Do Antiracist Efforts and Diversity Programs Make a Difference? Assessing the Case of Norway

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Introduction

In European academic debates about multiculturalism and antiracism, Norway is marginal. However, the country's extreme-right and populist-right has attracted international attention because of Anders Behring Breivik's terror attack on July 22, 2011, the populist Progress Party's strong public support and its participation in government from 2013. The party's new hardline immigration minister Sylvi Listhaug has also garnered attention (see Faiola, 2016; Palazzo, 2016). While anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes, largely resulting from negative media coverage and populist rhetoric, remained stable through the last decade (IMDI, 2014; ECRI, 2015), Norway is developing into a multicultural society (Stokke, 2012) increasingly accommodating minorities according to the Banting-Kymlicka multicultural policy index. While fear of Muslims is widespread, media and government have recognized Islamophobic hate speech as a problem. Over time, the Progress Party has lost ground, from record highs of 30% in opinion polls and 22.9% in national elections in 2009, down to 16.3% in 2013 national elections and 9.5% in 2015 local elections.

While the Progress Party strives to exploit the refugee crisis to make immigration policy the strictest in Europe and deport "illegal" immigrants, integration policy (Meld.St. 6, 2012-2013) follows Council of Europe (2008) recommendations. It explicitly values difference and disagreement, recognizes minorities' rights to cultural and religious identities and practices, within a framework of universal human rights, no longer equated with Norwegian values. On the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2015), Norway ranks high, comparable to Canada. Norway scores high on minority employment and political

participation, but restrictions on family reunification and dual citizenship pull down scores. Like Britain, Norway thus combines strict immigration policy with partial multiculturalism. Minorities are visibly present in most sectors of society, with Norwegian-born descendants of 1960s Pakistani labor migrants taking the lead. Minority participation in the public sphere has increased strongly (Eide, 2011; Stokke, 2012; Bangstad, 2013), shifting public debate from whites worrying about minorities (Hage, 1998) to multicultural negotiations (Modood, 2007). Public debate is no longer a battle between politically correct and populist rhetoric, but also a place of discursive struggles between racism and antiracism including minority voices (Stokke, 2012). While often confrontational, there are dialogical tendencies allowing people to get to know each other.

Objectives

This chapter assesses if antiracist efforts and diversity policies have made a difference in Norway in the last decade. From a critical multiculturalist and antiracist perspective, I focus on anti-Muslim racism in the mediated public sphere, Norwegian Muslims' antiracist activism, its impact on public debate and public opinion, and state responses in law, policy and education. I attempt to give a nuanced account based on two case studies, the cartoon affair and the hijab debates, intent to highlight antiracist voices and positive developments, while criticizing policy shortcomings and acknowledging persistent racism. I also consider recent developments in the 2015 European refugee crisis and conclude with discussing how school teachers approach racism, and how antiracist education can develop as part of multicultural education.

Norwegian Literature on Multiculturalism and Racism

In Norway, the academic literature on multiculturalism and (anti-)racism closely relates to political debate, where three prominent anthropologists with distinct positions acted as public intellectuals in the 1990s and early 2000s. Two liberal positions, one nationalist (Wikan, 1995; 2002) and one cosmopolitan (Eriksen, 2005; Eriksen & Tretvoll, 2006) have competed for hegemony, challenged by a critical position (Gullestad, 2002; 2006). In Scandinavia, Norway positions itself between Denmark, where nationalist discourse dominates (Myong & Danbolt, 2017; Vertelyte & Hervik, 2017), and Sweden, where critical multiculturalism is stronger (Haavisto, 2017). Norwegian integration policy approximates Kymlicka's (2002) liberal theory of multiculturalism (Borchgrevink & Brochmann, 2003, pp. 72, 90-92), giving extensive rights to the indigenous Sami people, but expecting immigrants to integrate into the national culture and remaining skeptical of conservative religious groups restricting the individual freedom of their members (Kymlicka, 2002; Modood 2007).

The nationalist approach represented by Wikan (1995; 2002) aligns itself with the "critique of multiculturalism" as in Okin's (1999) concern with minority cultures' internal restrictions on its individual members, women in particular, and proposes assimilation into national values confused with universal human rights values (Gressgård & Jacobsen, 2003). Other researchers following the nationalist paradigm (Brox, 1991; 2005; Borchgrevink, 2002; Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012) problematize immigrants in relation to the welfare state. A common denominator in this research is that it sees immigrants as a problem, a challenge to the assumed "national values" of gender equality and the welfare state, assuming a conflict between the others' culture and Norwegian/western values. The nationalist approach has set the agenda for public debate as well as policy: In recent years, Brochmann has led several government commissions on integration.

