Narratives and Practices of Migrant and Minority Incorporation in European Societies

Contested Diversity and Fractured Belongings

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Becoming Norwegian or Running in Place?

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Introduction

In post-migration societies, a central part of public and political discourse centres on whether, how, and to what extent minorities incorporate into mainstream society (Kriesi, 2016). Incorporation is a complex and protean set of phenomena rather than a linear process, which touches on many aspects of post-migration societies. Discourses arise, vehemently politicised and contentious, related to topics such as minorities' socioeconomic marginalisation, their societal inclusion, and to what extent they should have their own identity, culture, and values. In addition, while such debates are being carried out, the people who are at their core are present in society, and may follow, be affected by, and even participate in said debates. In this way, the discourse surrounding incorporation affects how it is carried out. At the same time, the very complexity and multifaceted nature of incorporation allows people with opposing views to frame their opinions as they choose. Whatever point one wishes to make, there will be some piece of data available to support it, even if it must be taken out of context in order to "work." This enables people to interpret reality in the way that best supports their own position, and, crucially, discredits that of their ideological opponents. This last point is pivotal. The emotionally charged, contentious nature of these discourses cause many to frame those that disagree with themselves as antagonists, partly shaping their own opinions and arguments in opposition to this "other." Often, this leads to both sides appearing to speak at cross-purposes, as close inspection will reveal that they are operating with completely different conceptions of their core term. However, this may be intentional, and they may have actively chosen a certain conceptualisation because it is the one that most suits their needs. For instance, we may imagine a discussion on incorporation, where it becomes clear that each interlocutor defines it differently. One party is speaking of socioeconomic convergence, the other of cultural adjustment. This is likely because each finds that it best serves their argument to frame incorporation in these disparate terms.

This chapter presents an example of such a discourse around socioeconomic and sociocultural incorporation (see Kadarik, 2019). The former measures incorporation by such metrics as employment, income, educational levels, homeownership

and so forth, which has the benefit of being clear and measurable. However, the latter aspect of incorporation, becoming a part of a new society in a social or cultural sense, is less clear. Indeed, there will typically be great disagreement as to what a nation's culture is, and thus what being a part of it actually means. While socioeconomic incorporation seems to be the official goal in Norway (Barstad & Molstad, 2020), politicians' statements centred on sociocultural issues are more visible. In this regard we find that societal discourse in a diverse country such as Norway becomes centred on what types and degrees of difference are acceptable, how much is it reasonable to expect migrants to adapt, and at what point integration can be said to be "complete."

This chapter explores these issues by asking how volunteer organisations conceptualise incorporation, and how this arises out of an oppositional dialogue with a hypothetical "other." The study is based on 20 interviews with organisations dealing with the integration and inclusion of Norwegian Muslims. Some of these organisations were religious, others secular, which we might expect to affect the understanding of the role religion plays in incorporation. It would also be expected that, as all participating organisations are run by and/or for minorities, these will find themselves ideologically at odds with the immigration- and diversity-sceptical government that was in power during data-collection. However, there was an unexpected disparity in the way religious and secular organisations conceptualised incorporation. These seemed ideologically compatible, but nevertheless imply different standards as to how incorporation should be gauged. This philosophical position on how Muslims should be incorporated was simpler and more straightforward among the religious organisations. It was geared towards the wish to retain a specifically Muslim identity, and also an apparent goal to position themselves in opposition to Islam-critical voices in the societal discourse. Such voices become discursive "others" in opposition to whom pro-diversity actors can frame their positions. The essence of this framing, which will be explored in this chapter, may be likened to Zenon's second paradox of motion, where Achilles is trying to overtake a tortoise. In Zenon's thought experiment, whenever Achilles closes the gap, the time taken has allowed the tortoise to advance, if only infinitesimally. This leaves Achilles eternally doomed to chase the tortoise, forever shortening the gap, but never quite catching up. Likewise, the discourses presented by the discursive other would perpetually extend the criteria needed to be considered part of a society, with the effect that Muslims could never become fully Norwegian.

