the Constitution of 1814 was formed. This constitution established one of the most liberal and open political systems in Europe. Political conflicts have tended to be handled peacefully and in pragmatic ways, even dramatic disputes such as the one between the King, his government and the Norwegian parliament when parliamentary democracy was introduced in 1884. The end of the Swedish - Norwegian Union in 1905 also happened without

the use of weapons, when the Norwegian male population voted for national independence and elected a Danish prince as their King. Historically, the legitimacy of the Norwegian state is based on the proximity, communication and mutual influence between civil society and government on the local and national level (Selle & Berven 2001), and the capacity of the state to accommodate new interest groups.

Norwegian sovereignty was set aside during the German occupation 1940-1945. The struggle against the Germans was a strong incitement for people of every political shade to cooperate, and this was conducive to a modern state characterised by pragmatic negotiations and compromises in an extended system of committees and consultations. Also, the prolonged social democratic government after 1945 contributed to the construction of a welfare state based on principle of universality of social services, and a friendly partnership between the state and the citizens. The Norwegian multi-party system based on proportional representation has been conducive to openness. Combined with a small population this means a relatively short distance from public demands to political decision-making.

Features like those described above have nurtured a Norwegian sense of being particularly democratic, egalitarian and peaceful. ‘The democratic public-mindedness is the Norwegian gift to modern the world’, claims sociologist Rune Slagstad. An exorbitant self-concept has been fortified by an image of the Nordic region as extraordinary, confirmed by a foreign social scientist:

‘The Nordic equality is very real; the passion for justice and liberty is no less real; the fears that Tocqueville entertained that equality might one day drive out liberty have not been realised. The Nordic world appears somehow to have managed to combine both.’

(Graubard 1986:14)

The overwhelming positive Norwegian identity, also encouraged by the Norwegian government, is however, contested by new perspectives on Norwegian history and society: The anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, for instance, maintains that even though nationalism has been a positive, liberating and democratizing force in Norway, this ‘national imagery ignores Norway’s history of oppressive practises to

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8. On the partnership between state and citizens, see (Slagstad 1999:93; Leira 1989 and Hernes 1987).
minorities’ (Gullestad 2006: 41). Gullestad argues that ‘in terms of phenotype, majority Norwegians (and other Scandinavians) represent the most privileged white racial pole more visibly than most other Europeans.’ (ibid.: 40) For instance, the ‘inclusive’ 1814 Constitution, in addition to neither recognising women as a group nor men below a certain income as citizens - two typical limitations at that time - excluded Jews, Jesuits and monastic orders from entrance to the country.\(^{10}\) Norway has been involved in international infringements, for instance in slave-trade during the Danish-Norwegian union, but ‘people in Norway still face difficulties in coming to terms with the inheritance of slavery, colonialism and imperialism, the atrocities of World War II etc.’ (ibid.: 41). Also, the image of a homogeneous population in fact obscures that Norway always has been the home of the Sami people. Thus, the widespread idea of Norway as a homogeneous nation conceals the historical immigration that has taken place as well as the existence of various national minorities and indigenous people:

‘(…) different minorities therefore take up different and hierarchically organised symbolic positions within the Norwegian national imagination where all groups of immigrants are expected to adopt ‘basic Norwegian values’ - loosely connected to democracy and gender equality - while the Sami culture is to be maintained.’ (ibid.: 41).

Also, the Norwegian tradition of peaceful conflict resolution is not without exceptions. One is the Kautokeino rebellion in 1852, when a group of Sami’s protested against the harsh oppression.\(^{11}\)

Back in 1986, Graubard noticed that the Nordic world was ‘very protected and remote’ compared to the problems experienced by multi-racial societies:

‘(…) Norden (…) knows so little of the social tensions and turmoil characteristic of so much of the rest of the world. The Nordic countries are not obliged to integrate ‘outsiders’; they have no need to create unity between diverse and disparate peoples and races, the larger questions of subordination and domination are unknown.’ (Graubard, 1986: 14).

\(^{10}\) Jews were accepted after a long political debate in 1851, the monastic orders in 1897, and finally the Jesuits in 1956 when Norway ratified the European Human Rights Declaration.

\(^{11}\) Several people were killed. The story of the rebellion has recently been told in the movie *Kautokeino* by Nils Gaup, 2008.
Graubard obviously failed to notice that Norden, and Norway, since the 1970s, was rapidly transforming because of the increasing influx of labour migrants and political refugees from outside Europe and North-America. There was a temporary ban on immigration to Norway in 1975, soon to be prolonged, but this could only change the composition of the migrants for a short while. The ethnic landscape of Norway gradually changed, but it was not until the elections in 1985 and - 87 that the issue of migration became politicised, due to the successful anti-immigration campaign of the Progress Party (FrP) (Melve 2003: 188). With the increasing number of non-western migrants, the historic position of the Norwegian Protestant State Church is changing (Kultur- og kirkedepartementet 2006). A number of smaller religious communities have been well established, like the Pakistani and Bosnian Muslims and various Catholic communities - contributing to an unforeseen religious diversity.

However, the minority issues are certainly not confined to migrant populations. The Sami issue also became highly controversial during the 1970s, disturbing the Norwegian identity from its very inside. An assimilation policy had been the official Norwegian policy towards the Sami population since the 1880’s, the ‘Norwegianisation’ was a ‘very active and harsh policy of assimilation’ (Semb 2008). The Sami movement has struggled for autonomy - the right to exist as an independent cultural and social entity - since the turn of the 19th century (Jernsletten 1998). The breakthrough came during the long-lasting and bitter conflict over the river Alta-Kautokeino during the 1970s and 1980s. The plans to develop the watercourse threatened to swamp an entire local community, and to bring about fundamental changes in the traditional Sami economic base. No wonder the plans mobilised the Sami population and resulted in a tremendous revival of the Sami movement. In the end, the river Alta was dammed, but the Sami people succeeded in their demands for fundamental institutional changes in Norwegian citizenship rights: The establishing of the Sami Parliament (1987) and the Sami Estate (2005).

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12 A ‘migrant’ (innvandrer) has been represented to be migrants from non-Western countries. They amounted to 0.5 per cent of the total population in 1970 (Melve 2003). From the late 1960’s the ‘migrants’ were mainly single male labourers; from 1975 mainly their family members, and from the middle of the 1980’s refugees and asylum seekers (Brochmann & Rogstad 2007; Melve 2003).

13 For a historic description of the Sami movement, see (Jernsletten 1998).

14 Legislation to establish a Sami Parliament was passed in 1987, and the constitution was amended in 1988. The Sami Act stipulates that decision-making powers may be delegated to the SP from
This is not the time to elaborate Norwegian political history in detail. The elements of the political structure described above, and their implicit opportunities and barriers to women’s organising and claims making, will have to suffice.

2.3 ‘Listen, It’s a Commotion, Thousands of Feet …’

The citation is from the novel *Kvinneakvariet* (The Women’s Aquarium) by Bjørg Vik and illustrates well the enthusiastic mood of the dawning feminist mobilisation of the 1970s. During less than a decade the gender political landscape was fundamentally revised. A range of fresh feminist networks, campaigns and organisations were born. Established women’s organisations were reinvigorated. A new gender discourse was established, with new words such as sisterhood, liberation, sexism, male chauvinism, sexual harassment and forced fucking ['tvangspuling']. Long-lasting political institutions were formed. Why and how did all this happen?

A partial answer is that the political opportunity structures were favourable: The Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet) had lost its absolute majority during the 1960’s. The party was eager to attract more voters, and listened seriously to the articulation of feminist demands. Splits among the political left, polarisation and the forming of the Socialist Folk Party (Sosialistisk Folkeparti) and the Marxist Leninist AKP-ml (AKP-ml) further destabilised the political system. Also, the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society in the last half of the 20th century - accelerated by the discovery of vast oil reserves in the North Sea during the late 1960’s - made a difference. The expected economic growth was dependent upon increasing labour, and the abundant number of married women was an attractive potential. At that time, Norway was Europe’s leading ‘land of housewives’ (Skjeie 1999b). Also, women had access to new resources: The contraceptive pill was legalised in 1967.
(Wiig 1984), women’s access to state funded student loans was easier and the public gender equality rhetoric was prominent.

This was a period of thorough reforms and expansion in higher education, and thousands of women enrolled. The fact that they were often encouraged by their own housewife mothers indicates that the ‘housewifization’ process has come to a halt. If a complementary gender order based on a single earner family and the support of women through the marriage contract was a prerequisite for the modernisation of Norway (Melby 1999: 230), a gender equality order based on the dual wage earner family and support of women and men mainly through waged work was appropriate in the post-modern time ahead. However, childcare facilities were hardly available in Norway during the 1960’s and 70’s (Wiig 1984: 344), leaving women in a troubled position between conflicting expectations and opportunities. Women were at the intersections between housewifery and waged labour, and the intersection between a public ideology of gender equality and actual experiences of gender inequality (Haukaa 1982). Feminists who were mobilised were neither housewives nor employees but in between - they were students - facing unforeseen possibilities but also deep ambiguities between the established and the emerging way of being a woman. A combination of push and pull factors accounts for women’s new choices and their mobilisation for change.

2.4 Campaigning for Rights

Two early signs of a new wave of feminist mobilisation are worth mentioning. The National Council of Women initiated a campaign in 1967 to increase the representation of women in politics. The campaign was impressive in its capacity to unite forces across generational and political divides, and also attracted the sympathy of a number of men. More important than the impact on the 1967 election itself was the long-term effects: There were local actions such as the so-called ‘The Women’s Coup’ in 1971 when women won a majority of the seats in three local councils (Skjeie 1992b: 85); the Women’s Political Action in 1977 to influence the

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16 More and cheaper day care facilities was a less successful demand, set forward in hundreds of local and national campaigns - until finally the present coalition government in 2005 promised to solve the problem - and has almost made it.
national election, and last but not least the cross-party election campaigns ever after. These campaigns were based on public funding, had a paid staff and worked systematically to improve their strategies. The Norwegian hallmark for being in the lead regarding women in politics\(^\text{17}\) can be traced back to these campaigns. The feminist activists’ unstoppable focus on the importance of power inside and outside formal politics is rather unique in a comparative perspective. Quotas for women were introduced in the appointment of members to public committees in 1973, and in The Liberal and Social Left parties shortly after. The symbolic effects were vital, but the practical effects of quotas in politics only came when a large party implemented quotas, which the Labour party did in 1981. The effect of party and election quotas is that ‘the male-only and strongly male-dominated assemblages within political parties and the political elite have lost their legitimacy. Women and gender differences are now integrated into mainstream political culture.’ (Christensen 2000:84)

The second indication of a new ‘commotion’ was the Norwegian Breast Feeding Mother’s Support Group (Ammehjelpen) set up in 1968 to stop the decreasing inclination of women to breastfeed. The network contributed to a radical change in the discourse on breastfeeding, including where and when proper women could uncover their breasts and feed their babies. The network blurred the private-public divide and demonstrated the drive to set up new institutions, run and controlled by women. The feminist perspective on the breast was distinct from the campaign in the US (Helsing 1970), and was an early warning of women’s dedication to new reproductive rights. Among these rights was abortion on demand, an issue in Norway since 1913.

Abortion, however, was the main issue. The right ‘to control one’s own body’ probably played the same vital mobilising role during the 70’s as the issue of universal suffrage did during the feminist mobilisation of the 1880’s. The abortion issue was perceived as a symbol of injustice, and the slogan effectively defied the rights of commissions of doctors to decide. The existing ‘class law’ let working-class women endure humiliating procedures, while women of wealth could go abroad to

\(^{17}\) For instance Gro Harlem Brundtland’s ‘women’s-cabinet’ (‘Kvinneregjering’) in 1986 with nearly fifty per cent women, setting a new standard. See reports from the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP 1995 2002).
have their abortion. Abortion on demand was introduced on the national platform of the Labour party in 1969, by a surprisingly strategic move of the Women’s Secretariat (Kvinnesekretariatet) during the national convention (Haukaa 1982: 26), and was a main issue during the two next parliamentary elections. A number of feminist initiatives demonstrated the injustices and health injuries stemming from the existing regulation, with public hearings and sit-down demonstrations. Powerful and outspoken national campaigns for as well as against abortion on demand were set off in 1974, collecting several hundred thousand signatures for and against the claim. The Norwegian Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti) and active Christians of the state Lutheran Church and ‘low church’ congregations made efforts to frame it as a moral issue, in contrast to the feminist’s political framing (van der Ros 1994:531). Uncompromising struggles went on until the final decision was made in parliament in 1978, when the pro-choice campaign won with the smallest possible majority.

2.5 Norwegian Feminism and the European Dimension

The 1970s saw an intense growth in groups, networks and organisations expressing a new feminist discourse, the New Feminists (Nyfeministene) (1970) and the Women’s Front (Kvinnefronten) (1972) being the most influential new groups. The mobilisation of women was part of a general radicalisation in Norway, influenced by social movements abroad but also by some distinct Norwegian features. The relationship to the EC/EU has been a conflictual issue in Norwegian politics since the British applied for membership in 1961. A referendum in 1972 resulted in a mass mobilisation of protests against the political establishment who advocated membership. Most men rejected that this was a gender issue, but in the spirit of the new gender discourse, Norwegian women argued differently. European women’s organisations had not been granted consultative status within the EC, and Norwegian women had read a copy of the EC’s Sullerot-report (1971), bluntly accusing EC of ‘the untroubled handling of the problems related to women’s work’, and maintained that ‘the member states of EC do not even today do anything to develop a unified policy regarding the position of women’ (Sullerot in Haukaa 1982: 40, our transl). A majority of women were against membership - so also in 1994 - and they effectively mobilised in the Women’s Campaign against Norwegian
Membership in the EEC,\(^\text{18}\) thus establishing and reproducing networks and friendships. When the protesters 'won' the referendum in 1972, against all odds, the feeling of optimism among the radical left was almost euphoric. The feminist movement also gained confidence, political skills and networks of lasting importance from the EC struggle.

### 2.6 From Equal Pay to Equality Broadly Defined

1972 was an important year in Norwegian politics not just because of the European issue. 1972 was also when the Equal Pay Council (Likelønnsrådet) was transformed to the Equal Status Council (Likestillingsrådet). Three reasons appear obvious:

a) the failure of the Equal Pay Council to influence women's wages, and the Council's recommendation to pursue equal pay in a much broader perspective.

b) a delayed response to the United Nations 1964 call for national commissions to plan gender equality initiatives. This call was picked up by the Labour Party's Prime Minister in his inaugural speech, but instead of a national commission, the Labour Party set up a party committee.\(^\text{19}\)

c) various requests from the Norwegian Women's Right Association, which had asked for a permanent commission since the UN call.\(^\text{20}\)

The Equal Status Council was set up as a consultative agency with a broad representation and a mandate to pursue gender equality, to initiate research, policy reforms etc. One of the priorities was to diminish the pay gap, including efforts to revalue women's professions. This was a highly visible issue in 1972, indicating that the feminist mobilisation also took place outside the universities. The 1972 wage settlement had been disastrous for the nurses, and they took the public by surprise when rejecting the result. Instead, they established The Nurse Campaign (Sykepleieraksjonen), collected thousands of signatures to support their demand and organised selective strikes escalating just before the day of the EEC referendum.

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\(^{18}\) 55 per cent of women were against membership in 1972, and 57 per cent in the 1994 referendum. Experts maintain that the 'no' majority in 1994 was a product of women's voting (Blom 1999: 341).

\(^{19}\) The report 'Women's Place', 1965, was rather modest.

\(^{20}\) The National Council of Women was strictly against a permanent commission. This conflict, in addition to their differing attitudes to abortion on demand, resulted in the NWRA withdrawing from the NCW (Lønnå 1996: 251 cont., Wiig 1984 221 cont.).
They did not succeed, and their campaign ended in 1973. However, the nurse’s historic protest made an impact, and their wage conditions were soon discussed in a separate report to Parliament, and they were eventually partly rewarded.

A series of different strikes took place in the beginning of the 1970s among female cleaners, in the fishing industry and in forestry. These strikes had the support not only of the newly established feminist organisations, but also from established ones (Wiik 1984: 277). Women’s access to paid work had not been prioritised by the Norwegian Federation of Trade Union (NFTU) (Landsorganisasjonen). When NFTU replaced the Women’s Committee (Kvinnenemnden)21 in 1974 with a Family Committee without due organisational procedures, distressed women established the Oslo Federation of Trade Unions Women’s Movements to fight for women’s rights in the very male-dominated organisation.

A particularly disturbing event made the headlines in 1975 and contributed to the broad mobilisation of women: Female workers were dismissed from a workplace in spite of the established principle of seniority. Women around the whole country were reminded of the family policy of the 1930’s which restricted paid work to just one member of a family (Wiik 1984: 347). The rhetoric of gender equality was undressed, again. Despite all the well-meaning policy proposals, equal pay and working conditions were not realised. This is still the case. In 2006 a cross-party commission on equal pay was established. The commission has suggested a number of instruments, including a radical approach setting aside the principle of wage negotiations (Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet 2008). The government’s response is expected within 2009.

Back in the early 1970s, the Labour Party, in order to attract new voters in a strained situation, promised to present new equal status legislation if the party came to power after the 1973 general election. The party succeeded, and a complicated legislative process went on until 1978 when the Equal Status Act was finally passed. However, a series of compromises, with the Conservative party as well as with the Federation of Trade Unions resulted in less efficient regulations regarding equal pay and

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21 Kvinnenemnden, established in 1940.
preferential treatment (Lønnå 1996, Bergqvist 1999: 193). The explicit purpose of the law was to promote gender equality, and in particular to improve the position of women (Section 1). The general clause (Section 3) declared that direct or indirect differential treatment of women and men is not permitted, but ‘Different treatment that promotes gender equality in conformity with the purpose of this Act is not a contravention of section 3. The same applies to special rights and rules regarding measures that are intended to protect women in connection with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.’ The Gender Equality Ombud (Likestillingsombudet) and the Appeals Board (Klagenemnda) were set up to implement and monitor the Act.

The Norwegian act is rather unique in that it covers not only working life conditions, but all sectors in society, even family life. The only formal exemption is the case of internal conditions in religious communities, including the Norwegian State Church. In practice, however, it is difficult to enforce the law in family and private life. However, the Ombud, Eva Kolstad - a well-known feminist activist and previous leader of the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights - made the most of the general clause regarding preferential treatment and the obligation of the state to promote gender equality.

2.7 Feminist Feuds

In the previous paragraphs we have seen examples of flourishing feminist activity. In practice, various groups, networks and organisations often joined forces despite heated ideological disputes. The Women’s Front was set up in 1972 as a response to the New Feminists (1970), and both of them were distancing themselves from the established Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights (1884) (Dahlerup & Gulli 1985). Contrary to a common impression, however, disagreements often went straight through the various organisations rather than between them, and they all struggled to adjust to the changing feminist landscape. The divisive line between the New Feminists and the Women’s Front, was not patriarchy contra class, since both were oriented towards women’s liberation and socialism, but rather which dimension

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to emphasise most (Haukaa 1982: 62). The New Feminists were anti-capitalist, but tended to highlight patriarchy and prioritize gender struggle before class struggle. The flat structure with autonomous consciousness-raising groups was conducive to silent withdrawal and exit as responses to internal disagreements, rather than to violent strife and splits. The Women’s Front was a mixture of Socialist and Marxist women who were sympathetic to the newly established Workers’ Communist Party of Norway (the Marxist-Leninist), and had a hierarchical structure. Failing to reconcile the two fractions, and clearly prioritizing class struggle, the hierarchical and formal structure of the Women’s Front encouraged powerful confrontations between those in favour of a ‘front policy’ and those who wanted a Socialist Feminist policy. The campaign to ‘wipe the feminists out’ in 1974 clearly indicated the Marxist-Leninist party’s control (Haukaa 1982: 116). The split was a fact in 1975 and resulted in the formation of Bread and Roses (Brød og Roser, 1975).

The strife also contributed to the forming of the Lesbian Movement (Lesbisk Bevegelse, 1975) (Haukaa 1982:28). The arrival of the contraceptive pill and the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1972 had contributed to a feeling of sexual revolution during the 1960 and 70’s, and women proudly broke the silence that had previously surrounded their sexuality. But even feminist organisations were reluctant to discuss lesbian issues. In 1973, however, a group of New Feminists registered in Association -48 (Det norske forbundet av 1948), the only homosexual organisation in Norway, to struggle for the rights of lesbians. In 1975 they established the Lesbian Movement. According to Haukaa (1982:133) this was partly a reaction to the heterosexual focus of the feminist organisations, but mainly to the combination of conservative and Marxist-Leninist men in Association -48. Two milestones in the struggle for gay and lesbian rights were obtained during the next decades: In 1981 Norway, as the first country in the world, introduced criminal protection against the discrimination of gay and lesbians, and in 1993, Norway was the second state to adopt a legal regulation of same sex marriage, the Act related to registered

23 A ‘front’ in the terminology of the Marxist-Leninists is an organisation mobilising people on single issues or claims, while the party elaborates the analysis of the collective policies. The party members are obliged to fractionate within a front to carry through the politics of the Party (Grenness 1975).

24 Association -48 was established in 1953 and abolished in 1992 when it joined forces with several organisations to form the Norwegian LGBT Association (Landsforeningen for lesbisk og homofil frigjøring).
partnership (Partnerskapsloven). A reform in 2008 also grants lesbian couples the right to assisted pregnancy and to adoption.

The importance of the Norwegian Marxist-Leninist party during the 1970s in Norway is hard to exaggerate. Never numerous, the fraction nevertheless succeeded in its strategy to infiltrate and control leftist groups, campaigns and various activities. The AKP-ml movement embittered not only the Women’s Front but the new women’s movement as such, and exposed the activists to wear and tear. The campaign against Norwegian membership in the European Economic Community; the formation in 1973 of the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti), joined by numerous feminists; the AKP-ml and the resulting fervent debate between the New Feminists and the Women’s Front probably brought the entire Norwegian women’s movement into more ‘general political debate’ than was usually the case with the feminist movement in Europe (Dahlerup & Gulli 1985: 31).

2.8 Legal Regulations

Feminist disagreements were outspoken from the Labour Party’s initial proposal for the Gender Equality Act (Likestillingsloven) in 1974 until the Act was finally passed in 1978. Feminists disagreed on the principal framing of the law: Should it be gender-specific or gender-neutral; include active statutory provisions or rather passive provisions; informative instruments or mandatory; encompassing regulations of the public and the private sphere or a more limited scope? The radical feminist Women’s Law milieu at the University of Oslo, a very prominent group who started the Legal Advice for Women in 1974 and later became deeply involved in the shelter movement, mobilised energetically against the gender-neutral, moderate, limited and passive framing of the proposal from the Labour party. On the other hand, the liberal Women’s Right Association (WRA) generally welcomed the proposal and its ‘equal rights’ framing, even if WRA also voiced objections along some of the same lines as the new feminist organisations and networks (Lønnå 1996: 261). The end result was, as explained in a previous section, a compromise reflecting the negotiations between political parties, interest groups in the labour market and the women’s movement, limiting the scope of possible policies. Skjeie claims that
‘The Norwegian feminist movement, which at first expressed little interest in state-initiated attempts to promote formal equality, at a later stage became involved in drafting new legislative proposals on behalf of the Socialist Left Party. The broad concerns of the movement were with fundamental changes in society’s basic production/reproduction division, rather than with the provision of legal statements on non-discrimination. Nevertheless, its main point of attack concerned just such statements (Skjeie 1992b: 78).

The final provision aiming specifically at improving the conditions of women, and of preferential treatment, can be seen as concessions to the criticism leveled by the feminist movement. ‘The Confederation succeeded in narrowing the scope of the equal-pay legislation; the feminist movement managed to broaden the scope of legal measures to promote equality’ (ibid.: 79) Also, women’s organizations influenced the work of the Equal Status Ombud in the succeeding years regarding preferential treatment and positive action in favour of women.

During the 1970s, Norwegian legislation was generally revised in a gender-neutral way, taking formal equality a long step forward. One example is the changes in the Allodium Act (Odelsloven) from 1974, giving girls born after 1965 equal rights with boys to take over their parent’s farm. This was necessary for Norway to ratify the UN’ Human Rights Declaration. The Norwegian Society of Rural Women (Norges Bygdekvinnelag, 1946) (NBK) opposed the change, displaying women’s differing and historically shifting interests.

2.9 Violence Against Women

Violence against women is one of the old feminist issues, also on the agenda of the first women’s organizations. During the 1970s, however, the issue was revived and the framing radicalised. One early indication was a program in the TV series ‘The Court is in Session’ (‘Retten er satt’),25 produced by law students in 1973. A group of young, feminist law students took the opportunity to discuss the legal meaning of the marriage contract, focusing on the question of rape in a marriage in relation to § 192 of the Criminal Act. Is rape, legally speaking, possible in a marriage? Or is it outside the scope of public regulation? Does the husband have a right to sexual intercourse? The ‘Court’ in the constructed case, convincingly set up, concluded that

the husband was guilty of rape. The public and experts alike were engaged in the issue, and some were furious, accusing the students of poor scholarly work. In less than a few years, however, the first Norwegian husband was convicted for rape in marriage. But it was not until the scale of the problem was firmly documented by the end of the 1970s that the general tune was changed and the long struggle against domestic and sexual violence against women took a new, intensified turn.

Inspired by the International Tribunal on Violence Against Women in Brussels 1976\(^{26}\), a helpline for raped and battered women was set up in Oslo in 1977, and shortly after the Camilla Centre for Battered Women (1978). The aim was to bring the problem of domestic violence to the public’s attention and to make the government provide funding. The Crisis Centre Movement succeeded in both, and the growth of hotlines and centres was formidable. In fact, this proved to be one of the most significant institutional expressions of the women’s movement.\(^{27}\) By 1991 there were a total of 53 women’s shelters and helplines, involving 3000 volunteers (Morken & Selle1995). The fact that the movement turned towards rather than away from the state and considered public funding a right is characteristic of the close relations between civil society and the state (Bergman, 1999) Morken and Selle rightfully claim that

‘Understanding the women’s shelter movement’s special relations to the welfare state is the key to understand the character of both the movement and the welfare state. This relationship demonstrates the most typical aspects of the Norwegian welfare state and also illustrates what it means to be an alternative movement in a “state-friendly” society’. (ibid. 177)

Van der Ros notes that ‘Norwegians are not comfortable with charity; it reminds them too much of unequal conditions. When services are publicly funded, however, the equality between the helper and the helped is restored.’ (van der Ros 1994: 539).

The Crisis Centre Movement has, however, not been able to avoid painful conflicts and split-ups related to its ideology and organisational form. There was a ‘coup’ at

\(^{26}\) The Tribunal was initially planned as a protest against the UN and the various governments participating at the International Women’s Year World Conference in 1975, but for lack of funding it could not take place until 1976 (Brantenberg, Kirsti, Lykkjen, Sørbøe, and Natland 1976).

\(^{27}\) The women’s studies movement is another example (Halsaa 2004), and the election campaigns (Halsaa 1998).
the Shelter in Oslo in 1989, when a small splinter group took over with the assistance of the Conservative Party and the Progress Party in the Municipal Council of Oslo. The conflict, according to Morken and Selle (1995), was related to attitudes towards victims of incest, and to immigrant women:

‘The splinter group was of the opinion that incest victims with post-trauma effects were not in an ‘acute crisis’ and therefore should not have access to the shelter. The same group had aired the idea of creating a separate unit for immigrant women instead of having all women under the same roof’ (ibid.: 194).

The two existing umbrella organisations of the various shelters, The Administration of Women’s Shelters (Krisesentersekretariatet) and Norwegian Crisis Center Association (Norsk Krisesenterforbund) are evidence of ongoing disagreements.

2.10 Diffusion and a New Agenda

Before the 1980s, three major struggles had come to an end: the EEC controversy, abortion on demand, and the gender equality legislation. The Crisis Centre Movement, the Women’s Studies Movement and campaigns for women in politics were institutionalised. Also, feminism had made an impact on literature, movies, sports and what not, manifested during the numerous ‘women’s festivals’ at the end of the -70s. But, fundamental demands were yet to be recognised and the struggle was not over. The movement fragmented, however, as more women channelled their energy outside the established feminist organisations. The support of the International Women’s Day parades decreased since 1977 and the feminist magazines were struggling to keep their subscribers. The ‘death of the movement’ was publicly discussed in 1981, also indicating a disintegration of the new feminist public sphere (Vibe 1994). If the feminist organisations attracted less enthusiasm at the turn of the decade and had to cope with a more restrained political context, new issues were soon to emerge. Before we turn to them, we will take a closer look at the changing work-family relation.

28 The first Centre for victims of incest, and the Centre for raped women, were established in 1986.
29 Oslo was an exception (Haukaa 1982: 95).
2.11 The Work-Family Problematic

Women’s entry in the labour market has been characterised as an invisible and silent revolution (Skrede and Tornes 1983; Skrede and Tornes 1986). During a short time span Norwegian married women’s life course changed from that of a maintained housewife to a wage earner; from mothers with young children hardly in paid work during the 1960’s, to almost half of them in paid work at the end of the 1970s. The expansion of the welfare state resulted in ‘the reproduction going public’, and numerous jobs were considered fit for women, often as part-time employment. A huge change, obviously, but was it silent? The ideological struggle between ways of being female - the ‘housewife ideal’ and the ‘independent woman ideal’ demanding men to take their share of the domestic work - was quite loud.

The very real problem’s women had to cope with in their daily lives in order to combine family and paid work, and to survive on women’s salary, were indeed articulated by women’s organisations and campaigns, with the support of the Equal Status Council. The economic recession in Europe had finally hit Norway in 1977-78, and unemployment hit women harder than men during the early 1980’s (Lønnå 1996: 270). Memories of the dismissed married women of the 1930’s recession were looming, and the ‘right to work’ was a basic feminist parole. The six hours working day soon was a major, unifying demand believed to ease the combination of paid and unpaid work, the caring of elderly and young children - for both men and women. The concepts of a ‘women’s culture’ and ‘a rationality of care’, from Norwegian women’s studies, attracted a lot of attention - more so in Norway than in Sweden and Denmark. Even the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights was influenced by the new discourse of difference and took on a care-centred feminism (Lønnå 1996: 275). The struggle for equal pay, however, continued as before, as did the demand for day-care services.

These problems and demands stimulated a new gender political agenda for the 1980s and - 90’s. According to Skjeie (1995), a political consensus was gradually established between the political parties to outline a ‘care- and career policy’. The
bourgeois (non-socialist) parties\textsuperscript{30} favoured mothers as carers while the parties to the left were concerned with mother's as worker's. Thus, a new gender policy was adopted with day care and expanded parental leave as the consensus-establishing priorities. These reforms could be framed as supportive of the normative family - father, mother, child (now in a kindergarten) (Skjeie 1999a). Gradually, the Christian Democratic Party and the Centre Party changed their attitude to working mothers. The less than satisfactory public policy towards the family-work problematic was expressed as a ‘passive partnership between the welfare state and working mothers, in the sense that the welfare state is not

\begin{quote}
‘forming an unambiguous “partnership” with the employed mothers, if a partnership is taken to imply that the state as partner either precipitates social change and acts preventively to meet the problem forecasts, or, that it intervenes post hoc to offer solutions to problems emerging. The Norwegian welfare state policies towards mothers in employment display a mixture of measures, a passive partnership at best, with more than a tinge of patriarchal overtones.’
\end{quote}

(Leira 1989: 205).

However, radical parental leave reforms were introduced during the 1990's: 42 weeks with full pay or 52 weeks with 80 percent pay, including four weeks reserved for the father.

\section*{2.12 Sami Feminism}

Sami women have been an integrated part of the modern Sami movement setting off in 1968, provoked by the Norwegian government’s plans to develop the Alta-Kautokeino watercourse. From the middle of the 1970s, however, Sami women began to voice their discontent as women, disclosing new gender diversities. The celebration of the UN Year for Women, Peace and Development arranged by the municipal women’s year committees in Norway also took place in Sami communities, providing a small policy window. The vulnerable position of women in the traditional Sami reindeer husbandry was clearly expressed in 1977 when The Social Security Tribunal questioned their status as housewives or working women (Wiig 1984: 312). The status is of the utmost importance regarding social security, and the issue parallels the traditional discriminatory definition of female farmers. In 1978, Sami

\textsuperscript{30} The Conservative Party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Centre Party.
women faced another problem when the revisions of the Reindeer Herding Regulation suggested a replacement of the traditional Sami system of one reindeer stamp per family member with a system of one stamp per family. This was immediately seen as yet another example of Norwegianization policy, and considered to hit women in particular (Sára 1980; Blom 1999: 333). Female Sami nomads protested vigorously, and partly succeeded in the sense that married couples were admitted the right to ask for individual stamps.

A most dramatic protest by Sami women took place in February 1981, deeply ingrained in the escalation of the Alta-campaign to save the river. When the protests of a mass movement and enduring civil disobedience had no effect, a group of Sami men had started a hunger strike right in front of the parliament. An unexpected resignation of Prime Minister Nordli cleared the way for Gro Harlem Brundtland, the first female prime minister in Norway. Stimulated by this event and in the spirit of sister solidarity, a group of 14 Sami women went to Oslo to demonstrate their support for the hunger strike (Lindi 2004). When Brundtland came out of the Royal Castle after having been appointed Prime Minister, the Sami women displayed their banners and asked for a meeting. A few days later they actually met at the Prime Minister’s office. But when the PM left the meeting without any clear-cut promises (she left in order to read the Declaration of her cabinet), the Sami women refused to leave her office. 300 people in the Sami community of Masi simultaneously demonstrated their support in a torchlight procession. The press coverage was enormous, and so was the public sympathy when the Sami women were involuntarily removed by the police the next morning. They did not give in easily, and later on they visited the Pope in Rome to request his support.

The Sami people struggled to protect the river Alta along with the environmental movement, and in particular the People’s Action against the Development of the Alta-Kautokeino river (Folkeaksjonen mot utbygging av Alta-Kautokeinovassdraget) set up in 1978. They were defeated, but their struggle for recognition and rights had otherwise been rather successful. A Sami Rights Commission was established, and the discourse soon transformed from an ethnic minority to an indigenous

31 The Alta Campaign had approximately 20,000 members at the most, and 10,000 took part in the actual demonstrations.
people’s discourse – with a whole new range of rights (Semb 2008; Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet 1984; Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet 1985). In 1987, the Sami Parliament was established through the Sami Act (Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet 1986), and the first elections were held in 1989.

A new stage in the Sami feminism began when Sáráhkka-Sami Women’s Organisation, named after a goddess, was established in 1988 to promote Sami women’s interests. Sáráhkka was a transnational organisation with branches in Sweden, Finland, Russia and Norway, and was a result of the policy window which came along with the emerging recognition of the Sami as an indigenous people, and the institutionalisation of Sami politics. In 1989, Sami women set up a Women’s List for the Sami Parliament election (see Chapter 6A). This was a reaction to the contested nomination process of the Sami People’s Union (Samisk Folkeunion), when the original nomination of a woman at the top of the list was rejected by another meeting that chose to put two men at the top. The gender debate within the Sami communities was heated. The Women’s List almost won a seat, and succeeded during the local election in 1991. Sáráhkka’s aim is to improve women’s rights within and outside the Sami institutions, and cooperates whenever reasonable with the Sámi NissonForum (Sami Women’s Forum). The Sami NissonForum, set up as an informal network in 1993, was formally established in 1998, with members from four different states (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia), and publishes the Norwegian-Sami magazine Gába.\footnote{For a detailed and updated overview of the gender political organisational landscape, see (Eggebø, Halsaa, Skjele & Thun 2007).}

2.13 Migrant Women

In 1979, a modest note in the new Norwegian magazine Immigranten informed the readers about the establishment of Foreign Women’s Group (FWG). The aim was rather informal at the beginning, but was soon politicised. The Foreign Women’s Group identified with the anti-racist movement and was eager to broaden the Norwegian feminist agenda, to include anti-racist struggle alongside the struggle against patriarchy and capitalism. Generally, the aim of FWG was to combat the discrimination of women in working life, in housing, education and wherever relevant.
In particular, FWG focused on requirements of the Immigration Act to family members (i.e. women) trying to obtain an independent residence permit. The historian Ida Blom asserted that the interpretation of the Immigrant Act was according to an understanding of femaleness which was significantly weakened after the 1970s, namely that of women as primarily wife and mother (Blom 1999:333). The requirements have caused problems for female migrants who after 1975 had to apply for residence permits pursuant to the family reunion provisions. A migrant woman is still not being treated as an autonomous individual if she divorces during the first three years of her stay in Norway, but risks to lose her permit, unless she can prove that she has been a victim of violence - which is a tricky matter. The requirements for documentation of violence and the burden of proof can be hard to fulfill, the criteria for obtaining a residence under the exception sections are difficult to comprehend, and women’s knowledge of legislation and rights may be wanting (Madsen, Paul, Schlytter, and Jemteborn 2005).

FWG marked the beginning of organised black feminism in Norway, but it was neither the first nor the only organisation to focus on the needs and interests of migrant women and refugees. The various national associations for migrant groups and the Foreign Labour Association (Fremmedarbeiderforeningen, 1971) have addressed these issues to some extent, but further research is needed. However, the ethnic Norwegian Christian Intercultural Association (KIA) addressed issues related to migrant women from the 1970s onwards, with language courses for women and social events.

FWG was concerned with empowerment, legal advice and skills upgrading from the outset, and soon confronted the ethnic Norwegian feminist organisations and the public authorities with the problems of migrant women, and were distressed by what they generally interpreted as a lack of response, understanding and responsibility. The Equal Status Council probably demonstrated the hegemonic framing of migrant women’s situation in 1980. The Council described migrant women as isolated and without sufficient language skills, but were silent about their exposure to racism (Likestillingsrådet 1980). A special issue of the feminist magazine Kjerringråd in 1981 on ‘Migrant women’ illustrates the frustrated relations between FWG and the
ethnic Norwegian feminism (Redaksjonen 1981). This is reflected in a comment by one of the founding mothers of FWG in 1994:

‘It has been a lonely struggle because women from the majority society have often been interested to lead and speak on behalf of minority women rather than supporting their struggle and letting their voices be visible and dominant. (…) sadly enough, the white ethnic women who occupy the power position as experts and helpers have hijacked the political struggle ethnic minority women have been fighting for many years. They have taken the lead to define, and set the premises for minority women’s participation and integration in the Nordic countries. (…) I am very sad to say that there is a great backlash within the politics of solidarity among women. We are witnessed to a great sense of arrogance from a number of white women in the power positions and feminist researchers particularly from Norway forming predominantly white networks on the subject of feminism and multiculturalism without including significant black voices within those networks. Thus, marginalising and excluding the minority women from a very important political arena. (…) it is a dishonest feminist discourse, hiding behind the rhetoric of gender equality for ethnic minority women but in reality perpetuating the stereotypes and making black and ethnic minority women even more visible within the discourses of integration.’

(Salimi 2004): 98-99)

In an interesting comparison of the Sami and the migrant minorities in Norway, discussing the extent to which migrants may learn from the Sami people’s struggle, the importance of the ‘Alta affair’ is underlined. This was the ‘Big event’, the breakthrough for recognition and rights, changing the Sami as individual subjects. “A new, mature Sami was born” according to Máret Sárá (in Lindstad 1992: 200). Migrant people, however, ‘will hardly get their Alta affair’ because they do not have the material foundation: prescriptive rights (rett og hevd) to their own soil and water (ibid. 200).

FWG was replaced by the MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women in 1989, as a result of a women’s funding campaign (see next section). The Centre publishes the Mira Magazine, and has played a continuous role as watchdog and midwife for migrant women. Also, MiRA illustrates a general trend in the Norwegian civil society from the 1990’s: a decline of member based democratic associations and the rise of professionalised pressure groups with paid staff (Selle & Berven, 2001). At that time Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees (SEIF) had already been operating for two years. SEIF had a distinct women’s profile from the outset. With its focus on the abuse of foreign women, forced marriages etc., and contacts to the shelter movement, SEIF was a significant expansion of the
organisational landscape. So was Oslo Røde Kors International Centre (ORKIS), set up in 1988. ORKIS works for inclusion and against racism, also with a specific interest in minority women and girls. To-day there is an impressive flora of migrant women’s organisations. Most of the ethnic minority organisations in Norway are gender-mixed, but almost all of the registered unisex ethnic minority organisations - 46 out of 50 - are for women only (Nyhagen Predelli 2006). Among the approximately 1000 migrant’s organisations, most of them local and regional, 150 mostly address women and girls.

2.14 Feminist Communities

The ideological tensions between the old and the new women’s organisations became less poignant during the 1970s, paving the way for pragmatic cooperation and strategic alliances. The ‘Conservative wave’ (Høyre-bølgen) and the economic recession during the 1980s, was one reason for feminists to join forces. They were afraid of a backlash. Also, the various meetings to discuss, comment or implement plans related to the UN’s International Decade and the various initiatives from the new equal status machinery provided political opportunities to develop personal relations, establish trust and discuss priorities. Two cross-party initiatives established during the late 1980s, related to pension rights and to visiting rights for fathers who did not live with their child after its birth (Skjeie 1992a:120), also indicate the co-operative political atmosphere of that time. The most important mobilising issue, however, was the struggle against pornography and prostitution. This was an extension of the struggle against violence against women, and became a core issues during the 1980s.

An unlikely alliance between the Norwegian Housewife Organisation (Norges Husmorforbund), the Norwegian Society of Rural Women, the Center Party’s Women Caucus and the Women’s Front started the Women’s United Campaign against Pornography (Kvinnenes fellesaksjon mot pornografi) in 1977. The Norwegian

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33 The gender gap in politics turned in the 1981 election, when women voted more for left wing parties and men more for right wing parties, indicating women’s supportive attitude to distribution policy and collective solutions (Blom 1999: 334).
Association for Women’s Rights did not join, however, because it was opposed to the Christian People’s Party’s negative attitude to sexuality on the one hand, and to the Women’s Fronts militant methods, such as the burning of books and magazines on the other. The campaign attracted numerous organisations, and was reorganised as the United Campaign against Pornography and Prostitution (Fellesaksjonen mot pornografi og prostituer) in 1981. At that time, researchers had established that prostitution was much more dispersed than anticipated, and that prostitutes often had a miserable life. A heated debate on the criminalisation of pimps started, and militant feminists pretending to be prostitutes, painted slogans on the cars of clients. An autobiography by a prostitute in 1982 disclosed grave physical and psychic scars and wounds as an effect of prostitution and drug abuse (Halvorsen 1982). This contributed to a more nuanced media debate about prostitution.\(^{34}\) In 1983, the Norwegian state TV broadcasted a program with Unni Rustad, the leader of the campaign, with shocking slides, videos and a lecture elaborating the porn industry. The program was a national eye-opener, and soon also the WRA joined the campaign.

Two large international women’s conferences organised during the 1980s also reveal the cooperation and great vitality of the women’s and feminist movement: The International Feminist Bookfair (Internasjonal Kvinnebokmesse) in 1986; and the Nordic Forum (Nordisk Forum) in Oslo 1988, with thousands of women attending the various events. Four different Norwegian Sami organisations along with Foreign Women’s Group were involved in the Norwegian planning of Nordic Forum.\(^{35}\) Migrant women established a Nordic committee for migrant- and refugee women, NKIF, during Nordic Forum. Their most urgent concern was related to legal rights, the right to an independent status and ‘integration on their own terms, not assimilation’ (our transl.). During the Nordic Forum, the Nordic Council of Ministries also organised a conference on equal status, thereby providing a unique opportunity for stimulating confrontations and dialogue between the politicians and grass-root

\(^{34}\) The book was written by two researchers, Liv Finstad and Cecilie Høigaard but based on the story of Ida Halvorsen.

\(^{35}\) The Sami organisations and FWG groups were not included from the outset, but asked to be included along with some ethnic Norwegian organisations. The Sami organisations were Norske Reindriftsamers Landsforbunds kvinneutvalg; Norske Samers Riksforbund, Samenes Landsforbund and Samenemnda for studierbeid (Knudsen and Moen1989).
women. Another Nordic Forum was arranged in 1994 in Finland, and this time Sáráhkká and FWG were part of the executive committee from the outset.

Peace was another issue uniting women across organisations during the 1980s. A Nordic Women’s Peace Movement (Kvinnefredsbevegelsen) was born, triggered by NATO’s new atomic strategy and plans to station more than 500 atomic warheads in Europe. Half a million signatures were collected ahead of the UN Women’s Conference in Copenhagen in the summer 1980. The peace march Copenhagen-Paris in 1981 inspired the start of Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp in the UK (Skjønsberg 1998, Roseneil 2000). The international peace movement mobilised thousands and thousands of people until President Gorbachev and Reagan finally signed the Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty in 1987 (Skjønsberg, 1998). Together with Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (Internasjonal kvinneliga for fred og frihet) (WILPF), the Grandmothers against Atomic War (Bestemødre mot atomvåpen), Grandmothers at Stortings Plaza (Bestemødre for fred) have kept the peace issues alive.

The last example of successful co-operation to be mentioned took place in 1989, when 46 women’s organisations were responsible for the Norwegian Broadcasting Company’ yearly fund-raising campaign. The aim of the ‘Women in the 3rd world’ campaign was twofold: to meet the needs of women in the Third World; and to increase awareness in Norway of the need for development cooperation programmes directed specifically towards women. The 46 organisations responsible for the national campaign had a unique opportunity to inform and engage people about women’s needs. Long-lasting cooperation between the organisations was institutionalised resulting in FOKUS Forum for women and development (FOKUS Forum for kvinner og utvikling). A request from the Foreign Women’s Group to use some of the money from the fund-raising campaign on migrant women in Norway was accepted, resulting in the MiRA Resource Center. FOKUS successfully applied for another campaign in 2005, The Dream-catcher (Drømmefanger), to combat violence against women. 49 projects world-wide are funded by the present campaign.

36 The Center for International Women’s Issues (1989-1994) was reorganised as FOKUS in 1995. Today, more than 70 women’s organisations are members of FOKUS.
2.15 Men in Feminism

The feminism of the 1970s has been characterised as totally dominated by women, compared to earlier waves of feminist protest where men had more prominent roles (Nagel 1995). Still, the ‘men’s issues’ were inescapable, for various reasons. One reason is the inherent contradiction in patriarchal societies between oppression and love (Jónasdóttir 1994). The accusation of feminists for hating men is usually based on a blurring of the fine line between fighting patriarchy as structures and relating to men as individuals. This easily happens if the topics are violence against women, rape, incest or sexual harassment. This was the case during the early 1980s, and resulted in a furious and bitter debate between feminists. The strife brought down Sirene, the first feminist magazine of the 1970s, and resulted in the anthology Mannfolk! 13 innlegg om mannhat i kvinnekampen (Menfolk! 13 contributions on man-hate in the women’s movement, our transl.) (Bjerck, Brantenberg, Brekken, Finstad, Glomm, Hildre, Hoel, Høigård, Larsen, Michelet, Myklebust, Nyhamar, Rustad, and Rønneberg 1983). Here, feminists repudiated the claim of man-hate, which has in fact rarely been a distinguishing mark of the Norwegian women’s movement.

The feminist vision of men has focused on men as companions, intimate friends and equal partners in parenthood, and subsequently in demands towards men to take their fair share of family work. Men - as a group - did not really enter the Norwegian stage until The Government Commission of the Role of Men (Mannsrleutvalget) (1986-1989) was established by the government. The aim was to increase the interest and consciousness of men’s roles, and to propose measures to combat sexualized violence etc. (Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet 1991). The committee’s proposal stimulated public debates on men’s roles, and also put pressure on proposals for ‘quotas for fathers’. (The parental leave scheme, reserving part of the leave for fathers

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37 A particular characteristic of gender politics is that men and women - the two structurally defined social groups opposed to each other within the gender system - relate intimately with each other on the personal level. The mutual dependency - as lovers, married couples, father/daughter etc - related to (hetero)sexuality and love potentially brings about emotional community (felleskap) and understanding (Holter 1970).

38 See Hellesund for a detailed discussion of ‘man-hate’ in the women’s movement (Hellesund 2001).
was introduced in 1993 (Bergqvist 1999). The Committee also resulted in an impressive growth in research on men, and in voluntary associations to promote men’s interests as fathers. In 1988 ‘Alternative to violence’ was set up, a combined research and therapeutic project for men, funded by the government and the municipality of Oslo. The concern with men is indicative of a gradual shift in equal status policy, away from a focus on women and the improvement of women’s status to a focus on men as fathers. The 1995 revision of the Equal Status Act indicates this, in its redefinition of preferential treatment to also include men.

39 Since 2005 the fathers have a right to two weeks paid leave at birth and since 1998 a cash benefit has been paid to parents staying at home with children below three years of age.
40 However, positive discrimination of men is restricted to teaching and caring professions.
2.16 A Moving Landscape

The landscape of ethnic Norwegian women’s and feminist organisations has changed gradually since the 1980s. There has been no dramatic new wave of mobilisation, but maybe a small crest from the turn of the century mobilizing young women. Two of the old women’s organisations have been abolished: The National Council of Women (1989) and the Norwegian Federation of Women (2003). Also, two of the strongholds from the seventies are no longer operative: the New Feminists and Bread and Roses, and the feminist magazines *Sirene* (1973-1983), and *Kjerringråd* (1975-1986) are gone. At the same time, new organizations, networks and activities have been established. One of them is the Feminist Group Ottar (Ottar), starting in 1991 as a split-off from the Women’s Front. Ottar has been characteristic of its activist, militant and public profile. Ottar boasts of itself as representing ‘snowplough-feminism’ - breaking the way for the other feminist groups (Eielsen 2004: 35). Another highly visible and controversial newcomer is the Human Rights Service. HRS began in 2001, as an independent, professional organisation, and is indicative of general structural changes in the non-governmental sector. HRS’s focus is on the rights of women and children in multiethnic societies. HRS is noted for lobbying politicians on issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and honour killings.

There has been a general decrease in the ethnic Norwegian voluntary sector, however. Contrary to this, prominent mobilisation has taken place among women with an ethnic minority or national minority background. The MiRA Centre has kept its unique national position in the struggle for migrant and refugee women’s rights, and along with the Centre and SEIF there is a large number of local and regional migrant women’s organisations. There are, however, few national organisations of/for migrants and refugees. In their typology of the ten national organisations in the ‘migrant field’, Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen included three organisations with a ‘women related profile’ (Wollebæk, Selle, and Lorentzen 2000): the MiRA Centre, the Self Help for Immigrants and Refugees SEIF, and Christian Intercultural Association (KIA). The categorisation indicates interesting differences between national organizations by/for migrant and refugee women: MiRA was positioned in the category ‘equal worth organisations’ - organisations focusing on equality and anti
discrimination. SEIF was included in the category ‘help organisations’, organisations focusing legal protection and rights. KIA was included in the category ‘bridge-building’, organisations focusing on community and meeting places.

The government has been eager to promote migrant voluntary organisations, and has called for organisations to function as spokespersons and integrating mechanisms (Melve 2003). Voluntary organisations have been the traditional Norwegian way of ‘doing civil society’, and the corporate channel has been very influential. Efforts to organise migrant communities and to include them in the political processes were to be expected, due to Norwegian traditions. ‘Ethnic corporatism’ (Brochmann & Rogstad 2007) was institutionalised when the Contact Committee between migrant organisations and the government (Kontaktutvalget mellom innvandrerbefolkningen og myndighetene) (KIM) was established in 1984. KIM was meant to compensate for the lack of national organisations (Nyhagen Predelli 2006).

The state has wanted organisations across ethnic groups, oriented towards the majority society, but this has hardly happened, despite the incentives of the public funding system (Fornyings- og administrasjonsdepartementet 2006). When asked, most of local migrant organisations categorised themselves as ethnic and cultural organisations, which means a focus on identity issues and the social milieu. This does not preclude their interest in politics, however, since approximately half of them are involved in various forms of political activity (Nyhagen Predelli 2006: 39). In her examination of a selected number of organisations working to promote the interests of ‘minority women’, Nyhagen Predelli claims that there are few organisations established or headed by minority women which aims at influencing public policy (Nyhagen Predelli 2003). Several informants maintained that the space for informal political participation had improved. In particular, individual women and highly profiled migrant women’s organisations have been visible related to issues like forced marriage and gender mutilation (ibid. :144).

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41 Norway has one of the largest numbers of voluntary organisations in Europe (Brochmann & Rogstad 2007).
Some basic structural changes in the Norwegian associational life since the 1970s are worth mentioning: While the activity of the voluntary associations as such is increasing, the aims are more private and individual, and the hegemony of democratic and hierarchical structure is lost (Wollebæk and Selle 2001: 228). Voluntary organisations tend to be less ideological, they are more oriented towards leisure and the local level is disconnected from the national. The implication is that their role as a critical public is weakened (Wollebæk & Selle 2001). The Norwegian voluntary sector is becoming less unique, broadly speaking, and tends to become more like the rest of Europe with a bifurcated society of organisations.

‘This represents a break of the tradition of social movements as basic agents of grassroots mobilisation, characteristic of the democratization and nation-building processes in Norway.’ (Rokkan in Wollebekk and Selle 2001: 217, our transl).

There are indications of such changes among the feminist organisations. On the national level we have already mentioned the MiRA Resource Centre and the Human Rights Service. They are not member-based organisations, and they do not have local units. The same goes for FOKUS. The contractual relationship between the organisations and the state, where the state provides funding for distinct projects and the organisations implement public measures, means that more organisations adapt to the competition for projects by becoming more centralised and professionalised (Selle, 2000 in Berven & Selle 2001: 14).

We also clearly see new ways of feminist organising in less formal ways. Women Astride (Kvinner på tvers) is one example, an important network of women focusing on equal pay and working women’s condition. This is a loose network uniting the Women’s Front, the Feminist Group Ottar, various trade unions and Women in Male Trades (Kvinner i Mannsyrker) in yearly conferences since 1993. The revival of feminism among young women in the late 1990’s also took place without formal organising. Instead, informal networks, Internet and paper publications were fundamental. One outcome has been the magazine Fett – Feminist Journal (from

42 The first and most influential books, inspired by the Swedish Fittstim (Skugge, Olsson, and Zilg 1999) were Råtekst, Matriark and Feminisjon (Solheim and Vaagland 1999; Øvold and Lode 2000; Sandnes, Nossum, and Smith-Erichsen 1999).
2004), another has been new ways of marking the 8th March - attracting increasing numbers of women, and some men.

2.17 Changing Discourses and Policies

Since the 1970s, violence against women - in a broad sense - has played a fundamental role in Norwegian feminist organising and claims making. The tyranny of beauty has become another important issue, new in the way it relates to eating disorders, implants, surgery etc. Old feminist issues like equal pay and economic independence are still urgent, despite Norway’s ranking at the top of the UN Human Development Index (UNDP 2006). The woman-friendly welfare-state (Hernes 1987), still embeds paradoxes: The stark contrasts between women’s position in the labour market and political leadership, and the systematic male dominance in almost every Norwegian elite (Skjeie and Teigen 2003).

These paradoxes are related to the particular Norwegian take on the ‘same-different’ issue: norms of gender difference or gender complementarity have been distinctly institutionalised in Norwegian politics (Raaum 2001: 156). The Norwegian version of the ‘women-friendly welfare state’ according to Helga Hernes, has been an expansion of women’s rights combined with a recognition of motherhood and the social importance of unpaid care work (Hernes 1987, 1998). The legitimisation of gender difference has been a significant incentive for women’s participation in the public sphere (Danielsen 2002, Hernes 1998, Holst 2006). The citizen carer has joined the citizen worker, but hardly on equal terms (Danielsen 2002).

The feminist discourse has, for the obvious reasons just mentioned, changed a lot since the 1970s. With formal gender equality established, it is less legitimate to talk about the ‘oppression’ of women. In an increasingly diverse feminist landscape and related to an explicit critique of white feminism, it is also problematic to talk about ‘sisterhood’ and ‘solidarity’. With men’s rights firmly on the gender agenda, feminist and women’s organisations have new company in the gender political field. For these reasons ‘equal status’ and ‘equal rights’ are more complex concepts than during the 1970s and 80s, and ‘equal rights’ are no longer synonymous with ‘women’s issues and rights’. Also, with the ratification of various UN declarations the
talk is more often about legal ‘rights’ than ‘women’s liberation’. Basic changes in the feminist discourse are related to ethnicity and migration in general, and subsequently to culture and religion in particular. Politically speaking, the most important changes in the discourse are probably related to the symbolic merging of the gender equality and the migration policy fields.

The Norwegian policy towards non-western migrants was restricted to a careful accommodation to paid labour, and apart from that not to interfere with their distinctive cultural character out of respect and tolerance (Duve & Kavli 2001: 202). This policy changed during the late 1980s, after a serious critique of failed integration policies and documentations of an emerging new ethnic underclass. Starting with the white paper *Om innvandringspolitikken* (*On Migration Policy*) (Kommunal og arbeidsdepartementet 1987), migrants were now expected to respect fundamental Norwegian values. These values were constructed to be democracy, gender equality and the rights of children. Attention to patriarchal cultural practices in some migrant groups; research and media publicity of forced marriages and female genital mutilation, contributed to a fortified critique of the dominant Norwegian cultural relativistic approach of the 1970s and – early 80s. All at once, the discourse was constructed to set up gender equality as a stark and basic contrast to migrant cultures, most of all Muslim cultures. This is not a unique Norwegian phenomenon, however. The attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001, reinforced the peculiar embrace of gender equality by men, and some women, hitherto never known to be concerned about feminist issues. Thus, today it is ok to talk about patriarchy and the oppression of women as long as it relates to ‘the others’, to the migrants - contrary to the dominant discourse on ethnic Norwegian women. The adoption of separate legal regulations in areas directly related to migrant people, such as the 1995 ban on female genital mutilation, and forced marriages in 2006, reinforce the image of separate cultures in contested ways.

### 2.18 Mainstreaming and Intersectional Policies

The institutionalisation of equal status policies from the late 1970s was part of a broad international process, in which the UN Women’s Conferences and global plans of action (Pietilä and Vickers 1994; Utenriksdepartementet 1985) played decisive
roles. Norway ratified the CEDAW convention in 1981, and governments of shifting colours have loyally constructed plans of action in all areas of public life to improve the status of women. As a consequence, the Gender Equality Act and the gender equality institutions have been revised several times. The allocation of responsibility for the development and implementation of gender equality policy has been the subject of extended discussions, in particular the closing of the Equal Status Council in 1997, and the conversion of the Council into a Centre for Gender Equality - against the protests of women’s organisations (Barne- og familiedepartementet 1991; Barne- og familiedepartementet 1995; Borchorst 1999). The separation of gender equality policies from family policies has been suggested to counteract the tendency to reduce gender equality to family issues (Nytt om likestilling 1997), without success. The mainstreaming credo of the 1990’s, when efforts to integrate gender perspectives into the core thinking of public administration resulted in a downscaling of women-oriented projects and institutions, was highly contested by women’s organisations. Scepticism has also been raised with regard to intersectionality, the credo of today. Intersectionality as the ambition to deal simultaneously with complex patterns of discrimination, including ethnic dimensions, is unassailable. However, the radical restructuring of the established gender equality machinery in 2006, when the task of the Gender Equality Ombud, the Gender Equality Board of Appeals and the Gender Equality Centre and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination were merged, has been questioned for a number of reasons. Women’s organisations have deplored the loss of their long-time ally, the Equal Status Council/the Centre of Competence, as independent watchdogs. They have foreseen less public resources and less focus on women’s and gender issues, also questioned by the CEDAW committee. The lack of any White Paper on Gender Equality since the 1990’s, and the reluctance of left and right governments alike to incorporate CEDAW in the Human Rights Act, indicate that this is not unsubstantiated.

43 www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/bld/tema/likestillingsomradet/the-new-equality-and-anti-discrimination.html?id=416686
44 CEDAWs comments to Norway’s 7th report CEDAW/C/NOR/CO7 para 15,16. (See also appendix B)
45 The CEDAW committee has criticized Norway on this issue, and the present leftist coalition government has promised to incorporate CEDAW properly, but no definite steps have been taken so far. Norway ratified the additional CEDAW protocol about the individual right to complain in 2002.
3 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS, GENDERED CITIZENSHIP, AND MULTICULTURALISM

3.1 Introduction

The overall question to be addressed in FEMCIT is the relationship between the changing forms and practices of gendered citizenship in a multicultural Europe, and the demands and practices which have emerged from ‘second wave’ women’s movements from the late 1960s and onwards. In Work Package 4 (WP4) Strand 1 we explore the demands and practices of majoritised and minoritised women’s movements. We have selected Spain, Norway and the UK - with very different migration histories and different gender regimes - as empirical examples of the intersection of feminism and ethnicity. Our point of departure is the division among feminists along racial/ethnic lines, and the dynamic relationships between differently situated activists (Roth 2004). To what extent have majoritised or ‘white’ women’s organisations engaged with minoritised women’s organisations, and have they been able to establish a common political platform? What has been the impact on public policy, or the resonance between feminist claims and public policy? The research is inspired by feminist, black and post-colonial theories and whiteness studies (Hill Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Srivastava, 2005; Sudbury, 1998). The reflections offered in this chapter concern core concepts that form the basis of and links between the individual country studies within WP4. In the sections below we develop our understanding of the concepts of women’s movements, gendered citizenship, multiculturalism and intersectionality. We also present some reflections on our own positioning in relation to the research undertaken in our country studies.

First, however, two notes on terminology are called for. Firstly, we have conducted interviews and literature studies in three different languages, whereas this report is written in English. This means that everything spoken or written in Norwegian and Spanish has been translated to English. Translating academic, political, bureaucratic and everyday language is challenging. We might not always have
succeeded in catching the ‘right’ words, in spite of our efforts to be loyal to the research participants.\textsuperscript{46}

Secondly, in our descriptions and discussions of relationships between various analytically distinct ethnic or racial groups within the women’s movement, we struggle with the selection of concepts. The effects of language mean that we are in danger of embodying the groups as ‘natural’ instead of political, and we try to deal with this problem by employing various combinations of seemingly descriptive concepts like (ethnic) ‘majority’/(ethnic) ‘minority’ feminism on the one hand, and explicitly political concepts like ‘majoritised’/‘minoritised’ feminism and ‘white’/‘black’/Sami feminism on the other. Our take on concepts is motivated by Yasmin Gunaratnam and her book \textit{Researching ‘Race’ and Ethnicity} (Gunaratnam, 2003) in which she applies a social constructivist perspective to the usage of terms such as ‘minority’ and ‘majority’. She uses the term ‘ethnic minority’ not in a descriptive sense, but sees the label and its connotations as socially constructed and therefore uses the term in quotation marks. Gunaratnam prefers using the term ‘minoritised’ as it signals ‘the active processes of racialisation that are at work in designating certain attributes of groups in particular contexts as being in a “minority”’ (ibid.: 17). In our reports, for the sake of readability we do not always use quotation marks around the terms ‘majority’ and ‘minority’. However, we use these terms interchangeably with those suggested by Gunaratnam (majoritised and minoritised), as we agree that how groups of people are labelled are in large part determined by existing power relations and power differentials between different groups.

In our country studies we develop historical and contemporary accounts of the collaborations and alliances (or lack thereof) between majoritised and minoritised women’s movements in Spain, Norway and the UK. The contemporary accounts are mainly based on interviews with activists - covering the time period from the 1970s upwards - from a number of women’s organisations (listed in appendices to each country report) and a selection of politicians and civil servants, whereas the historical accounts are mainly based on secondary literature of the women’s and feminist movements in the three countries. We also examine political claims-making and

\textsuperscript{46} Moreover, with one exception none of the authors of the reports on Norway, Spain and the UK have English as their mother language.
problem representations forwarded by both movement and government actors, with an emphasis on violence against women issues and racism and discrimination issues that are relevant to the violence against women agenda. The anti-violence and anti-racism engagements of the organisations are chosen by the researchers as empirical examples of the intersection of feminism and ethnicity. A selective mapping of policy documents and reports, produced by national governments and by women’s organisations, has been carried out to supplement the interviews. In various ways, we address the emergence of gender equality and ethnic diversity as distinct or intertwined policy fields, and relate our research to the growing concern with multiple forms of discrimination (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2007; Squires, 2007).

We apply a historical and process-orientated perspective on claims-making and demands forwarded by women’s movements, compared to a more unified measuring of impact or effects often used in for instance empirical political science (for our approach to the political influence of women’s movement actors, see Chapter 4). We are thus not trying to establish degrees of measurable influence, unlike for instance the authors of *Comparative State Feminism* (Stetson and Mazur, 1995). To some extent we also, like Stetson and Mazur, focus on formal politics and the state. However, we take a broader approach to politics which encompasses both informal politics and the politics that characterise relations between different actors within the women’s movement itself.

### 3.2 Women’s Movements

We use the terms ‘contemporary women’s movements’ to delineate our focus on the women’s liberation movement which gained momentum in many European countries from the late 1960s and early 1970s. We are reluctant to using terms like ‘second wave women’s movements’ because the wave metaphor is more confusing than clarifying in comparative research (Lønnå. 2004). The number of waves and the timing of the waves differ from country to country, i.e., between Norway, Spain and Britain, and the term tends to focus on tops and high-points without reflecting on the normal level of mobilisation, activity and visibility of women’s movements that is taking place in between the crests (ibid.: 41).
Our research includes different geopolitical regions of Europe - the Western (UK), Northern (Norway) and Southern (Spain) regions, a time span of about 40 years, and a major concern with demands voiced by minoritised women’s movement actors in relation to majoritised women’s movement actors and in relation to the state. Although our main emphasis is on women’s movement organisations with explicit feminist aims and identities, we have also included non-feminist women’s organisations, or even gender-mixed organisations, whenever deemed required or desirable. Empirically speaking, our project includes social movement organisations that may not subscribe to feminist identities. An emphasis on contributions and claims-making from ethnic minority women has necessitated such a broad approach. In Spain, for instance, ethnic minority women’s groups are often embedded within gender-mixed organisations rather than organising independently of these, and in the UK many black women’s organisations identify more with the anti-racist movement than with the women’s movement (Siddiqui, 2000). In Norway, organisations without feminist aims and gender-mixed organisations have played an important role in promoting the interests of migrant women.

In general, any categorisation of organisations is daring, partly because the organisational landscape changes rapidly and partly because categories are neither empirically nor theoretically self-evident. Feminism is multidimensional, and the organisations ‘are outcome[s] of situationally and historically specific processes’ (Ferree and Martin, 1995). In order to illustrate this problematic, we can look at the example of Norway.

A mapping of Norwegian organisations in the early 1980s defined women’s organisations as those whose members and leaders were predominantly women (Dahlerup and Gulli, 1985), and differentiated between eight categories, one of which was ‘the women’s movements’ (women’s rights, feminist) (ibid.: 9). The selection of organisations for our own project, more than 20 years later, is based on a mapping of the overall ‘gender political’ organisational landscape which also includes men’s organisations as well as gender mixed organisations. The mapping is focused on gender issues and on the intersection between women’s and migrants’ organisations in particular. We have categorised according to profile/aim, gendered composition of
Such categorisations, however, make organisational distinctions appear more unambiguous than they in fact are, concerning gender as well as ethnicity/race. We find West and Blumberg’s ‘continuum of gender integration in social protest’ and the differentiation between independent, gender-integrated and gender-parallel organisations inspiring (West and Blumberg, 1990: 22). Their categorisation include independent organisations, where separate gender groups operate autonomously (women and men have their own gender-specific groups); parallel organisations, where auxiliary women’s groups are linked to a single male dominated movement with some mutually beneficial movement aspects; and, finally, gender integrated organisations, which simultaneously engage both men and women pursuing a single objective (ibid.). Similarly, ethnic minority organisations engaged in social protest can be categorised along the same dimensions: whether ethnic minority women have their own independent or separate groups, whether they have parallel or auxiliary groups, or whether they are integrated into gender-mixed ethnic minority organisations.

In our analysis of the relations between minoritised and majoritised women’s movement organisations, we have elaborated various ways of mapping the organisational landscape and selecting organisations for further research. So far, the categories in Table 3.1 illustrate the intersection of gender and ethnicity in voluntary and professional organisations in Norway, Spain and the UK:

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47 For the mapping by Eggebø see www.femcit.org/files/WP4 WorkingpaperNo1.pdf. The following categories were constructed and used in the mapping: gender political organisations, minority organisations, religious organisations, social and humanitarian organisations, women’s committees of organisations and political parties, organisations focusing on gender based violence and local women’s organisations.
Table 3.1 The Intersection of Gender and Race/Ethnicity in Social Movement Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS ON RACIALLY/ETHNICALLY BASED DISCRIMINATION</th>
<th>FOCUS ON GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN FOCUS</strong>&lt;sup&gt;49&lt;/sup&gt; (Women’s movement organisations)</td>
<td><strong>PARTIAL FOCUS</strong>&lt;sup&gt;50&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMINIST</td>
<td>NOT FEMINIST&lt;sup&gt;51&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAIN FOCUS (Anti-racist/indigenous people’s movement organisations)</td>
<td>Feminist + anti-racist/national minority/indigenous people’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-racist/national minority/indigenous people’s organisations with a partial concern with women’s issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTIAL FOCUS</td>
<td>Feminist organisations with some interest in ethnic discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s organisations with a focus on the situation of women of ethnic minority backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAK/NO FOCUS</td>
<td>Feminist organisations with no focus on the discrimination of ethnic minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s organisations with no focus on ethnic minorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which a movement or an organisation is feminist is an empirical question, but feminism itself can be defined and operationalised in a number of different ways (Outshoorn and Kantola, 2007). Although scholars may use the concepts of women’s movement and feminist movement interchangeably, McBride and Manzur, 2008) point out that such a usage does not work effectively in comparative research, as the concept of feminism is highly contested and may be intuitively associated with (negative) images such as bra-burning and man-hating, and white Western imperialist feminism.

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<sup>48</sup> The table is inspired by West and Blumberg 1990.
<sup>49</sup> These organisations are ‘women’s organisations’, where the members and leaders are predominantly women, usually regarded as the ‘women’s movement’.
<sup>50</sup> Organisations where the members and leaders are gender mixed.
<sup>51</sup> See the distinction between feminist and women’s movements elsewhere in this section.
Ferree and Tripp define feminism as ‘the broad goal of challenging and changing gender relations that subordinate women to men and that thereby also differently advantage some women and men relative to others’ (Ferree and Tripp, 2006: vii). They also claim that whether or not individuals or groups choose to call themselves feminists, ‘their goal of empowering women should be considered feminist’ (ibid.: vii). It follows that organisations which do not self-label as feminist may be described as feminist by researchers employing the understanding forwarded by Ferree and Tripp. Furthermore, Ferree and Tripp distinguish between feminism as a goal for social change and women’s movements as organised constituencies.

Such a distinction is in keeping with the work of RNGS, the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State, where feminist movements are seen as a subset of the women’s movement. While ‘women’s movements’ is used for a broad variety of different forms of women’s organising, the term ‘feminist movements’ refers to collective activity that explicitly challenges the dominant gendered power relations or confronts the gender order. In our reports we follow the usage of the RNGS network, thus taking the broader concept of ‘women’s movements’ to include collective action by women presenting gendered identity claims (McBride and Mazur, 2008). In the same vein, a women’s movement discourse will emphasise the identification with women as a group, the use of explicitly gendered language about women, and a demand for representation of women in public life (see ibid.). The concept of ‘the feminist movement’, on the other hand, is in this perspective seen as a sub-category of women’s movements, consisting of women’s movement actors that present a particular movement discourse (feminism) which involves demands towards changing the position of women, including the challenging and changing of women’s subordination and the structures of gender based hierarchies (ibid.).

3.3 Gendered Citizenship

A current trend in feminist studies of citizenship is the opening up of the term from a narrow political-legal and state-oriented definition to a broader and more inclusive cultural-social definition. Currently, a number of researchers are engaged in

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52 For information about RNGS, see [http://libarts.wsu.edu/polisci/rngs](http://libarts.wsu.edu/polisci/rngs).
attempts to analyse the extent to which women in various communities exercise citizenship in this broader sense, including Lister, 2003; Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 2006; and Siim, 2000. The classic view of citizenship as delineating legal and political rights and duties has been challenged on several fronts, including its limitation of citizenship to the public sphere and its narrow view of citizenship as ‘status’. Feminist scholarship has thus claimed that citizenship encompasses practices within all spheres of life - be they political, economic, social, cultural, religious, bodily, domestic or intimate. Our project follows Siim’s citizenship perspective in exploring the ‘interrelation between institutions, women’s participations, and identities of agency’ (Siim, 2007: 493), approaching ‘lived culture’ as a dynamic process, and including the transnational level as an additional aspect of the citizenship frame (ibid.: 493).