Defense of multicultural society mainly comes in the form of promoting "diversity" from a liberal cosmopolitan perspective represented by Eriksen (2005; Eriksen & Tretvoll, 2006), resembling the interculturalist position (Barrett, 2013) promoted by the Council of Europe (2008). While sometimes presented as an alternative to multiculturalism, it partly overlaps with multiculturalism and its attempt to find a dialogical "third way" between universalism and cultural relativism/particularism resonates with Parekh's (2000) philosophy of intercultural dialogue. This approach is liberal in the individualist sense, but not "color-blind" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Törngren, 2017), as it recognizes cultural differences and promotes open-minded intercultural understanding, not necessarily resulting in consensus. The cosmopolitan perspective has some political influence, especially under the 2005-2013 social democratic government with its dialogical approach to the Mohammed cartoon affair. While it recognizes the importance of fighting discrimination and emphasizes listening to minority voices, this perspective pays insufficient attention to structures of domination, in contrast to critical and postcolonial perspectives, which explicitly challenge power relations. Nevertheless, intercultural dialogue opens up a space where critical minority perspectives can be heard (Stokke & Lybæk, 2016).

The critical approach, represented by Gullestad (2002; 2006), takes minority voices as a starting point and engages with postcolonial perspectives and critical race theory. It resembles Modood's (2005; 2006; 2007) critical multiculturalism, which starts from the insights and sensibilities of minorities experiencing and mobilizing against various forms of racism. Gullestad (2006) critically analyzes the Norwegian ideology of "imagined sameness" and the conformist idea that differences are essentially bad, and that equality presupposes sameness – an ideology that supports dominant color-blind liberalism ("treat everyone the

same regardless of difference") and makes recognition of positive difference hard for Norwegians. While the two versions of liberalism discussed above compete for hegemony, critical approaches have grown stronger in recent years in connection with critical minority persons' – Norwegian Muslims in particular – increasing access and visibility in the public sphere since about 2005. Younger researchers following in the critical paradigm include Gressgård & Jacobsen (2003), Jacobsen (2011), Bangstad (2013; 2016) and myself (Stokke, 2012; Stokke & Lybæk, 2016), and engage to a larger extent Anglophone multicultural and critical race theory.

Critical research in pedagogy and teacher education draws on Freire's critical pedagogy, Banks' (2004) multicultural education (Westrheim, 2011; Svendsen, 2014; Stenshorne & Stokke, 2015) and antiracist education (Børhaug, 2009). In the field of education, critical multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010; Harlap & Riese, 2014) is explicitly opposed to liberal and colorblind perspectives that everyone should be treated the same, and advocates that minority perspectives need to be heard and accommodated in the curriculum, in the classroom, in decision-making processes, and in parent-teacher relations. This necessarily implies addressing racism as lived experience, and fighting its structural, discursive and interpersonal manifestations. The social democratic government's diversity policy (Meld.St. 6, 2012-2013) recognized that diversity be appreciated in education and seeks to increase teachers' multicultural competence, opening a space for teacher educators to introduce Anglophone multicultural and antiracist education theory.

Theoretical perspectives

Like most contributions to this book, this chapter positions itself within the critical paradigm outlined above. Antiracist research (Okolie, 2005) is a critical approach with a normative agenda to reveal and delegitimize racism in hegemonic discourses and supporting counter-discourses, by giving voice to antiracist resistance and politically conscious minority persons (van Dijk, 1993, p. 19). Racism is a dominant discourse culturally inherited from colonialism, which individuals learn and unlearn through socialization. Structural racism refers to power relations where majority dominates minority, legitimized by racist discourse. Racism consists of a division between "us" and "them", ascription of negative characteristics to the other, and power to translate "race thinking" into discriminatory action (Hervik, 2004). This covers more than the narrow liberal definition of racism as racist ideology, individual intentions and acts of discrimination (Midtbøen, Orupabo & Røthing, 2014, pp. 35-36).
To contribute to antiracist struggle, research should be empirically grounded and give a nuanced account, acknowledging positive developments while remaining critical. Antiracist

theory takes account of both power and resistance in real-world discursive struggles, accounting for individual and collective action, in addition to power structures. Said's *Orientalism* (1994), a key reference for understanding Islamophobia, combines Foucault's notion of discourse with Gramsci's concept of resistance, but largely renders alternative voices invisible. While individuals do reproduce dominant discourses more than we are aware of, voices of resistance always exist and antiracist research intends to let these be heard. Taking an educational approach to antiracism, I believe that highlighting minorities' own voices, analyses, and activism will do more to change negative perceptions among the majority, than a critical normative attitude alone can achieve.