Central Analytical Concepts

Incorporation

The first question that must be addressed is why use the term "incorporation" rather than "integration." The first reason for this is to avoid confusion, as there is no agreed-upon definition of integration. Indeed, various authors use the term very differently, with some using it narrowly to refer to a diversity management strategy with a pro-diversity outlook, often juxtaposed with assimilationism (Barstad &

Molstad, 2020). Others use it as an umbrella term encompassing all approaches as to how receiving societies should engage with migrants, and on what terms they and their descendants should be made part of society. This latter usage is quite close to how incorporation is used here, so why not simply use "integration" in this broader sense? This brings us to the second reason, which is that integration has become a politically and emotionally loaded term. Indeed, some of the participants took exception to its usage, arguing that it was used to otherise non-white Norwegians. When the term arose in the interviews, it elicited passionate statements such as "I was born in Norway. In what sense do I need to integrate?" With these issues in mind, we find that "incorporation" is preferable, avoiding much of the baggage that might follow other available terms.

"Incorporation" is thus used here in a wide sense, an umbrella term metaphorically referring to a process where a foreign object becomes a part of the body proper. The way in which it is used in this chapter refers to the degree to which minorities participate in a society alongside the majority in any number of ways, determined by how a given speaker delineates it (Enes et al., 2019). In this chapter, it refers to integration and inclusion of both migrants and their Norwegian descendants. On a wider level, incorporation deals with how the various members of Norwegian society conceptualise difference. How much difference is acceptable before the other becomes "the other"? From the various organisations interviewed for this study, we see that incorporation work can mean a great many things. The work of these organisations ranged from helping individuals with job applications to attempting to affect public discourse concerning minorities on a societal level.

Socioeconomic and Sociocultural

For the purposes of this chapter, we may broadly differentiate between socioeconomic and sociocultural incorporation, concepts that might be abstracted to incorporation in general. The socioeconomic side focuses on factors such as labour market participation, employment outcomes, income levels, and educational attainment (e.g. Bevelander & Veenman, 2006; Gollopeni & Haller, 2020). It seems uncontroversial that employment and movement towards socioeconomic parity is an important part of becoming incorporated into a new society (see Kahlenberg, 2006). We know that a great number of social problems arise from socioeconomic differences (Alstadsæter et al., 2020; Bartelink et al., 2020; Draine et al., 2002), and as such it seems reasonable that much hardship can be alleviated by minorities gaining similar educational, employment, and income levels as the majority population. Simultaneously, the sociocultural side delves into the processes through which migrants adapt to the cultural norms, values, and practices of the host society (e.g. Alba & Nee, 2003; Borsch et al., 2019). Although this is not explicitly stated, the way in which these topics are discussed often implies a linear process where the obligation for adaptation is solely on the minority (Spencer & Charsley, 2016).

Incorporation in Norway

Norway had traditionally not been an attractive destination for migrants, and large-scale labour migration only began in the 1970s, when the more desirable destinations began to restrict entry (Brochman, 2003). Initially, the workers who came in this era were assumed to be temporary (Brochman, 2003), which may explain the relatively liberal tack taken by the Norwegian government at this time. The first government white paper on migrant workers (St. Meld. 39, 1973–1974) covered both socioeconomic and sociocultural issues, noting that they should have the opportunity to retain linguistic and cultural distinctness, and also have the same rights and accesses as the majority population.

As labour migrants were, at this point, not considered permanent settlers, full socioeconomic parity was not emphasised. Nevertheless, there has been progress on that point, albeit slow and incremental. While the situation has improved, people with immigrant backgrounds on average have lower wages, lower levels of education (Bye, 2021), and lower levels of employment (Statistics Norway, 2021) and experience significant discrimination in the workplace (Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019). That being said, when invoking socioeconomic criteria, this must logically imply an endpoint to incorporation. Whether one views education levels, income or representation in political office as the relevant metric, it follows that once a minority reaches the required levels, they are, by definition, incorporated. In sociocultural terms, however, things are somewhat more complicated. The metrics for what sociocultural parity demands are highly subjective and disputed. Norwegian society in general seems to place privacy highly as a cultural value, and as such, most will regard what migrants do in their own homes as their own business (Gullestad, 1986). However, displays of difference that enter the public sphere elicit stronger responses. Issues such as whether it is acceptable to wave the flags of other countries on Constitution Day or whether police officers can wear hijabs or turbans while on duty have repeatedly been subjects of vehement debate, with right-wing political actors often taking a central position on the negative (Aslam, 2023; Forbord, 2019; Warberg-Knoll, 2013).

