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## Caring Multiculturalism

### Local Immigrant Policies and Narratives of Integration in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna

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# **CARING MULTICULTURALISM**



# Caring Multiculturalism

Local Immigrant Policies and Narratives of  
Integration in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna

*Sarah Scuzzarello*



LUNDS UNIVERSITET

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*A Dani e Paul per le risate e gli abbracci*



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Lund and London, April 2010

Sarah Scuzzarello

# Introduction

Today Western European states are under challenge, not least of which is that posed by immigration (Joppke 1996). Increased migration flows and the settlement of migrants have brought far-reaching changes in the receiving societies. As a result, Western Europe has a large migrant population most of whom live in a situation of relative socioeconomic deprivation. Culturally and politically, some of these minorities struggle against racial discrimination and in response call for change, including the recognition of cultural and religious differences in various policy areas, such as education.

During the 1990s, policy and academic debates have focused on multicultural solutions to the challenges to the nation-states. Inspired by some debates in Canada and the USA (see e.g. Young 1990; Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 1995), European multiculturalists have sought to guarantee equal rights and recognition for ethnically, culturally and religiously defined groups. Arguing that the privileging of the majority could not be normatively justified, authors such as Bhikhu Parekh (2000) has called for the introduction of measures to help minority groups preserve their language, culture and religion and to fight disadvantages they may suffer because of their identity. Some countries have translated this into concrete policy measures which have guaranteed migrants a range of cultural rights and privileges. For instance, Sweden has provided mother-tongue education for children with migrant backgrounds; the Netherlands and Britain fund confessional schools on a fully equal basis with state schools; Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Britain provide public funding for broadcasting media catering to minorities.

These policy and public debates have not gone unchallenged, however. After initial enthusiasm, Christian Joppke (1996; 1999; 2001), Giovanni Sartori (2000) and Brian Barry (2002), among others, have advocated the promotion of individual rather than group rights. These critics suggest that multiculturalism tends to advocate particularistic and primordial cultural identities. Such focus on culture and cultural differences legitimises the self-separation of some groups (Joppke 1996; Sartori 2000). Multiculturalism seems to have lost much of its resonance also in political practices. Studies have demonstrated a “retreat” of multiculturalism in Europe and its replacement by policies of civic integration (Joppke 2004). By way of example, several countries that have traditionally been labelled “multicultural” (e.g. Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands) have



introduced citizenship rituals, while others have made language and national culture tests a precondition for naturalisation (e.g. Britain, Denmark).

The perception that multiculturalism has failed to meet its goal of creating a multicultural citizenship where groups would not be oppressed because of their diversity has been exacerbated by the terrorist attacks conducted by Islamic fundamentalists characterising the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Contrary to the aims of multiculturalism, migration and diversity are increasingly presented as a danger to the public order and a threat to European society. Drawing upon critical security studies, Waever et al. (1993) point at how migration has become the new focus of insecurity (see also Huysmans 1995; 2000; Kinnvall 2004; Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2010)<sup>1</sup>. Some critics have also shown that migrants living in countries that have embraced the politics of multiculturalism tend to perform worse in socioeconomic domains (Koopmans 2010).

## 1.1 Theoretical aim and research question

This dissertation aims to contribute to the debate on multiculturalism in Western Europe. In my perspective, the two main aims of multiculturalism, i.e. the “recognition of group difference in the public sphere” (Modood 2007, 2) and the quest for “the terms of a shared citizenship and national identity” (Modood 2007, 2), stand in tension with each other. Recognition aims at re-valuing particular group identities vis-à-vis the majority society. Thus conceived, recognition leaves unquestioned the contested contents of these identities, most notably culture and religion. Consequently, the promotion of differences hinders the fulfilment of multiculturalism’s second aim, i.e. the establishment of a common identity. In fact, if we are to introduce remedies which aim to revalue particular cultural and religious differences, the common identity one is left with will be nothing more than the sum of its individual parts, i.e. the cultures which inhabits it.

In my view, the tension between recognition of differences and seeking substantive cohesiveness at national level makes multiculturalism not fully able to meet the challenges it has faced in the past decade. The quest for recognition of cultural groups’ essential differences fixes the standpoints of the groups in question (e.g. the majority society and migrant minorities). It rigidifies, if not polarises, the interactions which could instead foster new common

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<sup>1</sup> For a critique and a development of this approach see Boswell (2007).

identifications. Finally, multicultural recognition risks maintaining unequal relations between and within groups. I maintain that there are two significant obstacles embedded in multicultural theory which can substantiate my claim. These are (1) a static conceptualisation of culture, identity and group formation, and (2) the tendency to suggest abstract and de-contextualised remedies for recognition.

I argue that the debates on multiculturalism would benefit from an explicit transformative theoretical framework. Fraser suggests that a transformative approach to politics is one which “correct[s] inequitable outcomes [...] by restructuring the underlying generative framework” (1997, 23). A transformative theory changes “the underlying cultural-valuational structure” (1997, 24). It proposes remedies which would destabilize existing group identities and differentiations and change both the majority society’s and the minority groups’ sense of self. A transformative theory of multiculturalism aims therefore to introduce change, i.e. transformation, in an individual’s or a group’s sense of self and in the societal structures which might contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities. The approach to multiculturalism which I advocate, also calls for an understanding of social inquiry which is attentive to the institutional and narrative context in which the politics of multiculturalism are implemented. It is particularly important to adopt a contextually thick approach to multiculturalism if researchers wish to understand if and how change in societal structures and in shared narratives about a group can be introduced.

Following this, the theoretical aim of this dissertation is to develop a transformative theory of multiculturalism which I label “caring multiculturalism”. The correlated research question is: *How can caring multiculturalism help us address diversity in such a way that it can expose unequal power relations as well as change psychological orientations, attitudes and feelings towards the “other”?* This approach addresses the possibilities to achieve a changed psychological and moral orientation towards the group which is classified as alien, stranger and, because of that, is often devalued. Furthermore, caring multiculturalism deals with how the practices of multiculturalism could be developed in such a way that they do not reproduce static conceptions of belonging and it attempts to address the inequities of power within and between groups.

Caring multiculturalism is anchored in three bodies of literature: feminist understandings and critiques of multiculturalism (e.g. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Brah 1996; Okin 1998; 1999; 2000; 2002; Narayan and Harding eds. 2000; Shachar 2001; Phillips 2007), caring ethics (e.g. Tronto 1993; Sevenhuijsen

1998; Robinson 1999; White 2001; Williams 2002; Hankivsky 2004; Held 2006) and a narrative and relational understanding of identity formation which draws from social psychology (in particular Harré and van Langenhove 1991; 1999; McNamee and Gergen 1999; Gergen 1999b; 2001; Bar-Tal 2000a; Raggatt 2000; 2006; 2007; Hermans 2001; Staub 2003; 2006; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007).

Feminist perspectives have been crucial in highlighting the gendered impacts of much of the existing theories and practices of multiculturalism. They ask whether or not the recognition of difference or demand for equal “group” treatment would have a disadvantageous effect on less powerful individuals within a group, in particular women. In my view, these perspectives tend to favour an analysis of the practical consequences of gender-neutral multicultural theory at the expenses of the scrutiny of the theoretical and normative implications of feminist theory in the realm of multiculturalism. I find the recent developments of caring ethics<sup>2</sup> to be particularly useful in this context.

An ethics of care’s central focus is to meet the needs of others and it questions the universalistic understanding of morality put forward by liberal theory (Held 2006). Tronto (1993, 103) argues that care is not only a practice (i.e. taking care of someone). It is also an ethics with a specific set of values (attentiveness; responsibility; competence; and responsiveness) that should inform social and political life. I find caring ethics relevant for the development of a new approach to multiculturalism particularly for its perspective on public values. Drawing from caring ethics’ normative underpinnings we can reformulate how particular needs expressed by different groups can be met in a context-attentive way. An ethics of care informs a viewpoint on citizenship based on deliberation and active participation in the public sphere. According to Sevenhuijsen (1998) an individual’s identity as a member of a particular community should spring from what we do, since participation in the public sphere provides the opportunity to developing other kinds of connectedness and other forms of identifications. The values of care ultimately provide the

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<sup>2</sup> Olena Hankivsky (2004) distinguishes between the first and the second generations of care ethicists. The earliest articulations of care were based on the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and have been criticised for importing a feminine ethics based mainly on the dynamics of mother-child relations into the realm of the public sphere and into issues of justice and lack thereof. The second generation of care ethicists follows instead the endeavours of Joan Tronto (1993) who has attempted to bridge the separation between care and justice and to develop a feminist ethics of care. This study draws upon the latter body of work.

framework for reaching judgements which are attentive to difference and concrete contexts (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 14-15).

We need to understand the psychological and structural dynamics that make people feel a sense of attachment to and identify with a community if we want to foster new forms of identification. Caring ethics does not provide clear theoretical tools in this respect. Social psychology, instead, brings crucial insights to the field of multiculturalism because it allows us to specify the emotional and cognitive processes for the categorisation and identification processes which are essential to human beings (e.g. Tajfel 1982; Lakoff 1987)<sup>3</sup>. In particular, the literature I draw upon provides an understanding of identity which (1) acknowledges the role of narratives<sup>4</sup> in creating an individual's and a group's sense of self (McNamee and Gergen 1999; Gergen 1999a; 1999b; 2001; Bar-Tal 2000a; Staub 2003; 2006), and (2) conceives of the self as constituted by multiple narrated positions<sup>5</sup> (Harré and van Langenhove 1991; 1999; Raggatt 2000; 2006; 2007; Hermans 2001; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). Stories<sup>6</sup> about a group or an individual, narrated in first or third person, contribute to shaping a sense of identity that links a reconstructed past with an imagined future in order to give the present an appearance of unity and purpose. Narratives also contribute to the emergence of positions, i.e. an account that is given about a person's place in the order of things and that impinges on the possibility of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action (Harré and van

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the psychological perspectives on groups and group formations such as Social Identification Theory and its derivative Social Categorization Theory (e.g. Tajfel 1978; 1982; Turner 1989) are troublesome as they tend to overlook the socio-political context within which groups are formed (Reicher and Hopkins 2001) and treat identity as something more ascribed than acquired (Huddy 2001).

<sup>4</sup> I conceive of narratives as stories people tell in order to make sense of the world and of their position in it. A more detailed discussion of narrative is provided later in this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> In this study I take "position" to mean an account that is given about a person's place in the order of things and that impinges on the possibility of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action (cf. Harré and van Langenhove 1999; Anthias 2002). Positioning is the narrative process which leads to the definition of certain positions in a specific context. Given the processual and relational ontology which informs this study, it is important to stress that positions are conceived of as crystallisations of the narrative process of positioning, not essential outcomes of that process. As we will see later, positions can however be perceived as essential by social actors and be imbued with political significance and deployed to legitimate action.

<sup>6</sup> I use "narrative" and "story" interchangeably.

Langenhove 1999). As these narratives change in the course of time, an individual's or a group's sense of self is affected accordingly. This understanding of identity is important for a transformative theory of multiculturalism because it underscores the dynamic character of identity formation.

The original theoretical contribution of this thesis to the body of work on multiculturalism is to integrate these strands of literature, i.e. feminist understandings and critiques of multiculturalism, caring ethics and social psychology. In this sense, this dissertation's develops a novel approach to multiculturalism which focuses on the socio-political and cognitive dynamics of group formation and which seeks to find ways to achieve transformation. I suggest that caring multiculturalism relies normatively on an ethics of care as it demands *attentiveness* to the context in which social relations are played out. This entails paying attention to how power is mediated through class, ethnicity, gender and other social relations. It also requires *responsiveness*, i.e. the ability to perceive others in their own term, and *responsibility* in appreciating the actual outcomes of policies on people's lives in collaboration with the beneficiaries of these policies (Williams 2010). I argue for the importance of dialogue between allegedly antagonistic groups with the scope of establishing new shared identifications. I maintain that one possible shared identity tied to the local community, i.e. the city or the area where an individual lives. To foster this and similar forms of identification I acknowledge the importance of active participation not only in political processes (e.g. elections) but also in the small-scale activities that might take place at the neighbourhood level (e.g. voluntary activities) and in the private sphere (e.g. child-rising). Caring multiculturalism's practical measures are attentive to the relations of power that tend to silence the experiences and needs of some individuals. They therefore put particular emphasis on the dynamics of power embedded in expressing a group's needs and claims, what is called "voice" in the literature on caring ethics. Caring multiculturalism does not provide a set of practices for multiculturalism that are universally applicable, however. The development of a theoretical framework must be contextualised in an empirical project. It is only by examining and understanding the institutional and narrative setting operating in a specific context that we can see if aspects of caring multiculturalism can be applied in real contexts. This leads me to the dissertation's empirical aims and research questions.

## 1.2 Empirical aim and research questions

Some authors have provided explanations for societal change by referring to the sets of opportunities and constraints facing collective actors in the political environment for mobilizing challenges on the prevailing order (see especially, McAdam 1982; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1989; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995). This body of work is known as the “political opportunity structure” approach. The concept of the “political opportunity structure” has been widely used in social movement literature to describe “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action” (Tarrow 1998, 76-77). I argue that the political opportunity structures operating in a context are not only important for understanding the mobilisation of actors in that particular environment. They are also important for understanding the extent to which change in particular policy areas, such as immigrant policies, can be introduced. Therefore, any attempt to develop an analytic framework which advocates cognitive and social transformation must be accompanied by an empirical project which examines the political opportunities and constraints unique to the context in which they are embedded and which might offer favourable access or negative stimuli to the application of caring multiculturalism<sup>7</sup>. Following this, the *dissertation’s empirical aim is to understand which institutional opportunities and policy narratives in three local contexts (Malmö in Sweden; Birmingham in Britain; and Bologna in Italy) are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism*. The empirical research provides further insights for developing this theoretical framework. This thesis focuses mainly on the role of the state as an actor. The state, operating at national and local levels, is the actor which holds most power and influence in shaping the sets of institutional *and* narrative opportunities that are available for all types of actors, in their attempts to influence the inclusion of migrants.

In the context of the dissertation, I emphasise aspects of the political opportunities which are relevant to immigrant policies<sup>8</sup> and which define the relations between the local state and migrant groups. The chosen time-span is

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<sup>7</sup> In this thesis I adopt a political opportunity structure approach as an analytical tool and I do not aim to develop this field of work.

<sup>8</sup> I follow Thomas Hammar’s (1985) distinction between immigration regulation, i.e. the regulation of the in- and out-flows of people in one country, and immigrant policy. The latter refers to the conditions provided to resident immigrants and it comprises all issues that influence the conditions of immigrants, such as housing, education, etc.

between 1997 and 2007. The role of local politics in shaping practices of multiculturalism should not be overstated, however. While it is true that within a broad national pattern there is substantial scope for variation at the local level, the variations between local approaches to immigrant policies are limited by particular national frameworks (Koopmans 2004). The nature of a country's political system shapes the opportunities a municipality has to develop its "own" approach to migrants' integration. A country's immigration and citizenship regulations as well as its approach to immigrant policies are also important in the context of multiculturalism. Therefore, in the thesis the analysis of the three local contexts is preceded by a discussion of Sweden's, Britain's and Italy's general political context, immigration and citizenship regulations, and immigrant policies (chapter 5).

Political opportunities consist of an institutional<sup>9</sup> side and of a discursive side (Koopmans 2004, 451; McAdam et al. 1996; Koopmans and Statham 1999; 2000; Ferree et al. 2002). In the thesis I focus on the everyday level of communicative interaction in policies, what I call policy narratives, and not on macro-discourses concerned with the large structuring themes that shape and organize society. To be sure the narratives employed to communicate in the everyday world draw on the vocabularies of the macro-discursive level, as I explain in detail in the following sections. But here I examine the micro-narrative form as a discursive practice expressed in policies. In fact, narratives play an important role not only in popular culture, but also in politics and public policymaking. As Fisher explains "when we examine communication in the everyday realm of politics and policymaking, we find people largely explaining things by telling stories" (2009, 192).