Case study 1: The Cartoon Affair

In January 2006, Norway was drawn into the Danish and international cartoon affair when a small weekly magazine republished Jyllands-Posten's 12 cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. The Norwegian cartoon affair was an international relations event first, before becoming domestic: Attempting to avoid escalation of Muslim anger, which climaxed with attacks on Norwegian embassies in Iran and Syria, Foreign Minister Gahr Støre initiated dialogue with Muslim countries, and later with Norwegian Muslims. While Denmark's Fogh Rasmussen refused to meet Muslims, Norway's government arranged a reconciliation where the cartoon publisher, Editor Vebjørn Selbekk, shook hands with Islamic Council leader Mohammed Hamdan, who called off – or so he thought – further Muslim protests. The government recognized the Islamic Council as "dialogue" partner and gave it regular funding in return for silencing Norwegian Muslims' voices of protest – an example of cooptation (see Stokke, 2012, pp. 73-87).

Kristin Halvorsen, then-finance minister and Socialist Party leader, spoke at a reconciliation rally afterwards, illustrating the government's narrow perspective:

> Norwegians are used to be seen as peaceful and welcome… Now we are threatened… 100 persons threw stones at the Norwegian embassy… If a small number of people tries to harass Muslims in Norway, we must remember that 4.5 million people do not wish to do that… (Dagbladet, 11 February 2006)

She framed the issue as a foreign problem, outside of Norway, while revealing white privilege: "We are used to be seen as peaceful and welcome" (Dagbladet, 11 February 2006). How many Muslims could say the same, post-9/11? She construes Norwegians as well-intentioned ("do not wish to do that"), denies widespread anti-Muslim racism in Norway ("if a small number of people tries to harass Muslims)", labels Muslims opposed to the cartoons as extremists, and silences legitimate and peaceful Muslim protest.

In a climate of public fear of violence from Islamist and right-wing extremists, Norwegian Muslims did not let themselves be silenced. Without organizational backing, a group of volunteers gathered 1500 people for a peaceful protest the next day, carrying posters showing a variety of slogans (see Aftenposten, 12 February 2006; Dagbladet, 11 February 2006; 12 February 2006; Dagsavisen, 12 February 2006; VG, 11 February 2006; 12 February 2006), including:

Mutual respect, please.

Peace and respect for our values.

Respect our faith, then you respect us.

Shame on you, media, for making hate speech.

Politicians and media, this is the result of your irresponsibility.

What we witness now is the result of misused freedom of expression.

Your freedom of expression ends when you step on my feet.

The caricatures are lying, free speech is to say the truth.

We condemn the lies about the prophet.

Media, stop terrorizing us and our lives.

Stop the hate speech. Muslims demand protection against hate speech and bullying.

Do you want a sweet life – Stop making it sour for others.

Building a good society takes time, tearing it down takes seconds.

Media, mouthpiece of lies.

Freedom to practice our religion.

When truth comes, lies disappear.

Islam is the truth.

While the last slogan is in religious language, and some protesters called for reviving anti-blasphemy laws, no slogans rejected Western values or invoked a culture clash. No calls for violence or terror threats, as in certain other anti-cartoon protests. Muslims, of course, do not speak with one voice, but this message was clear: peace and mutual respect, appeals to the media to stop hate speech and stigmatizing Muslims. Protesters criticized media, not the Norwegian nation, and not just for the cartoons, but general negative coverage of Muslims in media and public debate. It was mostly an ethical appeal for respect, truthfulness, and responsibility more than a call for legally banning hate speech (M. S. Thorsen, 2017). Thus, it was a Muslim antiracist mobilization against anti-Muslim racism in the media: antiracism with a religious dimension, as Modood (2005, pp. 104-106) discusses in the British context.

Case study 2: The hijab debates

Since the 1990s, white feminists operating on a "white savior" logic (Razack, 2008; Abu-Lughod, 2002) had dominated Norwegian public debates about Muslim women – echoing Spivak: "white men [here: women!] saving brown women from brown men." The loudest was Hege Storhaug from the *Human Rights Service*, described by the Norwegian Antiracist Center as a "cornerstone in the domestic hate industry" (Dagbladet, 26 March 2010). Her think tank/women's help organization seeks to liberate young Muslim women from human rights violations imposed by their families and communities, for example, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and restrictions on freedom, including the hijab. More recently, her attacks have turned more and more towards the Islamic religion itself. In 2007, she published the book *Veiled. Unveiled.* (Storhaug, 2007) with the double meaning of "Covered up. Uncovered" claiming the hijab is a symbol of Islamism and essentially oppressive, regardless of hijab wearers' own perceptions. With the Progress Party, which guarantees public funding for her organization, Storhaug called for banning hijabs in elementary schools, following French law. In 2009-2010, Muslim feminism had a public breakthrough after the government turned down a Muslim police students' request to allow hijab for uniformed police. Many Norwegian Muslim women wrote op-ed articles, gave interviews, and joined the Women's Day parade with a "hijab brigade". They called themselves Muslim feminists and justified women's rights with reference to Islamic religious scripture (Mir-Hosseini, 2006). Like Black and postcolonial feminism, Muslim feminism is an intersectional struggle fighting both traditional minority patriarchy and majority racism, including paternalistic white feminism.