Assimilation versus Multiculturalism

The discourses as to what comprises sociocultural incorporation tend to align themselves along the metric of assimilation versus multiculturalism in terms of how much cultural idiosyncrasy a society "should" allow. Assimilationism has been the norm in many European societies. This was the idea that minorities should adopt the language, beliefs, customs, and so forth of the majority, often along with an ideology of "civilising" these minorities (Bø, 2011). Multiculturalism arose as a repudiation of assimilationism. While there are many conceptions of multiculturalism, the overarching commonalty is the principle that minority groups should be free to retain cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and/or religious identities distinct from those of the majority (e.g. Kymlicka & Wayland, 1996). In everyday parlance, these are sometimes referred to as the "melting pot" and the "salad bowl" models, but this is somewhat misleading. Both are philosophies in how to understand difference.

Multiculturalism is illustrated with the salad bowl. The ingredients are mixed together, yet each remains distinct, retaining its own properties, its own "identity." Multiculturalism sees difference as beneficial to society, or at least harmless, whereas assimilation sees it as threatening to national cohesion. Therefore, assimilationism intends that new elements that enter society should set aside their idiosyncrasies, instead adopting the properties of the majority. In this way, the melting pot is not an apt metaphor for assimilationism, as there is no intention that minority elements should merge with those of the majority. When mixing Norwegian and Pakistani, assimilationism does not call for a Norwegian–Pakistani alloy; it calls for the "Pakistaniness" to be burned away, so that the "Norwegianness" is all that remains. In this way, assimilationism demands that the substance of the minority should be transmuted into being homousian with that of the majority. In Norway, and indeed many other countries, this is especially clear when discussing Islam.

Is Islam Compatible with "Western" Values?

While Islam is Norway's largest minority religion, the most recent figures place it as only comprising between 2.8% and 4.7% of the population (Østby & Dalgård, 2017). However, Muslim immigrants and their descendants are given disproportionate space in political discourse. The Progress Party especially have capitalised on immigrant-critical rhetoric for political gain, where Islam is presented as irreconcilable with Norwegian values (Jupskås, 2016). In this narrative, the Muslim world is conceptualised as a monolith, in ideological opposition to an equally monolithic "West" (Scharbrodt, 2011). This is used to feed a construct of an antagonistic clash of civilisation versus barbarism, where the Muslim world is depicted as a threat (Tuastad, 2010), a proverbial enemy at the gates, or, more apropos, enemy within the gates (Bangstad & Darwish, 2023).

Multiple European countries display a particularly negative image of Islam and Muslims. Findings from France, Germany (Adida et al., 2016), and Holland (Maliepaard & Phalet, 2012) illustrate this, along with a widespread view that Islam is incompatible with European values, which would suggest a further belief that Muslims as a people are incompatible unless they set their religion aside. Such findings are mirrored in Norway, with greater scepticism towards those Muslims who are perceived as particularly religious (Brekke & Mohn, 2018; Brekke et al., 2020). As to whether Islam fits in with Norwegian values, only 6% answered that it was fully compatible, and 29% said that it was somewhat compatible, significantly lower than for any other religion (Brekke & Fladmoe, 2022). This would further suggest that, while Islam-critical policies are associated with the right wing, the belief that Islam is incompatible must statistically be prevalent also among those that vote for centre and left-wing parties.