The focus of the thesis is on the formal mechanisms of migrants' political participation (institutional side); the narratives of integration of migrants (narrative side); and the narrative constructions of migrant (narrative side). The dissertation sets to answer the following empirical questions.

1. *How is the issue of voice (understood as political participation) addressed by the public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?*

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<sup>9</sup> I define institutions as formal rules and standard operating practices around a defined purpose that are accompanied by rewards for conformity and penalties for deviations and that structure the relationships between individuals and the polity (March and Olsen 1984; Hall and Taylor 1996).

2. *How is the issue of integration defined in the immigrant policies and programmes at the local levels of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?*
3. *How are migrants conceived of by public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?*

The first question looks at the political participation mechanisms provided by each municipality. The question aims to identify and examine the institutional opportunities that the local government provides to migrants for potentially having influence and voicing their needs. Voice is understood here as a political issue connected to the beneficiaries' power to affect decision-making. Some voices are louder than others and gain visibility because they resonate with the *status quo*. Other people may not be in the position of power. Their voice is therefore often not listened to (Gilligan 1982; White 2000; Williams 2002). In Western Europe at the national level, one extreme is represented by Italy which denies non-European migrants voting rights. At the other extreme we find Sweden and Britain where the naturalisation rates are relatively high and where migrants are guaranteed extensive political rights. The answer to this question sheds light on which opportunities are provided to migrants to participate in the recipient society's political life. It clarifies if migrants are formally conceived of as full-fledged members of the city they live in. This is important in the context of a transformative theory of multiculturalism as one might expect that migrants' participation in public debates, together with a political orientation towards the country of residence rather than the homeland and a proactive stance for rights and participation, are indicators of a strong identification of migrants with the politics of the country or city of residence (Koopmans 2004, 453).

Narratives are one of the most widespread and powerful forms of discourse in human communication (Patterson and Monroe 1998, 316). They relate to the normative orders expressed in discourses. Therefore, the study of narratives sheds light on what is valued in a society, who is considered its legitimate member and the thresholds to become such. Certain specific modes of narrating a society, its values and its members, can be employed as instruments not only for the maintenance of the *status quo* but also for the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of society itself (Lincoln 1989, 3). The second and third empirical research questions examine the narrative dimension of each case's political opportunity. The second question compares the ways that the three case-study municipalities have defined the issue of migrant integration. I do not evaluate single policies. Instead I single out how the local state conceives of migrants' integration. To identify which narrative constructions of migrants' integration are more significant in each context enables me to see if what is



valued in that context is compatible with the normative underpinnings of caring multiculturalism.

Finally, the third question examines the narratives that the local states have developed to construct migrants in relation to the majority society. In this thesis I am therefore interested not only in what the narratives of a policy issue might tell us about what is valued in a context. I am also interested in how migrants are placed by the local state within the normative order of its polity. The analysis of these narratives provides an understanding of how migrants' collective identity is constructed in relation to the majority society. Migrants can be identified as "lesser-than" the implicit norm of what makes a good citizen or they can be defined as individuals who are members of the city's polity and should participate in the political process. Whether the integrated migrant is defined in exclusionary or integrative terms affects the level of identification of migrants with the recipient society as well as the opportunities for introducing shared identities which might tie together different groups.

The thesis' empirical aim calls for a comparative analysis<sup>10</sup>. The careful comparison of the institutional and narrative opportunities which are relevant to immigrant policies can explain which political setting holds more potential for adopting caring multiculturalism. In contrast to single case studies, comparative analysis provides a richer repertoire of political opportunities in which some tenets of caring multiculturalism could be adopted. By reference to cross-national and cross-municipal differences in the formal structures of political power and in the normative underpinnings that inform policy-making, I am able to account for the degree of significance of caring multiculturalism in each case. As the comparison covers a relatively wide time-span (1997-2007), I am also able to detect changes in the features of the political system which might create new narratives of belonging.

### 1.3 Why keep studying multiculturalism?

What is the added value of another study in the field of multiculturalism if there seems to be "a wholesale *retreat* from multiculturalism in Europe" (Joppke 2004, 244)? Should we not use other concepts and analytical tools to address unequal power relations in society, such as tolerance or justice (e.g. Sartori 2000; Barry 2001; Joppke 2004)? My position is that multiculturalism as a theory and as a

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<sup>10</sup> I present the methodological approach adopted in this thesis in chapter 4.

policy approach is still meaningful if it is reformulated to address some shortcomings. Given the increased flow of people across the globe, it is crucial to present an approach to multiculturalism that not only tries to accommodate differences and respect rights, but also takes the dynamics of identity construction seriously. We need to move away from asking how different static groups can coexist. Instead, we need to try to understand which actions should be promoted to foster a collective identity which goes beyond ethnic, religious, or cultural divides. If we are to avoid the development of ethnic/religious pockets in Western European cities we need to develop a multiculturalism away from a static and mutually exclusive understanding of groups or communities.

To study the policies of multiculturalism is interesting from an empirical perspective as well. Giovanna Zincone (2006a) says that to analyse the means a welfare system adopts to deal with migrants' immigration and integration helps in understanding the welfare system's distinctive traits. Immigration, putting the policy system under pressure, works as a "reagent" stressing the system's characteristics and caveats. At the same time, however, immigration and integration can be conceived of as "agents" of change. They provide a window of opportunity for normative change at policy and societal levels as they force the welfare system to adapt to the needs of migrants. In this context, immigrant policies are an interesting object of enquiry as they potentially could change, or at least affect, the narratives that express what is valued in a society and, ultimately, the sense of collectivity that defines a community. Local administrations provide an interesting testing-ground for studying this potential normative transformation. Indeed, the city is the place where integration actually takes place, where people meet, encounter and interact and where fears are spelt out.

## **1.4 Relational ontology**

How can we develop a transformative theory of multiculturalism? Part of the answer lies in turning to another type of ontology than the one which, in my perspective, has been adopted by several multicultural theorists. As I show in chapter 2, multicultural scholars rely on a substantialistic ontology which takes the outcomes of social processes as the main unit of analysis. In this section, I present the main tenets of substantialist ontology. I then discuss the ontological premise on which this thesis builds. This approach, labelled "relational ontology", is usually juxtaposed to substantialism and it emphasises the importance of a contextualised analysis of societal processes. In particular, I look

at the implications of relational ontology for our understanding of identity formation and for morality.

A substantialist perspective takes as its point of departure that clearly defined entities or substances are the primary units of analysis. The endeavour of a substantialist approach goes to identify elements of action and understanding their interactions (Emirbayer 1997, 283-286). In many ways substantialism is embraced by several multicultural theorists. Their work focuses on the relations between established, at times pre-given, ethnic or cultural groups, and not on how the relations between these groups affect their meaning in a specific spatial and temporal context (see also Somers 1994, 608). For instance, Will Kymlicka defines an ethnic group as “an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history” (1995, 18). Even authors who advocate a more critical understanding of groups tend to formulate a theory of multiculturalism which is underpinned by the assumption that what need to be addressed are social relations between externally bounded pre-established groups. The work of Ayelet Shachar is a case in point here. In advocating for a more gender sensitive understanding of multicultural accommodation, she uses the term “*nomoi* communities” to refer to religiously defined groups or people that “share an unique history and collective memory, a distinct culture, a set of social norms, customs and traditions” (2001, 2). They have “a comprehensive worldview that extends to creating a law for the community” (2001, 2) and they have “normatively and legally justifiable interests in shaping the rules that govern behavior” (2001, 17). Similarly to Kymlicka’s ethnic group, Shachar’s *nomoi* groups are relatively solid entities. Action takes place among the entities/groups themselves and no inquiry is made about the relations of time, space and power in which people find themselves in and which are constantly in flux.

Emirbayer (1997) demonstrates how substantialism privileges an individualistic view of morality. According to this perspective, principles of justice are arrived at from a position of impartiality and autonomy. Those who are to establish the principles of what is just should be detached from the socio-political and moral context in which they live<sup>11</sup>. This abstract, universalistic and individualistic account has consequences for how we understand morality and commitment to others. Julie A. White argues that the understandings of justice

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<sup>11</sup> Rawls’ seminal work on justice (1971) expresses this trust on individualistic ontology very clearly.

and morality informed by substantialism and individual ontology “make[s] it possible to argue that our particular attachments to others are contingent relationships with the self rather than constitutive of the self” (2000, 50). The self is therefore conceived of as existing prior to relationships with others and with the context in which it is located. An individualistic ontology does not provide any reasons for why one should pay heed to others’ interpretations of what is good and right. In other words an individualistic ontology can too easily slip into egoism. It is undeniable that, from a substantialistic perspective, relationships do exist. They are understood as means to achieve further independency and autonomy, however (Robinson 1999, 39; Scuzzarello 2009).

Relational ontology differs from substantialism. Margaret Somers describes relational ontology as an understanding of reality which “takes the basic units of social analysis to be neither individual entities (agent, actor, person, firm) or structural wholes (society, order, social structure) but *the relational process of interaction between and among identities*” (1998, 766-767. Emphasis added). It is an approach which conceives of these entities as “embedded in time and constituted – not merely engaged – in relationships” (1998, 766). Similarly, Emirbayer argues that:

[T]he very terms of or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction. The latter, seen as a dynamic, unfolding process, becomes the primary unit of analysis rather than the constituent elements themselves. (1997, 287)

Relational ontology thus “reject[s] the notion that one can posit discrete, pre-given units such as the individual or society as ultimate starting points of sociological analysis” (Emirbayer 1997, 287). Rather, such units are conceptualised as ontologically related to each other, i.e. they derive their meaning in their relations to other entities and to the context in which they are embedded. In this context, relational theorists speak of “network”, envisioning the objects of their study as embedded in a network of relationships and connected to each other by virtue of sharing certain characteristics (Somers 1995a; 1995b).

To adopt a relational ontology has important implications for how we understand the processes of identity formation. A relational understanding of the self entails that people develop a sense of who they are because there are others who recognize and confirm their individual characteristics (Somers 1994; Robinson 2006b, 13). Individuals do not remain fixed and unchanged throughout their interaction with others, but rather derive their identity from the dynamic

processes that are human relations. Similarly, a relational perspective does not conceive of groups as discrete and externally bounded entities that interact with each other and which constitute social life. Rather, it sees groups as political expressions of crystallised narratives which are invoked to call a group into being (Brubaker 2002). Relational ontology provides the means to reconceptualise the self and the other in a non-antagonistic way and it opens up for an understanding of the processes of identity formation that can serve as generative sources of change.

Relational ontology conceives of human existence in the context of social and personal relations. Morality is grounded in those relations (Robinson 1999, 39; 2006a, 222; 2008). A relational ontology entails an understanding of ethics which is not abstracted and detached from the sociopolitical life one is studying, but rather intrinsically related to and embedded in it. Robinson (2006a) argues that this approach is in line with feminist ethics and caring ethics in particular, in that it calls for a situated, practical and interpersonal ethics. In moving away from a universalistic understanding of ethics, a relational ontology is contextually thick and calls for an inquiry focused on the everyday lives and the sociopolitical context in which a particular phenomenon, in this thesis multiculturalism, is carried out.

To sum up, the advantage of a relational ontology lies in the fact that it rejects a static understanding of identity and groups. It allows us to develop a theory of multiculturalism that does not start from pre-existing groups but is rather concerned with the processes and relations that have made specific groups, categories and values more important than others in a specific context. This, in turn, allows us to examine the moral, cognitive, emotional, political, and discursive boundaries that are created to exclude certain people from a community. Furthermore, because relational ontology also calls for a contextually thick understanding of morality, it informs a view of social sciences as deeply embedded in the social world which they analyse. It departs from an understanding of social sciences as able to provide universal explanations of social relations, distinct from politics and social life in general. Theories of multiculturalism developed on the basis of ad-hoc illustrations and unstructured empirical analysis (e.g. Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007) are what analysts need to move away from if they want their work to have any (limited) impact on policymaking.

## 1.5 Conceptual clarifications: discourses and narratives

In this section I discuss the concepts of discourse and narrative. I elaborate a working definition of the concepts and discuss the relation between them. There are several ways of defining discourse in social sciences. Despite these variations, Frank Fisher (2003, 73-75) identifies a number of features which characterise it. Discourse is historically specific and has an ontological dimension, i.e. it contributes to shaping the identities of actors and objects. It is more than a sheer speech-act. It can be imagined as a network of sentences (spoken or written) “that produces meaning larger than that contained in the sentences examined independently” (Fisher 2003, 74). In this sense a discourse is a system of meanings which represent specific constellations of power. They express the normative ideas about a legitimate political order. Hajer summarises these characteristics in a useful definition.

Discourse here is defined as a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities. (1995, 44)

As such, the societal beliefs in a society, i.e. the organising frameworks of knowledge concerning the main features of a society and its sense of uniqueness to its members (Bar-Tal 2002a), can be understood as a discourse in the same way as culture can be. These discourses are “produced, reproduced, and transformed” through practices such as rituals (e.g. celebrating particular days such as Christmas or singing the national anthem), myths (i.e. forms of language generated from imagined experiences but which provide the basis for social identification), symbols (e.g. the crucifix), or narratives – a discursive practice I return to.

Fisher, drawing from Foucault’s ([1972] 2002) understanding of discourse as constitutive, argues that discourses organise the actors’ understanding of reality, including the basic organising principles of social action such as feudalism or patriarchy (2003, 37-40; 75). This has implications for how power is distributed and exercised in society. The practices that constitute, sustain and reproduce discourses support relations of power between groups and between individuals. For instance, the policy officer who establishes *a priori* the needs of migrants living in the area in which s/he works is exercising

power because s/he reproduces pre-existing conceptions of what is accepted as knowledge (hers/his and not the beneficiaries') and what is valued in that social context.

Discourses are durable, but by no means permanent. Fairclough (1992, 96-99) argues that discursive change takes place through actors problematising conventions on the basis of certain contradictions. For example, actors can problematise the conventions of interaction between women and men because of the contradictions between traditional gender relations into which many may be socialised, and new gender relations. When actors are confronted by these problematisations they can try to solve them by means of transgression, crossing boundaries, formation of counter-narratives etc. This can produce change in the order of discourses but it can also create new meanings and new identities, i.e. "it may alter cognitive patterns and create new cognitions" (Hajer 1995, 59). Not everyone has the same power to solve problematisations, however. Nor do problematisations come from nowhere. A discourse has to stop fulfilling a particular function for a group of people who has enough power (size, material resources), for them to begin problematising it (Bar-Tal 2002a, 69). Groups that hold a different view from the majority society may also be able to put forward claims which could change the order of discourse in a particular context. The "mobilization potential"<sup>12</sup> (Klandermans and Oegema 1987) of some groups is dependent on its degree of closure (i.e. the degree of separation from other groups and the degree of internal integration); on the salience and non-institutionalisation<sup>13</sup> of the issue the group is mobilising for and therefore on the capability to create consensus around that issue; on people's motivation to participate; and on the resources to overcome the barriers put in place to prevent change (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Kriesi et al. 1995, 5-10).

## **Narratives**

If discourses can be found at the macro-level of social analysis, narratives are discursive practices and operate at the meso- and micro-levels of social relations. At the most basic level, narratives are story-lines employed to communicate in

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<sup>12</sup> Klandermans and Oegema define a "mobilization potential" as "the people in a society who could be mobilized by a social movement. It consists of those who take a positive stand toward a particular social movement" (1987, 519).