An emphasis on citizenship as practice implies that citizenship is not a fixed attribute of a particular group of individuals included in a given polity, but that citizenship is contested, fluid and dynamic, and involves processes of negotiation and struggle (Lister, 2003; Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 2006). Women’s movement actors are involved in struggles over and developments of notions of citizenship when they demand women-friendly, gender-fair or gender-equal policies. Our project includes a particular focus on claims forwarded by migrant and ethnic minority women, and their resonance with claims forwarded by majority women’s movements. We also focus on claims forwarded by majoritised and minoritised women’s movements and their resonance with state authorities. Theories of citizenship are useful in this context because they display tensions ‘between equality and diversity for women and minorities that represents a challenge to the universal framework of citizenship to include difference and diversity’ (Siim, 2007).

From the feminist type of argument outlined above it follows that if women do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men to participate in all areas of life, that is, if women are not free to choose whether they want to act as full citizens at work, in the family, in civil society and in politics, then they are not treated as equal citizens and are hence discriminated against. In so far as rights and the freedom to choose do not guarantee equal outcomes for women and men, a radical implication of feminist theories of citizenship is that practices should be inclusive of women and
men in all aspects of life. A precondition for inclusive practices, and hence for
democracy, is agency - ‘[a] conscious capacity to choose and act at a personal and
political level’ (Lister, 1997:38). Women’s movement actors are on the one hand
agents that may put forward citizenship claims and demands in relation to various
policy areas. On the other hand, their agency may be constrained or conditioned by
the particular characteristics of the social and political structures in which they are
embedded. In our project we address bonds or links between civil society (in the
form of women’s movements organisations) and the public arena (in the form of
government and gender machineries) with a particular focus on women’s
movements and the emerging voices and claim-making of organised ‘racialised’ and
minority ethnic women, and the presence or absence of collaboration and alliances
between ethnic majority and minority women.

3.4 Multiculturalism, Minorities Within Minorities, and Intersectionality

The contested terms ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’, which have been widely
used in research and in politics and policy for many years, now seem increasingly to
be replaced by notions such as diversity and community cohesion. Relating our own
project to ongoing international debates within feminist theory (May, Modood and
Squires, 2004; Okin, 1999; Narayan, 2002; Phillips, 2007), we also distinguish
between the ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’. We use the term ‘multicultural’ as a
descriptive concept referring to the realities of cultural pluralism or diversity of
contemporary societies, and to the cultural mixes and hybridities that result from
local, regional and global migration. Multiculturalism is however used as a normative
concept which includes a range of positions, including the view that cultural and
ethnic groups should be recognised and possibly given specific group rights.

In Europe usage of the term ‘multiculturalism’ is often related to race and ethnicity,
signalling ‘the extension of cultural group recognition and rights to ethnic minorities’
(Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passy, 2005: 7). Anne Phillips, who focuses
‘primarily on the multiethnic, multicultural societies formed through the mass
migrations of the last 50 years’, is opposed to subsuming indigenous minorities
under the concept (Phillips, 2007: 170). She relates the notion more directly to anti-
racist policies, defining multiculturalism as a ‘political agenda designed to redress the
unequal treatment of cultural groups and the “culture-racism” to which members of minority cultural groups are often exposed’ (ibid.: 3).

In line with these authors, our perspective on the multicultural and multiculturalism has been delimited to ethnicity/race, also in harmony with the EU 6th framework programme priority 7.1.2 Gender and Citizenship in a Multicultural Context which focuses on: ‘(…) how notions of citizenship and multiculturalism incorporate a gender perspective, (…) the relations between gender, race, ethnicity, class and different notions and practiced of citizenship’ (ibid.: 16).

Paradoxically, multiculturalism, when understood as giving not only recognition but also group rights to ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, might undermine the ideal of gender equal citizenship through the production of increased inequalities for minoritised women. Women within a particular minority group might be prescribed a subordinated role, or second-class status, in relation to men within their group. For example, women might be denied a role in public life, with no access to an independent income or to representation in positions of power. If such cultural groups are given the legal right to continue gender discriminatory practices, conflicts inevitably arise between women’s rights to equality and the minority cultural group’s rights to possibly override women’s rights. In this sense, women come to constitute a minority within a minority (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005), disadvantaged by the intersection of multiple structures of oppression. Such power differentials between women and men in minority groups is a contested issue in countries such as Norway and the UK, where the governments have been accused by women’s groups of speaking mainly with self-appointed, male, community leaders.

In this context the various understandings and interpretations of ‘gender equality’ forwarded by women’s organisations and movements are important, as they can be

54 Such conflicts might also arise between international human rights conventions and practices within member states that are signatories to such conventions. For example, in the context of Islam and human rights, traditional Shari’a law legitimates and even ‘requires legal discrimination of women’ (Mayer, 1991: 99), and in effect undermines the protection women in Muslim states have under the CEDAW convention (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) (Mayer, 1991: 137; see also Moghadam, 2002 and Nyhagen Predelli, 2008).
used in supporting or critiquing policies that purportedly support multiculturalism. For example, a positive view of multiculturalism might engender support for policies that seek to reduce generational conflicts related to forced marriage practices through mediation between the involved parties. A more negative view of multiculturalism might lead to the insistence that mediation should be abandoned in favour of increased support services for individuals who have been subjected to such illegal practices. These are political issues and conflicts that are fought over between women’s organisations who seek to influence current government policy.

Women’s organisations that are explicitly feminist, moreover, might either reject multiculturalism outright (in line with Okin, 1999), or promote ‘weak’ interpretations of multiculturalism that reject some aspects (in particular group rights that conflict with women’s rights) and support other aspects (group rights that do not conflict with women’s rights) (see Phillips, 2007). In so far as feminists do not agree about what the term ‘gender equality’ entails, the debate about multiculturalism, women’s rights and gender equality will continue among academics and activists alike. While some feminists might focus on formal and legal rights, and on equal opportunities for women and men, others are bound to focus also on processes and results in the form of equal participation and equal outcome. Different ideological standpoints within women’s movements thus promote and support varying versions of multiculturalism, women’s rights and gender equal citizenship.

We understand gender, as well as race and ethnicity and other inequalities like social class, to be simultaneously subjective and structural concepts, about everyday practices, identities and social positioning (Brah and Phoenix, 2004). Furthermore, we emphasise the need for complex approaches to structured inequalities, whether they are multiple, compound or intersectional (Danish Institute of Human Rights, 2007: 16). It may be insufficient to ‘add on’ race, ethnicity, class and other inequalities to that of gender when analyzing the different claims and demands coming from differently positioned women’s movement actors. Intersectional approaches acknowledge the inseparable nature of different inequalities, and aims to examine how structures of gender, race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and religion are interlocked and produce unique experiences from which legitimate political demands might arise (Hill Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1997; McCall, 2005;
Verloo, 2006). Patterns of privilege and disadvantage are closely related to structures of gender, race and ethnicity, and class, but such patterns are not set in stone and individuals and groups might move between positions of privilege and disadvantage, depending on the social and cultural context in which they are located at different times. Although a fully developed intersectional approach would include inequalities based on class, age, sexuality, and disability, WP4 focuses mainly on the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity. Other work packages within FEMCIT are dealing with other dimensions of inequality, and our aim is that the integration of all the work packages will lead to the development of a comprehensive understanding of gendered citizenship and the different types of inequalities that intersect with and impact upon gendered practices of citizenship.

3.5 Shifting Between Insider and Outsider: reflecting on our own positions as researchers

Based on various groups of women’s experiences of injustices, problems and possibilities in actual lived life, our ambition is to analyse women’s collective agency - their political mobilisation, problem-representations and claims-making. In order to contribute to new understandings of gender-fair citizenship, we apply a grounded approach to justice and rights. This implies taking the concepts from the level of abstract principles and placing them in dialogue with actual problems and practices (Hellum, Steward, Ali and Tsanga, 2007), relying mainly on context-sensitive and qualitative approaches.

In contrast to more deductive approaches to gender justice which take normative feminist theory or theories of human rights as their point of departure (Okin, 2005; Fraser, 2003; Nussbaum, 2000; Phillips, 2003), our project relies mainly on an inductive approach to gender fair citizenship. This implies comprehensive empirical research in various locations (Spain, Norway and the UK) into changing notions and practices, claims and contributions from majoritised and minoritised women’s movements.

We approach the empirical research from different positions and backgrounds, and acknowledge that our research perspectives and analyses are influenced by our own
experiences and also by how we are perceived by our research participants. In the
main, we are white, middle class women researchers, but we have moved in and out
of shifting positions as insiders and outsiders in relation to our research.

Five of the six researchers engaged in Strand 1 of the WP4 project are white and of
European origin, while one is black and of African origin. None of the researchers
have been activists in ethnic minority women’s movements. Reflecting on this
composition, we have made efforts to ensure a responsible feminist research
practice along the lines suggested by Sherene Razack. She proposes that an
awareness of our subject positions implies ‘tracing the hierarchies in which [we are]
both subordinated and privileged’ (Razack, 2000). Two of the researchers are from
and live in Norway, and have completed the project work in Norway. One of them
has been active in the majority women’s movement from the 1970s and onwards,
while the other researcher is an outsider to the women’s movement. The research
for the Norwegian report has thus been undertaken by researchers who variously
find themselves in positions as insiders (activist, feminist, majoritised) and outsiders
(non-activist, feminist, majoritised). A third researcher with a background from
Romania works and lives in the UK and has done the bulk of the fieldwork in Spain.
She is the main contributor to the report on the Spanish women’s movement to
which she is an outsider, irrespective of the majority/minority categories. As a
feminist she has been in an insider position, but as a non-native and a non-activist
she has been an outsider. The fieldwork for the UK report has been conducted by a
Norwegian-born researcher who lives and works in the UK. She is a non-activist
feminist and an outsider to the UK women’s movement. The UK report also includes
contributions from an English born feminist who is an outsider to but interested
observer of the women’s movement, and from a Ghanaian-born woman living and
working in the UK who is also an outsider to the UK women’s movement.

The gaining of trust and confidence from research participants has been handled in
different research contexts. For instance, one of the researchers found it particularly
useful to refer to Scandinavian examples of gender equality policies and institutions
in order to highlight specific features of the UK context. Another researcher thought
she had an advantage as an outsider, while the insider position was found to be an
asset in some situations by a third researcher.
An important feature that impacts on our positions as researchers in various contexts is the extent to which the women’s movements in general and the relations between majoritised and minoritised women’s actors within them in particular, have been researched. The history and development of such relations within the three countries have followed different trajectories. In Norway, little research has been conducted on relations between ethnic majority and ethnic minority women’s organisations, and, indeed, such relations have largely been absent in the movement itself. In Spain, the picture is quite similar, in that previous research on the women’s movement has largely neglected the claims-making of ethnic minority women, while also the majoritised women’s movement itself has overlooked the interests of ethnic minority women in formulating policy demands. In the UK, on the other hand, there is much documentation available on the history and development of ethnic minority women’s organisations and their critique of the ethnic majority women’s movement. Despite a background of tense relations, majoritised and minoritised women in the UK women’s movement have managed to work together effectively in putting forward policy demands, in particular in the area of violence against women. There is less available research in the UK, however, on relations between ethnic minority and majority women’s organisations in today’s women’s movement. Furthermore, there is little empirical research on the current UK women’s movement and its engagement with and impact on political decision-making processes at the state level (see Mackay 2008). Thus our aim is to produce new knowledge about contemporary women’s movements in all the three countries.
Realising the importance of our own location as researching subjects, we would like to quote Uma Narayan extensively for her approach, emphasising our positions as political subjects engaged in critical analysis of women’s movements:

‘There is an important respect in which we all, as feminists, are not outsiders and “Anthropologists” within our own cultures, nor “Native Informants” whose task is to provide raw materials for the reflections of our “Others”, nor necessarily those most grievously affected by the institutions and practices we criticize. We are political subjects engaged in critical political analyses about things we consider crucial, and care about, in the variety of contexts that constitute our “locations”. If Western and Third-World feminists are, in crucial ways political subjects, we need to see relationships between us as political relationships that always involve struggle and contestation, as well as prospects for political solidarity and cooperation’.

(Narayan 1997: 152)

As a way of practicing the feminist epistemology of situated knowledge or articulating the location we speak from, we have found that memory work (originally developed by the German sociologist Frigga Haug; see Haug, 1987) can provide a valuable tool in reflecting on our own underlying notions of race, feminism and good practices in gender equality politics. Awareness of our own normativity is important with respect to both research design and analysis. Four of us have engaged in repeated memory work in order to reflect on our own whiteness and privileged locations as white, middle-class women working in public universities. This type of memory work has been inspired by the Norwegian researcher Anne-Jorunn Berg and her colleagues (Berg, 2004; 2008), who took memory work out of its original white feminist context and used it in relation to processes of racialisation. They wanted to look at the intersection of gender and ethnicity, and to focus on the silencing of whiteness as a majority category. Instead of looking at the process of silencing women qua women, as white women’s studies did in its early years, Berg and her colleagues wanted to focus on the silencing of whiteness as a majority category - in an effort to ‘avoid reproducing stereotypical images of minority women’ (Berg, 2008: 3). They chose to articulate whiteness based on the realisation that ‘our (lack of) understanding of “race” was of vital importance for our research’ (Berg, 2008: 6). Whiteness and privilege is something we might take for granted, and as such it will be reproduced as long as we do not deconstruct what is taken-for-granted and question our
privileges. We sympathise with Ruth Frankenberg’s claim - in her important book ‘White women, race matters’ - that:

‘White people tend to look at racism as an issue that people of color face, but not as an issue that generally involves us (...) racism can, in short, be conceived as something external to us rather than as a system that shapes our daily experiences and sense of self.’

(Frankenberg 1993)

In this project, where relations between minoritised and majoritised women are examined, it has been crucial to introduce theories of whiteness not just in relation to the dynamics of racialisation in the women’s movements, but also to address the racial/ethnic positioning of the researchers. We have taken notice of Frankenberg’s statement that white women ‘missed’ or did not ‘get’ the significance of their own race or of anyone else’s experience, and that this was closely related to the ‘standpoint’ white women might inhabit. White women are not in ‘a structural position to see the effects of racism on our lives, not the significance of race in the shaping of society’, Frankenberg maintains (ibid.: 9). In order to deal with this challenge, memory work has been a tool in linking abstract theory to personal experience. Doing memory work has been a way of recognising that race is not just an intellectual issue, but also one that is personal and political.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

As discussed above, we follow McBride and Mazur, 2008 in using the broad term ‘women’s movement’ to delineate any collective action by women which involves the presentation of gendered identity claims. The term ‘feminist movement’ is narrower and can be seen as a sub-category of women’s movements. Feminist movements articulate demands that are critical of any patriarchal gender arrangements or practices, and argue for the elimination of such arrangements and practices.

Women’s movements and feminist movements are part of contemporary multicultural societies in Spain, Norway and the UK. However, they might take different positions in relation to claims that argue for giving specific rights to cultural, ethnic or religious groups as such rights might undermine women’s rights and ideals of gender equality. Multiculturalism is thus a contested issue for women’s movement actors, which
highlights the importance of intersectional approaches to inequality. Looking one-sidedly at specific structures of inequality (such as only gender, only race or ethnicity, or only class), might actually deepen inequalities and threaten ideals of a gender equal citizenship. Patterns of inclusion and exclusion can however never be determined once and for all, and individuals and groups might move between positions of privilege and disadvantage, depending on their social and cultural context. It is here that women’s movement actors have a particular role to play, in combating structures of exclusion and inequality and supporting and mobilizing women’s agency in order to change society towards a more gender equal citizenship.
4 POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES, FRAMING PROCESSES AND RESONANCE

4.1 Introduction

In Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, women’s intensified mobilisation for collective action and protest, forming new crests in women’s movements dating from the 1970s and onwards, have been shaped by, and in turn have also influenced, the particular socio-political context in each country. As such, women’s movements in specific locations have been and continue to be ‘shaped by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they are embedded’ (McAdam et al., 2006: 3). The different national contexts are highly relevant when we examine the complex relationship between majoritised and minoritised (Gunaratnam, 2003) parts of the feminist and women’s movements. Our research question is how the relationships of cooperation and conflicts have been represented by movement activists, and how movement actors, politicians and civil servants perceive and assess the influence of feminist and women’s movements on public policies.

In order to grasp differences and similarities, or unique and common features, of women’s movements in Norway, Spain and the UK since the 1970s as these have emerged and matured, we have been inspired by theoretical approaches that emphasise political opportunities, discourses and framing processes.

In this chapter we discuss political opportunity structures in relation to their institutional and discursive aspects and how they give rise to both opportunities and constraints for women’s movements organisations in particular contexts. We also argue for the usefulness of discourse and frame analysis in our study of women’s movements actors and their claims-making. In relation to the possible impact women’s movements have on public policy we are examining the representations of such impact by various actors, or how they talk about political impact. Our analysis of influence, then, is based on representations rather than outright measures of influence related to ‘objective’ criteria. Consequently we prefer to use the concept of ‘resonance’ (Benford and Snow, 2000) to describe the outcome. Our purpose is to
highlight the eventual resonance or dissonance between claims forwarded by ‘majoritised’ and ‘minoritised women’s movement actors on the one hand, and claims forwarded by interviewed civil servants and politicians and in state policy discourse and decision-making.

4.2 Political Opportunity Structures: institutional and discursive aspects

Accounts of the mobilisation of collective action and social protest lean on various strands of political theory, and recent research literature displays differences in both the number and labels of theories deemed useful to the investigation of social movements. Bergman, for example, differentiates between four theories of mobilisation: collective behaviour, resource mobilisation (encompassing rational choice and political process theories), new social movement theories and constructionist theories (Bergman, 2002). Kjellman, 2007: 12 has however identified three main approaches: mobilising structures approaches that focus on networks and organisations as the building blocks of social protest; identity-oriented approaches including culture, identity, and framing processes, and political opportunities approaches that link the state and social movements (Kjellman, 2007)). Although researchers label and categorise their approaches differently, the various perspectives have mainly been inspired by economic, psycho-social, structuralist, post-structuralist and cultural theories.

During the last decade, however, there has been a significant shift from treating these various theories and concepts as competing and mutually exclusive, to viewing them as supplementary and useful in building a more comprehensive picture of social mobilisation and movements. Efforts to merge such theories have for example been made by authors such as McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996), and Davis, McAdam, Scott and Zald (2005). In line with such comprehensive approaches, we find it fruitful to apply two sets of core concepts - those of ‘political opportunity structure’ and ‘discursive framing’ - from hitherto rather distinct theoretical strands. We regard both these sets of concepts as necessary in order to account for different yet decisive features of the mobilization of gendered and feminist protest among majoritised and minoritised groups of women from the 1970’s and onwards in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.
4.3 Political Opportunities

In any given social and political context, the mobilisation of women’s groups, organisations and movements depends on the social problems of gender inequality that are identified as critical and that as such merit the mobilisation of collective protest. Moreover, such protest cannot emerge in a political vacuum, and its success or failure depends on a range of contextual factors or on ‘properties of the external environment, relevant to the development of social movements’ (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 16; see also Koopmans et al., 2005). In short, success or failure depends on what is often labelled as the relevant ‘political opportunity structures’ in a given context. Such structures are defined by Tarrow (2006: 12) as ‘features of regimes and institutions (for example, splits in the ruling class, political alignments, the presence or absence of influential allies, the threat or lack of repression, and the changes in any of these) that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action’.

A theory of political opportunity structures thus recognises the influence of political institutions on the mobilisation, claims-making and outcome of social movements. In other words, any given political context offers a fluid and dynamic set of opportunities and constraints that can enable or hinder the success of collective action (Koopmans et al., 2005: 16). Within this view, social structural problems, such as gender inequality or inequalities rooted in ethnic difference, are also context-dependent but may not have a unitary or direct causal impact on mobilisation. Rather, the ‘social structural tensions, problems and grievances [are] mediated by the available opportunities and constraints set by the political environments in which mobilising groups … [such as women’s movements] operate’ (Koopmans, 2004: 451; our emphasis).

Political opportunity structures are key to understanding the mobilisation, strategies and results of social movements because they operate as ‘structuring cues’ for social movements (Kjellman, 2007; McAdam, 1996). Such cues, which include the distribution of opportunities and threats, and repression and facilitation, impact differently on different groups of citizens in various political contexts. Because
political systems vary across nations, regions and other localities, it is of particular interest to conduct comparative studies in which the possible effects of different political opportunity structures are taken into account in the analysis of women’s movements and the opportunities and constraints they are faced with in trying to change a particular gender regime.  What counts as relevant features of a political opportunity structure is, however, a contested issue in the research literature, as there is a lack of consensus on relevant dimensions to be included in the concept (McAdam, 1996: 24-25). The adding of new variables has certainly expanded the explanatory power of the concept, but at the same time this has led to a lack of specificity (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 17). Koopmans (1999: 101-102) states that the concept needs clarification, but given the vast variety in social movements and political systems a single conceptualisation might also be unrealistic. Koopmans thus argues that ‘(political) opportunity structure is a context-sensitive analytical tool par excellence’ (ibid.: 102).

4.3.1 Limiting the concept of political opportunity
In an attempt to bring more analytical clarity to the concept, McAdam (1996) has argued that political opportunity structures must be limited to institutional features. According to McAdam, institutional opportunity structures refer to the following four, relatively stable, national dimensions of a polity which either encourage or dissuade collective protest:

- ‘the relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system’;
- ‘the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity’;
- ‘the presence or absence of elite allies’; and
- ‘the state’s capacity and propensity for repression’ (or its willingness to apply power) (McAdam 1996: 27).

We would add a fifth dimension, namely that of a positive will to act politically to improve the conditions of particular groups, which may be a characteristic of the state itself or of political parties or individual political representatives. The presence or absence of such political will may to some extent determine the opportunities and

55 For the concept of ‘gender regime’ see Connell 1987.
constraints that non-governmental actors (such as women’s organisations and movements) are faced with.

4.3.2 Stable and dynamic, general and field specific structures
Gamson and Meyer emphasise a further distinction between stable and dynamic or volatile aspects of political opportunity structures, where the stable elements are the institutional structure and the party system. Thus, within the context of a given nation-state, the stable institutional structures consist of parliamentary and governmental institutions and the party system. The dynamic or volatile aspects of political opportunity structures include the openness of a system, elite alignments, alliances and public policy changes (Gamson and Meyer, 1996: 278-281). These aspects can include corporatist and network features such as government consultations and lobbying, alliances between system representatives (such as politicians and civil servants) and non-governmental organisations, and the capability and willingness to change public policy.

Koopmans et al., (2005: 20) have pointed to a weakness of the political opportunities approach; namely, the use of this concept at a too general level. They argue (ibid.: 19-20) that political opportunities are field-specific and that both institutional and discursive opportunity structures have general and field-specific dimensions. In other words, a given political system will have general features such as its party system, degree of corporatism, power balances, and so on. The political system will also exhibit field-specific features such that each particular political field (for example, ‘gender equality’ or ‘racial and ethnic discrimination) will be characterised by designated institutions, alliances and ways of working. In our analysis we will pay specific attention to ‘women’s policy machineries’, ‘women’s policy agencies’ or ‘institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women’ – or those government institutions that ‘pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women’ (Kantola and Outshoorn 2007: 3). Research has shown that different policy fields ‘offer very different political opportunity structures from women’s point of view’ (ibid.: 7).

4.3.3 The transnational context

The political context of women’s movements in particular nation states has never been confined within or limited to such states the women’s movement, including the first general mobilisation of women which started in the late 19th century, has always been and continues to be, international and global in its character (Antrobus, 2004; Hawkesworth, 2006; Ferree and Tripp, 2006; Rupp, 1994). The creation and sustaining of transnational networks has been a major feature of the international women’s movement. Both the necessity and the usefulness of international links between women’s movement actors has been accentuated by recent global developments towards supra-national political entities such as the European Union, and by the continued focus of the United Nations on the conditions of women throughout the world (exemplified by the UN conferences on women and the Beijing Platform for Action, and by the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW) (Pietila & Vickers, 1994). It is therefore necessary to look beyond the context of the nation state in order to examine the political opportunities available to women’s movement actors and the constraints they face in attempts to produce policy changes. This is in line with McAdam’s critique of political opportunity approaches that have ‘missed […] the critical role of international trends and events in shaping domestic institutions and alignments. In short, movement scholars have, to date, grossly undervalued the impact of global political and economic processes in structuring the domestic possibilities for successful collective action’ (McAdam, 1996: 34).

In our project, both the United Nations and the European context will be taken into consideration when we discuss particular features of women’s movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK. The role of the United Nations in the development of national gender machineries in various nation-states, as well as the impact of transnational networks on the formation of domestic policies, have been recognised by scholars (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 9). Moreover, the Council of Europe and the European Union has led individual member states to initiate and effect more radical gender equality legislation, thus also providing women’s movement actors with opportunity structures they can take advantage of in their particular locations within nation states or international contexts (ibid.: 10; see also Roth, 2007). The European Women’s Lobby (founded in 1990), for example, has carved out a
significant role as representing more than four thousand women’s organisations from all the EU member states and advocating policy innovation and change towards the European Union. On the other hand, the European Union itself has been criticised by women’s movement actors for being slow in recognising both the interrelatedness of gender, ‘race’, ethnicity, class and sexuality and a lack of concern for the discriminatory practices faced by immigrant women (EWL, 2007; European Parliament, 1995).

4.3.4 Explaining change
The critical part of any structural or institutional theory is, of course, to explain how change - the mobilisation of protest - can take place. Political opportunity theorists refer to ‘changes in either the institutional feature or informal political alignments of a given political system’ because such changes significantly may ‘reduce the power disparity between a given challenging group and the state’ (McAdam, 1995: 224, as cited in Kjellman, 2007: 18). Kjellman (2007), however, emphasises that the notion of a political opportunity structure is inherently contradictory: On the one hand it is a structural concept, and as such refers to the ‘relatively permanent features of a society that cannot be easily altered by actors’ (ibid.: 22). On the other hand, the concept refers to actions related to the opening and closing of opportunities in the system, and ‘essentially contradicts the very definition of structure within the social sciences’ (ibid.: 21). Gamson and Meyer have suggested solving this problem through the above-mentioned distinction between the stable and the dynamic aspects of political institutions (Gamson and Meyer: 278-281). McAdam has also suggested that the political opportunity structure is imbued with a potential for change (McAdam in Kjellman, 2007: 23), and that a distinction can be made between objective and subjective or imagined opportunities. For this potential to be realized, however, political agents (such as women’s movements) must interpret the political opportunity structure to actually include or present such potential. In other words, an opportunity which is not comprehended by movement actors is not an actual opportunity. Thus, even if structural features make certain courses of action more or less likely, we still have to differentiate between objectively given political opportunity structures and the structures which are comprehended and interpreted as presenting either opportunities or constraints (Kjellman, 2007: 23).
In conjunction with the dynamic aspects of opportunities, McAdam and Scott (2005) have been concerned with clarifying ‘transforming mechanisms’; the very features which trigger the mobilisation of protest. In this regard we find McAdam and Scott’s concept of ‘destabilizing events’ to be promising. In the context of women’s movements, such events could include the eruption of socio-political issues of particular relevance to women due to for example media attention (gender pay gap, violence against women issues, and so on). According to McAdam and Scott, a set of questions should be asked in relation to a particular destabilizing event: Has the event been framed or interpreted as a challenge or as an opportunity by movement actors? How has the event been appropriated? Did the event originate new or innovative actions and agents? And lastly, are there any signs of new institutional alignments in the aftermath of the event (McAdam and Scott, 2005: 18-19)?

The notion of ‘timing’ is closely related to the concept of destabilising events, and timing is often essential. In order to make institutions change, it may be critical to grasp and take advantage of ‘the right moment’ or a ‘window of opportunity’ (Gamson and Meyer, 1996: 280). Sometimes ‘Big Opportunities’ or ‘open moments’ might arise, but more often opportunities are ‘small’ and issue-specific. A particular ‘policy window’ might ‘temporarily open [ ] “an opportunity for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to put attention to their special problems …”’ (Kingdon, 1984) as cited in Gamson & Meyer, 1996: 280). Policy windows can change in a matter of weeks or months, and the challenge is how to recognise them - the framing aspect - and to act appropriately. This brings us to the concept of discursive opportunities.

4.4 Discursive Opportunity Structures and Framing

Koopmans et al., (2005: 17) have pointed to the ‘one-sided emphasis on institutional opportunities’ in theories of political opportunity structures, and have suggested the addition of discursive opportunities to such theories. While the institutional side consists of ‘the structure of the political system and the composition of power in the party system’, the discursive side consists of ‘established notions of who and what are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate’ (Koopmans, 2004: 451). As such, discursive opportunities may determine which claims that gain policy and
media attention, which claims that resonate with claims by other actors, and which claims that gain legitimacy in public discourse (Koopmans et al., 2005: 19).

In our research context, that of the women’s movement, it is thus relevant to consider which actors are discursively established, either by the state (government actors) or by movement actors themselves as ‘reasonable, sensible and legitimate’. One way of studying this is to examine who is talked about as ‘natural’ to invite to particular events (such as hearings, committee meetings, consultations, etc.), or who is perceived as a legitimate representative of a particular group or issue. Another way is to ask organisations who they have made alliances with or cooperated with, or who they view as central actors alongside themselves in policy areas such as gender equality and violence against women.

Many European states have longstanding historical traditions of contact and cooperation between civil society, in the form of voluntary associations, and the welfare state (Hernes, 1982; Grant, 1985 and 1990; Berven and Selle, 2001; Jones, 2004). Often, voluntary associations, including women’s organisations, have been decisive in the formation and delivery of welfare state policies. An important example from our research context is the provision of refuge services for women who suffer from domestic violence. Indeed, cooperation between the state and voluntary organisations, including women’s organisations, may be seen as an important part of political citizenship (Raaum, 1999: 28), and as a vital aspect of the political opportunity structure available to such organisations. Contemporary governments in Norway, Spain, and the UK all take an active approach to women’s organisations and recognise their contributions, by inviting them to participate in political processes and the delivery of public services, and by providing public funding for various parts of their operations.

What constitutes institutional versus discursive sides of the political opportunity structure might sometimes be blurred. For example, we would view a state or government’s provision of financial resources to women’s organisations, which facilitates both the formation and mobilisation of such groups, as part of the institutional opportunity structure. On the other hand, relations between the state and women’s organisations that are nurtured through formal and informal dialogue
and cooperation might be seen as part of both the institutional and the discursive side of the political opportunity structure. The practical inclusion of women’s organisations in government consultations is, nevertheless, a clear example of an available political opportunity structure - be it institutional or discursive. The strictly discursive side of the political opportunity structure is perhaps more clearly demonstrated by the state’s policy documents (such as white papers and consultation papers) relating to the preferred role and legitimacy of women’s organisations as part of the voluntary sector. Such documents provide the ideological framework within which the voluntary sector in general and women’s organisations in particular must navigate and negotiate. In ideological terms, the state may for example support women’s organisations in order to promote such values as democracy, participation, trust, social capital and belonging, learning, and diversity.\(^{57}\) On the other hand, women’s movement actors themselves produce discourse, and their policy documents might give us an intake into how they present themselves, other movement actors and the state, and how they view the available discursive political opportunities. We have mapped comments that women’s organisations have made in relation to a selected number of national and international reports (see Appendix B), and the findings are to some extent included in the analysis of resonance in Chapter 7.

A criticism that had been made against the political opportunity structure approach is its alleged ‘insufficient appreciation of the fact that contentious politics is fundamentally interactive and dynamic’ (Koopmans et al., 2005: 21). For example, collective actors or movements may engage with more established actors and create competition, alliances, or opposition. In the same vein, the political opportunity approach has been critiqued for an alleged structural bias and deterministic perspective (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999; cited in Kjellman, 2007: 21). According to this criticism, social movements are not seen as dynamic by political opportunity theorists, but as responding in a mechanical fashion to given opportunities (McAdam, et al., 2001; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; both cited in Kjellman, 2007: 21). In a general sense, structure often refers to ‘those relatively permanent features of society that cannot be easily altered by actors’, and a ‘true’ structural approach thus

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\(^{57}\) An example of this can be found in the Norwegian government’s white paper on the relationship between the Norwegian state and voluntary organisations (\textit{St.meld.nr.} 27 (1996-1997): 10-11).
cannot grasp the dynamic interaction between social movement actors and their political environment (Kjellman 2007: 22). Following this critique of the concept of structure as stable, fixed or unmoveable, the concept ‘political opportunity structure’ is now more often referred to as simply ‘political opportunities’ (Kjellman 2007: 22). We recognise this conceptual development in relation to Koopman’s distinction between institutional and discursive political opportunity structures, and whenever we use the full term ‘political opportunity structures’ it is implied that such structures are changeable. Thus, political opportunities can be seen as fixed and permanent or as fleeting and changing. An example of changing political opportunities would be regime changes, including changes in the governmental gender machinery and in gender equality policies. For example, while the 1970s and 1980s saw a rights-approach by government institutions to gender discrimination with concomitant action plans for gender equality, both at national and international levels, recent years have seen developments towards multiple discrimination or intersectional approaches to inequalities (see European Commission, 2007). To some extent, such changes are also being reflected in gender machineries which previously were primarily concerned with gender inequalities and today are implementing more multifaceted approaches to inequalities by including race and ethnicity, faith and belief, and other dimensions, to their inequalities remit. Moreover, social movements do not only act or react in relation to opportunities they are presented with; they are also agents of change and can create new opportunities in their own right. Political opportunities are thus not necessarily static or given, but may be relational or dynamic (Kjellman 2007: 18 and 36).

Different social movements may actually be able or unable to take advantage of political opportunities. Favourable political opportunities, be they stable or dynamic, are no guarantee for the mobilisation of protest. Protest requires the recognition and framing of opportunities. Generally, people need to feel both aggrieved by some or most aspects of their lives, as well as optimistic that collective action can produce change. Snow originally defined framing as ‘the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action’ (Snow, as cited in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 6). Claims-making, on the other hand, is defined in the literature as ‘the collective and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals,
criticisms, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans 2004: 454). There are thus similarities between the concepts of framing and claims-making, but we are treating claims-making as the prognostic framing of an issue and thus as an essential part of the more general framing process (see below).

Importantly, movements exist in a wider societal context and draw on the cultural stock - or, in the words of Charles Tilly (Tilly in Zald 1996: 266), on repertoires of action and contention - in how they decide to protest and to organize. Such cultural stocks are not static, and are not equally available to every social movement and their leaders. Tilly recognized the importance of innovation and learning by social movements - the constructive and empowering aspect of the discursive opportunities. The power of discursive opportunities to subject the members of a society, to discipline them, is the opposite aspect (the governmentality) - indicating that framing is a notion with a Janus face.

4.5 Framing Processes

By combining institutional and discursive opportunities, Koopmans and his colleagues (2005) aim to connect elements from the theory of political opportunity structure with that of the framing approach as originally established by Goffman (1974) and later developed by Snow et al., (1986) and by Snow and Benford (1992) in their analysis of the dynamics of social movement theory. The concept of ‘frame’ refers to ‘an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment’ (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). Social movement actors produce collective action frames that ‘are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation’ (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). Benford and Snow list a range of framing tasks, including ‘diagnostic framing’, ‘prognostic framing’ and ‘motivational framing’. Diagnostic framing involves the identification of an injustice or a problematic issue, while prognostic framing ‘involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan’ (Benford and
Snow 2000: 616). The motivational framing provides the rationale for collective action and a call to mobilise for action (ibid.: 617). When women’s movement actors participate in lobbying and advocacy work, they engage intentionally and strategically in such framing tasks. In our analysis we will examine how women’s movement actors in Norway, Spain and the UK frame violence against women issues in their attempts to influence public policy.

In her book ‘Women, policy and politics: The construction of policy problems’ (1999), Bacchi argues that governments, and indeed all of us, give a particular shape to social ‘problems’ through the ways in which we speak about them and the proposals we advance to address them. It is not the ‘problem’ itself that requires exploring, but rather how the problem is represented. In Bacchi’s view we are all active in the creation of particular ways of understanding issues. Competing understandings of social issues are, in Bacchi’s terminology, called ‘problem representations’ (Bacchi 1999: 2), and she argues that it is crucial to identify competing problem representations because they constitute a form of political intervention with a range of possible and tangible effects. Furthermore, Bacchi argues that the processes of problem representation actually go deeper than intentionality. In other words, we are all to some extent embedded in a pre-existing discourse which may limit the intentionality of our problem representations.

Crucial here is the issue of agency: are we as subjects primarily the users of discourse, or are we (only) constituted in discourse (Bacchi 2005)? Although this tension characterises the relationship between the (psychological) tradition of discourse analysis and the (political) tradition of analysis of discourse, Bacchi argues that the two approaches should be combined in order to explore both constraints and opportunities in relation to subject agency (Bacchi 2005). In our research context, it is thus important to consider not only how women’s movement actors are embedded within ‘naturalised’ or dominant discourses, but also how they intentionally use discourse to construct particular problem representations (and possible solutions). In particular, we examine how women’s movement actors represent the issue of cooperation and alliance within the women’s movement.
According to Bacchi (1999: 40) it can be ‘useful to think of discourses as frames, since they provide frameworks or ways of viewing issues’. However, when we start to talk about the ability to choose among competing frames, we have left the discourse theory for framework theory (Bacchi 2005: 203). Strategic framing\footnote{Strategical framing as a concept refers to ‘strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries’ (Verloo, 2005:17).} of political claims is within the tradition of framework theory (Verloo 2005). Frame theorists see discourse as outside the subject, as cultural constraints, within which intentional subjects can shape useful political collective action frames. A discourse analysis approach sees no subject outside the discourse and the subject therefore has work to do on her or himself to avoid falling into discursive positions which may be exploitative of others (Bacchi 2005: 206).

What Bacchi seeks to accomplish is ‘a dual-focus research agenda that would identify the ways in which interpretative and conceptual schemas delimit understandings, and the politics involved in the intentional deployment of concepts and categories to achieve specific goals’ (Bacchi 2005: 207). In other words, Bacchi is concerned with both structure and agency, or with both constraints and opportunities. She draws attention to the fact that we are all situated in discourses, understood as ‘intentionally supported and culturally influenced interpretive and conceptual schemas and signs’, while at the same time paying attention to ‘the active deployment of language, including concepts and categories, for political purposes’ (Bacchi 2005: 207).

The first part of this agenda thus involves paying attention to the discourses within which we operate. This requires ‘committed attempts to draw in a wide variety of women’s voices in order to lessen the chances of adopting taken-for-granted cultural and class-based presumptions in one’s analysis’ (Bacchi 2005: 207). By interviewing representatives of both majoritised and minoritised groups of women and their organisations, our study of different types of women’s movement actors aims to include a wide variety of voices. The second part of Bacchi’s agenda addresses the deliberate deployment of concepts and categories both by those with greater and those with lesser institutional power in their advancement of specific political projects. According to Bacchi (ibid.), framework theory can here examine
‘how social movement actors manoeuvre within discursive limits to shape issues in ways that advance their political projects’. Her thinking is echoed by Kjellman (2007: 28), who suggests that ‘the framing of political events may be better seen as part of the way in which a movement quite deliberately goes about constructing the motivational frames necessary to sensitize and mobilize constituents, or plot courses of action’. Likewise, Benford and Snow underline the importance of the ‘conscious shaping of frames that act to convert others to your cause and that advance desired political goals’ (Benford and Snow 2000; cited in Bacchi 2005:203). The question of who is speaking a given discourse is of central importance to us (Clifford, 2001 cited in Bacchi 2005: 207). Both majoritised and minoritised women’s movement actors can actively deploy concepts for political purposes. By asking representatives of women’s organisations about the strategies they employ to build alliances, promote issues on the political agenda, and influence public policies, we seek to address how majoritised and minoritised women actively frame their agendas and claims.

The main goal of Bacchi’s ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ approach is to bring silences in problem representations into the open for discussion and debate. According to Bacchi, this approach to policy is therefore a method of exposing the meaning-creation involved in policy analysis and policy design. The point is that particular ways of talking about a ‘problem’ and particular policy ‘responses’ will determine which issues get raised and which issues will not be discussed. Bacchi is also concerned with the effects of problem representations and discourses, and identifies three general categories of such effects: firstly, the ways in which subjects and subjectivities are constituted in the discourse (for instance groups assigned labels such as ‘needy’ or ‘disadvantaged’), secondly, the effects which follow from the limits imposed on what can be said or uttered, and thirdly, what she calls “lived effects” of discourse (Bacchi 1999: 45).

Our analysis, based mainly on interviews with activists but also supplemented with a mapping of selected policy documents, is inspired by Bacchi. ‘What’s the Problem?’ approach is usually applied to analyse policy documents in order to highlight competing constructions of issues addressed in a policy process. However, the approach can also been used to analyse interviews (see for instance Rönnblom 2002).
When we focus on 1) the representation of cooperation and alliances between majoritised and minoritised women’s organisations, and 2) the resonance or dissonance between policy-claims made by women’s movement actors and actual government policy in the area of violence and racism/discrimination against women, we seek to address the following questions: How is the issue of cooperation and alliance between majoritised and minoritised women’s organisations represented in our interviews? Is it at all represented as problematic? If so, are there specific issues which are presented as problematic? If not, why is that? What is the ‘problem’ represented to be in relation to the government’s development and implementation of policies in relation to violence against women? Is there at all a problem? If so, what are the specific issues which are being presented as problematic? If not, why is that? Are any solutions presented in relation to the problem representations, and can any effects produced by the problem representations be identified? How are subjects constituted within these problem representations? Finally, who is held responsible for the ‘problem’? and what effects follow from this attribution of responsibility?

4.6 Political Impact or Resonance

It is a widely held notion that democracy implies the ability of citizens to influence political decision-making. The capacity to exercise influence depends, however, on the extent to which citizens actually participate in governing structures. Women can achieve political influence through their mobilisation in elections as well as by engaging in lobbying efforts and involvement in organisations and social movements. In the words of political scientist Helga Hernes (1987), such mobilisation of women constitutes ‘feminism from below’. Moreover, political influence can be achieved if and when a government opens up for, and invites the participation and representation of, women. Such a strategy amounts to a ‘feminism from above’, where the state actively implements women-friendly gender and social policies (see Hernes 1987: 136 and 153; see also Skjeie and Siim, 2000). State feminism is a contested term, and a term that has various meanings. Kantola and Outshoorn (2007: 3), for example, state feminism as ‘the efforts by women’s policy machineries to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women’. In our context, such
efforts count as feminist if they are embedded in a discourse that challenges women’s subordination and the structures of gender based hierarchies (McBride and Mazur 2008; see also Annesley et al. 2007). If they are not embedded in such feminist discourse, then ‘efforts by women’s policy machineries to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women’ would in our usage count as ‘women-friendly’ efforts. If the state is to be an instrument for women-friendly or feminist policies, then there are, from the viewpoint of women, many aspects that may potentially complicate what is, at any point in time, considered as women-friendly. Social structures related to class, ethnicity, and sexuality are some of the complicating factors operating in this field, leading many theorists to argue the necessity of intersectional analyses of women’s positions and roles in society (e.g. Hill Collins 1991, Crenshaw 1998; Denis 2008).

In corporatist systems, interest groups have established formal relations with the state through consultations and representation in committees and advisory bodies (Raaum, 1999: 38). Traditionally, women have not had prominent roles in corporatist systems. Although women’s organisations have been influential in shaping and implementing parts of the welfare state, they have largely done so through more informal channels (Raaum 1999; see also Hernes 1987; Berven and Selle 2001; Nyhagen Predelli 2003). Relations between the state and civil society were previously understood in much of the research literature in terms of the concept of corporatism, while terms such as ‘governance’ and ‘network’ are preferred by contemporary researchers. Scharpf emphasizes that the concept of policy networks does not relate to formal decision-making structures, but to ‘informal patterns of interaction preceding or accompanying formal decisions taken by parliaments under the majority rule, or by negotiated agreement among governments, or in other formally legitimised modes of interaction’ (Scharpf 1999: 20). A network is relatively stable, and the participants will be specialists in a certain policy field (Scharpf 1999). Moreover, within a policy network, ‘policy agendas are defined and policy options introduced, clarified, and criticized, in open-ended and largely informal processes in which private individuals, interest groups, public interest organisations, and governmental actors are able to make contributions to policy formation and policy implementation’ (ibid.: 19).
Lobbying can be seen as a form of networking with the aim of influencing political decisions. In the Norwegian context, for example, lobbying has recently become increasingly important in political processes, while corporatism has lost clout as a plausible mode of policy-making (Klausen and Rommetvedt 1996; Raauum 1999; for the UK context see Grant 1985 and 1995; Jones 2004; Lovenduski 2007). While formal relations and contacts are central to corporatist systems, informal relations are at the core of lobbying tactics. When the patterns of cooperation between the state and voluntary organisations are fluid, it is possible to talk about a ‘pluralistic situation’, where different actors choose to cooperate with each other on a case-by-case basis. The organisations do not exercise formal decision-making power but participate in decision-making processes in alternative ways and by exercising ‘the power to present ideas or define an issue’ (Berven and Selle 1001: 16) or a ‘normative power and the power to define’ (Raum 1999: 43).

The power to present ideas or define an issue can be viewed in relation to the notions of problem representation and production of collective action frames. As discussed above, different problem representations may compete, and whether or not a problem representation resonates with those in power (politicians and civil servants) and thus gains influence and legitimacy depends, to some extent, on the available institutional and discursive political opportunities. Another way of expressing this resonance is to look at ‘the compatibility of the framing of women’s movement demands with the dominant discourse in the policy area’ (Kantola and Outshoorn 2007: 7; our emphasis). Women’s movement actors wanting to introduce new policies or reform established policies will seek to negotiate frames that work politically and through such frames convince powerful actors that their frames, including their claims-making, is actually the right political move to make. In order to achieve this, they might form what Benford and Snow terms as bridging frames that fit with existing political discourse and thinking (Benford and Snow 2000: 624). Rather than talking about any direct political impact or influence women’s movement actors might have, we are interested in the representation of such influence by movement actors themselves and by government officials and politicians, and whether we can detect any resonance between statements uttered by these different actors. The concept of ‘resonance’ has been specified by Benford and Snow (2000) to include several dimensions related to the credibility of a particular framing and
also its “salience to targets of mobilisation” (ibid.: 621). In our context, we are particularly concerned with the ‘perceived credibility of frame articulators’ and also with the centrality of movement frames defined as ‘how essential the beliefs, values and ideas associated with movement frames are to the [practice] of the targets of mobilisation’ (ibid.: 620-621).

4.7 Conclusion

In our study of women’s organisations and women’s movements in Norway, Spain and the UK, we will pay attention to the context in which these organisations and movements are situated. In order to gain an understanding of the specific dimensions of each locality, we will examine both institutional and discursive aspects of political opportunities. In particular, we will identify whether and how issues are presented as problems, and the types of representations or collective understandings forwarded by different women’s movement actors in relation to whether or not they cooperate and form alliance with each other. In this regard we ask whether minoritised feminism has been rejected and resisted, or embraced and accepted by the majoritised feminist movements (Sudbury 1998). We are also inspired by Narayan’s writings on the positioning of minoritised feminists as emissaries, mirrors or authentic witnesses (Narayan 1997) and ask how minoritised feminists themselves frame their own collective activism and how they are framed by majoritised feminists. Furthermore, we aim to discuss the eventual resonance or lack of resonance between the strategic frames forwarded by women’s movement actors in relation to gender equality issues and the frames applied by the respective governments in these three countries. Through the application of this multi-dimensional theoretical apparatus we aim to advance knowledge about majoritised and minoritised women’s movement actors, their relations (or lack of relations) in the form of alliance and cooperation, and the extent of resonance (or lack thereof) between their claims and claims forwarded by state actors.
5 RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 Introduction

This research report is based on new empirical evidence arising from a total of 34 interviews; 31 with women’s organisations\(^{59}\) and 5 with civil servants and politicians. We have conducted interviews with activists from the 1970s and 1980s (12 interviews\(^{60}\)) and from the 1990s and 2000s (19 interviews\(^{61}\)). Some of the interviewees have also been activists for this whole time period. For a brief description of the profile, membership and activities of the interviewed organisations, please see Appendix A. In order to contextualise the interviews, the historic Chapter 2 is based on secondary literature.

We have also conducted interviews with parliamentary politicians from different political parties and civil servants from different ministries. These are selected as key respondents whose main work relates to issues of gender equality, ethnic discrimination/racism or violence against women in particular. The institutional affiliations or backgrounds of these politicians and civil servants will not be revealed due to protecting their anonymity.

The report also includes a selective mapping of documents which is intended to complement findings from interviews with women’s organisations, civil servants and politicians.

The aim has been to discover the degree of resonance between these claims and the policy proposals that have been forwarded by the state and the state’s reports to CEDAW (the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and CERD (the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

\(^{59}\) We have been able to interview two activists from some of the organisations. These ‘second interviews’ are basically meant for Strand 3 of Work Package 4, and are not about the organisations per se, however some of the interviewees provided information that was relevant for the organisations’ work in general and some of this information is used in this report.

\(^{60}\) 11 interviews were conducted with activists from the 1970s and 1980s, in addition to one pilot interview with an activist from the 1990s.

\(^{61}\) The total number of interviews with activist from the 1990s and 2000s were 20, however, one interviewee chose to withdraw from the study.
Discrimination (CERD). Specifically, it sought to identify to what extent women’s organisations in Norway have been invited to comment on policy proposals, and to what extent they have actually commented - whether they were invited or not, regarding the two main areas of interest of ethnic citizenship within FEMCIT:

- Violence Against Women, including domestic violence, honour killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Racism and ethnic discrimination related to violence against women.

The approach adopted to identify claims made by women’s organisations was termed selective mapping. This has been to provide a descriptive overview of selective documents on the subject of violence against women, and race and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. The mapping considered two sources of reports: Norwegian government publications and publications by women’s organisations.

Three recent national law proposals have been selected:

- Changes in the Penal Code on violence in close relations (and annulling the act on vagrancy): Ot. prp. 113 (2004-2005) (Om lov om oppheving av løsgjengerloven og om endringer i straffeloven mv. ( eget straffebud mot vold i nære relasjoner mv.)).
- Changes in the Immigration Act (protection against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage, and protection of foreign employees’ working conditions and salary) (2004-2005): Ot. prp. 109 (Om lov om endringer i utlendingsloven (beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap og mishandling i ekteskap og vern av utenlandske arbeidstakeres lønns-og arbeidsvilkår mv.).
- Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here) (2006-2007): Ot. prp. 75 (Om lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her Utlandingsloven)).
A selection of the Norwegian reports and the NGO shadow reports to the CEDAW and CERD committees have been examined, based on reports where comments by NGOs are available. The mapping focused on the following dimensions:

- If women’s organisations have been invited by government to participate in the development of national policy reports.
- If women’s organisations have participated in shadow reports with other NGOs or alone.
- What claims have the women’s organisations forwarded in the two areas identified above.
- The outcomes of the claims evidenced in government’s policy and legislations.

The mapping of selective documents is located in Appendix B.

5.2 Research Ethics

Ethical approval for the Norwegian part of WP4 has been obtained from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. All research participants have received a letter of information about the research project and they have all signed a written consent form which stated their right to withdraw from the project at any time in the research process without being required to explain any reason from withdrawing. One organisation also chose to withdraw from the study and the interviewee had read the transcript of the interview. The respondents have also been promised anonymity and their individual identities are kept confidential. In the report, interviewees are referred to as ‘interviewee’, ‘respondent’ or ‘research participant’. We have tried to avoid linking direct quotes from individuals with the organisations they are from. Some of the organisations are quite small or have a certain profile that makes them easier to recognise even if the individual respondents are not named. Norway has a small population and a small activist milieu which has made the issue of anonymity quite challenging. It is often difficult to contextualise the analysis in order to keep the interviewee anonymous and relevant information is sometimes lost. However, we have tried our very best to prioritise anonymity of individuals throughout the presentation of our research findings.
Some of the interviewees wanted to read the whole interview transcript or their quoted statements, and they have had the opportunity to do so.

5.3 Mapping, Selection and Recruitment

The selection of organisations to interview was based on a mapping of gender political organisations in Norway (Eggebø et al., 2007). We needed an initial mapping to get an overview of the organisational landscape, and this report gives an overview of more than 200 organisations at the intersection of a) gender based organising, b) ethnic- , national- or minority based organising and c) religion based organising. The common feature of these organisations is that they are either purely women’s organisations or have an explicit gender dimension (based on their names, composition of their members, aims and the activities.)

The organisations have been categorised according to practical as well as analytical aims:

- 24 minority political organisations,
- 11 religious organisations,
- 15 gender political organisations,
- 17 social/humanitarian organisations,
- 14 vocational organisations,
- 12 gender and violence based organisations,
- 77 local women’s organisations,
- 7 party political organisations,
- 26 women’s groups and committees within other organisations,
- 8 women’s groups within mosques in Oslo.

The organisational landscape is continuously changing because of new organisations being established and existing ones being abolished. For instance, less than half of the minority organisations were established before 1990, and none before the 1970s, whereas half of the gender political organisations were established before 1990, and two before 1970. Also, the voluntary sector in influenced by public funding schemes. For instance, the category ‘local women’s organisations’ consists
almost completely of organisations funded by local government schemes for migrant organisations.

After the initial mapping we decided to select organisations which are national and capital based member organisations and foundational organisations. This decision was mainly made because we wanted to include organisations that were most likely to be in contact with the national political system. This gives the data material a centre bias. However, we also decided to select some interviewees from outside the capital and some of the interviewees are members of local branches of larger organisations and some are based outside the capital. We decided to include some organisations that are not member-based women’s organisations in order to include organisations that work politically with issues related to violence against women and/or ethnic discrimination. Some of these are mixed ethnic majority/minority and/or mixed men/women organisations. These are included because they work to improve women’s situation in Norway and some of them are most likely to be in contact with the political system. There are only a few national member based minority women’s organisations in Norway and very few will call themselves feminist, so we needed a wider approach in order to capture cooperation/conflict and political influence.

5.4 In-depth Interviews

The interviews have been based on a qualitative approach to research. We have conducted in-depth interviews with the help of topic guides. Such an approach offers the opportunity to focus on a limited number of cases whilst exploring topics and meaning in depth, resulting in the production of ‘thick description’ data (Geertz, 1973). Following Rubin and Rubin (2005: 30), we define our approach to interviewing within the tradition of interpretive constructionist thinking, in which ‘responsive interviewing’ (ibid.) entails the understanding that both the researcher and the interviewee come to the research situation with their own feelings, personality, interests, and experience, Moreover, a dynamic relationship is created in the interview situation which might challenge both the researcher and the interviewee in terms of his or her understanding, and the interview setting thus provides an arena for dialogue and conversation which aims at ‘depth of
understanding, rather than breadth’ (ibid.). A strategy of engagement in the research interview, rather than disengagement and distance, is a valued aspect of feminist methodology and research, and emphasises connections between knowledge, theory and language, and experience (Ramazanoğlu, 2002; see also Kitzinger, 2007). Further reflections on how our own backgrounds and experiences have influenced our research can be found in Chapter 3.

In the report, the different types of research participants (organisational activists, civil servants and politicians) are presented and represented through different ‘voices’ (Baklien and Solberg, 1997: 22). These voices are sometimes expressed through direct quotations from the interview transcripts, while at other times they are expressed through statements produced by the researchers - statements which summarise and interpret what the research participants have said (ibid.). Moreover, our own ‘researcher’s voices’ are expressed through the evaluations and interpretations that are made by us on the basis of interviews and document-based data. While our aim is to keep as much distinction between these different voices as possible, we might not always have succeeded in achieving clear distinctions recognisable by our readers. Again, based on the view that research data are produced through interaction between the researcher and research participants (Kvale, 1997), we acknowledge that it is neither realistic nor advisable to succinctly separate all the different voices that speak through the discourse produced in our report.

A qualitative approach offers comparable data (across cases), but contrary to other research strategies this approach does not produce findings that can be generalised. Strictly speaking, our findings are thus limited to the organisations that have been included in our study. Nevertheless, our findings indicate issues and problems that are probably indicative of a broader set of women’s organisations than those included in our study. Our analysis has been based on an inductive approach and has thus been grounded in the data.

Four sets of topic guides were developed and used for different categories of interviews: one guide for interviewees from ethnic majority women’s organisations, one for interviewees from ethnic minority women’s organisations (slightly different
versions for respondents from the 1970’s and ‘80’s), one for civil servants and one for representatives from political parties. The topic guides have been used as flexible research tools. The four topic guides are included in Appendix C.

The interviews were conducted in the time period May 2007-May 2008. We started doing pilot interviews in May 2007 and did most of the interviews with women from the organisations during the fall 2007. Interviews with civil servants and politicians were conducted in the spring 2008. Most of the interviews have taken place in the offices of the relevant interviewee, some have taken place in our offices, and a few have been conducted at cafes or at places where the organisations has had meetings. The interviews were recorded and have all been transcribed by research assistants.

Activists in the women’s organisations have a busy schedule and the recruitment process have been slower than expected. We sent recruitment letters to 18 women’s organisations in Norway and we followed up by e-mails and several phone calls. All the organisations we asked to participate in interviews were positive except one organisation. In the beginning the recruitment process went well and the first interviews were conducted shortly thereafter. However, some of the organisations have been difficult to make contact with and even if they have said yes to participate in the project it has been difficult to make interview appointments with some of them. The recruitment process has been time consuming and especially some of the small local women’s organisations have been hard to get in contact with.

5.5 Interviews Versus Documents?

The interviews conducted with activists from the 1970s and 1980s address the historic relationship between ethnic Norwegian (majority) women and ethnic minority women (migrant, refugee and Sami). Obviously, recalling the situations, actions and emotions which defined the ‘relations’ going back some thirty years, is a difficult task. Sometimes, the informants explicitly said that they simply did not remember anything adequate with regard to the particular questions, and sometimes they carefully brought into memory fragments of episodes. At other times, however, they shared vivid, precise and detailed memories. Still, the interpretation and reconstruction of
the interviews is based on an understanding of the interviews as interpretations and constructions (Kvale, 1997). This is also relevant for the interviews covering the 1990s and 2000s, even if these events are more recent.

The interviews in this report are of limited value with regard to how the relations ‘actually were’ during these decades, and should be interpreted as constructions and partial representations of the past. They may, however, in various ways add value to published documents. Contemporary pamphlets, essays and newspaper articles are important sources, but they may exaggerate or understate actual disagreements for strategic reasons. Memories recollected decades after the actual events are free of such immediate tactical considerations. Irrespective of this, the stories told can be influenced by desires to legitimate, explain, justify, embellish and/or to comprehend the past. The time distance may have weakened the memories, but also extended them by reflection and life experience.

The memories represented did not emerge by themselves, but as responses to the research questions presented. Thus, they are influenced by the researcher and the theoretical frame of the project as such: the relationship between women’s movements and citizenship in multicultural Europe. Interpreted and analyzed along with published documents, they shed an interesting light on the historic and contemporary struggles for women’s rights in European contexts.

5.6 Language and Concepts

The interviews were all conducted in Norwegian, and the citations have been translated by the researchers. Unfortunately, some accuracy may have been lost in translation, and some of the subtle references to persons or events of the time may be difficult to grasp for non-Norwegian readers.

The selection of words is no innocent matter, and we have struggled hard to find and develop a proper language with which to label our analytic categories. For instance, we sometimes use ‘majority feminists’ to name informants with an ethnic Norwegian background, who are active in a feminist organisation led by ethnic Norwegians, which has a predominantly ethnic Norwegian membership and no explicit focus on
the situation of migrants, refugees or the anti-racist struggle. For the sake of variation, they are also presented as ‘majority/majoritised’ feminists, and sometimes as ‘white feminists’. Women with a minority background are sometimes called ‘minority women’, ‘minoritised women’, ‘migrant women’ or ‘Sami women’ or ‘black’/‘Sami feminists’. ‘White feminism’ is a quite unusual concept in the Norwegian context. So are ‘black feminists’, although this has been introduced as a political concept by migrant women themselves. Ethnic Norwegian women may be identified politically as ‘black feminists’, and migrant women may be politically identified as ‘white feminists’. ‘Black feminism’ was introduced by migrant women during the late 1970s and is a self- elected name, contrary to ‘white feminist’ which was never applied by majority feminists. Whiteness was far from being problematised then, and hardly is today. Strictly speaking, it is not appropriate to force a contemporary label on a historic group, but this is still what is being done in this report in part to sensitise the reader to the issue of race/ethnicity and in part as an effort to acknowledge the claims of black feminists.

It is sometimes complicated to differentiate between the feminist and not feminist organisations of the women’s movement, but it is harder to differentiate along ethnic and racial lines. However, during the 1970s and 80s the division between migrant and refugee women’s organisations, Sami organisations and ethnic Norwegian women’s organisations was more clear- cut than today. If we look at the constituencies, leadership and the aims/priorities, the organisations then were predominantly of one or the other sort. During the 1990s and particularly during the present decade, the constituencies, leadership and aims/priorities have become much more mixed, and the categories are blurred.

5.7 The Role of the Researcher

In applying a discourse analysis approach, the role of the researcher is not to get ‘behind’ the discourse and find out what people really mean and how the world is like in reality (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 31). The point of departure is that we experience the world through the way we understand it, i.e. through discourse. Therefore the researcher’s role is to look for patterns in the utterances, and to explore social consequences of various discursive representations of the world. The
aim is not to say which understandings are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, even if you can critically evaluate these understandings at a later stage (ibid.). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 31) emphasise that it can be difficult to see discourses as ‘socially constructed systems of meaning’, especially when you as a researcher is part of the culture you are researching. Then it can be difficult to probe the underlying assumptions and the taken for grantedness.

According to Rönnblom (2002), dominating discourses are established by constructions of the ‘normal’ and the ‘true’ and this is done by excluding or degrading ‘the false’ and ‘the other’ as abnormal and untrue (Rönnblom, 2002: 26). A researcher, as any other member of society, is familiar with the discourses you aim to bring to light. One proposed solution is to try to alienate yourself and try to view different understandings of the world as unfamiliar (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 32). One angle of approach can be to see competing problem representations in the interview material in light of each other, and thereby explore silences.

However, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 32) address ‘the reflexivity problematic’ in regard to the researcher’s role, and they argue that from a social-constructivist point of view, the researcher’s representations of the world cannot be seen as ‘better’ than any other representation of the world. The researcher always has a position in relation to the field she is studying and that position will be part of her way of seeing the field.

It is also crucial to reflect on the researcher’s role and the interaction between the interviewee and the researcher in interview situation. During the interview, the interviewee does not simply ‘supply data material’; it is rather a situation where the researcher and the interviewee create meaning together. This makes interviews different from documents as data material. The concepts we as researchers use in the interview situation, the types of questions we ask and the way meaning is created in the dialogue between researcher and the interviewee, are contributing factors in the discourses that are constructed in the interview setting.

In the next step of the research process, however, it is us as researchers who are responsible for analysing the interview transcript as text, selecting quotes, interpret
them and write about the results of the analysis. Therefore it is important for us as researchers to discuss the position from which we construct the analysis and to be self reflexive about our role as researchers. Our positions as majoritised women are an issue that we have been made aware of in some of the interviews and also in the analysis. We might have a tendency to be more ‘critical’ in our analysis of the interviews with majoritised women. The initial research questions were also influenced by the criticism of the Western feminist movement. One of the initial questions for our research project was whether minority women’s demands have been rejected or accepted by the majority women (see for instance Sudbury, 1998). We have also been influenced by various intersectional approaches, and here the marginalisation of women of colour has been a central issue (see for instance Crenshaw, 1991). Memory work as a methodological tool has been useful in order to be self-reflexive (Berg, 2007; Widerberg, 2008).
6A CONTESTED RELATIONS IN THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT: THE
1970s AND 1980s

Researcher: ‘Can you express what it was that I, that they or we, did not understand?’
Interviewee: ‘That this was a group of women who exposed this society as a divided one. And how this objectified, how it was divided and that there was a completely separate set of statutes and regulations and attitudes towards the one group contra the other.’

6.1A Introduction

This chapter discusses the contested relations between minoritised and majoritised women. This part A of the chapter outlines the conflicting and concurring interactions of the 1970s and 80s as they are represented by ethnic Norwegian and migrant women’s movement activists. The mobilisation of Sami feminism and its relation to the women’s movement at large is also included, covering the period from the 1970s until the turn of the century. The chapter starts with some methodological notes on the positioning of the researcher who was also an activist. Then the difficult relations between black and white feminist as they evolved around the Foreign Women’s Group are addressed. Controversies, negotiations and joint actions are described and contextualised, in particular the claim of black feminists that their agenda was misrecognised by white feminists. The disputes between black and white feminists are constructed as discourses of anger and irritation, and contrasted to discourses of charity and dignity among non-feminist ethnic Norwegian activists. The struggle for improved rights and living conditions of ethnic minoritised women in Norway included a national minority in addition to migrant and refugee women. The mobilisation of Sami women and their struggle for improved citizenship rights is framed by their position as ‘a minority within a minority’ (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005). Chapter 6 A ends with a discussion of a common political agenda, suggesting that despite a number of controversies during the two decades, there are indications of improved relations between and within the ethnic minority and ethnic

62 ‘Misrecognition’ or non-recognition is a term applied by Nancy Fraser (Fraser 1997).
63 The expression ‘minorities within minorities’ refers to the question of ‘what happens to individuals or minorities within protected minorities who find that their community discriminates against them’? (ibid.: 1). This question is also addressed in the ‘multiculturalism-feminism’ debate on how attempts to combat cultural inequalities may undermine gender equalities (Okin et.al. 1999).
majority feminists in Norway during this period. One story of joy and one story of sadness finalise the section, and preserve the image of complex and controversial relations.

6.2A The Researcher as Participant

Working with the interviews has been a personal voyage for me, sometimes painful and sometimes joyful. Being part of the feminist movement myself, this research has also been an investigation of my own history. I was not a member of any organisation selected for this project, however, and I did not live in any of the places from which we recruited informants. However, I was a self-defined part of the feminist movement, and an activist in the ethnic majority feminist communities (among other political groups) within which I lived during those years, and some of the informants are known to me. Some of the feminist disputes of the 1970s are ingrained in me, such as, what I considered to be unfair political play by members of some activist groups, along with other momentous events. In addition, my impressions of the 1970s and 80s are influenced by the representations of close friends who were also deeply involved in the feminist struggles during those years.

I am also old enough to remember the emergence of the Sami movement in Norway, and of black feminism. I have few, but vivid, memories of seeing some of the early black feminist activists ‘in action’. At the time, I thought they were angry and excessive in their accusations. In retrospect, however, I would have liked some of my reactions to have been different. In my own recollections, issues relating to migrant women were not addressed in my feminist networks during the 70s, but we were tremendously concerned with the situation of women (and men) in third world countries.

I was also involved in local as well as state feminism as a deputy and representative on various public boards. This means I have a stake in the public

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64 This section is written in a personal form because it involves the personal experiences of a single researcher.
65 ‘State feminism’ was invented by Helga Hernes as a concept for the combination of women’s mobilisation from below and the integration of women and gender equality policies from above (Hernes 1987).
gender equality politics and in the production of knowledge about women’s situations.

These various personal experiences naturally have some bearing on my research. Firstly, they have motivated my involvement in this project. Secondly, they have influenced the interview situations and the analysis. Although it is hard to identify and express the effects of this process, I will try to explain how the collection and interpretation of information has been effected by my personal background:

Interviewing majority feminists was like travelling back to a warm, joint past, despite the many disputes of the period. Access was easy and the interviewees made implicit or explicit references to shared events, sometimes actual and at other times imagined. I was intuitively tempted to include myself in the larger ‘we’ of the feminist ‘old days’. In sum, I was easily trapped in the role of an ‘insider’, endangering the collection of data whenever issues were not automatically explained or outlined. This could happen if the informant took it for granted that I knew what she was referring at, or I thought I did. Sometimes I did know, and sometimes I did not and should have probed further to gain clarity. Interviewing minority feminist activists, on the other hands, was like entering a foreign territory. I was given a polite and friendly reception as an outsider and I felt like one. Sometimes I was uncomfortably aware of my lack of knowledge and I was reluctant to disclose it, at other times I could take advantage of being an outsider and pose naive questions. Sometimes it was embarrassing to be positioned as a representative of the majority feminists and/or state feminism, at other times it was not. Minority informants hardly took my comprehension of their struggle and issues for granted, or rather took a range of other issues for granted compared to the majority feminists. The encounters with different groups of activists represented rather different research situations, and positioned me differently as both an insider and an outsider.

In this respect, applying memory work as a methodological tool to handle my subjectivity has been useful (Berg, 2007; Widerberg, 2008). Memory work was developed as a feminist methodology, and is a way of problematising experience. If

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For instance, I was a deputy member of the Norwegian Equal Status Council 1983 -1987, and a member in 1987-1992, and also involved with the institutionalization of women’s research in Norway.
proximity is the point of departure, distance is the result. The ambition is to enable the connection of personal experience and practice to social theory; to avoid reproducing stereotypes and to position the researcher (Berg, 2007). Doing several ‘memory exercises’ alone and within the context of the FEMCIT research project, has brought up personal memories long forgotten, and made them available for reflection and questioning. In line with findings in whiteness studies (Taylor 2007)(Taylor, 2007), embarrassing and uncomfortable situations have emerged, making me aware of my own role in the evolving race relations in general and in the white and black feminist relations in particular (Frankenberg 1993). In the same way that Frankenberg formulates the reactions of white feminists in her enlightening study of whiteness among feminists, whilst conducting this research, I always felt like ‘a well-meaning individual [and], the idea of being part of the problem of racism was genuinely shocking’ (Frankenberg, 1993: 3). Racism was something external to me, to paraphrase Frankenberg (1993: 6). Memory work has been helpful in making me realise the ways in which ‘white women’s daily experiences differed from those of our sisters of color’ (Frankenberg, 1993: 9, emphasis in the original). Not merely as a theoretical construction but as ‘flesh and blood’ experiences. Hopefully, memory work has made me better equipped for researching the relationship between white and black feminism because it has been a tool for reflection, a necessary practice related to subjectivity and ‘distance’ in research.

6.3A Discourses of Anger and Irritation: the Intersection of Feminism and Anti-racism

This section deals with the relationship between black and white feminist activists dating back to the 1970s. The focus here is on the divergences and gaps between the two groups, whilst cooperation and alliances are discussed at the end of part A of the chapter. The context of the representations of the relations between black and white feminists consists of actual events and encounters between the two groups. The encounters are represented as conflict-ridden and stressful, in contrast to the types of encounters discussed in the subsequent sections of the chapter. The discourse of charity, of dignity and of a minority within a minority discourse differ from the first discourse (of anger and irritation) in that they are not to the same extent based on physical encounters between the groups of majoritised and minoritised
activists. The representations in this section, however, ‘speak’ to each other quite explicitly because the informants refer to similar events and issues when they elaborate on their encounters with each other.

6.4A Black feminists: Homeless, Rejected and Unrecognised

When black feminists organised in Norway during the late 1970s, racism soon became the uniting issue. Black feminists in Foreign Women’s Group were an ‘organic’ part of the anti-racist movement, a large intellectual circle around the Immigranten journal and the Anti-racist Centre in Oslo. Anti-racism operated as a ‘kind of ideology’ for black feminism, according to one research participant. Naturally, black feminists addressed racism as a feminist issue. The intersection is illustrated in their first basic slogans:

- ‘The struggle against racism is also a struggle against the oppression of women’,
- ‘Independent status for immigrant women’.  

The first slogan is a general ideological statement, which explicitly introduces a new theoretical and political dimension into Norwegian feminist thinking. The slogan shows that black feminists were rooted differently within the different strands of feminism, i.e. within the then emerging anti-racist movement. The second slogan differs from the first because it is a specific claim related to the ongoing struggle to influence Norwegian migration policy. Like the first slogan, however, this one also expands the existing basic feminist agenda in Norway. Here is a demand outside the domain of majority women. The issue of ‘independent status’ had not yet been related to the ‘gender equality field’. The slogan, however, introduced the Immigration Act's (Utlendingsloven) regulation of residence permits into the feminist debate. Migrant women fiercely opposed the requirement of three years of living in Norway (the three year rule), after entry permission based on family reunion, before a spouse could apply for autonomous residence permit. The question of whether the issue of formal status should have the same priority as white feminist claims is one that has been debated between black and white feminists for many years.

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67 [Kamp mot rasisme er også kvinnekamp] and [Selvstendig status for innvandrerkvinner].
68 This regulation is also discussed in Appendix B.
‘What provoked us was the attitude from at least part of the Norwegian feminist movement, which did not accept our struggle as their struggle. They would either incorporate or assimilate us to their agenda, right, or just pick the parts that fitted in.’

‘It was as if we threatened the feminist standpoint by demanding that other dimensions than gender is part of the discrimination scenario and that it is feminism to include them. But the worst, you know, was the demand to understand that a white feminist also can discriminate, along different dimensions … It was this … This was the most difficult, in particular for the most radical.’