Method

This chapter is based on 20 semi-structured interviews with leaders of organisations working with incorporation of Norwegian Muslims. The organisations that were invited to participate were selected so as to have a participant sample that

was diverse in different ways. For instance, the organisations vary in size, some being local branches of global NGOs, others being run by just a handful of people. They also vary in focus, some dealing only with Muslims, others with minorities in general. They also vary in religiosity, with some being Muslim organisations, others non-Muslim religious organisations, and some secular. The intention was also to capture different levels of operation, with some working at a local or municipal level, others at a national or international level. For the local level, two cities, Oslo and Drammen, were chosen due to their high proportion of Muslim inhabitants. Another way we intended the sample to be diverse was in terms of ethnicity, and we therefore recruited both majority- and minority-run organisations. However, COVID-restrictions limited the recruitment of the latter. As it was only possible to contact potential participants remotely, those minority-run organisations focusing on more established national groups were easier to reach, as they were far more likely to have websites with up-to-date contact information. This meant that minority participants were predominantly descendants of the migrant workers arriving in the 1970s.

The central disjunctures in this chapter are discernible in the differences in the answers given by religious congregations and the more secular organisations. Among the Muslim participants, we included a number of mosques as long as they, in addition to religious services, also carried out organised activities intended to promote the incorporation of their members, such as community outreach, Norwegian language classes, or Norwegian culture courses. As for the remaining participants, some also had religious connections, such as being church-run charities. However, this is not discernible in their actual day-to-day operations, which are indistinguishable from that of the wholly secular participants. Therefore, these 12 will for simplicity's sake be collectively referred to as secular organisations (Sec. Orgs.) Both the mosques and the Sec.Orgs. will also be differentiated by locus of operation, which were Oslo (O), Drammen (D), or national level (N).

The interviews focused on how the participants conceptualised incorporation, touching on subjects such as how they defined incorporation, as well as what they did to help their members or clients in this regard. Data collection was conducted in the latter half of 2021. Due to COVID restrictions, almost all interviews were conducted remotely. Most interviews lasted approximately one hour, with the shortest being 45 minutes, the longest 90 minutes.

Each interview began with a preliminary session where the interviewees were told about the project and could ask any questions they wanted. Data collection and data management was registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and was carried out in accordance with their ethical guidelines. All organisations are referred to pseudonymously, and care is taken to avoid information that might serve to identify them. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants.

Findings

Participants' Incorporation Work

Once the preliminaries were completed, each interview proper began with the participants being asked their conception of incorporation. This involved a clarification

on terminology. The interviewer explained that the study's usage of incorporation encompasses both integration and inclusion, and that the interviewee was free to use the term that they felt to be more suitable. While there was some variation in the details, nuances, and implications, on a surface level, all participants answered fairly similarly. All presented views that were generally positive to immigration and diversity, which was to be expected given the nature of the organisations. Most of the participants' reflections on incorporation aligned with a generally multicultural ideology, indicating that minorities should be free to retain linguistic, religious, or cultural identities distinct from those of the majority.

> "I think it means to include people into society so that they can function as an integrated part of society without having to relinquish their own cultural distinctness." *Sec.Org. O1*
>
>   "I suppose both of those, integration and inclusion, are kind of the same thing. It means to let people in, to let people participate in society on their own terms. . . . They can participate in Norwegian society, adapt to Norwegian culture, but still keep some of who they are." *Sec.Org. D1*
>
>   "We are living in a democracy, and as such, everyone has rights. If someone wants to speak Swahili to their children, or someone else wants to celebrate Divali, how is that anyone else's business? As long as they adhere to Norwegian laws and function in Norwegian Society, anything else should be up to them" *Sec.Org. N6*

These statements were broadly representative of the types of responses most Sec. Orgs. gave. On the general level, we see here a good deal of agreement between the participants. They all suggest that incorporation should be carried out in a diversity-friendly manner, and that minorities should be free to retain at least some cultural distinctness. Here, these organisations worked in very different ways, but a recurring focus was the need for social interaction.