<sup>13</sup> Its institutionalisation implies that an issue becomes regulated by established procedures and that the group involved is integrated into the political network.

the everyday world. They have an ontological dimension because it is through narratives “that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives [...] that we constitute our social identity” (Somers 1994, 606. See also Barthes 1968; McAdams 1985; Gergen and Gergen 1983; 1988; Polkinghorne 1987; Patterson and Monroe 1998; Fisher 2003; Tilly 2004). A narrative is characterised by a structure with a beginning, a middle and an end. Following Somers (1995a; 1995b) I propose that narratives are made of concepts<sup>14</sup> which are ontologically interrelated to each other and to which people refer in order to find a certain level of legitimacy for the story they are telling an audience. Narratives are a joint social production and as such they are interrelated to each other and to the spatial-temporal context in which they are expressed. In line with relational ontology, narrated stories cannot be analysed as isolated phenomena. They are ongoing processes with dynamic rather than static ties, and we can only understand them if they are placed in the social and historical context in which they unfold. In this sense narratives which share the same conceptual framework are related to each other in a narrative network (Somers 1995a, 135). An important implication of the idea of narrative networks is that it entails a move away from thinking of narratives as independent from each other, to regarding them as ontologically related to one another. This means that the single narrative ascribes its meaning only in terms of its ‘place’ in relation to other narratives in the web (Somers 1995a, 136). Narratives, contrary to chronicles, explain rather than just list events and they weave into a plot these events or series of events – or “emplot” them – in a way which is said to require the occurrence of a subsequent event (Gergen and Gergen 1988; Fisher 2003). This is called causal emplotment (Somers 1994, 616). What may be included within an acceptable range of causal forms is contextual. Indeed, in narrating a story, a selective process of appropriation and omission of certain elements is constantly present. This selectiveness of memories and of forgetting allows different stories to be told. Since narratives are processual, there is a constant revision of the stories allowing their reformulations (Patterson and Monroe 1998,

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<sup>14</sup> Naturally the same concept can be used in different narratives, its signification sometimes changing. For instance the concept of “marriage” can be used in a network of concepts which refers to e.g. property and inheritance rights, thus constructing a legalistic narrative. The same concept can however also be part of a network of concepts which refers to belonging, kin responsibility etc. and as such it is part of a socio-cultural narrative.



322; Whitebrook 2001, 38-39). I find Margaret Somers' definition of narrative useful to sum up what I have just discussed.

Narratives are *constellations of relationships* (connected parts) embedded in *time* and *space*, constituted by *causal emplotment* [...] the chief characteristic of narrative is that it renders understanding only by connecting (however unstable) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices. (1994, 616)

Not all narratives gain visibility and resonance. The process of narration always entails a selective process of appropriation and omission of certain elements, but also of "fitting in" in some discourses. In the wording of Quentin Skinner

[T]he problem facing an agent who wishes to legitimate what he is doing at the same time as gaining what he wants cannot simply be the instrumental problem of tailoring his normative language in order to fit his projects. *It must in part be the problem of tailoring his projects in order to fit the available normative language.* (2005 [1978], xiii. Emphasis added)

Narratives can therefore gain visibility and resonate with its audience (e.g. collective actors; the electorate) only if they can manage to achieve legitimacy. This means that they need to resonate with collective ideas about what makes that particular group unique. Which narrative achieves legitimacy and can claim authority and truthfulness, is therefore ultimately a question of power by means of selectivity, coherence, rationality, negotiation and validity (Gergen and Gergen 1988; Somers 1994). Why and which narratives achieve a certain status is an empirical question rather than a presuppositional one. Because they relate to norms expressed in discourses, narratives are interesting objects of analysis if we are interested in understanding the values, beliefs and preferences legitimating different ways of life. As Patterson and Monroe put it:

[I]nsofar as narratives affect our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behavior. (1998, 315-316)

Following Tronto (1993), I conceive of these modes of narrating as expressions of a society's normalised understandings of which values are honoured, and of the conceptions of a good society and of a good citizen. Let me illustrate this point by reference to the work of Molly Andrews (2007). She shows that the events of 9/11 triggered a frenetic patriotism among Americans and the duty to

avenge the deaths of the attacks was perceived by many as “a moral imperative” (2007, 106). Other voices criticising the Bush administration’s approach to the “war on terrorism” were effectively silenced through pieces of legislation such as the USA Patriot Act. Here the dominant narrative became one of patriotism and celebration of American life (which can be seen as a dominant discourse in this context), every form of dissent was read as unpatriotic. Narratives depicting the “good” American versus the “evil” terrorist/Islamist played a role in gearing Americans’ political behaviour towards increased patriotism. Also the protagonists of the narratives of 9/11 were well-defined according to gendered and racialised signifiers. This means that the main characters of these narratives were carefully selected by, among others, institutions. Shepherd (2006) shows that the heroes of this narrative were “decent ordinary citizens” and that they were exclusively male and white. This ignored the efforts done by women or non-white communities in rescuing the victims of the attacks.

The fact that narratives are constrained by the socio-historical and cultural context in which they are deployed does not mean that there is no space for agency. Narrative, in fact, “requires agency” (Monroe and Kredie 1997, 26). People have a position, a place, in a story and they internalise, process and interpret the information that is provided by and to them through narratives. We can witness agency when positioning is accepted, rejected, or improved upon by the individuals engaged in the elaboration of a narrative. The very selectivity of memories and of forgetting allows for different stories to be told and old stories to be challenged. The introduction of new or different narratives about a group and its collective identity can contribute to the overcoming of antagonistic group relations in contemporary, diverse western societies. This means embracing the enabling and transformative potential of narratives.

## **1.6 Limitations of this study**

Caring multiculturalism focuses on the role of institutions and narratives in providing the means to foster new forms of identification. In this thesis I have decided to focus on the institutional and narrative boundaries created by the local state which may facilitate or impede the development of new shared narratives of belonging. The reason for this is because we need to understand the institutional and narrative framework into which people have migrated before we can assess the actual possibilities of psychological change. I have not met the target groups of the immigrant policies adopted by the local government to discuss their

experiences in order to assess if there is any real opening for the development of new, shared identities.

I limit the institutions studied here mainly to the state represented by the local municipalities of Birmingham, Malmö and Bologna. The comparison does not concern the actors working in the third sector despite the fact that they play an important role in bringing people with different background together and in facilitating the introduction of migrants into the recipient society. The main reason for focusing on local government is motivated by the greater power they have in comparison to other non-institutional actors.

Finally, this study focuses only on the politics of integration of migrants and therefore the issues related to national minorities and indigenous groups fall outside the purview of this study. I use the concept of migrant as a general category including migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. One may object to this choice on the basis that the three categories of migrants are subject to different national and international legislation. However, as the narratives about integration deployed in my three empirical cases and the stories representing migrants do not usually discern between migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, I have decided to use this general category<sup>15</sup>.

## **1.7 Outline of the study**

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 critically reviews the literature on multiculturalism in Western Europe and North America. I focus on two particular aspects of the debate. First, I discuss how several authors have conceptualised identity and culture and how they understand the processes of group formation. Second, I present how scholars of multiculturalism address the practices and politics of multiculturalism. In both instances, I demonstrate the limitations of these approaches using relational ontology and feminist epistemology. Chapter 3 answers the thesis' theoretical research question, that is: how can caring multiculturalism help us address diversity in such a way that it can expose unequal power relations as well as change psychological orientations, attitudes and feelings towards the "other"? I present two theoretical underpinnings of caring multiculturalism, caring ethics and relational and dialogical understandings of individual and collective identity formations. I then outline the main characteristics of caring multiculturalism. I focus on how

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<sup>15</sup> The case of Birmingham is an exception here. See chapter 8.

cognitive and social transformation could be achieved according to this theoretical and normative framework.

Chapter 4 to 8 make up the empirical part of the dissertation. Chapter 4 presents the analytical framework and methodology adopted for the empirical analysis as well as a rationale for studying the cases of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna. It develops a methodology of feminist comparative narrative analysis which allows for a systematic comparison across my cases and which enables me to understand which institutional opportunities and policy narratives in Malmö; Birmingham; and Bologna are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. Chapter 5 provides an historical and institutional overview of the policy developments in Sweden, Britain and Italy. National policy approach, immigration regulation, immigrant policies and citizenship legislation are presented for each national context. Chapters 6 to 8 deal with the dissertation's three empirical questions. Chapter 6 studies the mechanisms of political participation provided by each City Council comparatively. Chapter 7 analyses the narratives of integration in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna comparatively. Chapter 8 critically examines the narrative constructions of migrants by public actors in each city. Caring multiculturalism is used as a lens to analyse the narratives and policies adopted by the municipalities. The similarities and differences between my three cases are highlighted in each chapter. The concluding chapter, chapter 9, summarises the findings and draws attention to the key contributions of the dissertation by evaluating caring multiculturalism in the light of the empirical analysis.

## 2 Theories of multiculturalism – a critical assessment

Multicultural theory has generally two aims: recognizing groups' cultural differences and developing a common identity between communities living in the same territory (Kukathas 1992; Raz 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007). In this chapter I argue that, given the theoretical and ontological underpinnings that inform multicultural theory, the two aims mentioned stand in conflict with each other and make multicultural theory incapable of promoting cognitive and social transformation, the main underpinning of caring multiculturalism. The reason for this, I argue, is that multicultural advocates want to foster a common identity which can encapsulate culturally diverse groups, at the same time as they emphasise the essential differences between these groups. The recognition of such differences should be accompanied by the introduction of special group rights for e.g. immigrants. As Kenneth Gergen (1999a, 4-5) points out, however, to make claims for the rights of a particular group "typically implies the existence of an essential entity - a group unified by its distinctive features. The group name is treated as referential - derived from characteristics existing in nature, independent of the name itself". One important consequence of adopting a definition of a group by its distinctive features is that multiculturalism, while it wants to change the relations of power which lead to the devaluation of minority groups, also reinstates the very boundaries which are maintained by these power relations.

In this chapter I review the body of work on multiculturalism to demonstrate why multicultural theory, as it stands, is not able to promote a transformative approach to multiculturalism. First, I show how multiculturalism's conceptualisations of culture, identity and group formation are static and what consequences these understandings have for introducing cognitive change. Second, I illustrate the tendency among multicultural scholars to suggest abstract and de-contextualised remedies for recognition. In particular, I look at the conditions posed to groups to be eligible for group rights; the relations between the state and minority groups; the protections multiculturalism provides to oppressed members of illiberal groups; and the issues of cohesiveness and solidarity in a multicultural society. The review contributes to this thesis since it shows the lacunae that a transformative understanding of multiculturalism, i.e. caring multiculturalism, will have to fill. Throughout, I

offer alternative analytical tools which rely on relational ontology and feminist epistemology. These perspectives have transformative implications. Relational ontology informs a more dynamic conceptualisation of culture and identity which allow us to explore the processes of differentiation and the contexts in which identity significations emerge relationally. Feminism challenges deeply-embedded gender roles, and long-standing assumptions about the role of social policy within which policies of multiculturalism are usually implemented.

## **2.1 Culture, identity and group formation**

Culture is not a structure, but a dynamic, flowing process – constructed by actors dialogically and dialectically (Haste and Abrahms 2008). Several multicultural scholars subscribe to such constructivist perspective (e.g. Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007). However, in their work, multiculturalists often tend to equate culture with a more-or-less explicit, internally homogeneous, and externally distinctive entity. Much of their work relies on the assumption that culture is an entity which can be examined as a clearly defined unit of analysis. One consequence of this conception of culture as an entity is that it gives a static account of cultural difference. Rather than looking at what actors do with culture, multicultural theorists tend to interpret discourses and practices about a culture as non-varying, characteristics, and group properties. This view on culture affects how multicultural scholars conceive of identity, inter-group dynamics, and, not least, how they envisage change in a diverse society. In this section I flesh out how “culture” has been conceptualised in multicultural theory and which role it supposedly plays in this view of the formation of identity. I then address what implications this definition of culture has for understanding the dynamics of group formation.

### ***Culture, its meaning and functions***

Despite the fact that many scholars of multiculturalism claim to embrace a constructivist understanding of social relations, they tend to take discrete groups as basic constituents of social life and as units of social analysis. This follows a substantialistic approach. For instance, culture is conceptualised as being an outcome of “an *active* process of creating meaning” (Parekh 2000, 153. Emphasis added). However, for the most part, the literature on multiculturalism defines culture as a system of meaning which is characterised by certain stability, formal structures and longevity. In *Rethinking multiculturalism* (2000), Parekh

defines culture as a “historically created system of meaning and significance [...] in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives” (2000, 143). Some authors assume that cultures are based on a national or ethnic descent. Most notably, Will Kymlicka conceptualises culture in a way that is synonymous with nation, that is “an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history” (1995, 18)<sup>1</sup>. As Seyla Benhabib argues, this conceptualisation of culture is underpinned by faulty epistemological premises in which cultures are delineated as wholes and coterminous with a population (2002, 60).

Dhamoon (2006, 355) argues that the boundedness of culture is integral to Kymlicka’s ability to categorise groups into national and polyethnic minorities<sup>2</sup>. I maintain that the substantialist definition of culture is not only important to multiculturalists for categorising groups. It is also fundamental to legitimise the ontological role of culture as a system of meaning which shapes people’s worldviews and values. Thus, Kymlicka maintains that culture “provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres” (1995, 76). Similarly, Joseph Raz argues that culture has three vital functions for human beings (1994, 162-163). First, culture structures its members’ moral world, giving meaning to their activities and relationships. It equips human beings with the means to make intelligent choices thus providing the necessary basis of their freedom and autonomy. Second, culture has a fundamental function in helping individuals to make sense of their selves as it gives them a sense of rootedness and a focus of identification, thus defining their identity. Third, culture favours certain bonds to be generated and certain relationships to be established.

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<sup>1</sup> Kymlicka developed his theory on multiculturalism in a Canadian context in which national minority groups (e.g. indigenous people and the Québécois) were making substantial claims for independence. His work, as well as Charles Taylor’s, should therefore be seen in the light of these political events.

<sup>2</sup> Kymlicka draws a sharp distinction between national minorities, immigrants and refugees and argues that the cultural claims of those groups have different moral weights (1995, 95-101; 167-170). Immigrants do not constitute a “nation”, i.e. “a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture” (1995, 11) and have the right to appeal only to polyethnic rights and to special representation rights.

As we have seen in chapter 1, a substantialistic analysis begins with self-subsistent entities which come “pre-formed” and only then that is considered the dynamic flows in which they are involved (Emirbayer 1997, 283). Substantialists reduce “processes to static conditions” (Elias [1970] 1978, 112). They assume that stability is the normal condition of human life and that change is a disruption of a normal state of equilibrium. For multicultural scholars, cultures are stable as they are “intergenerational” and “more or less institutionally complete” (Kymlicka 1995, 18). They have “a life of their own” (Raz 1994, 163) and therefore the social dynamics relevant to multiculturalism are the ones that take place between entities, not in them. Hence, they overlook how culture is constructed politically to achieve power and cognitively to make sense of one’s position in a particular context (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Brubaker 2002; 2004; Brubaker et al. 2004. See also Phillips 2007, 19-20).

### ***Cultural change***

Multiculturalists argue that change within a culture can still be achieved through interaction with other groups, even if “the ties to one’s culture are normally too strong to give up” (Kymlicka 1995, 87). Members of several cultural communities should interact with each other, “read each other’s books”, “watch their films” and “enjoy their cuisine” (Parekh 2000, 155). This interaction will “hover” some group members’ “cultural horizon” (Parekh 2000, 155). These new practices will not become practices of their collective culture, however, “partly because culture is shared with other members of their community who might not be influenced by them, and partly because their influence might not extend to reshaping the system of beliefs and practices of those who are” (Parekh 2000, 155). According to Parekh, these practical influences may constitute an “unincorporated alien resource” and stay inert for a long time until one resumes them and “activate them to reshape their culture” (2000, 155). Thus understood, intergroup interaction does not aim primarily at developing new solidarities between people. Rather, it wants to provide better knowledge of other cultures independently of one’s own principles and according to the system of beliefs of the other cultures engaged in the dialogue. This process, which Taylor (1994) calls “fusion of horizons”, will enable people to evaluate the content of that culture and perhaps even bring some elements of that culture into one’s own (Parekh 2000, 176-178). Thus, while a functioning multicultural society presupposes dialogue and a broadly shared culture to sustain it (Parekh 2000, 219), the coming into being of a new culture seems to be down to the rational



agency of the members of different cultural communities. Furthermore, cultural change seems to be mainly an internal matter.