Ilham Hassan, Somalian student leader at Oslo University, hijab-wearer and brigade organizer, asserted in an interview:

> We ourselves have to define the meaning of feminism…The right to decide over one's own body is also about being able to decide what to wear…the right to wear hijab… Hijab is not oppressive as long as it is chosen, as it is for most women…There is no coercion in religion…the Qur'an gives rights to women… In Norway … Muslim women's struggle is about discrimination…hijab-wearing girls cannot get the education and job they want…Hijab is allowed in …low status jobs. But when talking about a profession that symbolizes power, it becomes a problem. (Klassekampen, 7 March 2009)

She speaks the language of feminist struggle, while referring to religious scripture – a key characteristic of Muslim feminism. Muslim women want to decide for themselves how to

define feminism, and how to analyze the oppression Muslim women are facing, without white feminist instructions.

Bushra Ishaq, Muslim Student Society leader, of Pakistani ancestry and not wearing hijab, appeared as an op-ed writer in major newspapers in 2009-2010:

> In contemporary debate, a perception is cultivated that Muslims constitute a problem simply by their existence, and are static carriers of certain characteristics that imply social problems – a sort of racism that stigmatizes and judges Muslim children before they are born.
>
> Following my faith as practicing Muslim, I am supposed to strive for peace and…abstain from activities that…increase…conflict….My purpose…to introduce the values of dialogue into the debate arena - listen to my opponents with an open mind, respect and neighborly love. (Dagbladet, 11 May 2010)
>
> The government's conclusion to say no to hijab is a demand for assimilation, not integration, where one has to change one's religious practice in order to pursue a career. (Dagsavisen, 4 May 2009)
>
> Feminist values can be justified by Islamic theology…[but] the Muslim adaptation of feminism will differ from the Western one. (Dagbladet, 31 January 2009)
>
> When finding theological justifications for the right to pursue higher education and paid work, the battle against a strongly traditional parental generation has become easier. (Aftenposten, 5 September 2009)

She explicitly refers to racism and assimilation policies against Muslims. Like Ilham Hassan, she asserts Muslim women's right to define feminism grounded in theological justifications. She asserts a positive Muslim identity based on peace, dialogue, open-mindedness, respect and neighborly love – the opposite of Orientalist images of Islam as violent, closed-minded and threatening. By speaking for themselves, and sharing experiences from a Muslim woman's position in Norway, they challenge images of passive and oppressed Muslim women. While white feminists' Orientalist descriptions of Muslim women invoke feelings of pity, assertive Muslim women's voices potentially lead to empathy and solidarity, recognizing difference as well as commonality. Despite these media interventions, socialist party leader, Kristin Halvorsen, then-education minister, comments on the proposal to ban hijab in schools in February 2010:

> Hijab for children is absolutely unwanted because it prevents children's development and opportunity to make independent choices… We as a society must be clear that we don't want hijab in primary schools. (Dagbladet, 24 February 2010)

Stopping short of supporting a legal ban, there is little tolerance for the hijab even from the most left-leaning party in parliament.

Analysis

In Norway, policies and public debates on minorities are mostly discussed in terms of *integration* – an ambiguous concept with many interpretations. When using the term, politicians, media, and public opinion often mean cultural and social assimilation ("becoming Norwegian") followed by judgements that integration has failed. The Diversity and Integration Directorate (IMDI) and Statistics Norway (SSB) define the term as language skills, employment, and political participation, and argue that integration is successful in Norway compared to other countries. Hage (1998) characterizes the expectation of cultural assimilation as a "white fantasy" and argues that real integration in local communities, the latter sense, takes place all the time independent of white people's worries about failed integration.