> "In order to be a part of society, you need connections. You have to feel belonging, on an emotional level. We try to arrange social events with those that, maybe, feel they are a little on the outside, and being with other people who feel the same . . . I think it's good for them. They can choose their own level of involvement, you know? Maybe some just want to hang out once in a while, and others want to try to find friends. It's important to find a feeling of belonging. . . . We don't really think so much about where someone is from, what colour they are, their religion, or . . . you know. We just try to take the person as we find them. We try to connect people. If someone has somewhere to go, people to talk to, we think that the rest will kind of . . . you know . . . take care of itself." *Sec.Org. D1*

There were several Sec.Orgs. that worked with social inclusion on an individual level, and for these, this quote is highly representative. The implications of statements such as the one above seem to eschew traditional incorporation frameworks,

but the orientation around social inclusion and belonging seem more in line with a sociocultural understanding of integration. However, it might be said that these participants arrive at this perspective by adopting a somewhat colour-blind perspective, downplaying the importance of ethnicity, religion, and skin colour to inclusion (see Schütze, 2023; Schütze & Osanami Törngren, 2022). We can see this in the fact that, while these participants emphasised people's right to retain district identities if they wished, they also typically said things like,

> "We don't really care where someone is from or what they believe. We want to engage with the person as an individual." *Sec.org. D3*

In this way, while all Sec.Orgs. argue that people should be *free* to retain minority identities, many seem indifferent as to whether anyone *avails* themselves of this, or what these identities actually are. A commonality among the majority-run organisations was that they called for incorporation on an individual level, where religious or group identities was a personal matter. In this way, they are friendly to multiculturalism if this is what the individuals in question want, but at the same time, they seem somewhat indifferent to whether group-based identities are retained or not. Thus, for these participants, "pro-diversity" might be a better moniker.

The Religious' View of Incorporation

The participating mosques, on the other hand, did not conform to the trend outlined here. Firstly, a specifically Muslim identity was very much emphasised in these interviews. Phrases such as "participate in society *as a Muslim*" or "retain one's *Muslim* identity" was frequently dotted throughout the conversations with all the mosques. In addition, these participants diverged from the other organisations in the very way they conceptualised incorporation, placing far less emphasis on the feeling of social inclusion.

> "To be integrated, you need to follow society's rules, the laws, and you must participate. Get a job, be a good worker, be a good neighbour. Treat others with respect. Send your children to school, teach them to respect the laws. Some people are always saying 'that's not enough,' but how can that not be enough? To participate in society and to respect the rules." *Mosque D3*

"Some people" here refers to right-wing politicians and right-leaning members of the public, and the interviewee is responding to the view that Norwegian Muslims do not sufficiently take part in Norwegian society.

> "For me, integration means adapting to Norwegian laws and Norwegian norms, and that which is . . . but anything that crosses over to go against my religion, that becomes different. . . . For the Mosque, the definition of integration is simply to adapt to Norwegian laws and the society in which you

live . . . to follow the rules that at all times are laid down for us . . . for all of us . . . here in Norway." *Mosque O1*

The second of these statements touches briefly on religious identity. It should be no surprise that the mosques emphasise the importance of retaining a specifically Muslim identity. This was touched on by all the mosques, with this being a fairly typical representation.

> "I was born here, have lived here all my life, speak the language fluently . . . and I use the hijab. In this sense, I have adapted to society. I speak the language, I work, I pay my taxes, and so on. However, I should also be able to keep. . . . I should be able to say that I believe in one God, I believe in the Qur'an, I like to wear hijab." *Mosque O4*

These statements share the generally pro-diversity attitude of the Sec.Orgs. However, there are two important differences. Firstly, they show a markedly more concrete and practical view of incorporation than those of the other organisations. Secondly, where many of the Sec.Orgs. use an individualised approach where issues such as faith are to be kept private, the mosques emphasise incorporating specifically as Muslims. We also see the Sec.Orgs. favour "inclusion," and the mosques "integration," probably due to the vaguer, more social implications of the former. The main crux of the incorporation they present is getting a job, following the laws, and paying taxes. It is an understanding closer to the socioeconomic model, as it pertains to concrete, objective measures and downplays vague, subjective criteria such as "culture" or "values." Indeed, these participants were very much aware that some segments of Norwegian society use such metrics to exclude Muslims.