‘We thought that racism was a women’s struggle. We thought, of course, that we were a part of the women’s movement, but that we were also very much more. The movement was just a part of us. But we were, naturally, a part of the women’s movement, but, well, there wasn’t much of a women’s movement to feel at home in.’

These representations illustrate the frustrations, irritation, provocation and disappointments of black feminists at the reception of their demands by white feminists. They represented white feminists’ responses as an outright rejection of their agenda, a lack of awareness of the complicity of racism, and an unfriendly cold shoulder. Black feminists were, therefore, homeless and misrecognised.

The representations of white feminists differ with respect to their encounters with women from Foreign Women’s Group. Sometimes they are ambiguous and display uncertainty, sometimes they confirm the gap, and once they oppose the representations of black feminists, at least in part: One white feminist insists that her organisation ‘fully supported the demand for autonomous status for migrant women’, and contributed a great deal: ‘We were concerned with the opinion of Foreign Women’s Group when we commented on policy proposals.’ This responendt also claims that the gender equality institutions ‘were preoccupied with the status of immigrant women’ when the Action Plan for Gender Equality was written in 1981’.

This representation is partly inconsistent with the statements of black feminist that their struggle was not accepted: It does not proclaim identification with anti-racism as part of the feminist struggle, which was probably the most basic black feminist idea, but it is supportive of their second claim (independent status for immigrant women).
None of the other white feminists from the early years of black feminism in Norway have similar explicit assertions of support to black feminist demands. The black and white feminist representations just commented do, however, imply ambiguities and divergences concerning the relationship between the different communities. These will be elaborated in the sections to come.

6.5A Beyond the Pale

Migrant feminists utilised the new political opportunity related to the United Nation’s International Women’s Decade. They brought their slogans and justifications abroad during the summer of 1980, to Copenhagen and some workshops arranged during the NGO-Forum organised along with the United Nation’s second world conference on Women, Equality, Peace and Development. They presented not only their own organisation, but also their general critique of Norwegian immigration and equality policies, to women of the world and to Norwegian feminist activists.

When asked about this event, the representations of the encounters indicate gaps in the interests and interpretations of majority and minority feminist activists. One black feminist interviewee represents the Forum workshops quite vividly, and remembers frustrated discussions with white Norwegian feminists. A white feminist activist also present in Copenhagen hardly remembers the presence of migrant women at all, on the other hand, and has absolutely no recollections of conflicts or unpleasant discussions. In her representation, the situation of migrant women was not really discussed until the UN Forum in Nairobi in 1985. ‘That’s when it started’, according to her.

Researcher: ‘Did you meet Norwegian immigrant women in Copenhagen?’
Interviewee: ‘No, I don’t think they were, no, there were no, well immigrant women’s issues were thoroughly discussed in Nairobi, that’s when it began. And think that it was not very, well, certainly there must have been immigrants among the group at the Forum [in Copenhagen], but that was not, that was not a big issue. I cannot remember, well, I cannot remember any serious conflicts with migrant women at all. Another thing is, there were no headscarves, you know. That was in Nairobi, that’s when they came.’
The total absence of representations of issues and confrontations is a stark contrast to the representations of Copenhagen as a turning point for migrant women, as we will soon see. The description above, however, is interesting not just because of the silences, but also because of the connection established between ‘migrant women’ and ‘headscarves’. Migrant women are represented as wearing headscarves, and to having a particular religious belonging. This may be an example of a current issue influencing memories of past-time issues: The blending of Islam and migration today might have coloured the informant’s recollection of events more than 20 years back. In addition, international political conflicts did play a major role during the UN official conference and during the FORUM in Copenhagen. According to the official, governmental Norwegian report from Copenhagen, they displaced gender equality during the negotiations: Issues like apartheid, and the occupation of Palestine were discussed separately, and the report claims that conflict in the Middle East in particular had so much media coverage as to ‘overshadow information concerning the work on general women political issues’ (Utenriksdepartementet 1981).

More importantly, blindness to the presence of migrant women in the representation above reflects a general feature of the Norwegian state and civil society during the time. The majority hardly ‘saw’ migrant people and ‘heard’ their voices. For instance, Foreign Women’s Group (FWG) was not mentioned in the public report *The Role of Women’s Organisations in Norway* made for the NGO-Forum, although the organisation was established before the report was printed and was suppression also in the updated version published in 1984 (Strømberg 1980). Also, FWG was probably not invited to the official preparatory meetings ahead of the Copenhagen NGO-Forum. (A Norwegian woman representing the Nordic Sami was present.) Foreign Women’s Group is not listed among the Norwegian NGO’s mentioned in the Foreign Ministry’s report (Utenriksdepartementet 1981: 37), although migrant women were described as an active group during the Forum in the report from the National Council of Women: They arranged a workshop on their situation, ‘And it [the workshop] was not edifying, so something has to be done’, the National Council of Women commented (ibid.: 37).

69 None of the reports from the Equal Status Council are focusing the role of migrant women http://www.arkivverket.no/fk/classes/fk_serie.php?qc=afcd0ca5e9055cf7c994bd1af83db281&ft=1&arkivid=4491&serieid=22265
One of the black feminist research participants had, like the white respondent, no memories of encounters with Norwegian women’s organisations in Copenhagen. Another feminist had, however, and the shade of her description of the NGO-Forum is rather different from the representation above:

‘The first time we met the Norwegian women’s movement [was in Copenhagen], and this meeting politicised us, you know. … because we had been, you know, more like as a social network. (…) But the reaction we received was, like this is not true, this is not Norway like we know it, and a bit like ‘shame on you, because there are international guests here, and how can you say these things about Norway?’ (…) This made us sharpen our minds, and want more knowledge about systematic discrimination of black women. And then we all went, you know, collectively seeking knowledge else where. And we were quite simply politicised.’

First of all, the citation discloses that the organising of black feminists in Norway started as a rather social getting together thing, but soon transformed to a political network due to disappointing responses from Norwegian feminists, the state and the public in general. The activists who went to the NGO-Forum were quite young as a group, and not yet acquainted with the white Norwegian self-image. They soon realised, however, that their critique of Norwegian gender equality policy came as a big surprise, and was not warmly received.

A comment on the context seems adequate: This was right after the institutionalisation of gender equality politics (the Gender Equality Act, the Gender Equality Ombud, the Gender Equality Division in the Ministry of Children and Consumer Affairs, and the making of the Plan of Action to Promote Gender Equality). The public authorities were pleased with its accomplishments, and compared to many other states, they were gradually thinking of Norway as ‘the land of gender equality’. Feminist organisations had successfully struggled for abortion on demand, the bitter conflicts between the AKP-ml affiliated parts of the movement and

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70 This beginning is quite in line with the first public announcement of the Foreign Women’s Group ‘we want to get to know each other talk together discuss our problems and have common activities. We shall also aim for cultural exchange among ourselves and with Norwegians. It is the group’s intention to make us feel that we take part in this society’ (Immigranten no. 1 1979: 13).

71 Norway as ‘the world champion’ in gender equality came just a few years later, related to the rapidly increasing number of women in politics, with Gro Harlem Brundtland’s ‘women cabinet’ of 1986 as a peak.
the rest were decreasing after wearing out the participants, and many activists were absorbed in various institutions.

This was hardly the best time to present sharp, outright critique of the feminist movement and the femocrats. Justified or not, they did not like what they heard. Their critique was beyond the pale.

6.6A White Feminism, Third World Women and Racism

“Our issues were totally subordinated these enormous issues of the feminist gang, sexual rights and the third world.”

Black feminists represent the lack of response from white feminists with a reference to their different interests and priorities. They mocked at the preoccupation with sexual issues and with women abroad. Quite rightly, prostitution and pornography was one of the most important issues with respect to mobilising activism during the 80s. And the predominant concern with the situation in Norway did not preclude international women’s issues. Quite the contrary, one effect of the NGO-Forum was transnational networks, for instance related to the sex industry. Several Norwegian women’s and feminist organisations were national branches of international associations, and involved in international women’s issues in that context. Also, the Norwegian tradition - as a small state - to be engaged in international conflict resolutions and humanitarian projects through the UN system entailed opportunity structures for trans-national cooperation. This is clearly seen in the Norwegian (and Nordic) women’s involvement in the UN system. They were present and made their impact during the formulation of the UN Charter in 1945; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1947/48 and the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946 (Linder 2001; Pietilä 2001). They were enthusiastic supporters of the proposal to proclaim 1975 as the International Women’s Year (Utenriksdepartementet 1976; Hovedkomitén for Kvinneåret1976). International concern was also expressed in the National Women’s Year Committee. The committee also initiated a project abroad (in Kenya), and funded the booklet Women and development. A number of women’s organisations and committees were engaged in developmental projects in third world countries to continue after 1975,
and even the municipal cross-political Women’s Year committee all over the country focused on third world women (1976). The idea of funding a project directed at ‘immigrant families’, however, was put aside because other actors were already involved, according to the report.

The subsequent UN Decade for Women - Equality, Development and Peace 1975-1985 (Pietilä and Vickers 1994), entailed new opportunities for international networks and campaigns. The Norwegian National Council of Women successfully lobbied for public funding for international development projects (Likestillingsrådet 1980). Solidarity campaigns were initiated by left-oriented feminist groups, such as campaigns to improve the lives of women in Iran after the revolution in 1979, in Palestine after Sabra and Shatilla massacres in 1982, in the Philippine related to trafficking and mail order brides, etc. An International Contact Committee for Women’s Issues (Internasjonalt kontaktutvalg for kvinnespørsmål) had been established in 1982 to facilitate contact between the Foreign Ministry and women’s organisations in the preparations for Norway’s contributions to the UN conference in Nairobi in 1985.72

These examples demonstrate a strong ethnic Norwegian interest in women and development. The representations of international engagement, however, differ between white and black feminists. White feminists have wholeheartedly positive representations of their various third world projects. They are proud of their efforts to improve the situation of women abroad. Reflections or hints at the issue of migrant women at home are absent, racism likewise. The two topics are disconnected. This is contrary to the representations of black feminists, who have a rather critical take on the third world focus just because it is seen to be completely isolated from race awareness at home, and also be at the expense of a focus of third world women in Norway.

When asked explicitly about their relations to black feminists in Norway, majority feminists confirm the representations of black feminists in the sense that they display

72 Neither Sami nor migrant women’s organisations were part of the committee, however. Indigenous and migrant women’s issues were not explicitly discussed in the Norwegian official report after the Nairobi conference, and neither are mentioned in the comments on the NGO-Forum (Utenriksdepartementet 1985).
absence of awareness of racism. They don’t remember racism as a feminist issue or any personal sense of racism as a structural challenge during the early years of black feminism. One interviewee says that she has no memory of discussing racism, and then adds: ‘racism, in the way we are conscious about it today that is.’ The addition reminds us of the fragile nature of memories, and indicates the possibility of some race awareness, although framed differently. This is more visible in this representation:

‘I mean, our [mentions her organisation] strength was that if somebody tried to sack an immigrant women, we would be there with support and name it racism and oppression of women and all kinds of things. But if one insisted on discussing these structural conditions, well … (…) I don’t really know if we disagreed, or whether it was rather a matter of style - or if it was simply that … We had similar goals, I gather, but we were very far. (…) I did not always understand what she [a black feminist] talked about.’

Here the important distinction between individual and structural discrimination, basic in the feminist discourse, is articulated. Also, ambivalence and uncertainty is clearly stated. On the one hand, there is a claim that the white and black feminists had a similar agenda, and that it was style rather than content which was problematic. On the other hand, reservations are made: ‘I don’t know’, ‘I gather’, and finally the declaration of not understanding what black feminists talked about, which is probably a quite accurate description.

The ambivalence relates to Frankenberg’s claim that women of colour speak from concrete conceptions of what ‘difference’ and ‘multiplicity’ of experience mean to them, whereas white women visions of ‘difference’ and ‘multiplicity’ may remain abstract’ (Frankenberg 1993). Norwegian feminists were deeply influenced by socialist ideas during the 70s, and concerned with oppression as a structural issue. On a theoretical level, they might have been able talk about racism at home. However, the representations rather demonstrate the ‘epistemology of ignorance’ (Taylor 2007) and the national self-image of tolerance and innocence (Gullestad 2006; Hagelund 2003). According to Frankenberg, these discourses were not detached from social status and position. Rather, they
‘had everything to do with standpoint: We were not in a structural position to see the effects of racism on our lives, not the significance of race in the shaping of society,’ she maintains.’ (ibid xx)

The feminist euphoria of the period, and of imagined communities of mutual understanding, respect and support contributed to narrowing down the perspective of white feminists. To paraphrase Srivastava, feminism was not ‘a place of just practices, egalitarian relations, revolutionary goals and good individuals’ (Srivastava 2005: 36).

6.7A Norwegian Black Feminism: Not copying anyone

The Norwegian black feminist thinking evolved in a dynamic interplay with migrant women abroad, mostly in the United Kingdom but also in France and Germany. They also had a lot of contact with third world feminists. The black activist interviewees underline the development of their own unique understanding: ‘We were not copying anyone, but we developed our own theories and thoughts based on our own experience’. The articles and pieces about meetings published in the anti-racist journal Immigranten indicate convincingly the broad international feminist anti-racist milieu from the late 1970’s. The slogans also clearly resemble major black feminist slogans abroad. But what was the particular ‘Norwegian’ blend of Black feminism? According to one representation, it was related to Norwegian history and demography, but most of all the core is deeply intertwined with the Norwegian self-image:

‘Because United Kingdom and the US both were explicitly part of an imperialistic world, while we in Norway lived in, let’s say, a social and political self-image of being sort of global underdogs, and not part of the racism going on in the US which one looked at in consternation. So, one needed a gaze from the outside, a strong gaze from the outside to tell how Norway had been a part of Western imperialism or have been a part of Western history … So I mean, I feel that some of the particularly Norwegian was to fight against this Norwegian self-image. An image of what it means, of Norwegian-ness and generousness [storsinnmethet] and simply a form of well this egalitarian self-image was massive, and still is. That is the best and the worst about Norway, sometimes, isn’t it. So, this is part of the Norwegian particularities, in addition to this being a tiny country, and one … The first times we talked about racism in Norway, I experienced, well we used very much time to ease the shock we witnessed in the audience.’
This is a representation of Norway and Norwegians unjustified self-image. Racism talk took most Norwegian majority feminists by surprise, even shock, and black feminists spent time and effort to reduce the damage inflicted by their insensitive claims, of framing. We might smile at the description today, but there were hardly many smiles then. In order to comprehend the depth of the black feminist critique, one has to imagine the dominant complacent self-image, which is still, I believe, quite widespread. One small anecdote may illustrate the mentality; the Prime Ministers, totally serious, claim during the Winter Olympics in Norway 1994: ‘It is typical Norwegian to be best.’

6.8A Mutual Accusations

‘They laid it on thick [var beinharde], and they were always after us’. (…) I was petrified, I would say, and a bit irritated.’

‘I remember I thought they [women from a minority women’s organisation] went hard at it [kjørte veldig hardt] in the beginning, right? I wasn’t that bad. (…) She [a member of an organisation for ethnic minoritised women] was very obstinate. She frightened me, yes, she was like five times as bas as X [the informants own organisation], or something like that.’

‘And I was, obviously, an angry, young woman for many years. Participating in those forums, ever so often, in dialogue, discussion and exchanging opinions – this sharpened me as an angry, young woman. Angry, young feminist. (…) I have learned a lot from influencing by shocking.’

Interviewee: ‘This resistance from Norwegian women, the resistance and scepticism of what we represented, that this also was feminism. (…) The total block [blendegardinen].’

Researcher: ‘Can you express what was that I, that they or we, did not understand?’

Interviewee: ‘That this was a group of women who exposed this society as a divided one. And how this objectified, how it was divided and that there was a completely separate set of statutes and regulations and attitudes towards the one group contra the other.’

The encounters of organised black and white feminist activists during the first years of black feminism in Norway demonstrate a high level of frustration and disappointment, in both groups. The two first citations above demonstrate white feminist’s irritation, and the last two demonstrate black feminists anger with white
feminist’s colour blindness and ‘epistemology of innocence’ (Taylor 2007). ‘Anger and irritation’ seems to describe a common ground, and yet the representations contradict each other fundamentally. Interviewees from majority organisations represent black feminists as too negative and too critical. They don’t accept the verbal attacks, and they don’t see themselves as ‘that bad’. The representations indicate a rather unison white feminist discourse of irritation and frustration. Different apprehensions of particular activists are a moderating element, however: Some black feminists are represented solely as ‘angry’, whereas others are represented as reasonable or as ‘bridge-builders’. The general impression of exaggerated accusations is unambiguous, however, and the effects are discomforting and strained relations.

Organised minority feminists represent their claims of discrimination and racism in the labour market and elsewhere as accurate and well-founded. They maintain descriptions of discrimination of migrants within the Norwegian state and society, and they uphold charges against white feminists for neglecting and ignoring their difficult situation. They were angry, and the justification of their anger was unrecognised. The lack of recognition is complete when black feminists represent the reception of their critique as a ‘total block’. There isn’t much of a chance for white feminists to evade the impression of being entirely immune to the discourse. The effects of such representations were detrimental to any potential for cooperation and alliances.

When struggling to understand the opposite interpretations of black and white feminists, the failure of Norwegian white feminists to take the black feminist critique inwards is most intriguing. Ruth Frankenberg’s observations related to white feminists in the US are especially relevant here:

‘(...) my sisters and I struggled to comprehend a situation we did not understand and had not meant to create, critical questions for me were: How did this happen? How did we get into this mess?’ Frankenberg asks (1993: 4).

73 See Chapter 4 for a discussion of discursive political opportunities, representations and their effects.
Her questions are a reminder of the global prevalence of whiteness as an unmarked category, and the ‘multiple ways in which the racism of the wider culture were simply being replayed in feminist locations.’ (ibid.: 3) The present discussion is limited to the situation as it arose in Norway during the 1970s. The approach is to look at the political context and relate the colour blindness to the internal history of white feminism in Norway and to the hegemonic discourses on race and ethnicity.

The bitter internal feminist conflicts of the 70s were finally disappearing at the time that migrant women began to get organised. The old activists were tired, and in no mood for further internal disputes. The white feminist protagonists of women’s liberation during the 1970’s had struggled for a decade against traditional prejudices, against the sex role discourse, and also against the institutionalisation of a public gender equality policy. The feminist norms of liberation and struggle against patriarchy and capitalism (in a number of combinations) were, however, based on the lives and experiences of middleclass white women. At the turn of the decade, their discourses were fundamentally challenged by black feminism, in Norway as elsewhere. The majority feminist organisations were all of as sudden exposed to a fundamentally new kind of critique. Confronted with angry descriptions of their shortcomings, they responded with surprise and partial dismissal. Descriptions of the state and society as racist, and continuous claims from organised black feminists to take a personal as well as a political responsibility was received half-heartedly. White feminists were supportive of the concrete claims for autonomous status and direct discrimination, but they hardly grasped black feminist claims of structural, permeating racism. White feminists were reluctant to see the anti-racist struggle as intersecting with feminism, which resulted in many disputes relating to the 8th March.

Norwegian feminists were unprepared for the basic critique of racism ingrained in the black feminist discourse, and they fumbled to find ways of responding. The critique was represented as angry, hard and unfair. The interviews demonstrate that the militant discourse of black feminists irritated and frightened white feminists. In addition they indicate that many feminists were tired after years of activism. One interviewee underlined that feminist activists were fed up with internal strife and eager to move beyond them. The timing of the rise of black feminism, then, was unfortunate with respect to its reception among white feminists. They had to deal
with it, however, and they tried to negotiate the claims of racism. The representations indicate, however, that regardless of how white feminists tried to accommodate the antiracist feminist discourse, they failed to do so adequately. Black feminists were not prepared to accept only a partial acceptance of the claims of racism within the (white) feminist movement in Norway.

Black feminists were deeply disappointed with the lack of sincere support for their anti-racist feminist agenda. Their representation of stubborn claims making, of continuous anger, of efforts to educate white feminists, and their constructive contributions for instance to the phrasing of the banners for the 8th March parades as unsuccessful, are striking, in comparison to white feminist’s representations of sympathy with the claims, if not with the forms. The lukewarm reception of the numerous efforts of black feminists to prove the fundamental intersections of anti-racism and feminism fortified their conviction of structural racism within the (white) women’s movement, and sustained their anger.

Apprehensions of disparities in general living conditions between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minority population during the 1970s and -80s differed radically between black and white feminists. White feminists’ reluctant attitude to charges of racism reminds reflect Frankenberg’s claim that:

‘The extent to which white women was ‘missing’ or ‘not getting’ the significance of race in either our or anyone else’s experience had everything to do with standpoint.’ (Frankenberg 1993: XX).

White women infrequently see the consequences of race and ethnicity on their own lives, or in social processes and institutions. In addition to the structural position of white feminists, the dominant white discourse of ‘being decent’ (Hagelund 2003) also resulted in blindness to structural racism. Frankenberg’s research demonstrated that ‘White women had a limited repertoire of responses when charged with racism’ (Frankenberg 1993: 2). Norwegian white feminists also displayed limited ways of responding. When accused of racism, the response was one of condescending rejection or irritation, and references to the excessive anger of (some) black feminists.
The representations of white feminists indicate that migrant women activists, despite the partial response to their critique, never really disturbed the ‘business as usual’ for majority feminists during this period. Rather, black feminists were handled as any other group of women with yet another set of demands which had to be negotiated in practice. The inclusion of specific claims relating to migrant and refugee women did not truly trouble the overarching analysis of gender injustice, oppression and discrimination.

6.9A Conflicts and Clashes as Everyday Issues

The level of conflicts and disagreements between white and black feminists should be seen within the larger context of the women’s movement. Numerous testimonies to internal feuds have been passed on. The internal relations among white feminists were represented as anything but peaceful and harmonic when the informants talked about the 1970s:

‘Before the 8th March there were negotiations about the platform, where one fought with imperative mandate. (...) Obviously, there were some banners we wanted to include, and some we definitely would not accept. (...) These 8th March meetings with real splits and compromises, (...) they were tough. (...) it was difficult. (...) I think we lived in different worlds.’

‘The situation was not idyllic. (...) It was nothing like a Sunday school within this field of women’s issues, you know. It was quite a lot of (...) wagging the fingers at each other. (...) At times it was unpleasant, but what was unpleasant was in particular, the fact that we were so few. There was no exit. (...) We often had quite hard fights, and it was not particularly pleasant. There is nothing wrong in disagreements, but it becomes very visible when the group is small. This expectation of sister solidarity, at all levels, became sticky for me, I have to say.’

The citations from majority feminists add to a long list of quite heated debates within and among old and new feminist organisations of a liberal, radical and socialist flavour. The struggle for abortion on demand mobilised and united feminists across organisations and networks during the whole decade,\(^\text{74}\) but the fierce dispute over Norwegian membership in the EEC divided them during the first half of the decade,

\(^{74}\) The abortion issue did also divide the broader women’s movement and gave rise to a countermovement against liberalization of the abortion legislation, also mobilising masses of women, and men.
and basic disagreements related to the proposal for an Equal Status Act split them during the latter half. The equal status legislation, ‘that’s where the frontline was’ was how one interviewee represented the principal disagreements.

Most of all, the feminist divisions during the 1970s were deeply ingrained within the general political turmoil. One research participant commented that ‘there were marked policy shifts within the left side,’ which is a blatant understatement. The approach of the revolutionary AKP-ml party had noticeable consequences because of their militant strategy of infiltrating existing organisations. As the Women’s Front tightened its connections to the AKP-ml, the divide in the women’s movement increased and resulted in organisational splits (Grenness 1975; Haukaa 1982). The deep gulf between the various fractions of the feminist movement was related to class. One informant underlined the academic and middle class character of her organisation when reflecting on the relations to different feminist organisations:

‘They [another majority feminist organisation] were still the ‘factory floor’ and the self proletarisation and the revolution. And there was not much of a bridge between the various ways of living, despite the fact that many women in the [previously mentioned organisation] had the same social background as us. (...) But they had decided to cut the connections.’

The feminists had similar middle class backgrounds in general, but some of them made efforts to identify with working class women, not just in theory but also in practice. They quit education and became blue collar workers. Their sympathy with mainstream feminism was non-existent during some years. Indeed, the newspaper of the AKP m-l declared ‘battle against feminist ideas which weakens women’s struggle’, as a consequence of feminism being defined as a bourgeois ideology not promoting the struggle of working women’ (Grennes 1975). In the heat of this dispute, the New Feminists were excluded from the Women’s House in Porsgrunn, the Clara Groups in Bergen were characterised as ‘fraction makers’ [splittelsesmakere], and the general atmosphere was ‘crass and unpleasant’ (Grennes 1975: 56). The antagonism of this period was exceptional, even from a Nordic perspective, with long-lasting consequences for the new left.
In addition to political problems based on ideological disagreements between white feminists, quite normal, everyday organisational problems could be hard to deal with during the 70s. The radical feminist idea of doing politics in non-hierarchical ways was challenging because it tended to conceal informal power structures. Also, the lack of organisational experience among newly mobilised feminist activists made them badly prepared for dealing with factionalism. Problems of handling internal disagreements, difficulties of dealing with authoritarian informal leaders - particularly within small groups - are represented in various ways by the white feminists:

‘One could say that she [an informal leader in the organisation] was an unusually strong person, and she was also a source of strength in this work, and when you were in this X [the organisation], you should rather not mean or say anything different from her.’

This is a low-key representation of suppression of plural voices among feminists. Compared to comments published during the actual time, the interviewee’s representations of internal movement problems during the 70s are rather modest. Taken as a whole, however the representations paint a picture of tough, serious and at times unpleasant political strife.

The changed context of feminism during the 1980s along with a certain degree of burn-out contributed to more peaceful relations. However, the assumption is that the wounds caused by the previous disputes continued to make an impact. They could cast dark shadows over newcomers to the movement, for instance:

‘This woman, I didn’t know her, but she knew who I was. This was during a break in a meeting where we discussed 8th March banners, and she bawled me out for something my organisation did during the 1970s. I didn’t understand why she was so angry, and I didn’t know what she was talking about, but she was extremely angry.’

This representation is indicative of the fragile feminist alliances and co-operative efforts of the 1980s. The personal and emotional conflicts of the 70s were not easily wiped out. One respondent represented the problem of cooperation and conflicts as partly generational, indicating that time contributed to changing the relations between white feminists. She described three historic rebellions within her organisation, indicating shifts in focus and constituency: the lesbian rebellion during the 1970s,
the young women’s rebellion of the 1980s, and then the migrant women’s rebellion. Unlike the lesbian and young women’s rebellion, the migrant rebellion was represented as emerging from the outside, confirming the claim of exclusion by black feminists. The young women’s rebellion illustrates the flow and ebb of mobilisation, and indicates the problem of being burned-out. There are several representations - from all kinds of feminist activists - of the cost of being an activist and all the effort it takes. Also, it is hard to mobilise new members when the wave of activism retreats.

What was at stake in the representation of the ‘young women’s rebellion’ was the capacity of the organisation to open up to new ideas and members, and to keep the motivation and mobilisation across the decades. One issue which brought refreshing ideas and actions during the 1980s, was the struggle against pornography and prostitution, which attracted new activists in the ‘young women’s rebellion’. The other issue which mobilised hundreds of women (and men) was the peace issue.

Neither pornography/prostitution nor peace issues were at the ‘heart’ of the priority issues within black feminism, however. These issues did little to bridge the gap between ethnic Norwegian and black feminists. On the contrary, black feminists complained about the white feminist’s focus on sexuality because their own issues ‘were totally subordinated these enormous issues of the feminist bunch related to reproductive rights and the third world.’ Black feminists articulated condescending representations of white feminist’s priorities.

According to the representations of interviewees from migrant women’s organisations and from organisations mainly promoting their interests, migrant feminists wanted to meet and cooperate with ethnic Norwegian feminists. Their expectations were not fulfilled because the concerns differed. However, whereas black feminist’s representations of differences across the ethnic divide are similar, the gap between interests was not really recognised among the white feminists, at least not in any deep sense.

The lack of recognition is represented in various ways by black feminists, ranging from mild resignation to anger and sorrow. One respondent represented the effort to co-operate with the ethnic Norwegian feminists as a complete ‘crisis’. Issues like abortion and homosexuality were particularly damaging to establish joint actions, she
maintained, because it was out of the question for the migrant women to support such issues:

‘There were a lot of migrant women connected to X [the interviewee’s organisation], and they wanted to have contacts [with white feminists]. So, we ... arranged this meeting to discuss the banners and claims for the 8th March demonstration. And it failed, totally. It was completely impossible, you know, to make these demands, to make them [migrant women] identify with the demands of the Norwegian women. (...) it was an absolute crisis. (...) they [migrant women] could not go there. It was unthinkable for them to go there.’

At the same time, however, this informant represents the confrontations with white feminist organisations as ‘fruitful’ because they demonstrated, beyond doubt, the limits of cooperation. Also, the failure to establish a joint platform resulted in autonomous organising of the 8th March celebration along lines resonating with the migrant women’s own interests.

Disappointment and sorrow is explicit in another representation of the unhappy efforts to establish cooperation with ethnic Norwegian feminists. In spite of this, the organisation never withdrew from direct confrontations with white feminists, never stopped trying to have an impact on the dominant feminist discourse:

‘They [the majority feminists] did not give a shit about us [black feminists] (...) the relationship was not lukewarm and indifferent. Antagonist, I don’t know if that’s the correct word, but the relation was very aggressive. Maybe not antagonist, but aggressive it was. (...) it was very sad, that’s how I experienced the large meeting where we invited influential women, who ... No, I experienced it as extremely sad and like one felt like crying afterwards, yes. Oh Lord!’

The emotions in this citation are striking, and display the feeling of being totally overlooked. In addition to straight political disagreements, this also represents an experience of degradation. There were no indications of reflexive thinking among black feminists during the interviews. Blame for the difficulties was laid squarely on the shoulders of the white feminists. This lack of reflexivity may have been linked to me as a researcher, because I was an ‘outsider’ and positioned as a ‘white feminist’.
This may have coloured the interviews with black feminists and turned them into a type of ‘testimonial’. 75

6.10A Hierarchies of Citizenship

Internal conflicts and external struggles have always been ingredients of the women’s movements (see Chapter 2), but the interpretations of the disputes and the strategies to handle them differ. In some ways, the clashes between white and black feminisms from the end of the 1970s do not seem worse, more uncompromising or adverse than those among white feminists themselves. The basic disputes concerned basic ideological perspectives: how to describe, explain and combat the oppression of women. The ‘white’ representations of the dispute with black feminists indicate the ‘normalcy’ of feminist disagreements, although the anger and stubbornness of black feminists are highlighted.

In other ways, however, this dispute was different. The particularities were articulated time and again in the black feminist representations. What was it that differed? The black - white feminist debate was distinguished by a new political divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This was not simply a split based on different approaches to ‘race’ as a foundational feminist category. Rather, it was the different, hierarchical positioning of the majority and minority feminists in relation to citizenship status which fuelled the dispute. The new feature in Norwegian feminism from the late 1970s, then, was not the level of disagreements and accusations as such. ‘… fighting and quarrelling, that’s life, yes’, as one of the black feminist informant maintained. It was rather the status of race and ethnicity as salient markers at the levels of theory as well as practice. Material conditions were unequal between women in new ways, and white feminists did not really understand this. ‘[White] women’s organisations are unable to mobilise. It’s us and them, in a way,’ one respondent said. Migrant women were not attracted to white feminist organisations because they perceived a gap between ethnic Norwegian feminists and migrant feminists.

75 We thank madeleine kennedy-macfoy for making this argument.
6.11A Lack of Respect and Recognition

‘Interviewee: (...) As I said, it was never easy, and we were never given credit for anything.
Researcher: So, you were treated like you were nothing?
Interviewee: Yes, no we were nothing. (...) there was this big debate on [female] genital mutilation, and about who was suffering the worst mutilation. Was it Western women or those women who had been through genital mutilation? I remember, we had quite some contact with Norwegian feminist activists, and it was nothing positive. I remember that strongly. Once again it was the same thing, this very upside down and arrogant and …’

‘We were there and we put pressure on them all the time, but they had their own interpretations, and they did not see us, in a way. We were nobody … it was like, as if we had no intellectual or political capacity. It was on that level, these issues were totally subordinated these enormous issues of the feminist gang … the sexual rights and the third world. And even if you come with the objects of the third world, it does not help if you come, because they knew [better], they knew. … now this new women’s movement was here, but they would not recognise it. It was not because we were unable to articulate, we articulated ourselves all the time. We were always there, and we demanded and claimed, and invited, but … we were immediately put in kind of a submissive situation.’

The problem of relating to white feminists during the 1970s and - 80s are represented as painful and humiliating by the black feminist informants. They describe derogatory ways of being approached, in explicit, detailed and concrete ways. Representations of encounters based on peer relations are absent.

There was, however, a growing interest among white feminists to learn more about black feminism after the UN conference in Copenhagen in 1980. The motives were viewed with suspicion and were questioned by black feminists: Why did white feminists, really, invite migrant women to their meetings? There are ambiguous interpretations: they were only meant to contribute to the self-development of the Norwegian women’s movement, or sometimes an effort to have a play-off to justify ‘the continuation of separate camps’. According to the interviewees, migrant women had to fight against the exploitation of their expertise, and white feminists did not speak the truth when they said they wanted cooperation. The effect which was produced by these representations was that co-operation and strategic alliances were unlikely. White women were suspected of promoting their own agenda. Invitations were:
‘(…) a new opportunity to push one’s arguments against black women. Some
times it was as if to confirm one’s attitudes and even prejudices. Some times
out of compassion. Because there was, obviously, that sort of upper class
attitude of majority women which has always been there and also exists in the
Norwegian women’s movement. And there was very few occasions where I
really experienced this ‘here we are really invited to an equal, to a debate on
equal footing, you see.’

In addition, black feminists sometimes described majority women and feminists as
motivated by charity, particularly when it came to some of the non feminist women’s
organisations. These organisations were among the first to invite migrant women,
but were suspected of doing so out of benevolence:

‘They were so used to reaching out to help the needy, and their attitudes were
often “What can we do to help?” And we could respond by asking them to
support our political struggle vis a vis the Ministry of Justice to attain
independent status for migrant women. No, it wasn’t easy, you see, the
political struggle was not popular. Even today I sometimes experience this
kind of attitude, you see. Still this, let’s say, missionary attitude which you
have towards those you see as needy. And, well, pity is a good capacity,
don’t misunderstand me, but in politics it immediately positions some above
and some below and makes “us” and “them”. Which is not very inclusive, to
put it that way.’

White feminist and women’s organisations were said always to book ‘authentic’
migrant women when they called and asked for someone to give a presentation.
The request for ‘a typical migrant women’, as one interviewee put it, resembles
Sherene Razack’s pointed critique of the authentic third world women, and her claim
that the ‘imperial politics of saving the colonized is key to the production of Authentic
Third World Women (Razack 2000). Norwegian minority feminists developed of a
kind of black humour to counteract the condescending enquiries, according to one
interviewee:

‘The most ludicrous part of our meetings was [when we told] about the last
order of women who should be of this and that age and mix, be circumcised
or not, come from this or that place etcetera, insane orders, totally
uninhibited.’

This resembles Sudbury’s description of black women in the UK who ‘utilised
ridicule, objectification and scorn to emphasise their cultural distance from white
feminists.’ (Sudbury 1998).
When ethnic Norwegian feminists describe their encounters with minority feminists, the representations are strikingly different. Patronising attitudes and motives of charity are absent, and when majority feminists recall their uncomfortable relationship with minority women, their approach is reflexive. Looking back, their representations are sympathetic and comprehensive. These representations may in part be attributed to my position as an ‘insider’ and a majority feminist: White feminist activists may have used the interview as a ‘testimonial’, within which they appear reflexive, sympathetic and comprehensive. Also, their representations may be coloured by hindsight. Their representations of the previously mentioned accusations from black feminists are marked by concessions. They admit that the claims were justified, at least to some extent:

Interviewee: ‘I had this visitor from X [a country overseas] and we went to see [a migrant women’s organisation], but they were not interested in X [the country, and the visitor from abroad]. This was a peculiar encounter, where I was just sitting there and being bawled out. Not just for what I had done myself, but for what I had done during the 70s when I was not even a part of the women’s movement. There was no interest for Y [the visitor, an activist who had recently been released from prison]. And this, this tongue-lashing came each time [I went there]. The first time, I was not prepared for the scolding, and, well, there was a lot in the critique which was justified. A lot of the critique was accurate. Lot’s of accuracy, of course, in the criticism. But, the critique was like “what you do is insufficient and it comes too late”, which was not very productive, the severe criticism did not function positively to elevate, but it did scare us in the right direction.’

Researcher: ‘How do you mean, “scare you in the right direction”?’

Interviewee: ‘Well, obviously, because we included a migrant perspective, and they were after us wherever we went, and never neglected to mention the lacking migrant perspective, which was quite right. Quite right.’

The citations demonstrate contradictory representations. On the one hand, migrant women did not behave respectful towards white feminists and the migrant visitors. They also just kept on criticising regardless of the results. On the other hand, the critique is still understandable, and despite of the bad timing was seen as having positive effects.

Another majority feminist represented the anger articulated by minority feminists as a consequence of their recent mobilisation and participation in ‘a brand new organisation trying to make its own way, and therefore [the activists] argue on
grounds of [non-negotiable] principles' instead of being more pragmatic. Maybe this majority respondent had the sharp confrontations between recently emerged groups of majority feminists during the 70s in mind. This interviewee also described minority women’s approach as quite powerful. In general, majority feminists presented their dislikes of the rhetoric and form of minority feminists, but definitely granted them some justification. Their mixing of being frustrated by the recriminations on the one hand, and of admitting their own shortcomings on the other, is quite different from the representation of not-feminist women activists.
Relations to ethnic minorities were described quite differently by interviewees from non-feminist women’s organisations compared to the feminist respondent. The divergence, I believe, is due partly to the fact that the relations actually were dissimilar, mainly due to the aims of the organisations and partly also to variations in time and place. The non-feminist representations of the also varied Non-feminist women’s organisations cover a range of different aims, issues and strategies which are likely to influence their encounters with ethnic minority women and their organisations. A non-feminist woman’s organisation with the purpose of doing voluntary work and contribute to the social well-being of people in the community - such as fund-raising to improve the medical service, or grants for new furniture in a welfare service centre - would not necessarily run into migrant groups as part of their normal activities, although they might address various needs of migrant and refugee women in their surroundings. A religious organisation established with the specific purpose of promoting the integration of migrants and refugees, would potentially have close relations to various organisations in this policy field, including feminist ones. However, the representations of non-feminist informants in this project did not encompass any direct and personal relations with organised Norwegian black feminists. Actually, the informants were not localized in the same geographical area as the ethnic/national minority feminist organisations. This reflects the fact that the few organisations led by and for women with an ethnic minority background during that time - were mainly based in the capital or in Finnmark, the northernmost region of the Norway. Situated outside of these regions, minority feminist organisations were neither ‘natural’ allies nor ‘obvious’ adversary groups for the interviewees from non-feminist organisations. Also, they had not been involved in the deep political, and sometimes also personal, conflicts and strife between majority feminist groups during the 1970s.

The representations of the interviewees from non-feminist majority women’s organisations are different from the majority feminist’s representations and indicate variations within the women’s movement. Let’s turn o the non-feminist majority research participants.
'I find it difficult to answer these things with immigrant stuff [innvandrergreier] because we have hardly had anything to do with them, really. (…) ‘There was this woman from X [a third world country] who went back to her home country after a university degree in Norway. She said she could not stay in Norway any more because she was needed in her home country. And she established a branch of the Norwegian organisation, in order to improve the rights of women in those countries. And that was what she should help them with: to stand on their own feet and be allowed to have their own opinion and stuff. So that they shouldn’t be so oppressed, and stuff, as they are there.’

Interviewee: ‘No, it is really women from those countries (where migrant women come from) who manage most poorly in a way, because they are, well I noticed on a train once (…), this man and woman. And I only saw her eyes, you know. And I thought, well, when she is going to eat in a while, well, she would have to lift this headscarf to be able to put food in her mouth. And he just sat there, he did not do nothing, so I thought …’

Researcher: ‘But do you think this is so for every migrant woman, that women are worst off among all groups of migrants?’

Interviewee: ‘Yes, that’s my impression. I think so because they are the ones who are isolated and their husbands work. And they want, well, many of those menfolk [mannfolka] would rather have their women in the kitchen, to take care of the children.’

This respondent lives in an area with a scattered population, almost without the presence of ethnic minority women. She represents her encounters with migrant women as rare because of their physical absence. Thus the conditions and motivations for relating to women with an ethnic minority background were fundamentally different from the previous interviewees who live in large cities. There were hardly any traces of organisational ties or moments of cooperation or conflict as such. The descriptions were mostly focused on isolated encounters with individual migrant women or migrant families. For instance, she talked about a municipal event where all the organisations presented themselves in order to recruit more members. Her organisation was approached by some migrants with whom they talked for a long time, and they invited the migrant women to come to one of their events. Another example was of a girl with a migrant background who performed with a group of pupils during a social event arranged by the organisation, and a third example was a migrant woman who once lived in her neighbourhood. The
encounters were rather incidental and detached. Migrants are represented as city people, and as such of little concern in rural areas.

The interviewee’s relations to minoritised women were ambiguous. On the one hand, the absence of migrant women made it hard to relate to the research topic. On the other hand, there were a number of relevant references in her personal family and in the local encounters just described. At the national level, her organisation also focuses on the situation of migrant women; and there were various initiatives by the municipality to address issues relating to migrant people and the changing composition of the population. Yet, the absence of migrant women’s organisations in her community precluded direct contact with migrant women activists.

This respondent belongs to a non-feminist women’s organisation with an impressive record as the initiator of various welfare schemes. In line with the policy and purpose of the main organisation, the interviewee represented the interests of the members of her local branch in ‘supporting things in the local environment’. The absence of local women with an ethnic or racial minority background justified the marginal focus on migrant women. Still, the interviewee did mention a couple of interesting incidents. One was the ‘International Café’ organised by the local authorities, where groups of immigrants could come and serve their national food, along with ethnic Norwegian organisations. The interviewee had hoped to invite the mother of the girl in the performance group previously mentioned, to join her organisation, hoping that she could serve food from her national background at the café. (So far, this has not happened, the respondent said). Another encounter with minority women mentioned by this respondent was a long conversation with a migrant family, during a stand where the respondent’s organisation informed about its activities. Last but not least, the interviewee described her plans to invite the local refugee consultant to talk about the situation of refugees in Norway.

This interview, then, was marked by the actual lack of presence of migrant people, then. At the same time, however, her representations of ‘ethnic encounters’ are familiar and echo the duality in the public discourse on migrant people: migrants are represented as if they are a homogeneous group, and differences between them are rarely addressed. Migrants are represented as ‘poor or miserable things’ [stakkars],
and as people needing help in various ways, but also as a group that ‘can enrich us’. Also, there is a tendency to see ‘relations to migrant women’ as synonymous with ‘aid to women in developing countries’ or to women in Eastern Europe. Lastly, ‘migrant’ is often synonymous with ‘Muslim’. These representations add up to a discourse of charity, quite distinct from the next discourse in which dignity is underlined.

6.14A Wake Up and Listen!

During the 1970s and 80s, some ethnic Norwegians did establish organisations to support migrants and refugees, some of them professional organisations with paid staff. One of the activists interviewed belongs to this kind of organisation. The organisation’s purpose is to promote integration and networking, and she was determined to always and systematically include migrants and refugees in the activities of the majority [i majoritetens etablissement]. She was quite opposed to ‘particular undertakings’ for migrants, and did not approve the tendency - whether in migrant or ethnic Norwegian groups - to always start new undertakings for ethnic minorities. This attitude was quite clearly expressed when she told me about a failed initiative to organise the protest march on the International Women’s Day jointly with white feminists:

‘There are immigrant women in the 8the of March demonstration, in the various sections, you know. That’s how it is, and that’s the best also. I do not want us to go here, the migrant women and their problems [in a separate section]. For me, people are people, and the situation of women can be very similar independent of their culture. We have something in common, no doubt about that, but [we differ] in the expressions, in how we express them and show them. To appear in a protest march, a march like that, in some cultures this is perceived as very inappropriate, right? And all the strain, then, we have not wanted to push the women. But we support those who want to join, and tell them when things happen and so forth. And then we have our own arrangement afterwards.’

However, the attempt to organise a joint protest march in her city failed thoroughly. The interviewee still seemed pleased with the outcome of the negotiations because the limits of cooperation were disclosed and because migrant women were able to join any section of the demonstration, of their own liking. This is represented as
preferable to a separate ‘migrant women’s section’ in the protest march, since this would emphasise their particularity as migrant women instead of their commonalities with majority women, ‘as women’. The informant also, she underlined that the 8th March committee often invited refugee women to give a speech, which is a convenient opportunity for migrant women to address their particular concerns within a common frame.

The most striking aspect of this interview, to my mind, is the humble and prudent discussion of relations with ethnic minorities. In part the informant’s representations resonated with the black feminist critique: for instance, her descriptions of herself as a person who eventually woke up from hibernation, and was finally able to see and hear what migrant people have tried to tell her for years. Ordinary problems of exclusion, that is, and the difficulties of being included:

‘Still, it is difficult for them to be included, and this is something I have been looking critically at for a while, this issue of what we Norwegians talk about, I mean what the majority talk about and how we behave together. There are lots of “arrangements” blowing in the wind and hints about things one has done earlier and “thanks for the last time we were together” and “yes, we’ll meet” here and there. There are lots of these small things which daily excludes a person who belongs to a minority, you know, and even parents who greet people during parent-teacher meetings whom once were in the same choir, or even attended the same primary school, or went to the same university. A migrant mother will never, or at least very rarely, encounters somebody who is this natural referent, if not another migrant from her own country.’

This example is one of a number of representations illustrating how migrant people are excluded by the majority, often unintentionally, from common daily events and situations. Adding up, their systematic occurrence makes processes of integration very hard. The informant explains the trouble of including migrants, and underlines that it is language rather than unwillingness which is the main problem:

Interviewee: ‘(...) and the difficulties of breaking the codes of our company which is so much more difficult than we are aware of, and is in effect exclusionary. This woman from X ([a third world country], she talked so much about being excluded, and I, well you see, I thought that she exaggerated and that she was in fact very welcome. But now I understand better and better what this exclusion is about.’

Researcher: ‘You did elaborate this in the story you told me about X.’
Interviewee: ‘And the more you are aware of it, the more you see that even seemingly trivial issues may be, well, sufficient to cause this feeling of being alien, and in a way to consolidate this distance, without us being quite aware of it.’

The interviewee’s representation of exclusion of minority women in ordinary daily situations is obviously relevant when the relationship between the majority and minority women’s organisations is at risk. Mechanisms of exclusion were not reflected in the white feminist’s representations, however. Their silence on this particular issue may be coincidental, but the silence is also consistent with colour blindness and a misrecognition of the challenges facing migrants from overseas countries. The representation of this non-feminist activist, however, resembles the statements of exclusion by minority feminists. One migrant feminist who came to Norway during the 1980s represented the trouble of learning to live in a totally different community quite vividly:

‘I had a hard time trying to adjust. So you get … it is fairly lonely, then, sitting at meetings without understanding a lot. Of course, you cannot demand that people talk English because of you, but … There are limitations because of communication, I believe. (…) I was not mature for that, you see. It was a shock not to understand and, you know, I was only [mentions her age]. (…) I still feel this demand that I am supposed to change, if I’m to be accommodated.’
The majority non-feminist interviewee discussed in this section, however, responded to such grievances. She talked about deficiencies in the majority population, such as the tendency to overlook differences within groups of migrants and refugees:

‘I think it is a challenge for migrant women to know which voice they want. They are quite diverse and one should not expect them to be of one mind and to have one voice. They must be allowed to have several voices because there is a broad spectre of background, education, tradition and religion. Consequently, one can hardly talk about immigrant women as one, with only one voice. And I see it as important that we, the society, are attentive to the plurality among them.’

A statement like this was absent from the rather one-dimensional representations of white and black feminists. The context of the feminist group’s relations was quite different from this non-feminist respondent’s relations. Yet the absence of plurality in the representations of migrant feminists by white feminists - and vice versa - probably contributed to the production of stereotypes and unilateral perceptions.

I also want to highlight this non-feminist, ethnic Norwegian interviewee’s reluctance to talk on behalf of migrant women. She was often invited to address issues related to migrant women, for instance the headscarf and health issues. They have had a lot of public attention, and the interviewee’s organisation has been asked to address them. For too long, she said, she had kept discussing these issues on her own, without bringing migrant women along. She used to think that she had sufficient experience and knowledge.

Interviewee: ‘But I have become increasingly more careful about it, and I am more and more pleased to have other people to bring with me or instead of me.’
Researcher: ‘That must be a privilege.’
Interviewee: ‘Yes, yes. I was asked by the hospital priest to come and talk about how various religions look at food, hygiene and care for dying people - what to say at the hospital when people die. And I said, “well then, we have to ask people from these religions to come”. Well, is that possible, they asked, but that was no hard task for me. And this made a deep impression on the nurses, during a day of on-the-job-training, they were “struck to earth” by hearing this directly from those affected.’

The issue here, ‘who can talk for whom’ is a sensitive one. It is easy to make mistakes out of bad habits or lack of attention. Fakhra Salimi, director of the MiRA
Resource Centre, for instance claims that the experiences of minority women are excluded from the dominant debates about minority women, and also that there is no credibility if the perspectives of black and ethnic minority women are not included (Salimi 2003). It takes careful considerations to change institutionalised practices. It is possible, as the citation above indicates, if we really make efforts to consider and change our ways of relating to ‘others’.

6.15A ‘I See How we Fail to Understand’

The representations of one majority non-feminist activist resembled the black feminist discourse, but differed in its inclusion of a critical stance towards migrants. The embodied, nuanced and reflexive representations of the problems were not in abundance elsewhere. Migrant women and men were portrayed with dignity but also with defects. I assume that this complex representation of problems and difficulties of communicating across ethnic divides was in part a consequence of the interviewee’s professional experience.

Violence against women and sexual taboos, she underlined, have to be dealt with carefully. Respect, attentiveness, confidence and trust are crucial because migrants are often in very vulnerable situations. Moralising and thinking of rights and wrongs do no good:

“I know we have to practice and practice, to deal with the thought of homosexuality (…) They [migrants and refugees] have to be allowed to look at these issues as taboos, but they also have to see our reactions, and we have the possibilities of making more nuanced pictures. Not to condemn them and dissociate from them, but neither to force them and argue in favour of liberal practices], but rather to lift the issues out in an open space to make them less dramatic.’

‘… there are ethnic groups who are very sceptical to abortion and homosexuality, and things like that which are taboos, in a ways, for them, but which are open in our communities. But they need to find their own forms, and they have to find their own ways into these issues. But we should be there without expecting their ways to be the same as ours. And we should be attentive to what is natural to them.’

Lastly, this interviewee represented a concern with migrant men - husbands and fathers - which was quite unique among the respondents. Related to violence
against women, a topic she had dealt with for many years in various ways, she expressed the dangers connected with not paying attention to the different meaning of marriage and family among groups of migrants and refugees. Without ever forgetting women’s need for support and empowerment, she also wanted to address the despair among male violators:

‘When we begin helping a woman to liberate herself from a violent husband, we have to pay attention to the situation, because she can stay at a crisis centre and in a protective milieu, but she will always have her mother, grandmother, her father and her brothers on her mind - all those people who do not at all understand why she does not stay with her husband. And they are the persons to whom she was most attached, which mean that this is really a big rebellion on her part. And it is really such a big step for her, and I do not think we are sufficiently humble and we do not have enough knowledge, to really comprehend this deeply.’

The sustained focus on the shortcomings of the majority population with respect to the complex situation of migrants, and the awareness of problems and pain ingrained in the positions of migrants as aliens, distinguished the representations of this interviewee. ‘The majority isn’t aware of how it behaves, really. That’s the way it is,’ she bluntly maintained without escaping less positive aspects in migrant communities. In a section on racism, she emphasised the effects of prejudice among migrant groups on the freedom of migrant women:

‘We address these issues if we suspect that racism is what it is about. And it is very difficult to demonstrate that it is. And often, the minorities are oversensitive and paranoid, they have very little self confidence. If you don’t feel quite welcome, you feel that other people want to make things unpleasant for you, you easily interpret things in the negative direction. (…) I am very impatient with the lack of respect between people. We say that “here, we must all show respect to each other”. And I believe that it is just as much discrimination internally within the ethnic groups, and that more groups from X, Y, Z [the interviewee mentions several overseas countries] with prejudices against each other than we are aware of.’

Prejudice within the migrant minorities was addressed more carefully by some of the black feminists, but was absent among the white feminists. A potential reluctance among minority women to criticise their own group is understandable in light of their vulnerable position. Internal loyalty is often applied as a strategy against external adversaries. Interestingly, however, this strategy is not operative among the national minority feminists in Norway. We turn to Sami women in the next section.
6.16A A ‘Minority’ Within a Minority

When the black and white feminist movements emerged during the late 1960s, they were brought about by the internal dynamics of the civil rights movement and various liberation struggles (Roth 2004). In a parallel way, Sami feminism did not appear out of the blue, but grew out of the dynamics and conflicts of the Sami liberation movement (see Chapter 2):

‘I think that most of the Sami feminists have a background as Sami politicians. That we have been, we were engaged in the Sami political awakening, connected to the Alta-river affair, I think. (...) we were very, you know, vulnerable to being Sami and ending up in a Norwegian dominated milieu like in X [the interviewee mentions a city], and all the time you have to defend yourself against this, this ‘what is it with you Sami?’

Sami feminists formally started to organise later than migrant women in Norway, in 1988, some ten years after the Sami movement gradually emerged. Contrary to the organising of black feminism in Norway, Sami feminism already had a foothold within the institutions: One of the activists was employed at the Sami Council and actively made use of her position for feminist purposes before 1988. The Sami Council had established a Women’s Committee in 1986, and the activists were eager to push women and gender equality issues from the margin to the centre. According to the interviewee, women’s issues had been swept under the carpet during the Alta-river affair when Sami activists insisted that Sami women were not discriminated against, in the interests of the Sami liberation movement to present its community as basically different from the Norwegian:

‘Because there was a lot of confrontation during the Alta affair, during which one wanted to present a different society, a society with the right to exist [med livets rett], and also to justify why the recognition of distinct Sami rights were vital. The Sami society was not an oppressive society, but rather described as ..., we were equal. The equality claim was a myth, you know, we had been making coffee and standing by the stencil duplicator for years.’

In the latter half of the 1980s the time had come to bring women’s issues into the daylight. The timing reflects the policy windows related to the aftermath of the UN International Decade for Women (1975-1985) in addition to the particularities of the

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76 See footnote in 6.1A
Sami’s political situation. Feminist activists and gender equality officials all over
Norway - the Samis included - were busy with preparations for the Nordic Forum in
the summer 1988. The Sami community was engaged with preparations for the
upcoming election for the very first Sami parliament\(^{77}\) the year after. The time was
ripe for feminist initiatives.

6.17A The Mobilisation of Sami Women

The idea of a formal Sami feminist organisation grew out of a long process, however.
In general the dissemination of feminist ideas internationally and the UN International
Women’s Decade in particular, motivated a series of seminars addressing Sami
women’s issues starting in 1975.\(^{78}\) The most urgent feminist issue was the situation
of female reindeer herders, and this topic was prioritised during the first seminar in
Kiruna, Sweden. Then the history of Sami women, along with contemporary social
changes in their living conditions, were discussed in 1978; the dual language
situation and Sami mythology in 1982; and the promotion of Sami women’s status in
traditional handicraft and primary industry during the 1985 seminar. Then the
participants also demanded annual women conferences to be arranged by the Sami
Council, and urged the Sami Research Institute to conduct research on Sami
women. At the end of the seminar in 1988, which had focused on cultural issues, the
reindeer herding industry, leadership and organising, the participants were invited to
remain in order to establish a women’s organisation, the Sáráhkká - Sami Women’s
Organisation. The initiative was not welcomed by everyone, however:

‘We had prepared this, you know, and of course some people were angry,
including some women. They were political women who attended the
conference because they were represented in the Sami Council and
represented the big, Sami organisations which did not want any feminism,
Sami feminism. And they did not support the initiative, and they did not see
any need, but we gathered the women and established the organisation.’

This representation manifests a critique of the established Sami organisations and of
individual women, and indicates the resistance against feminism within the
community. Women participating in the political institutions did not like the feminist

\(^{77}\) The Sami parliament was established by the Sami Act of 1987.
\(^{78}\) See http://www.samis.no/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=31 (2008.10.10)
activism according to the informant. Justifications for ‘not want(ing) any feminism’ were based on religious traditions and attitudes towards gender roles, as we will see.

Sáráhkká was said to play a most important role with respect to the rights of women in the reindeer herding industry. The legal regulations did not, as is often the case, in themselves express discrimination against women, but in practice they were discriminatory (see also Chapter 2). Sáráhkká articulated the demands of reindeer women, not just in Norway but in the whole Sami area. The contributions of the organisation were substantial, according to the informant. The reindeer women established women’s groups within the Norwegian Association of Reindeer Herders, and also were appointed to its board. The awards granted to some of the female reindeer herding activists, for instance the Gender Equality Award of Finnmark county, were very well-deserved, the informant claimed.

6.18A The Women’s List

The first ordinary annual meeting of Sáráhkká, in 1989, took place during the preparation for the Sami parliamentary election and addressed discrimination against Sami women. The fear of discrimination was soon justified: a Sami feminist was excluded from the top position of one of the candidate lists for the election. She had been nominated at one meeting, but the nomination was contested and another nomination meeting decided to alter the original candidate list. The feminist activists were prepared for this result, and decided to leave the nomination meeting immediately, in protest:

‘We were a group of women who just left the assembly, we wouldn’t stand for being excluded from the top position.’

This is a representation of deep frustration - ‘wouldn’t stand for it’ - and of outright protest - ‘we just left the meeting’. The women, organised feminists beforehand, did not accept the exclusion of one of their own. They could have been loyal to the decision of the meeting, and they could have asked for the floor to argue their case. They did not. They opted for exit. This move came as a big surprise to the assembly:
This old, experienced male Sami politician says that you cannot do such a thing, you cannot just leave the meeting and say that you want to establish your own list. You simply just don’t do such a thing. And I asked him, why not? And he says this is something you just don’t do, you know. It never came to his mind that somebody could come up with the idea of leaving this whole organisation, and least of all because it hadn’t taken care of women’s interests and perspectives.’

The male politician is represented not simply as surprised, he is also morally upset. He makes an effort to stop the exit by arguing, but he has no substantial argument. His only weapon is the moral reference to tradition, which proves futile against the fury and determination of the women. The feminist activists broke the unspoken norms of staying to the end of the nomination meeting and of sticking to the majority decision. When remembered years after, the representation is typical in its indication of a feminist habit of leaving organisations. The exit was a bloody minded effort, however, to act in the interest of women. ‘Women’ come forward as a unified group in this representation, despite the actual disagreements, and resembles the hegemonic discourses of that time. The citation represents confidence, without indications of doubt or fear or remorse. This seems to emphasise that the activists had prepared for this outcome of the meeting, and were determined to do what they did. Contrary to the occupation by Sami women of the Prime Minister’s office in 1981, this protest was directed against the Sami community itself, and caused a storm of reactions.

Undoubtedly, the protesters were seen as ill-loyal in the eyes of the male politicians, and they were soon to pay. The reactions were no less hard when the women proclaimed their intention to establish a separate Women’s List79 for the Sami Parliamentary election. The Women’s List was too much for the community:

‘And we were called traitors for many years after. They held against us, well, that “you were the ones who betrayed us”. And they never confronted themselves with what they had done, those people who were in the permanent Sami, the established Sami organisations. So we never got closer to them.’

‘We were terribly mocked in the media, and they had a campaign against us. The last night before the election there was a group of men, and they must have had female supporters, distributing leaflets in all the mail boxes, on a

79 The Women’s List was inspired by the Icelandic Women’s List in 1983.
Saturday, and we had no opportunity to make a countermove because this was election day and people woke up to the leaflet in their mailbox. ‘This was really dirty, you know.’

The depth of the antagonism between the Sami feminists and their adversaries is illustrated in this representation. Being called traitors within the context of Norway, where the political debate is generally quite low-key, was extreme and highly unusual. The interviewee rejected the label and represented it as ‘dirty’. It was dirty play because ‘everybody knew’ that women on the Women’s List belonged to a pro-Sami organisation. The Sami community was falling apart, according to the interviewee, because they fought against their own women instead of the Norwegian political parties who were also striving for seats in the new Sami Parliament. The brief hint in the citation, at the lack of self-examination in the Sami community, indicated disappointment. Although the political climate was rough and tough, the majority ought to reflect when things had cooled down and apologize for its violation. ‘So we never got closer’, implies that the wounds have still not healed.

The critique against anti-feminist attitudes and practices within the Sami minority population are harsh and explicit. They resemble the Norwegian feminist critique during the 1970s, when a few organised local election campaigns resulted in a majority of women’s seats in three municipalities and was a media sensation (Skard 1978) (see Chapter 2).

Talking about the fate of the Women’s List, established in 1989 and continued in 1991, 1993 and 1995, the respondent deepened her arguments by commenting on neutrality in politics:

‘Women were regarded as the largest threat, because, well, they obviously regard themselves to be gender neutral, I mean, if you are a man and a politician you are neutral, and gender has no bearing. We brought it into the daylight, however, and they did not master it and they did not comprehend. We were called traitors, we who were part of the Women’s List. We had betrayed the movement.’

This representation draws on the symbolic meaning of gender and of men as representing the neutral in the culture. It is a hint at men’s lack of understanding: they reject the importance of gender and stick to their own neutrality as
representatives of the universal human being. Also, men are described as rather incompetent since they do not ‘master’ nor ‘comprehend’ the meaning of gender, whereas women stand out as ‘heroes’ in the sense of bringing the issue into ‘daylight’. Yet, they were seen as traitors of the Sami movement. What is silenced here is the unwillingness or incapacity of the Sami movement to encompass women’s interests.

The focus on institutional politics and election campaigns in this interview is quite unlike migrant feminists, but rather similar to the priorities of the ethnic Norwegian feminist movement during the period. The political opportunities and the Norwegian gender equality policy add up to path dependency: feminists have had a particular focus on inclusion in political institutions, they have successfully organised a number of campaigns since 1967 and invented instruments to improve access for women. Ethnic Norwegian feminists were mocked and scorned at first, when they organised for their inclusion in political institutions, but this laughter had disappeared by the time Sami women made similar claims. The laughter and scorn reappeared, however, within Sami communities.

6.19A Organising Sami Women: Sami NissonForum

The time and energy expended on the Women’s List in 1989 and the succeeding election campaigns for the List until ‘95 drained Sáráhká of resources, according to the interviewee. Organising Sami women in four different countries required enormous efforts. After a while, the activities decreased and some women wanted to focus more on local, practical issues than on the large, Nordic and principal issues. In 1993, women from four municipalities established another organisation, the SNF-Sámi NissonForum. This was intended as an informal network and as a platform for continuing the work of the Women’s List. The activists were resisted in the local communities, however:

‘It was incredibly hard because you soon spent all the resources on the List. In a way, it was quite unfamiliar in Sami communities, to support Sami women. In many communities, this Læstadian protestant spirit is well alive, with only men being allowed to stand and speak in an assembly. And when women are used to oppressing themselves, they also oppress other women.
who dare to stand up. And then, well, they vote for (pause) … there is a lot of deletion of women’s names from the candidate lists for the local elections.’

The representation of outspread anti-feminist campaigns and attitudes in the Sami population is interesting compared to the silence of this issue in the black feminist’s representations. This difference may simply reflect the explicit focus on relations to ethnic Norwegian feminists in the interviews with black feminists and the lack of saliency if this topic in the interview with this respondent. Anyway, this interviewee is exceptional in light of the general inclination of a minority within a minority to silence any critique levelled against it, captured by Crenshaw’s concept of ‘political intersectionality’ (Crenshaw 1997). The concept refers to the difficulties of being situated within two or more subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas. The problematic of violence against black women, for instance, may disappear because of the ‘strategic silences of anti-racism and feminism’, Crenshaw claims (ibid.: 183). Are Sami feminists less reluctant to criticise male members of their communities in public because they are better protected - as an indigenous people - than migrant women? We would need further research to know.
Sami NissonForum was represented as an offspring of Sáráhkká as well as of the Women’s List:

‘Like a continuation of the Women’s List, several women wanted to work more on local issues. And Sáráhkká was not, well it operated rather on a Nordic level in principle, while we wanted more local projects. (…) so on this basis women from four municipalities who wanted to continue to work like we had done within the Women’s List, that is, to influence the Sami Parliament and the municipal councils, established this Sami Women’s Forum. A network from ‘93 and then from ‘98 a formal organization with statutes etc.’

This representation indicates that the new organisation was established as a critique of Sáráhkká, and was an alternative way of doing feminist politics. Yet, there are no indications of political conflicts, personal antagonisms or any frustration with relation to Sáráhkká. It seems to be quite the opposite, in fact, because the initiator of Sáráhkká is described in a positive way. Also, the two organisations are represented as allies on several issues and seem to have maintained a good contact.

‘I had left Sáráhkká because I was busy with the Women’s List and political work and so on, and the Women’s List was more oriented towards projects. That’s where the activists were. We wanted, well, to do concrete things and organise courses etc, but at the same time we took political initiatives and went to meetings and so on.’

The new organisation seemed to be complementary to Sáráhkká, rather than a competitor, and demonstrates that the impetus for initiating a social movement organisation is not always to defeat existing organisations.

6.20A Absent Allies?

Allies are important in all kinds of social and political struggle. Who supported Sami feminism, who were the allies? When asked about cooperation with women’s organisations, the interviewee was a bit reluctant and said that cooperation only took place on exceptional occasions. She named Sáráhkká, and then FOKUS and the television fund-raising campaign in 2005 (see Chapter 2) as examples. Then she said that ‘there are no women’s organisations in Northern Norway at all’. When asked if this was really so, she added:

‘Well, the large women’s organisations like the Norwegian Women - and Family Association - they have local divisions all over the country. But they
do not have any Northern-Norway profile in their activities. Because we never hear about anybody who wants to work with, for instance women at the Kola peninsula, not necessarily with the indigenous women in Russia, but women in general.'

This representation referred to a distinct regional political agenda with a triple focus: one related to the Northern parts of Norway, another to transnational issues and the Kola peninsula, and the third - almost absent - to national Norwegian issues. The effect was to display the Oslo/southern dominance. All the large and national women’s organisations are based in Oslo, and their political priorities are said to mirror their geographical position. Regional politics have always been an important political field in Norway, and majority feminists have been criticised for having an urban, southern focus at the expense of a district and northern focus.80 The representation here, ‘there are no women’s organisations in Northern Norway’ is, therefore, placed within a long tradition of north-south conflicts. This is not surprising. The second, transnational perspective, is unique however, and illustrates the very different context of Sami politics compared to majority and migrant politics.

Sáráhkká and Sami NissonForum have (had) branches in four countries (Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway). The reason is that these countries all have Sami populations, and thus belong to Sapmi or the Sami nation. Close ties to women’s and feminist groups in these countries have been self-evident for Sami feminists, despite the high costs of travel, interpretation service and bad funding. Contrary to the absent Norwegian allies in the representation, the Northern ones are present. The Sami national minority in Norway works transnationally, like ethnic minority women, but in different regions of the world. Previously, several Norwegian organisations were involved in North-West Russian project, but when public funding was redirected, most projects had to stop. Sami NissonForum has arranged its annual meeting in Russia, during the 15th anniversary of the Kola Women’s Congress however, thanks to funding from the Sami Parliament and the Barents Secretariat.81 Language issues and cultural and social development were major issues for cooperation projects.

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80 This is clearly stated in feminist research, see for instance (Fredriksen 1981; Kristoffersen, Fredriksen, and Gerrard 1986; Valestrand & Gerrard 1999).

Beside the transnational cooperation projects, various Sami women’s organisations and networks have been most important allies of Sami NissonForum, according to the interviewee. Sáråhkka is one partner, for instance during the TV fund-raising campaign to combat violence against women in 2005. Sáråhkka and the Men’s Association in Kautokeino (Mannsforeningen Dievddut), working against the sexual abuse of women, and Sami NissonForum arranged a big seminar and cultural event in Oslo in 2007, funded by the Sami Parliament and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The respondent also mentioned that a number of female reindeer herders are members both of Sami NissonForum and the Norwegian National Association of Reindeer Herders.

Sami NissonForum is a member of FOKUS, the umbrella organisation for Norwegian women’s organisations involved in foreign aid. A disappointment with FOKUS is represented, however, due to a rejected application for financial support. FOKUS has adjusted its guidelines to the Norwegian Aid Directorate: project support is now limited to projects in the ‘South’. This has had quite negative effects for Sami NissonForum, with a west-east/Arctic axis and not a North-South axis. The interviewee was, naturally, disappointed and hoped to effect a change in FOKUS’ guidelines.

The respondent underlined insufficient communication with public authorities, be they Norwegian or Sami. She deplored the absence of Sami women in the Nordic gender equality work, and represented the neglect to be a lack of recognition. Even though the Sami people are recognised as an indigenous people by Sweden, Norway and Finland, the populations are still divided by national borders and they are not recognized as a Sapmi nation by the Nordic political institutions. Unlike the Inuits of Greenland, for instance, who are represented in the Nordic Executive Committee on Gender Equality, there is no representation of the Sami’s as an indigenous people within the Nordic Council of Ministers:

Interviewee: ‘The situation is such that the Nordic region consists of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland, in addition to the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. There is a separate gender equality institution [the Nordic Executive Committee on Gender
Equality], with annual meetings under the auspices of the Nordic Civil Servant Committee for Gender Equality. But the Samis, we are not present.’

Researcher: ‘I didn’t know that.’

Interviewee: ‘Well, and I have made a proposal to the Sami Parliament, and to the Nordic and the Norwegian authorities, with a letter to the Swedish and Finnish gender equality authorities about this matter. This is a political issue concerned with the recognition of the Sami population as a nation [folk], and this is of course a general Sami political issue. We [the respondent’s organization] do not have the main responsibility [to solve the problem], it is the responsibility of the Sami Parliaments in each national system and in the Nordic system. We are not represented there.’

This representation points to institutional barriers to being represented, to the claim of being recognised as a people/nation with inherent rights to be represented, and to the present situation of exclusion. There is a clear understanding that recognition and presence are preconditions for decent gender equality efforts. For instance, Sami women are unable to comment on the periodic national reports to CEDAW because they don’t have sufficient resources. This is described as ‘terrible’, also since no Sami institution contributes to the national CEDAW reports, and never report to CEDAW themselves. Sami women feel completely sidelined. They cannot make an impact on national nor Nordic policy as long as they lack presence.

The problem of representation is also related to the Ministry of Children and Equality and to FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, however, and their selection of NGO representatives to participate in the Norwegian delegation to the annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). As long as the Samis are not properly recognised, organisations of and for Sami women will have to compete for a seat in the Norwegian delegation on the same conditions as all the other member organisations of FOKUS (more than 70 organisations). The effect of the respondent assertion is criticism of the Ministry and of FOKUS: it is not fair to treat Sami organisations as organisations quite like the other organisations when they are in fact representing indigenous people with particular citizenship rights. The funding and the representation policy of the Ministry and FOKUS are clearly not in the interest of Sami women. Yet, the disappointment is carefully articulated by the interviewee.
The solution to the problems of exclusion is represented to be the institutionalisation of Sami feminism, according to the respondent. The ideal is for the Sami feminist organisation to become something similar to the MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women (see Chapter 2). There have been some communications between the two organisations lately. So far, the respondents organisation has not prioritized the Oslo region, despite all the members in that area. But there is a curiosity to find out if migrant and Sami women will be able to promote issues which have not been advanced by other women’s organizations. The planting of seeds of contact and cooperation between an indigenous and an ethnic minority feminist organisation is exciting, but the outcome remains to be seen.

With respect to institutionalization, Sami women always fall between the cracks, according to the interviewee. Their issues are invariably in between the various ministries who are responsible for the situation of the Sami population:

‘We were never able to establish a firm foundation in any Ministry related to discussions of Sami issues. We tried to lobby, but we were always brushed aside by the claim that this was not their table. We have been in dialogue, but every time there is a change [in the political positions] we have to start all over again. (...) Our mission [sak] relates to several ministries, which is far from easy.’

This representation indicate that potential allies within the formal political institutions are hard to find, and that the formal recognition of the Sami as an indigenous people has not solved Sami women’s claim to be present in their own right.