### ***Culture and identity***

Multiculturalists forcefully argue for the plurality of identities (e.g. Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007), but their view on identity and group formation does not entirely reflect this. Multiculturalism in fact assumes that culture serves as the “primary foci of identification” (Margalit and Raz 1990, 447), as culture and membership to a specific cultural group “affects how others perceive and respond to us, which in turn shapes our self-identity” (Kymlicka 1995, 89). Hence, cultural identity provides an “anchor for [people’s] self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging” (Margalit and Raz 1990, 447). Multiculturalism is not able to explain why sharing a territory, a language and a history is more important than sharing the same sexual orientation, gender, or life experiences, however (Shachar 2001; Benhabib 2002).

Charles Taylor’s understanding of identity is a case in point. Taylor’s defence of multiculturalism is underpinned by a conception of the self as defined by its relation to the moral framework that defines the good life (Taylor 1989). He claims that traditional philosophy overlooks the social contingency of identity as it understands identity as an inwardly generated process (Taylor 1994, 31-32). Against this, he maintains that individuals are interrelated to each other and embedded in “webs of interlocation”<sup>3</sup> (Taylor 1989, 36), thus adopting a relational approach. Human identity achieves fullness only in interaction with the world and with “significant others”. Here Taylor follows George Herbert Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism<sup>4</sup> (1934) and argues that we “always define our identity in dialogue with, and at time in struggle against, the things our

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<sup>3</sup> In *Sources of the self* Taylor argues: “I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding – and, of course, these classes may overlap. A self exists only within what I call ‘web of interlocation’” (1989, 36).

<sup>4</sup> The symbolic interactionist perspective sees meaning as always being constructed through interactions with other people. Once agreed on, meaning becomes part of our social reality. The meanings we attach to ourselves, people and objects are negotiated over time. In this interpretation, symbols and language are pivotal for giving meaning and value to the objects and people around us.

significant others want to see in us” (Taylor 1994, 33)<sup>5</sup>. The relational character of group formation is however “lost in translation” from the individual level to the collective one. The claim that identities are shaped in a continuous dialogue with others implies that it is difficult to establish a clear core of that identity, let alone its boundaries. Rather, cultural and social forms of identification would seem to be as fundamentally dialogical and relational as subjective identities are. Following this, it seems reasonable to argue that nominally different social groups, once able to interact, would continue to develop their identities together and in relation to each other via the same processes that are, for Taylor, pivotal for recognition. Collective identification would therefore be highly contingent and subject to constant revision and change, and new forms of identification would be able to develop. This, however, is not the conclusion reached by Taylor. Instead he posits culture as a given that can be identified independently of actors. Thus, those cultures that

have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings [...] over a long period of time – that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable – are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject. (Taylor 1994, 66-67)

Culture becomes the primary factor which shapes one’s identity. This conception of culture flattens out the contradictory lived experiences and interpretations of culture. It underestimates the ways in which people’s sense of the self is formed through narratives about gender, sexuality, class, age, disability, etc. and that those identifiers may mean more to people than culture.

The uni-dimensional understanding of identity has been much criticised by feminists. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1994) emphasises that if one identity is constructed as more important than others, then intra-group differences are conflated or ignored (see also among others Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Narayan and Harding (eds.) 2000). A person’s identity is instead constructed at the intersection of different social positions, the relevance of which changes across time and space. Dhamoon (2006, 357) points out that even when multiculturalists try to engage with a multiple understanding of identity, they

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<sup>5</sup> Taylor departs from Mead in that he, to a much larger extent, takes into account the constitutive role of language in the definition of the self and relations (Taylor 1989, 525 n.12).

have to conceptualise identity in an additive way, i.e. as a multilayered entity made of singular, uni-dimensional and distinct categories. Thus Parekh, for example, presents the case of an unmarried female lawyer who sees herself, and is seen by her colleagues and customers, primarily as a lawyer rather than a woman. “Being a lawyer is an identity for her, but not being a woman” (2008, 18), Parekh writes. Things can however change and she might fall in love with a man and beginning to enjoy being a woman, wishing to become a mother and giving her life a new orientation. “She is now a different individual, seeing the world and relating to it in a very different way” (2008, 18). If social identities, among which Parekh counts gender and profession, are plural and contextual, how can she then become a “different individual”? I would rather argue that her identity is constituted through a network of narratives and that she (as is the case for anybody) emphasises different aspects of her identity depending on the context. Motherhood does not necessarily entail wiping out one’s professional identity.

### ***Culture and group formation***

Multiculturalism maintains that culture is the main factor that triggers group formation. Culture provides meaningful options and a sense of identity which people strongly value (Kymlicka 1995). Parekh claims that group formation on the basis of culture is more important than other identity signifiers since it gives its members a sense of rootedness, existential stability and a way of understanding the world (Parekh 2000, 162). Similarly, Raz maintains that people’s sense of dignity is related to their sense of themselves as members of certain cultures (1998, 200). Culture becomes then an all-inclusive way of life that unites people across generation and across space.

This understanding of cultural groups signals a belief that cultural groups are relatively harmonious. This is particularly evident in Taylor’s work. As Benhabib points out, his world is one where intra-group conflicts are invisible and his politics of recognition “seem to presuppose a seamless web of interlocations through which individuals are held together” (2002, 57). Other authors acknowledge the tensions within groups to a larger extent. Margalit and Raz (1990, 443-444), for instance, recognise the wish of some members of the group to acquire a new culture because they may be oppressed by the culture they presume to be theirs. To leave one’s group is however a “slow and painful process” (Margalit and Raz 1990, 444) and therefore seldom embarked upon. The implicit assumption of relative intra-group harmony is paralleled to an

antagonistic understanding of inter-group relations. Raz maintains that inter-group “[t]ension is an inevitable concomitant of accepting the truth of value pluralism” (1994, 165). In Parekh’s work we find a similar assumption of antagonism between groups when he discusses the principles of intercultural dialogue (2000, 268-273). Intercultural dialogue, which is understood as the best way to develop a multicultural society, is conceived of as a way of settling disputes between the majority society and minority communities. It proceeds in three stages. The minority first defends the practice in question in terms of its cultural authority; then its community-sustaining role; and thirdly by looking for moral similarities in the majority society’s culture. If none of the three stages of intercultural dialogue is successful, “incomprehension, intransigence, irreconcilable differences” (Parekh 2000, 272) will arise. In the case of irresolvable, urgent matters “the operative public values of the wider society should prevail” (Parekh 2000, 272)<sup>6</sup>.

In my reading, Parekh’s intercultural dialogue is based on an oppositional rhetoric where the minority has to defend cultural practices which are deemed offensive to the majority society’s public values. The way in which it proceeds builds upon antagonisms between the parts where one part disapproves of the other’s practices, constructs the other as an object of contempt and in this way alienates him/her. This reflects once more the tendency to adopt a substantialistic perspective whereby groups are interpreted as autonomous, internally organised, self-sustaining “systems” (Emirbayer 1997, 294). Obviously the group, not the

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<sup>6</sup> Parekh’s argument makes a peculiar theoretical loop here. He devotes the first half of *Rethinking Multiculturalism* demonstrating the fallacies of liberalism in dealing with group claims. However, he concludes his argument by claiming that in case of conflicts between the majority society and the minority communities, “the operative public values of the wider society should prevail” (2000, 272-273). In practice, this means that in Western societies liberal public values and liberal rationality should trump rival ideals and values in case of dispute – a position at odds with his claim that liberals tend to absolutise liberalism by making it the central frame of reference (2000, 110). He rightly points out that Raz and Kymlicka do not provide a strong argument for why illiberal national and ethnic minorities should be internally liberal. However, his argument in favour of the majority society’s operative public values is not more convincing. While the majority society’s values are necessarily the normative framework from which one can evaluate disputed practices, I cannot see how a cohesive diverse society could be fostered if one follows Parekh’s line of argumentation. The preservation of the majority’s way of life and the lack of knowledge of how things are done in the recipient society are in fact two of the reasons why the operative public values of the majority are to succeed over the minority’s (2000, 273).

single individual, is at the centre of their concerns. But, as they conflate individual identity with group identity, they also conflate individuals' and group's interests and rights. As stressed by Gergen (1999a, 7):

[T]he discourse of individuality is not thereby disrupted. Rather the group is treated much in the same way discursively as the individual: imbued with good and evil intent, held blameworthy, deemed worthy of rights, and so on. [...] [W]e thus inherit the problems of individualism yet once again [...]. Rather than a society of isolated and alienated individuals [...] we have a battlefield of antagonistic groups.

In order to subvert traditional binaries and to challenge antagonism between groups, we need to take seriously the implications of a theory which emphasises the multiple, discontinuous and relational character of the self. To assume that culture is the essential factor with which we identify and to focus only on culture as the main justification for the politics of diversity limit the possibilities to explore other constructions of identity. To acknowledge the permeability of group boundaries and the narrative character of identity and culture opens up "possibilities for specifying other kinds of connectedness, other idiom of identification, other styles of self-understanding, other ways of reckoning social location" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 32). In other words, it opens up possibilities for a transformative theory of multiculturalism. Transformative remedies entail the deconstruction of a society's normative structure and the destabilization of existing antagonistic group identities. These remedies would involve the transformation of social patterns of representation in ways that would change everyone's social identity (Fraser 1997; Benhabib 2002; Robinson 2006a). Some of these will be presented in greater detail in chapter 3.

Multiculturalism is not able to account for what actors do with social categories such as "culture" because culture is conceptualised through substantialistic ontology (Brubaker 2002). Multiculturalism thus overlooks the *everyday politics* of collective identity, i.e. the use of socially significant categories in the public sphere in order to establish a sense of belonging among some individuals. People may gather around narratives linking past, present and future in a coherent story and describing allegedly shared characteristics (Andrews 2007). They may derive a sense of stability and security from them, especially in times of socio-political and psychological distress (Kinnvall 2004; 2006). People may also want to live according to beliefs and values that are not necessarily the same as those of the majority society. This cohesiveness is, however, by no means constant or definitionally present. It is rather the

expression of “groupness” (Brubaker 2002, 168), a variable and contingent process of group formation which may *at times* trigger intense cohesion and solidarity.

From a relational perspective, culture is conceptualised as an intersubjective and public bundle of “communication, relations, or transactions” (Emirbayer 1997, 300). Culture should be understood in relation to other concepts and modalities of meaning (Somers 1995a, 136). This means that the narratives of culture, ethnicity or religion derive their meaning from a socio-political context. They are always created in a web of relations with other constructed groups and individuals. A processual and relational understanding of culture maintains that “[h]uman beings do not create unitary societies but a diversity of intersecting networks of social interaction” (Mann in Emirbayer 1997, 295). A relational understanding of culture and groups thus departs from the assumption that society and groups are social entities which possess a core and a stable collective will. Instead, it emphasises that there are diverse interpretations of ethno-racial identifiers and that they are always mediated at the interface of other categories of identification such as age, marital status, sexuality, class etc. To embrace a processual and relational ontology does not mean that we can ignore the discriminatory ways in which some cultural, gender, and ethnic categories are used. Rather it means that we need to analyse how certain categories of identification are used in different contexts by the state and by ethnic/religious/cultural entrepreneurs. It means to understand how changes in social conditions affect the use and even the content of these categories. It means, in other words, to analyse human agency in its relation with the context in which it operates. For this reason, this study engages with an empirical analysis of the existing practices of immigrant policies.

A consequence of multicultural theories’ substantialistic ontology is that they tend to affirm the specificity of groups and support their differentiation as a means to correct inequitable social relations. While this may be relevant in certain instances, it is not necessarily the only way to proceed. Firstly, this approach overlooks that identity and culture are analytic variables that need to be studied. Second it ignores that they are embedded in a societal network and mediated through social and political institutions and practices (Brubaker 2002). A theory of multiculturalism which does not take in consideration the specificities of a given political environment is limited in its potential to critically examine and possibly transform the practices of multiculturalism adopted in that context. Multiculturalism runs the risk of presenting an

oversimplified perspective on social relations and of providing abstract, albeit appealing, solutions to multicultural accommodation.

## **2.2 The politics of multiculturalism**

Multicultural theory tends to be highly de-contextualised. A key problem with a de-contextualized conceptualization of multiculturalism is that researchers impose their own analytical framework and thus neglect participants' own constructions of the meanings to their interaction. In the following I unpack some of the problematic consequences that arise from taking such a stance. In particular, I look at the conditions multiculturalists think minorities should fulfil in order to be entitled to group rights. I also examine how they justify that a state should not intervene in a group's internal dynamics. Finally, I discuss to what extent a liberal state should tolerate illiberal groups and I highlight how multicultural theories address power inequities within groups. In particular, I look at the right to exit one's cultural group.

### ***Group rights – conditions posed***

Multicultural scholars argue that liberalism is shaped by an intrinsically Western European historical and cultural context. As such, it cannot claim to be universal in scope (Young 1990; Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; Modood 2007). The liberal state unavoidably promotes certain cultural identities and values. It thereby disadvantages other minority cultures. As cultural minorities do not have the same power to influence institutions as the majority society, their culture runs a higher risk of dying out in the case of national minorities (Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 1995), or of withering away as in the case of migrant groups (Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007). In order to enable minorities to preserve their cultural distinctiveness and to combat disadvantages they suffer on the basis of their cultural or religious identity, the state, according to multicultural theory, should guarantee them particular rights.

According to multicultural scholars, there are conditions that a group has to meet in order to be eligible for group rights. A community should not repress their members; it cannot be intolerant of other out-group members; it should guarantee the right of exiting one's community; and it should provide all its members with adequate opportunities for self-expression (Raz 1998, 199; Parekh 2000, 217-218; 262-263). In addition to these conditions, Parekh lists a number of characteristics that a group has to meet if it wants to enjoy group rights. A

cultural collectivity should be significant to its members; they need to express the wish to preserve it; the group's existence should be perceived as threatened or oppressed; and its diversity has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the wider society (2000, 217-218; 262-263). Margalit and Raz make a similar list to which they add the condition that a group should not be too small or it would jeopardize the anonymity of its members (1990, 443-447).

The issue of democratic group representation is seldom mentioned by multicultural scholars. Parekh touches swiftly the issue when he claims that a collectivity merits group rights if its decision-making process is broadly accepted by its members (2000, 218). The question of who has the power to define a group's traditions and needs and who has the legitimacy to become an interlocutor with the state is, in my opinion, crucial to the possibility of challenging the dynamics of power in a group. As Brubaker notes (2002, 166), cultural entrepreneurs<sup>7</sup> invoke groups and thereby seek to evoke them, to call them into being. They provide safe and coherent stories with which people can identify. While Brubaker (2002) provides an insightful perspective to this debate, he does not take notice of how the stories about a collectivity are highly gendered. Often cultural entrepreneurs are self-elected males who try to establish one hegemonic version of the complex and contradictory narratives that define a group. It can be in the interest of these individuals to silence dissenting positions within the group to maintain their power. They provide a false authentic and harmonious narrative which can become an important legitimating factor with which rights, wealth and other resources can be claimed from the state (Yuval-Davis 1997, 58). The stories evoked by cultural entrepreneurs often tend to restore patriarchal traditions which give them control over women and their behaviour (Yuval-Davis 1997, 58). Pnina Werbner (2007) shows how the debates on the use of the veil in the public sphere have been framed in terms of honour and female sexual modesty<sup>8</sup>. Following multicultural theory, the state

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<sup>7</sup> I understand cultural entrepreneurs to be leading individuals who draw on certain discursive practices such as symbols, myths and narratives to specify the characteristics of a group. They play an active role in forming, disseminating, and maintaining discourses about the uniqueness of a group. In so doing, they reify groups - they treat them as substantial things in the world (Brubaker 2002). While other actors are involved in the process of group formation, the role of cultural entrepreneurs in evoking groups is important and gives them a powerful position.