> "It may be that no one has a good definition (of integration). Some may define it as becoming the same. For these people, if I have different values from them, then it is bad integration, then I'm not integrated. Even if I have paid more taxes than maybe they have and contributed more than they have, this is not good enough for them." *Mosque O2*

"Them" in this regard again refers to right-wing voices, politicians, pundits, and the members of the public who take up their rhetoric. We see also see repeated this theme of concrete participation in society through employment and contribution to society through taxes. In this way, the mosques stress many of the same topics as the Sec.Orgs. do, but while there is a tendency for the latter to place more emphasis on feelings, there is a converse trend for the former to emphasise action, what their members actually do. This was framed in opposition to voices in society deriding Muslims for not adapting to Norwegian society, which is generally presented in terms of culture and values. The explanations given mainly revolve around people following laws, working, and being good neighbours. We also see a clear wish that their members should be incorporated *as Muslims*. There was a call from the mosques for a more group-oriented presentation, as opposed to the

individuality presented by the Sec.Orgs. Identity thus becomes more of a group project than individual, as well as being less private and more of a matter of public visibility.

The Spectre of the Discursive "Other"

We have seen in the previous section that the mosques and the Sec.Orgs. have similar ideologies of incorporation, but whose conceptualisation rests on different internal logics. In other respects, as we saw, they are more in tune. However, their statements illustrate that there is a third entity which needs to be considered: the constructed "other" that the participants argue their positions against. In order to understand the participants' view of incorporation, we must also understand that they seemed to be partly presenting their own views, partly arguing against those of others. In 2013, the reins of power in Norway were inherited by a right-wing coalition government, consisting of the Conservative Party, the Progress Party, the Christian Democrats, and Liberal Party. When conducting the present study, it was clear that many of the participants' answers were coloured by living in a country run by a government significantly to the right of themselves, and whose priorities were at odds with those of their own organisations. The Progress Party (FrP) was especially seen as problematic. It is the most right-wing of the major Norwegian political parties, well known for controversial and inflammatory statements, and had ascended to government for the first time as part of the populist wave in Europe (Bjerkem, 2016). Because of this, while the Conservative Party led the coalition, statements made by FrP members gained greater visibility and were presented by the participants as indicative of the government's position as a whole. At the time of data collection, FrP had withdrawn from the government, but their time in power still loomed large in the interviews.

> "As for integration, this term has, among many politicians and among the government that is now on its way out, been synonymous with assimilation. The idea that to integrate, they must be like us. And, in anthropological terms, I have always felt that integration is something else. Integration is that we have to give and take and find a common way." *Sec.org. N5*

We see here that an "other" is identified, that an explicitly assimilatory position is ascribed to them and that the participants' view is defined in opposition. This exact constellation of features appeared in more than half of the interviews. In more general terms, we see in all interviews a perception that there are people in key positions of power who harbour opinions that are concerningly hostile to diversity. Often, this was conveyed through reference to things that concrete people have said or done. In the first half of the interviews, the most commonly referred to was an infamous Facebook post by Sylvi Listhaug, now FrP party leader, but who at the time was the minister for immigration and integration. "*I believe that those who come to Norway must adjust to our society. Here, we drink alcohol, we eat pork, and we show our faces*" (Listhaug, 2016). While the

intent here is clearly to exclude Muslims, she also alienates Sikhs, Jews, and anyone who for any reason doesn't drink alcohol or eat pork. She presents a narrow understanding of what it meant to be Norwegian, which many of the participants brought up in the interviews in order to repudiate. Especially the Muslim participants were highly aware that the statement served to shut them out from the category of "Norwegian."