6.21A We Are at War up North, Really

This section on Sami feminism cannot end without some comments on the contemporary situation of the Sami question in Norway. The Sami Rights Commission of 1980 was the beginning of a long process with enormous consequences. The Sami Parliament and a new Paragraph 110a in the Norwegian Constitution of 1988 were important steps to cultural rights, and the Finnmark Act of 2005 was a fundamental breakthrough for Sami rights to land and water resources.

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82 The Ministry of Children and Equality, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
(Semb, 2008). The responses, for instance in some of the newspapers in Finnmark, are represented as the ‘worst examples of racism’, because the Sami population is accused of having exclusive rights at the expense of the Norwegian population.

‘But this is not a correct description of the legislation, and if you read the text you would realise this. But the fact that the point of departure of the new legislation was to recognise the Sami population, makes very many people from Finnmark see red … And the media coverage is often racist because they charge the Sami as a people and describe us like this and that, sometimes being explicitly rude and insulting.’

When the Gender Equality Ombud visited the region in 2006, she was represented as shocked by the media, and to have declared that if the same accusations had been directed towards migrants, the major newspapers in Oslo would have intervened and brought the cases to the Prime Minister and the Ombud.

‘But then, this is what we have to live with, and I told the Ombud that it is quite intolerable that you don’t bother to read the newspapers from Northern Norway. Because they [the Ombud] had told us they didn’t subscribe to those newspapers, despite the responsibility of the Ombud to be concerned with racism in the media.’

The representation of relations between the majority and minority population as racist and beyond the concern of the Norwegian authorities resembles the black feminists’ representations. The claims made about Sami people are “totally unbelievable” according to the interviewee. The media is represented as irresponsible, publishing anything without demanding any kind of documentary proof according to the informant.

‘It is a fulltime job to respond the charges. I don’t know, it’s kind of hopeless to respond all the time, because the reader’s letters are historically wrong, based on incorrect information, rendering the Sami suspect. (…) In a way, you always have to - several times a week - confront attacks of being Sami, and actually we are at war in the north. In reality that’s what we are.’

This is by far the gravest description of minority-majority relations in this investigation. Unfortunately it is by no means outdated, and deplorably, the majority population in the South seems to be unaware of the serious situation.
So far in this chapter some of the problematic aspects of the interactions between minoritised and majoritised women’s and feminist organisation have been addressed. In this last section traces of co-operation and common platforms are examined. The research participants were asked to elaborate on the extent to which majority and minority feminists had been able to develop a joint agenda. Some of them emphasised an increasing number of united actions and demands throughout the 1980s. They indicate, despite various knots in their relations, specific issues of mutual concern particularly among white feminists, but also across the ethnic divides.

The representations of agreements and mutual support differ, as the two succeeding examples demonstrate. Before presenting two rather different perspectives on the question of cooperation and commonalities, a few remarks on the issue in general seem necessary. First of all, there are a considerable number of references to common political initiatives in the interviews, in line with the documentation of cooperation presented in Chapter 2. This is consistent with what one would assume because the activists do, after all, belong to the same social movement.

Also, the total number of organisations, campaigns, action groups and networks mentioned by the informants as allies in various campaigns and situations, indicate that feminist activism has an extensive register. This is also in line with the actual organisational landscape -more than 200 gender political organisations and groups at the intersection of gender and ethnic equality were mapped for this report (Eggebø et al. 2007).

Lastly, the distinct political belongings of the feminist and women’s organisations covered by the interviewees are emphasised. There are pronounced differences in the profile of networks and relations - the affiliations - of various types of feminist and non-feminist organisations. The different, but not distinct, fields of feminist/women-oriented activities apparent in the material, displays the origins of feminist and women’s organisations within larger social movements. Feminist and women’s organisations were established in protest at the lack of interest in women’s issues, in
order to criticise and supplement established organisational practices. The attachments to their movement of origin, whether national or transnational, are diverse and changing. Based on the interviews, we would describe the main networks of the 1970s and ‘80s as follows: the Foreign Women’s Group, the Phillipine Community Norway and the Kurdish Women’s Association have a firm foundation in the anti-racist movement, and in organisations of/for their specific national groups. Sami feminists relate basically to the Sami movement organisations, in the northern parts of Norway and in the Sapmi area. In addition they are concerned with Norwegian and Nordic authorities. The Christian Intercultural Association has close ties to a range of religious movement organisations and to State Church institutions. The Women’s National Health organisation relates mainly to a number of non-feminist women’s organisations, organisations and institutions within the health field. The different affiliations of the ethnic Norwegian feminists outside the women’s movement mirrors in part their origin and in part their present profile: the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights used to be attached to the Liberal Party, but since the 1970s has developed strong ties to public gender equality institutions. The Legal Advice for Women organisation is linked to various legal institutions, whereas the Women’s Front emphasised the connections to various solidarity movements and campaigns.

A few more examples of the different roles of the selected organisations are worth mentioning. In order to indicate the complex landscape, the roles of the Foreign Women’s Group, the Women’s Front, the Sami feminists and the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights are described a bit further. Foreign Women’s Group/the MiRA Centre for Migrant and Refugee Women is undoubtedly the spider in the web of social movement organisations focusing on women’s citizenship during the 1970s and ‘80s. The interviewees demonstrated its crucial role in politicising the situation of women with an ethnic minority background. As the first formal organisation for this constituency, and the dominant one throughout the 1980s, the contribution to broaden the feminist agenda and combat the misrepresentations of migrant and refugee women was formidable. According to the informants, the Women’s Front was by far the ethnic majority feminist organisation with most focus on and relations to ethnic minority feminist groups and organisations during this period. This was in part an effect of the organisation’s focus on international
solidarity work, because this eventually was a bridge to recognising the difficulties of third world women in Norway. In contrast to Foreign Women’s Group and the Women’s Front, the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights (WRA) and the Sami feminists were more concerned with institutional politics and relations to public authorities than with other organisations. In the case of the WRA, this was clearly related to the dual roles of many members as activists and as state feminists during the period, and also the strong personal ties across institutions. The Sami feminists directed a substantial part of their resources towards the general Sami liberation struggle from the 1970s, and towards political elections during the 1980s. Geographically distant from the headquarters of the women’s movements organisations, they sought to make a claim for representation in the newly established Sami institutions.

Despite the various affiliation profiles and networks, the organisations also related closely to each other, for better and for worse. As feminists or as promoters of women’s interests they belonged to the same policy field. They had ideological disagreements and supported different specific strategies and claims, but they were all concerned with the situation of women in general, with the emerging public gender equality policy, with how political proposals affected women or various groups of women, and they were all concerned with women’s issues internationally. They established a number of influential meeting places, more or less institutionalised, during the 1970s and ‘80s: 8th March preparations and celebrations; election campaigns; Women’s Houses and women’s cultural festivals; research conferences and seminars; the TV fundraising campaign; events related to the UN International Women’s Decade; and the Nordic Forum etc. Here, their priorities were outlined and negotiated, their arguments were sharpened and disagreements were amplified. All together, the symbolic and material common spaces were crucial to develop personal and organisational ties and trust.

Probably the most important united action during this period, with respect to the minority-majority interactions, was the TV campaign ‘Women in the Third World’ in 1989 (see Chapter 2). This is mentioned by several informants, not because the campaign process was without disputes between majority and minority women, but because it represented the breakthrough for feminist ethnic minority voices within the
feminist and women’s movement in Norway. The campaign resulted in a decision to fund the MiRA Centre, an exception from the general aim of the campaign to fund projects in third world countries. This was decisive for the transformation of the fragile Foreign Women’s Group into the robust, viable MiRA Centre.

6.23A Improved Relations – a Different Place

Four decades have passed since migrant feminists began to formally organise in Norway. The political institutions and the political discourses related to feminism, ant-racism, gender and ethnic discrimination have changed. Although the effects of social protest are difficult to assess, and despite a potential urge among some informants to focus on success rather than failure, there is a definite message about improved relationships in the interviews. The representations emphasise a general trend from misrecognition, anger and irritation towards more respect, understanding and trust. The interactions have necessarily increased in number and frequency since more organisations of and for ethnic minority women have been established since the 70s, but more importantly: the interactions have been more constructive and productive, in the eyes of the informants, on both sides of the ethnic divide:

‘Yes, well, everything is positive. Everything is much more open, there are more kinds of discussions and all this fuss about the women’s movement is over, you know. Now, I don’t know what is going on in the movement now, but there are more kinds of expressions. There are no more struggles, but there are many different voices articulated by various groups at different times, a plurality of standpoints and voices. Even now with the trafficking and all, well, it is acceptable to have different opinions. And one may think from different perspectives. Then there is this totally new generation of young women, if we talk about this group which is in the media and everywhere … There are other dynamics, and they create a different society in the context and forms the different struggles take. Maybe this weakens in a way, but I don’t think so.’

‘Today, more people live together [across ethnic belonging], and children who are born together they go to the same primary school etc. Some of them develop polarity, but others develop relations.’

‘And also among several groups, there are many more well educated people, you know, show respect, who at least serve this frame of respect. And have some knowledge. I think maybe people have travelled in new ways, and have discovered things in new ways. They don’t have this, I mean the 1970s was a
time when one really had not discovered other people, I men the ‘other’ as genuine persons. They were like miserable in all shapes. And I believe, this socio-political project, we have come to a quite different place. It still happened, of course, but there are many more who meet you on a different level.’

These citations mention several reasons for the improved relations: a more open atmosphere and the plurality of voices today compared to the previous policing of meanings; a new generation of women and a new context. There is an ambiguity, or rather complexity in her representation of progress: ethnically mixed communities may foster antagonism, not only mutual respect. She emphasises the potential for friendly relations, however. She refers to the development from a rather homogeneous population - ‘one had not discovered other people’ - to a multicultural one. There is some reluctance, however, in her remark that the more educated people ‘serve this frame of respect’ - indicating that the positive signs characterize the surface, whereas life below the surface may be less than respectful.

The focus of the interviews was not contemporary relations within the women’s movements, but those of the 70s and 80s. The discussion of this period comes to an end with two different representations, one rather happy and the other rather gloomy.

6.24A A Story of Love and Friendship

Reflecting backwards, this interviewee highlighted the remarkable changes that took place at the turn of the 1970s. The political atmosphere opened up and the internal relations among feminist groups became more relaxed and concerned with co-operation. Joint actions were seen as crucial in an unfriendly context. Co-operation was prioritised over the previous quarrelling between the various feminist and women’s groups.

The 1980s were marked by collaboration according to this interviewee. She described a women’s research conference as an example. The topic of this conference was the relations between women’s research and the women’s movement, and activists were invited. In spite of actual disagreements on single issues, she said,
‘(...) large areas of fundamental agreements were drawn [during this conference]. We had more or less decided to have only one, united 8th March protest demonstration, for instance. It was urgent to display unity because of all the resistance against feminism. Feminism has never had strong support, and we knew, neither then nor now nor ever. Uniting forces was simply something we decided to do.’

The emphasis here is on the rationality of joint action: feminism was and had always been a tiny social protest movement, and uniting forces was urgent when resistance was manifest.

The anti-porn campaign was an issue which united the movement, and so was the campaign for a six hours working day, she said. Disagreements were restricted to practical issues, such as how to formulate demands. And then, she added:

‘Friendship, you know, because, friendship, naturally, was also behind all the efforts to cooperate and to implement.’

‘I mean, this thing about friendship, at least, well ... me making friends within X [the respondent mentions another feminist organisation] was important, and that I made friends within the Y [another organisation] And the fact that we socialized privately, contributed to “pour oil on troubled water”, and to elaborate compromises on issues. Simply, well, because then we could agree on what we disagreed on. This thing about just one protest demonstration, there was a lot of friendship behind it, to make it.’

Friendship as the basis for building a common platform was not expressed by other interviewees, but has been identified as crucial in the mobilisation of protest, although overlooked in much research. This interviewee explains why socializing was important to build trust and clarify the potential for joint actions. The informant mentioned the Nordic Forum in 1988. This was a site for disputes related to the organising of immigrant women among other issues, she said, and immediately added another manifestation of co-operation: Eva Kolstad, the Gender Equality Ombudsman, and a prominent member of the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights, was an important bridge-builder between the organisations, and the conferences arranged by the Equal Status Council for the women’s organisations during that period represented annual assemblies of the women’s organisations. The tradition of Nordic cooperation was emphasised because ‘alliances were established crosswise’. The Nordic public institutions played important roles in the
respect: ‘To establish arenas where you have a chance to meet, is extremely important. When those arenas collapse, then …,’ she said. Spaces to meet contribute to interaction, obviously, and have the potential of fostering friendships. In addition to friendship, this informant also underlined joy - the ‘wonderful parties’ on 8th March for instance - and love:

‘And then of course, there were lots lovers, yes? Across the organisations, and, you know, they could led to conflicts and rupture. And the opposite, lots of funny things happened then.

There was a mix of the private and the political like from here to the moon, you know, lasting ties. There is a certain danger that there could be gatherings instead of rational debates. That is a point, of course, But what gave energy and endurance, was … that we had such an incredibly good time. It was terribly fun.’

Being a movement activist takes time and energy, but it may also be immensely rewarding, as this informant indicate. Love - lesbian love and others kinds of love relations - is a bonus when things develop in a positive way. Friendships and love, however, may cause problems when relations break or when rational debate is substituted with small talk and gossip. In the respondent’s mind, and in other stories told, the joy and fun overshadowed the misery. However, this was not the case for all interviewees.

6.25A Indeed, a Very Sad Story

At the end of our talk, one interviewee picked up on her previous descriptions of the relations between black and white feminists as ‘very sad’. She had talked about the influential women who were invited to black feminist meetings, and represented them as ‘totally dead related to the scenario they were situated in, no, I experienced it as sad and like one would almost want to cry afterwards, you know.’ When asked at the end of the interview if she wanted to add anything, she said:

‘I have to say that this history is a very sad history. Even if there is now, in a way, a reward with more space, socio-political space, it still is, well, I never understood. I never understood! That all these well-educated, intellectual and political women, especially the women, then, that they did not see what
we were doing. That they were unable to, well, that was sad. And it was very sad for the concerned groups.’

This manifestation of incomprehensive response ends the discussion of interactions between majoritised and minoritised women during the 1970s and 80s. The inability - or unwillingness - to hear and see the claims of migrant and refugee women made a deep impact on many black feminist activists. The wounds did not stop them from being involved in the struggle for improved citizenship rights and belonging, but the wounds have not evaporated. They are a reminder of past mistakes and misunderstanding, and could be a motivation for mutually considerate and respectful interactions in the future.

6.26A Closing Remarks

The history of feminism is contested both outside and within activist groups. So are the representations based on the selected informants in this particular research. I have not wanted to silence the different voices of the interviewees, or the ambiguities within the accounts. In particular, the recognition of Sami feminism seems vulnerable. It is exposed to specific challenges, related to the fundamental changes following the new citizenship status as an indigenous people. Still, with the exception of Sami feminism, it is possible to detect a red thread in narratives insofar as the activists make connections to contemporary interactions: they indicate that relations have improved, there is a better sense of the claims made by black feminists and ethnic minorities, and a will to establish joint actions. The effects of being misrecognised have not disappeared, however. In the next part of this chapter the interactions represented by activists of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century are discussed. Do they confirm the narrative of improved relations, or do they emphasise misrecognition and incompatible claims?

‘When you think about minority women, it is not one group. It is a huge variation of people. There are some cultural differences. And then there is the individual person, how active you are as a person. And also other things; like what kind of education you have, what experiences you have had in your life. All this matters … (…) The majority also has its differences; whether you’re from the north or the south, the city or the country-side and all that.’

(Interviewee from a minority women’s organisation)

6.1B Introduction

This part of Chapter 6 will explore the relationship between ethnic minority and ethnic majority women’s organisations in Norway. More specifically, we will analyse problem representations of majority/minority cooperation and alliances. The point of departure was the question whether is exists some kind of ‘sister solidarity’ across ethnic and religious backgrounds. Bearing in mind the criticism of the Western feminist movement, one of the questions was whether ethnic minority women’s demands have been rejected or accepted by the ethnic majority women. Most of the interviewees have talked about the lack of cooperation between majority and minority organisations, but there are also examples of cooperation and alliances in the interview material. The main focus, however, in this chapter, is on how the ‘problem’ of cooperation/not cooperation is represented. We have been particularly interested in the intersection between ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’, and how the categories ‘women’ and ‘women’s issues’ are constructed in the interviews.83

The initial quote in this part of Chapter 6 emphasises the differences within the categories minority and majority women. The quote illustrates one obvious, yet important, finding in this study, namely the vast variation of women’s organisations

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83 The quotes in this chapter are mainly from interviews with the member-based women’s organisations in our study. However, the findings are also based on the interviews with the more professionalised NGOs which work with issues related to women’s rights, violence against women and ethnic and/or religious discrimination.
within these two categories. A mapping of the ‘new’ women’s movement\textsuperscript{84} in Norway shows that the organisational landscape is complex. In the intersection between women’s organisations and migrant’s organisations there is a wide variety of organisations, and a clear-cut division between majority and minority women’s organisations is not an accurate picture of this organisational landscape (Eggebø, Halsaa, Skjeie and Thun, 2007). This also points to a methodological issue in how to deal with socially constructed categories both analytically and when you present your findings - the problem of reproducing these categories. These are issues we have been dealing with through the whole research process. We have chosen to use the categories minority and majority in this chapter because the point of departure has been to explore the relationship between minority and majority women’s organisations, and to explore the intersections of the categories ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’ in the interviews with women from these organisations. However, the aim is to explore the various representations and the complexity in the organisational landscape.

In the next and second section of this chapter, we will give a short presentation of Carol Bacchi’s What’s the Problem represented to be? approach, which has inspired the analysis (see also Chapter 4). This is followed by the main and third section which is the analysis of the qualitative interviews. The forth and last section in the chapter consists of a summary.

\textbf{6.2B \ What's the Problem Represented to be? Approach}

The analysis is inspired by Carol Lee Bacchi’s What’s the Problem represented to be? approach. In her book ‘Women, Policy and Politics: The construction of policy problems’ (1999)\textsuperscript{85}, Bacchi argues that we shape social ‘problems’ in the ways in which we speak about them and in the proposals we have to ‘address’ them. Competing understandings of social issues, is in Bacchi’s terms called ‘problem

\textsuperscript{84} The concept ‘women’s movement’ is used as a broad concept which includes collective action by women presenting gendered identity claims, and is used for a broad variety of different forms of women’s organising. The concept of ‘the feminist movement’ is in this perspective seen as a sub-category of women’s movements (McBride and Mazur, 2008, see Chapter 3).

\textsuperscript{85} Bacchi’s ‘What’s the Problem?’ approach is usually applied to analyse policy documents in order to highlight competing constructions of issues addressed in a policy process. However, the approach can also been used to analyse interviews (see for instance Rönnblom, 2002).
representations’ (Bacchi, 1999: 5). The focus on interpretations or representations means a focus on discourse, which according to Bacchi (1999: 2) is defined as ‘the language, concepts and categories employed to frame an issue’.

Bacchi (1999: 40) refers to Foucault and his definition of discourses as ‘practices that systematically form the object of which they speak; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention’. In this view, discourse is understood as ‘speaking’ which sets limits on what can be said. According to Bacchi it can be useful to think of discourses as frames, since they provide frameworks or ways of viewing issues. She argues that the processes of problem presentation go deeper than intentionality. Rather than attempting to decode how political agents frame an issue for political purposes, the goal of a What’s the Problem represented to be? approach is to probe the deep conceptual underpinnings of problem representations.

According to Bacchi (2005) it is possible to talk about how a discourse frames an issue but when we start to talk about the ability to choose among competing frames, we have left the discourse theory for framework theory. Strategic framing\(^\text{86}\) of political claims is within the tradition of framework theory (Verloo, 2005). Frame theorists see discourse as outside the subject, as cultural constraints, within which intentional subjects can shape useful political collective action frames. A discourse analysis approach sees no subject outside the discourse and the subject therefore has work to do on herself or himself to avoid falling into discursive positionings, which may be exploitative of others (Bacchi, 2005: 206).

The aim of the analysis in this chapter has been to explore the understandings and the meaning-making in the qualitative interviews. The aim has been to probe the underlying assumptions of various problem representations, rather than strategic framing for political purposes. In Chapter 7, the main focus will be on strategies applied by organisational actors in their attempt of influencing policy-making, and thereby also the strategic framing of certain issues. Strategical framing as a concept refers to ‘strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries’ (Verloo, 2005: 17).

\(^{86}\) Strategical framing as a concept refers to ‘strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries’ (Verloo, 2005: 17).
refers to ‘strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries’ (Verloo, 2005: 17).

The main goal of a What’s the Problem represented to be? approach is to bring silences in problematisations into the open for discussion and debate. Inspired by Bacchi’s questions, the analysis will address these issues (Bacchi, 1999: 12-13):

First, what is the ‘problem’ of cooperation or alliances with minority/majority women’s organisations represented to be in the interviews? Is it at all represented to be a problem? If so, are there specific issues which are problematised? If not, why is that? Second, what are the causes of the problem (diagnosis)? What presuppositions or assumptions underlie the identified problem representation/s? Third, what effects are produced by this representation of the problem? What is likely to change with this representation of the ‘problem’? What is likely to stay the same? Who is likely to benefit from this representation of the ‘problem’? Fourth, how are subjects constituted within this problem representation? Who is held responsible for the ‘problem’? What effects follow from this attribution of responsibility? 87

The first and second question will be explored in the thematic analysis under each topic in section 3, while the third and fourth question will be discussed in the summary in section 4 of the chapter.

6.3B Current Problem Representations in the Women’s Movement in Norway

Section 3.1 examines the representations of cooperation and alliances between majority and minority women’s organisations. In relation to the issue of cooperation and alliances, the general representation of ‘women’s issues’ has become relevant in the analyses; which issues are included and excluded within the various representations of ‘women’s issues’? The issues addressed will include ‘women’s issues’ in general, but the primary focus in the interviews has been violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism. The question whether the fight against

87 The analysis has also been inspired by various operationalisations of Bacchi’s questions (in Edle Bugge Tenden (2001: 26-27), Trude Langvasbråten (2006: 12-14) and Linn Tuva Solberg (2007: 23-24), and analytic tables for each interview have been made in the analysis process.
ethnic discrimination/racism should be included as a ‘women’s issue’ proves to be a controversial issue, and in relation to this issue there seems to be a divide between minority and majority women’s organisations.

Section 3.2 will look more specifically on the representation of ‘feminism’ and the representation of men. We will discuss how the interviewees relate to feminism. And also; which issues are included and excluded within a feminist agenda? Section 3.3 includes a discussion of religion as a site of disagreement and confusion. Here there are very different representations of religion in relation to women’s rights, both within the categories minority and majority women’s organisations.

6.4B Representations of Majority and Minority Women’s Organisations and Women’s Issues

6.4.1B Representations of cooperation and alliances by minority women’s organisations
In the following section, we will look at how women from minority women’s organisations talk about majority/minority cooperation and ‘women’s issues’.

Exclusion of minority women
Interviewees from some of the minority women’s organisations emphasise the lack of cooperation with majority women’s organisations:

‘There is a huge distance between Norwegian women in women’s organisations [and minority women]. (…) I don’t think Norwegian women in women’s organisations care that much about minority women. I don’t think so. Because … very few cares about what’s happening to migrants and minority women. They don’t think it is important. (…) I don’t think Norwegian women’s organisations are familiar with the problems minority women are dealing with.’

According to this interviewee, there has been very little cooperation or alliances with majority women’s organisations. She stresses the lack of support from Norwegian feminist organisations regarding international women’s rights and minority women’s rights in Norway. The respondent argues that Norwegian feminists are only focusing on ethnic Norwegian women. They are not focusing on international women’s issues and they are not interested in problems women are facing in other parts of the world. She mentions a meeting about a March 8 arrangement where one group of white
feminists did not want to include a parole about women’s rights in the interviewee’s country of origin, even if it is supposed to be an international women’s day. In her view, ethnic majority women’s organisations do not care about minority women or immigrants in Norway either, and in her opinion there is a huge gap between majority and minority women.

‘(…) When I first came to Norway I had expectations in regards to Norwegian women’s organisations. But they are not as I thought. I thought; ‘oh, maybe I can cooperate with them’ and ‘they will take me seriously and talk about the issues I’m concerned with’. But it didn’t turn out like that. But the issue I’m working with now [honour-related violence] is very important to me. So this time I had my hopes up.’

This interviewee tells a story of great hopes for sister solidarity with Norwegian majority women’s organisations when she first came to Norway and established the organisation ten years ago. However, the expectations were not met, and she also tells a story of disappointment. This minority women’s organisation has experienced that their voice has not been taken seriously and that their claims towards the majority feminist organisations have been excluded.

The view that the problem regarding the white Norwegian women’s movement is the exclusion of ethnic minority women is echoed by an interviewee from another minority women’s organisation:

‘(…) women’s organisations were not including [minority women] because minority women were not seen as belonging to the Norwegian society. Besides, the issues on the agenda of Norwegian women’s organisations were not very relevant for minority women. Racism in Norway, for example, was not on the agenda.’

The respondent from this minority women’s organisation claims that their efforts have been made invisible. This organisation has been active for quite some time. Back in the 1980s migrants and migrant women were not seen as part of the Norwegian society, and minority women were being objectified and exotified, also within Norwegian women’s organisations, according to her. These organisations were used to see black women as receivers of Norwegian aid and themselves as givers, and they were not used to see minority women as strong and equal partners. Still today there is exoticification of minority women, she claims, however not as extreme as before. According to the interviewee, today there is an acceptance for
the fact that Norway is a multicultural society and migrants are here to stay. There is recognition of gender and racism as interacting factors which influence minority women’s everyday life in Norway, but in her view majority women’s organisations and others have started to show an interest for these issues because there is money in it.

‘The difference is that [our organisation] is a women’s movement. We existed before there was money involved in issues like forced marriages and so on. We discussed these issues long before they became ‘popular’ issues. (...) but other organisations became interested because there was money in it. They are a result of the state’s immigration- and integration politics which are based on short lived measures and projects. But these issues [forced marriages and so on] are complicated issues (...).’

According to the interviewee, there are two pillars; the first one is minority organisations, including her organisation, with an anti-racist feminist agenda which promote women’s rights with arguments based on fundamental human rights. They see minority women as part of the Norwegian society. These organisations work for fundamental change in society and they view racism and sexism as structural problems, not only cultural problems. They want to integrate for instance forced marriages within the field of violence against women, and they work for empowerment of minority women. The second pillar consists of ethnic Norwegian charity actors which see minorities in the ‘victim role’ and minority women as victims of cultures that oppress women. The interviewee mentions for instance majority women’s organisations, Women’s Shelters and Red Cross within this second category.

‘Our point of departure is that we [women] have to get a residence permit on an independent ground when we come to Norway through family reunion. We must have gender equality in Norway no matter which culture we are from. And there are two different points of departure. Another point of departure is to see women as victims of barbaric traditions and you feel sorry for them and give them residence permit out of charity. (...) What minority women in Norway fought for, was basic human and women’s rights. They don’t want charity. They don’t want to be seen as victims. Yes, they are victims of violence if they get in that particular situation. However, they are not only victims of violence from that man, but also violence from the Norwegian state, which define them as merely an appendage to their husbands (...).’

In this interviewee’s opinion, minority women’s critical voices have been marginalised and suppressed, while the others (‘charity actors’) have confirmed the
dominant discourse of migration in society which supports prejudices and stereotypes.

The interviewee refers to the ‘three year rule’\(^{88}\). Spouses of Norwegian citizens who come to Norway from abroad are usually given a dependent legal status for a period of three years. After three years they can get a permanent resident status. Migrant woman who leave a violent husband before three years can lose her residence permit. The exception from the three year rule is when the woman has been subject to domestic abuse. However, it is difficult for immigrant women to ‘prove’ domestic abuse according to § 37, 6 paragraph in the regulation of the Immigration Act\(^{89}\) (Eggebø, 2007).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) writes about a similar rule under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. A waiver was introduced to make an exception for cases of domestic violence. Yet, Crenshaw argues, many immigrant women could not meet the requirements for evidence of domestic violence, and therefore remained in a vulnerable situation. Some of these women were dependent on their husband to give them information about their legal status and language barriers could also be a problem. The immigrant women who were socially, culturally, or economically marginalised were the least likely to take advantage of the waiver. According to Crenshaw (1991: 1249), ‘patterns of subordination intersect in women’s experience of domestic violence’. Crenshaw calls this ‘structural intersectionality’ which is defined as ‘the way in which the location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reform qualitatively different than from white women’ (Crenshaw, 1991: 1245).

\(^{88}\) (...Women who come to Norway through family reunification do not get a residence permit on until three years after arrival ('the three year rule'). This means that if a woman gets divorced before three years have passed, she will normally not get a residence permit. For these women the three year rule can seem like an extra punishment sanctioned by society, and a form of structural violence (...). However, the exception from the three year rule is when the woman has been subject to domestic abuse (...).)(http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/jd/dok/NOUer/2003/NOU-2003-31/6/1/3.html?id=372823, my translation).

See The Immigration Act of 1988 (utlendingsloven) (http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-19880624-064.html). (The new Immigration Act of 2008 and the women’s organisations work related to this Act is a topic in Chapter 7).

\(^{89}\) See § 37, 6 paragraph in the regulation of the Immigration Act (utlendingsforskriften) (http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-19901221-1028.html).
Organising on one’s own

Not all the respondents from minority women’s organisations talk about the lack of cooperation with majority women’s organisations as a problem. Several of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations also emphasise the need to ‘organise on their own’:

‘(…) we haven’t opened up for Norwegians that much. So we are not multicultural like that. We only have one Norwegian member. On the last general assembly we decided to open up for Norwegians. But in the beginning it was important that the organisation was only for women from [a particular ethnic group/nationality]. Many didn’t want to go to meetings if we didn’t speak our language. (…) [In the beginning] we wanted to create a safe space for women.’

This interviewee says that her minority women’s organisation has been preoccupied with its ‘own’ issues until now and it has not tried to initiate cooperation with majority women’s organisation. This organisation was established ten years ago. The initiative takers wanted to start a women’s organisation because they needed a network, they needed somebody to talk to and they wanted to help each other figuring out the Norwegian society. They also took Norwegian classes and computer classes in order to qualify and get into the Norwegian labour market. The interviewee emphasises women’s central role in families from their country of origin. The organisation was concerned with violence against women during the war in their home country, gender equality and integration into the Norwegian society. Today most of these women are established and well integrated in the Norwegian society, the interviewee says, but they still need to meet and keep in touch with their own people, their culture and their tradition, unless they would lose a part of themselves.

Now however, the interviewee thinks it is time to make an effort to cooperate with majority women’s organisations. In the beginning the organisation was only for women from a particular ethnic background, but now they have opened up for other members. The organisation would like to have more cooperation with majority women’s organisations, but there is a lack of meeting places. In the beginning they got help and information from a well-established minority women’s organisation and one majority feminist organisation among others. The organisation had an office at a ‘women’s house’ and the network and the information they got from the others there was very helpful in the beginning. They all regret that this house does not exist
anymore. The organisation does not have a permanent place to meet, and they have lost this network.

The need to establish their own minority women’s organisation is also expressed by interviewees from other minority women’s organisations:

‘You arrive in a new country where you don’t have a network. And you miss a network. In my case, people come from different countries, but from [the same continent]. We have that in common and we also have Norway in common. We try to learn the language, to use Norwegian. So we have some things in common, and we also have the same challenges; we have to learn Norwegian, get integrated, get a job, and we have to follow the rules and laws in the new country. So we also have the same problems and therefore we get together. Language is a problem for us, job is a problem, network is a problem, and the social life is very different from where we come from.’

According to this respondent, an organisation specifically for women was founded because migrant women with a background from the same continent face the same challenges and have similar problems in the Norwegian society (language barrier, difficult to get integrated and to get a job, lack of network). The organisation provides a social network and the women can motivate each other and help each other with for instance job applications.

‘We wanted an organisation only for women because we can share what we have in common. (...) for instance regarding the upbringing of children. (...) in general, women from [our region] have the main responsibility when it comes to upbringing of children. A mother needs to be integrated; she needs to be the family’s “head”. Many women don’t have an education and they need to be motivated. The mentality of Norwegian men and men from [our region] is not the same; they don’t have the same upbringing. Norwegian men can say that it’s okay for women to get an education, that’s fine. And that women should have the same rights as men. But when you are from a society where women are supposed to stay at home and take care of the children and cook and don’t get an education. Then you come here and you see women who are driving buses and do men’s jobs. So then … women have to motivate each other.’

‘(...) in addition we also have children who are growing up in this country and they don’t have any references. If we’re not able to organise and to be good role models for these children, they’ll have a lot of problems. We read the statistics about children who drop out of school early. They’ll need to choose schools, studies. There are so many things you have to know.’

Women from [this region] also have a special role in the upbringing of children. Women take care of the family and they need to get an education and a job. To
raise children with two cultures is a challenge ("kulturkæs") and women have to support these young people. Minority children and young people lack role models with the same background, for instance young men who experience unemployed fathers.

‘Now we live in Norway, a country which is very concerned with women’s development, gender equality, and children’s rights. I looked at these possibilities and I thought; ‘Ok’. And then I noticed that Norway is a very much organised society. So to move on, you can’t be alone, you have to be organised, to be a team. So I thought about that, and I figured that it is better to be organised in stead of feeling lonely and sitting alone with one’s problems thinking that it’s only me who’s struggling. So maybe it’s better to get together. First of all; the social part is important to us. And then; to exchange experiences with people who has come here before we came here and who knows more about the society (…)’

The interviewee emphasises gender equality and women’s rights. Gender equality is mentioned by several of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations.

‘Empowerment’ is also a concept which has been mentioned by several of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations:

‘Empowerment; migrant women, we have the same routines and daily chores and no one helps out. Well, some men do, but women do most of the domestic work. A lot of women experience pain, some get depressed. In our home country we have a social life, but in Norway, when you have four children and you stay at home and everyone else are busy. (…) In Norway everything is different from what we are used to. There are a lot of things we need to discuss. Why do we get these pains? And many of us have problems. Many of us lost family members in the war. (…) so when you come here and gather many women and you listen from the others. (…) two-three hours we sit together and we talk. All the women forget about their pains ands troubles.’

The interviewee stresses that minority women need to get together to share their experiences and to help each other in dealing with their new daily life in a new country. ‘Empowerment’ in her opinion is to help each other to understand the Norwegian ‘system’, the language and simply to listen to each other and be there for each other. To be part of a women’s organisation will enable these minority women to handle problems in their daily lives and to face challenges in a new country.

‘Empowerment’ is also emphasised by another interviewee:
‘The work we do in our organisation is based on rights. It is based on women’s
independent right to decide in her life. (…). We work for empowerment.’

‘We wanted to organise only minority women. We were closed for white women
back then. So we have gone through that development. One of the reasons
was that we wanted to strengthen minority women’s own voices. We wanted to
strengthen their self-organising, and strengthen their own premises in the
battles we’re still fighting.’

‘Empowerment’ means to raise women’s consciousness about women’s rights and
women’s independence. This interviewee also highlights ‘empowerment’ of minority
women as a political strategy in which their own voices needed to be strengthened.

A common issue in the interviews with members of minority women’s organisations
is the need to create a ‘safe space’ and a place where women can meet and talk to
women who face the same challenges and have the same opportunities. After the
minority organisations have existed for a while, several of the interviewees have
expressed a wish to cooperate more with majority women’s organisations. As the
quotes in this chapter illustrate, the different organisations have had different
experiences regarding cooperating and alliances. It clearly differs whether
interviewees from different minority women’s organisations say that the lack of
cooperation with majority women’s organisations is a problem or not.

Representation of ethnic discrimination and racism within ‘women’s issues’
A general theme in all the interviews with women from the minority organisations is a
wish to include the fight against racism and ethnic discrimination within the definition
of ‘women’s issues’. In their view, the majority women’s organisations are opposed
to racism, but it is not an integrated part of their work.

‘One the one hand, you have minority women who are integrated in the
Norwegian society. Then you expect them to have the same challenges as
Norwegian women, and you don’t need to talk specifically about minority
women. So maybe Norwegian women’s organisations think like that. But on
the other hand, you have minority women who face problems Norwegian
women don’t face, and they need that special attention. (…) Some women face
racism, even if they don’t like to talk about it, it is a fact. So you have to talk
about the problems these women face in their everyday life because they are
minorities. So maybe feminism has to open up a little or widen the agenda to a
certain degree (…).’
In this interviewee’s opinion, there are minority women who are integrated in the Norwegian society and have the same needs and interests as majority women. However, there are some problems that only minority women face which need extra attention, for instance racism in their everyday life. According to the interviewee, minorities in Norway are still not 100 per cent equal with majority Norwegians in the labour market and hardly anyone (especially with the particular ethnic background which this organisation has members from) is involved in politics. Therefore, she wants Norwegian feminist organisations to focus both on ‘regular’ women’s issues like six hours work day, and also open up and include an anti-racist agenda.

‘(…) Norwegian women are very concerned with that [gender equality]. She got that through her mother’s milk. So that’s the main thing. But anti-racism, that is… That is a recent concept due to increased immigration. So FOKUS is concerned with discrimination of migrant women. Some Norwegian women’s organisations in which we have been in contact with, they almost have the same ideology as us. They want to help us. If we need help. They have experience since it’s their country and so on (...). But the issue of anti-racism.. It is not so much the focus. If it’s OMOD and the Anti Racist Center - yes, that is where it happens. The other organisations, at least the women’s organisations are not … I think if I ask them or you ask them, they are opposed to racist attitudes …’

According to this respondent, gender equality is very important to Norwegian majority women, but anti-racism has not been so much a focus for majority women’s organisations. Several interviewees from minority women’s organisations mention FOKUS as an exception. The majority women’s organisations are opposed to racism, but the quote above implies that it is not an integrated part of their work. Organisations like the Institution against Public Discrimination (Organisasjon Mot Offentlig Diskriminering, OMOD) and The Anti Racist Centre in Norway (Antirasistisk senter) do anti-racist work. These are mixed gender organisations with an explicit anti-racist agenda.

‘There are many migrant women with a lot of experience and competence which the Norwegian society needs. If they get to know us they can use that competence. But we are seen as one person. “We” and “Them”, you know. That’s how it is. (…) Many unemployed migrants have studied here, but they

90 FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development. ‘FOKUS coordinates the international solidarity work of 71 women’s organisations in Norway. The affiliated organisations in FOKUS include traditional and radical feminist organisations, environment and solidarity organisations, women in trade unions and workers organisations, immigrant- and refugee women and women’s units in development NGOs, church organisations and political parties’ (http://www.fokuskvinner.no/English).
Minority women are facing discrimination in the labour market (disqualified because of a foreign name and so on), and according to the interviewee, they are experiencing ‘double discrimination’; both as women and immigrants.

The interviewee is in favour of the new Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud\textsuperscript{91} and in her opinion it reflects that Norway is an international society and new people are facing new problems.

The interviewees from minority women’s organisations say that they have to work for equality, both between women and men and majority and minority. The organisations are concerned with equality both understood as ‘gender equality’ and ‘ethnic equality’.

Respondents from minority women’s organisations argue that majority women’s organisations are for the most part concerned with problems majority Norwegian women are facing. Some of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations have the impression that majority organisations mainly focus on female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages related to minority women, rather than ethnic discrimination in the labour market.

These interviewees do not identify with what is often considered to be ‘minority women’s issues’ like FGM and forced marriages. One interviewee thinks it is good that majority women raise some of these issues, however these issues are far from what her minority organisation is concerned with. This view is opposed to the claim

\textsuperscript{91} The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud was established on 1st January 2006 and is a fusion of the Centre for Equality, the Gender Equality Ombud and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (http://www.ldo.no/en-gb/TopMenu/About-ombud/The-history-behind-the-Equality-and-Anti-Discrimination-Ombud/) (See more about this in Chapter 7).
forwarded earlier in this section, namely that so-called ‘honour-related’ violence has not been a priority for majority women’s organisations. These opposite views illustrate the vast variety within the category minority women’s organisations, and their different claims. Issues like forced marriages and female genital mutilation have also received a lot of attention in the media, and the impression that ‘honour-related’ violence is high on the agenda of majority women’s organisations may also be due to what Anja Bredal (2007: 60) calls ‘hypervisibility’ in the media.

6.4.2B Representations of cooperation and alliances by majority women’s organisations
So far in this section of the chapter, we have looked at the various representations of cooperation and alliances by majority women’s organisations. How then, do majority women’s organisations talk about majority/minority cooperation and how do they represent ‘women’s issues’?

Minority women’s issues as difficult issues - ‘afraid of doing something wrong’
Interviewees from some of the majority feminist women’s organisations problematize the lack of cooperation with minority women’s organisations:

‘I think we have been a bit afraid of putting violence against migrant women on the agenda because one is afraid of doing something wrong and contribute to further stigmatization and discrimination (…)’

This interviewee is addressing issues like honour killings and forced marriages, which in her opinion are very difficult issues which the majority women’s movement has not been able to deal with. According to the interviewee, there has been some cooperation with minority organisations regarding work against female genital mutilation (FGM), but mainly there has been little cooperation and alliances. In her opinion it is a shame that the feminist organisations have not been able to address the problems that minority women are facing.

‘(…) In relation to honour killing and forced marriages, the political Right has been more attentive, rather than the political left and the women’s movement. I think that’s a pity, both for the women’s movement and those who are victims of forced marriages. I think these are extremely difficult issues, of course. (…) I don’t think that [my organisation] has a well-developed policy on these issues. But I think we have to realise that forced marriages can be a problem for those who are affected by it. That there are oppressive patriarchal structures in migrant communities that are maybe even strengthened by being in Norway

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because you feel defensive by being a minority who are being discriminated in the first place (...). To say that it is a real problem without saying that migrants themselves are a problem. (...) I wish the political Left and women’s organisations and feminists [would deal with these issues] even if it’s very difficult.’

The quote illustrates a fear of being perceived as non-tolerant, racist and to contribute to further stigmatisation of migrants in Norway. The interviewee says that her majority women’s organisation has been focusing on the ‘New in Norway’ part (language classes and so on), but it seems to forget that there are migrant women who have lived most of their lives in Norway and they have to deal with other issues like honour killings and forced marriages. According to the interviewee, these problems have been ‘picked up’ by the political Right (The interviewee refers to the Progress party (Frp) and Hege Storhaug). The interviewee says is difficult to state that forced marriages (and so on) are actual problems among ethnic ‘minorities’ without saying that migrants themselves are a problem. It is difficult to say that racism is a bad thing and at the same time criticise migrants because it can lead to further stigmatizing of migrants, especially Muslims. In her view, this fits better with Frp’s ‘enemy image’ of Islam.

The concerns voiced by this respondent reflect in many ways the debate about feminism and multiculturalism. The interviewee illustrates the ‘multicultural dilemma’ between the recognition of religion and culture and the concern about women’s subordination in minority cultures. In her opinion this dilemma makes is very difficult to cooperate with organisations representing minority women. Multiculturalism encourages cultural diversity and condemns intolerance of other ways of life. It has been argued that group rights for minorities help to remedy the disadvantages that minorities suffer within difference-blind institutions (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). Multiculturalism is ‘the radical idea that people in other cultures, foreign and domestic, are human beings, too -moral equals, entitled to equal respect and concern, not to be discounted or treated as a subordinate caste’ (Cohen, Howard and Nussbaum, 1999:4). However, cultural ideas, including religious ideas, sometimes provide rationales for controlling women’s bodies and ruling their lives.

92 The Progress Party (Fremskrittpartiet, Frp) is a right-wing populist party which has an immigrant restrictive profile and which argues against multiculturalism.
93 Hege Storhaug works for Human Rights Service (HRS) which is a human rights organisation. She is publicly known for her critique of Islam as being a threat to gender equality and women’s rights.
Susan Moller Okin (1999) in her much cited article ‘Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?’ asks: what should be done when the claims of minority cultures or religions clash with the norm of gender equality that is at least formally endorsed by liberal states? In her opinion feminists have been too quick to assume that feminism and multiculturalism are both good things which are easily reconciled, and she argues that there is a tension between feminism and a multiculturalist commitment to group rights for minority cultures. Okin states that many culturally based customs, like clitoridectomy and polygamy, are aimed to control women and render them, especially sexuality and reproductively, servile to men’s desires and interests. According to Okin, most cultures are patriarchal, but many of the cultural minorities that claim group rights are more patriarchal than the surrounding Western cultures. In Okin’s view ‘female members might be better off if the culture into which they were born were either to become extinct (so that its members would become integrated into the less sexist surrounding culture) or, preferably, to be encouraged to alter itself so as to reinforce the equality of women - at least to the degree which that value is upheld in the majority culture’ (Okin, 1999: 22-23).

There seems to be an underlying ‘black or white picture’ in quote by the majority interviewee above; either you are tolerant regarding other religions and cultures - and do not really know how to handle violence against ethnic minority women - or you are non-tolerant, see other cultures and religions as threats to Western democracy and ‘our values’, support the Progress Party and speak out about violence against women within minority cultures (but the aim is really to restrict immigration and assimilate ethnic minorities who live in Norway). The interviewee talks about many ‘ditches’ to fall into and she is talking about her own standpoint as ‘balancing on a line’. She is critical to both ‘ditches’ described above in the ‘black and white picture’, but she does not really see any solutions to the dilemma. There seems to be a lack of an appropriate language to talk about these intertwined complex issues.

An interviewee from another majority women’s organisation says that the problem of little cooperation with minority women’s organisations is due to failure in communication and concern with different issues.
‘It is a lot of focus [on minority women’s interests]. We have had discussions, but we have not yet concluded. But of course it is a lot that needs to be done, there is no doubt about that. But maybe it’s difficult; at least I think it’s difficult to find a way to communicate with them. Migrant women are a very diverse group. There is not one right answer. (...) we [the local branch of the organisation] have tried to make contact with some minority women’s groups, but we haven’t really succeeded. Of course, things could have been done differently … to have a good dialogue is hard, I think.’

The interviewee finds it difficult to communicate with minority women’s organisations. In her opinion there is a lot of focus on ethnic minority women’s interests in Norway and a lot need to be done regarding these issues, but it is difficult to cooperate with minority women’s organisations. The organisation she is a member of has tried to make contact, but the attempts have not yet been successful.

‘They [minority women’s organisations] might perceive us as dominating; that we want to be in charge and so forth. We haven’t been able to present ourselves as open-minded. And then you have all these different organisations which mean very different things. In general there are few organisations only for women. And they have some issues that they are very concerned with. So we have a very different point of departure. They have other problems. (…) They might think that our problems are ‘luxury problems’. Because they have a different background and a different reality (…)’

The interviewee has felt that the organisation has been misunderstood and perceived as dominating, and the earlier attempts to make contact have been rejected. There has not been a dialogue. Both the majority women’s organisation and different minority women’s organisations are responsible for not cooperating. The majority women’s organisation has not been able to present itself as open-minded and the minority women’s organisations have not seemed interested in cooperation.

Internally in the organisation they have discussed issues related to minority women, but on many issues they have not yet concluded. The interviewee thinks it is challenging, both to make contact and to conclude in difficult issues. In her view, minority women face different problems and have other interests than majority women, but because of the vast variation within the category ‘ethnic minority women’, it is difficult to specify their interests and then make contact with the right groups and organisations.
The interviewee emphasises their different points of departure; her organisation is a pure women’s organisation and works from a women’s perspective. In her view there are few minority organisations which are only for women. Another aspect is a focus on different issues; minority women have to deal with other problems like housing and employment in a different way than majority women. Their point of view is different, their background is different and their problems are different. Minority women may view majority women’s issues as ‘luxury problems’.

The highlighting of ‘difference’, is pointed out by Uma Narayan (1997), who writes that phenomena that seem ‘Different’, ‘Alien’, and ‘Other’, like female genital mutilation, cross borders more easily than problems that seem more ‘familiar’ in a Western context. These issues then become ‘Third World gender issues’ and receive a lot of attention both from academics, feminists and a larger public audience (Narayan, 1997: 100). In her opinion, these issues lose their contextual information, and become some form of violence against women ‘caused by culture’, rather than linked to domestic violence as such (Narayan, 1997: 103).
‘Solidarity is to lead the way’
An interviewee from another majority women’s organisation does not consider the lack of cooperation with minority women’s organisations to be a problem. What is considered to be a problem though, is the criticism from minority women’s organisations that Norwegian feminist organisations do not include ‘black women’ (gender + race/ethnicity).

‘Solidarity is to lead the way, to show that structural change is possible. (…) So don’t say that we [Norwegian women] have to stop demanding more because Somali or Pakistani women are victims of repression by the family or by imams. (…) The reason why they [migrant women] are disadvantaged is that they have a different family culture, a different suppression and cultural expectations to how they should live their lives and what choices they can take. So yes, I am in favour of them making their own [organisations]. But not in order to criticise us.’

According to this interviewee, the majority women’s organisation she is a member of does not cooperate with minority women’s organisations because there are no relevant cooperation partners. In her view, most minority women’s organisations are not political organisations. Politically engaged feminist minority women can join the Norwegian feminist organisations, and the organisation in which the interviewee is a member, does have some minority women as members.

According to this interviewee, the minority culture is the problem. She argues that minority women have to fight their own battle against cultures in which women are oppressed. She is in favour of minority women organising and having a public voice, but not in order to criticise the Norwegian majority feminists. When Pakistani and Somali women are exposed to oppression by the family and religious leaders, it does not mean that Norwegian majority women should stop to demand more. In her view, ‘sister solidarity’ is to lead the way and show other women that it is possible to make change in society.

In general the organisation wants structural change in society, and the interviewee mentions several important issues the feminist movement has fought for; for instance the right to abortion, paid maternity leave, criminalising the buyers of sex acts. Equal pay and equal pensions are other important issues, and so is Women’s Shelters.
The interviewee politically disagrees with minority women who claim that racism has to be included in a feminist agenda:

‘In my opinion class is more important than for example race. (...) there are only two universal bases of discrimination; one is class, the other is gender.’

According to this interviewee, to be a woman justifies a separate organisation; regardless of class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. ‘Women’ as a category is overall a more important category than being an ethnic minority. In the interviewee’s view, the only universal bases of discrimination are gender and class, and they are more important than race. Race is another basis of discrimination, but it is not more important than discrimination because of sexual orientation, disablement, age and so on. She does not agree that ethnic minorities should have a special position compared to other minorities (national minorities like the Sami, handicapped and so on).

An underlying assumption in this interview is that structural problems are the main problem for women’s liberation and gender equality in a Norwegian context, while oppression of ethnic minority women is due to a different family culture, and different cultural expectations of girls within their ethnic community. Violence against minority women is explained by ‘cultural’ factors, while violence against majority women is explained by ‘structural’ factors. Minority women’s issues are viewed as female genital mutilation and forced marriages, and it is due to their minority culture. Their families and religious leaders are to blame.

Another assumption which is taken for granted, it that minority women are not oppressed by the Norwegian society at large, but by the culture within their ethnic community. The fight against racism and ethnic discrimination is not included in the way ‘women’s issues’ are represented.

This understanding of oppression of minority women illustrates what Uma Narayan (1997: 51) calls ‘blaming culture’ for problems in Third-World contexts and communities. Narayan (1997: 60) writes that the concepts of ‘culture’, ‘tradition’, and ‘religion’ is often unproblematised and understandings of these concepts are often simplistic, ahistorical, and apolitical. She also points to the fact that ‘cultural
explanations’ are used to explain violence against Third-World women, but such explanations are not used in order to understand violence against Western women. In her view, there is a tendency to use ‘culture’ to explain problems in minority communities, but that is seldom used as explanation for similar problems within majority communities (Narayan, 1997: 84-87).

6.5B Representation of Feminism and the Representation of Men

‘Feminism’ is a contested concept and has different meanings for different people. The meaning of ‘feminism’ is contextual and definitions depend on those who make the definitions (Bergman, 2004: 27). One of the issues we asked about in the interviews was the interviewees’ view on feminism, whether the organisation is considered to be feminist or not, and how they define ‘feminism’.

6.5.1B Representation of feminism and the representation of men by minority women’s organisations

‘I’m not a feminist. I’m not against men’

One of the interviewees from a minority woman’s organisations said this about feminism:

‘I am not a feminist. I am not against men, for example. I don’t think that all women and men are alike. There are women and men who are modern, and there are women and men who are very conservative. (…) feminists, they think that women have to do it [fight for women’s rights], women and only women. I don’t think that is a good idea. It’s not. Women and men have to fight together. Otherwise there will not be gender equality, and that is what I’m concerned with.’

This interviewee clearly states that she herself and the organisation are not ‘feminist’.

She also emphasises that there is a big difference between the Norwegian feminist organisations she is referring to and the minority organisation she is a member of in the way that they see men’s role. In her view Norwegian feminists are ‘against men’ and they think that only women can work together to improve women’s situation. According to the interviewee, ‘modern’ women have to fight for women’s rights in alliance with ‘modern’ men, and that is the only way to ensure gender equality.
‘There are men who want to work with women’s rights. They are active and want to help and they stand for what we [the organisation] stand for. We don’t say that the organisation only has to be for women (…)’

The statements above can also be interpreted as a way to distance her and the organisation from Norwegian feminist organisations. In the study of black women’s organisations in Britain, Julia Sudbury (1998) found that many black women’s organisations welcomed men onto their premises. The exclusion of men was seen as an aspect of white women’s organisations from which black women wanted to distance themselves. Black women and men also had common experiences with racism (Sudbury, 1998: 66).

Distancing themselves from the label ‘feminist’ can also be interpreted as a kind of resistance against majority feminist organisations, and an expression of the experience they have had with a lack of interest from feminist organisations.

One of the underlying assumptions in this interview is that the majority women’s organisations understand the fight for women’s liberation in a ‘women vs. men understanding’, while the interviewee from this minority women’s organisation understands the fight for women’s liberation in a ‘modern vs. conservative understanding’. She talks about modern men and women, and conservative men and women in her home country and also within her ethnic community in Norway.

One of the interviewees from another minority women’s organisation says that there are still not 100 per cent gender equality in the Norwegian society, and her wish is that both majority and minority women’s organisation could work together to accomplish that. She mentions equal pay and equal representation in politics. The minority organisation usually participates on March 8 every year (“it’s a tradition”). This interviewee states that they support the same claims as majority women’s organisations (for instance against war, against violence against women, for gender equality). However, she emphasises that the organisation is not feminist.

C: Would you say that the organisation is a feminist organisation?
Interviewee: No, not quite. No.

C: What is the difference between your organisation and a feminist organisation?
Interviewee: A lot of things, I think, make us different from a feminist organisation. We have families and things like that. We don’t advocate feminism all the time. Maybe some of us, I don’t know. But as an organisation we're not feminists.

Some member may call themselves feminists, while others do not. She says that the organisation as such is not feminist, and goes on by saying ‘we do have families’. This implies that a feminist is a single woman, maybe a lesbian. ‘Feminist’ in this view, seems to be a negative label. The public understanding of feminists as ‘man-haters’ has not been unusual and also found in countries like Finland and West Germany (Bergman, 2004: 28). In several European countries, many of those who are in favour of gender equality resist the label ‘feminist’ (Lovenduski, 1997, in Bergman, 2004: 28).

A similar view is expressed by an interviewee from another minority women’s organisation:

C: Would you say that the organisation is a feminist organisation?
Interviewee: I don’t like the word ‘feminist’. (Laughter).
C: Can you elaborate?
Interviewee: If I say that I will get misunderstood. Once you say ‘feminist’ you get misunderstood (…). I think it’s important that women have the same rights as men when it comes to education, employment, sharing of housework. Things like that are very important. But to call me a feminist or use the concept ‘feminist’, I think that’s a label. I don’t want to become a man. I don’t want to be a man. But I want to have a good life and I want to be independent. So if you call that ‘feminist’, then I’m a feminist. (Laughter).
C: But what do you think the concept ‘feminist’ means?
Interviewee: It’s a bit difficult to say. The way I see it is to be independent, to have the same opportunities. But to go around and saying I’m a ‘feminist’ … I don’t want to be a ‘macho woman’, if you see what I mean? I don’t want to be a ‘macho woman’ like that. That’s why I’m thinking … the concept ‘feminist’ has gotten a label; if you’re a ‘feminist’ you want to be the boss and so on. But it’s not like that; it is to have the same opportunities. We are human beings first and foremost. God created a man and a woman and we have different roles actually.
This interviewee does not call herself a feminist. She thinks it’s important for men and women to have the same rights and opportunities to get an education, a job and to share the domestic work. However, the label ‘feminist’ is not positive in her view; she does not want to ‘be a man’, a ‘macho woman’. A ‘feminist’ is viewed as a negative kind of femaleness. She wants a good life and she wants to be independent, but the label ‘feminist’ has a negative connotation. In her opinion we are first and foremost human beings who should have the same opportunities, secondly we are men and women and they also have different roles.

C: (…) How do you relate to black feminism?
Interviewee: I have read lots of books about black feminism. I am reading a book by bell hooks on black feminism. I like that very much because through that they also help black men to become independent. It is the movement that Martin Luther King took over. It started with black women who fought for their men who where oppressed. That’s how it started. So in that sense I relate to that, to feminism in the U.S.

C: What about black feminism in a Norwegian context, is that something you relate to? Does black feminism exist in Norway?

C: Well, that’s my question. In the U.K. and U.S. it might seem like a more familiar and more used concept ... What do you think?
Interviewee: Yes. But if you think about us here in Norway, if you think about black women in Norway, it might come, but not in my generation, I think. It’s too soon. We’re the first generation in Norway. We don’t have one leg in each country like our children. Our children and grandchildren, they will fight on that. I think my generation only has reached the ‘first floor’, to put it that way; job, language. The language is a huge barrier for many people. There are probably many who want to engage and do lots of things, but the language is a barrier. So I don’t think we’re there yet. But the frustration is there. We see that in [our organisation].

The interviewee understands black feminism in the U.S. and U.K. as different from black feminism in Norway. She can relate to black feminism in the U.S. where black women also fought for their men because they were repressed. Many African men
in Norway are unemployed and have lost their integrity. In her opinion black feminism is not visible in Norway, and she thinks the time is not ripe. Norway has just recently become a multicultural society and many migrants have not lived here for long. The minority women in her organisation are occupied with learning Norwegian, getting a job and so on. The U.S. also has a different history with colonialism which has lead to black women’s claims. In her view, black feminism will perhaps be more relevant for the next generation in Norway because they are integrated and yet they experience frustration.

Black feminism marginalised in the women’s movement

According to an interviewee from another minority women’s organisation, black feminism and desi\textsuperscript{94}-feminism are marginalised by the white women’s movement and exist in the periphery.

‘(…) we’ve had some immense discussions here [in our organisation] among minority women about definitions. One of the reasons why we most often use minority women instead of “Black” women are because it is sort of a consensus concept. (…) “Black” is a political concept, it’s a political consciousness. It is how you define yourself, how you reclaim your own identity and how you define yourself in relation to society. The political consciousness is a result of experience and political engagement. When an Anti Racist movement was established in Norway that definition was used clearly political. Today however, things are different; there are no movements. Today you work for “integration” or “inclusion” or whatever you call it, these concepts change. When you work as a professional it is your job and you don”t have these clear political definitions. (…) [In our organisation] we discuss these things all the time. Lately it’s been desi-feminism. These definitions are being developed in the periphery, (…) they live in the periphery and eventually they die. To bring them into the centre and say: “I’m as much a woman and a feminist and a Norwegian, as you or anyone else is”. But we’re not there yet. As long as we are marginalised in the women’s movement we’ll have these marginalised identities as well. (…) I still define myself as a Black woman, not because of my colour, but because of my political convictions.’

According to the interviewee, black feminism is a political consciousness and leads to a political engagement with an anti-racist feminist perspective in the fight for women’s rights.

\textsuperscript{94} ‘Desi’ is concept used about south Asians living outside Asia.
In her view, the norm for being a feminist in Norway is an ethnic white Norwegian woman. The interviewee thinks it is important to acknowledge minority women’s work against for instance forced marriages and their work regarding the 3 year rule.

‘(…) For us it is important to put these issues on the agenda. However, when we have put it on the agenda, others have to take responsibility because minority women’s battle is not only minority women’s battle. Gender discrimination is every woman’s battle and responsibility. So in our opinion Norwegian women’s organisations have the same responsibility in fighting against the Immigration Act [utlendingsloven] which discriminates women or minority women.’

After these issues are put on the agenda, all women have to include these issues in their fight for women’s rights.

‘There have been some historical changes. These days there are no great political movements. If someone thinks that the Norwegian women’s movement exist today, I’d like to ask where it is. Most of the work today is done by specialists and experts and so on.’

A major problem today, according to this interviewee, is the lack of a strong women’s movement which could have put pressure on these issues.

Today, work with ‘ethnic minority women’s issues’ is done by an ‘ethnic industry’ and it is based on short-term and project-based work. She claims that the main actors in the field of ‘ethnic industry’ are professionalised organisations and they work for ‘integration’ or ‘inclusion’.

‘The fight against racism is also a women’s issue. (…) the connection between gender and racism is very, very clear. Minority women are not only discriminated against in the work place because they are women, but because they are minorities and Black.’

‘In debates about forced marriages and so on ethnic Norwegian organisations have been focusing on culture and tradition. Whereas we [our organisation] have been focusing on the issue of rights and we have advocated for the integration of this “problem field” within the ‘violence against women field’. (…) Racism and gender discrimination are not only cultural phenomena, it is a structural phenomenon.’

According to the interviewee, majority women are not only discriminated in the work place because they are women, but also because they are minorities and black. She claims that both racism and sexism are structural phenomena, not only cultural
phenomena. She also wants to widen the way violence against women are understood in the Norwegian society, and include for instance forced marriages. The Government Action Plan against domestic violence (2004-2007) states that domestic violence does also include forced marriages and female genital mutilation. However, these issues are dealt with in two separate Action Plans \(^{95}\) (Bredal, 2007: 57-58). According to Bredal (2007: 58) this generates a divide between ‘general’ violence and ‘special’ violence, where the latter category is linked to ethnic minorities.

This interviewee wants to include ‘minority women’s issues’ in the larger definition of ‘women’s issues’. She wants to include the fight against racism within the definition of women’s issues and make a connection between racism and feminism.

So far in this chapter section we have seen that interviewees from different minority women’s organisations have different views on feminism; some distance themselves from the concept ‘feminist’ and see ‘feminists’ as opposed to men. Others call themselves black feminists and claim that feminism with an anti-racist agenda is marginalised in Norway and the norm for being a feminist is a white ethnic Norwegian feminist. A common theme is a wish to open the feminist agenda and include minority women’s claims.

6.5.2B Representation of feminism and the representation of men by majority women’s organisations

How do majority feminists respond to these claims of widening the feminist agenda and include work against honour-related violence, ethnic discrimination and racism?

Among majority feminists in this study there are different responses to this claim.

‘Women’s issues’ and racism represented as separate issues

One response to the claims of widening the feminist agenda and include work against honour-related violence, ethnic discrimination and racism, is illustrated by this extract from an interview with a member from another majority women’s organisation:

\(^{95}\) The different Action Plans against domestic violence will be further discussed in Chapter 7.
C: Does the organisation work with issues related to racism and/or ethnic discrimination?

Interviewee: No, not in particular. I don’t think so, no.

C: What is the reason for that, in your opinion?

Interviewee: Well, there are a lot of things we would have liked to work with. But I guess … There are some things that are ‘women’s issues’ (kvinnesak), and then there are some things that deal with other issues [racism and ethnic discrimination] which other interest groups work with (…)’

The assumption underlying the way this interviewee talks about the difference between ‘majority women’s issues’ and ‘minority women’s issues’, is that most of the latter issues - racism and ethnic discrimination - are not women’s issues. Other organisations work with issues which are relevant for minority women and she mentions for instance the Women’s Shelter movement and SOS Racism (SOS Rasisme). The majority women’s organisation this respondent is a member of, does not work with issues related to ethnic and religious discrimination, and considers that to be different issues. Some individuals in the organisation are engaged with either ‘women’s issues’ or ‘migrant issues’ in their jobs. Women’s issues are represented as different issues than anti-racism.

‘The focus on women’s issues has shifted. There has been a shift towards men and migrant women. These issues are important issues as well, but feminist women’s issues do not have the same focus and it should have.’

The interviewee argues that there has been a turn away from focusing on feminist women’s issues to issues concerning men and migrant women. This statement can be understood as a fear of losing attention to the organisation’s main women’s issues due to for instance the focus on FGM, forced marriages and the ‘hypervisibility’ of these issues. However, it can seem strange that she mentions men and migrant women in the same sentence. Her view of women’s rights can be understood within a ‘women vs. men understanding’ where gender equality is not yet accomplished and women’s rights need to be ensured. The feminist perspective,

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96 Anja Bredal (2007: 60) writes that issues like forced marriages and FGM have received a lot of attention in the media and this attention has resulted in hasty efforts by the government in order to combat this type of violence. However, these issues are not included in the long-term work against domestic violence.
according to the interviewee, is to view the world from a woman’s perspective. Then the question might be; what women? Ethnic minority women do not seem to be included in the category ‘women’.

Struggles of defining ‘women’ and ‘women’s interests’ are a part of the women’s movement. ‘The rhetoric that defines women as a distinctive constituency, instead of, within or against their other potentially competing allegiances and identities, is a critical element of what creates a women’s movement’ (Ferree and Meuller, 2007: 580). The category ‘women’ is often ‘equated in practice with “white women”, where whiteness is treated as an “unmarked category” and normative claims are made as if this category represented the whole’ (Ferree and Meuller, 2007: 580 with reference to Hull et al., 1982; Spelman, 1988; Collins, 1990).

Ferree and Meuller point out that the understanding of ‘women’ is central in defining ‘women’s interests’. This definition will decide whether certain issues of women’s oppression, like for instance ‘honour-related violence’ will be included or excluded as a ‘woman’s issue’.

Feminist issues represented as ‘political’ versus ethnic minority issues represented as ‘cultural’.

Yet another view on feminism in relation to minority women’s issues is illustrated by an interviewee from another majority women’s organisation:

‘We have several [political] strategies, but the most important thing is to make room. You can make room in different ways. (...) We go out aggressively and tough, and that is how we open up room for others who can say: ‘Yes, I’m a feminist, but not like them’. It is a different space than for example in Germany or England where they are for equal rights, but they are not feminists. In Norway we have made way and opened a room where you can call yourself a feminist, as long as you’re not part of [our organisation].’

This interviewee emphasises the importance of opening up the space for various feminisms in plural. In her view this is a strategic political strategy which enables different kinds of feminist activism. However, this interviewee argues that most minority women’s organisations in Norway - with a few exceptions - do not have a feminist agenda:
'It’s fine [to open up different kinds of feminism]. (...) but they [most migrant women] have special issues connected to their own ethnicity, being ethnic minorities. It is not connected to society at large. If you are a Pakistani or an Indian migrant girl it is probably harder than being Norwegian. But for the most part that is not because of how the society at large is treating them, it is mainly due to how they are treated by their families. (...) the reason why they are disadvantaged is because they have a different family culture, a different kind of oppression and cultural expectations regarding how they should live their lives and what choices and possibilities they have.'

The underlying assumption here seems to be that ‘cultural issues’ which minority women have to deal with are not considered to be feminist issues. In this quote ‘cultural issues’ are represented differently than ‘feminist issues’. Norwegian feminist organisations are fighting against structural discrimination of women, which is seen as universal issues, whereas ‘cultural issues’ are seen as something special and particular, and reserved for ‘ethnic minorities’. The naming of minority violence as ‘cultural violence’ and violence against majority women as ‘domestic violence’ is addressed by Anja Bredal (2007). According to Bredal, ‘honour killings’ has received much media attention and it has been described as ‘cultural’, whereas cases where ethnic Norwegian men kill their wives are called ‘family tragedies’. The latter case is viewed as a deviant case, whereas the first case is seen more as a rule. Bredal points out that majority violence against women is linked to gender, power and ‘structure’, while minority violence against women is linked to ‘culture’. She argues that the analytical understanding of structure versus culture is unclear, but more general, societal explanations are used to explain majority violence, whereas minority violence is simply explained by ‘culture’.

The interviewee also thinks that minority women themselves have to fight against minority culture which discriminates women:

‘Liberation has to be your own doing. We are a feminist organisation in Norway. Yes, we have become a more or less homogeneous society, and I don’t mind that. But I still live in Norway and we are a Norwegian organisation, not for Norwegians, but for all sorts of feminists. They [some migrant women] are not feminists of our kind, and we cannot make organisations for them.’

What seems to be unproblematised in this representation of ‘feminist issues’ versus ‘cultural issues’ is that the feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’ does not seem to
apply to minority women who deal with gender discrimination due to ‘a different family culture’.

‘Feminist actors have struggled in favour of a broader definition of the “political” that includes all the so-called “private” and “personal” issues, such as violence against women (…)’

(Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28)

‘Violence against women has been a central issue for the women’s movement since the 1970s, and related to this expansion of the issue of violence against women is the definition of the political, and the feminist critique of the gendered public/private dichotomy.’


However, oppression of women in ethnic minority families is within this representation, not considered to be structural oppression.

‘Many show up on March 8, for instance the Iraqi Communist Party; the Iraqi women and some of the Latin American women. The politically engaged [migrant women] show up. We [our organisation] work politically. We don’t have networks with refugees or work with cultural understanding. We are into politics. (…) so the politically engaged migrant women show up. We have been able to make March 8 for everyone. But not for those who are interested in food from Eritrea. Our members [with an ethnic minority background] have been really angry about that; because they are considered to be “ethnic” they are supposed to get integrated by the local communities and they are expected to sit with other women simply because they are foreigners, even if they don’t have anything in common. These women might have come here because they have been imprisoned [in their home country]. They didn’t come here to cook. They know how to cook as well, but that is not their agenda. So we [our organisation] is for [migrant women] like them.’

According to the interviewee, there is a sharp division between the politically engaged minority women and those minority women who are more into ‘culture’ and cooking ‘ethnic’ food. This distinction is probably a bit exaggerated by the interviewee in order to stress the point that the former category has a feminist political agenda regardless of ethnic background or colour, whereas the latter category does not have a feminist political agenda. However, this representation of ethnic Norwegian feminists and a few minority feminist women as politically engaged and other minority women as merely interested in cooking, constitute the former category as politically conscious women and the latter category as unconscious housewives. To be a feminist is in this view similar to acting politically in a certain

97 Violence against women and strategic framing of this issue will be elaborated in Chapter 7.
way (‘we go out aggressively and tough and that is how we open up room for others (…), ‘we are often furious, but we never whine’). Minority women’s organisations - also feminist ones - are described differently:

‘(…) that victim position, that is their [certain minority women’s organisation] livelihood, that is their voice. (…) to say ‘women’ and ‘black women’ - that is what it is [a victim position] (…)’

This way of being a feminist is not considered to be a ‘good’ political strategy. Norwegian feminist (and some minority women with the same feminist agenda) are constituted as active in this way of representation ‘feminism’, whereas minority women with a different agenda is constituted as passive. However, minority women are responsible for putting themselves in that victim position since that is part of their political strategy. The minority women’s organisations who are viewed as ‘housewife organisations’ and more into cooking and social activities on the other hand, are seen as ‘apolitical’.

The interviewee is also making a distinction between volunteer and democratic grass-roots activism on one side and actors who are paid by the state on the other. Organisations who receive a lot of money from the state and people who are paid to work for these organisations are seen as less nuanced and less independent, compared to grass-roots organisations based on volunteer work and democratic principles which are independent and more ‘free’ in regard to political opinions.

Another distinction is made between grass-roots feminist activism and feminist academics. ‘Feminist academic women’ are constituted as theoretical and abstract, whereas grass-roots activists are constituted as practical. In this representation, academic feminism is seen as passive and grass-roots feminism is active and able to change the world.

The interviewee also thinks black feminism is dividing the feminist movement in Norway.

‘In my opinion, feminism is feminism. It is on the basis of gender. It is the same discussion we had in relation to middle class feminism and working class feminism. (…) it is dividing and it is wrong. I mean that in regard to class and in regard to ethnicity. (…) to be a woman is more important than to be black.’
Black feminism is considered to be academic and American/British, in contrast to this ‘grass-roots’ organisation. Black feminism can also be seen as an American phenomenon due to problems in the American society. The interviewee emphasise that racist attitudes are incompatible with being a member of this organisation. However, in her view, Norway has a different history than the U.S., and according to the interviewee, there is no structural racial discrimination in Norway.

To sum up: Norwegian ‘grass-roots’ feminism is described as tough and aggressive and it opens up for other forms of feminist activism and feminist identity, also feminists who define themselves as different. However, a line seems to be drawn in regard to ethnicity; discrimination because of ethnicity/’race’ seems to be excluded as a part of the feminist agenda within this representation of feminism. Racism and ethnic discrimination is viewed as ‘special interests’, and ‘black feminism’ is considered dividing in a Norwegian context.