<sup>8</sup> For other examples see the work of among others Saharso (2000); Shachar (2001); Phillips (2007). See also the special issue of Ethnicities on the rights of women and the crisis of multiculturalism (2008, vol. 8, nr. 3).



should assume that the claims made by cultural entrepreneurs are representative of the whole group. This not only disregards the plurality of voices within a group which are silenced through mechanisms of power and coercion, it also potentially enables the state to overlook how these claims may impact negatively on some segments of a group. We must take the issue of representation seriously, not only by focusing on the relation between state and group, but also by including the individuals who are members of the group concerned (Okin 1998; 2000; 2002; Shachar 2001; Phillips 2007). Indeed, arguments in favour of multiculturalism need to pay special attention to the different positions in the structures of power within a group which impede women, among others, to contribute to the process of making a group and to express their specific needs and problems.

One reason why multicultural theory cannot address the issue of representation is because it has to do with the tendencies to decouple normative assumptions from specific socio-political contexts. In reality, the intersection between narrative constructions of migrants and minorities and the institutional framework operating in a state has important consequences for the possible type of mobilisation of migrants (Gunew 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005). The tendency, for instance, to define minorities residing in the UK in ethnic or racial terms has facilitated the development of an anti-racist mode of political mobilisation and discourse (Statham 1999; Crowley 2001, 107). Conversely, ethnic or faith-based categories are not used in the French legal framework. This has probably affected the type of claims made by religious groups, such as Muslims, which tend to be predominantly dissociative in their relationship to the state's policies (Koopmans et al. 2005, 169). Multiculturalism's tendency to provide a "one-size-fits-all" model for differentiated rights fails to resonate with any national context and it cannot account for why some groups are given more rights than others in a country. By arguing that minority groups ought to be granted differentiated rights without contextualising the process of claims-making curtails the potential of multiculturalism to deconstruct and transform a society's normative structure and to destabilise existing antagonistic group identities.

### ***Questioning the principle of non-intervention***

Multiculturalism calls for a policy of "non-intervention" into groups' affairs (Sachtar 2001, 37-40). They argue that as far as group members do not feel oppressed and as far as the oppression is not the outcome of "occasional failures of socialization" (Raz 1994, 169), a cultural community "deserves to be

respected and left alone” (Parekh 2000, 177). Chandran Kukathas expresses this clearly: “if members of a cultural community wish to continue to live by their beliefs, the outside community has no right to intervene to prevent those members acting within their rights” (1992, 117). Following this principle, Kymlicka argues that “a liberal view requires freedom within the minority group and equality between the minority and majority group” (1995, 152). He maintains however that liberals should be wary of imposing liberalism on national minorities<sup>9</sup> (1995, 167). National minorities should be endorsed with encompassing exceptions. He argues that

In cases where the national minority is illiberal, this means that the majority will be unable to prevent the violation of individual rights within the minority community. Liberals in the majority group will have to learn to live with this. (1995, 168)

What are the real implications of the principle of non-intervention for a theory of multiculturalism? Amish children, for instance, enrol in the national curricula only up to the eighth grade (between thirteen and fourteen years old) in the belief that the basic knowledge offered up to that point is sufficient to prepare one for the Amish lifestyle. How can their culture provide them with a context of choice which can enable them to choose to live a different kind of life or changing their culture internally? Cases involving migrants are very different in Kymlicka’s view. As they have voluntarily chosen to leave their nation, it is more legitimate to ask them to respect liberal principles (1995, 170)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Kymlicka distinguishes between national minorities and immigrants and thinks that each group can make claim to different rights (1995, 95-101; 167-170). National minorities should be entitled to self-government rights which guarantee the devolution of “political power to a political unit substantially controlled by the members of the national minority, and substantially corresponding to their historical homeland or territory” (1995, 30). These rights are “inherent” and “permanent” (1995, 30). Migrants should instead be guaranteed polyethnic rights which are intended to favour the integration of immigrant groups into the wider society, and not to promote self-government. They are directed primarily at ensuring the exercise of the common rights of citizenship and aim therefore at rooting discrimination and prejudice against immigrant minorities and at enabling ethnic and religious groups to express their cultural diversity without it hampering their success in the public sphere of the society they live in. These rights may open up for exemptions from laws and regulation and are not seen as temporary since migrants and their offspring are not asked to give up their distinctive cultures (1995, 30-31).

<sup>10</sup> While it seems at first a descriptive distinction between groups, the differentiation between national minorities and migrant groups has deep implications which are hard to

In the case of illiberal groups multicultural advocates recommend that the state should “discourage repressive practices” (Raz 1994, 172) and that it should “speak out against [...] injustice” and lend its support to liberal reformers inside the culture (Kymlicka 1995, 168). Similarly Kukathas (1992, 132-133) maintains that by liberal standards, some oppression will always be exercised in other cultural groups. Injustices are however tempered by two factors. First, the degree of a cultural group’s dependence on the wider society. If a community decides to live a self-contained life, like some ultra-orthodox religious groups do, the level of state intervention should be much smaller than if the group wants to become an integral part of the community as in the case of migrants (Kukathas 1992, 133; Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000, 178). The second factor refers to the extent to which the individual enjoys a substantial freedom to leave, i.e. if an individual is guaranteed the right to exit his/her community.

To discourage oppressive or constraining practices is not enough. This is where multiculturalism’s call for non-intervention not only does not work, but also contradicts its theoretical foundations. It does not work because it burdens the victim of oppression with the responsibility of challenging her/his cultural group and its internal authorities. The non-intervention perspective, when coupled with a conception of a group as a self-contained entity, relieves the state from the responsibility of protecting the individuals who are members of the

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sustain normatively and empirically. As argued by Parekh (2000, 103), if culture is so crucial for achieving autonomy and liberty, it is difficult to understand why a person would voluntarily choose to leave it as migrants are expected to do. Second, Kymlicka distorts the lived experiences of some migrant groups to highlight the conditions of national minorities and he is not able to explain why migrant communities should have multicultural rights (Modood 2007, 34). Since he focuses his attention empirically on the case of Canada and the rights of Native Americans and Quebecois, he fails to grasp the complexities of multiculturalism in Europe, where the multicultural experience is based mainly on post-immigration (Favell and Modood 2003). Empirically, Kymlicka’s assumption is overstated. Even if war, famine or economic difficulties may drive people to move voluntarily, there is no indication that this decision is taken lightly. Rather, the conception of home (country) becomes crucial for immigrants (See Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Kinnvall 2004). Even among those better-off who migrate between wealthy European countries, a sense of identification with their home-country, in terms of the beliefs and norms one value, is strong (see e.g. Favell 2008). Finally, Kymlicka’s normative rationale for the differentiation between national and migrant minorities is based on his definition of societal culture/nation and it is therefore hardly sufficient for legitimising differential rights for each group (Benhabib 2002, 63). Indeed, to insist on the importance of sharing a common territory and a common history can be equivalent to cultural essentialism.

concerned group (Shachar 2001). This perspective also contradicts the general claims made by multiculturalism. Kymlicka for instance denies group rights to migrant groups who are illiberal, thus calling for state intervention for some groups<sup>11</sup>, while at the same time arguing that national minorities should be left alone. Raz writes about the state's right of intervening and suppressing oppressive cultures which will not adopt liberal reforms (1994, 170), but he also acknowledges that "*the demand for a forced retraining and adaptation* is liable to undermine people's dignity and self-respect" (1998, 200). This is based on a flawed logic. When should a state intervene at all if intervention can force change within a culture and therefore undermine the group members' context of choice and sense of self? This logic relies on a false assumption that a policy of non-intervention means not affecting minority groups. In fact, the state inevitably impinges upon in-group power relations; it legitimises certain interpretations of a group's cultural identity over others, and it indirectly participates in the process of redefining and maintaining a group's essentialised traditions (Sachtar 2001, 37-40). The degree to which this is done varies between states. The lack of contextualised understanding of multiculturalism is again problematic.

Regardless if the principle of non-intervention is desirable or not, the opportunities to apply this principle in reality vary greatly depending on a state's tradition of centralisation/decentralisation. While the principle of non-intervention may be in line with the philosophy of government of some countries such as the USA, other national contexts may be at odds with it. For instance the Scandinavian countries have traditionally intervened in the lives of their citizens and have supplied public facilities to help women with domestic responsibilities and child care and have instigated informal mechanisms to increase the participation of women in the political sphere. To advocate a non-intervening state in such contexts would resonate very little with the institutional framework of these countries.

The logic of non-intervention is also problematic because it relies on a strict distinction between private and public, where the state can only intervene in the public sphere. This approach leaves the question of who defines the boundary between public and private unanswered. Indeed, it is in the private

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<sup>11</sup> The Amish begun migrating to Pennsylvania in the early 18th century, but Kymlicka still considers it an immigrant community. However he argues that, even if they are an (old) immigrant community and should therefore not be granted the rights of self-government, they are subject to historical exemptions which cannot be withdrawn unless their practices are "unconscionably unjust" (1995, 170).

sphere that women, but also men who do not behave according to patriarchal narratives, face the worst discrimination (Okin 2000, 33). The control of some women and men is exercised in the privacy of homes by authoritative figures (male and female). It is often justified by references to culture and traditions and can be expressed through threats of repudiation and exclusion from the family and the community. Thus when Parekh rejects arranged marriage if coerced, but respects it if “young Asians are happy for their parents to choose or help them choose their spouses” (2000, 275), he ignores that the young may perceive that the option set is restricted. S/he may therefore agree on an arranged marriage if s/he was faced by the prospect of being excluded or even banned from her/his family. “‘Honour’ and ‘shame’ [...] can be rhetorical devices for eliciting obedience from recalcitrant or rebellious children who refuse to marry according to parental choices” (Werbner 2007, 168). Even if a child is choosing, the set of options could be so narrow that her/his right to decide upon her/his own life and possibly of exiting her/his community is severely constrained. The argument that interaction between cultural groups should take place under liberal and democratic forms is therefore insufficient. It overlooks the consequences of interaction in the private sphere and, if we follow Kymlicka’s argument for national minorities, it can even condone illiberal practices in the private domain. The logic of non-intervention therefore fails to take the opportunity of using the inevitable influence of immigrant policies on in-group relations to transform unjust power structures.

### ***Illiberal groups and the realistic opportunities to exit***

In order to offset the potential for groups to oppress their members, the proponents of multiculturalism argue in favour of the legal right of individual exit from a cultural community. Raz for instance argues that even if a person’s sense of dignity is tied to one’s membership to a culture, people may voluntarily want to retain the skills needed to make a life in another culture. If a culture does not contribute to the well-being of some of its members they should be able to leave it.

The opportunity to exit from a group is a vital protection for those members who are repressed by its culture. [...] the groups should be encouraged to change their repressive practices. But this is a very slow process. Opportunities of exit should be encouraged as a safeguard, however imperfect, for members who cannot develop and find adequate avenues for self-expression within their native culture. (Raz 1994, 172)

Similarly, Kukathas (1992, 134) maintains that the right of exit is important to milder the injustices carried out within a group. If cultural groups do not have the broad support of its members, who instead may decide to renounce their membership to that particular group, the community will wither. It is therefore in the interest of the cultural group not to oppress its members. This, he continues, can only be assured by an open wider society willing to protect individuals who have decided to leave their community. The right of exit is the restriction a society can place on cultural groups, according to multiculturalists.

The formulations of the right of exit expressed by multicultural scholars<sup>12</sup> typically rest upon the assumption that the right of exit is a matter of individual agency. Because multiculturalists do not contextualise their understanding of the right of exit in existing practices, they overlook the ways in which individuals are embedded in societal networks that can coerce their opportunities to exit and relieve the state from the responsibility to act against oppressive behaviours. Multicultural scholars also assume that community leaders value equally the criticisms and potential exit of all the members of the community they claim to represent. This is often not necessarily the case. Let me address these remarks.

There is a broad agreement among multiculturalists about the ontological importance of culture. Yet, by calling for the importance of the right of exit, authors such as Raz, Kymlicka and Parekh adopt a voluntaristic model of community affiliation which in turn undergirds the right of exit. Even if culture is only one of many factors which can be salient for an individual, for some it provides the basis for a secure sense of who they are, where they come from, and how they are supposed to behave (Kinnvall 2004; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). To them, the right of exit is less than an option (see also Saharso 2000; Shachar 2001). The socialisation of individuals in a community creates certain expectations about proper behaviour which in some cases can undermine their self-esteem and defer them from denouncing oppressions (Okin 2000; Phillips 2007, 148). An individual's opportunities to exit may therefore be restricted by the fear for adverse consequences of choosing to act against the dominant narratives about a cultural group's traditions and mores. Susan M. Okin (2000, 220-222) provides a useful illustration of the material and socio-cognitive

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<sup>12</sup> There are however differences between the authors. Kymlicka, Kukathas and Raz see the right of exit as a liberal political ideal and as an instrument for securing autonomy. Parekh and Taylor instead do not pay much attention to the concept of "right of exit", even if Parekh mentions it as a condition a group has to meet to be eligible of collective rights (2000, 218).

obstacles to exit. She refers to the example of a young migrant girl in the USA who, faced with an arranged marriage, feels “tormented”. Yet, when a teacher suggested to her that she should not go through with the marriage, she responded “in our religion, we have to think of our parents first. It would kill them if I ran away or disobey them [...] I would never go against my parents!” (2000, 222). Even if the girl has the formal right to exit, she cannot conceive of exercising her right of exit, regardless of how distressful the situation is for her. For people like this girl, it might be more important to be treated fairly within their group and to be able to express their needs, than to exit it (Okin 2002). As Shachar writes, the right of exit solution “throws upon the already beleaguered individual the responsibility to either miraculously transform the legal-institutional conditions that keep her vulnerable or to find the resources to leave her whole world behind” (2001, 43).

Multicultural theory leaves the individual with the options of putting up with oppressions or making a complete break with the group. An important consequence is that this understanding of the right to exit indirectly relieves the state from taking responsibility for the oppression these people face (Shachar 2001, 41). The only responsibility the state has is to be open to people who have left their group. This makes the role of the state in countering oppressive patterns of behaviour that find legitimacy in the name of culture a passive one because it cannot evaluate a culture from its moral standpoint. Instead it should understand the value of the culture in question from “within”, i.e. according to the system of beliefs of that culture (Parekh 2000). This position reflects a conceptualisation of groups as relying on only one interpretation of culture and it disregards the power necessary to create one single story about that group.

This leads me to my final criticism of multiculturalism’s conceptualisation of the right to exit. Multiculturalists assume that the right of exit can potentially generate intra-group change. If cultural communities do not have the broad support or commitment of their members they will wither away (Kukathas 1992, 117). This position assumes however that the criticisms and possibly the abandonment of the group are equally valued independently of who expresses the criticism or who exits the group. In practice this is not always the case. Those who are seen to have dishonoured their family and/or cultural group can be alienated and treated as outcasts. The exit of these people is rather seen as a relief to the most conservative members of a community. For instance in a conservative catholic family, a homosexual child can be excluded from her/his family before s/he can even manage to express her criticism or willingness to break up with it. Similarly, those who denounce oppressive values in their groups

can be subject to harassment and threats and are open to accusations of cultural betrayal and their exit may seem the best option to preserve a culture. Paradoxically, the survival of some cultural groups can be guaranteed by the use of the right of exit as a tool to exclude progressive members and reify conservative narratives and patterns of behaviour.

### ***Solidarity and cohesive identity – forgetting what “the national” entails***

Most proponents of multiculturalism agree on the need to establish some ties that bind (e.g. Kymlicka 1995, chapter 9; Modood 2007; Parekh 2008). For a multicultural state to function there must be some level of social unity and “willingness to share” (Raz 1998, 202). Solidarity will arise as the members of all communities will interact in the same economic environment and they will belong to the same political society, thus embracing the same political culture. This means that all members of the communities living in the same state will be guaranteed formal rights and equal opportunities. They would not have to suffer from discriminatory treatment because of their cultural belonging and they will be guaranteed the legal and political means to preserve their culture if they so wish (Raz 1994, 173; 1998, 202-203). If a state provides an environment where cultures are able to cultivate and maintain their diversity, it will create a fertile ground for the development of a shared political identity (Kymlicka 1995, 188) and a “community of communities” (Parekh 2008, 58. See also Raz 1998, 204).