Halfway through data collection, a new incident occurred which replaced Listhaug's post as the participants' go-to example. A Progress Party MP had offered a 15-year-old girl 1000kr (about €90) to remove her hijab, so that he could "*see her beautiful hair*" (NTB, 2021). This elicited a great deal of ire from the participants, although, in fairness, it may be unreasonable to ascribe this stunt to FrP as a whole, as it was also criticised within the party (Jensen, 2021). However, it seems that this reaction was more due to the youth of the child, and the crassness of propositioning her in this way in front of her friends, because, if the general message is that the hijab, and by extension Islam, is unwelcome in Norway, this seems fully representative of the Progress Party rhetoric. In fact, it seems less exclusionary than the post by Sylvi Listhaug, which promoted an extremely narrow ideal of "Norwegianness" needed to belong to what Listhaug referred to as "our" society. Listhaug's post is also more indicative of FrP views towards diversity given her position at the time. While the participants don't phrase it in these terms, they also describe this "other" as emphasising cultural similarity, that is a sociocultural approach.

In this way, the participants did not merely formulate their own positions, but pushed back against the perceived positions of those in power. Some organisations were more direct than others.

> "Both integration and inclusion are the same thing, really. It means accepting the person as they are. Giving them room to be themselves. It's like, not being one of those that say 'we don't like you because you're brown' or 'we don't like you because you're Muslim.' Of course, they don't actually say that out loud. Out loud, they talk about Islam not fitting in with Norwegian values, or say something like 'people not raised with western values can't function in our culture and become a burden on our society.' They try to make it seem like they have concrete concerns, but it's usually a cover for not liking brown people." *Sec.org. D4*

From these and similar statements, we see a representation of the government's perceived position as being one motivated by racism and Islamophobia. There was some variation as to whether the participant in question saw this as a systemic issue, or one stemming from "bad apples," but all presented discrimination on the part of those in power as a palpable issue. Nearly all participants also noted that such discriminatory attitudes tended to be aimed at non-white people in general and Muslims in particular. Both from the participants' statements and from the examples they chose to represent assimilatory attitudes, it seems as though the perception is that Muslims are especially excluded as Islam is seen as incompatible with Norwegian culture.
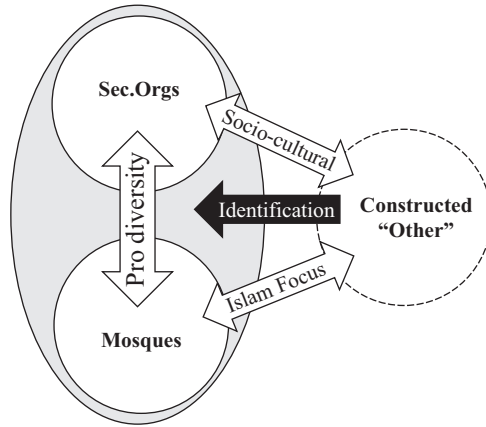
Figure 9.1 Relationship between entities

Three Discourses from Two Voices

From the above, we see three main analytical entities, two being participants of this study, the third, a constructed "other" acting as a dramatic foil to them both. The role of the foil is to define the protagonist by acting as a contrast, and here, the weight that most participants gave this "other" suggests that they are using this entity as a source of identification. Most participants gave rather vague accounts of what they themselves wanted but were much clearer about the assimilatory positions that they did not want.

If we accept this constructed other as its own analytical entity, we see that the three play off each other in interesting ways, each pair having one point of similarity (see Figure 9.1). In this study, only the mosques promote a practice-oriented, concrete view of incorporation. While we see that this is formed in opposition to right-wing discourse, it also differs from the other diversity-friendly participants. One way of making sense of this would be to see it in terms of the diverging self-interests of the different actors. As Muslim religious organisations that work closely with the everyday lives of their members, the mosques will naturally be hampered by the widespread perception that it is problematic to be both Muslim and Norwegian. Most Sec.Orgs avoid this issue by bracketing ethnic and religious belonging, but the mosques cannot do this. Due to their very nature, they need to frame incorporation in a way that allows their members to be both Norwegian and Muslim. In this way of seeing things, it becomes logical that it would be in the mosques' interest to frame incorporation in clear, objective, and observable ways.

However, we can see in this framing that both the constructed other and the mosques emphasise the Muslim category of these minorities, although they do this for different reasons. As Islamic, religious institutions, the mosques have a powerful vested interest in their members retaining a group identity and a Muslim identity. The "other" is also perceived to wish for this, but so as to make Islam a

fulcrum around which to orient dissent, and to use the group identity so that an attack against one hits all. In this way, both emphasise the centrality of a Muslim identity, although one does so from a pro-diversity position, whereas the other has a diversity-hostile position. The pro-diversity position is one that the mosques share with the Sec.Orgs.