‘Grass-roots’ feminism is represented as ‘political’; it changes society by being active and practical, as opposed to academic feminism which is theoretical and passive. Further, ‘grass-roots’ feminism is independent, as opposed to actors with a minority woman’s political agenda who are paid by the state and therefore not ‘free’ in the same way. ‘Grass-roots’ organisations also challenge gender discriminating structures in society, as opposed to most minority women’s organisations who are engaged in ‘culture’, ‘ethnic’ food and social activities and they are in general apolitical.
6.6B Representations of Religion - a Site of Disagreement and Confusion

The representations of religion vary in the interviews. The issue of religion was often brought up in connection to minority women’s rights and the perceived differences between minority and majority women.

6.6.1B Representations of religion by minority women’s organisations
The link between religion and women’s rights was brought up by several of the interviewee’s in relation to minority/majority relations and the representation of ‘women’s issues’. However, the view of religion in relation to women’s rights differed significantly among the interviewees.

Gender equality and recognition of religion as competing claims

‘I think we have a lot of discrimination because of that religion [Islam]. We fight against that. We don’t tell a woman that she can’t be religious, but in my opinion a women can’t be equal within that religion because it is oppressing women. Men have the power, women don’t (...). So I am totally against religion - not only Islam, but all religions because they don’t promote women’s rights.’

This interviewee from a minority women’s organisation considers women’s rights more important than the recognition of religion. In her view the struggle for women’s liberation is also a struggle against religion which in her opinion is legitimising the suppression of women. She’s addressing the tension between claims of minority cultures or religions and the norm of gender equality which Susan Moller Okin’s (1999) refers to, and like Okin, she sees gender equality and recognition of religion as competing claims. Her organisation works for women’s rights and it is especially focusing on honour related violence both in her country of origin and in Norway. The organisation is thus focusing on problems that women are facing as a ‘minority within a minority’ in a Norwegian context. In her view ‘modern’ women have to ally with ‘modern’ men within the minority community against the ‘conservative’ men and women within the same community. The perspective of the interviewee can be interpreted within what is called minorities within minorities problem in normative political theory. This literature draws attention to the way groups can oppress internal minorities, in this case women, and the risk that policies of multiculturalism will reinforce power inequalities within groups (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005).
‘Women’s rights’ compatible with religion

A very different view is voiced by an interviewee from another minority women’s organisation:

‘(...) we’ve had a Quran group where the women have learned about rights. (...) we had this woman here who is highly educated in the Quran and she taught them about health and general knowledge, and about women’s rights. And the women also learned Norwegian, and they evolved, and they started to apply for jobs and different projects (...)

This interviewee emphasises the connection between Islam and women’s rights, and she does not consider religion and women’s rights to be contradictory. On the contrary, she argues that increased knowledge about the Quran will make women aware of their rights and subsequently empower minority women. A feminist interpretation of the Quran (see for instance Mernissi, 1985) will support this view. However, the interviewee does not make any references to Islamic feminism. In her study of Muslim youth organisations in Norway, Christine M. Jacobsen (2006) found that it was quite uncommon to link critique of gender injustice with ‘feminism’. ‘In general, the young associated the term ‘feminism’ with a paternalistic attitude towards Muslim women that constructed them as passive victims of patriarchal relations and traditions’ (Jacobsen, 2006: 250). According to Jacobsen (2006) these young Muslims were not familiar with academic feminist critique. However, their critique of ‘male bias’ in interpretations of Islam were in many ways similar. “Recovering Islamic truth, and separating the ‘cultural’ from the ‘Islamic’ was a common point of departure in order to further women’s rights” (Jacobsen, 2006: 251). In the representation in the quote above ‘women’s rights’ is viewed as compatible with Islam, and the empowering of women is seen as taking place within a religious frame. The minority women’s organisation she is a member of works against female genital mutilation (FGM), and they make a distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ by arguing that FGM is a cultural tradition, and it is not required by Islam.

The different quotes above illustrate different views among minority women regarding the issue of religion and women’s rights. Again, these varied views
underscore that the category minority women’s organisations is a very diverse category.

6.6.2B Representations of religion by majority women’s organisations

Religion as a difficult issue

Several of the interviewees from majority women’s organisations mentioned ‘religion’ as one aspect that makes cooperation and alliances between majority and minority women’s organisations difficult:

‘We [majority and minority women] sort of have different point of views; what are ‘women’s issues’? What is important? (…) both in regard to kindergartens and work, and in regard to religion and religious garments. I think there can be different point of views regarding those kinds of things, both among Norwegians and internally in the migrant associations. So … that makes it difficult (…)’

This interviewee mentions a minority group which her organisation tried to initiate contact with, and they put a lot of emphasis on religion. She mentions different views on religious garments, both within the majority women’s organisation and among ethnic minority women. The members of this majority organisation have had many discussions about issues related to minority women, but they find it hard to conclude. Different minority women’s organisations have different views on for instance religious garments like hijab, and it makes this a complicated issue. Religion is regarded as a ‘difficult’ issue, and some of the interviewees also found this issue difficult to talk about. Another interviewee addressed the difficult balance between religion and oppression of women:

‘There is a balance between religion and oppression of women. (…) Some of the minority women’s organisations who have contacted us are very strongly against Islam. They argued against hijab and wanted to forbid hijab. This view was hard to accept for many in my organisation. (…) [Some in my organisation] view Islam as anti-imperialistic (…)’

This interviewee expresses a difficult balance between respecting religion and the concern about women’s subordination in ethnic minority communities. However, here the problem is not that the minority women are religious, but rather that they are very anti-religious. The interviewee says that some minority women’s organisations have contacted them in hope for alliances in the battle against violence against women in their home countries. These organisations are very negative to Islam, and
the interviewee is referring to a meeting where these minority women argued for a law against the wearing of hijab. These minority organisations see Islam as the cause of women’s subordination. The majority organisation in this interview, on the other hand, sees Islam as an anti-imperialistic force against the leading capitalist parts of the world, and they view Islam as a liberating force in a South-North perspective (poor versus rich, solidarity with the poor ‘South’). There is a close link between some of the feminist organisations and political radical left in Norway and according to the interviewee the political radical left has a problematic view on Islam.

Different views on religion in relation to women’s issues among minority women’s organisations seem make religion a site for confusion and disagreement for some of the majority women’s organisations. There are also different views within the majority organisations.

6.7B Summary

The women’s organisations presented in this chapter represent a variety of organisations within the categories of ‘minority’ and ‘majority’. We have chosen to focus on how women from these organisations talk about majority/minority cooperation or alliances, and how the ‘problem’ of cooperation/non cooperation is represented in the interviews. In relation to the issue of cooperation and alliances, the general representation of ‘women’s issues’ has become relevant in the analyses: which issues are included and excluded within the various representations of ‘women’s issues’? We have been particularly interested in the intersection between ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’, and how the categories ‘women’ and ‘women’s issues’ were constructed in the interviews. The question of whether the fight against ethnic discrimination/racism should be included as a ‘women’s issue’ proved to be controversial, and in relation to this, there seemed to be a divide between minority and majority women’s organisations.

There were many interesting topics in our interview material regarding minority -majority relations, but some topics stood out and will be summed up and highlighted in this concluding section. Problem representations which were highlighted through the empirical analysis will be discussed in relation to their effects. Bacchi (1999: 45) addresses three general categories of such effects: firstly, the ways in which
subjects and subjectivities are constituted in the discourse; secondly, the effects which follow from the limits imposed on what can be said and uttered; and thirdly, what she calls ‘lived effects’ of discourse. Here, we will mainly focus on the second category: the discursive effects of the identified problem representations, however, the effects are also linked to each other.

6.8B Different Representations of Women’s Issues

The first topic is the inclusion or exclusion of ethnic discrimination in the representations of ‘women’s issues’. Through the empirical analysis we find a major difference - despite differences within both categories on how they talk about cooperation (or the lack thereof) - between majority and minority women’s organisations in their representations of ‘women’s issues’. Minority women’s organisations emphasise ethnic discrimination, especially in the labour market, as an issue within the definition of ‘women’s issues’ (some call it ‘double discrimination’). This representation addresses the intersection of racism and sexism in minoritised women’s lives (Crenshaw, 1991), and racism and sexism are included in the definition of ‘women’s issues’. Hence, discrimination based on gender and discrimination based on ‘race’ or the category ‘minority’, are not separate issues, but they intersect. The similarities between majoritised and minoritised women - the common challenges they face as ‘women’ - are emphasised. However, minoritised women also have to face discrimination in the workplace and in other parts of society because they are women and minoritised. This understanding suggests that the category ‘woman’ can be the most important category in one social context, whereas the interaction between the categories ‘women’ and ‘minority’ is crucial in other social settings (Andreassen, 2006). White feminism is represented to be narrow, in the sense that ethnic discrimination and racism are excluded from the majority feminist agenda. This representation of feminism echoes the criticism by Black feminists both in the US and in Norway (see for instance Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000; Salimi, 2004, and also Chapter 6A in this report).

A common theme in the minority interviews was the wish to widen the agenda of the women’s movement, and include issues like ethnic discrimination in the labour market and issues related to violence against ‘minority’ women. These
representations of ‘women’s issues’ challenged an ‘either/or’ rhetoric, where racism is viewed against sexism. Categories like gender, race and class are seen as mutually constituting each other. Gender hierarchy and race hierarchy are not separate and parallel dynamics (Crenshaw and Ensler, 2008).

The majority women’s organisations on the other hand, regard ethnic discrimination and racism as ‘different’ issues from ‘women’s issues’ - and they are not included in the way they represent ‘women’s issues’. Racism and ethnic discrimination is not included in the way ‘women’s issues’ are understood.

Some majority interviewees claimed that organisations like OMOD and Anti Racist Centre deal with issues like ethnic discrimination and racism, and argued that there is a division of labour among the voluntary organisations. This can be interpreted as a practical concern due to lack of resources, but it can also be interpreted as an exclusion of ethnic discrimination as a ‘women’s issue’. The statement that there has been a shift from focusing on women’s issues, to a focus on minorities and men’s issues also indicates that minority women are not included in the category ‘women’, and minority women’s issues, like for instance ethnic discrimination, is, therefore, not included in the way ‘women’s issues’ are represented.

In some of the interviews with women from majority women’s organisations, there is a representation of categories such as ‘gender’, ‘race’ and ‘class’ as different, and even competing categories. These categories are also ranked, and ‘gender’ is viewed as a more basic category than both ‘class’ and ‘race’. This is an underlying assumption where the interests of men, women and migrant women are seen as competing interests.

As discussed earlier, the understanding of the category ‘woman’ is central to the definition of ‘women’s interests’ and ‘women’s issues’ (Ferree and Meuller, 2007). One assumption among some of the majority respondents is that minority women are not interested in ‘women’s issues’, meaning issues particularly from a women’s perspective. This implies that ‘women’ is defined as ethnic Norwegian women, and here whiteness is treated as an ‘unmarked category’ (Ferree and Meuller, 2007: 580 with reference to Hull et al., 1982; Spelman, 1988; Collins, 1990).
When addressing the intersection of ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’, the discursive effects of different representations of ‘women’s issues’ and the category ‘women’ are brought out in the analyses. In the interviews with majority respondents, ethnicity is silenced, and when asked specifically about ethnic discrimination, for instance, there was a tendency to exclude this issue in relation to women’s issues. The representations illustrate an ‘either/or’ logic where ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’ are seen as mutually exclusive.

6.9B Different Representations of ‘Minority Violence’ - ‘Cultural’ or ‘Structural’ Violence?

There are divergence representations of ‘minority violence’ in the interviews. One representation is that minority violence is ‘special’ and explained by ‘minority culture’. An underlying assumption in this representation is that structural problems are the main problem for women’s liberation and gender equality in a Norwegian context, while oppression of migrant women is due to a different family culture, and different cultural expectations of girls within their ethnic community. Violence against minoritised women is explained by ‘cultural’ factors, while violence against majoritised women is explained by ‘structural’ factors.

Another assumption in this representation is that minority women are not oppressed by Norwegian society at large, but by the culture of their ethnic community. The fight against racism and ethnic discrimination is not included in the way ‘women’s issues’ are represented. One of the discursive effects of this representation is that violence against minority women is not included in the feminist battle against patriarchal structures. ‘Minority violence’ is excluded from this kind of feminist agenda. The violence is explained by the ‘culture’ of ethnic minorities and the effect of this representation is that the ethnic minorities themselves have the responsibility of fighting against it. ‘Minority violence’ is not viewed as a ‘women’s issues’, but rather as an ‘ethnic issue’.

This representation is in line with much of the media coverage of ‘honour killings’, where this violence is described as ‘cultural’, whereas cases where ethnic
Norwegian men kill their wives are called ‘family tragedies’. In this representation, majority violence against women is linked to gender, power and ‘structure’, while minority violence against women is linked to ‘culture’ (Bredal, 2007). Issues like female genital mutilation lose their contextual nuance, and become some form of violence against women ‘caused by culture’, rather than linked to domestic violence as such (Narayan, 1997: 103). Narayan (1997: 60) argues that the concepts of ‘culture’, ‘tradition’, and ‘religion’ are often unproblematised and understandings of these concepts are often simplistic, ahistorical, and apolitical. ‘Cultural explanations’ are used to explain violence against minority women, but such explanations are not used in order to understand violence against majority women. It is a tendency to use ‘culture’ to explain problems in minority communities, but that is seldom used as explanation for similar problems within majority communities (Narayan, 1997: 84-87).

Other representations in our data material challenge this ‘culturalisation’ of minority violence, and claim that both racism and sexism are structural phenomena, not only cultural phenomena. In this representation ‘violence against women’ in Norwegian society can include forced marriages, for instance.

There is a divergence between the way interviewees from majority and minority women’s organisations represent this issue. However, the different problem representations do not follow this majority - minority divide in all the interviews. In some of the interviews with respondents from majority women’s organisations, honour killing and forced marriages-so-called ‘minority violence’ - is represented to be a ‘structural’ problem due to ‘oppressive patriarchal structures in migrant communities’. Here violence by minority men is also connected to ‘structural discrimination’ by the majority society. In this representation of violence against minority women, ethnic discrimination is included in connection with ‘minority women’s issues’. However, in this representation of ‘minority violence’, the fear of contributing to further stigmatisation of migrants in Norway makes this issue more complicated than ‘majority violence’. Violence against women because of patriarchal structures in a majority context is, within this representation, viewed as ‘easier’ to work against. The categories ‘gender’ and majority/minority intersect, and different meanings of the category ‘men’ are produced and different effects are being produced. Hence, when women are victims of violence by majority men, this is
viewed as a traditional feminist issue where patriarchal structures, embodied by majority men, are to blame. However, when women are victims of violence by minority men, this complicates the issue. In this representation, patriarchal structures are still to blame, but by criticising migrant men, who themselves are victims of ethnic discrimination by the majority, this criticism can lead to further discrimination against ethnic minorities, both women and men. The effect of this problem representation is that minority violence is labelled as ‘difficult’, and this may lead to passivity and a fear of dealing with these issues.

6.10B Different Representations of Reminism

The view of feminism is another contested area in the interview material. Several of the minority interviewees were reluctant or even opposed to calling themselves or their organisation ‘feminist’. These minority respondents were very much in favour of gender equality, and emphasised women’s rights and the great opportunities for women in Norway. They argued that Norway is still not a 100 per cent gender equal society, but yet women in Norway have many possibilities. Some also wanted more collaboration with majority women’s organisations with regards to achieving a gender equal society and a widening of the feminist agenda. However, many distanced themselves from the label ‘feminist’ because the concept in their opinion, has a negative connotation. ‘Feminist’ was viewed as being ‘against men’, ‘anti-family’, ‘manly’ and ‘a macho woman’. A ‘feminist’ was interpreted as a negative kind of femaleness and this representation implies that a feminist is a single woman, maybe a lesbian. Some of the minority interviewees also emphasised that even if men and women should have the same rights and opportunities to get an education, a job and to share the domestic work, men and women also have different roles in the family in their country of origin, for instance in relation to the upbringing of children. This can be interpreted as a different view on gender roles in some minority families and a more complimentary family model. However, as pointed to earlier in the chapter, the public understanding of feminists as “man-haters” has not been unusual among the majority population in Europe, and also found in countries like Finland and West Germany (Bergman, 2004: 28). In several European countries, many of those who are in favour of gender equality resist the label ‘feminist’ (Lovenduski, 1997, in Bergman, 2004: 28).
Distancing themselves from the label ‘feminist’ can also be interpreted as a kind of resistance against majority feminist organisations, and an expression of the experience they have had with a lack of interest from feminist organisations. The impression of Norwegian feminist being ‘against men’, and the wish to work together with minority men can also be understood in light having common experiences of racism with men racism. This is found in studies of black women’s organisations in Britain where women welcomed men onto their premises, and the exclusion of men was seen as an aspect of white women’s organisations from which black women wanted to distance themselves (Sudbury, 1998).

Another representation in the interviews with minority women’s organisations is of black feminism as marginalised in the Norwegian women’s movement. The concept of ‘black feminism’ is linked to an anti-racist feminist perspective in the fight for women’s rights. The concept ‘black’ is closely linked to the anti-racist movement and in this representation of ‘black feminism’ it addresses the intersections of racism and sexism (see Crenshaw, 1991). ‘Black feminism’ and ‘desi-feminism’ are represented to be in the periphery, whereas ‘white feminism’ is in the centre. This centre-periphery metaphor represents a picture of majoritised women as the norm for being feminist and also for being a woman in a Norwegian context. Experiences of racism and discrimination combined with gender discrimination are not included in this ‘normative’ understanding of women’s experiences and women’s issues. Minoritised women are represented as ‘deviant’ and political identities such as being a black feminist were especially viewed as ‘deviant’.

Some of the interviews with majority women’s organisations illustrate a representation of Norwegian feminism as inclusive to a certain extent, but there is a divide between ‘feminists of our kind’ and ‘most migrant women’. In this representation there is an underlying understanding of feminist issues as ‘political’ and minority women’s issue as ‘cultural’. One of the interviewees argued that there is no relevant cooperation between majority and minority partners because most minority women’s organisations are not feminist and they are political organisations. As we have seen above, several of the minority interviewees distanced themselves from the ‘feminist’ label. The impression that minority women’s organisations are
primarily ‘cultural’ is supported by a study of immigrant organisations in Norway
where the majority of the organisations preferred to call themselves ‘cultural’
associations (74 per cent) while only a few would call themselves ‘political’
associations (five per cent) (Nyhagen Predelli, 2006: 38-39, see also Chapter 2).

However, what seems to be unproblematised in this representation of ‘feminist
issues’ versus ‘cultural issues’ is that the feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’
does not seem to be applied to minority women who deal with gender discrimination
due to ‘a different family culture’. The feminist struggle to expand the definition of
the ‘political’ in order to include all the so-called ‘private’ and ‘personal’ issues, such
as violence against women (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28), is left out of this
representation.

The discursive effect is that there seems to be a line drawn with regards to ethnicity;
discrimination because of ethnicity/’race’ seems to be excluded from the feminist
agenda within this representation of feminism. Racism and ethnic discrimination are
viewed as ‘special interests’, and ‘black feminism’ is considered divisive in a
Norwegian context.

As we have seen in this chapter, the response from majority feminists to the claim of
widening the feminist agenda differ. Some interviewees from majority women’s
organisations were positive about this claim, but found it very difficult to address
minority women’s issues, both because of the fear of addressing oppression within
minority communities, and thereby contributing to further stigmatisation, and
because of a diffuse emphasis on difficult ‘differences’ - which we will discuss further
in the following and last section of this chapter.

6.11B Minority Women’s Issues as ‘Different’ and ‘Difficult’

A common assumption by the majority interviewees was that minority women have
‘different interests’. This emphasis on ‘difference’ is very evident in the interview
material, and this ‘difference’ is used either to explain the lack of cooperation or it is
a sort of underlying assumption throughout the interviews. The many different
representations in the data material clearly indicate that there are a lot of different
views among minority women, but the important thing here is that this ‘difference’
seems to be understood as ‘difficult’ and confusing. Phenomena that seem
‘Different’, ‘Alien’, and ‘Other’, like female genital mutilation, cross borders more
easily than problems that seem more ‘familiar’ in an Western context. These issues
then become ‘minority women’s issues’ and receive a lot of attention both from
academics, feminists and a larger public audience (Narayan, 1997: 100). Maybe the
‘hypervisibility’ in the media of issues like forced marriages and female genital
mutilation linked to ethnic ‘minorities’ (Bredal, 2007: 60) has exaggerated the image
of minority women as ‘different’. In the interviews it was often been hard to get the
majority interviewees to elaborate on these ‘differences’. Some mentioned
differences in ‘religion’, others said ‘culture’.

The majority respondents also express a fear of being perceived as non-tolerant,
racist and contributing further to the stigmatisation of migrants in Norway. It was
argued that it is ‘difficult’ to state that forced marriages (and so on) are actual
problems among ethnic ‘minorities’ without saying that migrants themselves are a
problem. It is ‘difficult’ to say that racism is a bad thing and at the same time criticise
migrants because it can lead to further stigmatizing of migrants, especially Muslims.
This ‘multicultural dilemma’ between the recognition of religion and culture and the
concern about women’s subordination in minority cultures makes is very difficult to
cooperate with organisations representing minority women.

There seems to be a lack of an appropriate language to talk about these intertwined
complex issues: *either* you are tolerant regarding other religions and cultures, *or* you
are non-tolerant, see other cultures and religions as threats to Western democracy
and ‘our values’. One of the majority interviewees talked about many ‘ditches’ one
could fall into in trying to walk the fine line between criticising the oppression of
women within minority communities, *and* at the same time not stigmatising an entire.
The lived effects that are produced by this representation of minority women’s issues
as ‘different’ and ‘difficult’ suggest that there probably won’t be any alliances with
certain ethnic minority women’s organisations. The assumptions that underlie the
identified problem representation are firstly, that the view on Islam is too different
and secondly, the fear of being perceived as intolerant and racist. We see the link
here to the discourse of being ‘decent’ in a Norwegian context (see Hagelund, 2003, and Chapter 2 and 6A).

A possible effect is that nothing is likely to change within this language, unless this discourse is challenged and a new ‘language’ is created. The majority women’s organisations do not know how to handle the difficult balance between the recognition of religion and the concern about women’s subordination, so they end up doing nothing. This passivity is one of the issues Anne Phillips addresses in her book ‘Multiculturalism without Culture’ (2007). She writes that feminism has ‘become prone to paralysis by cultural difference, with anxieties about cultural imperialism engendering a kind of relativism that made it difficult to represent any belief or practice as oppressive to women or at odds with gender equality’ (Phillips, 2007: 1). Some of the representations presented in this chapter seem to illustrate the ‘multicultural dilemma’ and the passivity that Phillips addresses.
Claims-making and political opportunities and constraints for contemporary women’s movement organisations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we examine some of the opportunities and constraints that women’s organisations in Norway have highlighted during interviews about their possible influence on policy-making. The examination is based on interviews about the 1990s and the 2000s. The interviews have mainly focused on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism. However, ‘women’s issues’ in general and especially issues concerning the intersection between ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’ have been addressed. The focal point is on the organisational actors’ strategies and their experiences in relation to the organisations’ political influence. Moreover, we have interviewed key actors among civil servants and parliamentary politicians about their view of the organisations’ political influence. We also examined international work performed by interviewed organisations and the perceived importance such work has among organisational actors and government representatives. In addition we refer to the selective mapping of documents which is intended to compliment our findings from the interviews.

The analysis focuses mainly on contemporary policy processes. The initial focus was on the 1990s and 2000s. However, some of the interviewees have been active in the women’s movement since the 1970s and 1980s and could provide a longer time perspective, whereas most of the small membership-based minority women’s organisations in our study are about ten years old or less. Thus the primary focus has been the 2000s. The longer time perceptive provided by some of the respondents, however, include perspectives on change.

The first part of this chapter outlines the main features of the national political opportunity structures that provide opportunities and create constraints for women’s
organisations in their attempts to influence policy. The focus is on opportunity structures on the Norwegian state level, however some of the small local organisations also relate to their local municipality.

Following Koopmans et al., (2005: 19-20), we distinguish between general and field-specific institutional and discursive opportunities. The institutional side includes the structure of the ‘political system and the composition of the party system’, and the discursive side includes ‘established notions of who and what are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate’ (Koopmans, 2004: 451).

In connection with the discursive opportunities, the analysis is inspired by frame analysis. The frame concept refers to “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). Snow and Benford apply framework theory in order to analyse the dynamics of social movement theory.

In Chapter 6 the focus was primarily on the various representations of cooperation and conflict. The analysis showed how categories like ‘black and white feminists’, ‘women’ and ‘women’s issues’ were constructed in the interviews. In Chapter 6 our aim was to highlight the conceptual underpinnings of problem understandings (Bacchi, 1999), rather than the strategic framing for political purposes. In this chapter however, the focus is first and foremost on strategies applied by organisational actors in their attempt of influencing policy-making, and thereby also the strategic framing of certain issues. Strategic framing as a concept refers to ‘strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries’ (Verloo, 2005: 17).

According to Bacchi (2005) it is possible to talk about how a discourse frames an issue but when we start to talk about the ability to choose among competing frames, we have left the discourse theory for framework theory. Strategic framing of political claims is within the tradition of framework theory (Verloo, 2005).
Collective action frames are understood as intentional shaping of political claims. Some attention to the impact of ideology, described as collective beliefs, on the frames adopted, but the central concern is how to negotiate a frame that will work politically. This can and often does mean forming bridging frames that fit within cultural belief systems. However, the emphasis remains upon conscious shaping of frames that act to convert others to your cause and that advance desired political goals.’

(Benford and Snow, 2000, in Bacchi, 2005: 203)

The intention is crucial when we talk about strategic framing. However, our understanding of reality is always filtered through social and cultural filters, what Gadamer calls ‘prejudices’ (Gadamer, 1960, cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 32). According to Verloo and Lombardo (2007) this does not mean that actors passively reproduce cultural discourses, but “actors might provide a representation of a given policy problem that is more gender-, or race-biased than they actually wished’ (ibid.:32). The aim of a critical frame analysis is to expose these frames (ibid.).

7.2 Selective Inclusion: Institutional and discursive political opportunities in Norway

The political opportunities approach seeks to ‘link social movements, the state, and institutional policies’ (Kjellman, 2007: 4). The state establishes the political space available to movements, directly by legal institutional arrangements which govern the extent to which social movement groups can organise, by providing financial support, by setting limits on when and where they can engage in protest. The state can also directly constrict movements. Indirectly, the state can endorse policy that serves to coopt movement issues, or incorporate groups into the legislative process (ibid.: 9-10).

The Norwegian political system is described as accommodating, all-inclusive, unitary and relatively de-centralised. It has a fractionalized party system and a multiple cleavage structure, with neo-corporatism and consensus politics. The Norwegian way of influencing social protests is the selective inclusion or incorporation, the inclusion of a few selected groups (Kjellman 2007).
As we shall see, the political opportunities have changed considerably since the 1970’s for Norwegian women, independent of their construction as majority or minority women. Generally, however, women’s political mobilisation during the 1970’s onwards took place within a political system characterised by favorable institutional structures, generally speaking. There was a tradition for public funding of non-governmental organisations, hearings and consultations with established groups through a wide system of permanent or ad hoc committees and councils; a legitimate tradition of lobbying based on a short distance - symbolically - from those affected by policy changes to the decision-makers, and a multiparty political system in majority constituencies - which makes it easier for diverse groups to be represented than in a different political systems.

Kjellman (2007: 9) argues that ‘protest and mobilisation in Norway have evolved in relation to specific types of political opportunities’. He further claims that ‘while a singular focus on political opportunities, on their own, does not tell the entire story, a focus on the role of selective inclusion into the political process by certain groups, and the manner in which other groups have been excluded, is fundamental to understanding patterns over time in the Norwegian case’ (ibid.:9, my italics).

In the article Inclusion or Exclusion? The Norwegian State, Social Movements, and Political Opportunities, Kjellman operationalises political opportunities as the formal institutional structure, the informal procedures of authorities, the parliamentary arena, policy implementation capacity, and the extent of democratic rights (Kjellman, 2007: 141). As to the first dimension, the formal institutional structure, the number of meaningful access points for mobilising groups gives an indication of the centralisation of the state. The Norwegian unitary system provides significantly fewer access points compared to federalist systems (Lijphart 1999, in Kjellman 2007: 144). Another feature of the formal institutional structure in Norway is the established pattern of neo-corporatist interest mediation. Since the mid-80s there has been an increased role for parliament in decision-making, but the corporative channel remains important (Nordby, 1994; Heidar og Bertnzen, 1995; Bortne et al., 2001, in Kjellman 2007: 144).
The second dimension of political opportunities, namely informal procedures, is
defined as ‘the shared implicit or explicit understandings of the political process and
movement groups that guide the actions of authorities’ (ibid.: 148). According to
Kjellman (2007: 149-150) there is a tradition of consensus politics in Norway, and it
is based on compromise and negotiation. The Norwegian state is inclusive towards
new societal interests. However, this inclusion comes at a price and groups are
expected to be moderate and possess skills that are of use to the authorities
(Kjellman 2000, in ibid.: 159). States have the power to define the terms of the
debate and inclusion of challenging groups can be a way for states to pacify them
and to preserve their own interests (Kriesi et al., 1995, Kjellman, 2007: 149).

The third dimension, the parliamentary arena, ‘serves to temper the degree of
centralisation in the Norwegian political system’ (Kjellman, 2007: 150). Compared to
a two-part system, the Norwegian parliament is factionalized and contains several
small and medium size parties. This creates more openings and access to social
movement groups (Aardal, 1993: 90, in Kjellman, 2007: 151). However, not all
movement groups will be included in the same way, and the parliamentary arena is
also selectively inclusive (ibid.:151-152).

Policy implementation capacity, the state’s ability to formulate and implement public
policy, is a fourth dimension of political opportunities. In Norway the state is seen as
strong on the policy output side. This dimension is viewed as an incentive for social
movement actors. However, this may vary over time and from area to area (ibid.: 153).

The last dimension is democratic rights. Norway is ‘generally described as having
one of the worlds’ most advanced and flourishing democracies’ (see Kjellman, 2007:
155). However, general descriptions are sometimes not accurate for all groups, for
instant immigrant groups. Another point made by Kjellman (2007: 156) is that
identities of social movement actors ‘based on inclusion or exclusion will in part be
constructed around perceptions of, or actual lack of democratic rights; [and] these
identities (…) will in turn influence the strategy choices by movement groups’.

In line with Kjellman we conclude that the Norwegian state is ‘selectively inclusive’:
‘It is, one the one hand, inclusive in that its formal structure allows movement groups access to decision-making processes through the neo-corporate channel, the administrative bureaucracy, and the parliamentary arena. (…) on the other hand, the Norwegian state is also one that can be described as exclusive. Its level of centralization - as compared to federalist states - provides fewer access points for movement groups (…), and by virtue of its lack of an independent judicial branch. It is further exclusive because, while authorities may grant concessions to protesters, they also have the discretionary capacity to keep them outside decision-making processes, grant access but not influence, or they can attempt to stifle extra-parliamentary challenges through direct repression.’ (ibid.: 79-80).

Integration into the political process is like a double-edged sword, however. It can lead to co-optation and institutionalisation of movements and the price to pay can be ‘moderation and bureaucratization, as well as alienation from grassroots elements’ (Dryer et al 2003:193, Kjellman, 2007:82). Another effect of inclusion can be ‘a shift towards hierarchical and professionalised organisational forms’ (ibid.: 89-90).

On the other hand, selective inclusion means that certain interests and movements organisations are excluded and there is a risk of creating dissatisfaction among groups not represented (ibid.: 146).

**Selective inclusion of women and ethnic minorities**

According to Siim and Skjeie (2004) there is an emphasis on active citizenship in Scandinavia. The social democratic conception of citizenship is ‘an active, participatory and egalitarian ideal’ (Hernes, 1987: 139, in Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 150). This social democratic model of the citizen is closer to the republican than the liberal tradition of citizenship. However, it has been interpreted as a third model of citizenship with a specific gender profile (Hernes, 1987, Siim, 2000, in Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 149). The Norwegian political scientist Helga Hernes has used the term ‘state feminism’ to describe the Norwegian political system (Hernes, 1987).

‘State feminism’ is defined as ‘a combination of women’s political mobilisation “from

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98 The republican citizenship model focuses on participation and the development of joint ethical community, but not so much on redistribution and protection of privacy. The liberal citizenship model emphasises ‘the part-time citizen’ and personal autonomy, rather than participation rights. This social democratic conception of citizenship focuses on participation, the political unity is a cultural and ethnic community, and there is no sharp divide between state and society. But in contrast to the republican ideal, the social democratic model emphasises social equality and economic security (Holst, 2006: 9-10).
below”, in social movements and voluntary organisations, and the political integration “from above”, in political parties and institutions.’ (Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 149).

The claims of active citizenship are consistent with the conclusions in *Comparative State Feminism* (Stetson and Mazur, 1995). Norway was ranked among the “high state feminist countries”, where women participated actively outside feminist groups as well as in established trade unions and political parties, and women were equally attracted to newer autonomous liberation movements and to the mainstream political and moderate reform-oriented groups. Radical feminist groups concentrated on consciousness-raising and moderate feminist group pressured political party elite and politicians to establish feminist women’s policy machinery.

The ideal of ‘state feminism’ has been criticised, however, for having some ‘blind spots’, such as underemphasising other dimensions than gender, and a reduction of citizenship to representation at the expense of public deliberation (Holst, 2006).

Corporative pluralism is ideally a system where affected parties are being heard and where they can participate in shaping decisions. However, this system is “open to criticism that it favours skewed participation patterns and closed decision-making processes (Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 152).

Stein Rokkan (1987) describes two channels to political influence in the Norwegian political system; the numerical-democratic channel and the corporate-pluralist channel. Skjeie and Teigen (2007: 23) write that these two main political structures represent ideal types at each end of a scale. Participation in the parliamentary democracy is based on individuals, whereas participation in the corporate channel is group based. Participation in the *formal* corporative channel includes 1) tri-partite bargaining between unions, the private sector (capital), and government, 2) publicly appointed boards and commissions that prepare policy initiatives and 3) participation in hearings (consultations on proposals that the Ministry send to affected parties; public and private institutions, organisations and other ministries). *Informal* participation includes lobbying and dialogue.
The corporate channel is part of the structure of the political system in Norway which gives collective actors like women’s organisations an institutional opportunity to influence policy-making. The corporate channel also has a discursive side, since the invitation structure to public hearings and the composition of publicly appointed boards and commissions will tell us which actors are seen as reasonable, sensible, and legitimate (Koopmans, 2004: 451).

In an article from 2007, Skjeie and Teigen ask whether the term ‘state feminism’ is an accurate description of the actual decision-making system. They conclude that ‘state feminism’ is ‘limping’, and they elaborate this statement by claiming that the politics of inclusion has prioritised individual and gender balanced representation in decision-making arenas, in the election channel. The inclusion of gender-based political organisations in the corporate channel, the other hand, has not been implemented on equal terms with other organised interests (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 35). Skjeie and Teigen (2007) point to exceptions in this overall picture, where organisational interests based on gender and ethnic minority have been included, which are reforms in the gender equality law and legal regulations to reduce forced marriages. However, this suggests a selective inclusion which contributes to isolation and segmentation of the gender equality policy (ibid.: 35).

Skjeie and Teigen (2007: 25) identify two different tracks in the way of including ethnic minorities and women as affected parties. Minorities’ participation and inclusion, aside from participation in elections, are limited to organisations and the corporative channel, while participation of women is based on an individual and gender balanced inclusion in the election channel. Women’s organisations in civil society do not have a central role in the corporative channel. Ethnic minority organisations are included, however, the inclusion is limited and ad hoc, and it is controlled by the government. The collective inclusion of ethnic minorities, which Skjeie and Teigen (2007: 25) call a multicultural approach to inclusion, have been criticised by feminists because group based claims can violate women’s rights (ibid.: 26).

Skjeie and Teigen (2007) refer to Nyhagen Predelli’s (2003) study of minority women’s organisations in Norway about their participation in decision-making
processes. Their inclusion is limited, and mainly in connection to ‘crisis policies’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 35), namely violence against women; honour-related violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriages.

**Funding**

State funding for ethnic Norwegian and migrant organisations were established during the early 1970’s as a way of including the new immigrant population. State funding of women’s organisations was established in the first national Action plan for gender equality in 1981 (see also Chapter 2).

The member-based majority women’s organisations can apply for funding through a financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues. They can apply for a general operating grant from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). The organisations have to have at least fifty paying members. The minimum amount per year in 2008 is 25000 NOK. It is also possible to apply for activity and project funding.

There are different types of public funding for voluntary ethnic minority/migrant organisations in Norway (Eggebø, Halsaa, Skjeie and Thun, 2007: 16-19, Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 25). The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) manages two main types of government funding: One type of funding is the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. This is a general operating grant (Nødland, Allred, Berg, Opedal, 2005: 7).

‘The primary objectives [for the support scheme for nationwide organisation] are to strengthen the rights of minorities and to strengthen their participation and integration in society. Secondary goals are; to increase knowledge of needs and interests of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants; to strengthen equality and secure minority rights; to fight racism and discrimination; and finally to increase contact, dialog and cooperation between people with immigrant background and the rest of

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99 White Paper No. 74 on Immigrants in Norway 1979-80 (St.meld. nr. 74 Om innvandrere i Norge 1979-80).
101 [http://www.bufetat.no/filestore/Bufetatno-dokument/Tilskudd/Familie_og_likestilling/RundskrivQ-17-08.pdf](http://www.bufetat.no/filestore/Bufetatno-dokument/Tilskudd/Familie_og_likestilling/RundskrivQ-17-08.pdf)
The organisations receiving nationwide financial support do not have to be organised by migrants, but they have to work for migrants, and the aims have to be to ‘secure the interests of migrants and asylum seekers in society’ (Statskonsult, 2000: 30, in Mjelve, 2003: 174).

In 2007, ten organisations were given this financial support. These organisations were African Youth of Norway (AYIN), the Anti-racist centre (Antirasistisk Senter), Human Rights Service (HRS), The Immigrant National Organisation in Norway (Innvandrerens landsorganisasjon, INLO), Christian Intercultural Association (CIA) (Kristens Interkulturelt Arbeid, KIA), The MiRA Resource Centre for black, immigrant and refugee women in Norway (MiRA Ressurssenter), The Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers (Norsk organisasjon for asylsøkere, NOAS), Institution against Public Discrimination (Organisasjon mot offentlig diskriminering, OMOD), SOS Racism (SOS Rasisme), and Self-help for immigrants and refugees (Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger, SEIF) (Eggebø et al., 2007:17).

Some of these organisations are membership based and democratic, whereas some are non-profit organisations. Those that are not membership organisations have to have people with a minority background on their board. ‘Nationwide’ is widely defined and includes issues with a nationwide relevance, cooperation partners, organisational structure, inquiries and so on. The organisations should speak on behalf of ethnic minority interests across ethnic groups in the migrant population. The organisations should not overlap each other with regard to regarding their expertise and their work (Nødland et al., 2005).

According to Nødland et al., (2005) there are three nationwide organisations which deal specifically with women related issues: MiRA, SEIF and KIA. More recently, HRS have been included in the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and this organisation also has a focus on women.
The other type of funding managed by IMDi and the local provinces in Norway is the financial support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity. This support scheme consists of two parts: a general operating grant, which only immigrant/minority organisations can receive, and financial support for specific activities, which are not only for immigrant/minority organisations (Nødland, Hidle and Kvaale, 2007:7). The migrant population is defined as “people living in Norway, born in countries outside the EEC [European Economic Community] area, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and their children” (http://www.imdi.no/upload/Retningslinjer_A4.pdf, my translation). These local organisations have to be membership based and democratically organised.

‘The main objective of the financial support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity is to facilitate minority integration and participation in civil society.’ (Nødland et al., 2007: 7). An evaluation report by Nødland et al.,(2007) shows that the support scheme has had an impact on the organisational developments of immigrant/minority organisations. ‘The majority of these organisations are dominated by a specific national or ethnic group, even though there are also multicultural organisations’ (Nødland et al., 2007: 7). The report concludes that these organisations ‘first and foremost are important meeting points for their specific group(s)’ (ibid.: 7). Nødland et al., (2007: 8) write that a main challenge is to ‘balance the needs of immigrants to organise themselves based on nationality, ethnicity, cultural background or religious conviction and to promote relations across these categories’. Local immigrant women’s organisations can apply for funding through this support scheme.

For the year 2008 the government also has extra project support for organisations that work against forced marriages. This is part of the Action Plan against forced marriages (2008-2011). Projects against forced marriages and female genital mutilation (FMG) have also been prioritised earlier within the financial support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity.

Most of the organisations in our study receive money from the state. Some, primarily the membership-based majority women's organisations, receive a general operating grant and/or project money for voluntary organisations which work politically with family- or gender equality issues. Some of the 'professionalised' NGOs receive financial support in the form of a general operating grant as nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the membership-based minority women’s organisations receive a general operating grant and/or activity/project support as local immigrant or minority organisations.

There are also a few organisations in our study which do not receive money from the state. The financial support schemes illustrate the separate spheres of ‘gender equality issues’ and ‘immigrant/minority’ issues. These institutional opportunity structures also indicate a discursive understanding of majority women’s organisations as working politically with ‘gender equality issues’ whereas minority women’s organisations mainly work with ‘immigrant/migrant issues’.

The general view of our interviewees was that there was a lack of resources:

‘The financial support for women’s organisations is quite small compared to other organisations. (…) we have raised this issue and addressed the Ministry. Now we have received a bit more support than earlier, but I think women’s organisations don’t get that much compared to other voluntary organisations.’

‘Women’s organisations in Norway receive very little money, in contrast to environmental movements and Mållaget [Noregs Mållag, “The Language Organisation of Norway”] - that type of organisation. That means that we’ve never had paid staff. We have never had a professional apparatus and that is very notable. (…) things are getting worse and worse. The media and internet. The media expects a whole different level of service; they expect you to be available, they expect you to “feed” them. This has changed in the last 15 years. (…) it is a larger pressure and we don’t have a professional apparatus to handle that, we have never been able to afford that. On the other hand, it is also a strength because you have to do everything yourself.’

These quotes by interviewees from majority women’s organisations illustrate dissatisfaction with the financial support from the state. In their opinion, women’s organisations receive less money than other voluntary organisations, which can be

103 Managed by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Bufdir.

104 Both managed by the Directorate for Immigration and Diversity, IMDi.
interpreted as the authorities putting women’s issues at the bottom of their list of priorities. The majority women’s organisations have addressed the issue of funding with the Ministry of Children and Equality. Here they cooperated on a common demand and this resulted in an increase of the support, however, not enough, according to the interviewees.

The interviewees from the minority women’s organisations also raised the issue of financial resources as a barrier in their work:

‘That is where we have stopped. (…) we don’t have the money to update our web-page. (…) we have done a lot of things, but it’s not visible on our web-page. (…) a friend of mine made the web-page for free, but she’s not working on that now. So it’s difficult to get someone to help us with that.’

‘There is always hope that we can do more; help more women. I know there are a lot of women that need more help. But we are not a big organisation with a lot of resources and many women who can help. That is the problem. (…) I think the things we do are good, but it’s not enough.’

‘Oslo municipality does not support the general operating of the minority organisations. Norwegian authorities only support different projects; you only get money to do different projects. So that is a problem we’re having.’

The interviewees from the small local minority women’s organisations said that it is difficult to do all the things they would have wanted to do because they do not have enough money. Several of them did not receive a general operating grant from the municipality and they have to rely on membership fees and project funding. However, they think applying for project money is time-consuming and stressful since everything is based on voluntary work. It involves a lot of work and they are not guaranteed to get the money they apply for. Some of the interviewees argued that organisational work is a very good way for minority women to get engaged and to become active citizens, however, the authorities have to make this possible.

Another problem the organisations face which is related to limited resources is the lack of a permanent meeting place:

‘2-3 years ago we rented at a Women’s House [Kvinnehus], but it was torn down. It was cheap rent which was good considering our lack of money. It was nice and we [different organisations] had more contact as well.’
‘There are so many things we would like to do, so many things we would have liked to worked actively with. (...) but we don’t have an office or a place where people can come. (...) I know that [our organisation] could have been a strong organisation if we had the opportunities; if we had the financing and the support. Because I know that there is a need for us. (...) there is a lot to be done. (...)’

‘(...) as long as we don’t have a permanent place to meet, as long as we don’t have the possibility to finance it [a meeting place], we’ve lost much of the activity and the engagement we had in the beginning. Then we met on a regular basis and we were able to progress. Now we just have to figure out a way. So the work of our organisation is now very much based on project-related activities; we participate in smaller groups and work with our respective projects.’

The interviewees stressed that not having a permanent place for the organisation to meet was a real barrier in their work. They could not afford to rent a place and that directly affected the work of the organisation. One interviewee said that they had lost much of the activity and the engagement they had in the beginning and it can also be difficult to recruit new members. Several of the interviewees would like a house where several women’s organisations could have offices and they think that would strengthen the possibility of more cooperation, also between minority/majority women’s organisations.

A common concern for the majority and the minority women’s organisations was that they did not have enough money to do all the work that they would want to. Some said that they would want to have at least one paid employee to apply for project money, which they all said is quite a lengthy procedure, or at least pay someone to do accounting, run the web-page and things like that. They also emphasised the increased pressure from the media, and the need to be available and to be visible in the media in order to put issues on the political agenda. The interviewees also said that the lack of resources was hindering them because they could not participate in all the channels of influence which they would have liked to. The lack of resources meant they had to do a difficult prioritising of different means in order to influence politically. When they could not have paid staff that also meant that it was difficult to attend conferences and seminars during the day, and several of the interviewees had examples of meetings and conferences initiated by the Ministries where the organisations were unable to attend because the members are at work during the daytime.
However, several of the interviewees also expressed an ambivalence concerning funding from the state. They emphasised their role as voluntary organisations and their independent role in relation to the state. Some of the interviewees also point at the lack of general operating grants to the small minority women’s organisations, and expressed concern about the critical potential of these organisations due to their dependence on project-funding. Small organisations which have financial problems might become afraid of criticising the state because they are afraid of losing their financial support.

Another criticism was related to the increased professionalisation of the ‘minority field’. One interviewee from a minority organisation criticised the state for giving the financial support to professionalised organisations and experts. Minority women’s organisations have put certain issues on the agenda, however when the resources are there, they do not get it. According to the interviewee, most of the money goes to ethnic Norwegian organisations (see also about ‘ethnic industry’ in Chapter 6). Those who cooperate with the state get project funding, she claimed, and argued that this was a setback for critical voices. Further research needs to be done to substantiate which kinds of women’s organisations and other organisations receive of financing.

*Field-specific opportunities; violence against women*

According to one of the interviewed civil servants, the gender dimension was brought into immigrant issues in the mid-90s. The white paper No. 17 (1996-1997) about immigration and multicultural Norway\(^\text{105}\) specifically addressed issues relating to women, whereas previously, immigrants had been dealt with as one group regardless of gender. Forced marriages were put on the political agenda, which was also helped by the media and the publishing of the book ‘Izzat’ written by Nasim Karim. The first Action Plan against forced marriages was introduced in 1998. Across-ministerial working group were set up including BFD (The Ministry of Children and Family, now the Ministry of Children and Equality), KRD (The Ministry of Local

Government and Regional Development\textsuperscript{106}, and the Ministry of Justice and Police. A parallel process happened with the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), and the first Action Plan against FGM was introduced in 2000. The Ministry of Children and Equality now bears the main responsibility for working against forced marriages and FGM.

2000 was also the year of the first Action Plan against domestic violence. Across-ministerial working group also prepared this Action Plan; however, The Ministry of Justice and Police had and still has the coordination responsibility for the first Action Plan and the subsequent two plans against domestic violence. According to one of the civil servants, the decision to place the coordination function with the Ministry of Justice and Police was a strategic effort to place the responsibility with a strong Ministry with many resources. If the responsibility was placed with the Ministry of Children and Family at the time, a weaker ministry with less financial resources, that would not have been a tactical choice. However, the choice of giving the responsibility of coordinating the Action Plans against forced marriages and FGM may be interpreted as a sign of a low political will to implement these action plans.

According to one of the civil servants, the divide between ‘immigrant’ violence, like forced marriages and FGM and the ‘ordinary’ partner violence was institutionalised back in 2000. She claims that later attempts by people working in the ministries to deal with these issues jointly have been difficult because two different ministries have the main responsibility.

Another interviewed civil servant also emphasises that forced marriages and FGM obviously are part of the definition of domestic violence, however, there are special Action Plans because there is a need for special measures against these forms of violence, and there is a need for specialist knowledge. However, she also thinks that the real reason is a more practical concern: the Ministry of Justice and Police would not be able to handle all the Action Plans, so the responsibility is divided.

\textsuperscript{106} KRD was responsible for immigration and integration at the time, now the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.
In general, the interviewed civil servants and the parliamentary politicians describe the Norwegian political system as quite open and accessible, also at a high level of government. In their opinion it is quite possible for women’s organisations to get in contact with the government and the access thresholds into the ministries are low. The ministries also try to have informal contact with the ‘field out there’ and they often invite organisations to ‘brainstorming meetings’ before preparing an Action Plan. This is consistent with Nyhagen Predelli’s report from 2003 where she claims that minority women in part have extensive influence on policy formation, mostly through informal meetings (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003: 141).

When asked which authorities they considered important in their political work, several of the interviewed women’s organisations mentioned the Parliament (Parliamentary politicians from different parties) and the Ministries, especially the Ministry of Children and Equality. Some also mentioned the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Research and Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (related to international work). Some of the small local women’s organisations also mentioned the municipal authorities.

Several of the organisations also mentioned Bufdir (the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) and IMDi (the Directorate of Integration and Diversity), both of which manage the different financial support schemes for voluntary organisations.

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud is mentioned by several of the interviewees. The new Ombud was established January 1st 2006. The Ombud’s mandate is to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. The Ombud upholds the law and acts as a proactive agent for equal opportunity throughout society (the Gender Equality Act, the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion etc. (the

Discrimination Act), and the regulations regarding equal treatment provided in the Labour Environment Act and the anti-discrimination regulations provided in the housing legislation). The Ombud is also responsible for checking that Norwegian legislation and practice are in compliance with Norway’s duties under CEDAW (United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and CERD (United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) (http://www.ldo.no/no/).

The interviewees were divided in their response to the new Ombud. Particularly interviewees from some of the majority women’s organisations were reluctant to the new Ombud:

‘We now have the new Ombud, and we have been very concerned as to how that will work for the women’s issue.’

‘Our organisation was very opposed to closing down of the Gender Equality Ombud [Likestillsombudet] and the Gender Equality Council [Likestillsrådet]. We didn’t want that to be joined with the others [the Centre for Equality and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination]. (…) we gave a statement about this.’

‘We think that the committees should have been constituted differently, and also how they were appointed. (…) the ‘traditional’ women’s organisations were not present. (…) they should have been more involved in the working groups and committees (…)’

These interviewees were concerned that the ‘women’s issues’ and discrimination based on gender would gain less attention when it becomes amalgamated with other strands of discrimination. The quotes also indicate that the ‘traditional’, here meaning ‘feminist’ organisations, were not consulted during the process of moving towards this institutional change. These responses from majority women’s organisations indicate that Stetson and Mazur’s conclusion from 1995 regarding Norway as ranking high on access and influence may no longer be ascertained (Stetson and Mazur, 1995). The minority women’s organisations and the professionalised organisations working on issues relating to ethnic discrimination and racism were more optimistic. However, one interviewee said that SMED (the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination) had a slightly different role than the new Ombud, and SMED could to a larger degree follow up single-issue cases.
The reorganising of the Ombud was quite new when the interviews were conducted and many of the interviewees had a ‘wait and see’ attitude.

### 7.3 Limited Discursive Space

In this section we will mainly focus on the discursive opportunities and barriers that organisational actors face in their political work. The institutional and the discursive opportunities are closely linked, however here we will primarily examine the discursive side: what issues and demands and also which actors are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate (Koopmans, 2004: 451)? We will specifically focus on violence against minority women, but also ‘women’s issues’ in general, and the framing and attempts at reframing these issues (Snow and Benford, 1992; Verloo, 2005).

*Cultural framing of minority violence and a narrow picture of minority women’s issues*

Violence against women has been a central issue for the women’s movement since the 1970s, and there has been a continuous expansion of the way this issue has been framed:

> ‘When the Women’s Shelters were started in 1978 this issue [violence against women] was seen as a private matter. But through this struggle which has been led by many actors, the attitudes have changed. A parallel process has been the general view of violence; earlier it was only physical violence, whereas now there’s also the psychological violence, the consequences for children, a larger focus on rape in recent years, and also forced marriages, female genital mutilation, prostitution and trafficking. So there has been a process regarding what has been considered to be violation of women.’

According to this interviewee, the women’s movement has succeeded in widening, and thereby reframing, the issue of violence against women. Related to this expansion of the issue of violence against women is the definition of the political, and the feminist critique of the gendered public/private dichotomy (Pateman, 1987 and Okin, 1991, cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28). ‘Feminist actors have struggled in favour of a broader definition of the “political” that includes all the so-called “private” and “personal” issues, such as violence against women (…)’ (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28).
However, the interviewees mentioned several barriers in their attempts to influence politically:

‘There is a general resistance regarding this issue [violence against women]. But when I ask for meetings at the Parliament or with Ministers, I seldom get a ‘no’. (...) Do I an impact every time? I don’t.’

‘Why do you think only women have been dealing with women’s issues all these years? Because these issues are related to taboo and shame. Resistance - it is because we sort of accuse men. What is it with these men who continue to beat women?’

These quotes say that the organisations have met a general resistance because the issue is violence against women. It indicates that this is a ‘women’s issues’ and, therefore, an issue with low status and priority. Violence against women is connected to shame and taboo, but is also a criticism of men. Still the organisations have experienced that they have been included as legitimate actors by politicians.

However, several of the interviewees from both majority and minority women’s organisations highlighted the fact that that violence in relation to minority and majority women is understood differently:

‘It is hard to try to give a more nuanced picture [about violence against minority women]. We [majoritised Norwegians] love to have others at the bottom of the pecking order and to criticise immigrants’ culture. But violence against women happens in all cultures. (...) we try to show what ethnic Norwegian men do to women. We try to use statistics; violence and the consequences of violence are practically similar (...)’

‘When we talk about minorities [and violence against women], it is seen in an immigration perspective. And then we go and change the immigration laws, instead of seeing this [violence against minority women] in a gender equality perspective and a human rights perspective. So therefore, when we do lobbying, we have to be extremely cautious regarding what we say. What happens? They change the laws in order to make it more difficult for minorities to enter this country. We don’t want that.’

These quotes illustrate an intended and strategic effort to reframe the issue of ‘minority violence’. There is also an understanding of a dominant cultural framing of ‘minority violence’ where this is seen as a form of violence which is ‘cultural’ and ‘special’. As mentioned earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 6, the Government Action Plans in Norway regarding violence, with one general plan against domestic
violence, and two separate plans against forced marriages and female genital
mutilation also underscore this representation and generates a divide between
‘general’ violence and ‘special’ violence, where the latter category is linked to ethnic
minorities (Bredal, 2007: 57-58).

In the second quote above, the interviewee says that violence against minority
women is seen in ‘an immigration perspective’, and she links it to a more restrictive
immigration policy. In an article from 2007, Connie Roggeband and Mieke Verloo
analyse how the framing of gender and migration has changed from 1995 to 2005 in
the Netherlands, and they argue that the problem of integration has been
increasingly defined as being a cultural problem. In this problem representation
there is an implicit understanding of the majority culture as unproblematic. The
unequal gender relations in the migrant culture (primarily among Muslims) are seen
as problematic. In this period Roggeband and Verloo (2007: 280) identify two
parallel shifts where migrant women are seen as key to integration of minorities in
the integration policy, and where migrant women also became the central subject in
gender equality policy. Culturally legitimized violence against women became a
main focus in this new dominant framing. During the time period from 1995 to 2005,
the central problem has changed from being a social structural problem related to
issues like education and the labour market, to a strictly cultural problem.
Discrimination by the majority society is not mentioned (ibid.: 280-281).

Christine M. Jacobsen and Randi E. Gressgård (2002) have analysed the white
paper No. 17 (1996-1997) about immigration and the multicultural Norway108 and
they also found that immigrant tradition and culture is seen as the problem of
integration. The issues relating to immigrant women that are mentioned are forced
Nyhagen Predelli (2003) and Skjeie and Teigen (2007) in the problematic way
gender and ethnic equality are related: gender equality as the norm and ethnic
inequality as the deviant.

The quote above indicated that this dominant cultural framing of minority violence is also evident in a Norwegian context, and the interviewee finds it hard to challenge this understanding of ‘minority violence’ as ‘special’ and ‘cultural’. However, the quotes also indicate a conscious strategy of reframing this definition of ‘minority violence’ into a ‘gender equality frame’ and a ‘human rights frame’.

One of the interviewees from a minority women’s organisation emphasised the problem of framing violence against minority women as ‘cultural’:

‘It is problematic to have a huge divide between migrants and Norwegians because of culture. For instance a girl who has been beaten up at home, and they say; ‘but that is how it is in your culture’ or ‘you can’t be with a boy with a different religion. That is not allowed in your culture’. That irritates me. A Norwegian girl, I mean both girls and boys have the same rights. When I grow up in Norway, why should I be treated any different? There is a huge difference between Norwegians and migrants because of the respect for my culture. I don’t have any respect for a culture which means discrimination and suppression. And religion is an excuse for all these suppressions. That is the problem.’

The cultural framing can lead to a misunderstood ‘respect of culture’ where ‘culture’ is the explanation and also an excuse of perpetrating violence. One interpretation of this quote is that a reframing of this issue into a human rights issue would be a better strategy in the work against violence against women.

As we saw in Chapter 6, some of the problem representations of ‘minority violence’ in the interviews with women from majority women’s organisations illustrated a view of ‘minority violence’ as ‘cultural’. This cultural framing also leads to a fear of interfering:

‘We are very aware that we can’t come and tell them [minority women] how things are supposed to be. We are very aware of that. For instance regarding female genital mutilation, I think that is something minority organisations have to deal with. It’s illegal in Norway, but it is passed on by heritage in the culture and it’s a battle they need to take. We would rather be a help and a resource. But it is not something we feel that we need to take the lead on.’

When ‘minority violence’ is understood as ‘special’ and ‘cultural’ it also makes it ‘their problem’, not a general ‘women’s issue’. It supports the image of ‘them’ versus ‘us’; the ‘suppressed minority woman’ versus the ‘liberated majority woman’. This
stereotypical image of a minority woman is an issue that was raised in several of the interviews, especially by interviewees from the minority women’s organisations:

‘(…) There is a very big focus on minority women, but it is very one-sided, and you see that through the women we meet in the work that we do. (…) the women who come to us are not oppressed. They are ordinary women, often strong women, and they don’t come here because of their own problems, but because of problems that their husbands or sons experience in society. (…) there is a disparity between what you read in the newspaper and the focus you see all the time - and where all the resources go also - and what we actually see here on a daily basis.’

‘A whole group [a ‘middle’ group] of [minority] women are missing in [in the public domain]. ‘You have the ones on the bottom and the ones on top, but most women are in between there somewhere. What do we know about them? How are they doing?’

‘You read all the time about those [minority women] who are getting beaten by these men and abused by their families - and yes; they exist. Those who don’t learn the language and don’t get out of the house -and yes; they exist. But many actually get out of the house (…) and you meet many of those young moms who haven’t been here long but who speak Norwegian with their children. (…) they don’t fit the picture of ‘the others’.’

These quotes illustrate a wish to broaden the focus regarding minority women. The focus has mainly been on violence against minority women, and even if work against violence against women is important, it does not have to be the entire picture. One interviewee says that the organisation has been in contact with the Ministry of Children and Equality and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and they have tried to remind them about the whole picture. However, their experience is that they have not been heard because ‘there is no room for it’. According to the interviewee, other issues like forced marriages and female genital mutilation are so overwhelming, that it becomes difficult to broaden the focus and get other issues besides ‘crisis gender equality’ on the political agenda. According to Roggeband and Verloo (2007: 286), ‘negative representations of migrant women as traditional, backward and (potentially) victims may limit the discursive opportunities for identification and participation of migrant women, and thus may have the opposite effect from what government aims to accomplish.’ Our analysis indicates that the narrow picture of minority women as victims of violence is a barrier for addressing other issues concerning minority women. ‘Ordinary’ equality issues such as
Another interviewee emphasised the barriers regarding the three year rule:

‘(...) Especially when it’s about the Immigration law and the Immigration authorities and regarding special considerations to specific problems that women might have. Of course we’ve met barriers; we meet barriers all the time. Nothing is easy, nothing is for free. We have to work very hard to have an impact on these issues. (...) abused women and their rights or lack of rights for thirty years, that’s the prime example. But in general; to get a problem of principle on the agenda is not easy.’

Here the interviewee addressed the barriers regarding the discrimination of women in the Immigration law, and the special problems for abused women without an independent resident permit. This has been a long battle where the organisations have met political resistance. The interviewee also mentioned barriers connected to getting big principle issues on the political agenda. This view is shared by many of the interviewees:

‘But it’s easier to get that [attention, to be heard] when it comes to the ‘small stuff’, for instance health in jail, women being discriminated in prison because they are women, female genital mutilation, forced marriages - single issues like that. Instead of the big principle issues where it’s more difficult to pick a side.’

‘We work with structure. (...) we have been working for a better law against ethnic discrimination. (...) one the one side, we work structurally, and on the other side, we also meet individual people who bring us cases. These cases can highlight several things concerning the structural problem.’

According to the interviewees, it is easier to get attention on some types of issues than others. They also say that it is easier to address a big principle issue if you have a specific case which illustrates a more general problem. One of the strategies is to “use” specific cases to get media attention and then go forward with a more big principle issue that a certain case highlights. However, in general the organisations experienced difficulty in getting these big principle issues on the political agenda.

Several of the interviewees also pointed to the general image of ‘minorities’ as ‘the other’ and the difficulty in presenting a more balanced picture:
‘When it comes to [minority] women, then you have this image of ‘the other’ and everything is characterised by that image. If you go to the Ombud’s [The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud] webpage you’ll see how they make mistakes like that. (…) they have a heading with ‘violence’ or something like that and then as a subheading; ‘FGM’ and ‘forced marriages’. (…) it is not right. They turn it into something ‘ethnic’, and not something ‘general’. (…) their culture is so and so, right. This will affect the general work against violence against women because in that sense Norwegian men do not practice violence then. And you don’t have any measures to combat it [‘minority violence’] because it’s supposed to be culture, right.’

This quote illustrates the discursive barrier some of the organisations’ attempts to reframe forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) as a part of the general definition of ‘violence against women’. This in turn will affect the political work against these forms of violence because the same measures are not being used in the attempts to combat ‘minority violence’ and ‘general violence against women’.

One of the parliamentary politicians also problematised the narrow picture of minority women in the public debate:

‘The media sets the agenda when they get a tip about an issue. The NRK [Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation] had a big story about female genital mutilation which was self-initiated, and they present it like a huge problem in Norway. We are in a situation where we don’t know the extent of this problem, and we can neither confirm nor reject what the NRK says. That was quite a frustrating situation. But it ends up with some political initiatives, for instance a report about this issue. (…) however, it is stigmatising that the media always has this agenda … The Norwegian people must think that all immigrant girls are married by force or victims of female genital mutilation. It is a much stigmatised picture of immigrant girls because they are usually only mentioned in those settings, otherwise they are made invisible.’

This politician refers to the extensive focus on issues like FGM, forced marriages and what Anja Bredal (2007: 60) calls ‘hypervisibility’ in the media. This attention has resulted in hasty efforts by the government in order to combat this type of violence. However, these issues are not included in the long-term work against domestic violence (Bredal, 2007: 60).

Reasonable, sensible, and legitimate actors?

The interviewees mentioned several barriers in their attempts to influence politically:
‘Barriers when we try to influence policy-making; we are young women, hysterical, feminists … Yes. (…) you notice domination techniques when you meet people, when the State Secretary [statssekretæren] has a meeting with the organisation and then that’s it, you know. Therefore it’s important that we know what we are talking about, that we are clear on when we know and when we do qualified guessing, we try to limit that. (…) but we see that it’s positive to come from [our organisation] because we are very good at having documentation for what we say.’

Some of the interviewees experienced that they have to be very well prepared in order to be taken seriously by the government representatives. The interviewee uses words like ‘hysterical feminists’ and thereby made a reference to a stereotypical picture of women being irrational and men being rational. This quote illustrates that an organisation with a feminist agenda represented by young women has to have documentation to support make claims and demands.

An interviewee from a minority organisation also addressed the issue of being viewed as a reasonable, sensible, and legitimate actor:

‘(…) things are viewed as more reliable if it comes from a white researcher rather than from a black organisation. (…) it is the same thing about gender, right, if you go 20 to 30 years back, if a man said something and a woman said something - which one would be considered the most reliable? It had to be the man. (…) so it’s not easy to be the new group in the game. You will not be heard, you will not be believed.

‘Especially when you are in a meeting in a Ministry where it is very hierarchical. (…) if I’m there with a male colleague [both with an ethnic minority background], then it’s about him being a male and I’m just a woman with him. However, if I’m there with a white female colleague, then I’m the ‘immigrant woman’, the immigrant ‘alibi’ who’s just tagging along. So you meet that. But it’s very subtle, right. (…) but very many, especially women, know what I’m talking about because they’ve had that experience themselves. (…) with a male colleague I’m a woman, and that’s that. Then you are kind of “second”. But with a white, female colleague, I’m black and then I’m “second” again.’

These quotes describe a subtle hierarchy where the categories ‘gender’, ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ come into play. In the interviewee’s experience, claims have been regarded as less trustworthy when they are forwarded by a black organisation compared to a white researcher. She addresses both a gender hierarchy and a racial/ethnic hierarchy. However confusion arises when a black man and a white woman come together; ‘where do you place them in the hierarchy? Who do you
address first?’ This quote is an example of the complex intersection of gender and ethnicity as lived experience.

Some of the interviewees were concerned with who is considered to be the legitimate representative for a minority group:

‘(…) we cannot have such a great respect for imams. When something happens, they [politicians, the government] go to the imams and ask them. (…) they don’t represent me. (…) in my opinion religion is a private matter. (…)’

This interviewee is member of a is a secular organisation and she criticises the Norwegian government for always having a dialogue with religious leaders, for instance imams, and seeing them as spokespersons for certain ethnic minority communities. She finds this highly problematic. This view is in accordance with feminist critiques of multiculturalism: that it is usually the more powerful members of a group (generally male) who are selected as spokespersons, and their versions of the community’s practices are heard in intercultural dialogue and debates (Okin, 1999; Phillips, 2007). So women’s voices (as a minority within the minority) are not being heard. The interviewee from this minority women’s organisation argued that the religious and the ‘conservative’ are the ones who are being heard, not the ‘modern’ voices, both men and women, who work against honour related violence. She claimed that it is very difficult to work for minority women’s rights and against honour related violence because conservative and religious people in the minority community blame her and the organisation for stigmatising the minority group.

Her organisation works for women’s rights and it is especially focusing on honour related violence both in her home country and in Norway. The organisation is thus focusing on problems that women are facing as a minority within a minority in a Norwegian context. In her view ‘modern’ women have to ally themselves with ‘modern’ men within the minority community against the ‘conservative’ men and women within the same community. The perspective of the interviewee can be interpreted within what is called minorities within minorities problem in normative political theory. This literature draws attention to the way groups can oppress internal minorities, in this case women, and the risk that policies of multiculturalism will reinforce power inequalities within groups (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005).
Some interviewees from another minority women’s organisation have had a different experience:

‘I think it’s very positive that we have been listened to. I have had a meeting with the State Secretary to the Minister of Children and Equality. (…) we had a meeting where I presented our work and I think the response was quite positive. (…)’

This organisation has primarily worked against female genital mutilation, and their experience is that they have been taken seriously and been regarded as a legitimate actors. This organisation represents women’s rights as compatible with Islam, and in this representation the empowering of women takes place within a religious frame. The organisation makes a distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ by arguing that FGM is a cultural tradition, and it is not required by Islam.

One interpretation of these different experiences is that an organisation may be seen as a more legitimate actor for the minority group if their work against so-called ‘honour-related’ violence is framed within a ‘cultural frame’. This would indicate that when ethnicity is connected with racism, the sensibility vanishes, however, when ethnicity is connected with culture, the sensibility and legitimacy increases.

**Views of organisational actors by civil servants and parliamentary politicians**

According to one of the parliamentary politicians, the women’s movement is a relevant actor today, as much as it was in the 1970s. She thinks that the women’s movement plays an important role by raising issues and making demands especially concerning violence against women. In her view there are still many issues that need to be addressed, and the women’s movement will have an important role to play in the years to come. However, the common view among the interviewed politicians and the civil servants, is that the majority feminist organisations have been absent in relation to minority women’s issues. They seem to be more engaged in majority women’s issues. One of the politicians thought that majority women’s organisations have not included minority women’s issues in their agenda. In her view, minority women are still not a part of ‘we’ the women, and there is a divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Majority women’s organisations are afraid of being accused of being racist, this politician argued. The Norwegian Women’s Public Health
Association (Norske Kvinners Sanitetsforening) is mentioned as a majority non-feminist women's organisation which has been engaged in dialogue with minority women, and as a result they have also taken some political initiatives.

According to several of the interviewed politicians and civil servants, the organisations which have been politically active concerning violence against women are the umbrella organisations representing the Women’s Shelters and also the organisations working with rape. The Administration of Women’s Shelters (Krisesentersekretariatet) and Norwegian Crisis Center Association (Norsk Krisesenterforbund) are especially mentioned as very engaged in violence against minority women and they also have an important role as ‘watchdogs’. The majority feminist organisations have not been that visible. Some of them, like for instance the feminist group Ottar, are active in the public debate about porn and prostitution. However, in general the majority feminist organisations have not been particularly active in contacting the parliamentary politicians nor the civil servants.

The parliamentary politicians and the civil servants also mention organisations as such as OMOD which addresses public discrimination and minority women’s rights, ORKIS (Oslo Red Cross International Centre), Self-help for immigrants and refuges (SEIF) and Human Rights Service (HRS). In relation to forced marriages, honour killings and female genital mutilation, SEIF, HRS and MiRA Centre have been active politically. Some of these organisations have different approaches to specific issues, such as forced marriages: HRS has a more confrontational approach, whereas MiRA is more focused on dialogue.

Among minority women’s organisations the MiRA Centre is mentioned by all the politicians and civil servants as an important actor. According to one of the politicians, there are few other minority women’s organisations with strong voices and the organisations that exist are small and weak. In general there are many organisations in the ‘minority field’ and there are a few strong individual voices, but the field is very fragmented and it is difficult to know who the individual voices actually represent. According to one of the politicians, it is particularly difficult to know what most minority women mean. This resonates with the findings in Nyhagen Predelli’s study from 2003, where she argues that the minority women’s
organisations that are working actively to influence policy-making are few and they
do not represent all the different groups of minority women in Norway (Nyhagen
Predelli, 2003: 148). The organisations that represent minority women and work
politically and professionally are still very few, and even if they do a good job, one of
the politicians wants to see more broad membership-based organisations in order for
more strong voices to be heard. In general, this politician found it problematic that
the majority define minority women’s problems, and therefore there is a need of
more and stronger minority women’s organisations which engage in political issues.

7.4 Claims-making, Opportunities and Constraints at the National Policy
Level

7.4.1 Strategies to achieve influence
In this section we will look at how the interviewed women’s organisations work in
order to achieve political influence.

Formal participation: participation in consultations (hearings) and boards and
commissions
We have done a document mapping of selected hearings within the areas: 1)
Violence against women and 2) Racism and ethnic discrimination (related to violence
against women) (Halsaa and Thun, 2008, see Appendix B). The main purpose has
been to complement the findings in the interviews with women’s organisations with
documented claims and issues made by these organisations in Norway. We also
wanted to identify to what extent women’s organisations have been invited to
comment policy proposals, and to what extent they have actually commented. In this
chapter we will focus on the invitation structure which is important in regards to both
the institutional and the discursive opportunity structures: Which organisations are
invited by the Ministries to participate in these consultations (hearings) and thus
seen as legitimate actors within different fields? In addition, to what extent have they
actually commented?