In multicultural theory, integration is a mutual process of accommodation and adjustment, whose outcome can take more assimilationist and multicultural directions. As Kymlicka says, minorities seek to negotiate the terms of integration. Modood's critical multiculturalism (2007, pp. 39-50) theorizes this negotiation process, where minorities mobilize politically in social movements and the state accommodates some of their demands. He emphasizes that antiracist resistance by each minority group is the primary means of mutual integration. There is increasing recognition that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attitudes are forms of new racism, parallel to anti-Semitism's racialization of Jews. People who "look Muslim", irrespective of individual religiosity and political beliefs, are ascribed negative characteristics and seen as essentially suspect and potential threats. Current images of Islam draw on colonial stereotypes, when Orientalism (Said, 1994) misrepresented the Islamic world as the West's negative mirror image. Ignoring Muslims' own voices and complex empirical reality, "clash of civilizations" thinking recycles these abstract generalizations of an unchanging, homogenous, violent and oppressive religion (Mamdani, 2004; Bangstad, 2016). Orientalism constructs Muslims as enemies, who must be feared and controlled – Islamophobia refers to this "irrational fear" of Islam. The Mohammed cartoons and Western obsession with hijabs reproduce Orientalist images of essentially violent Muslim men, and oppressed and passive veiled women (Yegenoglu, 1998).

As in the Black American struggle, Muslim minorities also mobilize to turn a stigmatized difference ascribed to them into a positive identity they are proud of. Because anti-Muslim racism stigmatizes their religion, which is personally important to most self-

identified Muslims, a common response is to promote a positive image of Islam as peaceful, liberating, and egalitarian. Doing this, they follow other multicultural movements like Black pride and Gay pride. Thus, Muslim antiracism inevitably has a religious dimension, not least because Muslims draw moral and spiritual strength from their religion (Modood, 2005, pp. 104-106). Progressive Norwegian Muslim activists have interpreted street protests and involvement in public debate as part of the greater jihad, i.e. the social and personal effort or struggle for justice (Jacobsen, 2011, p. 188), to rectify negative interpretations of Islam promoted by Islamophobics and Islamists alike.

In the process of multicultural mobilization, a minority claims the right to speak for itself, to define itself in positive terms, and the power to do their own analysis of oppression, redefining racism and modifying antiracist and feminist theory. This discursive and epistemological struggle challenges Eurocentrism, i.e. Western claims to monopolize interpretation of the universal, and insists on formulating alternative versions of the universal. Minority assertiveness also criticizes white antiracists who believe they have the correct answers, as when white antiracists told Muslims to "fight racism, not Rushdie" in Britain in 1989. In critical race theory, white attempts to tell minorities how to lead their struggle, are theorized as an illegitimate "white privilege". Antiracist analysis starts instead with the perspectives of politically conscious minority persons (van Dijk, 1993, p. 18). For antiracist activism to make a difference, minority voices need to be heard, to influence law and policy, and change dominant attitudes and perceptions.

Multicultural accommodation in law, policy and public debate

Antiracist social movements' pressure to democratize the state is a key element of multiculturalism from below, but so are the state responses that accommodate minorities in law and policy, as well as what Habermas (2005) calls the mutual learning processes in the public sphere. Following Modood (2006, pp. 40-41), public debate "allows for the changing of certain attitudes, stereotypes, stigmatizations, media images and national symbols" and from minority protest, dominant groups may learn what offends minorities and develop empathy (Haavisto, 2017). Let us look at the Norwegian case.

Law proposals

In December 2008, the government attempted to ban attacks on religion and allow police hijab, but withdrew both proposals after public pressure and internal disagreement (see Stokke, 2012, pp. 108-110, 182-184). Referring to the cartoon affair, the Justice Ministry proposed to extend the hate speech act to include "qualified attacks on religion" (specified as ridicule or insult; criticism of religion would be protected by free speech) to replace the

blasphemy act. After massive protest by media editors and public intellectuals, the government withdrew the proposal in February 2009. Simultaneously, the ministry announced that police uniform regulations would change to accommodate religious headdress. This also caused public protest, and the ministry reversed the decision claiming that a police hijab would undermine public trust in police neutrality. The Progress Party then had 30% support in opinion polls, and the Labor-led coalition refused to accommodate Muslims out of fear of losing votes.

Media and public opinion

Subsequently, Muslim women gained increased access to media. In 2010, the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt Ord) gave the Free Speech Prize to Bushra Ishaq (they also gave a Free Speech Tribute to Flemming Rose and Vebjørn Selbekk at the cartoons' 10th anniversary in 2015). Coverage of Muslims has become more diversified (Eide, 2011), with more critical minority voices in 2010 than 2006. Media is a prime source of information about minorities for many Norwegians, and these developments open an opportunity for the public to acquire a more nuanced image of Muslims. To an extent, the mediated public sphere can provide a dialogue arena allowing the majority to learn from minority perspectives and develop empathy with their requests for accommodation. Surveys (IMDI, 2014) show that public attitudes towards Muslims have not changed significantly: Still 40% consider Muslim values incompatible with Norwegian values, and ask for assimilation. However, media editors, journalists, women's activists, the Norwegian Church, policymakers and some politicians have heard the Muslim voices. Most mainstream media practice "responsible free speech" and do not publish cartoons of the prophet. A protest against the Islamophobic film *Innocence of Muslims*, organized by the Islamic Council in 2012, gathered 5000 people and the bishop and mayor of Oslo spoke to support Muslims. Simultaneously, 150 Muslim extremists held their own protest, but the liberal mainstream now knew that they did not represent Norwegian Muslims. Similarly, Storhaug's white savior agenda and negative portrayal of Muslims is still present and perhaps more extreme than before (Bangstad, 2016), but her lobbying has less influence on the liberal mainstream; debates about women's rights now show a greater awareness of postcolonial feminism.