Parekh goes further than many other proponents of multiculturalism. He argues that a multicultural society needs not only to ensure justice, but also to foster a plural collective culture which can trigger a sense of responsibility and loyalty for the society in which different communities live. This is best achieved through the establishment of a common national identity (2000, 230-236; 2008 chap.4. See also Modood 2007). A national identity provides a solid enough basis for common identification in a multicultural society since it unites its members around a common identity; provides “relevant virtues”; fosters “intergenerational continuity”; and “orders their moral and political life” (Parekh 2000, 231)<sup>13</sup>. Parekh acknowledges the potential dangers of the development of a

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<sup>13</sup> In his later work Parekh (2008, 87-89), instead of talking explicitly of “national identity”, argues for the importance of establishing “ties of common belonging” and a “moral contract”. Common belonging is however defined in the same way as he defined “national identity” (cp. 2000, 231 with 2008, 87). What a “moral contract” exactly



national identity. Therefore he sets some conditions that a national identity has to meet. It has to be defined in politico-institutional rather than ethno-cultural terms; it should allow for multiple identities to exist; it should include all its citizens; and it should provide the basis for identification for all of them (Parekh 2000, 231-232). Proponents of multiculturalism argue that the ties that bind are to be found in a minimal set of shared values, provided that the majority society's "operative public values", representing the shared moral structure of society's public life, are the point of departure for a debate on whether some minority practices should be tolerated or not (Parekh 2000, 267; 270). Intercultural dialogue is fundamental for the development of such a society. Multicultural advocates' abstract understanding of dialogue, albeit theoretically and normatively appealing, shows however its weakness when confronted with the practice of dialogue. The issue of representation is not discussed.

I agree with the idea that there must be something that brings together people living in the same state, even if they also identify themselves with different religious and cultural narratives. However, the conceptualisation of the multicultural state as expressed by Raz, Kymlicka or Parekh, among others, is nothing more than a community encapsulating other smaller communities. By the same token, a multicultural common culture is the sum of its individual parts, i.e. the cultures which inhabit it. A multicultural society is then a system where cultural entities interact, "educate and even 'civilise' each other" (Parekh 2000, 168). These entities remain however separated from each other. This reasserts the faulty substantialistic assumption which sees societal groups as coherent and self-sustaining systems and it legitimises the reification of group boundaries.

Another problem in advocating a national identity is that it overlooks the mechanisms of boundary setting and exclusion that underpin the creation of national identities. To construct a national identity means to construct meaningful stories that link past, present and future in a coherent narrative. These stories also try to make physical borders overlap with a certain group and they necessarily entail exclusion of others. The construction of a national identity is then ultimately a struggle for "political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones" (Gellner 1983, 1). New stories can arise, and new groups gathering around them will be formed – as one can see in the Balkans. Also, how can a multicultural national identity create stories that

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consists of or why we should equate "common belonging" with "moral contract" is unclear.

bind individuals and generations together (Parekh 2000, 231) if we do not first question the legacy of the nation in question? Britain for instance has, together with a history of democracy, also a past of colonialism, imperialism, and subjugation of its subjects. Is a national identity created around Britishness, as advocated by Modood (2007), the best ground on which to foster a sense of common belonging? Finally the emphasis on national identity overlooks the gender dimension underpinning the construction of the nation which subordinates women as cultural and biological reproducers of the nation. It has been widely demonstrated that women carry a “burden of representation” as they are constructed as the biological and cultural reproducers of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997).

Finally, to argue that national identity can become a means to secure the functioning of a multicultural community is problematic because it assumes that all minorities living in a territory are planning to stay – a claim which is empirically disputable. Some migrant groups may not aim at settling in the recipient country for more than a few years, as has been the case for instance with the A8-migrants who recently came to Britain (Green et al. 2007), or European citizens moving to another European country (Favell 2008). The argument made by multicultural scholars is not able to justify why these people should feel any affiliation to a (however new-born) national identity which has been developed in the country they live in.

## **2.3 Conclusions**

Since the 1990s, advocates of multiculturalism have attempted to find a balance between the recognition of cultural differences and the necessity to have substantive social cohesion at the national level. I have identified a series of problems with this approach. The first problem is a static conceptualisation of culture, identity and group formation. This approach promotes a uni-dimensional, or at best additive, understanding of identity. Because multicultural interpretations have come to describe culture as an entity with distinctive features, they are unable to “contextually explore meanings [...] that shape the reproduction, circulation, and use of messages that encode identities, differences, and non-differences within contexts of power” (Damhoun 2006, 363). The relations of power which always underpin the construction of identity as well as the societal normative assumptions which often devalue an out-group (e.g. migrants) are also left unexamined because culture, as an entity, is at the centre of investigation. This first issue, I have argued, hinders transformation. It is

difficult to see how new forms of identifications can be introduced because culture is considered to provide a sense of self and a group's normative boundaries. Furthermore, since the making and negotiating of culture is not examined, multiculturalism cannot challenge some interpretations of what a culture might consist of. Nor can it present new alternative identities in a way which might resonate in a specific context.

This is linked to the second problem which I have identified in the literature on multiculturalism, i.e. the tendency to suggest abstract and de-contextualised remedies for cultural recognition. Because multiculturalism does not examine the specificities of the processes of culture- and identity-making, it tends to suggest universal solutions to the establishment of a multicultural society. This hampers transformation in at least three ways. First, the suggested remedies do not resonate with the specific institutional and discursive context in which claims for group rights are made and have therefore limited applicability. Second, the relations of power that are embedded in particular interpretations of culture and group relations are not explored, and they can therefore not be challenged. Third, the lack of a contextualised understanding of culture- and identity-making fails to distinguish between self-identification and imposed identification and, therefore, the degree of identification of one individual with a community and its impact on that person's behaviour.

In the following chapter I present the main tenets of caring multiculturalism, which puts transformation at the centre of its theoretical and analytical foundations. This approach is anchored in three bodies of literature: feminist understandings and critiques of multiculturalism, caring ethics and a narrative and relational understanding of identity formation which draws from social psychology. I argue that the main tenets of these bodies of work help developing an explicit transformative understanding of multiculturalism. Feminist multiculturalism questions if the policies for respect and tolerance for difference *de facto* do not maintain gender-based inequalities and it calls attention to in-group power relations over the making of culture. Caring ethics challenges long-standing assumptions about the role of social policy within which policies of multiculturalism are usually implemented. It also proposes that an emphasis on justice and equal rights is not enough if the public sphere should become fairer. Values such as attentiveness, responsiveness, competence and responsibility should be equally emphasised to provide less abstract remedies to injustice. Finally, a more dynamic conceptualisation of identity allows us to explore the processes of identification and differentiation and how identities emerge relationally, in interaction with other people and other collectivities.

### 3 Caring multiculturalism

The aim of this chapter is to outline a variant of multiculturalism that addresses the shortcomings discussed in the previous chapter, i.e. a static conceptualisation of culture and of identity- and group formation, as much as the tendency to suggest abstract and de-contextualised remedies for immigrants' accommodation. These shortcomings make it difficult for multiculturalism to provide convincing explanations to questions such as; how do certain individuals come to recognise themselves in a more or less shared sense of "we"? How do individuals become involved in – or defect from – a group? Why are certain claims made in some contexts but not in others? These shortcomings hinder the potential of multicultural theory to introduce cognitive transformation, i.e. change in how we perceive other groups and individuals, as well as social transformation which can challenge unequal power relations between and within groups.

Caring multiculturalism, as I have labelled this new theoretical approach, has instead an explicit transformative goal. It is anchored in three theoretical principles: (1) the attention to gendered power relations within minority groups and to the gender-related consequences of immigrant policies (feminist multiculturalism); (2) an alternative source for moral and political judgment that introduces foundations for policymaking which are attentive and responsive to the actual context in which policies have to be applied (caring ethics); (3) an understanding of the collective and individual self as constituted by multiple interrelated positions and shaped by the social context in which it is embedded (dialogical self theory and positioning theory). These principles have guided the development of caring multiculturalism. Taken together, these three principles enable me to develop a transformative theory of multiculturalism for two reasons. First, they open up for a theory of multiculturalism that does not treat culture as an entity that enables agency, but rather as the outcome of stories and practices that are constructed, negotiated and deployed in social relations. The fact that stories about a culture change through negotiations and retrospective recasting means that alternative narratives of identification can emerge. Second, they provide analytical tools which enable me to identify and deconstruct existing power relations which devalue certain groups in relation to others and some individuals within groups. They also open up "new ways of seeing human beings, their social problems, and their needs, and it enables us to analyse

critically how government responds to these” (Hankivsky 2004, 2). As a consequence they have implications for social policy. In the empirical part of this project I investigate which institutional and narrative opportunities in Malmö, Birmingham, and Bologna are most likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism.

The chapter is divided in three parts. In the first part, I present the main tenets of an ethics of care and of dialogical self and positioning theories. I present a summary that highlights aspects of each body of work which are particularly relevant to this thesis, rather than a comprehensive coverage. I will not reiterate the main arguments of feminist multicultural theory as they have been briefly presented in chapter 1. Instead they will be explicitly adopted in this chapter<sup>1</sup>. In the second and third parts I present how caring multiculturalism can be considered a transformative theory of multiculturalism. Section 3.3 describes how caring multiculturalism can introduce cognitive change among the groups living in diverse societies, while section 3.4 is concerned with discussing how caring multiculturalism can address unequal power relations between and within groups.

### **3.1 Caring ethics**

Caring ethics’ original formulation (Gilligan 1982; Ruddick 1989) saw care as an aspect of private life. It juxtaposed care to justice which is traditionally connected to the masculine public sphere. In this view, care is associated with household activities and it is greatly undervalued in most societies. Recent conceptualisations of care ethics (e.g. Tronto 1993; Sevenhuijsen 1998; Robinson 1999; White 2000; Hankivsky 2004; Held 2006) have challenged this and explore how an ethics of care can influence institutional practices and our understandings of politics, democracy and citizenship. This thesis draws from the more recent interpretation of an ethics of care. I identify two interconnected features of an ethics of care which are of particular relevance: the recognition of a set of values that place care at its midst and contextual sensitivity. I organise my review of caring ethics along these features.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive review see Phillips (2007) or Shachar (2007).

## ***The values of care and justice***

Care is a practice (i.e. taking care of someone) and an ethics with a specific set of values and conception of the political actor that should inform social life. An ethics of care focus on three ethical elements of care: attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness<sup>2</sup>.

*Attentiveness* involves identifying the specific needs of others as they arise out of concrete relationships. Caring ethics does not advocate an abstract conception of morality meant to apply universally. Instead it listens to and learns from the lived experiences of real individuals (Tronto 1993, 127-131) and examines “the actual, concrete conditions within moral relations that can and do occur, and seeking to understand to nature of those moral relations” (Robinson 1999, 29).

*Responsibility* entails assuming the responsibility to meet the identified need. Responsible care is concerned with the actual outcomes and effects on people’s lives of certain choices and decisions (Hankivsky 2004, 38). If policymaking were grounded on this conception of responsibility, it would take into consideration a wider range of perspectives reflecting the realities of the citizens and the changing circumstances of their lives. The situation of those who require public care will be carefully assessed to determine how to respond best to their needs within the available resources. A work that might involve caring for someone can be carried out without a sense of responsibility for the cared-for. By paying taxes, the majority society takes care of migrants and indirectly funds public integration policies. A committee that sets up a national antidiscrimination board or launches a law aimed at protecting immigrant rights takes, in a sense, care of immigrants. This type of care is not direct, but “detached” (Tronto 1993, 144) and supports the opportunity of the most privileged to ignore certain adversities that they never have to confront. Detached care can lead some people to become deluded about how and who they are helping, for what reasons, and for how long. So, when non-Western migrants are in the position of caretakers, they become doubly targeted in the process of othering. They are cognitively positioned as “others” to the majority society, and as they are dependent on

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<sup>2</sup> Slightly different emphasis and names are used to signify these elements. Tronto (1993, 127-137), in addition to the values listed, argues that competence is an ethical value of care but defines it in a way that is vague. Hankivsky (2004) instead focuses on contextual sensitivity, responsiveness and consequence of choice. These are similar to what I describe.

somebody else's care, they are alienated and devalued as dependent "others" to the rest of society, which instead is constructed as efficient and independent. This can give support to discriminating views that see migrants as the undeserving recipients of care since they are not doing enough to integrate, to find a job, or to learn the majority's language. Furthermore, it can legitimize the majority's lack of responsibility for rooting out prejudice and discrimination because they themselves do not believe they are being prejudiced against.

Finally, *responsiveness* is related to care-receiving and the acknowledgment of the other's position as s/he expresses it. It entails understanding the needs of others as well as understanding how the provided care has been received (Tronto 1993, 134-137). It does not mean to put ourselves in the position of those who need care. The idea that one should put oneself in the position of those who are less privileged is flawed, as it obscures the social positions of the parts, thus neglecting their different positions, e.g. class, age, gender, in the distributions of power between the care-giver and the care-receiver (Young 1997, 38-59). Instead we should acknowledge the specificity of positions of the parts involved and their unique life histories and psychological constitution. If policies are developed in a responsive way, care receivers are given the opportunity to respond to the care received. Policy-makers will be able to evaluate the policies in question in the light of the experience of the beneficiaries of care (Sevenhuysen et al. 2003, 317).

## **Care and power**

Attentiveness, responsibility, and responsiveness should be seen as complementary to the values of justice and equality that are traditionally honoured in the public sphere. Several care ethicists ask how the practice of care without justice adequately can resist paternalism and parochialism (Tronto 1993; Robinson 1999; White 2000). In fact, caring ethics has been criticised for not fully appreciating the power inherent in caring relationships both within a family and in professional care and for glorifying the mutual exchange and practices of caring relationships as the basis for social life (Silvers 1995). This critique points to the risk of maintaining paternalistic relations of care which can translate into a permanent condition of dependency for the care-receiver. This is acknowledged by the care ethicists upon which I rely. Tronto (1993, 145-146), among others, argues that those who receive care are often alienated and identified by whatever marks them as needing care. Relationships of care also run the risk of patronising the cared-for and denying them the ability to make decision for themselves. In addition, power is expressed in caring relationships since the needs of some are

met more completely than those of others and this follows the distribution of power in a society.

Caring ethics addresses the issues of power embedded in paternalism and parochialism in two ways. First, it understands autonomy relationally (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000) and not as self-sufficiency. If human beings are conceived of as being at least partially dependent on the surrounding socioeconomic and political relations, then their autonomy is also shaped and at times impaired by the context in which they are embedded. In this perspective, a person's capacity for autonomy and agency are related to two factors. First, her/his self-perception, i.e. feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and self-trust. Second, her/his social context since oppressive socialisation and social relationships can impede on autonomous agency (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, 22; Mackenzie 2008). This perspective is important as it emphasises the socially constituted character of autonomy and calls for the importance of understanding a person's perception of her/his autonomy on her/his own terms and not according to abstract and generalised conceptions of autonomy. The second way of addressing power in caring relations is by advocating the equal importance of the values of care and of the values of justice and equality.

### **Care and justice**

Tronto argues that to avoid paternalism and parochialism, care should be connected to a theory of justice and "be relentlessly democratic in its disposition" (1993, 171). People should be granted equal care which should be provided according to the values discussed above, beyond face-to-face relationships. I subscribe to this perspective. I therefore do not conceive of an ethics of care and its derivative values as juxtaposed to justice (Gilligan 1982), or even as a substitute to it (Noddings 1984). Justice and care are instead mutually interdependent. Without justice, care runs the risk of reinforcing paternalistic relations and favouritisms. Without care, justice will only address the needs of an abstract citizen, overlooking the different needs that arise from individuals' positions in society. Justice should not be conceived of as embodying impartiality, general principles and universality, however. Most theories of justice maintain that the best way of reaching just decisions is through a certain degree of emotional independence and autonomous moral agency which would lead to the formulation of impartial and universally applicable rules and principles that are detached from the lived experiences of those who should be the subjects of justice (see Avineri and de-Shalit (eds.) 1992. Taylor (ed.) 2005 for reviews).