In the mapping we have focused on three law proposals concerning violence in close
relations, protection against forced marriage and changes in the Immigration Act.
Three recent national law proposals were selected:

1. Changes in the Penal Code on violence in close relations (and annulling the act on vagrancy): Ot.prp.113 (2004-2005) (Om lov om oppheving av løsgjengerloven og om endringer i straffeloven mv. (eget straffebud mot vold i nære relasjoner mv.)).\(^{109}\)

2. Changes in the Immigration Act (protection against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage, and protection of foreign employees’ working conditions and salary) (2004-2005): Ot. prp. 109 (Om lov om endringer i utlendingsloven (beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap og mishandling i ekteskap og vern av utenlandske arbeidstakeres lønns-og arbeidsvilkår mv.)).\(^{110}\)

3. Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here) (2006-2007): Ot. prp. 75 (Om lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsloven)).\(^{111}\)

This selective mapping does not provide the whole picture of the invitation structure and so forth, however it can provide an insight into the opportunity structures, and the interviews with organisational actors will provide their views of hearings as a channel for influence.

The general picture concerning the invitation structure is that the majority women’s organisations were invited by the Ministries to comment on proposals concerning violence in close relations, but not invited to hearings about the Immigration Act. Forced marriages and the three year rule are issues dealt with in the Immigration Act. These issues are related to violence against minority women and address the intersection between violence and ethnic discrimination. However, here the majority women’s organisations are absent - they were not invited by the Ministries to comment and they did not taken the initiative to send in their comments.

Only a few of the minority women’s organisations were invited to comment on the proposal concerning violence in close relations. The organisations which receive


funding from the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, were been invited to give comments.\textsuperscript{112} This pattern of selective inclusion was also been found by Skjeie and Teigen (2007) in their research into two Norwegian government proposals on legal regulations to prevent forced marriages.\textsuperscript{113} They concluded that ‘the invitation structure for these two hearings are not exactly tailor-made in order to include minority political and gender political organisational interests’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 30, my translation). Skjeie and Teigen (2007) also emphasise that participation in hearings is demanding and requires resources. Therefore, small and local migrant organisations do not always answer even if they are invited to participate in consultations (hearings). Their study also shows that gender political organisations, with the exception of organisations with a clear ‘help agenda’, are not invited to participate in consultations about forced marriages.

Skjeie and Teigen claim that ‘(…) objectives of gender representativity and ethnic diversity seem to exit nearly as separate spheres in Norwegian politics (…)’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007:35, my translation). They relate the two separate spheres to the debate about the relationship between the ‘old’ women’s movement and spokespersons for ethnic minorities, and the criticism of the majority feminists in Norway for not being engaged in minority women’s issues (Salimi, 2006; Bredal, 2005, in Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 30).

The pattern of inclusion suggests a selective inclusion (Kjellman, 2007; Skjeie and Teigen, 2007) where some organisations are ‘institutionalised’ as consultative bodies within certain policy fields, whereas other organisations are excluded (institutional opportunities). The invitation structure also says something about which organisations are seen as legitimate actors within different fields (discursive opportunities). There is little evidence of an intersectional approach concerning violence against women.

\textsuperscript{112} See more details regarding which organisations are invited by the Ministries to participate in these consultations (hearings), to what extent have they actually commented, and what their comments were in Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{113} One is the proposal from the Ministry of Justice and Police about changes in the Penal Code from 2002 and the other one is the proposal from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion about changes in the Immigration Act concerning forced marriages from 2006.
Our mapping and interviews with women’s organisations also support the selective inclusion concerning consultations (hearings). According to one majority women’s organisation that works primarily with violence in close relations, they are primarily invited to hearings about violence against women. They were not invited to hearings about immigration issues, but they gave their comments even if the organisation has not been invited to do so. Another interviewee from a majority women’s organisation said this:

‘I don’t think that we have given statements during the consultation process on issues where we have not been invited. I guess that is because we haven’t felt the need to do it.’

This organisation did not take the initiative to give any comments. This organisation has not been invited to respond to the Immigration Act, and the quote can be interpreted as if the organisation does not consider these issues as relevant ‘women’s issues’. However, it can also suggest that the organisation is not aware of some of the issues that are included under the laws relating to Immigration, such as forced marriages and the three year rule. Another possibility is that they thought the proposals were adequate and did not need amending.

One of the minority women’s organisations was invited to one of the consultations about forced marriages, but that was the first and only time they had been invited to comment on proposals by the authorities:

‘We sent our consultation statements to the Ministry [about forced marriages]. We do that sort of thing. We think that it is important, it’s to have something to say.’

The interviewee emphasised the importance of having an opinion in this matter and also the importance of participating in this political process.

An interviewee from one of the professionalised NGOs was rather critical of all the proposals that were sent to consultative bodies concerning the new Immigration Act:

‘(...) The Immigration Act [Utlendingsloven] - there has been several changes. I don’t remember if it was last year or the year before, but calls for consultations came constantly. So we don’t write consultation statements in regard to the Immigration Act anymore, I mean in regard to the single changes that come. I
According to the interviewee, all the proposed changes and the following consultations were actually a democratic problem since the intention of the consultation process is to get views from affected parties. The organisation received quite a few proposals in a relatively short amount of time, and in the interviewee’s view this impeded a thorough procedure of review of laws and legal measures. The perspectives of minorities, including both positive and negative effects were supposed to be considered, but in the interviewee’s view, it was difficult to do this properly when several law proposals, some of them quite extensive, were being sent to the organisations within a few months.

Another reason for not giving a comment on the law proposal on the Immigration Act was that some organisations did not agree with any of the proposals concerning the 21 year old demand\(^\text{114}\) to prevent forced marriages:

> ‘Sometimes it seems like everything is sort of decided beforehand. But sometimes it can still be important to make certain points. For instance in regard to the proposal of a 21 year demand. We didn’t answer that hearing because they said that if we introduce this [21 year old demand] then it will be like this or like this or like this. We were totally against this [21 year old demand] and then there is no point in considering these proposals against each other. (...) what we did instead was to have two appeals where we gathered several minority organisations. (...) and the proposal was stopped. It [an appeal] was very good because we could put focus somewhere else and not on this proposal and write consultation statements in regard to that (...)’

According to the interviewee, other strategies were more efficient in this matter, and the use of appeals was successful in order to shift the focus away from the Ministry’s proposal. The cooperation with several minority organisations was also viewed as instrumental in stopping the proposed 21 year old demand. This sort of response suggests a protest, both to the proposals by the Ministry and also to the way this channel of influence was set up. The Ministry had the initiative and the power to include and exclude organisations and other consultative bodies. The Ministry was also proposing different law changes and the consultative bodies were merely supposed to comment on some set alternatives.

\(^{114}\) A demand that both partners had to be at least 21 years in order to get a resident permit for a spouse or cohabite.
Several of the respondents consider participating in consultations as time consuming:

‘We do that as well, but we try not to do too much of it because it is very time-consuming. (…) We do it on some issues, but we probably only do a fraction of what [mentions another women’s organisation] do. But we do it when we think that we have something to say that no one else will say.’

Even if the interviewee finds this time-consuming, she thinks it is important to give comments to proposals when the organisation can provide a perspective that otherwise would not be heard. This suggests that the interviewee views this channel of influence as important because different voices can be heard.

Whether the interviewees thought they exercised any actual influence through commenting on the proposals by the Ministries differed from one informant to the next:

‘We try to influence policy-making, we try that all the time. We write statements during consultation processes. (..) We write about anti-discrimination issues. (…) So there are quite a few consultations. It takes a lot of time, but we see that it works because we get accepted and our point of view is being heard in the areas in which we have expertise. It is important to concentrate on what we are competent to do instead of trying to write about absolutely everything.’

According to this interviewee, the organisation has an actual influence through the system of consultations. However, the organisation has to prioritize the issues in which that they have a special expertise.

Other interviewees also considered this channel of influence to be important, both in order to add different voices and to be recognised as legitimate actors in a certain policy field. One interviewee from a minority women’s organisation said that her organisation was very active and they always sent comments on the proposals they are invited to comment on. The comments are cited quite a lot by the authorities, and even if she not could say for sure that their suggestions actually had an impact, she thought that the organisation had an influence on certain issues. She especially mentioned the Immigration Act and violence against women.
Another interviewee from a minority women’s organisation also mentioned that the organisation had some influence with regards to the issue of female genital mutilation:

‘Some of the points that were already included in the consultation invitation we received was a result of what we have been working on. (…) we sent our consultation statement and the other organisations did as well, and later we were invited to a meeting where several other [minority] organisations participated. (…) also a mosque was there. It was very exciting.’

This quote indicated that the organisation had been working actively on this issue before they were invited to comment on the proposal, and they had also been working actively through other channels of influence.

Other interviewees also emphasised the use of other channels of influence:

‘Consultation statements is not always … sometimes it’s a lot of work and you never know how much impact you’ll have until afterwards. I guess I believe more in meetings with Parliamentary politicians and the government in that regard.’

This quote indicates a more ambivalent view on the influence of organisations through this corporative channel. The interviewee was critical of how much influence her organisation actually had in relation to the amount of time spent on writing these comments.

‘(…) it is very seldom that a consultation statement changes what’s already decided. (…) we don’t prioritise consultations. We don’t have the possibility to do that. (…) of course, if we get a consultation invitation from The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration [UDI] about gender-based persecution or abuse of women we would answer that.’

This interview suggests that comments on proposals do not have that much influence, and in fact the issues in the proposal are already decided. According to this view, the consultative bodies do not have any actual influence and they are merely invited to comment on the proposals because the authorities need legitimacy for a law proposal.

‘You need to be involved in advance rather than afterwards. (…) plus it takes a lot of time and it’s not always easy. Especially some things can be quite … how should I put it? The language is sometimes not for ordinary people. (…)’
This quote indicates that the organisation needs to get their views heard and included before the proposal is sent out to the consultative bodies. The organisation’s views have to be included in the proposal from the Ministries. This statement indicates an involvement through other channels of influence in order to have real impact. The quote also raises another issue which is mentioned in several of the interviews; namely the language in which the proposals are written, which is quite difficult if you are not an expert in law and this can be a real barrier.

Another barrier mentioned by most of the interviewees, was the lack of resources which meant that the organisations do not have the capacity to comment on proposals:

‘(…) We don’t have any employees, and somebody has to do it [write consultation statements]. (…) We have to prioritise, we really have to prioritise. (…)’

This interviewee from a majority women’s organisation underlined the point made earlier in this section: namely the time-consuming nature of commenting on proposals and the need to have paid staff in order to be able to make this channel of influence a priority. However, one of the interviewees from a professionalised NGO, which has a paid staff, also said that the issue of capacity was one reason why they were not able to comment on all the proposals they were invited to give comments on:

‘We are invited to contribute to many calls for consultations. (…) we prioritise where we can because of capacity. (…) we prioritise issues we actually work with. We get calls about issues concerning immigrants, refugees, first generation [immigrant], second generation [immigrant], and integration. But we don’t have a chance to answer all of them.’

An interviewee from a professionalised NGO said this about political strategies for small minority women’s organisations:

‘They [small minority women’s organisations] have to participate, but I don’t know. I wouldn’t choose that [consultations]. If I had limited resources and had to choose, it wouldn’t be the main thing. (…) I would promote issues in a different way. It’s not that difficult to get a meeting with the members of Parliament. And it would be good to have a relationship with several of the Parliamentary committees. It depends what your focus is, but it’s good that they know who you are and they know that you exist and what your focus is. It
is also worth the effort to send some letters and raise some issues to the Ministers in a certain field and then follow up on it afterwards. Get something in the media, rather than writing consultation statements. If you have limited resources you have to choose.’

Her advice is to prioritise more informal channels of influence, rather than focusing too much on comments to proposals from the Ministries. Although several of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations we have interviewed would have wished to be invited to more hearings:

‘We have received invitations [to participate in consultations] by the Ministry of Justice and Police and the Ministry of Children and Equality. (...) but it has not been directly to [our organisation], rather through other organisations like OMOD or some [minority] organisations which have written letters to us and asked for our support. So we’ve said: “Yes, we support those issues”. (...) I think that is important. The more [organisations] who support, the more likely you are to have an impact.’

This quote illustrates the need for several organisations to collaborate on certain issues, but the interviewee also wanted her organisation to be included in this channel of influence.

This wish can be interpreted as a wish to be seen as a legitimate political actor by being included in this formal channel of influence.

One of the interviewed civil servants says that there is a huge challenge in transferring the knowledge of organisations ‘out in the real world’ and making use of it. Some of the organisations do not have the required ability to impart their knowledge in writing. In general, she thinks there are few formal initiatives taken by the organisations and they lack knowledge concerning how the central government administration operates. In her experience, there is a good chance of having an influence through the system of public consultations as long as the comments are well written, to the point, substantiated and the organisations have sufficient knowledge about the issue. In cases where voluntary organisations can provide civil servants with good arguments that will be taken into consideration and might affect the outcome. However, it also depends on the issue, what other strong actors mean about the issue, and the political priorities.
Participation in publicly appointed boards and commissions that prepare policy initiatives is another way of influencing policy through the formal corporative channel. Some of the interviewees mention this kind of participation as a political strategy where they can influence policy proposals at an early stage:

‘You have to see how you use your time and energy; see where you can achieve most influence. Sometimes you have to try to act more in advance rather than after [proposals are made]. (…) we have worked very hard for minority representation in committees that write proposals which will be sent out for hearing. In that way you are taken into consideration in advance.’

This interviewee from a professionalised NGO considers participation in committees to be an effective political strategy:

‘We are and we have been part of some committees and boards. (…) one of the reasons to be represented there is the general idea of representation and democracy. Another reason is that things happen in a process and to be there from the start. (…) you might not be heard immediately, but over time you’ll have an influence. And also the acknowledgement that you exist at all. (…)’

‘Earlier this year a health committee was appointed and one wanted a broad representation; “gender”, “geography”, and “age”, but not “ethnicity”. So we asked for an expansion in the committee, and the inclusion of someone with a minority background. Then they told us that they had been thinking about it, but they didn’t know of any suitable person with an immigrant background. (…) So we sent this case to the Ombud and they have sent a letter to the Ministry. (…) If you’re not present where decisions are made you are not a part of it, you are not visible, and you’re not being taken into account.’

These quotes also illustrate the need to be present at an early stage in the policy making and thus have a larger impact on the framing and the focus of the proposal. Another issue raised in this quote is the importance of including minority representatives in these publicly appointed committees, both because of the representation of different voices and the democratic aspect and also the acknowledgement of living in a diverse society and to prevent certain perspectives being silenced.

Some interviewees, however, criticised the widely used praxis of boards and commissions. One interviewee from a minority women’s organisation claimed that every issue has a committee and a lot of money is spent on these committees. In her opinion, committees that are writing reports and proposals concerning minorities
often consist of majority Norwegians, usually experts. Critical minority voices are silenced and the work that minority women have done in order to put these issues on the agenda is made invisible, she claimed. Several minority interviewees addressed what they think is a ‘stealing of knowledge’ from minorities by majority experts in the field of ‘ethnic minority issues’. One interviewee argued that the conditions are decided by committees or groups with members who are appointed by the state, usually experts. This leads to a strong exclusion factor of minority women’s organisations, she claimed. Moreover, if a minority woman is included, it is usually at a later stage and the conditions are already decided so it does not really matter whether she is critical or not because she does not have that much influence anyhow.

Another related criticism put forward by some of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations, was that the issues relating exclusively to minority women were being professionalised. Most of the work is done by specialists or experts, and the women’s movement is not an important actor anymore. Nyhagen Predelli (2003: 149) also addresses the issue of increased professionalism in the field of minority women’s issues, and she links it to the general professionalisation and centralisation of the voluntary sector.

**Informal participation: Lobbying and dialogue**

Among the organisations we interviewed it varied regarding the extent to which they used lobbying as a political strategy. Some interviewees considered informal contact like lobbying and meetings with members of parliament, politicians in the Ministries and civil servants to be an effective way of influencing policy-making:

‘It is best to talk face to face. A letter is a bit impersonal. (…) not everybody reads it. (…) but by talking to a person - I’ve talked to many politicians with direct eye contact - and by using a language that makes it easier for them to understand, rather than writing a letter.’

This interviewee from a minority women’s organisation emphasises the personal element and the importance of making personal relations and advocating issues face to face with politicians. Several of the interviewees argue that you have to know who to make contact with:
‘(…) You have to find people who have strategic positions and who might be visible in the debate.’

‘Sometimes an issue concerns many different authorities; then you need to challenge them all.’

‘Often we try to aim as high as we can; preferably a Minister. That seldom happens, but maybe the State Secretary. Yes, we try to aim high.’

These interviewees underlined the need to be strategic regarding who you approach. In their opinion, you have to find people in different political parties who have an interest in the issue you are concerned with, and make direct contact with these politicians. You also have to challenge the various relevant authorities. Another interviewee from a professionalised NGO is reluctant to call these initiatives ‘lobbying’:

‘Lobbying is not the right word for the work that we do. If there is a principle problem we go to the public authority, the politicians or the committee or the Ministry that deals with that issue and who can improve the situation. Then we go there directly and address the problem. It is not lobbying, it’s rather information sharing and proposals for improvement. (…) lobbying is more that you wander the halls in the Parliament and the Ministries. We don’t do that, we don’t have the time for that sort of thing.’

According to this interviewee, a direct approach is not the same as “lobbying”, which in her opinion is time-consuming and less productive. Several of the interviewees said that it is necessary for organisations to have meetings with politicians, but they do not have the resources and they cannot afford to have someone to do lobbying.

The quote above also illustrates a point made by several interviewees, namely the need to present a concrete suggestion, not only a general frustration or criticism. There is a greater chance of having an impact if you can provide productive solutions to a problem. The need to be able to document your views is also viewed as essential in order to be taken seriously:

‘We try to arrange meetings [with politicians in government] when we have people with important information; not just to say: “We think so and so”, rather: “This is our experience on this issue and here you have the facts”. (…) We try to have people with a lot of knowledge of the field when we address certain issues. Then it’s also easier to get appointments.’
‘If we have several cases about the same issue it’s easier to engage because then it’s not only qualified guessing. Then we have some numbers and statistics to show. We would like to have an impact and we very much want to be able to document what we’re saying.’

‘We have spent some time getting in contact with the parties that are now in government. They are especially interested in certain cases and we can get a meeting. (…) the smart thing to do, I guess that depends on the case and it varies. The most important thing is that you say something when it needs to be said, you can’t cry out every time if you want to be taken seriously on the right issues. You also need to have the documentation and then you’ll be heard.’

Several of the interviewees also claimed that a meeting is not the final goal if your organisation wants to have influence, it is merely the beginning:

‘If you have a meeting with someone - some people think that a meeting in itself is enough - but you have to understand how to use that meeting as a platform for further work.’

‘For the most part we get the meetings we want, as long as we are flexible. (…) however, a meeting in itself doesn’t necessarily mean that we’ll have an impact. (…) a meeting in itself simply means that they listen to what you have to say and then they do whatever they want to do afterwards.’

These quotes indicate that an informal dialogue meeting can have a downside; namely as a forum where organisations are being heard but not necessarily having any real influence. However, the interviewees emphasised the need to use a meeting as a platform for further work.

Some of the interviewees are more negative towards the use of informal contact with politicians:

‘I can’t say that we don’t do lobbying, but we try to use that as little as possible. However, there are quite often hearings at the Parliament. (…) but we only do that when we think that we have to. (…) sometimes we take the initiative and other times the Parliamentary politicians do.’

Part of the scepticism towards lobbying can be interpreted as a fear of becoming too ‘personal’ with people in positions of power and not to compromise the role of the organisations as independent ‘watchdogs’:

‘Our goal is neither to kick downwards or to the side, but rather to kick upwards and to make the politicians accountable, that is to politicise the whole thematic [violence against women]. We participate in many reference groups and
cooperation groups, also with the police. The police have a lot of power. A policeman said to me once: “it’s not easy; one day you kick us in the back, and the next day you sit here [at a cooperation meeting”’. I said: ‘Yes, I have that role. It’s not personal, but I am a “watchdog”, and if you don’t do your job, it’s my job to go out in public and say something. (...)’

‘One day we have a meeting with a Minister here (...) and we have a good professional dialogue. The next day, we criticise the same Minister. That is independence.’

‘We have been invited to the Parliament to talk about [minority] women’s situation. (...) One Member of Parliament called me and asked me if I wanted to be a member of her party and work with their women’s movement. But I didn’t want to become a member. (...) Then I would always have to think about the party, what the party says, but I’m not like that. I think without limitations. I’m not totally opposed to joining a party, but I think it’s best for me not to be member of a party.’

These quotes illustrate in different ways a view shared by several of the interviewees, namely that the independent role of these organisations is paramount.

According to one of the parliamentary politicians, the organisations are usually the ones who contact the politicians in their efforts to have an influence on policy-making. Some organisations have been present at hearings in the parliamentary committee. The politicians sometimes contact organisations, usually concerning new political initiatives when they need input from those who are affected by certain issues. Sometimes also, individual people make contact and have meetings with politicians at which they tell their story. According to one of the politicians, stories of young women who have experienced forced marriage or female genital mutilation have been crucial inputs concerning policy-making in these areas over the past eight to ten years. This also raises the question of legitimacy, which was also addressed in Nyhagen Predelli’s study from 2003; the degree of influence by single individuals compared to organisations that represent several members (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003: 149).

A combination of different strategies
Some of the interviewees emphasise a dual strategy in their political work towards the government: they participate both in the formal corporate channel, including boards, commissions and consultations (hearings), and they participate informally by
lobbying and setting up meetings with politicians. The media is also mentioned by most of the interviewees as an important strategy to put issues on the agenda:

‘Really you have to use many different approaches. One thing is to prepare statistics and reports, so it’s not only ‘we have experienced...’. (...) you also have to ask for meetings with the political parties and the party groups at the Parliament [Stortinget] and also with the different Ministries. So that is one strategy. The other is to draw attention to certain issues by using the media. The media has an immensely important role. We use the media very purposefully.’

‘We have a very important role as instigators. One of the most important means is to draw attention to violence against women. To make this issue visible in the public sphere. You create a debate; you highlight very negative sides of society [violence against women].’

The media is mentioned by several of the interviewees as an important factor. Many of the interviewees consider use of the media as an important strategy in order to get public attention to the issues they are concerned with and thereby put these issues on the agenda of politicians in power. However, several of the interviewees emphasised the need to know how to use the media:

‘(...)it is important how you handle the media. Many people talk too much for too long. You have to know that if you highlight one small thing then it’s much easier for the other person to get interested. That decides whether the issue will be taken up or not. And it is also important to see what’s happening; to know what’s going on today to be able to make your move. You need to make several phone calls and to follow up on that issue. It might not be interesting today, but maybe the day after tomorrow. (...)’

According to this interviewee, the organisations have to be able to present their message in a strategic way in order to get the media attention they want. They also have to follow the media debates and current events closely in order to seize an opportunity for their issues to be of relevance.

Several of the interviewees also emphasised the importance of being well prepared when contacting the media:

‘We contact the media when we have an issue of principal importance. Of course if we have some people or cases who can exemplify this matter, that’s good. However, if you go to the media you really have to know the issue, otherwise it might ‘hit you in the head’. When the media takes on a matter of principal importance it might reach the political agenda. Then you might get to
meet politicians to discuss the issue or they want more information about the issue. So by informing through the media, through reports, inform as much as possible, then you might get a chance to sit down and talk with experts and the bureaucracy. You don’t always need to talk to a Minister, but you need to present the problem where it belongs and maybe you’ll have an impact.’

‘We don’t scream wolf if there’s no wolf. (…) if we beat the big drum; if you go to the media or initiate a meeting and thump the table you have to know what you are doing; you have to know the case really well and you have to know what you are saying. Otherwise it can hit you in the head horribly. (…) so we continue working. We do a lot of serious hard work and then we will be heard sooner or later. (…)’

You have to be prepared to discuss the issue that you put on the agenda and you have to be able to substantiate the arguments that you are put forward. The media attention might give the organisation a platform from which to reach policy-makers and thus be a starting point for further political work:

‘When the politicians have decided on priorities and have resources, then you are only at the starting phase. After that you have to do something about it; that’s when the serious work comes into the picture. We had an Action Plan against forced marriages in 1998 and we took that Action Plan in 1999 and we used it for all it was worth. We had seminars and meetings around the country, allied with the Shelter Movement, and we raised awareness about this. We started to work with the youth. If we hadn’t done that it [the Action Plan] would have been lying in the drawer at the Ministry and collecting dust. So when an issue has reached the political agenda, then you have to do something about it. You have to work in order for change to happen, for improvement.’

When an issue reaches the political agenda and an Action Plan has been worked out, the organisations have to use this plan to push the authorities to follow up their goals. One of the interviewed civil servants also emphasised this aspect of the organisations’ political work and their role as ‘watchdogs’ in order to influence politically.

Some of the interviewees emphasised the way they use the media channel strategically also in order to give a more balanced picture of minorities and ‘minority violence’:

‘One of the most important [strategies] is the media. Especially with regards to minorities in order to give a more balanced picture, even if the media always try to paint a “black and white picture”. These women are stigmatised because we talk about minorities as if they were one homogenous group. We have,
however, experienced that there are huge variations. But you see how the media present murders of women; if there is an ethnic Norwegian man, he’s portrayed as a good man, a good worker, a good neighbour, he played with the kids and so on. There is almost an obituary written about him. However, if you see how the media portray men with a minority background: “he was practically a barbarian”. It probably feels good for the Norwegian society to say that kind of thing. And then they go on by talking about “honour killings”.

According to this interviewee, the media - even if they often paint a ‘black and white’ picture - can be used strategically to paint a more nuanced picture. The interviewee claimed that ‘majority violence’ and ‘minority violence’ are presented differently in the media, and the organisation has to contribute to give a more balanced picture and thus draw attention to violence against women in general - regardless if there are minorities or majorities involved.

The way the interviewees talk about media strategies suggests that they strategically frame their issues in order to get attention and put certain issues on the agenda. One dimension of this is related to forming bridging frames that fit with cultural belief systems or dominant discourses in order to negotiate a frame that will work politically (Benford and Snow, 2000, in Bacchi, 2005: 203). However, the quote above also indicates a strategy of reframing the dominant discourse about “minority violence” and extending the general frame of violence against women.

One of the interviewees from a feminist majority women’s organisation described demonstrations as a conscious strategy to get media attention:

‘The street is often an underrated arena. But it is all about getting room; room to talk, room to act. That’s what it’s all about. A demonstration will get you that room to talk; room to talk in all the media channels. A demonstration is important in its own right because it teaches people to do something about an issue with their own hands and feet. It is a very important part of a strong civil society. (…) but we also want to stage demonstrations in order to get attention from the media so that we can go out and argue on all channels, radio, TV and newspapers, afterwards.’

Another strategy has been to present the organisation as a though and aggressive actor:

‘(…) one thing is to build something when there is a situation of progress. Then you can present yourself as more likable. But in order for us to succeed it has been necessary not to be forgotten. Since feminism and women’s issues
haven’t been the most popular things to write about in a positive way, then this has been a good strategy. (…) we don’t care if they like us or not as long as they are afraid. This has been a deliberate strategy, very thought through.’

This media strategy has been deliberate in order to get attention to feminist issues at a time when these issues have otherwise received little attention.

The experience of an interviewee from another feminist majority organisation was that the media had tried to use them:

‘The media often call us, but it is not so often that they contact us after we deliver a press release. (…) sometimes they call us but we don’t fit the image they had of a “feminist”. (…) they think: “We want some crazy women who thinks that only women should have it all” or something like that, and when we say what we actually think about the issue, it’s not that relevant after all. (…) but all in all I think the media contacts us quite often and I don’t have that many bad experiences.’

According to the interviewee, the journalist already has a story and a picture of the archetypical ‘feminist’ that he or she wants the organisation to represent in the story. The quote also indicates that the organisation has experienced more difficulties in their attempts to get attention to their issues and to set the agenda in the media.

7.5 ‘Things Take Time’

Several of the professionalised organisations which have been around for a while, stress the need to be patient in order to change society in the direction that the various organisations aim to do:

‘First of all you need to work for some time; you have to do serious work. (…) If you have an ambition to be more than a fad it takes serious work in order to receive attention from the media, politicians, and experts. Of course you have to have a certain reputation in order to get attention. You can definitely sit down and cry out about an issue, but that probably won’t get you anywhere.’

‘Our goal all along is to accomplish things; that something concrete actually happens, and you see that you accomplish that over time. It doesn’t happen over night, but you need to continuously focus on you goal all the time. One way is to define main goals and ‘partial goals’ along the way. We have been working for a better law against discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, and then it was important to have a concrete case with regard to the old law in court. (…) You need to use several legal authorities and push the case through, in order to show that the old law is bad.’
‘(…) Now we have come to a place where we are an actor to be taken into consideration. Earlier we had to work extensively to be present. You also see that in regard to the media: earlier we had to call them, now they call us. It is because we have been in the game for a while and we are visible because we have concrete suggestions and we gain some influence over time. So you get a different role compared to what you previously had.’

These professionalised NGOs have experienced that they over time have been able to get a good reputation and as opposed to earlier, the media call them and they are now being invited by the authorities to give their point of view.

7.6 Cooperation, Competition and Division of Labour Between the Organisations

In Chapter 6 we examined representations of cooperation and alliances between majority and majority women’s organisations and definitions of ‘women’s issues’, which indicated quite different understandings. In this section we will look more closely at the organisations’ views of cooperation and strategic alliances in order to influence politically.

Some of the interviewees claimed that majority feminists are not interested in cooperation with organisations working with ‘minority issues’:

‘However, I say it again, as I’ve said before (…), ethnic Norwegian women’s organisations have not been on the front line for their fellow sisters. That is a fact. (…) in the beginning when we started to address forced marriages or arranged marriages with a higher or lesser degree of force as we call it. We have met a lot of opposition, both from [minority] communities, also women’s organisations within these communities, and from what I call Norwegian well-educated cultural relativists, women who thought that we blew things out of proportion because arranged marriages were a culture and we had to respect that. We said that we are talking about the force in that culture; we are talking about the negative aspects of the culture. It took several years before they - both within and outside the [ethnic] communities - said that arranged marriages are okay, but force is not.’

This interviewee from a professionalised organisation addressed the opposition - both from majority feminist organisations and from minority organisations - when they put issues like female genital mutilation and forced marriages on the agenda.
However, there are examples of cooperation between different organisations on certain issues.

Several of the interviewees argued that cooperation on certain issues can be a good strategy in order to put political pressure on the authorities:

‘We have common interests with many others [organisations]. How can we work together? For instance minority youth (...) and minority women’s organisations. (...) how can we cooperate in order to put political pressure? (...) one has to think about cooperating on certain issues (...)

‘We know each other in all the organisations, the nation wide organisations [in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees], especially the larger organisations. We know each other, we meet at meetings, and everybody knows who works with what. (...) we know of each other and we cooperate on certain issues, but we are independent organisations. (...) we cooperate on issues if it’s necessary.’

‘Sometimes we have to think about the big picture, not just single issues and the battles you have to fight to win the war.’

These quotes from different interviewees indicate that the organisations think strategically about cooperation on certain issues. According to some of the interviewees, cooperation can be difficult because different organisations have different views and some issues are seen as controversial issues, for instance the criminalisation of buyers of sex acts. One interviewee said that her organisation had been in favour of the criminalisation of buyers of sex acts, but now they do not have an opinion on that issue. Now they try to help prostitute women in other ways, and now they are able to cooperate both with organisations who are in favour of criminalisation and those who are against it. This can be viewed as a strategic effort to make alliances with different organisations which are very opposed to each other on a controversial issue.

Some of the interviewees mentioned mobilisations where the women’s movement - also sometimes in cooperation with professionalised NGOs - have been able to work politically together and to have an impact. One example of successful cooperation that was brought up in the interviews was the ‘Volda - case’:

‘(...) cooperation with [a feminist organisation] and other networks. To illustrate; the ‘Volda case’. A female student reported that she had been raped by
another student, but the case was dropped. Then he filed for defamation [injurersøksmål] because of slander because she had talked to someone. At the same time sexual violation and a change was out on a hearing. (…) we used March 8th, we had demonstrations (…) we lobbied; wrote letters to the Minister of Justice and we got huge media attention. (…) then the Defamation Act [injurieloven] was passed in 2000. (…) The Supreme Court [Høyesterett] said: “Women who have been violated take precedence over men’s honour” and it gave women the right to tell about violations … It was a big victory. (…) it is a story about the women’s movement where we fought together. We went to Volda, we had demonstrations’ (…) it shows that the women’s movement has power and the importance of working together. Then we can use one single case, like that case in Volda, and accomplish change.’

This story illustrates a mobilisation where the women’s movement was able to use many different strategies and were able to influence policy-making.

Another mobilisation in the women’s movement that was mentioned by several of the interviewees was the work regarding the three year rule in the late 70s and 80s.

‘We started in the 80s. (…) we have been fighting in all these years. In 1991 it was taken into the regulations of the Immigration Act; a woman who breaks out of the marriage because of abuse might stay [‘kan få bli’ paragraph]. Then we mobilised women in the Parliament and we were able to change it to should stay [‘skal’ paragraph]. (…) however, this is a paragraph that the government, the immigration authorities have never liked. So it has been two steps forwards and one step backwards all along for nearly 30 years now. (…) the definition of abuse has been under dispute. (…) so we have fought all the way.’

‘(…) there has been talk about changing the three year rule. We have fought for making this three year rule into one year. (…) they talk about different requirements [tilknytningskrav], about earning a certain amount in order to be able to get married [to someone abroad]. I think that is discriminatory in relation to a group of people. (…) it is only to prevent immigration.’

One of the interviewees from one of the oldest minority women’s organisations also mentioned the work regarding the three year rule as an issue where they were able to mobilise all Norwegian women’s organisations and they all stated that the law was discriminatory against women. They were able to use some cases in order to highlight discrimination in the Immigration Act of 1988.

This mobilisation regarding the Immigration Act of 1988 and the three year rule is an example which was highlighted by several of the interviewees from different organisations, both majority and minority women’s organisations and
professionalised NGOs that were working on this issue back then. This example shows that during the 80s, the women’s movement was able to mobilise around an issue at the intersection of women’s issues and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. However, there have not been many examples of similar cooperation in the 90s and the 2000s. The new Immigration Act of 2008 did not lead to a comparable mobilisation. Compared to issues like forced marriages, the three year rule also received little attention in relation to the new Immigration Act. The mapping of the comments from the consultation process regarding this law and the comments specifically concerning the three year rule indicates that some of the same organisations are still actively engaged in this issue, but among these there were mainly one established minority women’s organisation and some professionalised NGOs. However, none of the membership based majority women’s organisations were involved. The organisations included in our study, which commented on this issue agreed with the proposal by the Committee on Immigration Act’s report (NOU 2004: 20) that the regulation should be included in the law, and disagreed with the proposed reversal of the ‘shall’- regulation to a ‘might’- regulation. They also wanted women who had been victims of violence to be granted immediate residence permits, preferably after one, not three years. The Ministry of Labour and Inclusion agreed with the first two demands, but not the last one.\textsuperscript{115}

The lack of more extensive mobilisations in the women’s movement might also be explained by a combination of an increased professionalisation in the voluntary sector (Melve, 2003: 173-174) and the institutional opportunity structure which is characterised by separate spheres (Skjeie og Teigen, 2007).

According to the politicians interviewed, many of the organisations have become very professional and they have regular contact with politicians: they call and ask for meetings, and they influence policy-making. In the politicians’ view, the strategic thing to do is to make contact with the political parties that initially disagree with the organisations point of view; if you are able to persuade them, then you can actually have an impact. The most professional organisations are aware of that and they have a broad approach where they initiate meetings with different political parties. In

\textsuperscript{115} See Appendix B for more details.
general, one of the parliamentary politicians stated that there has been a change during recent years and organisations have become more professional; they are getting good at finding the right politicians to talk to depending on the issue they want to address.

Several of the interviewees emphasised the division of labour between the organisations:

‘We work more with individual people, case after case after case, one individual after the other. Whereas most of the other organisations [nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees] work more theoretically. (...) one has found one’s niche.’

‘There are organisations, like OMOD, who work against public discrimination, and the Anti-racist centre and so on. So it [ethnic discrimination, anti-racist work] is a specific field of expertise, and we don’t replicate. (...) but we work for equal rights and equal value, and that is a basic work against discrimination. We do it our way. (...) so of course we do anti-discriminatory work.’

‘We can’t say that much about the [minority] women who are oppressed. (...) others work with them. If you go to them [SEIF or MiRA] you will hear about them. We try to cover other areas because that is also very important and it can’t be left out of the picture. It is not because we don’t think that there are many oppressed women, it is rather that others do that work. Our job is to highlight the ordinary women and their everyday lives.’

‘We don’t work directly with racism because we have organisations like OMOD [Institution against Public Discrimination]. OMOD addresses racist cases. They are a public organisation which is well known for dealing with racist issues. So whenever there are cases like that, we cooperate with OMOD. We are in close contact and give information and support each other. Whenever there are cases like that, we demonstrate together with them. But [our organisation] does not directly address racist issues in relation to the authorities; OMOD and the Anti-racist centre do that, and also other organisations that have been in the game longer and have people with expertise in these issues.’

Statements like ‘we don’t replicate work’ and ‘one has found one’s niche’ indicate a strategic division of labour between the organisations. Quotes like ‘it [ethnic discrimination, anti-racist work] is a specific field of expertise’ and ‘[our organisation] does not directly address racist issues in relation to the authorities; OMOD and the Anti-racist centre do that, and also other organisations that have been longer in the game and have people with expertise in these issues’ also indicate separate spheres and increased professionalisation.
One of the interviewees from a ‘professionalised NGO’ explained the need for someone to do political work full-time:

‘(...) After a while we saw the need for an umbrella organisation. When there was a consultation: Who’s responsible writing consultation statements? (...) when the authorities contacted us; who should they contact? (...) who should lobby at the Parliament [Stortinget]? (...)’

Some of the small membership based minority women’s organisations did not think that they had the skills to work politically because they did not have the expertise in certain fields. Some of the larger membership majority women’s organisations also claim that participation in consultations and political cooperation with other organisations are time-consuming and they do not have the resources to prioritise these types of political strategies. Considering that, for instance, calls for consultations are sent by the Ministry to affected parties, increased professionalisation can be seen as problematic because the membership based organisations either do not have the competence or the financial resources to participate and thereby influence policy-making on issues that concern them.

‘There have been some historical changes. These days there are no great political movements. If someone thinks that the Norwegian women’s movement exist today, I’d like to ask where it is. Most of the work today is done by specialists and experts and so on.’

‘The difference is that [our organisation] is a women’s movement. We existed before there was money involved in issues like forced marriages and so on. We discussed these issues long before they became ‘popular’ issues. (...) but other organisations became interested because there was money in it. They are a result of the state’s immigration and integration politics which are based on short lived measures and projects. But these issues [forced marriages and so on] are complicated issues (...)’

Another issue which has been raised in some of the interviews has been competition among the voluntary organisations:

‘Organisations often have a tendency to pursue one’s own goals. Sometimes you can have a problem regarding cooperation with people who do other things. (...)’

‘When I started in this job I must have been the most naïve person in Norway. I went to all the different organisations and said: “I think we can cooperate” (...)’
One explanation for the competition between the organisations put forward by some of the interviewees was the lack of financial resources and the struggle to be seen as legitimate and sensible actors. The interviewees viewed the authorities as partly responsible for this competition because no one has enough money. Even if organisations have found their niche and work with issues from different angles, it can still be difficult to get all the organisations to cooperate about an issue. One interviewee said that she had to navigate and make different alliances with different organisations on different issues.

The interviewees from the small membership-based minority women’s organisations emphasised the need to cooperate with others in order to have political influence:

‘We [our organisation] can’t do that much alone, so we have to find partners to cooperate with in order to be able to influence policy. One part of this work is through the Council for immigrant organisations [Innvanderrådet]. (…) we try to do it that way. Our organisation is small and we can’t do it alone, that’s impossible.’

‘It is good if we can cooperate with somebody [other organisations] on a campaign and influence the authorities. (…) we [mentions another minority organisation] have written a letter together. (…) this letter will be sent to the media.’

One strategy is to try to influence politically in cooperation with other minority organisations through the Council for immigrant organisations [Innvanderrådet]. The interviewee mentioned issues like ethnic discrimination at the work place, quotas in the public sector and equality (both gender equality and ethnic equality). Another strategy is to support each other on certain issues, such as public consultations on forced marriages. The general impression from the interview data is that the small minority women’s organisations have mainly made alliances with each other on some issues and also with professionalised NGOs, primarily working with ethnic discrimination and so on. In order to influence politically there are few examples of cooperation or alliances between the majority and the majority women’s organisations.

7.7 International Level Work
In this section we look at the extent to which the interviewed women’s organisations were involved in international work. Several of the organisations in our study were involved in projects through FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development. FOKUS is a resource centre on international women’s issues and a co-ordinating organ for women’s organisations in Norway. FOKUS coordinates the international solidarity work of 72 women’s organisations in Norway. There are both minority and majority women’s organisations among the affiliated organisations in FOKUS. Several of the projects deal with violence against women (see more about FOKUS in Chapter 2). Some of the interviewees mentioned political work related to these projects:

‘Those [in our organisations] who work with international projects are often, or at least relatively regularly in meetings with the authorities about Norway’s foreign policy on women’s issues; both in relation to women during war (…), abortion (…), trafficking, prostitution (…)’

These organisations try to influence Norway’s foreign policy on women’s issues. Other interviewees are more reluctant to get involved in international projects because it hindered their ability to do political work in Norway:

‘We were not supposed to work internationally. (…) if you get into aid which it very easily becomes, then you have got to get partners in other countries. This is very demanding and time-consuming and you don’t get time to do political work at home. (…) aid is aid and political work is political work. When you are a small organisation and you don’t have that many people.’

According to this interviewee, international solidarity work is often purely aid and due to limited resources, they have to prioritise political work in Norway.

Some of the interviewed organisations were involved in shadow reports to United Nation’s conventions like CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination).

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116 See http://www.fokuskvinner.no/
117 CEDAW is monitored by CEDAW (The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).
118 ICERD is monitored by CERD (The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).
119 See selective mapping in Appendix B for more details.
The interviewees described how the organisations could use these international conventions in their political work:

‘The Women’s Convention [CEDAW] and the Platform of Action from Beijing. (…) I encouraged Norwegian organisations to use these conventions and action plans. (…) how can I use them to apply for money and to put a focus [on certain women’s issues]? How can I use these international instruments in the battle against violence against women and in order to put pressure on the government? (…)’

‘We have been to CERD [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination] a few times and we have sent our own report to the committee and we have met the committee prior to the examination. (…) there is also this NGO in Geneva called ARIC; Anti-racist Information Centre, and they work on CERD. That is very okay because we think the system is quite big and things get lost. So it’s okay to cooperate with them with reports and information and so on.’

‘We see that it is a very good instrument to use. (…) you can get a focus on issues which you haven’t been able to get properly addressed. (…)’

These quotes illustrate how organisations used these international documents in order to get money from the government for different projects. The government feels more obligated to follow the recommendations from CEDAW and CERD, and some of the organisations tried to use that actively in order to influence the Norwegian government. The participation in shadow reports and the use of these documents were mainly seen as an instrument to push the government to meet the recommendations from the UN committees. According to the interviewees, it is important for the Norwegian government to show that they are good on certain issues, like gender equality, and the organisations have an important job in being ‘watchdogs’ and making sure that they are actually doing what they are supposed to do.

There is generally little information about political work on a European level in the interview material, even if we have asked all the interviewees about this. One interviewee mentioned the reporting to the European Commission:

‘The European Commission has reporting every third year, kind of like CERD. But they come here; ECRI [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance]. (…) It is only recommendations, but it is something that we can use. (…)’
CERD and ECRI are mainly used as tools to influence the Norwegian government, and some of the organisations use these actively. However, in general there was little evidence of political work at a European level in our interview material. This may be due to the fact that Norway is not a European Union member (see Chapter 2 about the referendums). Several interviewees also mentioned lack of financial resources as a reason why they did not prioritise international political work.

7.8 Summary

In this chapter we have examined some of the opportunities and constraints that women’s organisations in Norway have highlighted during interviews about their possible influence on policy-making. We have focused on attempts of influence through the corporate channel (Rokkan, 1987). We have looked at the organisations’ participation both in the formal corporative channel (including participation hearings, publicly appointed boards and commissions) and informal participation (including lobbying and dialogue) (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007). Other strategies mentioned by the interviewees are the media, demonstrations and strategic alliances with other organisations. Our study shows that the organisations use a combination of different strategies in order to influence policy-making.

Chapter 6 were mainly focused on representation of cooperation and alliances found in the interviews with the member-based women’s organisations in our study. However, the findings were also supplemented with interviews with the more so-called professionalised NGOs which work with issues related to women’s rights, violence against women and ethnic and/or religious discrimination. In this chapter, we have presented more findings from the interviews with the professionalised NGOs, in addition to the membership-based women’s organisations. The reason why we included various professionalised NGOs reflects the complex organisational landscape within the fields of ‘gender equality’/‘women’s issues’ and ‘ethnic equality’/‘ethnic minority issues’. This also indicates an increased professionalisation in these areas, which our findings support. We also wanted to include organisations that have much contact with the political decision-makers, and our study support our assumption that these organisations work actively to try to influence policy-making. The professionalised NGOs usually have a paid staff, in contrast to most of the
membership-based voluntary women’s organisations. However, all the organisations in our study emphasise their independent role as ‘watchdogs’ in relation to the political authorities.

There is little evidence of cooperation or alliances in our interview material. This finding probably has different explanations. Our study does not of course present the whole picture of cooperation and alliances and political strategies to influence policy-making among organisations working within the fields of ‘women’s issues’ and ‘ethnic minority issues’. Our main focus has been on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism, and our special concern with issues related to the intersection between the categories ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’. Thus, our findings reflect that special focus. Our research is also based on interviews with selected organisations and there are probably examples of cooperation and alliances that has not been reflected in our interview material. However, our research findings can indicate some tendencies. This final section will summarise the main findings presented in this chapter.

7.9 Two Separate Spheres: ‘Women's Issues’ and ‘Ethnic Minority Issues’

Selective inclusion

Earlier studies indicate that there is a selective inclusion of movement groups (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007; Kjellman, 2007). The pattern of selective inclusion in the areas of ‘gender issues’ and ‘ethnicity issues’ point to two separate spheres and certain field-specific opportunities for organisational activists (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007). The financial support schemes illustrate the separate spheres of ‘gender equality issues’ and ‘immigrant/minority issues’. These institutional opportunity structures also indicate a discursive understanding of majority women’s organisations as working politically with ‘gender equality issues’ whereas minority women’s organisations mainly work with ‘immigrant/migrant issues’. Some organisations are ‘institutionalised’ as consultative bodies within certain policy fields, whereas other organisations are excluded (institutional opportunities). The invitation structure also says something about which organisations are seen as legitimate actors within different fields (discursive opportunities).
Our own mapping of selected law proposals concerning violence in close relations, protection against forced marriages and changes in the Immigration Act (see Appendix B), support the claim of selective inclusion. One aspect of the institutional opportunities is the invitation structure in regards to formal consultations of proposals that the Ministries send to affected parties (hearings). The general picture concerning the invitation structure was that the majority women’s organisations were invited by the Ministries to comment on proposals concerning violence in close relations, but not invited to hearings about the Immigration Act in which forced marriages and the three year rule are dealt with. These issues are related to violence against minority women and address the intersection between violence and ethnic discrimination. However, here the majority women’s organisations are absent - they were not invited by the Ministries to comment and they did not take the initiative to send in their comments.

Only a few of the minority women’s organisations were invited to comment on the proposal concerning violence in close relations. The organisations which receive funding from the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, had been invited to give comments. The divide between ‘minority violence’, like forced marriages and FGM and the ‘ordinary’ partner violence was institutionalised back in 2000. The Ministry of Justice and Police had and still has the coordination responsibility for the first Action Plan and the subsequent two plans against domestic violence. The Ministry of Children and Family (now Ministry of Children and Equality) has and still have the responsibility of coordinating the Action Plans against forced marriages and female genital mutilation. There is little evidence of an intersectional approach concerning violence against women.

The recent reorganising of The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud in 2006 points to a more intersectional approach. The new Ombud’s mandate is to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. The interviewees in our study were divided in their response to the new Ombud. Particularly interviewees from the some of the majority women’s organisations were reluctant to the new Ombud. These interviewees were concerned that the ‘women’s issues’ and discrimination based on gender would gain
less attention when it is amalgamated with other strands of discrimination. The minority women's organisations and the professionalised organisations working on issues relating to ethnic discrimination and racism were more optimistic. However, the reorganising of the Ombud was quite new when the interviews were conducted and many of the interviewees had a ‘wait and see’ attitude.

A limited discursive space
Violence against women has been a central and contested issue for the women’s movement since the 1970s (see Chapter 2), and there has been a continuous expansion of the way this issue has been framed. Related to this expansion of the issue of violence against women is the definition of the political, and the feminist critique of the gendered public/private dichotomy (Pateman, 1987 and Okin, 1991, cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28).

However, several of the interviewees from both majority and minority women’s organisations highlighted the fact that violence in relation to minority and majority women is understood differently: there is a dominant cultural framing of ‘minority violence’ where this is seen as a form of violence which is ‘cultural’ and ‘special’. Violence against minority women is also seen in ‘an immigration perspective’, and often linked to a more restrictive immigration policy. When ‘minority violence’ is understood as ‘special’ and ‘cultural’ it also makes it ‘their problem’, not a general ‘women’s issue’ and ‘our problem’. It supports the image of ‘them’ versus ‘us’; the ‘suppressed minority woman’ versus the ‘liberated majority woman’.

Our study shows that the organisations that have tried to challenge this dominant understanding of ‘minority violence’, have experienced this as a difficult task. However, some of the interviews indicate a conscious strategy of reframing this definition of ‘minority violence’ into a ‘gender equality frame’ and a ‘human rights frame’.

Several of the organisations working with ‘minority issues’ have also tried to broaden the focus regarding minority women. The political authorities have mainly been focusing on violence against minority women, and even if work against violence against women is important, it does not have to be the entire picture. Issues like
forced marriages and female genital mutilation are so overwhelming, that it becomes
difficult to broaden the focus and get other issues besides ‘crisis gender equality’ on
the political agenda. Our analysis indicates that the narrow picture of minority
women as victims of violence is a barrier for addressing other issues concerning
minority women. ‘Ordinary’ equality issues such as discrimination in the labour
market are not considered reasonable, legitimate, and sensible with respect to
minority women.

7.10 A combination of Different Political Strategies

Our interviews with women’s organisations also support the selective inclusion
assertion concerning hearings. However, these interviews also shed light on other
issues regarding the formal corporate channel and also informal channels of
influence. Our study demonstrates that women’s organisations are highly involved in
all stages and aspects of the corporate channel, but also that there are some
problems with respect to influence and impact.

Consultations (hearings)

Generally, all the women’s organisations wanted to be included as consultative
actors. The interviewees emphasised the democratic aspect, the value of
participation in the political process and the importance of being recognised as
legitimate actors in a certain policy field.

The organisations thought it was important to give comments to proposals when the
organisation could provide a perspective that otherwise would not be heard.

Some interviewees were quite positive to and thought that they had an influence,
whereas others had a more ambivalent view on the influence of organisations
through this corporative channel. According to this view, the consultative bodies in
hearings do not have any actual influence and the organisations are merely invited to
comment on the proposals because the authorities need legitimacy for a law
proposal. This indicates that the organisations need to get their views heard and
included before the proposal is sent out to the consultative bodies. This view
indicates an involvement through other channels of influence in order to have real impact.

A barrier mentioned by most of the interviewees, was the lack of resources which meant that the organisations do not have the capacity to comment on proposals. Some of the membership-based organisations saw the need to have paid staff in order to be able to make this channel of influence a priority. However, interviewees from the professionalised NGOs, which have a paid staff, also said that the issue of capacity was one reason why they were not able to comment on all the proposals they were invited to give comments on.

Another issue which was raised was the language in which the proposals are written, which is quite difficult if you are not an expert in law and this can be a real barrier.

The organisations that give consultation comments have to prioritize the issues in which that they have a special expertise. Although the minority women’s organisations wish to be invited to more hearings, interviewees from some of the professionalised NGO would rather advice small minority women’s organisations to prioritise other strategies in order to have an influence.

According to the interviewed civil servants there is a good chance of having an influence through the system of public consultations as long as the comments are well written, to the point, substantiated and the organisations have sufficient knowledge about the issue. In cases where voluntary organisations can provide civil servants with good arguments that will be taken into consideration and might affect the outcome. However, there are few formal initiatives taken by the organisations and they lack knowledge concerning how the central government administration operates. There is a huge challenge in transferring the knowledge of organisations ‘out in the real world’ and making use of it. Some of the organisations do not have the required ability to impart their knowledge in writing.

**Boards and commissions**

Participation in publicly appointed boards and commissions that prepare policy initiatives is mentioned by some of the interviewees as a political strategy where they
Some interviewees, however, criticised the widely used praxis of boards and commissions. According to this criticism, committees that are writing reports and proposals concerning minorities often consist of majority Norwegians, usually experts. There is a strong exclusion factor of minority women’s organisations and if a minority woman is included, it is usually at a later stage and the conditions are already decided. This criticism addressed a ‘stealing of knowledge’ from minorities by majority experts in the field of ‘ethnic minority issues’.

**Lobbying**

Among the organisations it varied regarding the extent to which they used lobbying as a political strategy. Some considered informal contact like lobbying and meetings with members of parliament, politicians in the Ministries and civil servants to be an effective way of influencing policy-making. They emphasised the personal element and the importance of making personal relations and advocating issues face-to-face with politicians. However, they underlined the need to be strategic regarding who you approach and in order to have an impact you have to provide productive solutions to a problem.

The organisations emphasised the need to be able to document their views, which is essential in order to be taken seriously. An informal meeting is not the final goal if your organisation wants to have influence, it is merely the beginning. However, a meeting can be used as a platform for further political work. There is also a potential downside in regards to having an informal dialogue; namely as a forum where organisations are being heard but not necessarily having any real influence.

There was also a more negative view of informal contact with politicians in the interviews. Part of the scepticism towards lobbying can be interpreted as a fear of
becoming too ‘personal’ with people in positions of power and not to compromise the role of the organisations as independent ‘watchdogs’. The independent role of these organisations is paramount.

*Media*

The women’s organisations find it most effective to use a combination of strategies in order to influence policy-making. In addition to participating in the formal corporate channel, including boards, commissions and hearings, and in informal settings like lobbying and meetings with politicians, the media is also mentioned by most of the interviewees as an important strategy to put issues on the agenda. However, several of the interviewees emphasised the need to know how to use the media. The organisations have to use strategic framing in order to get the media attention they want and they have to be able to substantiate their claims. The media attention might give the organisation a platform from which to reach policy-makers and thus be a starting point for further political work. When an issue reaches the political agenda and an Action Plan has been worked out, the organisations have to use this plan to push the authorities to follow up their goals.

The organisations that use the media to set the agenda strategically frame their issues in order to get attention. One dimension of this is related to forming bridging frames that fit with cultural belief systems or dominant discourses in order to negotiate a frame that will work politically (Benford and Snow, 2000, in Bacchi, 2005: 203). There are examples of organisations that have used the media in a way which indicates a strategy of reframing the dominant discourse about “minority violence” and extending the general frame of violence against women.

However, some interviewees have experienced that the media had tried to ‘use’ the organisation in a certain way by already having a story and a picture of the archetypical ‘feminist’ that he or she wanted the organisation to represent in the story. Some interviewees had experienced barriers in their attempts to get attention to their issues and to set the agenda in the media.

Demonstrations were mentioned as a conscious strategy to get media attention. This media strategy was deliberate in order to get attention to feminist issues at a
time when these issues have otherwise received little attention. Demonstrations and use of appeals have also been mentioned as successful strategy in order to shift the focus away from the Ministry’s proposal regarding the 21 year demand in the new Immigration Act. The cooperation with several minority organisations was also viewed as instrumental in stopping the proposed 21 year old demand. This sort of response suggests a protest, both to the proposals by the Ministry and also to the way this channel of influence was set up. The Ministry had the initiative and the power to include and exclude organisations and other consultative bodies. The Ministry was also proposing different law changes and the consultative bodies were merely supposed to comment on some set alternatives.

Strategic alliances, division of labour, professionalisation

There are examples of cooperation and strategic alliances in the interview material. Several of the interviewees have argued that cooperation on certain issues can be a good strategy in order to put political pressure on the authorities. Some of the interviewees have mentioned mobilisations where the women’s movement - also sometimes in cooperation with professionalised NGOs - have been able to work politically together and to have an impact. The interviewees from the small membership-based minority women’s organisations emphasised the need to cooperate with others in order to have political influence. One strategy was to try to influence politically in cooperation with other minority organisations through the Council for immigrant organisations [Innvanderrådet]. Another strategy is to support each other on certain issues, such as public consultations on forced marriages.

A mobilisation in the women’s movement that was mentioned by several of the interviewees was the work regarding the three year rule in the late 70s and 80s. This example shows that during the 80s, the women’s movement was able to mobilise around an issue at the intersection of gender equality and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. However, there have not been many examples of similar cooperation in the 90s and the 2000s. The general impression from the interview data is that the small minority women’s organisations have mainly made alliances with each other and also with professionalised NGOs, primarily working with ethnic discrimination. In order to influence politically there are few examples of cooperation or alliances between the majority and the majority women’s organisations.
As mentioned, there is little evidence of cooperation or alliances in our interview material, especially alliances between majority and minority women’s organisations. This finding probably has different explanations. Since our main focus has been on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism, and issues related to the intersection between the categories “gender” and “ethnicity”, our findings also reflect that focus. However, our research findings can indicate some tendencies.

Some of the explanations can probably have institutional historic roots and some explanations can find answers in personal relationships and conflicts. The lack of political cooperation and alliances can also be understood by examining the different problem representations (see Chapter 6). The representations of “women’s issues” were very different, and in relation to this issue there seemed to be a divide between minority and majority women’s organisations. The question whether the fight against ethnic discrimination/racism should be included as a ‘women’s issue’ proved to be a controversial issue. Minority women’s organisations emphasised ethnic discrimination as an issue within the definition of ‘women’s issues’, and this representation addressed the intersection of racism and sexism in minoritised women’s lives. The majority women’s organisations on the other hand, regarded ethnic discrimination and racism as ‘different’ issues than ‘women’s issues’ – and not included in the way they represented ‘women’s issues’. This representation illustrated a ‘either/or’ logic where ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity’ are seen as mutually exclusive.

In Chapter 6 and also in this chapter we have found different representations of ‘minority violence’. One representation is that violence against minority women should be viewed the same way as violence against majority women. Another representation is that ‘minority violence’ is ‘special’ and explained by minority ‘culture’, whereas ‘majority violence’ is explained by ‘structure’. One of the discursive effects of this representation is that violence against minority women is not included in the majority feminist battle against patriarchal structures, and excluded from this kind of feminist agenda. A third representation is that ‘minority violence’ is viewed as a ‘structural’ problem due to ‘oppressive patriarchal structures
in migrant communities’ and also connected to ‘structural discrimination’ by the majority society. However, in this representation, the fear of contributing to further stigmatisation of migrants in Norway makes this issue more complicated than ‘majority violence’. The effect by this problem representation is that ‘minority violence’ is labelled as ‘difficult’, and this may lead to passivity and a fear of dealing with these issues.

7.11 Professionalism

The lack of more extensive cooperation and alliances in the women’s movement might also be explained by a combination of an increased professionalization in the voluntary sector (Melve, 2003: 173-174) and the institutional opportunity structure which is characterised by separate spheres (Skjeie og Teigen, 2007).

Our study indicates an increased professionalisation. According to the politicians interviewed, many of the organisations have become very professional during the recent years and have regular contact with politicians: they call and ask for meetings, and they influence policy-making.

Our study also shows a division of labour between the organisations. Statements like ‘we don’t replicate work’ and ‘one has found one’s niche’ indicate a strategic division of labour between the organisations. This division of labour also indicates more specialised expertise on specific issues. Some of the small membership based minority women’s organisations did not think that they had the skills to work politically because they did not have the expertise in certain fields. A criticism put forward by some of the interviewees from minority women’s organisations, was that the issues concerning minority women are being professionalised. Most of the work is done by specialists or experts, and the women’s movement is not an important actor anymore. Some of the larger membership majority women’s organisations also claim that participation in consultations and political cooperation with other organisations are time-consuming and they do not have the resources to prioritise these types of political strategies. Increased professionalisation can be seen as problematic because the membership based organisations neither have the required expertise nor the financial resources to participate and thereby influence policy-
making on issues that concern them. This can be a democratic problem considering the fact that this system is set up in order to hear affected parties.

7.12 Funding

A common concern for most of the organisations was dissatisfaction with the financial support from the state. According to some interviewees, women’s organisations receive less money than other voluntary organisations. Do the authorities put women’s issues at the bottom of their list of priorities?

Some of the small local minority women’s organisations did not receive a general operating grant from the municipality and they have to rely on membership fees and project funding. However, applying for project money is time-consuming and stressful since everything is based on voluntary work. It involved a lot of work without any guarantee. Our study indicates that organisational work is a very good way for minority women to get engaged and to become active citizens, however, the authorities have to make this possible.

The lack of resources meant that the women’s organisations have to do a difficult prioritising of different means in order to influence politically. They also emphasised the increased pressure from the media, and the need to be visible in order to put issues on the political agenda. When they could not have paid staff that also meant that it was difficult to attend conferences and seminars during the day, and several of the interviewees had examples of meetings and conferences initiated by the Ministries where the organisations were unable to attend because the members are at work during the daytime.

However, the organisations also expressed an ambivalence concerning funding from the state. They emphasised their role as voluntary organisations and their independent role in relation to the state. Some of the interviewees also pointed at the lack of general operating grants to the small minority women’s organisations, and expressed concern about the critical potential of these organisations due to their dependence on project-funding. Small organisations which have financial problems might become afraid of criticising the state because they are afraid of losing their financial support.
Another criticism was related to the increased professionalisation of the ‘minority field’. Minority women’s organisations have put certain issues on the agenda, however when the resources are there, they do not get it. According to this criticism, most of the money goes to majority professionalised organisations and experts and this was a setback for critical voices. Further research needs to be done to substantiate which kinds of women’s organisations and other organisations receive of financing.

Another problem the organisations face which is related to limited resources is the lack of a permanent meeting place, and this was a real barrier in their work. They could not afford to rent a place and that directly affected the work of the organisation. Our study indicates that a house where several women’s organisations could have offices would strengthen the possibility of more cooperation, also between minority/majority women’s organisations.

7.13 Influence

Political influence is difficult to measure and our aim has not been to measure the ‘actual degree of influence’ by women’s organisations. Rather, our agenda has been to explore the organisational actors own accounts of their strategies and their experiences in relation to the organisations’ political influence. In addition, the views of key interviewees among parliamentary politicians and civil servants have been included because we have wanted to their views on which actors are considered ‘reasonable, sensible, and legitimate’.

In general, the interviewed civil servants and the parliamentary politicians describe the Norwegian political system as quite open and accessible, also at a high level of government. In their opinion it is quite possible for women’s organisations to get in contact with the government and the access thresholds into the Ministries and the Parliament are low. The Ministries also try to have informal contact with the ‘field out there’ and they often invite organisations to ‘brainstorming meetings’ before preparing an Action Plan.
According to one of the parliamentary politicians, the women’s movement is a relevant actor today, as much as it was in the 1970s. The women’s movement plays an important role by raising issues and making demands especially concerning violence against women. In her view there are still many issues that need to be addressed, and the women’s movement will have an important role to play in the years to come.

However, some of the interviewees mentioned several barriers in their attempts to influence politically. Organisations working with ‘minority issues’ have experienced that their claims have been regarded as less trustworthy when they are forwarded by a black organisation compared to a white researcher.

Some organisations have also addressed who is considered to be the legitimate representative for a minority group, and criticised the Norwegian government for always having a dialogue with religious leaders, for instance imams, and seeing them as spokespersons for certain ethnic minority communities. This view is in accordance with feminist critiques of multiculturalism: that it is usually the more powerful members of a group (generally male) who are selected as spokespersons, and their versions of the community’s practices are heard in intercultural dialogue and debates (Okin, 1999; Phillips, 2007). Other minority women’s organisations have had a different experience. One organisation who has primarily worked against female genital mutilation have experienced that they have been taken seriously and been regarded as a legitimate actor. One interpretation of these different experiences is that an organisation may be seen as a more legitimate actor for the minority group if their work against so-called ‘honour-related’ violence is framed within a ‘cultural frame’. This would indicate that when ethnicity is connected with racism, the sensibility vanishes, however, when ethnicity is connected with culture, the sensibility and legitimacy increases.

The common view among the interviewed politicians and the civil servants, is that the majority feminist organisations have been absent in relation to minority women’s issues. They seem to be more engaged in majority women’s issues. In their view, minority women are still not a part of ‘we’ the women, and there is a divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Majority women’s organisations are afraid of being accused of being
racist, one politician argued. The Norwegian Women’s Public Health Association (Norske Kvinner Sanitetsforening) is mentioned as a majority non-feminist women’s organisation which has been engaged in dialogue with minority women, and as a result they have also taken some political initiatives.

According to several of the interviewed politicians and civil servants, the organisations which have been politically active concerning violence against women are the umbrella organisations representing the Women’s Shelters and also the organisations working with rape. The Administration of Women’s Shelters (Krisesentersekretariatet) and Norwegian Crisis Center Association (Norsk Krisesenterforbund) are especially mentioned as very engaged in violence against minority women and they also have an important role as ‘watchdogs’. The majority feminist organisations have not been that visible. In general the majority feminist organisations have not been particularly active in contacting the parliamentary politicians nor the civil servants.

The parliamentary politicians and the civil servants also mention organisations as such as OMOD which addresses public discrimination and minority women’s rights, ORKIS (Oslo Red Cross International Centre), Self-help for immigrants and refuges (SEIF) and Human Rights Service (HRS). In relation to forced marriages, honour killings and female genital mutilation, SEIF, HRS and MiRA Centre have been active politically.

Among minority women’s organisations the MiRA Centre is mentioned by all the politicians and civil servants as an important actor. There are few other minority women’s organisations with strong voices and the organisations that exist are small and weak. In general there are many organisations in the ‘minority field’ and there are a few strong individual voices, but the field is very fragmented and it is difficult to know who the individual voices actually represent. In their view, it is particularly difficult to know what most minority women mean. The organisations that represent minority women and work politically and professionally are still very few, and even if they do a good job, the politicians and civil servants want to see more broad membership-based organisations in order for more strong voices to be heard. In
general, there is a need of more and stronger minority women’s organisations which engage in political issues.
This report based on the case-study of selected women’s movement organisations has produced new empirical evidence on the intersection of gender and ethnicity covering the period since the 1970s. The concern has been with the horizontal and vertical aspects of citizenship: the mobilisation of ethnic minority women, their relations to the larger women’s movements and the demands articulated by movement organisations towards the state. The report has focused on two major aspects of women’s movements activities:

1) the relations between ethnic ‘majority’ and ethnic ‘minority’ feminist and women’s organisations in the women’s movement.
2) the claims making of these organisations in relations to influence gender policy, policies on violence against women and discrimination/racism.

The case study has been based on 31 interviews with activists from women’s and feminist organisations and interviews with five key actors among civil servants and parliamentary politicians, and a mapping of a selected number of national policy documents, and national reports and shadow reports to the CEDAW and CERD committees.

The analysis of relations and claims making have been based on the political opportunity approach (Kjellman 2007). We have applied theories of institutional and discursive opportunities (Koopmans et al., 2005), however in different ways. The theoretical approach in Chapter 6 on the relations between majoritised and minoritised women’s organisations has been inspired by discourse analysis, in particular Carol Bacchi’s ‘What’s the problem’ approach (Bacchi 1999), whereas the analysis of claims making and influence in Chapter 7 is inspired by frame analysis, in particular the work of Mieke Verloo (2005). The empirically grounded arguments and conclusions we have made concerning the relationships and the claims making, are justified within different theoretical but related frameworks outlined in Chapter 4. In Chapter 6 the intention has been to disclose the deeper underpinnings of the interviewee’s descriptions and interpretations of the extent to which majority and
minority women’s organisations were able to or interested in cooperating and the extent to which majority organisations have ‘embraced and accepted, or resisted and rejected’ (Sudbury, 1988) the interests of minority women. The chapter consists of two parts, one of which is focusing the 1970s and 80s, and one is focusing the 1990s and 00s. In Chapter 7, however, the focus is mainly on contemporary political processes. The intention here has been to disclose the intentional and strategic ways in which feminist and women’s organisations have articulated claims and demands, and how they value their impact on policy making.

The Norwegian women’s movement consists of a variety of feminist and non-feminist organisations on the national and local level. We have counted more than 200 organisations when we include organisations at the intersection of gender based organising, ethnic-, national- or minority based organising and religion based organising (Eggebø et al. 2007). Prominent changes have occurred since the 1970s, particularly with regard to minority women. The mobilisation of Sami and migrant women and the emergence of professional women’s organisations has changed the organisational landscape. Political opportunities related to the funding of organisations have resulted in a multitude of local minority women’s organisations.

In Chapter 2 we also establish that the relationship between minority and majority women’s organisations has been contested from the outset of organised minority feminism. Different and often conflicting representations of the relations between majority and minority women’s organisations are extensively documented and discussed in Chapter 6. The 1980s seems to have been a decade of high integration through conflict: The contacts and rallying points were numerous, and brought about confrontations and conflicts as well as cooperation across the ethnic divide. The representations of the extent to which majority women listened and respected migrant women’s claims differ a lot between minority and majority women activists. There was a discourse of conflict and irritation within which minority feminists felt misrecognised and marginalised during the 80s. They describe derogatory ways of being approached. Majority feminists, however, hardly grasped the arguments of structural racism in Norway, and were reluctant to charges of racism. The consistent demand to include anti-racism as a feminist issue did not disturb the majority feminists’ analysis of gender injustice and oppression. Different
discourses - one of charity and one of dignity - are represented by non-feminist majority women, whereas Sami feminism addresses the particular problems of being recognised as a national minority.

We tend to conclude that the relations between minority and majority women have improved since the 1980s, as indicated in the interviews with activists from 1990's and 2000 in Chapter 6B. Yet, the interviewees still demonstrate quite dissimilar representations, and we have discovered competing problem representations for instance of ‘majority’/’minority’ cooperation, ‘women’s issues’, feminism and religion and ‘minority violence’. ‘Sisterhood’ does not seem to be extensively practiced. A common assumption by the interviewed majority feminists is that minority women have ‘different interests’, and this ‘difference’ is understood as ‘difficult’ and confusing. ‘Difference’ explains lack of cooperation. Most importantly: there seems to be a lack of an appropriate language to talk about the intertwined and complex issues of criticising the oppression of women within minority communities and at the same time not stigmatizing the entire community of migrants. Change is unlikely to happen unless this discourse of ‘difference as difficult’ is challenged, because majority women activists do not know how to handle the difficult balance between the recognition of difference and the concern about women’s subordination.

One of the major findings in Chapter 7 is the systematic divide between the gender equality policy field and the ethnic discrimination policy field. The divide is the result of mixed and probably unintended processes related to political opportunities: It is in part an effect of the institutionalisation of CEDAW and ICERD - which are the two conventions we have focused on - as separate issues and rights at the international level and consequently also at the European and national level. It is also in part a result of the different solidary identities (Rupp and Taylor, 1999) of the various women’s movement organisations. They are embedded in dissimilar social movements - the anti-racist, the women’s and the Sami movements - who mobilised to establish separate rights from the outset, and to strengthen their enforcement.

We have also noticed that issues related to some forms of violence against women - female gender mutilation, forced marriages and the three years rule - are positioned outside the ‘ordinary’ field of policies against violence against women. This is highly
contested, mostly by minority women’s organisations who argue against this division because the effect is to marginalize and victimize minority women. The structuring of the policy fields, as it is documented in our analysis of a selected number of hearing processes, reinforce a divided women’s movement: Majority women’s organisations are generally not invited to hearings related to violence against various forms of migrant women, and the other way round. Majority women’s organisations do not ask to be invited, out of lack of resources and sometimes because they are reluctant to get involved in minority women’s issues for various reasons. Also, we have seen that the selection of organisations to be invited to comment on policy proposals is rather accidental. The Ministries do not have updated, complete lists with the relevant categories of women’s organisations when they need consultation.

Another important finding is related to changes in the political system: the tendency to professionalise organisations in civil society based on hired employees - at the expense of democratic membership organisations based on voluntary work. The lack of sufficient funding, commented by several respondents, makes it difficult for the membership based organisations to accomplish what they aim to. The amount of complicated policy documents and the shorter time set aside for hearing processes is a problem, not just for the smaller organisations but for society at large.