Policy

Integration policy (Meld. St. 6, 2012-2013) now explicitly values diversity, indicating that policymakers are listening. It argues that everyone living in Norway should be able to identify as Norwegian and be able to feel part of the Norwegian community regardless of religion, dress codes, and ancestry. It emphasizes shared values based on universal human

rights, which are not particularly Norwegian but have room for a diversity of interpretations, priorities, and ways of life; and it rejects the idea of a value conflict between minorities and ethnic Norwegians. It argues that disagreement and conflict is necessary in a living democracy and that everyone has the right to criticize policies, work for legal changes, and influence decision-making. To solve political disagreement, it promotes public dialogue – understood as listening, learning, and transformation as well as deep disagreement, argumentation, and quarrelling. This may appear as self-evident platitudes, but compared to previous policy and a strong Norwegian ideology of egalitarianism and conformism (Gullestad, 2002), it represents a new approach. Minority voice and protest can lead to awareness, empathy, and change if state and majority are dialogue-oriented. Compared to the Danish government's confrontational denial of racism (Vertelyte & Hervik, 2017) during the cartoon affair, the official Norwegian approach is clearly more dialogue-oriented.

Assessing the impact: What difference does antiracism make?

Accommodation of social movements has been central to social democracy, especially in Norway and Sweden, ever since the class compromise brought formerly revolutionary labor movements into government. "State feminism" refers to a Nordic model of political inclusion where the women's movement mobilizes and makes demands, which are accommodated by the state and political elites (Skjeie, 2013). However, social movement agendas are only partially incorporated in state policy, often giving the movement little real influence and impact (Roald, 2013). Beatrice Halsaa (2013) argues that Norwegian women's organizations were not incorporated in decision-making when gender equality policy was developed in the 1970s; they were selectively consulted, but not equal partners in dialogue. Similarly, Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism is in the interest of the state, which partially accommodates minority demands to ensure minority loyalty and legitimize nation-building. While his liberal-nationalist perspective sees this as a success, from a critical perspective from below these compromises entail both progress and shortcomings. Ålund and Schierup (1991) speak about cooptation, containment and de-politicization of social movements in the case of Swedish multiculturalism and antiracism, which were implemented at the rhetorical level of political correctness, while social movement organizations were depoliticized through public funding, and minorities remain marginalized and excluded from decision-making. Unlike Sweden or Canada, Britain has no official multicultural policy, but rather a pragmatic accommodation of minority demands (Modood, 2007). Since the 1980s, neoliberals and later neoconservatives, like Thatcher in the UK, and various right-wing populist parties across Europe have fought to reverse democratic advances won by social movements: attacking

workers' rights and multiculturalism, welfare cuts, restricting immigration and increasing securitization, surveillance, and policing of political activism under the guise of anti-terror measures (Omdal, 2015). Still more social-democratic than Britain, Norway also joins this trend towards neoliberal governmentality (Djuve, 2011).

While social movement demands express the collective interests of a group, liberal state accommodation tends to recognize only individual rights and reduce antiracism and feminism to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, failing to change structural power relations. Liberal diversity policies can be similarly criticized: the tentative European consensus expressed in the Council of Europe's (2008) "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" is more of a cosmopolitan attitude than a multicultural policy for group recognition. But like multiculturalism, it focuses on reshaping national identity to recognize (mostly individual) diversity, constructing new national identities around human rights as shared values, and is supposed to be wide enough to accommodate all ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

Norwegians intellectuals, newspaper editors, policy- and lawmakers strongly believe in public debate as democratic deliberation in Habermas' sense. The dominant view is to maximize free speech and counter hate speech with arguments rather than exclusion, which means public debate makes room for both Islamophobia and antiracism, while hate speech laws are rarely enforced. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is concerned about Islamophobia in Norwegian debate, and questions the acceptance of hate speech and the funding of the Human Rights Service (United Nations Human Rights, 2015). Following Modood (2007, p. 57), multicultural respect goes beyond legislation against hate speech, and relies on ethical "sensitivity and responsibility to refrain from what is legal but unacceptable." Like the Rushdie affair in Britain in 1989-1990 led to multicultural negotiations and intercultural dialogue and over time facilitated mutual understanding between Muslims and majority and the emergence of multiculturalism, the cartoon affair appeared to have played a similar role in Norway. The balance sheet for multiculturalism is mixed: law proposals to accommodate Muslims were withdrawn due to public pressure, while policy has changed towards multiculturalism. The impact on public opinion is unclear: anti-Muslim attitudes remain widespread, but some people are learning a more nuanced perspective. Public opinion remains divided.