White and Tronto (2004) suggest that this approach is unable to bridge the principle of justice with the personal and political experience of injustice, i.e. the needs of some people as they articulate them. The reason for this, they argue, lies in the liberal understanding of the citizen. If a citizen can reach just decisions only through autonomy and emotional independency, her position as a full-fledged member of society is jeopardised when she is in an obvious position of need (2004, 433-444). This is particularly relevant in the context of diverse societies in Western Europe where a substantial number of migrants are dependent on welfare provisions. If paid work is constructed as the only way to achieve independence (understood as self-sufficiency), migrants will always be seen as unable to take care of themselves and of those around them. In this dichotomous construction between dependence and independence, migrants who depend on welfare benefits would easily be considered lesser citizens, unable to arrive at decision-making and therefore participate in the demos. If care and its derivative values are conceived of as public values, and if the need for care is acknowledged as being shared by all members of society, then the language of needs will not be constructed as opposite to the language of rights and full citizenship. If the values and principles of caring are included with commitments to other liberal values, such as the commitment to people's rights, citizens would become more attentive to the needs of others and less exclusionary in their relations with others (Hankivsky 2004, 28).

### ***Contextual sensitivity***

The values of care express the relational and contextual nature of caring ethics. To take seriously the context in which moral and political claims are made has important implications for how we understand difference and diversity in Western societies. A contextual approach means that we should not take for granted the diversity of others, be it ascribed or self-assigned. We should instead see it as the crystallisation of ever-changing processes of identity formation. This has clear implications for the development of a theory of multiculturalism. Given caring ethics' emphasis on the importance of the lived experience of people, the starting point of caring multiculturalism will be the processes of categorisation of self and others. This enables us to find possible openings in that specific context for changing or redirecting these processes so that new processes of group formation are prompted. If a theory of multiculturalism instead accepts entrenched ideas and groups as the starting point of analysis, it will contribute to the institutionalisation and reification of group differences.

Attention to particular contexts does not make an ethics of care relativistic, as the values and relations it seeks to analyse are relative to a context, but can apply to more situations (Sevenhuijsen 1998). However, Alison Jaggar (in Robinson 1999, 103) argues that the focus on specific situations prevents us from criticizing the social institutions that structure it. Her criticism is in many ways legitimate as several theorists of care have failed to broaden their analysis to include both the micro- and the macro-levels of analysis. Yet, I agree with Robinson when she states that:

Close attention to the specificities of moral situations need not obscure perception of the larger social context in which they are embedded if the process of understanding, knowing and caring for a person who is different from you involves an understanding that difference is actually constructed through relationships which are not personal but social, and which are often characterized by both power and privilege. (1999, 103)

Despite this, “there is minimal application of these themes to those political issues of international relations, where the care of distant humans is paramount” (Porter 2006, 98-99; see also Young 1994, 41). Several studies that rely on caring ethics tend to focus on policy areas that are based on face-to face relations such as volunteering (White 2000), child care (Sevenhuijsen 1998), or social policy (Hankivsky 2004). Few engage with the questions of how we can care for those with whom we do not have a direct relationship<sup>3</sup>. To my knowledge, no care ethicists have analysed in depth the normative aspects of caring ethics and its potential contributions to multiculturalism. However, Tronto stresses that “the practice of care describes the qualities necessary for democratic citizens to live together well in a pluralistic society, and that only in a just, pluralist, democratic society can care flourish” (1993, 161-162). Caring ethics, considering its traditional focus on needs and needs-oriented work (e.g. Sevenhuijsen 1998; White 2000), can prove a good companion to approaches to multiculturalism which attempt to address issues related to cultural, ethnical, or religious needs.

### **3.2 Relational understanding of identity**

In chapter 2 I have argued that multicultural theory relies on a static understanding of self and of identity- and group-formation. Therefore, in this

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<sup>3</sup> Two exceptions worth mentioning are Fiona Robinson (1999) and Virginia Held (2006).

section I focus on how a relational perspective provides insights in how identities are constructed and can change - an important element in the development of a transformative theory of multiculturalism.

### ***Relational self***

Social constructivist arguments in social psychology (e.g. Gergen 1985; 1999b) challenge the understanding of the individual as independent and largely unaffected by social context, which has been labelled by Markus and Kitayama (1991) as “independent self”<sup>4</sup>. Social constructivists propose instead that what is described, understood and even seen is not a direct consequence of how the world is but of the meanings it carries within a society. In line with this, Stephanie Taylor argues that “our understandings of who we are, our identities, are derived from the accumulated ideas, images, associations and so on which make up the wider social and cultural contexts of our lives” (2006, 94). This contributes to an understanding of the self as impossibly detached from a social context, and hence relational. Where the independent self is assumed to have a core ego, created primarily by reference to one’s own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings and action, the relational self sees itself as being part of social relations which affect its sense of who it is. Where self-other relations are conceived by the independent self perspective as dichotomous and at times antagonistic, a social constructivist perspective sees the self as ontologically related to the other (Gergen 1999a).

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<sup>4</sup> Markus and Kitayama argue that the independent self and its counterpart, the interdependent self, arise in different cultures. The interdependent self is characteristic of some Asian cultures, while the independent self is fostered in North American and Western European cultures. I subscribe to the fact that there are different ways of conceiving of the self and that each impacts on motives, emotions and cognition. I am however wary of linking a particular conception of the self with a homogenously conceived culture. I conceive of culture as being more heterogeneous than what Markus and Kitayama seem to imply. This can be empirically demonstrated by reference to the feminist movement in Western Europe and North America which proposes, as we have just seen, a more relational understanding of the self than the one proposed within liberalism.

## Positions and narratives

Actors recount for a person's place in a social context through narratives<sup>5</sup> of personal stories. This is called "positioning". Harre' and van Langenhove (1991, 395), in developing Positioning Theory, define "positioning" as "the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible [...] as social acts, and within which the members of a conversation have specific locations". These accounts have been labelled "positions". "Position" was originally defined as "the complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action" (Harre' and van Langenhove 1999, 1. See also Davies and Harre' 1990; Raggatt 2007). Positioning is then the narrative process which leads to the definition of certain attributes (e.g. I as a daughter; I as an academic; I as a woman) in a specific context and as such it partly confers meaning to an individual's identity (Davies and Harre' 1990). Given the relational ontology which informs this dissertation, it is important to stress that positions are conceived of as crystallisations of the narrative process of positioning, not as essential outcomes of that process<sup>6</sup>.

The self is not constituted by a core ego, but by a multiplicity of positions<sup>7</sup> in dialogue with each other (Hermans et al. 1992, 28). This perspective has been developed explicitly within Dialogical Self Theory

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<sup>5</sup> In chapter 1, I have adopted Somers' definition of narrative as "constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by casual emplotment [...] the chief characteristic of narrative is that it renders understanding only by connecting (however unstable) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices". (1994, 616)

<sup>6</sup> The concept of "position" differs from the idea of "role" which has informed role theory (Mead 1934). Positioning theory adopts a constitutive view of language. Following this, human interaction is not related to fixed roles from which a person is separable, but to discursive practices in which people are provided with and choose "subject positions" (Davies and Harre' 1999, 41-45).

<sup>7</sup> Researchers tend to separate personal from social positions (Harre' and van Langenhove 1991; Hermans 2001). Personal positions are those which are felt as part of myself (e.g. I as a mother). Social positions reflect the force of discourses and institutional prescriptions that define and limit the boundaries of the self (e.g. class) (Raggatt 2007, 359). I find the distinction problematic as it goes against the core argument of a relational approach. Supposedly personal positions such as I as a mother are invested with complex social meaning which makes it difficult to discern between what is social and what is personal (Hollway 2010). As Raggatt (2007, 359) points out, from a relational perspective the individual and the social "are part of a common dialogue" which shapes the self.

(Hermans et al. 1992; Hermans 2001; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). There are many potentially contrasting positions that can be occupied by the same person at the same time (Hermans et al. 1992, 29). This does not mean that the self is deranged or completely fragmented, as implied by some post-modern authors (see Flax 1990 for a review). Despite a multitude of positions, an individual creates self narratives which appear as coherent. A person has the possibility to move from one position to another depending on changes in situation and time. One's embeddedness in a social context may change over time as well as one's way of appropriating meaning from that particular context. Also, new positions can be introduced in the self-space depending on the changes in her life course (Hermans 2001, 252-255). Consequently, this approach departs from the work of McAdams who emphasises the unifying function of stories for identity as if there is one single story to tell for each person (1985; 2006). Naturally, when reached adulthood several narratives about the self have become dominant, but they still have no unifying character. Haste and Abrahms (2008) refer for instance to how black and coloured South Africans actively adopted new narratives and new derivative positions about themselves and the white population in the post-apartheid regime. One black South African, when asked how he would define himself in the new political context, replied "The answer is South African! If I say I am black then the other person will say he is white and then we start racism again and all the divisions and then we have apartheid. That is why I say that I am a human being and a South African, to stop racism" (2008, 390).

The contingency of identity does not imply a voluntaristic free choice, however, as Hermans and associate seem to suggest when conceptualising the self in terms of a "dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions" (1992, 28). The construction of positions is limited by broader societal discourses about good and bad, valuable and dishonourable. This view is supported by the empirical work of Gary Gregg (1991) who demonstrates how the positioning of the self is often dependent upon macro societal discourses relating to, for example, conflicts about class, gender, or ethnicity. Identity formation is not void of agency, however. Identities are in part actively constructed, contested and negotiated by active speakers (Taylor 2006, 95). The positions provided by the socio-cultural context in which one operates can be challenged through the creation of counter-narratives creating a new position. In this way, we can explain for instance the emergence of the gay movement as

presenting a counter-narrative to the hegemonic heterosexual narrations on family life<sup>8</sup>.

### **Self-other relations in a relational self**

The independent self perspective considers the relations with other people to be important but not constitutive of the self. Instead, a relational approach sees the self as constituted predominantly in terms of relationships with others. The other is important not only as s/he narrates stories which position individuals in accordance with his/her perception of the object of narration in a social context. It is also part of the self. An individual creates self-positions which refer to other people that are present in the narrator's life (Hermans et al. 1992, 29). For instance a woman can position herself as a wife only if she is wedded to her spouse.

Not only the real other but also the imagined other plays an important role in questioning, challenging and changing one's positions (Kinnvall 2004; 2006; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). Sometimes collective actors can project specific characteristics onto an individual or a group that are not present in the everyday life of the subject. This can have the effect of positioning individuals or groups as an enemy. It affects self-other relationships by ascribing a moral value depicting the out-group as bad and the in-group as good. For instance, the Italian populist party *Lega Nord* has on several occasions campaigned against Islam using leaflets that depict it as threatening Italian values and customs. One of them reads "Islam wants to take away Christmas from us! Join the initiative for keeping the nativity in every school. Let us protect our roots!". Another leaflet shows four immigrants queueing up in front of an elderly Italian man. The drawing is accompanied by the words "For the rights to housing, employment and health services – Guess who's the last one? Wake up!". Indeed, the *Lega* peppers its anti-Muslim and anti-immigration campaigns with dubious factual information about immigrant policies which they claim disadvantage groups they define as ethnic northern Italians.

Relations between self and other can bring about change in a person's sense of who s/he is. Hermans is clear in this respect when he argues that "the actual other questions, challenges and changes the existing positions in the self, and is able to introduce new ones" (2001, 255). When two people with different

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<sup>8</sup> A volume edited by Geisler (2005) provides several examples which illustrate how new narratives are constructed to contest national narratives.

position (I as Swede and I as Iraqi) come into contact, their ways of positioning themselves in broader discourses about Swedishness or Iraqness may be changed. New positions could develop out of narratives which for instance emphasise a hyphenated Swedish-Iraqi identity, or which redefine what it means to be a Swedish or an Iraqi living in Sweden. Contact with the real other, when not supported by structural and institutional arrangements can lead to “dialogical misunderstandings” (Hermans 2001, 257), when the rights, duties and obligations attached to a position collide with those attached to another. The degree of success of any strategy, such as contact or dialogue, which aims at changing existing positions is determined by the level of equal involvement of the parts.

The conception of the self presented here is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary diverse societies where different groups come together and possibly create new positions (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). To see the self as dynamic means that there is room for change at individual level and at the interpersonal (self-other) level. It therefore opens up for change in the psychological orientations toward the other.

### **Group formation**

A transformative theory of multiculturalism needs to be underpinned by an understanding of collective identity which acknowledges the complex processual and relational character of group formation. I find Alberto Melucci’s definition of collective identity to be particularly useful in this context. He argues that

Collective identity is an *interactive* and *shared* definition produced by several *interacting individuals* who are concerned with the *orientations* of their action as well as the field of *opportunities and constraints* in which their action takes place. (1989, 34. Emphasis added)

Thus defined, a collective identity is the outcome of interactions and dialogues among people and between people and dominant institutions and is therefore relational. Individuals are active agents and contribute to the formulation of a more or less stable “we” (i.e. a group) by formulating, negotiating and adjusting the goals of their actions, the means used, and the environment in which they are embedded (Melucci 1989, 26-27). None of these elements can be assumed *a priori*. Negotiations invest the social characteristics, values and valence of a group with meaning. This is part of the process of collective identity construction. This process also entails emotional investments which enable

individuals to identify with each other and to build ties of solidarity (Melucci 1989, 29; 35). A strong identification, i.e. subjective sense of membership with a group, makes participation in collective action on behalf of that group more likely (Huddy, 2003, 513; Klandermans 2003, 683).

Group solidarity is “not a given state of affairs” (Melucci 1989, 217). Leaders may attempt to give a more durable and predictable order to the negotiations over goals and meanings in a context. They are also those who put most emphasis on unity (Melucci 1989, 218). They have the material and discursive power to monopolise the meaning of the definition of the social characteristics of typical group members, the core values associated with membership, and the characteristics of common out-groups who help to define what the in-group is not. The attempts to impose one meaning of a social identity can silence the multiplicity of interpretations about a collective identity<sup>9</sup>. In reality however, groups are characterised by constant tensions and differences in interpreting what a group is and stands for. Britain’s Muslims, for instance, actively deliberate upon what it means to adopt a Muslim identification. There are debates about how to participate in British social and political institutions, how to understand Muslims’ marginalisation, or how to wear traditional garments. They all share a concern with improving Muslims’ collective position in Britain. However, different actors present different interpretations for how to come to terms with these issues. These multiple interpretations develop different meanings of what it means to be Muslim in Britain (Dwyer 1999; Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins 2006; Werbner 2000). The processes of collective identity construction are always mediated by factors such as gender, ability, sexuality, age, etc. (Yuval Davis 1997). Therefore some individuals, because of the existing relations of power in a particular context, will have fewer possibilities to participate in the discussions about their group’s collective identity. This has historically been the case for women in the definition of a national collective identity in Western European states.

Particular identities, such as ethnic or cultural ones, are constructed because they respond to collective needs. Kinnvall (2004; 2006) demonstrates that in order to cope with destabilising factors such as increased globalisation, individuals can perceive an increased sense of insecurity and vulnerability and

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<sup>9</sup> This is what Dialogical Self Theory, drawing from Bakhtin ([1929] 1984; 1994), calls “monological closures” (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007).



may need to reaffirm a threatened self-identity. Kinnvall argues that nationalist and religious identities

supply particularly powerful stories and beliefs because of their ability to convey a picture of security, stability, and simple answers. They do this by being portrayed as resting on solid ground, as being true, thus creating a sense that the world really is what it appears to be. (2004, 742. See also Melucci 1989, 209-210; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007).

People caught in the uncertainty of globalisation often solidify group boundaries that used to be flexible—and sometimes construct new group boundaries—in an attempt to reassert power or gain some control over macro-level or global forces.