There is little evidence of cooperation or alliances in the interview material with activists from the 1990s and 00s. This finding may be explained by the limitation of our research focus to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism and our concern with the intersection of gender and ethnicity. Our findings indicate a discursive understanding of majority women’s organisations as working politically with ‘gender equality issues’ whereas minority women’s organisations mainly work with ‘immigrant/migrant issues’. We also argue that violence in relation to minority and majority women is understood quite differently: ‘minority violence’ is seen as ‘cultural’ and ‘special’ and supports the general image of ‘them’ versus ‘us’.

The report also substantiates that there is a lot of women’s movement activism going on. Majority and minority movement organisations take advantage of the full range of available political opportunities. They participate - although in varying degrees - in consultation processes, boards and commissions, in lobbying and through the
media. When their influence is assessed, civil servants and politicians maintain that they do have informal contacts with the movement and often invite the organisations to meetings. The movement activists have different reflections on this topic, ranging from quite positive descriptions of the response and recognition they have had, to rather pessimistic claims of lack of resources and resonance. Many small minority women's organisations have a hard time in trying to cope with public policy proposals.

Some of the interviewees mentioned the existence of numerous rallying points during the 1980s, and the lack of equivalent points today. During the 80s, women's movement activists met physically at some Women's Houses in addition several institutionalised rallying points. In addition to the preparation before the 8the of March, which still exists, there were a series of national and Nordic conferences and meeting arranged by the Equal Status Council, the Nordic Council of Minister’s, the Research Council etc. Some of these meetings were related to preparations before and debriefing/follow up after the UN conferences in 1975, 1980 and 1985, and were important because they established space for continuous dialogue.

8.1 Recommendations

In order to improve women’s citizenship in Norway – including the initiatives and campaigns of ethnic majority or ethnic minority women activists - there is a distinct need to strengthen the role of women’s organisations. Initiatives to fortify organisations on the national level are required, in particular to improve the capacity to articulate claims. These are some concrete suggestions based on our analysis:

- improved funding of voluntary women’s organisations, mainly for their ordinary work and less based on support for specific projects. This is basic with respect to their chances of having a voice in the forming of new policy initiatives, and also with respect to shadow reports to CEDAW and CERD. Also, this is necessary in order to revive the Nordic, inter- and transnational relations of Norwegian women’s organisations.
- the facilitation of some sort of national umbrella structures to co-ordinate initiatives and circulate information between and across the various women’s
organisations. There is no such structure today, unlike the Women’s Lobby in many EU-member states. The role of FOKUS is limited in this respect because FOKUS is an umbrella for organisations dealing with aid/solidarity work on a project basis. FOKUS has not been mentioned by the interviewees in this respect either.

- consider the rights of Sami women’s organisations to be represented independent of ethnic Norwegian women’s organisations

- The government should establish more rallying points for women’s movements organisations, throughout the country. These are crucial for developing understanding and trust. More and regular national and regional conferences with and for voluntary women’s organisations should be funded.

- The role of the Ombud in facilitating rallying points and dialogues across ethnic and other divides could be crucial with respect to building bridges across organisational divides.

- The government should dedicate more resources to encourage dialogue with the women’s movement organisations prior to specific government consultation.

- The inter- and transnational work of women’s movement organisations should be encouraged and developed.

- The government should, as argued by CEDAW, ‘take the necessary steps to ensure that national machinery for the promotion of equality continues to give priority attention to gender equality and discrimination against women’ (CEDAW 2008: 6).

- The making of an updated, complete data base or portal of women’s organisations in the internet. Such a portal would be useful for politicians and bureaucrats related to consultation processes, it would be convenient for organisations who often do not know about each other, and it would be a valuable tool for further research. We have initiated a project with KILDEN - Information Centre for Gender research in Norway, and have sent a proposal to the Ministry of Children and Equality.
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APPENDIX A  BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH ORGANISATION INCLUDED IN STUDY

APPENDIX B  SELECTIVE MAPPING OF CLAIMS AND ISSUES BY WOMEN’S ORGANISATIONS IN NORWAY

APPENDIX c  TOPIC GUIDES

APPENDIX D  ABBREVIATIONS
APPENDIX A  BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH ORGANISATION INCLUDED IN STUDY

This annex provides a brief description of each organisation interviewed for this report. The information has been collected from the organisations’ websites, where further information can be accessed, and also from a mapping of gender political organisations in Norway (see Eggebø, Helga, Beatrice Halsaa, Hege Skjeie & Cecilie Thun (2007): ‘Organisasjonslandskapet i eit kjønnsperspektiv’, Working Paper No.1 FEMCIT WP4, Senter for kvinne- og kjønnsforskning, University of Oslo. www.femcit.org/files/WP4_WorkingpaperNo1.pdf)

The organisations are presented in the following (alphabetical) order:

Foreign Women’s Group/ MiRA Senteret
Juridisk Rådgivning for Kvinner
Krisesentersekretariatet
Kristent Interkulturelt Arbeid
Kvinnefronten
Kvinnegruppa Ottar
Kurdisk Kvinneforening
Nett BK - Nettverk for Bosniske kvinner i Norge
Norske Kvinners Sanitetsforening
Norsk Kvinnesaksforening
Organisasjon mot offentlig diskriminering
Pan African Women’s Association
Philippine Community Norway
Sami NissonForum
Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger
Somalisk Kvinneforening
Støttekampanje for Kvinners rettigheter i Irak
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women and gender profile</th>
<th>Based on name, activities and aim the MiRA Resource Centre is a women’s and gender political organisation. The aim is to promote equality for black, immigrant and refugee women in Norway, both in regards to the majority population and within the minority communities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
<td>1979 as Foreign Women’s Group and 1989 as The MiRA Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>The MiRA Centre is not a member-based organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>The MiRA Centre is not a member-based organisation, but a resource centre with a national and international network of minority women and organisations. The board is the highest body within MiRA and appoints new board members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical identity</td>
<td>The MiRA Centre receives a general operating grant as a nationwide organisation in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees and work with issues of a national character. Most activities are limited to Oslo and Akershus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities/policy</td>
<td>The MiRA Centre publishes a magazine (MiRA Forum for minoritetskvinner), provides legal and social services, information and networking, arranges seminars and conferences, establishes a meeting place for young girls, self-defence for women, holds lectures and give courses for the interested institutions, organisations and others, participates in the public debate and consultations (hearings) on proposals from the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>The MiRA Centre receives a general operating grant as a nationwide organisation in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The Centre has also received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity. In addition they have received project funding through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpage</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mirasenteret.no/">http://www.mirasenteret.no/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juridisk Rådgivning for Kvinner (JURK) (Legal Advice for Women)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
<td>Based on name, activities and aim JURK is a women’s and gender political organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1974.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>JURK is not a member-based organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>JURK is an independent charity working to improve the legal position and status of women. Female law students from the University of Oslo run JURK. Approximately 16 law students work at JURK, partly paid and partly volunteer work. They work at JURK for one year and four months. JURK has a flat structure. The Collective Meeting (FM) is the highest body within JURK. FM is being held every third week, and all co-workers must attend the meeting. All decisions of importance are made at FM. The board of JURK prepares cases for FM, make administrative decisions and is responsible for hiring new workers. The board consists of one co-worker from each working group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>JURK is located in Oslo, but women all over the country, regardless of income, may use their free legal advice. JURK also addresses political issues concerning women of a national character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>JURK provides free legal aid for women. JURK also addresses political issues concerning women, and are trying to better women’s position within the law. JURK provides legal information, information campaigns in schools and mosques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>JURK’s main income is from the Department of Justice and Local Authorities. Furthermore, the University of Oslo provides free office facilities, phone and postage. The voluntary work from the employees is essential for the existence of JURK. JURK has received financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity (to their “schoolproject” where the aim is to inform minority women about their rights and duties in the Norwegian society).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jurk.no">www.jurk.no</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
<td>Based on members, criteria for becoming a member, aims and activities, The Administration of Women's Shelters is a women’s and gender political organisation. The Administration of Women's Shelters is a member organisation for Women's Shelters. The aim is to promote women's interests and fight against violence against women and their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1994.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>The Administration of Women's Shelters is a member organisation for 33 Women's Shelters in Norway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>The Administration of Women's Shelters was established in 1994. The member shelters joined a common platform in 1982 and constitute the Shelter movement of Norway. The Administration of Women's Shelters work according to the platform. The organisation is democratic and the board is elected at the national congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>The Administration of Women's Shelters is a nationwide organisation that organises Women's Shelters all across Norway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>The Administration of Women's Shelters work towards changing the power structures in society that perpetuate the oppression of women. It provides statistics, reports and information, arranges seminars and conferences, holds lectures, is engaged in international solidarity work, and participates in the public debate, lobbying and consultations (hearings), publicly appointed boards working groups and committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>Today all the shelters in Norway are based on public funding. The Local authorities pay 50% of the total budget and the Central government, through the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs pays the remaining 50%. The Administration of Women's Shelters has received project-funding through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues and project-funding from the Ministry of Justice and Police (The ROSA project).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.krisesenter.com">www.krisesenter.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kristent Interkulturelt Arbeid (KIA) (Christian intercultural Association, CIA)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
<td>Based on activities KIA has a gender dimension. KIA is a Christian organisation working for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The organisation has some activities targeting women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>KIA was established in 1974 by several Norwegian missionary associations, the Bishops Council and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>Originally, KIA was not a membership organisation, but since a few years it has been an umbrella organisation due to conditions for receiving public grants. Recently, KIA also opened up for individual membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>From 2003 KIA has a main office and a general secretary. The organisation is lead by a national board with six representatives and the general secretary as the secretary. The board representatives are selected by the organisations' highest body, the National meeting every other year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>KIA has its main office in Stavanger and regional branches in Trondheim, Telemark, Møre, Rogaland, Oslo, Buskerud, Bjørgvin and Agder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>KIA is engaged in social work, publishes the magazine KIA Interkultura. A major concern is to contribute to networking in order to promote the integration of migrants. KIA works for multi-cultural fellowship and for equality, mutual caring and friendship irrespective of language, cultural and/or religious boundaries. Among the women-related initiatives, KIA offers language courses and dialogue groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>KIA recieves public support from IMDi as a national migrant organisation. In 2007 KIA got a grant of N.kr. 1,185,780. In addition the organizasjonen receives local project grants through the support scheme for local migrant organisations and voluntary activity in local communities. CIA is supported both by public funds and by donations from churches and other idealistic organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.kianorge.no">www.kianorge.no</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kvinnefronten (Women’s Front of Norway)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
<td>Based on name, member base, activities and aim the Women’s Front is a women’s and gender political organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1972.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>330 members (2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>The Women’s Front is a democratic membership-based organisation with an annual meeting every other year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>The Women’s Front is a national women’s organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>The organisation does activism, information, and political work related to women’s economic independence, violence against women, reproductive rights, equality of heterosexual and homosexual marriages, women with a minority background, and sexual liberation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>The Women’s Front receives a general operating grant through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.kvinnefronten.no/">http://www.kvinnefronten.no/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kvinnegruppa Ottar (The Feminist Group Ottar)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
<td>Based on name, member base, activities and aim The Feminist Group Ottar is a women’s and gender political organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1991.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>531 members (2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>The Feminist Group Ottar is a democratic membership-based women’s organisation. The local groups are independent. The Feminist Group Ottar has a national board, coordinating the work of the groups and their common projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>National organisation. The Feminist Group Ottar has groups in Oslo, Stavanger and Bergen, and individual members all over Norway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>The Feminist Group Ottar publishes the Ottar Magazine and participates in national debates and actions. The Feminist Group Ottar works with issues related to feminism, sexual harassment and violence, reproductive rights, economic oppression, family politics, lesbian and gay politics, and international solidarity and is very active in the battle against pornography and prostitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>The Feminist Group Ottar receives a general operating grant through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ottar.as/">http://www.ottar.as/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Kurdisk Kvinneforening – Norge (Association for Kurdish women in Norway)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on the name, aim and activities Kurdisk Kvinneforening – Norge is a women’s organisation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1994.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>A membership-based organisation which organises women from Iranian Kurdistan, not from Turkey or Iraq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>The organisation was split in two because the political party to which the members belonged, Kurdistans Democratic Party (sister organisation to the Norwegian Labour Party), was split. Member of the Women’s section of the Norwegian Council for the Rights of Kurds RKR, which was founded in 1994. Special issue on women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>National.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>Four main issues: Gender equality, integration for women and their families, have influence regarding an independent Kurdistan, support women. Activities: Help with homework, education in the mother tongue, swimming classes, work against violence against women (domestic violence), forced marriages, female genital mutilation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>The organisation does not receive funding from the public support schemes we have checked into.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td>The organisation does not have its own web page. See about Kurdish organisations in Norway <a href="http://www.kurdistan.no/1006606628/1069415316">http://www.kurdistan.no/1006606628/1069415316</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This information is based mostly on information from interviewee and less on Eggebø et al., (2007).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on the name and the activities this is an ethnic/national based women’s organisation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>A membership based women’s organisation. 80 members (2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>Membership-based women’s organisation. They change the leader every other year. Part of The Council for Immigrants in Oslo (Innvandrerrådet), part of the Bosnian National Association (Bosnisk Landsforening) and a worldwide Bosnian association with their main office in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>The organisation is geographically based in Oslo, but has national and international connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>One project about violence against women in Bosnia, one project for elderly Bosnian women living in Norway, one project for youth in Norway with a Bosnian background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>The organisation does not receive a general operation grant from the public support schemes. The organisation has received project-funding from the Oslo Municipality and from FOKUS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td>The organisation does not have a web page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 This information is based mostly on information from interviewee and less on Eggebø et al., (2007).
| **Women and gender profile** | Based on name and members NKS is a women’s association. The aim is to mobilise voluntary efforts for a better and safer community by engaging in women’s health issues and provide care in emergency situations. |
| **Established** | 1896. |
| **Membership** | 60,000 members in 2007. |
| **Organisation** | NKS is a democratic membership-based women’s organisation. The national congress is the highest body in the organisation. |
| **Geographical identity** | NKS is a national association with local branches. |
| **Activities/policy** | Promoting women’s health, supporting research on women’s health issues, activities for children, young and elderly in the local communities, providing care in emergency situations, international aid. NKS has a membership magazine called Fredrikkebladet. Oslo Sanitetsforening and some of the other local branches of the Norwegian Women’s Public Health Association, have a project called SESAM. SESAM is a meeting point for majority and minority women. They also organise talk groups and have different activities. |
| **Funding** | The organisation does not receive funding from the state. Money has been donated from previous members. |
| **Webpage** | [www.sanitetskvinnene.no](http://www.sanitetskvinnene.no) |
### Norsk Kvinnesaksforening (NKF) (The Norwegian Association for Women's Rights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on name, aim, activities and members NKF is a women's and gender political organisation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>305 paying members in 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>NKF is a democratic membership-based women's organisation. The national congress is the highest body in the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>NKF is a national organisation. NKF has local branches in Bergen, Oslo, Drammen and Fredrikstad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>NKF publishes the membership magazine Kvinnesaksnytt. NKF is a member of the International Alliance of Women (IAW), an NGO fighting for women's rights, and of FOKUS. NKF is dedicated to eliminating attitudes, laws and regulations that are discriminatory towards women and which prevent women's liberation and gender equality. NKF participates in public debates and work with women’s issues related to the UN system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>NKF receives a general operating grant through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.kvinnesak.no">www.kvinnesak.no</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Organisasjon mot offentlig diskriminering (OMOD) (Institution against Public Discrimination)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on activities OMOD has a certain gender profile. OMOD has gender equality and minority women as a theme on their web site. (<a href="http://www.omod.no/norsk_saks_likestilling.htm">http://www.omod.no/norsk_saks_likestilling.htm</a>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>OMOD is not a membership-based organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>OMOD is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>OMOD is based in Oslo, but works with national issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>OMOD focuses mainly on promoting civil and human rights as well as equal opportunities for cultural/racial minorities and immigrants who are residing in Norway. OMOD is a service office for people who have experienced public discrimination. They provide legal aid, information, and write reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>OMOD receives a general operating grant as a nationwide organisation in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. OMOD has also received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.omod.no">www.omod.no</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pan African Women's Association (PAWA)

**Women and gender profile**
Based on the name and activities, PAWA is a women’s association for women with an African origin.

**Established**
2003.

**Membership**
Membership-based.

**Organisation**
PAWA is a democratic membership-based women’s organisation. The national congress is the highest body in the organisation.

**Geographical identity**
PAWA has their activities in Oslo, but the association is for all women with an African origin in Norway, and they try to establish a national network.

**Activities/policy**
Networking with women of African origin in Norway, arrange carrier days. PAWA wants to be a meeting place for women of African origin and also a bridge to the Norwegian authorities. PAWA is a member of FOKUS.

**Funding**
PAWA has received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity.

**Webpage**
http://www.pawa.no/

## Philippine Community Norway (PNC)

**Women and gender profile**
PCN startet during the 1980s, as a gender mixed organisation. PCN has various subgroups, including one for women.

**Established**
PCN startet during the 1980s.

**Membership**
Information missing.

**Organisation**
Information missing.

**Geographical identity**
Information missing.

**Activities/policy**
The main work is related to social and cultural activities, but the PCN has been involved mobilising for political elections, in issues related to migration, paid work and work permits, integration, training, and more specific women’s issue such as mail order brides, the rights of au pair.

**Funding**
Information missing.

**Webpage**
Information missing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sami NissonForum – Samisk KvinneForum (SNF)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger (SEIF) (Self-help for immigrants and refugees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on the activities SEIF has a gender dimension. SEIF has an aim is to help our new habitants to find their way in the Norwegian society, and to obtain sufficient information to solve their own problems.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>SEIF is not membership-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>SEIF is a voluntary and independent organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>SEIF is a national organisation with local branches in Oslo, Kristiansand, Ålesund, Trondheim and Bergen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>Information and practical help to immigrants, crisis phone against female genital mutilation, information and help to youth in a crisis situation, project with the Roma population. The organisation focuses especially on work against female genital mutilation and forced marriages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>SEIF receives a general operating grant as a nationwide organisation in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. SEIF has also received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.seif.no/">http://www.seif.no/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Somalisk kvinnekjøring (SKF) (Somali Women’s Association)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on name and activities SKF is a women’s organisation. SKF is a national based women’s organisation for women with a Somali background.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>250 members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>Membership-based women’s organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>Local women’s organisation in Oslo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>SKF can be characterised as a minority political organisation and the organisation focuses also on social and humanitarian work. SKF’s aim is to help Somali youth in Norway to use the possibilities in growing up in a multicultural society. SKF works against female genital mutilation, gives health information, works with youth groups and groups for elderly women. They have had women’s groups about religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>SKF has received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity. In addition they have received project funding through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Støttekampanje for Kvinnens rettigheter i Irak (SKKRI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Women and gender profile</strong></th>
<th>Based on name, aim and activities SKKRI is a gender political organisation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>The Norwegian branch was established in 1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>Missing information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td>SKKRI is the Norwegian branch of The Organisation of Women’s Freedom in Iraq (OWFI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical identity</strong></td>
<td>The international organisation (OWFI) has branches in Iraq, UK, Norway, Holland, Canada, Finland, Denmark and Switzerland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities/policy</strong></td>
<td>Internationally the organisation works against violence against women in Iraq. They organise support for Women’s Shelters. SKKRI has organised seminars about children’s rights, women’s rights and possibilities in society, and worked against forced marriages and honour-related violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>SKKRI has received some financial support for specific activities through the support scheme for local immigrant and minority organisations and local voluntary activity. In addition they have received project funding through the financial support scheme for voluntary organisations that work politically on family or gender equality issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.equalityiniraq.com">www.equalityiniraq.com</a> (international webpage)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SELECTIVE MAPPING OF CLAIMS AND_issues_by women’s organisations in norway

WP4 Strand 1 Norway

Beatrice Halsaa and Cecilie Thun (eds.), in collaboration with Trine Rogg Korsvik and Kristin Aukland

Oslo, Centre for Gender Studies, October 2008
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<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Violence</td>
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<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Summary of comments by NGOs to the Norwegian CEDAW report 5/2000</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiRA Resource Centre</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Women’s Front of Norway</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Administration of Women’s Shelters (Krisseuntersekretariatet)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.2.2 CEDAW’s response (2003)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 The debate on Norway’s fifth and sixth reports</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) The 597th meeting of the CEDAW committee</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The 598th meeting of the CEDAW committee</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Norway’s seventh report (2002 - 2005): CEDAW</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
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<td>Forced marriage</td>
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<tr>
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<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gender Equality Machinery – reorganisation of the Ombud</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working life issues and ethnicity</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.1 Norway’s fifteenth report (2000): CERD</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
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</tr>
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1 Introduction

The main purpose of this selective mapping has been to complement the findings of the interviews with women’s and feminist organisations with documented evidence of claims and issues made by these organisations in Norway (Chapter 6 and 7). Also, the aim has been to discover the degree of the resonance between these claims and the policy proposals that have been forwarded by the State and the State’s reports to the CEDAW Committee (the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and the CERD Committee (the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Specifically, it sought to identify to what extent women’s organisations in Norway have been invited to comment on policy proposals, and to what extent they have actually commented – whether they were invited or not, regarding the two main areas of interest of WP4 strand 1:

a. Violence Against Women, including domestic violence, honour killings, forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
b. Racism and ethnic discrimination related to violence against women.

The first main section is the mapping of selected Norwegian reports to CEDAW and CERD, women’s organisations shadow reports, and the committees’ responses. The second main section is the mapping of selected national policy proposals (on violence in close relations, immigration, and protection against forced marriage), and comments on these proposals made by women’s organisations.

1.1 Mapping method

The approach adopted to identify claims made by women’s organisations was termed selective mapping. This approach was to provide a descriptive overview of selective national and international documents on the two main areas of interest. The selected documents considered were a) the consultation processes (hearings) related to a selected number of Norwegian national reports to the CEDAW and CERD committees (for details, see section 3), and b) the national consultation processes (hearings) related to three recent governmental proposals according to the design of the comparative study within which this mapping is a part. We have chosen governmental proposals
concerning violence in close relations, protection against forced marriage and changes in the Immigration Act\(^1\) (for details, see section 4).

The mapping of the selected documents focused on the following questions to the hearing processes:

1. If women’s organisations have been invited by the government to participate in the development of policy reports.
2. If women’s organisations have participated in shadow reports with other NGOs or alone.
3. What claims the women’s organisations have forwarded in the two areas identified above.
4. If any resonance of the claims are evidenced in the governmental reports.

**Invitations and participation (1 & 2)**
We have explored the public lists of invited parties to the consultation processes (hearings) in order to identify the inclusion of women’s organisations. Such lists are often available on the web (recent documents) or in the national reports. We have noticed, however, that these lists are not always complete, or sometimes even unavailable. We have included participating organisations whenever we have identified one, also when they were not on the public list.

The identification of women’s organisations in the selected political consultation processes (hearings) was based on a comprehensive mapping of gender political organisations in Norway (Eggebø et. al. 2007).\(^2\) This mapping gives an overview of more than 200 organisations at the intersection of a) gender based organising, b) ethnic-, national- or minority based organising and c) religion based organising. The common feature of these organisations is that they are either purely women’s organisations (based on membership) or have an explicit gender dimension (based on their names, composition of their members, aims and the activities). The organisations have been categorized according to practical as well as analytical aims, and the number of

---

\(^1\) Here we especially looked at the section concerning the three year rule.

\(^2\) The report displays information concerning the organisations gender political profile, year of establishment, membership, type of organisation, activities etc. The report is primarily based on information registered in connection with public funding arrangements, and restricted to organisations belonging to the migrant, family- and gender equality and Sami fields, every fifth year since 1990. In addition, the report builds on lists of hearing bodies [høringsinstanser] related to a selection of relevant public documents in the gender political field. There are two limitations worth mentioning: the report mainly consists of organisations who have contact with public authorities, and who have their own webpage. The report is available at www.femcit.org.
organisations according to the types of categories we have looked for in the various policy processes are as follows:

- 24 minority political organisations,
- 11 religious organisations,
- 15 gender political organisations,
- 17 social/humanitarian organisations,
- 14 vocational organisations,
- 12 gender and violence based organisations,
- 77 local women’s organisations
- 7 party political organisations
- 26 women’s groups and committees within other organisations
- 8 women’s groups within mosques in Oslo

**Claims and resonance (question 3 & 4)**
We have, in principle, identified and described all claims relevant to the two main areas of interest forwarded by the women’s organisations in the selected documents. The claims and their originators are described, and the claims are compared whenever relevant. When we have been able to identify resonance, this is noted.

The number of pages in the selected reports is extensive, however. We have adjusted the mapping according to the volume of the reports. This means that we have used the reports list of content as a point of departure for the more voluminous documents, and restricted the mapping to sections with a relevant headline. Less voluminous documents have been skimmed through completely.

**Overview of all the selected documents**
The report presents tables presenting overviews of selected national policy proposals and reports to international agencies and a mapping of the NGOs invited as consultative bodies to comment on the proposals/reports as well as a mapping of the NGOs who actually voiced their opinion (table 2 and 3); and gives a brief summary of the public authorities’ proposals/comments, and the claims made by women’s organisations.

Table 1 provides an overview of all the selected documents in this mapping, and the NGOs roles.
Table 1 Public reports and the role of the NGO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO's roles</th>
<th>Public reports</th>
<th>National level reports</th>
<th>International level reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governmental propositions</td>
<td>Norway's reports to CEDAW and CERD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to the Odelsting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO's invited</td>
<td>Overview of invited NGOs exist</td>
<td>No systematic reporting on invitations to NGO to comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO responses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO claims</td>
<td>Described</td>
<td>Described</td>
<td>Described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resonance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. International documents: CEDAW and CERD conventions

The section includes a mapping of selected Norwegian reports and NGOs shadow reports to the CEDAW and CERD from 1986 to 2007. The focus has been on claims of women’s organisations in the areas violence against women and discrimination based on ethnicity and race in relation to violence against women. We have also done a mapping of a wider range of equality-diversity issues in a selection of the official Norwegian reports to CEDAW and CERD, the NGOs comments on these, and the committees’ discussions of these from 1990-2007. Thus, in these reports we have chosen to look at issues related to working life in addition to looking at issues related to violence against women. In the CEDAW-reports we have focused on working life issues in connection with ethnicity and the CERD-reports on working life issues and gender.

---

3 For extensive analysis of CEDAWs and its status in the Norwegian legal system, see Hellum 2008.
4 These reports include responses from CEDAW/CERD. CEDAW's response to the seventh CEDAW-report also includes Norway's answers. Together with Norway's fifth CEDAW-reports we also examine CEDAW's response and the debate (summary of the 597th and 598th meeting). In the fifth CEDAW-report, response and the debates and in the third CEDAW-report and response, all the reports are checked. In the other reports, CEDAW’s seventh report together with CERD’s fifteenth and eighteenth reports and responses, we have looked particularly for headings and chapters related to violence.
5 This expansion of topics is justified by the larger research project – PLUREQ – in which this Norwegian mapping is a part.
The CEDAW and ICERD conventions are monitored by two committees: the CEDAW and the CERD committees. They meet once a year to discuss national reports. In order to promote balanced and independent information about the member states, the committees, NGO's are encouraged to participate in various ways, and the committees have developed procedures to secure the rights of the NGOs to present their information. NGOs may contribute while the committee prepares questions to the national reports; with a separate shadow report to the committee, and/or with oral presentations during the committees meetings.

At the national level, it is – in principal – possible for NGO’s to participate during consultations processes or public meetings with oral or written comments, and to prepare separate shadow reports to the CEDAW and CERD committees. In the succeeding sections we will explore the content of the national reports on the selected issues, the participation of women’s NGOs in the reporting processes, and the remarks from the committees.

2.1 The selection of CEDAW and CERD reports

Norway has ratified both the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) conventions without reservations, in 1981/2002 and 1970, respectively. National reports are sent regularly every fourth year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CEDAW</th>
<th>ICERD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratified by Norway</td>
<td>21 May 1981</td>
<td>6 Aug 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 March 2002 Optional protocol</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women includes: The Communications Procedure which gives individuals and groups of women the right to complain to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women about violations of the Convention. This procedure is known as "the communications procedure". United Nations communications procedures provide the right to petition or the right to complain about violations of rights. Under all procedures, the complaint must be in writing. The Inquiry Procedure enables the Committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic abuses of women's human rights in countries that become States parties to the Optional Protocol. Known as an inquiry procedure, this capacity is found in article 8 of the Optional Protocol.
A selection of the Norwegian reports and the NGO shadow reports to the CEDAW and CERD committees have been examined, based on reports where comments by NGOs are available. As seen later in this report, such comments are rather absent. Due to the unavailability of shadow reports to all the reporting periods, six out of seven CEDAW reports from the period 1982 - 2007, and four out of 18 CERD reports have been selected.

The more extensive mapping of issues related to violence against women and issues related to working life, including the official Norwegian reports, the NGOs comments on these, and the committees’ discussions of these in selected reports from 1990-2008, is based on a selection of three CEDAW-reports and two CERD-reports (the CERD-report from the early 1990s was not found). Here we have selected one report from the early 1990s, one from around 2000, and the most recent one from the 2000s.

The selected CEDAW and CERD reports (including response from CEDAW and CERD committees) are:

CEDAW:
Norway’s seventh report (2002-2006), and CEDAW’s response (2007)

CERD:
Norway’s seventeenth and eighteenth report (2005) and CERD’s response (2006)
Norway’s fifteenth report (2000) and CERD’s response (2001)

---

7 The CEDAW report from 1982 was not found in the archives of the Ministry of Children and Equality
8 The CERD reports which were available on the Internet.
9 The reports are in principle available in Norway, but due to reorganisational problems we were asked to order the reports from the Danish National Library in Århus. We did, but the reports have not arrived.
2.2 Overview of the CEDAW reports and relevant subjects in the NGO comments

In the subsequent table (table 2) we indicate if and what kind of issues related to violence which were mentioned in the Norwegian national reports to CEDAW and the identified organisations who commented on the reports. The reports do not systematically inform if NGOs have been invited to comment or not. Our examination is based on NGO comments which have been included in the national reports, or on discovering shadow reports. The exact role of the NGOs in the reporting processes, which NGOs are invited to comment and which NGOs actually comments, need further examination.

Table 2 Reports to CEDAW: Issues of violence, NGO comments.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D&amp;V)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female genital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutilation (FGM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour killings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HK)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R&amp;D)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 year rule</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MiRAsenteret</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>IWRAW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Krisesenter-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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10 See NGO Information Note from CEDAW:  

11 The second CEDAW report from 1988 was not found in the archives of the Ministry of Children and Equality.

12 This is the first periodic report. The first report was delivered in 1982
Of the CEDAW reports only one (5/2000) includes comments by NGOs. Of the Shadow reports, only two address directly to CEDAW (one from 1995 by International Women’s Rights Action Watch, and one by Norwegian women’s organisations from 2007). The first does not mention violence against women etc., but the latter does (see comments below the table). A third report, which is mentioned in the table below, is “Beijing +10.

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13 We are not sure whether this report has anything to do with the CEDAW reports. The Norwegian organisations participating in the report (which was found in Beatrice’s papers and also is available at the Internet site of FOKUS) are FOKUS, The Centre for Gender Equality, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Women’s Front, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Legal Counselling of Women, Network for Women with Disabilities, The Soroptimists, The Norwegian Association of Country Women, Norwegian Women and Family Association.
Alternative report” from 2005. However, we do not know whether this is sent to CEDAW. Violence against women, also in an ethnic minority perspective, is mentioned in this report, as well as the three-year clause.

2.3 The CERD reports and comments

In two of the four CERD reports we have examined (from 1996, 1997, 2000 and 2005), we have found comments by NGOs. In the report from 1996, the Association for Asylum Applicants, the Anti-racist Centre, the Contact Committee for Immigrants and Norwegian Authorities (not an NGO), the Organisation against Public Discrimination and the Institute for Human Rights have made comments. These are not available at the Internet, besides, none of these are gender-based organisations.

The CERD report from 2005 mentions topics concerning violence against women, namely the Norwegian Plan of Action against Forced Marriage from 2002, and the Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation from 2000.

In the CERD report from 2005 comments by NGOs are available at the Internet.14 These are from the Anti-racist Centre and the Sami Reindeer Herders’ Association of Norway and do not deal with “women’s issues”.


This section includes a more extensive mapping of issues related to violence against women and issues related to working life, including the official Norwegian reports to CEDAW, the NGOs comments on these, and the committees’ discussions of these in selected reports from 1990-2008. Three CEDAW-reports are examined: Norway’s third periodic report (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs 1991), fifth periodic report (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs 2000) and seventh periodic report (Ministry of Children and Equality 2008)

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14 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaw.htm

This report is much more comprehensive than the previous, 40 pages compared to 22 pages in the second report.

Generally, gender means women in this text and men are seldom mentioned. The main focus is employment, equal pay, education and working life. There is nothing about ethnicity except one passage about immigrant women and crisis centres. We will return to that under the heading Violence.

Violence

A Norwegian study, in addition to similar studies in other industrialized nations, shows that a majority of women prostitutes were sexually abused as children.

There has been a steady increase in sexual crimes reported to the police in Norway since the mid 1970s. Since the first half of the 1980s the increase has been greatest in the number of reported cases of sexual coercion, sexual exploitation and the sexual exploitation of minors. 2/3 of all registered cases are sex crimes against children under 15, and one third of these cases are incest cases. In most cases, men are the reported abusers and women/girls are the victims. Far more women than men seek help for victims of sexual crimes.

Incest is a heading and thematized in ten points in the Norwegian report. The issues are inter alia the victims’ age, the abusers sex, the victims’ psychological and psychosomatic problems and the establishment of Norway’s first support centre for incest victims in 1986 and also opening of incest centres in other cities. Furthermore how many patients who indicates physical abuse as the cause of their injuries, about a large number of cases go unreported, a steady rise in the number of persons seeking help at crisis centres and also that the number of immigrant women who contact crisis centres has increased. In Oslo immigrant women comprised approximately 1/3 of all crisis centre users in 1988.

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15 Inter alia (i.a.): among other things.
Rape is a heading and mentioned in six points in the report. The issues are inter alia that the number of rapes reported to the police has increased steadily and that a large number of rape cases are never reported. Furthermore about the Rape Victim Reception Centre which opened in 1986.

The aggrieved party in rape cases (as well as abused women) is entitled to legal counsel financed by the public authorities. They are also entitled to free legal counsel and legal aid without a means test.

The Ministry of Justice has implemented particular legal aid measures for groups with special needs, and abused women are inter alia entitled to free legal aid without a means test. Rape victims (both women and men we presume) are entitled to free legal aid in criminal cases against the offender.

In appendix B to Article 15 we believe that the extended legal aid for victims of acts of violence concern both women and men. The Ministry of Justice wishes to increase the services of free legal aid and victims of violence shall be entitled to free legal aid without a means test. Furthermore the extended service comprises both free legal counsel and free legal advice.

**Working life issues and ethnicity**

There is nothing in the report about this issue.

**3.1.1 CEDAW’s response to Norway’s third and forth reports (1995)**

**Violence**

The Norwegian representative pointed out that the priorities set out in the White Paper to the Storting in 1993 included inter alia more effective actions against the abuse of women and sexual violence.

Members of the Committee asked what programmes are in place to assist the immigrant women who constitute a sizeable percentage of those abused in Norway. The Norwegian representative answered that the large numbers of immigrant women who are seeking refuge at the crisis centre have been a phenomenon limited to the
capital. However, MiRA Resource Centre assists immigrant and refugee women, including women victims of family abuse.

Violence against women does not seem to have been reduced and the members of the Committee wanted to know if any study has been carried out on the causes of this phenomenon. The Norwegian representative stated that several studies have been carried out in order to understand the causes of violence, but the findings differ depending on their theoretical framework. Psychoanalytic theory see violence as a consequence of the individual history, system theory explains violence as an issue of revictimization and feminist theory focuses on the power relation between women and men. Empirical evidence suggests that gender power and family pattern have been central in understanding of sexual violence in society.

The Committee noted an increasing incidence of child abuse and the establishment of centres for incest victims, and wanted to know if preventive and rehabilitative measures also are directed to the abusers. The Norwegian representative stated that funds are provided for three treatment projects for persons convicted of sexual crime. A reference group will evaluate the projects and present proposals for treatment, and the research programme on sexual violence has a focus on the role of men as abusers and preventive measures.

The Norwegian report noted the increasing violence committed by spouses. The Committee asked whether there were any statistics available on this. The Norwegian representative answered that there are no statistics available on the effect of the amendment that allows the prosecution to prosecute unconditionally cases of violence in families. There is reason to believe, however, that the number of prosecutions has increased.

The Committee is concerned about violence against women, including incest.

Working life issues and ethnicity
Members of the Committee wanted to know inter alia how the female immigrants are integrated into Norwegian society, if the families of immigrants have the right to work and what sort of work they do. The Norwegian representative stated that immigrants
should be granted the same opportunities, rights and obligations as the rest of the population. Family members of immigrants with a lawful residence permit are generally entitled to work, and immigrants work in branches such as oil and gas extraction and in public services. Immigrants from developing countries are overrepresented in sectors such as hotel and restaurant sectors, cleaning and certain manufacturing industries, and both women and men experience unemployment more frequently than the rest of the population. Insufficient command of the Norwegian language and various types of discrimination are among negative factors, and immigrants’ qualifications are not fully utilized. Programmes to facilitate integration into Norwegian society have been offered and there are special training and education schemes for immigrants in the employment service.

Religion
The Committee asked the Norwegian Government to eliminate exceptions based on religion in the Equal (Status) Act because women more often face greater discrimination in family and personal affairs in certain communities and in religion. The Norwegian representative replied that the exception concerns internal conditions in religious communities.

The national report is 27 pages in addition to a large amount of statistics and comments form NGO’s and public institutions. The involved women NGO’s are: The MiRA Resource Centre, The Women’s Front of Norway and the Organisation for the Shelters for Battered and Raped Women. The summary of the comments from women’s organisations will be included later in this section.

We start by mapping violence and then issues related to working life and ethnicity.

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16 The Organisation for the Shelters for Battered and Raped Women is now called The Administration of Women’s Shelters. The Gender Equality Ombudsman, The Centre for Gender Equality, The Confederation of Business and Industry (NHO) and The Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), and from Statistics Norway also made comments, but are not included in our mapping.
Violence

Norway wishes to establish projects targeted specifically at women in order to level out disparities and some projects are targeted at men, for instance efforts to combat violence against women.

Norway supports the Coalition against Trafficking in Women’s work to combat sexual exploitation of women worldwide.

Forced marriages are prohibited in Norway, and over the last few years there have been several cases of forced marriages. Either of the spouses may bring legal action to have a forced marriage declared invalid. Government funding has been provided for a report, and one of the aims of the report was to find ways to prevent forced marriages (this is below the heading “Article 16, 1 b) Arranged and forced marriages”).

The Ministry wishes to spread information about violence against disabled women and the police will be one of the target groups. Another objective is to spread knowledge about help and support services for victims of violence.

The last heading in the report is Violence against women and goes over three pages. Violence against women is seen as a serious problem. The Government’s priorities are inter alia prevention of violence and providing services, shelter and support for survivors of sexualized or gender-related violence. 52 shelters for battered and raped women and 2 crisis telephones have been established and there are 17 support centres for victims of incest in Norway. There has been an increase in the numbers of immigrant women seeking help at shelters for battered and raped women, and seminars have been held on the situation of these women and how the support services can be especially sensitive to their needs. Furthermore a research project on women with disabilities has revealed cases of sexual abuse among these women. A DNA register has been introduced, battered and sexually abused women can be protected against their abuser and there has been developed an alarm system called the violence alarm. ATV (Alternative to Violence) was founded in 1987 on a private initiative. ATV has treatment of violent men as one of three main tasks. Sexual harassment of women at the
workplace and violence against the elderly are also mentioned below the heading 

*Violence against women* in the Norwegian report. ¹⁷

**Working life issues and ethnicity**

Ethnicity is hardly mentioned in the report. In the chapter called article 11 about inter alia employment and equal pay, there is nothing linked to ethnicity. The only passage where ethnicity is thematized is not in the report itself but in the comments from MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women.

### 3.2.1 Summary of comments by NGOs to the Norwegian CEDAW report 5/2000

http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/400/66/IMG/N0040066.pdf?OpenElement

The relevant NGOs that made comments to CEDAW 5/2000 were the MiRA Resource Centre, the Women’s Front of Norway and The Administration of Women’s Shelters. ¹⁸

**MiRA Resource Centre**

MiRA Resource Centre criticises the report for lacking a perspective on the specific gendered reality ethnic minority women live in, and for not recognising the work NGOs like the MiRA Centre has done. The special situation of ethnic minority women is also neglected in the Norwegian Equality Act, according to MiRA. The three-year rule is pointed out as particularly discriminatory:

> “The immigrant women who join their husbands under the provision of family reunion, have no independent residence permit before three years of their stay in Norway. In cases of grave violence and abuse they are often forced to stay within the family and physically live with their husbands until three years before they can apply (for) residence permit of their own. If the marriage breaks before three years these women risk to be deported. (…) We have documented lately a large number of cases where the native Norwegian men marry foreign women, bring them to Norway and keep them like domestic slaves and in some cases use grave sexual and physical violence. If the women protest the men just call the police and the women’s residence permit is withdrawn at the time of the renewal. The police and immigration authorities often believe the men’s rather than the women’s testimony.”

¹⁷ This is based on a summary of the chapter and not a completely examination of all the points.

¹⁸ (The Gender Equality Ombudsman, the Centre for Gender Equality, the Confederation of Business and Industry and the Confederation of Trade Unions also made comments, but are not considered as parts of the women’s movement).
The solution to prevent violence against ethnic minority women pointed out by MiRA, is to empower the women themselves, by providing financial support to minority women’s organisations.

MiRA also refers to obstacles in the integration of ethnic minority women, especially in regards to creating equal opportunities inter alia in the labour market. MiRA points out two conditions which limit ethnic minority women’s opportunities to integrate on their own premises. One is that the traditional attitudes towards education, employment and family role of women, could limit minority women’s participation in the society. The other is discrimination and exclusion from the labour market, lack of access to the education and no recognition of previous experiences. MiRA claims that there is an urgent need to take affirmative actions to promote gender equality for minority women, particularly in the field of education and employment. Ethnic minority women face difficulties related to work permit, the type of jobs available for them and the lack of recognition of their previous qualifications.

The Women’s Front of Norway
The Women’s Front declares that they want more than gender equality; their goal is women’s liberation. The Norwegian CEDAW report is criticised for emphasising the achievements of the Government and minimising the claims of organisations. According to the Women’s Front the report lacks “the wider context of issues” and does not “explore connections”. In questions concerning violence against women the report is criticised for not including pornography and prostitution. The three-year clause is discussed, and the Women’s Front sees this in relation with prostitution: “Independent status for foreign women is an important claim also in connection with trafficking.”

The Administration of Women’s Shelters (Krisesentersekretariatet)
The Norwegian CEDAW report’s articles on forced marriages and violence against women are commented by The Administration of Women’s Shelters. They ask for clearer distinctions between forced marriage and arranged marriage, as well as between incest centres and shelters for battered and raped women. In addition, they want the vulnerable situation of immigrant women marrying a Norwegian citizen to be taken into the report (the three-year rule):
“Although § 37.6 in the directives to the Immigration Law states that women who have been abused shall be granted permits to stay in Norway, we see that it is very difficult for these women to provide evidence for the abuse.”

The Administration of Women’s Shelters presents no particular solutions in this matter.

3.2.2 CEDAW’s response (2003)
The response is for both the fifth and the sixth periodic reports of Norway, starting with violence and then working life and ethnicity issues.

Violence
The Committee mentions that one of the Norwegian Government’s highest priorities was to combat violence against women. However, preventing was difficult to determine and underreporting of violence against women was common. In 2003 the Commission on Violence against Women was scheduled to submit a report and the report would be taken into account in the Government’s revision of its plan of action to combat domestic violence. The Norwegian representative reported that the number of foreign women in shelters had been steadily rising.

Trafficking in women and children related mainly to sexual exploitation and involving mostly foreign women.

The Committee writes that combating arranged marriages and female genital mutilation had been a priority of the Government. Furthermore the Government had relied on dialogue with NGO’s, individuals and communities that represented the cultures in which these practices\(^{19}\) had their roots.

The Government had provided financial support for a study concerning a possible worldwide hearing on best practices in combating violence against women.

The Committee is concerned about the multiple discrimination faced by migrant, refugee and minority women and their exposure to violence. The Committee urges Norway to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against migrant, refugee and minority women and to combat xenophobia and racism.

\(^{19}\) Our italics.
The Committee is concerned about the persisting of violence, including domestic violence, against women and children, and concerned about that a growing number of women who seek refuge in shelters for battered women are migrants. The Committee is furthermore concerned that an extremely low percentage of reported rapes end with convictions and that an increasing number of such cases are dismissed.

The Committee urges that the Government addresses violence against women, including domestic violence, as an infringement of women’s human rights. The Committee also urges analysis of the causes of the very low percentage of trials and convictions in reported rape cases.

The Committee urges the State Party to enact relevant legislation to combat trafficking in women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The Committee requests the State Party to continue the efforts to eradicate the practices with forced marriages and female genital mutilation. The Committee is concerned at the extent of these practices.

Working life issues and ethnicity
The Committee is concerned about the multiple discrimination faced by migrant, refugee and minority women with respect to access to inter alia employment. It recommends that a gender dimension is included in Norwegian legislation against ethnic discrimination.

Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the obstacles to the integration of migrant and refugee women into Norwegian society and regrets that the report provides insufficient information about these women’s situation. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to encourage migrant and refugee women, particularly those with care-giving responsibilities, to participate in Norwegian-language classes and the State party should in addition provide information on this group of women, including in respect of inter alia their employment.

3.2.3 The debate on Norway’s fifth and sixth reports
a) The 597th meeting of the CEDAW committee

In this section the relevant parts of the debate on violence, working life and ethnicity issues are copied from the official minutes, staring with violence.

**Violence**

11. Combating violence was one of the Government’s highest priorities, especially violence against women. The services offered to victims had improved, but it was not easy to measure progress due to prevention because problems tended to be kept hidden.

12. A 1999 health survey among women aged 20 to 49, indicated that 10 per cent had been raped by their partner and 5 per cent by someone other than their partner. Every year 2,700 women took refuge in a shelter, and the number of such women born outside Norway had been rising steadily. That indicated that those women did not have the resources to escape from a violent relationship and shelters must therefore become more effective at providing help to those groups.

13. Trafficking in women was a relatively new problem for Norway and the Government attached great importance to preventing trafficking, criminalizing all aspects and supporting and protecting the victims.

15. Norway did not accept the practices of forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and had implemented action plans to combat those practices.

The Chairperson said that much remained to be done regarding Norway’s equality policy, inter alia violence against women. Another members said that an extremely low percentage (6 per cent) of the reported rapes resulted in convictions. However, the number of reported rapes had risen.

Norway was asked to what extent immigrant women were subjected to gender based persecution, why investigation of cases of female genital mutilation had not yielded any prosecutions.

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20 The numbers in the following section refers to the numbers used in CEDAW’s minutes from the debate.
The Norwegian representatives responded that in cases of domestic violence and rape many women withdrew the charges when they knew the perpetrator. The Ministry was working to get more accurate figures of such assaults, and to generate more public discussion of violence against women. The action plan on female genital mutilation was helping to raise awareness, both among women and men.

Norway also reported that the plan of action against racism and discrimination included a gender perspective in its activities, and that gender-based persecution was recognized as grounds for granting asylum under the Immigration Act. Immigrant women were generally unwilling to press charges against their aggressors and tended to withdraw their complaints of violence before cases were brought to court. No cases involving violence against immigrant women had been heard in court so far. The second plan of action against domestic violence to be adopted in 2003 would inter alia focus on improving training for those who dealt specifically with the problems faced by immigrant women.

Norway said that immigration regulations contained specific provisions aimed at female victims of domestic violence, in particular the right to obtain an independent residence permit.

Norway said that the 2002 plan of action against racism and discrimination focused inter alia on combating racism at work, in the public sector, within the education system and on the Internet. A committee had been mandated to look into ways of strengthening legal protection against racism, and proposals for developing a new law prohibiting ethnic discrimination.

The committee asked whether the authorities were providing more personal alarms to victims of violence. She also wished to know if Norway would be introducing specific laws on domestic violence and if marital rape was currently punishable by law. One member of the committee finds it incredible that in an advanced society as Norway, domestic violence was still regarded as a private matter and a taboo. Another was surprised that the question of how municipalities dealt with violence against women had not been addressed.
The Norwegian representatives said that men’s role in violence against women and children had been studied in depth and that a white paper would be presented to Parliament in 2003. Norway also said that marital rape was indeed punishable by law.

The Committee turned to violence against women, and a member stressed the need to address prostitution because it was difficult to protect against sexual exploitation if prostitution was legal, whereas another was alarmed by the statistics on marital rape.

Working life issues and ethnicity
The Chairperson said that policies regarding immigrant women, in particular, must become more proactive and that Norway must address inter alia the gender equity in wages.

The Norwegian representatives said that the plan of action against racism and discrimination included a gender perspective in its activities. Immigrant mothers were offered language and vocational training. They also said that the 2002 plan of action against racism and discrimination focused inter alia on combating racism at work.

b) The 598th meeting of the CEDAW committee

Violence
4. Ms. Hole (Norway) was recalling that changes had been made in the Penal Code to prohibit persons under the age of 18 from inter alia engaging in prostitution.

6. The victimization of a disabled woman was an aggravating circumstance in any criminal case of violence.

9. Victims in criminal cases could obtain free legal aid and could apply to the Gender Equality Board of Appeals without charge.

10. Once it had assessed how effective the mobile alarms were, it seemed likely that the Government distribute them.
11. More progress had been made in raising the police’s and the health workers’ awareness, than the courts and judges, with regard to gender issues and violence against women.

12. The Government wondered about making it mandatory for shelters to report instances of violence to the police.

40. Mr. Melander was concerned about that the forced marriages also involved very young people. Two solutions were available for the Government. It could ban marriage under a particular age, or declare certain marriages entered abroad to be annulled in Norway.

The committee asked why so many rape cases were dismissed. She finds that the Government should investigate the files and determine what had occurred in each case.

48. There were few cases of forced marriages in Norway. Legislation was developed that would allow young girls to raise the cases before the courts. The Government was also strengthening the relevant provisions in the Penal Code. Norway was working with foreign embassies and requested embassy officers to interview young girls before families were reunited.

Other reason for the small number of prosecutions was that women often were reluctant to report rape, particularly in cases where the victim knew the rapist.

A committee member was not satisfied with Norway’s reply concerning the prosecution of rape. The State party should find out why women rape victims were reluctant to report and prosecute the crime. This is because there are always measures that could be taken to combat it.

The Norwegian representative agreed that Norway did not have satisfactory answer to that question. The next report will include data on the police, health workers and shelters.
Working life issues and ethnicity
In this meeting nothing was said that can relate to working life issues and ethnicity.

3.3 Norway’s seventh report (2002 - 2005): CEDAW

Norway’s seventh national report is the latest CEDAW-report and the most comprehensive (81 pages) (Ministry of Children and Equality 2008).

Women’s NGO’s produced a shadow report, the only one identified in this mapping. The involved NGO’s were FOKUS, The Norwegian Women’s Right Association, the Women’s Front and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

The mapping starts with issues related to violence, trafficking and prostitutions in the national report, then maps efforts to combat discrimination of women related to marriage and family affairs and goes on to map working life and ethnicity issues in the national report. Then the shadow report is briefly mapped before the response fro the CEDAW committee and Norway’s answer to the relevant topics.

Violence

“Article 6 Violence, trafficking in women and prostitution”
“Domestic violence”
There is a political consensus that violence against women is not a private matter, and that the authorities are responsible for preventing and helping to avert the violence.
Norwegian authorities have implemented a large number of measures to combat domestic violence, essentially channelled through the Government’s two Action Plans; Violence against Women (2000-2003) and Domestic Violence (2004-2007).

The first Action Plan produced results, but also highlighted weaknesses and the need to intensify efforts.

\[21\text{ In Norway’s seventh report we have searched for violence against women below related headings. Headings or chapters that include violence, racism or discrimination are the passages to be examined. DV means domestic violence and HT means human trafficking.}\]
In 2003 the Committee on Violence against Women presented a report in which a number of measures are proposed to improve the situation for women and children victims. That included inter alia treatment programmes for perpetrators and introducing a new penal provision to cover domestic violence.

The 2004 Action Plan to combat Domestic Violence comprises the main categories:
- Improve collaboration and knowledge of the support services
- Increase awareness of the issue and prevent it
- Adequate help, protection and assistance to the victims
- Strengthening treatment programmes for perpetrators

The Ministry of Justice carried out surveys of violence in 2003 and 2005. That is example of steps taken to increase the support service’s awareness of violence.

The Government announced in the Soria Moria Declaration that it intended to intensify efforts to combat this violence.

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for coordinating the efforts to combat domestic violence, but there are issues that cannot be solved by criminal policy alone. Cooperation with authorities for health issues, social issues and gender policy issues is required.

No overall evaluation has been carried out, but limited evaluations including an evaluation of the police’s domestic violence coordinator programme and the implementation of mobile violence alarms.

It is hoped that the establishment of a special resource centre for studies on violence and traumatic stress (NKVTS) will increase general knowledge and professional expertise, together with the current reorganisation of the health sector.

The first nation-wide survey of the extent of violence in couples was presented in 2005. The survey showed inter alia that more than one woman in four and more than one man in five over 15 years of age reported that their spouse or cohabitant had used or threatened with violence on at least one occasion.
In the course of one survey week, the police and support services registered around 1000 inquiries regarding women who had experienced domestic violence. Furthermore the survey carried out by the Ministry of Justice in 2005 shows inter alia that in 85 per cent of inquires, the perpetrator was a man.

The number of formal reports of DV (Domestic violence) has increased from 2003 to 2005 and it is reason to believe that this is due to a greater openness about DV, and not due to an increase in violence.

There are 50 crisis centres and some of them are also centres for victims of incest. In addition there are two DIXI resource centres for rape victims.

The Norwegian Secretariat for the Shelter movement and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions published a brochure intended to better equip employer to provide care and support for women victims of DV and to provide counselling.

In 2006 the Network for Women with Disabilities in Norway published a report on municipal services for women with disabilities as DV victims. One of the conclusions is that there seems to be a lack of knowledge of living conditions for women with disabilities and of DV as a phenomenon.

In 2006 the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs will present a report based on a study of women who were turned away from crisis centres. Measures will be developed to meet the needs of this particularly vulnerable group of women.

A penal provision regarding domestic abuse came into force in January 2006. The new provision will inter alia strengthen the legal status of women since women are the main victims of DV.

Other legislative amendments are ban on contact. This is to prevent violence against women and improve the situation for victims. Furthermore persons who are exposed to threats may be given a new fictitious identity, after other protective measures prove to be insufficient.
A system of DV coordinators was established in each of the 27 police districts in 2002. The role of the coordinators is inter alia to ensure that the police give sufficient priority to cases concerning violence against women. The system of DV coordinators in the police was evaluated in 2004. The results indicated inter alia that the degree of priority given to DV varied significantly from one police district to another.

In 2004 the police initiated a system of mobile violence alarms. The alarms are intended to give persons under threat of violence greater freedom of movement and help prevent violence and threats.

Furthermore there is a pilot project for a “reverse alarm” for violent offenders that will begin in 2007. There is also a three-year pilot project for a support centre for aggrieved persons in Trondheim. The project staff offers support for both victims and their next-of-kin. In addition a system of advisory offices for crime victims was established in 1996.

The Ministry of Justice commissioned in 2002 a report to improve the situation of crime victims. Testifying in criminal proceedings is often a very traumatic experience for victims, particularly victims of sexual crimes. The working group was following up the report and it proposes inter alia to improve witness protection and develop a system to offer support to witnesses.

To further improving the situation of aggrieved persons and next-of-kin, a committee presented a report in 2006 in which measures were proposed for improving the position of these persons in criminal proceedings (NOU 2006). The committee suggests six different proposals.

The report discusses free legal aid and entitlement to compensation relating to the Free Legal Aid Act in three paragraphs.

The Action Plan to combat DV is also focusing on the person committing the violence. Both punishment and treatment is important. It is essential that the violent men take responsibility for their actions and develop a different view of women.
A large number of women inmates have been abused by persons closely related to them. The Correctional Service Region East and the Secretariat for the Shelter movement started in 2004 a programme for women victims of violence in prison. The object was to help women inmates escape from the role of victim, prevent men from using violence and increasing the expertise of prison employees.

A legislative amendment in 2006 introduced provisions prescribing that an application for establishing a family and for a visa may be rejected if the applicant or children from another marriage are likely to be subjected to abuse or exploitation. The purpose is to prevent the abuse of women from poorer countries who marry men in Norway.

The Immigration Regulations contain a special provision that abused women and children with a residence permit on the basis of family reunification must be given a renewed residence permit on independent grounds. The purpose is that these women and children are not forced to remain in that situation in order to keep the permit to reside in Norway. Out of a total of 89 applications, 58 were granted and 31 were rejected. NOU 2004 proposes that the provision is made gender-neutral.

Rape poses a special challenge. This is a challenge for the legal system for both the frequency reported rapes and the rapes that culminate in a conviction are low. Also is it a challenge because the health services for rape victims vary significantly.

The Government intends to set off a committee that will be appointed in 2006 and will identify factors that contribute to rapes not being reported and propose strategies to increase the rate of the reported rapes. Furthermore the committee will inter alia assess the situation of rape victims, both female and male, with disabilities, minority backgrounds or, in particular, experience of prostitution.

The Government will also raise the level of sanctions for rape, homicide, gross violence and sexual offences.

There is much focus in this chapter on efforts to combat human trafficking. Around five pages are concerning this issue. The remarks below are just a summary.
The Ministry of Justice is responsible for coordinating the efforts to combat human trafficking, and the work is organized around two plans of action launched in 2003 and 2005. One out of five main objectives to combat human trafficking is improving programmes that provide assistance and protection for victims.

In 2003 a special penal provision prohibiting human trafficking was adopted. It covers the criminal groups behind human trafficking and also the person who does the actual exploiting.

The Ministry of the Defence and the Defence Forces are involved in ongoing efforts in NATO and the UN to prevent military personnel from contributing to trafficking, for instance by buying sexual services.

Through the Action Plans to combat human trafficking, Norway provides support for projects run by Norwegian and international organisations to improve the position of women and children in countries in order to help to reduce recruitment to human trafficking.

Victims of human trafficking may be granted a period of reflection of at least 45 days. The person presumed to be a victim must be willing to accept help and information.

Victims of human trafficking, who risk being persecuted if they are returned may, on certain conditions, are granted asylum or protection.

Through collaboration with organisations that run outreach services for prostitutes, possible human trafficking victims will be able to obtain information and assistance.

There is also a 24-hour information helpline run by the Secretariat for the Shelter’s movement.

The Secretariat for the Shelter movement has also started a project to provide safe housing and resettlement programmes for women victims of human trafficking.
The Directorate of Police has drawn up guidelines for the protection of witnesses and has also established a witness protection programme.

Victims of HT (Human trafficking) are entitled to legal aid according to the Free Legal Aid Act. This means that the costs will be wholly or partly covered by the state.

If there is reason to believe that HT victims will suffer considerable harm to body or health, or in the event of a violation of one of the criminal procedure provisions, e.g. relating to rape, the victims may be granted counsel.

The authorities have provided support for several research projects aimed at updating knowledge and understanding of HT and national and international developments.

HT will be incorporated into the curriculum of the Police Academy.

A three year information campaign is intended to inter alia raise awareness of the connection between demand for sexual services and trafficking in women and children.

Another important means of reducing recruitment and demands is by establishing ethical guidelines for civil servants prohibiting the purchase and acceptance of sexual services.

All Norwegian personnel must be given instruction on challenges that may arise in specific situations they will face in the country concerned. Also they must have training in international law, particularly humanitarian law and international human rights, including rules regarding sexual violence and HT.

“Article 16 Eliminate the discrimination of women in all matters relating to marriage and family affairs”
“Article 16 b”
In 1998 the Government presented a three-year Plan of Action against Forced Marriages (FM) that contained 40 measures to combat FM. The measures were such as information, dialogue and collaboration, crisis, research and documentation. In 2002 30 new measures were presented, for instance crisis assistance for young people, improvement of competence and regulations.
FM was a punishable offence under Norwegian law before, but it has been necessary to introduce legislative amendments in order to combat FM.

The Marriage Act lays down that one of the conditions for entering marriage is that it is voluntary, and a new provision prescribes inter alia that the parties must state that the marriage was entered of their own free will. The residence permit may be denied if the reference person does not consent to the applicant being granted a permit, or if it is likely that a marriage has been entered into against the will of one of the parties. There is also a provision intended to prevent a person from being coerced into marriage against their will during a visit abroad.

A victim of FM is entitled to free legal aid without a means test and do not have to pay a share of the costs.

Under Norwegian law, the parties must be at least 18 years of age and both parties must be present at the ceremony to enter into marriage. It is a proposition that inter alia marriages entered into abroad, where one or both of the parties are under the age of 18, may not be recognised if at least one of the parties is a Norwegian national or permanently resident in Norway. This is to prevent child marriage, reduce FM and prevent circumvention of the rules.

A victim of FM may have the marriage declared invalid by the court or dissolve the marriage by divorce.

A marriage entered into abroad may be recognised provided that it has been legally entered to the law of the land where the marriage was contracted. In order to achieve more easily understandable regulations, it is proposed that this main rule also be incorporated into the Marriage Act.

One goal is to develop contacts with authorities in countries where FM may take place in order to achieve effective handling of specific cases.

The marriage of cousins in immigrant communities may be associated with FM.
A team of experts, such as the police and the Norwegian Red Cross, to combat FM, was established in 2004.

There is a FM hotline run by the Oslo Red Cross International Centre. The organisation Self Help for Immigrants and Refugees also receives support to assist young people who believe they are in danger of being forced into marriage. The Government also investigates the occurrence of FM in Norway.

The greatest challenge is to change the attitudes of the parent generation. Also there is a need to provide information to newly-arrived immigrants.

Working life issues and ethnicity
The summary below is comments in the report that is related to working life issues in connection with ethnicity. Norway’ seventh report is 81 pages and the main focus is comparison between women and men. For example Article 11. 1d Equal pay covers a gender perspective, but mentions nothing about ethnicity. We could say that the report does not have an intersectional focus. In the passages about gender, ethnicity is not thematized, however when immigrants/ethnicity is the issue, gender occasionally is mentioned. Ethnicity comes to focus mainly in the description of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud’s tasks, about the Anti-Discrimination Act of 3 June 2005 No. 33, about the introduction programme and in the chapter called Immigrants and working life.

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud has been given the task of prohibiting discrimination on the labour market on the grounds of criteria such as ethnic origin.

An example of multiple discrimination is when women are denied the right to wear hijab at work. These cases can be estimated between gender-based discrimination and religion-based discrimination. In such cases it is an advantage that the former Equality Ombud is now The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud.

The requirement of good Norwegian language skills in job vacancy advertisements, are example of cases of discrimination taken up by The Ombud’s own initiative.
One task for The Ombud is to give advice to employers in the public and private sectors on ethnic diversity in working life.

The Norwegian Parliament (Storting) passed the Act of 3 June 2005 No. 33, and the Act is based on EU Council Directive (2000/43/EC), which includes the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, and the EU Council Directive (2000/78/EF), for equal treatment in employment and occupation. This Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion or belief, and applies to all areas, included working life.

The Government’s Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination (2002-2006) covers discrimination of indigenous peoples, national minorities and persons with immigrant backgrounds, and one of the targets in the plan is working life.

In June 2003 the Storting adopted the introduction programme for recently arrived immigrants. Norway believes in the importance of integration, and the introduction programme is supposed to qualify immigrants for participation in working and social life. The introduction programme is for both women and men and the grant is paid individually. However, enabling women to take part in working life is aimed especially.

In fourth quarter 2004 the employment rate was 52 per cent for female immigrants and 61 per cent for male immigrants, the female immigrants were less economically active than the male immigrants. The figures for the population as a whole are 66 per cent for women and 73 per cent for men.

Unemployment statistics from third quarter 2005 shows that one out of five unemployed persons is immigrant.

In 2004 there was a pilot project concerning especially non-Western immigrant women barriers to qualifications and employment. A report points out the need for more information in this area and recommends focusing on women’s financial equality and the factors that causes their inferior position in working life.
A comparison is made between “first generation” immigrants, “second generation” and non-immigrant population and employment, in fourth quarter of 2004. In the 20-24 age-group the employment rate was 50 per cent of the “first generation”, 66 per cent of the “second” and 71,6 per cent of the non-immigrant population. While the employment rate among “first generation” is 8 per cent higher for men than for women, is the rate among “second generation” 67 per cent for women and 65 per cent for men. There is a large percentage among non-Western “second generation” young women who are employed.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development supported (2004/2005) a project called “Top 10 International Women”. The aim is to increase awareness in working life of the competence of the (non-Western) immigrant women. The project finds women with success in working life and describes their strategies for dealing with obstacles.

3.3.1 CEDAW 7/2007 – Shadow report
http://www.fokuskvinner.no/484/Norwegian_NGO_Shadow_report_to_CEDAW.pdf

Participants were: FOKUS (Forum for Women and Development), the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights, the Women’s Front of Norway, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. Matters concerning violence against women constitute important parts of the NGOs’ critique of the Norwegian CEDAW report. They call for:

“A holistic strategy and a nation-wide competence and action centre are required to address gender based violence in all its forms (physical and physiological abuse, forced marriage, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage (sic) and femicide). The purchase of sexual services should be banned by law (...). Programmes are needed to educate young men about gender stereotypes, gender roles, violence against women and prostitution as a means of preventing men from buying sex and becoming perpetrators of sexual violence.”

The Norwegian CEDAW report's lack of addressing discrimination and abuse of black women due to post-colonial sex-stereotyping is also criticised.

Gender based violence

Violence against women is seen as an indicator of how far the efforts towards achieving gender equality have progressed in society, and women’s vulnerability to and fear of
gendered violence are emphasised as obstacles to equal participation of women in the Norwegian society. According to the report, Norway tops the statistics in Europe of men murdering women they know.

Forced marriage
The report suspects that the law proposals aimed for preventing forced marriages in fact are measures for a stricter immigration policy, and expressions of racism and gender discrimination. Instead of viewing forced marriage as an element of the debates on immigration, the NGOs demand measures targeting forced marriages directly, e. g. incorporating the subject of violence against women, forced marriages included, in the curriculum in compulsory school, police education, teacher training, health education, etc. Conflict councils should be established, as well as housings for the victims.

3.3.2 CEDAW’s response and Norway’s answers (2007)\textsuperscript{22}


Before going into the details of the response, we notice that the committee

“welcomes the State party’s recognition of the positive contribution made by women’s non-governmental organizations (BGOs) to the preparation of the report. It notes, however, the absence of Norwegian NGO’s at the session, apparently for lack of funding.” (CEDAW Report Comments para 5)

The Gender Equality Machinery – reorganisation of the Ombud

3. CEDAW asks Norway to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the new machinery – the Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud – as compared to the previous – the Gender Equality Ombud – that focused on gender equality only, including case load on different grounds of discrimination.

Norway replies that based on the first annual report from the new Ombud, it can be concluded that the number of inquiries over gender-based discrimination is at the same level as before. The number of inquiries and complaints based on other grounds, such as ethnicity, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation, is eventually rising.

\textsuperscript{22} As mentioned in this heading, CEDAW’s response also includes Norway’s answers. The numbers in the following section refers to the numbers used in CEDAW’s minutes from the debate.
The new Ombud has continued to pursue important gender equality questions, such as gender-based violence, but also seeks to intercept and identify new problems, and is especially aware of problems in the intersection of gender/ethnicity and gender/religion.

**Violence**

5. CEDAW comments on the increasing numbers of DV, in addition to the stable number of crisis centres and the number of women who were turned away from crisis centres. CEDAW asks what have been done to ensure that all women have access to all services.

Norway replies that the increasing numbers is probably not due to an increase in violence, but an increase of formal reports. There are no indications that there is a lack of space in the crisis centres, but the Government has initiated several surveys with the aim to improve the assistance given to women exposed to DV.

The Norwegian Secretariat for the Shelter movement and the Network of Women with Disabilities have conducted a survey regarded the assistance to battered women with disabilities.

At least 15 per cent of the women seeking refuge in a crisis centre are turned away, mainly because of psychological problems and/or problems with drugs or alcohol, or have not been exposed to violence. 71 per cent were offered counselling before they were turned away and referred to other support services.

6. CEDAW asks for numbers of women murdered by their intimate partner per year in the last four years.

From 2003 until 2006, between five and nine women have been murdered by their intimate partner per year.

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23 Our italics.
7. CEDAW wishes information on the study of judgments in rape cases, and the results of the working group’s examination of the quality of investigations and prosecution of rape.

There were 2600 reported cases of rape during the period (a two and a half year period from the beginning of 2003), 428 of the cases (16 %) were prosecuted and of these 316 ended in a conviction. In 84 % of the cases a decision was made not to prosecute.

The working group concludes that the quality of investigation and prosecution of rape cases is mostly of high quality, but there is a possibility that incorrect attitudes and myths about rape and rape victims affect the results in some of the cases. The report indicates that these myths may be held, consciously or subconsciously, and that such attitudes may influence the way in which cases are handled.

The working group has made a number of recommendations to strengthen the position of rape victims, and measures are proposed aimed at increasing the level of competence among professional groups involved.

8. CEDAW refers to the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights about the lack of specific legislation on DV. CEDAW wishes a description of the follow-up steps and more details, in addition to the status of the proposals contained in the report of the Committee on Violence against Women.

Norway replies that that particular committee recommended adding a new section aimed at DV against women. The new penal provision entered into force in January 2006, and both physical violence and other types of maltreatment are criminalized, including mental abuse.

9. CEDAW wonders how the Action Plan to Prevent Violence has contributed to preventing and ending violence against women.

Norway answers that the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress is conducting a study on the impact and effectiveness of the treatment program provided by Alternative to Violence, together with a study on the availability of services.
10. CEDAW comments that a growing number of women who seek refuge in shelters for battered women are migrants, and the Committee asks what measures are available specifically at combating violence against migrant women and providing support services to them.

Norway replies that the Government has started a project to increase the local support services knowledge about battered migrant women’s needs. Furthermore, the Norwegian Resource Centre on Violence and Traumatic Stress has developed a training program built on three modules. One of them is to organize a “visiting arrangement” at crisis centres with a high number of women with an ethnic minority background and with an extensive experience in handling issues related to working with them.

In 2005 and 2006, around 10 seminars were conducted for crisis centre staff and collaborators, and the seminars were focusing on issues such as set of rules, cultural knowledge, own attitudes and concrete ways to work.

11. The Committee asks for statistical data on the extent of trafficking in women. CEDAW finds that this should include the number of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, work and other forms of exploitation, and on perpetrators punished and sentences imposed.

Norway explains that in November 2006 a National Coordinating Unit for Assistance and Protection for the Victims of Human Trafficking started its work. The unit will assist the welfare services by providing methods for identifying victims and mobilizing assistance and protection services. In addition the unit is supposed to developing statistical data on the victims and on perpetrators punished in court cases, but at the moment there is no such system.

Since January 2005 the Government has funded a project offering safe housing and the project is build on the existing structure of shelters for victims of DV. 18 victims were admitted, while the figures for 2006 were 31 women.
Two court cases resulted in sentences in 2006: The Supreme Court was finding two men guilty of trafficking young Estonian women to Norway.

The District court of Trondheim sentenced a man in prison for involvement in the same trafficking ring.

12. CEDAW asks how many victims of trafficking have taken advantage of the period of reflection. Furthermore, the Committee wonders about the plans to reform the programme of assistance and extend the duration of the period, and also if it is possible for the victims to obtain a stay permit on humanitarian grounds.

Norway replies that the reflection period was extended till six months in December 2006. Only one or two victims had previously taken advantage of the 45-day period. This was because of the economic benefits of seeking asylum caused the victims to choose that option. The new reflection period is also a tool providing predictable and secure health and social services and accommodation.

In addition to qualifying for refugee status and asylum, there are several examples of cases where trafficked women have been granted a permanent residence permit on humanitarian ground.

13. The Committee asks for information on measures taken to prevent and punish exploitation of prostitution and measures available for those women who seek to leave prostitution.

Various outreach teams working in the major cities may assist women seeking to leave prostitution.

The National Police Directorate is ensuring that police districts have the necessary knowledge relating to all cases of sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the Oslo police launched a new unit in January 2007 to increase the number of investigations targeting pimps as well as traffickers.
27. The Committee asks for the results of the study conducted by the Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Research on the cases of forced marriage. CEDAW also misses information about forced marriage, measures to address the phenomenon and the impact of the measures.