It is risky to build state policy towards marginalized groups on volatile public debate when large parts of the majority are rather conformist and susceptible to nationalist rhetoric. A weakness of Habermas' model of democratic deliberation lies in its individualist

assumptions; it understands the public sphere as consisting of presumably rational, “free and equal” citizens, insufficiently recognizing group-based inequalities. The model I suggest, drawing on Modood’s critical multiculturalism, sees the public sphere as an arena for discursive struggles: It is polarized, not between majority and minority, but between dialogue-minded and accommodating liberals on one hand, and hardline confrontational populists on the other. These two ideological positions are constantly struggling for hegemony, while both being challenged by more critical, antiracist voices. Whichever becomes more influential at a given point depends, among other things, on the public availability of populist, liberal and critical voices in the media.

Recent developments: the refugee crisis

According to researcher Helge Lurås (NRK, 22 November 2015), hospitality and empathy characterized Norwegian public opinion during the 2015 refugee crisis when growing numbers of Syrian refugees arrived in Europe. In November 2015, increasing refugee arrivals also to Norway, combined with renewed public fear after the terror attacks in Paris, turned the tide, and provided the governing Progress Party with an opportunity and public legitimacy to propose stricter border control and a new asylum and immigration policy, claimed to be the strictest in Europe. In subsequent months, refugee arrivals to Norway almost came to a full stop due to Europe’s internal border controls, and the feeling of crisis and panic partly subsided. Now, the proposed new regulations were widely criticized, especially the restrictions on family reunification and the increased use of temporary residence permits were criticized for violating human rights as well as preventing integration. While the coalitions’ parliamentary support parties, Christian Democrats and Liberals, voiced objections, the Labor Party mostly supported these restrictions. When the new hardline immigration minister, Sylvi Listhaug, presented a slightly revised law proposal to parliament in April 2016 (VG, 5 April 2016), she defended the restrictions and argued that current asylum arrivals to Norway were “artificially low”. The government also presented a new white paper on the integration of asylum seekers (Meld.St. 30, 2015-2016). It does not explicitly contradict the previous white paper’s emphasis on inclusion and diversity; rather “refugees” now replace “Muslims” as the main problem (Kristensen, 2017). Overall, Norway continues to combine strict immigration policy with a diversity-friendly policy for permanent residents, but intends to make acquiring citizenship more difficult. Restrictions on family reunification and citizenship will negatively affect Norway’s score on the multicultural policy index.

Critical voices of asylum seekers reached the public also during the crisis. In the autumn 2015, asylum seekers protested against poor conditions in Norwegian asylum centers,

specifically insufficient food and dirty conditions as well as lack of internet access to keep in contact with families. Progress Party politicians saw the discontented asylum seekers as ungrateful (Dagbladet, 8 November 2015), but media also documented the bad conditions in several asylum centers run by private, for-profit companies. A significant example of refugee voices in the media, the Norwegian-produced documentary *The Crossing* (2015), directed by George Kurian and shown on national TV across Europe, told the stories of Syrian refugees themselves. Based on a group of well-educated Syrians' own footage, the documentary shows them smuggled by boat from Egypt to Italy. The movie's groundbreaking significance lies in allowing the audience to identify and empathize with the view of the refugees, realizing that they are "just like us" when preparing for the trip, but then gradually lose hope and become deeply disillusioned, isolated, and passive in northern European asylum centers. This film is suitable for antiracist education: Listening to refugees' own voices allows us to identify and empathize with "the others" and an experience-based counterpoint to the populist rhetoric constructing them as threats to the welfare state and as potential terrorists.

Antiracist education

The Council of Europe (2008) emphasizes schools as key arena for living together in a multicultural society, and its concepts of intercultural dialogue and competence (Barrett, 2013) open a space for developing antiracist education beyond liberal ideas of diversity (Børhaug, 2009, p. 238). Diversity policy (Meld.St. 6, 2012-2013) argues that all schoolchildren and parents should feel included, respected, and recognized, and that cultural and religious diversity be appreciated as resources. Increasing teachers' multicultural competence – to include minority cultures, knowledge, and experiences in dialogical teaching practice – has become official priority. Norwegian researchers and teacher educators (Westrheim, 2011; Harlap & Riese, 2014; Stenshorne & Stokke, 2015) look to American critical multicultural education (Banks, 2004) for inspiration.