The Sec.Orgs. share with the "other" an emphasis on sociocultural measures of incorporation, although here too, the former is approaching the issue from a pro-diversity standpoint, the latter from a diversity-hostile position. Here, the Sec. Orgs. do vary quite a bit, but those of them that deal with people in their everyday lives mostly focus on their social belonging and inclusion. Here, the goal of the sociocultural focus is to set aside any potential differences, and to make the individual feel part of a community. For the perceived other, the goal is very different, as they use the sociocultural view of incorporation as a way to define "Norwegianness" in a way that excludes Muslim minorities. The very subjective and ephemeral nature of these measures would allow the goalposts to be eternally moved in a way to exclude any non-white person. In the case of Muslims, the majority of the Norwegian population agrees that Islam is incompatible with Norwegian society (Brekke & Fladmoe, 2022). Such attitudes likely have entered into a dialectical relationship with the political rhetoric we have seen, as there is an intense antagonism to Islam among the more visible political voices, which likely both influences and feeds off casual Islamophobia in the general public (Alghamdi, 2015; Jupskås, 2016). Thus, this perspective leaves Norwegian Muslims in the position of Achilles forever trying to catch up to a perpetually advancing tortoise. By contrast, the mosques' framing of incorporation circumvents this paradox. By eschewing "values" or "culture" in favour of Norwegian laws, adaptation suddenly becomes very clear; if one does not break the clearly defined laws, then one has incorporated. The same might be said of societal participation. If one is gainfully employed, pays taxes, and does not make trouble for one's neighbours, one contributes to Norwegian society.

Conclusion

It may be unavoidable that any position within the field of migration and diversity becomes couched in societal discourses, and thus framed in an adversarial manner. Possibly, it might further be the case that the partisan bifurcation of politics feeds into the perceptions of the participants in such ways that their arguments must always be shaped in interlocution with an imagined other. In this case, the implied arguments of the participants, especially the Muslim participants, seemed to be modelled as repudiations of right-wing strawmen. This is not to say that these figures were figments of the participants' imagination, as the attitudes that may be inferred from the participant statements seem fully supported by the real-world actions and statements of the political actors in question. In this instance, we see that the discourses to which the Muslim participants are responding are ones that would eternally seek to exclude them from the category of Norwegianness. In fact, they would go so far as to make Islam antithetical to Norwegian values, drawing

on a centuries-old perceived civilisational opposition to suggest that practicing Islam would automatically exclude one from a Norwegian identity. The cynical elegance of such a framing is that it allows those on the anti-diversity side of the debate to appeal to emotions and deeply rooted prejudices, enabling them to make arguments that seem powerful without actually tying them down to meaning anything at all. This feeds the need of these voices in societal discourse to never allow minority cultural expressions to become a valid part of what it might mean to be Norwegian. The non-Muslim organisations participating in this study, through their colour-blind approach, sidestep this issue. While there seems little doubt that they mean well and seek to support minorities' access to insider status, by bracketing ethnicity and religion, they are by implication claiming neutrality in the debate of how to frame Norwegianness, a debate in which declining to take a position may play into the hands of diversity-critical voices. This is not a criticism, as these organisations exist in the same politicised landscape, work with a variety of groups, and it may not be in their interest to risk alienating other marginalised people by throwing their support wholly behind one group. Mosques, on the other hand, would necessarily face a somewhat different equation. Not only the extreme populist fringes, but mainstream opinion, places them in a position where "Norwegianness" is unattainable. From this starting point, there are only two options: either to change themselves or to reframe the discussion. As we have seen, this is done through a socioeconomic argument, building on objective criteria whose realisation may objectively be observed. Thus, be redirecting incorporation from questions of culture or values, these organisations find a way for their members to retain their Muslim identities, and yet become incorporated with, and find belonging in, Norwegian society.

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