Norway refers to the enclosed information about the study by The Centre. The study of forced marriage includes some numbers, but there are no official statistics on forced marriage in Norway.

A three-year Plan of Action against Forced Marriage which contained 40 measures was presented in 1998. The Plan of Action covered information, dialogue and collaboration, crisis, training and human resource development, regulatory amendments, research and documentation. In 2002 30 new measures to combat forced marriage were focusing on the themes of crisis assistance for young people, awareness-raising, improvement of competence and regulations. Norway enclosed the two plans.

28. CEDAW would like an update of refugee and asylum-seeking women, including data on the number of such women, trends over the past four years, economic opportunities and protection from domestic violence.

In 2003 25% of the asylum applications were from women, in 2004 21%, in 2005 34% and in 2006 28% women of the adult asylum applicants.

From 2003 to 2005 the percentage of women granted a residence permit on the basis of an asylum application increased from around 40% to 62%. In 2006, 69% of all women applying for asylum were granted a residence permit. Maybe the high numbers partly can be explained by the fact that there has been greater awareness around gender based persecution.

The Government continues to focus on gender based persecution and is drawing up guidelines for the handling of cases with gender related claims.

The “summary of report on forced marriage cases dealt with by public support services, incidence and challenges” from the annex, is left out.
Working life issues and ethnicity
The only question from CEDAW (and Norway’s response) where working life issues and ethnicity is mentioned is question number 24 about what have been done for immigrant women to create further economic opportunities.

Norway’s answer is that the Government has strategies for strengthening employment and inclusion of persons who are at the fringe of the labour market. The Government submitted a White paper with the strategies in November 2006. Some of the strategies are exclusively for immigrant women, such as to obtain more knowledge about how to reduce the obstacles for participation in working life. Furthermore to elucidate the start of a qualifying program for women who are not comprised by the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants.

In addition, the Government’s action plan on integration contains several measures where immigrant women are a target group. This includes admission to labour market programmes and continuing the New Chance-programme. The New Chance-programme is paid qualification for those immigrants who are not included in the introduction programme, who have lived in Norway in several years, depend on social benefit and have no permanent ties to the labour market. Furthermore the Action Plan focuses on immigrant’s entrepreneurship activities.

Some measures in the Action Plan refer to immigrant population in general, such as reinforce the work focus in the introduction programme, reinforce the program for basic competence in working life and increase recruitment of persons with immigrant backgrounds to public administration and health enterprises.

Women also benefit from the introduction program for newly arrived refugees. One of the aims of the program is preparing for participation in working life and/or further education.


This section includes a more extensive mapping of issues related to violence against women and issues related to working life, including the official Norwegian reports to
CERD, the NGOs comments on these, and the committees’ discussions of these in selected reports from 1990-2008. **Two CERD-reports are examined:** Norway’s fifteenth report (2000) and seventeenth and eighteenth reports (2005). **The CERD-report from the early 1990s was not found.**

### 4.1 Norway’s fifteenth report (2000): CERD

There is not much about gender in general in this report. Gender is mentioned when referring to a survey among young people in Oslo in 1996 about view on immigrants. The responses show that girls generally take a somewhat more favourable view of immigrants than boys do. Else there is minimal about gender or gender differences.

#### Violence

There is nothing about violence and gender in the report.

#### Working life issues and gender

There is nothing about working life issues and gender in the report.

For example in the chapter about the labour market situation for immigrants and refugees, comparisons are made between immigrants and the total population, and similarities or differences related to gender neither are discussed.

However, below the heading *The right to education and training*, there is a gender perspective on apprenticeship training opportunities. A report from the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU) from 1999 showed that young people with an immigrant background, and especially immigrant boys, are less likely to be selected by enterprises for apprenticeship training. This kind of training is partly included in the ordinary working life.

### 4.1.1 The CERD report and comments from NGOs

In the CERD report from 2000 we have not found comments from NGOs.

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24 The reports are in principle available in Norway, but due to reorganisational problems we were asked to order the reports from the Danish National Library in Arhus. We did, but the reports have not arrived.
4.1.2 CERD’s response (2001)
This report contains only CERD’s response to Norway’s report (and not Norway’s answers).

The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination.

The Committee is concerned that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has not been incorporated in Norway. The absence of an explicit prohibition of racial discrimination in the Constitution increases the concern.

Violence
In the response there is nothing associated with violence and gender.

Working life issues and gender
In the response there is nothing associated with working life issues and gender.

4.2 Norway’s seventeenth and eighteenth reports (2005): CERD
This report focuses on immigrants, skin colour and ethnicity, but rarely on gender or gender differences. One example is the notion in Norway’s last CEDAW-report (2002-2005) about the introduction programme and the specifically importance for women, while there in this CERD report is made no connection between the introduction programme and gender.

One of few issues related to a gender perspective in the report are hiv positive women. They are described as triply discriminated: because they are women, because they are immigrants and because they are hiv positive.

In addition gender is mentioned together with issues such as female circumcision and comparisons between girls and boys’ participation in education.

Anti-Discrimination Act and Ombud
Gender is not mentioned in the comments on the “The Anti-Discrimination Act”
The act was approved by the Storting in 2005 and the prohibited grounds of discrimination are ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion and belief. The Government has supported the view that the concept of race should not been used in the wording of the act because the concept has no justifiable scientific basis and has strong negative connotations. Besides, a prohibition against discrimination will cover clearly enough what could otherwise be characterized as racial discrimination, and the Government therefore sees no need to use the term “race”.

Furthermore Norway explains that the Act applies in all areas of society, except for family life and personal relationships. There are also exceptions for acts and activities of religious communities. Differential treatment necessary to achieve a legitimate objective, or positive special treatment that contribute to the achievement of the Act, is not considered to be discrimination.

A provision regarding shared burden of proof has been included, and the Act also covers discrimination committed jointly by several persons. In addition the Act meets the requirements set out in a EU Council Directive (2000/43/EC) implementing the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and for equal treatment in employment and occupation (2000/78/EF).

“The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud”
At the same time as the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Government presented a proposal for a statue relating to an Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud. This act was approved by the Storting in 2005.

The Ombud is to encourage employers to avoid ethnic discrimination and promote ethnic equality in their enterprises.

“The Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination (2002-2006)”
Gender is not mentioned.

The Government’s view is that combating racism and discrimination must be based on long-term, continuous attention.
A total of 48 measures are outlined in the plan of action and the measures cover the following areas: the labour market, public services, school and education, the police/public prosecutors/courts, documentation/surveillance, the Internet, local communities, strengthening of judicial protection against ethnic discrimination and racist expressions, and general measures.

One of the measures the Government wishes to draw particular attention to, is to ensure the availability of specialised expertise for cases regarding ethnic discrimination and racially motivated violence or harassment.

Violence

*Plan of Action against Forced Marriage“*
In 2002 the Government presented the programme Renewed Efforts to Combat Forced Marriage. The programme comprises 30 measures, and as a result of this programme, amendments have been made to various regulations. For instance, stricter maintenance requirements in connection with family reunification on the basis of marriage when one of the spouses is under 23 years of age. Furthermore, unconditional public prosecution in cases relating to FM has been introduced, and increased the penalty for being an accomplice to FM.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, emergency assistance is provided through the FM hotline run by Oslo Red Cross, and Self-Help for Immigrants and Refugees which assists young people who are at risk of being, or have been forced into marriage. It is a priority to train public employees and that a national team of experts has been established.

“The Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation“*
The Plan of Action was presented in 2000, and the Government presented a joint effort in 2002 which defines and expands the Plan of Action with 33 measures. The purpose is to collect the experience gained from the OK Project in one place in order to ensure that it is available, updated and developed.
Working life issues and gender
Gender and working life are not explicitly commented on in the report. Working relationship are sometimes mentioned together with equal treatment, but then in a way referred to below, equal treatment as skin colour and national or ethnic origin, not gender.

About the Working Environment Act the report refers to Council directive 2000/78/EC and Norway’s implementation of the general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The new provisions relating to equal treatment contain a prohibition against discriminatory treatment throughout working relationship, but of the ten grounds of discrimination, the report only refers to skin colour and national or ethnic origin.

Furthermore on the remarks to employment/unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the population or for persons with background from an African country is commented on, but there are no remarks on gender differences.

4.2.1 The CERD report and comments by NGOs
In the CERD report from 2005 comments by NGOs are available at the Internet. These are from the Anti-racist Centre and the Sami Reindeer Herders’ Association of Norway and do not deal with “women’s issues”.

CERD’s response (2006) contains only CERD’s response to Norway’s report (and not Norway’s answers).

Anti-Discrimination Act and Ombud
One of the positive aspects, in the Committee’s view, is the adoption of the Act on Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal in January 2006.

Another positive aspect is the amendments which aim to strengthen protection against expressions of racial hatred.

25 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/ceds69.htm
The Committee is concerned that the anti-Discrimination Act does not specifically cover discrimination on the ground of race, because of Norway’s difficulties in addressing the notion of “race” in the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that discrimination on the ground of race is adequately covered in existing legislation and falls within the mandate of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud.

Violence
In the response there is nothing related to violence and gender.

Working life issues and gender
In the response there is nothing associated with working life issues and gender.

NGOs
The Committee recommends that the State party continue consulting and expanding its dialogue with NGOs working in the area of combating racial discrimination in connection with the preparation of the next periodic report.

5. Summary and closing reflections on the CEDAW and CERD processes

• Our mapping indicates that there is a low degree of NGO participation in shadow reports to CEDAW. The first mentioning of the role of NGO’s is found in the fourth periodic national report to CEDAW (1994).

• Women’s organisations were invited to comment on the national CEDAW reports from 1998. The report claims that NGO’s have been consulted, but does not name specific organisations. Comments from three NGO’s are attached. In the fifth report (2002), 30 women’s and various other relevant NGO’s were invited to consultations and a public hearing. The seventh report (2006) was circulated ‘widely’ to women’s organisations, in addition to an open meeting to discuss the report.

• Despite the CEDAW committee’s encouragement to NGO’s to participate, we have only found one proper shadow report to CEDAW (to the seventh report). In
general, there have been few comments from women’s organisations included in the reports we have examined (from 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006).

- Among the approximately 200 women’s organisations registered in our mapping (Eggebø, Halsaa, Skjeie and Thun 2007), we have been able to identify six organisations involved in commenting to the national reports: Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, the Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights, the MiRA Resource Centre, and FOKUS. FOKUS an umbrella organisation with app. 70 members, and was involved in the 2007 Shadow report, and in a way increases the number of organisations involved in various ways.

- Half of the identified organisations in the previous point are professional, indicating that participating in the reporting process takes a lot of resources, and often more than ordinary voluntary membership organisations can afford.

- We do not know whether women’s organisations have been invited by the government to give their comments because we have not found any reliable information about the invitation structure. Thus, it is difficult to answer our initial question whether women’s organisations have been invited by the government to give comments.

- The women’s organisations that have commented and participated in shadow reports have made claims concerning violence against women. There is a resonance between these organisations concern with violence against women and the Action Plans, research and increased focus on this issue by the government. However, we do not know whether the comments from the few women’s organisations have influenced this.

- The women’s organisations that have commented and participated in shadow reports have been concerned with the three year rule. The MiRA resource centre has addressed this issue and so have the Women’s Front and the Administration of the Women’s Shelters. So on this issue there has been a resonance between
minority and majority women’s organisations. This is in line with our findings in the interviews about cooperation across ethnic divide concerning this three year rule (see Chapter 7).

- The CEDAW committee has focused on immigrant women and violence in their comments to the Norwegian government. They have been concerned with the increased number of immigrant women in Women’s Shelters. Ethnicity seems to be mainstreamed in the committees’ response and the Norwegian government has been pushed on issues related to immigrant women.

- CEDAW (2006): comparisons between women and men, for instance membership in organisations, but ethnicity are not used for comparison. The chapter “Equal pay” is just women and men and nothing about ethnicity. No intersectional perspective.

- CEDAW does not have solutions, but are questioning Norway’s choices and priorities.

- In the CEDAW (2006) the introductory programme was particularly targeting against women, but in the CERD-report (2005) the introductory programme is not related to gender at all.

- Norway is critical to the term “race” in CERD (2005), but not in CERD (2000).

- Gender does not seem to be mainstreamed in CERD, neither in the Norwegian reports, nor by the NGOs’ comments or the committee’s response.

- The CERD report from 2005 mentions topics concerning violence against women, namely the Norwegian Plan of Action against Forced Marriage from 2002, and the Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation from 2000.
• We have found comments by NGOs in two of the four CERD reports we have examined (from 1996, 1997, 2000 and 2005). Women’s organisations have not given any comments.

• We suggest that the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud may promote mainstreaming of gender in the Norwegian reports to CERD and mainstreaming of ethnicity in the Norwegian reports to CEDAW, and thus we might see more intersectionality in the next reports.

• We suggest that the Ministry for Children and Equality accommodates women’s and other relevant NGO’s in order to facilitate their active participation in the reporting process. This is also according to the Norwegian policy to fund third world activists working on CEDAW reports,²⁶ and to the CEDAW committee’s comment to the Norwegian government for not having funded the authors of the Shadow report in 2007 to travel to the CEDAW/CERD meetings to present their points of view.

• The consultations processes seems to take more resources than voluntary NGO’s have, and they should be encouraged to coordinate their resources in order to participate in the reporting process.

6. National political documents and consultations
The section includes a mapping of three selected national level reports – governmental propositions – related to violence in close relations, protection against forced marriage and changes in the Immigration Act. The three national documents reviewed in this report are propositions to the Odelsting (Odelstingsproposisjoner, abbreviation Ot.prp.), or green papers. These are proposals from the government concerning new laws, changes in laws or annulations of laws presented to the Parliament.
The section also includes the list of organisations invited to comment on the propositions, and the content of their comments. A list of invited consultative bodies to a proposition is, in general, presented in an Ot.prp. proposition. The consultative bodies

²⁶ Professor of Law Anne Hellum, University of Oslo, has informed us about this tradition in the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.
who are invited to comment on ‘hearings’ or consultations to proposals from the Ministry should be ‘affected parties’ (public and private institutions, organisations, municipalities and other ministries). According to the governmental Internet site (www.regjeringen.no) the purpose of the consultations is to evaluate economic and administrative consequences of public measures. On occasions, consultative bodies are also invited to comment on Norwegian Official Reports (NOU). NOU’s are documents made by committees and work groups appointed by the Ministry to make preparations for new Ot.prp. propositions, as well as for reports to the Parliament from a Ministry on a specific policy (Stortingsmelding, abbreviation St.meld.), white papers.

The three recent national reports (law proposals, Ot.prp.) selected for the mapping are:

a. Changes in the Penal Code on violence in close relations (and annulling the act on vagrancy): Ot.prp.113 (2004-2005) (Om lov om oppheving av løsgjengerloven og om endringer i straffeloven mv. ( eget straffebud mot vold i nære relasjoner mv.).

b. Changes in the Immigration Act (protection against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage, and protection of foreign employees’ working conditions and salary) (2004-2005): Ot. prp. 109 (Om lov om endringer i utlendingsloven (beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap og mishandling i ekteskap og vern av utenlandske arbeidstakeres lønns- og arbeidsvilkår mv.).

1. Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here) (2006-2007): Ot. prp. 75 (Om lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (Utlendingsloven)).

6.1. Invitations to organisations and their participation

To what extent have women’s organisations been invited to comment on each of the three law proposals? Are all organisations invited to the three propositions, or are the invitations selective? Did all the invited organisations actually participate, and did some organisations comment on the propositions without having been formally invited? The results of the mapping with regard to the issues of invitations and participation are presented below (The selection and categorisation of the organisations invited as consultative bodies is, as explained in the introduction, based on Eggebø et al (2007). We have, however, included a few organisations which were not mentioned in the

Eggebø report, but have been identified by us later). An ‘X’ in the column below a proposition means that the actual organisation was invited, and a ‘*’ means that the organisation did comment. The content of the comments are addressed in the section following the table of invited and participating NGOs.

Table 3 List of NGOs who were invited and who actually commented on the three selected propositions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender political organisations</td>
<td>FOKUS- forum for kvinner og utviklingsspørsmål</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Human Rights Service</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
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<td>Internasjonal Kvinneligfor fred og frihet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis Centre for Women in Bergen (Kriseseint for kvinner i Bergen)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Advice for Women (Juridisk Rådgivning for Kvinner)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Administration of the Women’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
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</table>

30 Organisations marked with an asterisk (*) are relevant organisations, which are not mentioned in Eggebø’s report.
31 In this NOU we have looked the section concerning the three year rule in particular, and the comments by the organisations concerning the three year rule.
32 Legal Aid for Women was categorised twice in Eggebø et.al. 2007, as a gender political organisation as well as a social and humanitarian organisation. With respect to NOU 2004 we have decided to put it in the first category.
33 The director of The Administration of the Women’s Shelters was actually a member of NOU 2003:31 The Right to a Life without Violence.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shelters (Krisesentersekretariatet)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Women’s Front of Norway (Kvinnefronten)</td>
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<td>The Feminist Group Ottar (Kvinnegruppa Ottar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights (Norsk kvinnesaksforening)</td>
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<td>Kvinner Viser Vei</td>
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<td>Kvinneuniversitetet i Nord</td>
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<td>Kvinneuniversitetet på Løten</td>
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<td>Mannskomitéen av 1988</td>
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<td>MiRA Resource Centre (MiRA Ressurssenter)</td>
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<th>Minority political organisations</th>
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<tr>
<td>African Youth in Norway</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Anti-Racist centre (Antirasistisk Senter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arktisk urfolks kvinnenettverk</td>
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<td>Den eritreiske kvinneunion</td>
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<td>Foreningen for somaliske kvinner og barn*</td>
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<td>The Immigrant National Organization in Norway (Innvandrernes landsorganisasjon)</td>
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<td>Landsforeningen for lesbisk og homofil frigjøring</td>
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<td>The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers</td>
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<td>Self-help for immigrants and refuges (Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger (SEIF))</td>
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<td>The Centre against Ethnic Discrimination)</td>
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<td>Krise- og rådgivningstелефonen for menn*</td>
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<td>Kvinnekraftgruppa*</td>
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<td>Tyrkisk Samlar kvinneforening</td>
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</table>
6.2 Mapping of the propositions and the NGO comments

The summary of the content of the law proposals, as well as the summary of the comments made by the consultative bodies, are organised in the same manner as in the propositions, only condensed.

6.2.1 Law on annulling the vagrancy act and changes in the penal code (Violence in Close Relations) Ot.prp.113 (2004-2005)


The Ministry of Police and Justice’s proposition Ot.prp.113 succeeded the proposals of the Committee on Violence against Women (Kvinnevoldsutvalget, NOU 2003: 31) and the Committee’s suggestion of a distinctive prohibition act on violence in close relations).

The Ministry of Police and Justice supported the Committee on Violence against Women in its proposal of implementing a penal provision directed towards violence in close relations. According to the Ministry, this could be appropriate to discover how many acts of crime of this kind are ending up in court. The Ministry also supported the Committee on Violence against Women in the view that already existing regulations on assault do not cover all kinds of violence in close relations, and that a new regulation will signal that violence against intimate persons is not accepted by society. The already existing penal provision of § 219 on assault was considered unclear in several matters, e.g.: that the maltreated had to be incapable of taking care of itself due to illness, age, etc., and that children and partners were not sufficiently included. The new proposal suggested an unconditioned protection of all groups of persons, such as children, partners and even separated and divorced partners. In addition, the proposition 113 suggested an increase in the sentence from two to three years.

The consultative bodies were asked to comment on the Committee on Violence Against Women’s proposal of a new penal provision directed towards violence in close relations; as well as on a proposal of a penal provision specifically directed towards violence.

34 In Norwegian there are two different notions of “penal provision”: straffebestemmelse and straffebud. We have contacted juridical expertise (the international division of the Ministry of Police and Justice) to get an explanation of the difference between them. The answer was that the two notions have the same
against women in close relations, and that also psychical violence and threats of even the less serious assaults should be included in the regulation to catch up the complexity and totality of the maltreatment.

Comments by the consultative organisations

Most organisations supported the proposal of the implementation of a new penal provision directed towards violence in close relations. Among these were Amnesty International Norway, Legal Advice for Women (JURK), the Crisis Center in Trondheim, the Women’s Front of Norway, the Norwegian Women- and Family Association, The Norwegian Crisis Center Association.

JURK emphasises that the already existing regulation does not catch up with the complexity of the offence situation: A new regulation can contribute to changing the norms in society; women’s exposure to violence in close relations gets less acceptable and the offenders will be made responsible, JURK argues.

Other organisations, such as PION, suggest that § 219 on assault already covered these crimes.

Of the gender-political NGOs, only PION opposes the Committee on Violence Against Women’s suggestion of directing the regulation towards women in close relations, and that also psychical violence and threats of even the less serious assaults should be included in the regulation.

6.2.3 Changes in the Immigration Act
(Protection of foreign employees’ working conditions and salary, and protection against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage) Ot.prp. nr. 109 (2004-2005)

meaning. It seems, however, that straffebud is directed more specifically towards the group it will include; such as "women".
The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development proposed changes in the Immigration Act (of June 24, 1988, no 64) in order to protect against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage, and to protect foreign employees' from being exploited.

We have looked closer at four proposals concerning forced marriages, described below:

1. Admission to refuse an application for family establishing and visa if it is probable that the applicant or the applicant's child(ren) are in risk of being maltreated or exploited by the reference person (the person resident in Norway) (changes in § 9 and a new § 25a) (Ch. 2);

The justification for the proposition is problems related to Norwegian men who marries women from poor countries and exploits or maltreats them. Some of these men have been reported to the police (or sentenced) for violence and sexual exploitation prior to the marriage.

Comments by the consultative organisations: admission to refuse an application for family establishment

Few of the organisations made comments on the proposal of giving the immigration authority admission to refuse an application for family establishing if it is probable that the applicant or the applicant’s child(ren) are in risk of being maltreated or exploited by the reference person (the person resident in Norway). According to the proposition, most of those commenting agreed upon the proposal (no organisation names mentioned).

The proposal of introducing the opportunity to refuse residence permit to protect the applicant against offence was more controversial, but was however supported by most of the organisations and institutions, among these Legal Advice for Women (JURK), the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (SMED) and Human Rights Service (HRS).

35 Family establishing (familieetablering) is not the same as family reunification (familiegjenforening). The first describes a recent marriage between a person resident in Norway and a person resident abroad, whereas the latter describes the reunification of any family members of whom the person resident in Norway having relation to prior to the arrival in Norway.
The MiRA Resource Centre, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen did not support the proposal, arguing that the applicant would thus be punished for what the reference person has done: This implies declaring the applicant as incapable of managing her/his own affairs. Actually, these organisations claim, there is a wish to regulate the immigration that lay behind the law proposal. The Immigration Act is not the right mean to prevent violence and abuse of women. These are problems that should be combated through penal codes and other arrangements, according to their view.

The Administration of Women’s Shelters also argues that the immigration authorities cannot reject an application for residency on such grounds: The immigration authorities are only to act as intermediaries by passing information of the record of conduct of the reference person, so that the applicant can judge whether she or he wants to apply for family unification with the reference person.

Several of the organisations and institutions, among them JURK, Institution against Public Discrimination (OMOD) and Forum for Men and Care point out the need for defining notions like e.g. "offensive", "maltreatment", and "exploitation".

The Administration of Women’s Shelters, OMOD and Forum for Men and Care thought the reference person has to be sentenced previous to the immigration authorities informing the applicant of his/her conduct.

OMOD and Forum for Men and Care emphasise that an earlier wife’s stay in shelter for battered women, police reports, etc., are not proofs of violence performed by the reference person.

The Administration of Women’s Shelters notices that the situation for women having been in contact with shelters or the police might be worsened if this could be used as evidence. This could be threatening women’s rights to be anonymous in shelters for battered women, which in turn might prevent women from reporting violence.
JURK and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (SMED) support the proposal of the police having the opportunity of control of conduct in cases of family establishment. In addition they emphasise that in some cases the authorities should be obliged to get such reports.

OMOD thinks the committee’s proposal of control of conduct is discriminating as long as not everyone wishing to get married is equally controlled.

The committee’s proposal of not giving information of conduct when the application of residence is accepted is supported by SMED.

The Administration of Women’s Shelters and the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen think that information of conduct should be given also in cases where the application of residence is accepted. JURK emphasises that in cases where the applicant has children this should be particularly urgent.

Comments by the Ministry to the proposal of denying residence by risk of maltreatment or severe exploitation

The Ministry agrees with the committee of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the majority of the consultative bodies in the proposal of refusing an application for family establishment to protect the applicant against offence.

2. Admission to control the conduct of the reference person\(^ {36}\) in cases of family establishment and visa (new § 44 a and b) (Ch 3);

The background of the proposal is that certain men ”use and throw” women by constantly inviting new women on three months visa, without planning a lasting relationship: If the authorities have reason to believe that the woman will be maltreated or severely exploited, her application for visa can be refused.

Comments by the consultative organisations: Admission to control the conduct of the reference person

Most of them had the same views as on the proposal of implementing the opportunity of

\(^ {36}\) The person resident in Norway.
refusing family establishment to prevent offences against the applicant and her/his children [no further information in the proposition].

Comments by the Ministry
The Ministry agrees with the committee of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the majority of the consultative bodies in the proposal of admitting the authorities to refuse an application for visa or residence to protect the applicant against maltreatment or severe exploitation.

3. Admission to deny a residence permit (or work permit) in cases of marriages abroad until the reference person has returned to Norway and been interviewed by the immigration authorities, in order to prevent someone being married against their will while staying abroad (new § 9) (Ch 4).

In order to prevent someone from being married against their will while staying abroad, the Communal committee of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development proposed that a person having married abroad with a person resident in Norway is not granted residence permit (or work permit) before the resident partner has returned to Norway and been interviewed by the immigration authorities (new § 9 in the Immigration Act).

Comments by the consultative organisations: Admission to deny a residence permit
Of the organisations commenting on this proposal, only the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen (KSB) and The MiRA Resource Centre are negative to it. KSB thinks it is not likely that “a control talk” with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDi) will reveal forced marriages. Young women being forced to marry by their families are often in a difficult situation, and it is likely that her parents also will force her to declare the marriage as voluntarily in such a talk, KSB argues, and points out the fact that a large group of people are not being in a “situation of forced marriage” would be rendered suspect by such a regulation.

The MiRA Resource Centre argues similarly against the proposal, and thinks that instead, information campaigns and events in Norway should be directed towards people being exposed to forced marriage. In addition, The MiRA Resource Centre is worried that the obligatory interviews will prolong the processes of family establishment in cases were forced marriage are not into question.
Human Rights Service (HRS) is positive towards the proposal, but thinks it does not reach far enough. They suggest that a person resident in Norway with intentions to marry abroad and apply for residency for her/his partner, should be obliged to inform the authorities before going abroad. If not informing the authorities in advance of marriage, the application of immigration should not be proceeded, in HRS’ view.

JURK agrees with the proposal, and thinks it might prevent forced marriages.

The Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (SMED) remarks that all reference persons should be treated equally in the interview situation, because this is important in a non-discrimination perspective.

Comments by the Ministry
The Ministry does not share the views of the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen (KSB) or The MiRA Resource Centre that interviews will not prevent forced marriages. According to the Ministry earlier experiences from interviewing reference persons in Norwegian foreign offices abroad has discovered situations of forced marriages, and it is expected that reference persons would dare to admit being exposed to forced marriage to an even larger degree if the interviews were to take place in Norway. The interviews should be carried out by the local police and would thus take place in all parts of the country.

6.2.3 Admission to refuse an application of residence or work permit

Admission to refuse an application of residence or work permit if the reference person does not agree to give permission to the applicant or if it is possible that the marriage is not voluntary, in order to prevent forced marriage as a mean to achieve residence or working permit (changes in § 9) (Ch 4);

The background of the proposal is the vulnerable situation of a reference person who has been exposed to pressure to marry a foreign person, which can make difficulties for her/him of informing the authorities about the problematic relation.
The committee of Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development proposes a legal authority for a denying residence permit when a) the marriage is accomplished against the will of one of the partners; and b) the reference person does not actively gives her/his support to the application.

Comments by the consultative organisations
The Administration of Women’s Shelters supports the proposal of legal authority for denying residence permit in case of forced marriage, and when the reference person does not actively gives her/his support to the application.

Human Rights Service (HRS) also supports the proposal, although HRS remarks that young people still would be exposed to pressure in order to give the authorities the impression that the marriage is voluntary. Besides, HRS claims that young women resident in Norway will be kept in the “country of origin” until the family has ensured that she is pregnant, for then to lay pressure on her to ensure the children’s father’s migration to Norway.

OMOD is sceptical to the proposal of denying residency when the marriage is accomplished against the will of one of the partners, regarding the weak demand for evidence and the situation of the reference person after the refusal. They do however support the proposal of denying residency when the reference person does not actively gives her/his support to the application.

Only the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen (KSB) and The MiRA Resource Centre disagree with the main content of the proposals.

KSB thinks the regulation will stigmatise an already weak group, as well as it might “raise the level of conflict between Norwegian authorities and groups in the Norwegian society that practise forced marriages.” Besides, KSB fears that the arrangement will not prevent forced marriage. Neither does The MiRA Resource Centre, who suggests "a report of how minority and foreign girls and women can be protected through the penal code; other parts of the legal system and through a general strengthening of the protection mechanisms."
Comments by the Ministry
The Ministry supports the proposal of implementing a legal authority to refuse residence permit in case of forced marriage, and to refuse residence permit in case where the reference person does not actively gives her/his support to the application. The Ministry notes that only two of the organisations (The MiRA Resource Centre and KSB) are against it.

6.2.4 Changes in the Immigration Act
(On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here) Ot.prp. 75 (2006-2007) & NOU 2004:20

The changes in the Immigration Act follows the Committee on Immigration Act’s report the New Immigration Act from 2004 (NOU 20: 2004), as well as the 2006 consultations made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion on specific proposals of measures to protect young people against forced marriages (Beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap). Both documents (the NOU 20: 2004 and the Beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap) were sent to consultative bodies to comment, and a summary of these comments are to be found in Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here) Ot.prp. 75 (2006-2007).

The consultative bodies’ comments to the report New Immigration Act
(from 2004 (NOU 20: 2004) are to be found at:

37 Here we specifically looked at the section regarding the three year rule and comments by the organisations concerning the three year rule.
38 http://www.regjeringen.no/Rpub/NOU/20042004/020/PDFS/NOU200420040020000DDDPDFS.pdf
39 The main proposal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion was to introduce an age limit of 21 for marriage. This, however, was not introduced. Comments from the many NGOs participating in the consultations are to be found here:
40 We have used this website to identify the invited organisations and their possible comments http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/regpubl/otprp/20062007/otprp-nr-75-2006-2007-/2/2/2.html?id=474179
One exception was identified: the comments made by The Administration of Women’s Shelters were not published on the government’s websites, but on the organisation’s own webpage:


6.2.5 Family immigration (including the three year rule)\(^{41}\)

Chapter 9 in the Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here), Ot.prp. 75 (2006-2007), deals with “Family immigration”, which is a new notion that combines both family reunification and family establishing. Family immigration is seen as particularly important as it is the single most important basis of permanent immigration to Norway.\(^{42}\)

The proposed regulations of family immigration are more detailed than the previous regulations. A few regulations are more liberal, e.g. the right to family reunification for cohabitants with children and for parents with Norwegian children, whereas some proposed regulations are directly aimed to prevent foreigners to immigrate through marriage; e.g. refusing residency when the reference person previously has been married with someone else when it is likely that they still live together even if they are officially separated. The Ministry has also proposed to establish by law regulations that were formerly provisions of the Act; e.g. admission of residence permit after divorce caused by maltreatment. The proposition also suggests to make this part of the regulation gender neutral, not directed towards women as beforehand.

6.2.6 Divorce because of maltreatment (ch. 9.8.2.)

When a foreign person has married a Norwegian citizen she or he does not have an individual residence permit before three years of stay in Norway. According to the Committee on Immigration Act, foreign women should not be obliged to stay in a violent relationship in fear of being deported.

The Committee on Immigration Act proposed new regulations on independent residence permits for foreign women that have been divorced because of physical and/or psychical

\(^{41}\) We specifically looked at this section in order to examine comments by the organisations concerning the three year rule.

maltreatment (§ 21). Several “difficult cases” were pointed out when considering whether the maltreated woman should be granted residence permit or not: if there is doubt whether the woman actually has been maltreated; if the treatment is really to be considered as maltreatment; if the woman has stayed for a very short time in Norway; or if it is not difficult for the woman to return to her country of origin.

The committee recommended individual judgements in cases where a foreign woman has claimed that she has been maltreated and suggested that the regulation should be changed from a regulation of right (a “shall be” regulation) into a regulation stating that the maltreated applicant might be given independent residence permit. In addition, the regulation on maltreatment was suggested to become gender neutral.

Comments by the consultative organisations
Most of the consultative NGOs are positive towards the proposal of taking the regulation into the law. Among these are: Amnesty International Norway, Norwegian People’s Aid, Legal Advice for Women (JURK), the Anti-Racist Centre, The MiRA Resource Centre, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen and Forum for Men and Care.

Most of the consultative bodies support the proposal of making the regulation gender neutral. An exception is the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen, who is “worried about the consequences of making the law gender neutral, as it will mask the fact that these are offences that systematically affect women.”

The consultative bodies have different views on the proposal concerning the claim for evidence of maltreatment.

Forum for Men and Care thinks the regulation could lead foreign women to give false testimonials of maltreatment in order to be granted independent residence permit. To prevent this, Forum for Men and Care asks for more specific claims for documentation, e.g. a legally valid sentence.

Concerning the matter of defining the measures of what is considered as maltreatment,
only the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen makes comments. The definition of maltreatment is too restricted, they argue.

The consultative bodies have different views on changing the regulation from granting independent residence permit in case of maltreatment in marriage into a “might” regulation: JURK and the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen are against it, because they think it will lead to a more restrictive practice. JURK thinks it would be unfortunate to let individual officials decide whether the person claiming being a victim of maltreatment deserves an individual residence permit or not, or to judge a divorced woman’s possible problems when returning to her country of origin. This implies approximate decisions that cannot be checked by court, according to JURK. Individual officials cannot take such a subjective judgment, JURK maintains, the woman herself is to judge whether or not she will get in trouble when she returns. The proposed change in regulation will limit women’s possibilities of being granted residency on an individual basis, which in turn may make women keep staying with violent men. Especially in cases where the women have children this could have severe consequences, in JURK’s opinion.

The Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Anti-Racist Centre and The MiRA Resource Centre claim that spouses being maltreated should be granted an immediate independent residence permit, alternatively after one year, and not after three years in force.

The Anti-Racist centre and The MiRA Resource Centre claim:

“As a spouse or partner the applicant is completely dependent of the reference person the first three years in Norway, because her residency is attached to the reference person. This three year clause make the spouse, which is often a woman, and sometimes a foreign male partner of a Norwegian woman or man, absolutely dependent of the status and the goodwill of her/his partner or spouse. Indeed, the woman can apply for residence permit in cases of offence or difficult circumstances at the return, but this is not easy to confirm. If the woman feels she has broken her bonds in her home country, she is forced to endure. “

Comments by the Ministry
The Ministry does not agree with the Committee on Immigration Act in changing the regulation of independent residence permit in cases of maltreatment from a “shall-
regulation” into a “might-regulation”. The Ministry emphasizes that maltreated persons should not consider the regulation as an insecure alternative, and as a consequence keep staying in a harmful relationship in fear of losing the residence permit. The Ministry agrees in the proposal of rendering the regulation gender neutral, but not in the views on the three-year clause of The Administration of Women’s Shelters, the Anti-Racist Centre and The MiRA Resource Centre.

6.4 National propositions: divided and accidental consultation processes

The proposal regarding violence in close relations (Ot. Prp. 113) were drawn up by the Ministry of Justice and the Police. Several of the “gender political organisations” were invited to participate in this hearing, but only two (The Women’s Front of Norway and Legal Advice for Women) gave their comments. Some of the “minority political organisations” were invited, mainly the professionalised NGOs within this category, but no one gave their comments. Several of the organisations within the category “social, humanitarian or relief organisations” were invited, and two gave their comments (Amnesty International Norway, and (Norges Kvinne- og familialforbund). Also organisations working with gendered violence, prostitution and incest were invited and a few answered. The overall impression is that many organisations were invited to this hearing (90 organisations), but only very few (8 organisations) gave their comments on the law proposal.

The law proposal on protection against forced marriage (part of the Immigration Act) (Ot. prp. 109) was presented by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Five of the “gender political organisations” (Human Rights Service (HRS), the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, Legal Advice for Women, MiRA Resource Centre) were invited and they all gave comments on the law proposal. Eight of the “minority political organisations” were invited - mainly the professionalised NGOs within this category - and two of them answered (OMOD and SMED). Among the “social, humanitarian or relief organisations” four

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43 Categorisation based on Eggebo et al. (2007), see Chapter 5.
44 See more details about which organisations were invited and which organisations gave their comments in table 3..
45 After 2005 issues related to Immigration came under the remit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.
organisations were invited and one (Forum for Men and Care) gave their comments. A few organisations working with gendered violence or prostitution and also two religious organisations were invited, but did not give any comments. None of the local women’s minority women’s organisations were invited to this hearing.

The law proposal concerning changes in the Immigration Act (Ot. prp. 75) was presented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. This law proposal was based on two hearings regarding the Norwegian Official Report called New Immigration Act (NOU 2004:20); one hearing concerning the whole NOU 20:2004 (here we specifically looked at comments by the organisations concerning the three year rule), and one hearing concerning efforts against forced marriages, also based on the same NOU 2004:20.

In the hearing on the whole NOU 2004:20, four of the “gender political organisations” (HRS, the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, MiRA Resource Centre) were invited and they all, except HRS gave comments on the law proposal. Seven of the “minority political organisations” were invited and two of them answered (NOAS and OMOD). Among the “social, humanitarian or relief organisations” three organisations were invited but none gave their comments.

None of the local women’s minority women’s organisations were invited to this hearing and none gave their comments.

In the hearing concerning forced marriages, five of the “gender political organisations” (HRS, the Crisis Center for Women in Bergen, The Administration of Women’s Shelters, Legal Advice for Women, MiRA Resource Centre) were invited and they all gave comments on the law proposal. Several of the “minority political organisations” were invited and eight of them answered (the Anti-Racist Centre, Innvandrernes landsorganisasjon, Kvinners frigjøringsorganisasjon i Irak (Støttekampanje for kvinners rettigheter i Irak)(OWFI), NOAS, Norsk innvandrerforum, Self-help for immigrants and refugees (SEIF), Somaliland Women’s Solidarity). Among the “social, humanitarian or relief organisations” two organisations were invited and one (Amnesty International Norway) gave its comments. Norsk krisesenterforbund within the category “organisations working with gendered violence” was also invited and they gave their
comments to the law proposal. Some of the local minority women’s organisations were also invited to this hearing, but they did not give their comments.

To conclude our main research questions: who are invited, who responds, what are the claims and is it possible to identify resonance with public policy – we suggest the following:

The identified invitation structure varies between the selected propositions. The variations do not look quite systematic with respect to what categories of organisations are being invited for what proposals, with one possible exception: The majority women’s “gender political organisations” are not invited to comment on the three proposals particularly addressing ‘immigrant women’s issues’. This indicates a divided consultation structure which may increase rather than decrease the probability of cooperation between women’s organisations across the ethnic divide. The majority women’s organisations are conspicuous by their absence also among those who actually comments, with the important exception of The Administration of Women’s Shelters and Legal Advice for Women. These two women’s organisations obviously contributes to bridging the gaps, but none of them are ordinary member based voluntary organisations.

We have also noticed that whereas a number of organisations are sometimes invited into the consultation processes, the numbers of actual comments are quite much low. One reason is likely to be that consultations take more resources than the organisations have. This assumptions is strengthened by the fact that a few ‘core organisations’ tend to reappear in the hearing processes, and these are mainly organisations funded by support scheme for national immigrant organisations.

We do not have sufficient evidence to conclude on the issue of resonance. The women’s organisations have different opinions, and some of them are more likely to comment in ways which resonate with the public proposals. However, the main purpose of this selective mapping was to complement the findings of the interviews with women’s and feminist organisations with documented evidence of claims and issues made by these organisations in Norway and to discover the degree of the resonance between these claims and the policy proposals in the relation to violence against women and ethnic discrimination related to violence against women (see Chapter 6 and 7). One example of
this is the women's organisations that have commented and participated in shadow reports have been concerned with the three year rule. The MiRA resource centre has addressed this issue and so have the Women's Front and the Administration of the Women's Shelters. So on this issue there has been a resonance between minority and majority women's organisations. This is in line with our findings in the interviews about cooperation across ethnic divide concerning this three year rule (see Chapter 7).

**List of sources**


**National documents**


Ot. prp. 75 (2006-2007): changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners’ admittance to the country and their residence here)
Norwegian Official Report 20: 2004 on a New Immigration Act

Comments by Krisesentersekretariatet:

International documents


Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, periodic reports of States Parties:
The reports from the 2000s are available at:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm

Shadow reports
Shadow report to CEDAW 7/2007
http://www.fokuskvinner.no/484/Norwegian_NGO_Shadow_report_to_CEDAW.pdf

http://www.fokuskvinner.no/English/3914/Beijing10-2.PDF

APPENDIX C  TOPIC GUIDES

This annex includes four our sets of topic guides which has been used for different categories of interviews: one guide for interviewees from ethnic majority women’s organisations, one for interviewees from ethnic minority women’s organisations, one for civil servants and one for representatives from political parties. The topic guides have been used as flexible research tools. The four topic guides included here are in Norwegian (see the UK Country Report for the English version of these topic guides).

1) Majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner

1) INNLEIDENDE SPØRSMÅL
Hva er din stilling/rolle i organisasjonen? Hvor lenge har du vært aktiv i denne organisasjonen?

Når ble organisasjonen grunnlagt? Hva er den etniske profilen?

Hva er den viktigste saken for denne organisasjonen i dag? Har dette endret seg fra tidligere? (sjekklisite: 1970-, 80-, 90-, 00-tallet)

2) VOLD MOT KVINNER
Jobber organisasjonen mot vold mot kvinner (alle former for vold)? Hvilke former for vold? Hvordan?

Sjekk-liste:
- Voldtakt/seksuelle overgrep
- Seksuell trakassering
- Vold i nære relasjoner (partnersvold og andre)
- Tvangsekteskap
- Æresrelatert vold, æresdrap
- Kjønnsemllestelse/kvinnelig omskjøring
- "Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women"
- Kvinner og statsborgerskap eller bosettingsrettigheter (f.eks. 3-års regel i Norge. Innvandrerkvinners mulighet til å “escape” fra 3 års regel hvis de kan bevise at de har vært ofre for vold i nære relasjoner)

3) RELIGIØS OG ETNISK DISKRIMINERING OG RASISME
Jobber organisasjonen med saker som omhandler rasisme/antirasisme og/eller etnis diskriminering? Hva slags saker? Hvordan jobber dere med disse sakene?

Hvor viktig er antirasistisk arbeid sammenlignet med arbeid for kvinnespørsomål og likestilling mellom kjønn for din organisasjon?
Jobber organisasjonen med saker som omhandler religiøs diskriminering? Hvis ja; Hvilke saker? Hvordan? Hvis nei; Hvorfor ikke?

- Saker knyttet til religios tro og praksis, for eksempel:
  a) hijab og niqab på offentlige steder som utdanningsinstitusjoner og arbeidsplassen.
  b) kvinners rett til å inneha ledende posisjoner innenfor religiøse organisasjoner.

4) POLITISK ARBEID PÅ NASJONALT NIVÅ

I hvilken grad vil du si at din organisasjon forsøker å påvirke norsk politikkutforming?

- Sjekkliste:
  Hva slags saker/saksområder; hvilke virkemidler/strategier (snakke med politikere, underskriftskampanjer, aksjoner, høringer osv.) hvem eller gjennom hvilke kanaler (partier, folkevalgte, andre organisasjoner, media); nasjonalt/lokalt. (Husk: saker som omhandler vold mot kvinner).

I hvilken grad syns du at din organisasjon har hatt innflytelse når det gjelder konkrete saker på nasjonalt eller lokalt nivå? Gi eksempler

Har organisasjonen bidratt til å sette spesielle saker på den politiske dagsordenen?

Har organisasjonen møtt noen hindringer i forsøk på å påvirke offentlig politikk?

Blir organisasjonen invitert av myndighetene til å komme med sitt syn? Hvordan? I hvilke saker? (høringsuttalelser?)

Er organisasjonen representert i offentlige utredninger eller i råd/utvalg? Hvilke?

Har organisasjonen gitt uttrykk for sine syn direkte til myndighetene uten å ha blitt invitert til å gjøre det? (høringsuttalelser m.m.) Hvis ja: Hvilke saker? Hvordan? Hva slags respons? Hvis nei: Hvorfor ikke?

Er det noen bestemte myndighetsorganer/forvaltningsorganer som er spesielt viktige for organisasjonen? Er organisasjonen tilfreds med hvordan institusjonen er organisert? (likestilling, vold mot kvinner, rasisme og diskriminering) Be om eksempler på kontakt, samarbeid, uenigheter.

Syns organisasjonen at interessene til minoritetskvinner er ivaretatt av statsbyråkrater og politiske partier?

Hva med etniske majoritetskvinner? – er deres interesser ivaretatt av statsbyråkrater og politiske partier?

Hvordan ser organisasjonen på norsk likestillingslovgivning? Ivaretar den interessene til alle kvinner i dette landet? Majoritet/minoritet? Hvordan/hvordan ikke?

Hvis organisasjonen din fikk bestemme – hvilke tiltak ville den iverksatt for å fremme kvinnens deltagelse og innflytelse på myndighetenes politikkutforming? Er det noen tiltak som ville vært særlig relevante for minoritetskvinners eller majoritetskvinner?
Hvorfor burde politiske beslutningstakere høre på din organisasjon?

5) SAMARBEID MED ANDRE ORGANISASJONER generelt og mht vold spesielt

a) Andre organisasjoner for majoritetskvinner
Samarbeider organisasjonen med andre organisasjoner som representerer etniske majoritetskvinner?
(Sjekkliste:
   Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags type samarbeid?)

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid med majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner?
   (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter, utfall).

b) Minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner
Har organisasjonen samarbeidet med eller laget allianser med andre organisasjoner som representerer etniske minoritetskvinner?
(Sjekkliste:
   Hvilken organisasjon, når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker har dere samarbeidet om, hva slags type samarbeid)

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid?
   (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter, utfall).

I hvilken grad mener du at etniske minoritetskvinners interesser har blitt hørt og plukket opp av majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvilke saker er tatt opp av norske majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvilke organisasjoner tar opp slike saker?
   (Inkludering/ekskludering av folk/organisasjoner og saker)

Ut i fra din erfaring; er majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner opptatt av å påvirke myndighetene i saker som har relevans for minoritetskvinner? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? I så fall: Hvilke saker? Utdyp.

Dersom det ikke har vært samarbeid med andre organisasjoner; hvorfor ikke? Hva er dine synspunkter?

Hva slags møteplasser eksisterer? (paraplyorganisasjoner, 8de mars med mer.)

6) POLITISK ARBEID PÅ INTERNASJONALT NIVÅ
Har din organisasjon deltatt i eller samarbeidet med trans- eller internasjonale nettverk og/eller organisasjoner?
(Sjekkliste:
   Hvilke organisasjoner/nettverk; om hva, når, etter hvem sitt initiativ, utfall).

Har din organisasjon kontakter eller nettverk på europeisk eller globalt nivå?
(Europarådet, Women’s Lobby, International Council of Women etc.)?
Har organisasjonen din aktivt engasjert seg i forhold til FNs kvinnekonvensjon CEDAW\(^1\) og/eller FNs antirasismekonvensjon CERD\(^2\)? Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke? I så fall; Fortell mer om dette.

Sjekk: har organisasjonen bidratt til norsk rapportering?

Har organisasjonen etter din mening hatt noen politisk innflytelse på EU nivå eller på internasjonalt nivå?

7) MEDIA
Har din organisasjon brukt media til å fremme deres interesser og synspunkter? Fortell.

8) ANDRE SAKER
Hvordan vurderer organisasjonen sine ressurser (er de tilstrekkelige?)?
Hva slags støtte fra myndighetene?
Hvem konkurrrerer organisasjonen med om ressurser (andre organisasjoner?)?

Kan du foreslå en eller flere personer som har en viktig rolle i forhold til politiske saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinner og som kan bli spurt om å stille opp til et intervju?

Er det andre ting du ønsker å få fram om organisasjonen?

SLUTT HER

Tilleggsspørsmål dersom det er tid:

KVINNESAKER I DAG
Hva anser din organisasjon som de viktigste kvinnesakene i dag i Norge og internasjonalt?

LIKESTILLING
Jobber organisasjonen med saker på likestillingssområdet? Hvordan? Hvilke saker?

Sjekk-liste for spesielle saker:
- Arbeid og utdanning
- Politisk deltagelse
- Omsorg for barn/familie
- Aktiviteter på 8. mars?

RELIGIØS OG ETNISK DISKRIMINERING OG RASISME
Hvordan forstår din organisasjon begrepet rasisme? Hva er deres syn på omfanget av rasisme i Norge? Har dette endret seg fra tidligere? (sjekkliste: 1970-, 80-, 90-, 00-tallet)

SAMARBEID MED ANDRE ORGANISASJONER generelt og mht vold spesielt

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\(^1\) Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women.
\(^2\) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
Har organisasjonen samarbeidet med andre organisasjoner i 2007 eller har planer for samarbeid i 2007?

(Hvis aktuelt: Hva slags forhold har din organisasjon til norske feminister/norsk kvinnebevegelse?)

c) Etniske majoritetsmenn
I hvilken grad har din organisasjon blitt hørt av menn fra tilsvarende etniske gruppe? Hvordan posisjonerer organisasjonen seg i relasjon til etniske majoritetsmenn?

d) Kjønnsblandede majoritetsorganisasjoner
Samarbeider organisasjonen med kjønnsblandede majoritetsorganisasjoner?
Sjekkliste:
  - Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags type samarbeid?

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid?
  (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikt).

e) Religiøse trossamfunn/organisasjoner
Samarbeider organisasjonen med religiøse trossamfunn/organisasjoner?

Sjekkliste:
  - Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags type samarbeid?

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid?
  (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikt).

f) Kvinneforskning/ akademisk kvinnebevegelse
Har organisasjonen kontakter til kvinne- og kjønnssforskning? Hvordan? Mener du at organisasjonens interesser er inkludert i/ivaretas av kvinne- og kjønnssforskningen/akademiske feminister?

INFORMASJON OM ORGANISASJONEN (innhente denne informasjonen på forhånd hvis det er mulig):
Organisasjonstype (medlemsskap/profesjonell? Nasjonal/lokal?)
Organisasjonsstruktur (leder, styre, demokratiske valg)
Ressurser (offentlig/privat finansiering)
Administrative ressurser (sekretæriat eller andre ansatte, kontor)
Målsettinger
Aktiviteter

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2) Minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner
1) INNLEENDE SPØRSMÅL
Hva er din stilling/rolle i organisasjonen? Hvor lenge har du vært aktiv i denne organisasjonen?

Når ble organisasjonen grunnlagt? Hva er den etniske profilen?

Hva er den viktigste saken for denne organisasjonen i dag? Har dette endret seg fra tidligere? (sjekkliste: 1970-, 80-, 90-, 00-tallet)

2) VOLD MOT KVINNER
Jobber organisasjonen mot vold mot kvinner (alle former for vold)? Hvilke former for vold? Hvordan?

Sjekk-liste:
- Voldtekts/sexuelle overgrep
- Seksuell trakassering
- Vold i nær relasjoner (partnervold og andre)
- Tvangsektorskap
- Æresrelatert vold, æresdrap
- Kjønnslemlestelse/kvinnelig omskjæring
- "Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women"
- Kvinner og statsborgerskap eller bosettingsrettigheter (f.eks. 3-års regel i Norge. Innvandrerkvinners mulighet til å “escape” fra 3 års regel hvis de kan bevise at de har vært ofre for vold i nær relasjoner)

3) RELIGIØS OG ETNISK DISKRIMINERING OG RASISME
Jobber organisasjonen med saker som omhandler rasisme/antirasisme og/eller etnisk diskriminering? Hva slags saker? Hvordan jobber dere med disse sakene?

Hvor viktig er antirasistisk arbeid sammenlignet med arbeid for kvinnespørsål og likestilling mellom kjønn for din organisasjon?

Jobber organisasjonen med saker som omhandler religiøs diskriminering? Hvis ja; Hvilke saker? Hvordan? Hvis nei; Hvorfor ikke?

- Saker knyttet til religiøs tro og praksis, for eksempel:
  c) hijab og niqab på offentlige steder som utdanningsinstitusjoner og arbeidsplassen.
  d) kvinners rett til å inneha ledende posisjoner innenfor religiøse organisasjoner.

4) POLITISK ARBEID PÅ NASJONALT NIVÅ
I hvilken grad vil du si at din organisasjon forsøker å påvirke norsk politikkutforming?
Sjekkliste:

Hva slags saker/saksområder; hvilke virkemidler/strategier (snakke med politikere, underskriftskampanjer, aksjoner, høringer osv.) hvem eller gjennom hvilke kanaler (partier, folkevalgte, andre organisasjoner, media); nasjonalt/lokalt. (Husk: saker som omhandler vold mot kvinner)

I hvilken grad syns du organisasjonen har hatt faktisk innflytelse når det gjelder konkrete saker på nasjonalt eller lokalt nivå? Gi eksempler
Har organisasjonen bidratt til å sette spesielle saker på den politiske dagsorden?

Har organisasjonen møtt noen hindringer i forsøk på å påvirke offentlig politikk?

Blir organisasjonen invitert av myndighetene til å komme med sitt syn? Hvordan? I hvilke saker? (høringsuttalelser?)

Er organisasjonen representert i offentlige utredninger eller i råd/utvalg? Hvilke?

Har organisasjonen gitt uttrykk for sine syn direkte til myndighetene uten å ha blitt invitert til å gjøre det? (høringsuttalelser m.m.) Hvis ja: Hvilke saker? Hvordan? Hva slags respons? Hvis nei: Hvorfor ikke?

Er det noen bestemte myndighetsorganer/forvaltningsorganer som er spesielt viktige for organisasjonen? Er organisasjonen tilfreds med hvordan institusjonen er organisert? (likestilling, vold mot kvinner, rasisme og diskriminering) Be om eksempler på kontakt, samarbeid, uenigheter.

Syns organisasjonen at interessene til minoritetskvinner er ivaretatt av statsbyråkrater og politiske partier?

Hva med etniske majoritetskvinner? – er deres interesser ivaretatt av statsbyråkrater og politiske partier?

Hvordan ser organisasjonen på norsk likestillingslovgivning? Ivaretar den interessene til alle kvinner i dette landet? Hvordan/hvordan ikke?

Hvis organisasjonen din fikk bestemme – hvilke tiltak ville den iverksatt for å fremme kvinners deltagelse og innflytelse på myndighetenes politikkutforming?

Er det noen tiltak som ville vært særlig relevante for minoritetskvinners eller majoritetskvinner?

Hvorfor burde politiske beslutningstakere høre på din organisasjon?

5) SAMARBEID MED ANDRE ORGANISASJONER generelt og mht vold spesielt

a) Andre organisasjoner for etniske minoritetskvinner

Samarbeider organisasjonen med andre organisasjoner som representerer etniske minoritetskvinner? (Sjekkliste:
   Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags type samarbeid?)

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid med minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner?
   (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter, utfall).
b) Majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner/norsk kvinnebevegelse
Har organisasjonen samarbeidet med eller laget allianser med andre organisasjoner som representerer etniske majoritetskvinner?
(Sjekkliste: Hvilken organisasjon, når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker har dere samarbeidet om, hva slags type samarbeid)

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid? (Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter, utfall).

I hvilken grad mener du at etniske minoritetskvinners interesser har blitt hørt og plukket opp av majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvilke saker er tatt opp av norske majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvilke organisasjoner tar opp slike saker? (Inkludering/ekskludering av folk/organisasjoner og saker)

Ut i fra din erfaring; er majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner opptatt av å påvirke myndighetene i saker som har relevans for minoritetskvinner? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? I så fall: Hvilke saker? Uttyp.

Dersom det ikke har vært samarbeid med andre organisasjoner; hvorfor ikke? Hva er dine synspunkter?

Hva slags møteplasser eksisterer? (paraplyorganisasjoner, 8de mars med mer.)

6) POLITISK ARBEID PÅ INTERNASJONALT NIVÅ
Har din organisasjon deltatt i eller samarbeidet med trans- eller internasjonale nettverk og/eller organisasjoner?
(Sjekkliste: Hvilke organisasjoner/nettverk; om hva, når, etter hvem sitt initiativ, utfall)

Har din organisasjon kontakter eller nettverk på europeisk eller globalt nivå? (Europarådet, Women's Lobby, International Council of Women etc.)?

Har organisasjonen din aktivt engasjert seg i forhold til FNs kvinnekonvensjon CEDAW\(^3\) og/eller FN's antirasismekonvensjon CERD\(^4\)? Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke? I så fall; Fortell mer om dette.
Sjekk: har organisasjonen bidratt til norsk rapportering?

Har organisasjonen etter din mening hatt noen politisk innflytelse på EU nivå eller på internasjonalt nivå?

7) MEDIA
Har din organisasjon brukt media til å fremme deres interessert og synspunkter? Fortell.

8) ANDRE SAKER

\(^3\) Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women.
\(^4\) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
Hvordan vurderer organisasjonen sine ressurser (er de tilstrekkelige)?
Hva slags støtte fra myndighetene?
Hvem konkurrrerer organisasjonen med om ressurser (andre organisasjoner)?

Kan du foreslå en eller flere personer som har en viktig rolle i forhold til politiske
saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinne og som kan bli spurt om å stille
opp til et intervj?

Er det andre ting du ønsker å få fram om organisasjonen?

SLUTT HER

Tilleggsspørsmål dersom det er tid:

KVINNESAKER I DAG
Hva anser din organisasjon som de viktigste kvinnesakene i dag i Norge og
internasjonalt?

LIKESTILLING
Jobber organisasjonen med saker på likestillingsområdet? Hvordan? Hvilke saker?

Sjekk-liste for spesielle saker:
- Arbeid og utdanninng
- Politisk deltagelse
- Omsorg for barn/familie
- Aktiviteter på 8. mars?

RELIGIØS OG ETNISK DISKRIMINERING OG RASISME
Hvordan forstår din organisasjon begrepet rasisme? Hva er deres syn på omfanget
av rasisme i Norge? Har dette endret seg fra tidligere? (sjekkliste: 1970-, 80-, 90-, 00-tallet)

SAMARBEID MED ANDRE ORGANISASJONER generelt og mht vold spesielt

Har organisasjonen samarbeidet med andre organisasjoner i 2007 eller har planer
for samarbeid i 2007?

Hva slags forhold har din organisasjon til norske feminister/norsk kvinnebevegelse?

Etniske minoritetsmenn
I hvilken grad har din organisasjon blitt hørt av menn fra tilsvarende etniske gruppe?
Hvordan posisjonerer organisasjonen seg i relasjon til etniske minoritetsmenn?
(“Minority within minority”)

Kjønnsblandede etniske minoritetsorganisasjoner
Samarbeider organisasjonen med kjønnsblandede etniske minoritetsorganisasjoner?
Sjekkliste:
- Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags
type samarbeid?
Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid?  
(Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter).

**Religiøse trossamfunn/organisasjoner**
Samarbeider organisasjonen med religiøse trossamfunn/organisasjoner?

Sjekklister:
Hvilke(n) organisasjon(er), når, hvem tok initiativet, hvilke saker, hva slags type samarbeid?

Hva er organisasjonens erfaringer med slikt samarbeid?  
(Muligheter og hindringer/begrensninger i samarbeid og dialog, konflikter).

**Kvinneforskning/ akademisk kvinnebevegelse**
Har organisasjonen kontakter til kvinne- og kjønnssforskning? Hvordan? Mener du at minoritetskvinners interesser er inkludert i / ivaretas av kvinne- og kjønnssforskningen/akademiske feminister?

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**INFORMASJON OM ORGANISASJONEN** (innehtende denne informasjonen på forhånd hvis det er mulig):
Organisasjonstype (medlemsskap/profesjonell? Nasjonal/lokal?)
Organisasjonsstruktur (leder, styre, demokratiske valg)
Ressurser (offentlig/privat finansiering)
Administrative ressurser (sekretæriat eller andre ansatte, kontor)
Målsettinger
Aktiviteter

---------------------------------------------------------

3) Byråkrater i departementer

1) Informasjon om departementet/direktoratet

Hva er ditt arbeidsområde innenfor likestillingsfeltet og /eller innvandrings-/integreringsfeltet i departementet? (finn ut før intervjuet)

Hvilken relevans mener du kvinnebevegelsen har for politikk i dagens samfunn? Har kvinnebevegelsen en politisk rolle?

2) Kvinnesaker

Arbeider du eller har du arbeidet direkte med saker som er spesielt relevante for minoritetskvinner?

I hvilken grad vil du si at departementet har vært opptatt av saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinner? Har interessen vært stabil, økende eller synkende de senere åra? I så fall; hvorfor?
I så fall; hva slags type saker - rådgivning, lovgivning, langsiktig/kortsiktig arbeid eller annet? (Her kan de nevne sakene de jobber med siden det er et åpent spørsmål. Listen nedenfor er de områdene vi må dekke for å få sammenlignbare data).

Sjekk-liste for spesielle saker:
• Vold mot kvinner, inkludert:
• Vold i nære relasjoner
• Tvangseksetskap
• Æresrelatert vold, æresdrap
• Kjønnslemlestelse/kvinnelig omskjæring
• Kvinner og statsborgerskap eller bosettingsrettigheter (f.eks. 3-års regel i Norge. Innvandrerkvinners mulighet til å “escape” fra 3 års regel hvis de kan bevise at de har vært ofre for vold i nære relasjoner)
• Saker relatert til religiøs tro og praksis (f.eks. hijab, niqab + retten til å ha religiøse lederposisjoner innad i trossamfunn) (disse temaene er ikke voldsrelatert, men bør inkluderes).

3) Kontakter med kvinneorganisasjoner

Har du vært i direkte kontakt med kvinneorganisasjoner (både majoritet- og minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner) gjennom ditt arbeid med disse sakene? Hvorfor ble kontakten opprettet og hvem tok initiativet? Deg, departementet, majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner, etniske minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvor ofte vil du si at du har kontakt med kvinneorganisasjoner (både majoritet og minoritet)?

Hvem har du kontakt med – enkeltpersoner eller organisasjoner/ representanter fra organisasjoner?

Hva slags kontakt? (møter, konferanser, formell eller uformell dialog osv?)

I hvilken grad gir denne kontakten deg synspunkter og innspill som er nyttig i ditt arbeid?

Kan du spesifisere eksempler på beslutningsprosesser der kontakt og dialog med a) generelle kvinneorganisasjoner og b) etniske minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner eller deres representanter har vært viktig?


4) Kvinner politiske innflytelse

I hvilken grad tror du a) kvinneorganisasjoner generelt og b) etnis minoritetskvinne spesielt har innflytelse på saker departementet håndterer?

Har du kontakt med kvinner (både majoritet og minoritet) som ikke er del av en organisasjon, men som har politisk innflytelse som enkeltpersoner?
I hvilken grad tror du både a) majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner og b) etniske minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner klarer å påvirke den offentlige politiske agenda? Hvilke saker har faktisk kommet på myndighetenes politiske agenda?

Hvilke faktorer kan etter din mening hindre politisk deltagelse og påvirkning for både majoritetskvinner og etniske minoritetskvinner? Hvilke faktorer kan fremme slik deltagelse og innflytelse?

Etter ditt syn, hvorfor er det viktig for politikere å lytte til etniske minoritetskvinner når offentlig politikk skal formes og iverksettes? Hvorfor?

Har du noen ønsker eller ideer for hvordan etnisk minoritetskvinner kan bli inkludert i dialog med myndighetene i offentlig politikkutforming?

5) Media

Etter ditt syn, i hvilken grad bestemmer media hvilke saker som får politisk oppmerksomhet når det gjelder saker som er relevante for kvinneorganisasjoner?

6) Oppsummerende refleksjon


Når det gjelder majoritetskvinneorganisasjonenes politiske innflytelse – er den annerledes eller lik i omfang og innhold, i sammenligning med minoritetskvinneorganisasjonenes politiske innflytelse?

7) Andre saker

Har, etter din mening, kvinnebevegelsen i Norge noen innflytelse på europeisk og internasjonal politikkutforming i saker slik som vold i nære relasjoner og likestilling?

Ut i fra din erfaring; er de norske majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner opptatt av å påvirke myndighetene i saker som har relevans for etniske minoritetskvinner i Norge? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? I så fall; Hvilke saker? Utdyp.

Har du opplevd samarbeid/allianser mellom majoritets- og minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvis ja; Hvilke saker? Omfang?

Ut i fra din erfaring; Er det andre aktører, bortsett fra egenorganiserte kvinneorganisasjoner, som arbeider for å påvirke myndighetenes politikkutforming i saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinner? I så fall; Hvilke aktører? (eks. Human Rights Service, JURK, OMOD osv.) Hvilke saker? Hva er ditt syn på disse aktørene? I hvilken grad representerer de minoritetskvikners interesser?

Hvem mener du er de mest legitime representantene for minoritetskvinner (spesielle organisasjoner eller enkeltpersoner?) Er det noen du foretrekker å samarbeide med i forhold til andre? Hvorfor?
8) Eventuelt

Kan du foreslå en eller flere personer som har en viktig rolle i forhold til politiske saker som er relevante for likestilling generelt og/eller etniske minoritetskvinner spesielt, og som kan bli spurt om å stille opp til et intervju?

4. Representanter for nasjonale politiske partier

1) Informasjon om partiet

Hva er din politiske partitilhørighet? Posisjon i partiet? (finn ut før intervjuet)

Hvilken relevans mener du kvinnebevegelsen har for politikk i dagens samfunn? Har kvinnebevegelsen en politisk rolle?

2) Kvinnesaker

Arbeider du eller har du arbeidet direkte med saker som er spesielt relevante for minoritetskvinner?

I hvilken grad vil du si at ditt politiske parti har vært opptatt av saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinner? Har interessen vært stabil, økende eller synkende de senere åra? I så fall; hvorfor?

I så fall; hva slags type saker - rådgivning, lovgivning, langsiktig/kortsiktig arbeid eller annet? (Her kan de nevne sakene de jobber med siden det er et åpent spørsmål. Listen nedenfor er de områdene vi må dekke for å få sammenlignbare data).

Sjekk-liste for spesielle saker:
- Vold mot kvinner, inkludert:
- Vold i nære relasjoner
- Tvangsekteskap
- Æresrelatert vold, æresdrap
- Kjønnslemlestelse/kvinnelig omskjæring
- kvinner og statsborgerskap eller bosettingsrettigheter (f.eks. 3-års regel i Norge. Innvandrerkvinners mulighet til å “escape” fra 3 års regel hvis de kan bevise at de har vært ofre for vold i nære relasjoner)
- Saker relatert til religiøs tro og praksis (f.eks. hijab, niqab + retten til å ha religiøse lederposisjoner innad i trossamfunn) (disse temaene er ikke voldsrelatert, men bør inkluderes).

3) Kontakter med kvinneorganisasjoner
Har du vært i direkte kontakt med kvinnehorganisasjoner (både majoritet- og minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner) gjennom ditt arbeid med disse sakene? Hvorfor ble kontakten opprettet og hvem tok initiativet? Deg, partiet, majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner, etniske minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvor ofte vil du si at du har kontakt med kvinneorganisasjoner (både majoritet og minoritet)?

Hvem har du kontakt med – enkeltpersoner eller organisasjoner/ representanter fra organisasjoner?

Hva slags kontakt? (møter, konferanser, formell eller uformell dialog osv?)

I hvilken grad gir denne kontakten deg synspunkter og innspill som er nyttig i ditt politiske arbeid?

Kan du spesifisere eksempler på beslutningsprosesser der kontakt og dialog med a) generelle kvinneorganisasjoner og b) etnisk minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner eller deres representanter har vært viktig?


4) Kvinner politiske innflytelse

I hvilken grad tror du a) kvinneorganisasjoner generelt og b) etnisk minoritetskvinne spesielt har innflytelse på offentlig politikk? Spesielle saker?

Har du kontakt med kvinner (både majoritet og minoritet) som ikke er del av en organisasjon, men som har politisk innflytelse som enkeltpersoner?

Ønsker du å legge til rette for at både a) majoritetskvinneorganisasjoner og b) etniske minoritetsvinnerorganisasjoner skal ha innflytelse på den politiske agenden og på politikkutformingen? I hvilken grad og hvordan har du gjort det?

Hvilke faktorer kan etter din mening hindre politisk deltagelse og påvirkning for både majoritetskvinner og etniske minoritetskvinner? Hvilke faktorer kan fremme slik deltagelse og innflytelse?

Etter ditt syn, hvorfor er det viktig for politikere å lytte til etniske minoritetskvinner når offentlig politikk skal formes og iverksettes? Hvorfor?

Har du noen ønsker eller ideer for hvordan etniske minoritetskvinner kan bli inkludert i dialog med myndighetene i offentlig politikkutforming?

5) Media

Etter ditt syn, i hvilken grad bestemmer media hvilke saker som får politisk oppmerksomhet når det gjelder saker som er relevante for kvinneorganisasjoner?

6) Oppsummerende refleksjon

Når det gjelder majoritetskvinneorganisasjonenes politiske innflytelse – er den annerledes eller lik i omfang og innhold, i sammenligning med minoritetskvinneorganisasjonenes politiske innflytelse?

7) Andre saker

Har, etter din mening, kvinnebevegelsen i Norge noen innflytelse på europeisk og internasjonal politikkutforming i saker slik som vold i nære relasjoner og likestilling?

Ut i fra din erfaring; er de norske majoritetskvinneorganisasjonene opptatt av å påvirke myndighetene i saker som har relevans for etniske minoritetskvinne i Norge? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? I så fall; Hvilke saker? Utdyp.

Har du opplevd samarbeid/allianser mellom majoritets- og minoritetskvinneorganisasjoner? Hvis ja; Hvilke saker? Omfang?

Ut i fra din erfaring; Er det andre aktører, bortsett fra egenorganiserte kvinneorganisasjoner, som arbeider for å påvirke myndighetenes politikkutforming i saker som er relevante for etniske minoritetskvinne? I så fall; Hvilke aktører? (eks. Human Rights Service, JURK, OMOD osv.) Hvilke saker? Hva er ditt syn på disse aktørene? I hvilken grad representerer de minoritetskvinners interesser?

Hjem mener du er de mest legitime representantene for minoritetskvinne (spesielle organisasjoner eller enkeltpersoner?) Er det noen du foretrekker å samarbeide med i forhold til andre? Hvorfor?

8) Eventuelt

Kan du foreslå en eller flere personer som har en viktig rolle i forhold til politiske saker som er relevante for likestilling generelt og/eller etniske minoritetskvinne spesielt, og som kan bli spurt om å stille opp til et intervju?
APPENDIX D ABBREVIATIONS

AID (the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion)
AYIN (African Youth of Norway)
BFD (The Ministry of Children and Family)
BLD (the Ministry of Children and Equality)
Bufdir (the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs)
CEDAW (United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)
CERD (The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD))
CIA (Christian Intercultural Association)
FOKUS (Forum for Women and Development)
FGM (female genital mutilation)
FWG (Foreign Women’s Group)
HRS (Human Rights Service)
ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)
IMDi (the Directorate of Integration and Diversity)
INLO (The Immigrant National Organization in Norway)
JURK (Legal Advice for Women)
KRD (The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development)
Ombud (The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, earlier the Gender Equality Ombud)
OMOD (Institution against Public Discrimination)
ORKIS (Oslo Red Cross International Centre)
Ot.prp. (propositions to the Odelsting, Odelstingsproposisjoner, or green papers)
MiRA (The MiRA Resource Centre for black, immigrant and refugee women in Norway)
NGO (Non Governmental Organisation)
NOAS (The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers)
NOU (Norwegian Official Report)
NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation)
SEIF (Self-help for immigrants and refuges)
SMED (the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination)
SNF (Sami Nisson-Forum)
St.meld. (reports to the Parliament from a Ministry, *Sortingsmelding*, or white papers)
UDi (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration)
WRA (Women’s Rights Association)