In education, critical multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010) combines Freire's critical pedagogy, critical race theory and antiracism, and goes beyond liberal multiculturalism's superficial focus on celebrating cultural diversity. Antiracists criticize liberal approaches, like mainstream multicultural education and diversity programs, for assuming that a cosmopolitan society emerges simply by changing individual prejudice and learning about cultural diversity, without changing structural power relations where majority dominates minority. However, structural change starts with individual consciousness-raising – not just acquiring knowledge, but also becoming aware of and "unlearning" white privilege, and transforming attitudes and behavior. For privileged persons, this implies entering a

genuine dialogue with minority perspectives, learning to see oneself through the eyes of others (Gullestad, 2002).

Norwegian textbooks define racism narrowly as a historical phenomenon with little relevance today, but teachers often compensate with alternative learning materials that minority students can identify with, and students appreciate discussing current affairs like the hijab debates (Svendsen, 2014; Midtbøen, Orupabo & Røthing, 2014). This practice reflects multicultural education's aim to include and validate minority students' experiences and perspectives. Racism remains a difficult topic for many teachers. When using the textbook definition of racism, they dismiss minority students' experiences (Svendsen, 2014; Midtbøen, Orupabo & Røthing, 2014). When they take for granted ideologies of color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010) and "imagined sameness" (Gullestad, 2006), they fail to recognize minority students' perspectives. Norwegian education policy tends to have a universalist/Eurocentric emphasis on inclusion, shared values and sameness – as in France – at the expense of recognizing difference (Børhaug, 2009). Teachers and many students perceive schools as color-blind societies without racism, but minority students do experience forms of marginalization that fit a broader concept of racism (Midtbøen, Orupabo & Røthing, 2014, p. 72). While teachers tend to focus on possible problems of minority youth like weak Norwegian language skills, most minority youth are Norwegian-born, native Norwegian speakers with mixed identities (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012, pp. 33-60). Minority youth and parents tend to have higher ambitions and work harder in school than whites, and while minority women are more likely to pursue higher education, on average, minorities get lower grades. In high school, they experience less supportive teachers and more bullying, and have higher dropout rates.

Minority youth identify as foreigners more often than as Norwegians and well-integrated third-generation Norwegian Pakistanis feel least Norwegian (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012, pp. 33-60). In Oslo, where minority population ranges from 10% in wealthy western suburbs to 50% in eastern working-class areas, 40% of youth live in multicultural communities: most minority youth have white friends, but even in the east, many whites have only white friends. Few minority youth report discrimination and often play down such incidents, but many say they are "perceived as foreigners." Importantly, half of minority youth in this survey say they have experienced racism *as they themselves define it*, and Muslim youth say that negative media coverage is the predominant form of racism. Research (Vestel & Bakken, 2015) indicates that clash of civilizations thinking is less widespread among Oslo youth than among Norwegians in general.

While many teachers use alternative learning materials to include and involve minority students, in line with critical and multicultural education ideals, there is a wide "perception gap" between teachers' color-blind perspective and minority students' experiences. Many teachers lack an analytical framework that connects students' experiences of everyday racism with contemporary anti-Muslim discourses in media debates and with historical forms of racism. Antiracist research provides such a framework seeking to bridge the gap between majority and minority perspectives on racism. O'Brien (2003) argues that learning about minority perspectives and developing empathy requires stepping across the gap and acknowledging the extent of contemporary racism. Genuine empathy – as part of "mutual understanding" – takes more than a token black friend who shares the dominant white perspective. White people's failure to validate minority experiences may explain why many minority youth prefer to socialize with other minorities.

Conclusion

Norwegian diversity policy increasingly accommodates minorities, and multicultural education has become a priority. To some extent, teachers practice dialogical pedagogy allowing minority students to speak for themselves, and include alternative knowledge to which they can relate. Racism remains a difficult topic to teach, indicating a need to learn from antiracist research and education and go beyond commonalities, inclusion and equality to acknowledge difference – not least between differently situated experiences of privilege and racism. Like in North America, color-blind ideology dominates in Norway: well-intentioned whites believe that differential treatment equals negative discrimination. The cartoons and hijab debates are instructive: Norwegian Muslims want recognition as *both equal and different*: they share the values of free speech and gender equality, but want to have their say when these are defined, interpreted, and negotiated. They point out that Eurocentric attempts to monopolize interpretation of universal human rights and values are oppressive and hypocritical. Accurately put by six Norwegian Muslim women in a Women's Day op-ed:

> When reducing feminism to taking off clothes, and integration to atheism, oppression hides behind a mask of liberation rhetoric. (Aftenposten, 8 March 2010)

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