### **The role of institutions**

Individuals are not the only actors in constructing a collective identity. Institutions play a pivotal role in the process of collective identity formation. This is acknowledged, but not explored in depth, by Hermans and Dimaggio when they argue that “societal institutions entail social positions that deeply influence the dialogical process in structural ways” (2007, 38). This insight is important for this thesis given its empirical focus on the ways in which local institutions position migrants vis-à-vis the majority society.

The liberal state, while it derives its institutional position from the majority society, not only represents its demos but also controls it. The relation between the two is however mutually sustaining. While the state has normative and material power over its demos, in order to find legitimacy it has to anchor much of its actions (policies, laws etc.) in broader societal discourses which will resonate with its citizens. The state is also an important actor in expressing the collective identity of the majority society. It does so through discursive practices such as symbols or narratives. In particular, through discourses such as policies and laws the state expresses and gives legitimacy to a range of narratives which have strong implications for how we conceive of a society, its citizens and the values that are honourable in it (Tronto 1993; Hajer 1995; Bacchi 1999). In establishing the criteria for inclusion and exclusion to a demos in the context of diverse societies, the state ascribes certain characteristics to migrants and maintains and reproduces specific ideas about a collective self. For instance, if the state adopts a narrative about citizenship which follows the logic of *jus solis*, certain number of opportunities are given to the individuals to adopt a position tied to formal group belonging. S/he has to be born in that country in order to be positioned as citizen, regardless of her/his parents’ nationality. If the logic to

access citizenship rights follows *jus sanguinis*, an individual can be positioned as a citizen if s/he has a blood-tie through parents or grandparent of that country. Consequently a migrant is offered a more limited number of opportunities to access a position of citizen of that country.

A theoretical framework which relies on caring ethics, feminist multiculturalism and a relational and processual understanding of personal and social identities can be transformative for two reasons. First, a more flexible understanding of identity formation allows us to propose ways to change the psychological orientations towards the other shared forms of identification which cut across other collective identities. Second, if immigrant policies are informed by caring ethics' values of attentiveness, responsiveness, and responsibility, they would be able to challenge assumptions about the needs of a community's members and they would possibly be better able to challenge unequal inter- and intra-group relations. In the reminder of this chapter I suggest ways in which change at cognitive and social levels could be introduced.

### **3.3 Caring multiculturalism: cognitive transformation**

As demonstrated by psychologists working on reconciliation in intractable conflicts (e.g. Bar-Tal 2000b; Staub 2003; 2007; Staub and Bar-Tal 2003) and by political psychologists working on tolerance and empathetic involvement (e.g. Monroe 1994; Monroe and Martinez 2009), the perceived incompatibility between the opposing parties must be overcome in order to change a conflict-laden situation. New societal goals, new narratives about the otherness of the out-group, as well as narratives about the in-group must be introduced. Indeed, new positions can be introduced in the horizon of the self. New positions can lead to the reorganisation of already existing ones in such a way that the self becomes more adaptive in a range of situations and in relation to out-group members. This reorganisation has the potential of challenging old boundaries between groups and creating platforms for new commonalities, something which has important implications in the context of multiculturalism.

Every form of inter-group conflict, among which I count tensions between groups in diverse societies because of contrasting beliefs, requires cognitive activity by society members in order to understand it (Bar-Tal 2000b,

354; Staub 2007). Conflicts can be resolved through political and psychological processes which ultimately require that the involved parts

Change their beliefs regarding their own goals, the other group's goals, the extent of contradiction between these two sets of goals, the condition of the political environment, the situation of their own group, the situation of the adversary group, or combinations of any or all of these beliefs. (Bar-Tal 2000b, 354-355)

Change can be achieved through several means. Among these there are the creation of new stories which focus on positive reciprocity, or humanisation of the other (Staub 2003, 483); the recognition through dialogue of the parts involved in the conflict (Bar-Tal 2000b, 358); and the promotion of deep contact (Staub 2003; 2006; 2007; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). These measures may introduce new positions that could innovate the individual and collective self and are discussed in detail below.

### ***Humanisation***

Psychologists dealing with conflicts argue that the first step towards ceasing group antagonism is mutual humanisation (e.g. Staub 2003; 2006; 2007; Bar-Tal 2000b; Staub and Bar-Tal 2003). This means that a group should stop treating the other part as inferior and begin to see the other group's members as fellow human beings. Staub (2007, 339-340) suggests that in order to promote humanisation media and institutions should present the lives of the other groups as individuals, families and community members. This could promote cognitive change in several ways. Stereotypes about the other group would be challenged by presentations of the variations in the ways they conduct their lives. To present the everyday lives of other groups would also increase psychological understanding. In the case of migrant minorities, it is therefore important to make the majority society aware of what migrants have left in their country of origins and what has motivated their resettlement. Increased understanding of the psychological consequences of migration may increase empathy and humanisation. Dialogue can also be a strategy towards changed psychological orientations towards the other. To differentiate this kind of dialogue from intercultural dialogue (Parekh 2000), I present transformative dialogue as a means to achieve cognitive transformation.

## ***Transformative dialogue***

One way of achieving change is through what Kenneth Gergen and colleagues have called “transformative dialogue” (2001). The general aim of transformative dialogue is to develop interchanges with members of allegedly antagonistic groups (e.g. members of the majority society with migrants). Some may want to draw parallels to Parekh’s “intercultural dialogue” (2000, 268-273), but the difference between the two is crucial. As argued in chapter 2, I read Parekh’s intercultural dialogue to be based on an oppositional rhetoric which in the end hampers any possibility for transformation of the individual self and of society at large. Transformative dialogue instead takes place when speaker and respondent recognise the perspective of the other part in its own right and, further, when they are able and willing to revise and change their initial standpoints by taking the preceding utterances of the other into account (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007).

The aim of transformative dialogue is to crack the often reified boundaries between self and other and to develop new narratives and new common goals that can bring individuals together. Transformative dialogue requires, in line with caring ethics, that we are *attentive* to the viewpoints of others and to their needs. This means that in the course of the dialogue ample opportunity is given for self-expression, that each part can make its voice heard (Gergen et al. 2001). Also, this would require that particular attention is provided to the issue of voice and to who gets to participate in the dialogue, issues I will address later in this chapter. Transformative dialogue also requires that we are *responsive* to the other part of the dialogue. We should acknowledge the specificity of positions of the parts involved and their unique life histories and psychological constitution (Young 1997, 38-57). This also means that we cannot assume that we know what other people’s needs are on the basis of some expert knowledge. Indeed, if we speak for others in the course of defining needs, we are exercising paternalistic authority (White 2000, 44) which deprives the recipients of policies from the possibility to express their needs. Finally, to engage in a transformative dialogue entails that both parts manage to go beyond a rhetoric of group blame and begin to assume the *responsibility* for each other’s identified needs and claims. So for instance, if two cultural groups were to engage in a transformative dialogue, instead of blaming each other for disrupting each others’ traditions, for example, thus further polarizing antagonism, they would try to understand what has caused the other part’s defensive position.

Transformative dialogue can be useful to create self-awareness. Psychological experiments demonstrate that when students are exposed to information about human tendencies for categorisation and us-them differentiations, their helping behaviour increases (Staub 2003, 492-494; Monroe and Martinez 2009). In the context of diverse societies, transformative dialogue can contribute to an increased understanding of the other group's standpoint and can shed some light on the reasons for perceived incommensurability.

Transformative dialogue can also foster awareness of shared needs. Through transformative dialogue participants are given ample opportunities for sharing views that are important to them (Gergen et al. 2001). This can contribute to an increased understanding of the lives of the other group and the consideration that both groups may have communal needs. The involved groups may then decide to collaborate in order to meet these shared needs which can provide the basis for a new common identity. For instance, members of the majority society and of migrant communities may find that they share interests of having better schools in their neighbourhood, or more policing for dealing with urban unrest. This may trigger a sense of commonality and identification with the neighbourhood in which they live. Community leaders, politicians and media would have an important role in this because they have substantial influence in affecting minds to new perspectives (Staub 2007, 342). This is not the same as advocating assimilation, i.e. acceptance of the normative framework of the recipient society. Rather, I see that new emotional ties can be developed through the revision or accommodation of each group's (potentially conflicting) societal goals and narratives in favour of shared, super-ordinate ones (Staub 2003, 484).

Narratives about a shared history and a common vision for the future can also be promoted through transformative dialogue. Several authors who have studied reconciliation in war-torn societies give special attention to the process of examining the past in a truthful way in order to foster social and psychological healing (e.g. Boraine et al. 1994; Lederach 1997; de la Rey and Owens 1998). Discussing the relations between Dutch and Muslim communities in Amsterdam, Staub (2007, 350-351) suggests that a shared history including both Dutch and Muslims would describe how migrants in the Netherlands were first welcomed as workers, how economic changes led to unemployment and how this impacted on both migrants and the Dutch society. Through transformative dialogue, both parts could present their interpretation of the past and of the relations between groups and try to create stories that encompass each side's perspective.

Transformative dialogue does not aim at consensus as understood as rational collective agreement. Rather it means to advocate a view of consensus that acknowledges the importance of dissent.

Consensus is needed on the institutions constitutive of democracy and on the “etho-political” values informing political associations – liberty and equality for all – but there will always be disagreement concerning their meaning and the way they should implemented. (Mouffe 2005, 31)

We can therefore aim at achieving procedural, rather than substantive consensus (see also Nesbitt-Larking 2008a). For instance, there may be consensus on the list of reasons that are acceptable publicly but disagreement on the weight of the different reasons. Or there may be agreement on general reasons abstractly understood but disagreement about particular interpretations of those reasons. This understanding of public dialogue, which Mouffe (2005) labels “agonistic”, acknowledges the pluralistic character of contemporary societies and can bring about new meanings to democratic practices and norms.

### **Potential problems with transformative dialogue**

A question which everyone who explores the possibility of dialogue in multicultural societies has to struggle with is what happens if, regardless of a commitment to dialogue, the involved parts continue to have opposed ethical standpoints? This question can be broken down into two scenarios. One refers to opposed ethical perspectives. The second deals with the unwillingness of certain individuals to engage in a democratic, transformative dialogue. Parekh, as well as Kymlicka, argues that in case of incommensurable divergences the majority society’s (liberal) operative public values should prevail (2000, 267). Their solution moves too swiftly towards liberal rights. I argue that the steps between potential disputes over ethical standpoints and the assertion of liberal values, as well as the reasons provided for letting liberal values win, are far more complex than the proponents of multiculturalism claim. They involve contested issues of representation and voice. I will return to these later.

Paul Nesbitt-Larking raises another important question: “what does one do with those fundamentalists who refuse to engage in democracy themselves?” (2008b, 19; 2009). We cannot assume that everyone wants to engage in a dialogue. There is however a difference, as Nesbitt-Larking points out, between those who have not been enabled to participate in a democratic dialogue and demos, and those who have excluded themselves. Their decision to reject any engagement with the political community and, in extreme cases, to destroy it and

wreak vengeance is an expression of agency which cannot be ignored or excused. The discussion about the refusal to engage in a dialogue does not concern only fundamentalists, however. When studying participation in a multicultural society, we should also include those migrants who do not wish to participate because they have no intention to stay and they may be more interested in maintaining strong ties with their country of origin. This applies, for instance, to recent Eastern European migrants in Britain (Green et al. 2007), but also to Turks in Germany in the early days of the guest workers programmes (Koopmans et al. 2005), and to intra-EU migrants (Favell 2008). The question of how to deal with a benevolent lack of participation should be the subject of further inquiry, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address it.

Hermans and Dimaggio (2007), in line with the idea of transformative dialogue, demonstrate that in clinical experimental studies, communication with real others and engagement with other people's narratives supply means for overcoming the fears and uncertainties of contemporary western societies and, I would add, provide the foundation for a caring multiculturalism. However, as shown by Rosler et al. (2009) in the case of Israel, this is as much an internal as an external process. Instead of narratives being formed through confrontation with real others, people's fears are often dominated by rumours, media images, and meta-narratives dividing worlds into neat categorisations. How can these images and narratives be countered through the use of an imaginary other? Gergen's work does not provide a clear answer to this. Hermans and Dimaggio (2007, 54-56) refer to clinical experiments that aim to establish a dialogue with an imagined other. Yet these studies do not address how we can overcome stereotypical conceptions of other individuals or groups in contemporary societies. Furthermore, transformative dialogue, as it is elaborated by Gergen and colleagues but also by Hermans and Dimaggio, has significant problems in addressing real structural inequalities. Being able to envision oneself using alternative narratives, real or imagined, is only a temporary solution to structural discrimination (Kinnvall, Monroe and Scuzzarello 2009; Kinnvall and Scuzzarello, forthcoming). If a transformative dialogue aims at opening up for the development of new forms of self and collective identification, then it should appeal to a potential sense of belonging to the physical space in which individuals live. The local community is particularly suitable for this scope. The city is the main site where migrants and recipient society meet and confront; where the questions of how to come to terms with diversity are concretely felt; and where people's stereotypes and fears for each other are played out (Penninx and Martiniello 2004, 155). Hence the city is plausibly the best place where

dialogue with a real other can be established. This will be studied in the empirical section of the dissertation. Also the city, and the living in it, provides a strong enough basis to construct a new sense of belonging. I shall develop this in the next section.

### ***Solidarity - local contacts that bind***

Most theorists on multiculturalism argue that a multicultural society cannot be stable and long lasting if a common sense of belonging among its citizens is not developed (e.g. Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; 2008; Modood 2007). Quite often this sense of belonging and its derivative common goals refer to the establishment of a political community which, by and large, is coterminous with a national community. For reasons presented in chapter 2, I am sceptical to the use of national labels as useful common denominators that could provide a basis for identification for the majority society and migrant communities. The meaning of the national is always constructed through patterns of inclusion and exclusion which need to be fully and critically re-evaluated if the “national” is to include new members to its demos. In my view, this re-evaluation is only implicitly assumed in the literature of multiculturalism.

I rather follow the position put forward by, among others, T.H. Marshall that the national community is often too large and remote to trigger a sense of loyalty. A solution is to be sought in the establishment of more limited loyalties, “to the local community and especially to the working group” ([1950] 1992, 47). We should not read this as an either-or situation, either national or local/class citizenship. A relational conception of community allows several loyalties. It seems plausible that if people who identify with social categories referring to one’s nation, gender, race, religion etc. are to participate in and feel responsible for a new diverse community, a local community may become a strong enough platform of identification. It stands in between a narrow sense of community (e.g. family, friends, and interest groups) and a much broader one based on the nation-state. Furthermore, a city<sup>10</sup> is a big-enough territory with which people are

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<sup>10</sup> Plausibly, to live in a metropolis like London or to live in a smaller city affects one’s locally-defined sense of belonging. I would argue that the size of the city one lives in only partly affects one’s sense of identification to it. Other factors can play a role here, such as the extent to which a municipality stimulates active civic participation; which images of the city’s identity it promotes; how it comes to terms with socioeconomic deprivation and urban segregation, etc..



likely to identify more strongly than with a more abstract idea of the state. This is especially likely to be the case in diverse societies where people may feel strong emotional attachments to their country of origin or to their diasporic home-land. With this I am not arguing, as Noddings (1984, 86) controversially does, that “our obligation is limited and delimited by relation. [...] We are not obliged to summon the ‘I must’ if there is not possibility of completion of the other”. Her argument seems to justify the caring only for those in the inner, “natural”, and familiar circle and therefore curtails the political and moral potential of caring ethics. A caring, multicultural conception of citizenship strives to move away from face-to-face relations and must address the potential for neglect of the needs of far-away others (Tronto 1993).

In conceiving of a city as an important node of identification for people living in that community, I address the issue raised by Lister (1997), among others, that a multi-layered conception of community holds dangers in deconstructing identity-interests to a level in which no common identification for collective action remains. The local level, where the level of interrelatedness is clearer, could be conceived of as a better place where responsibility for others and collective action take place. Amin argues that the main site for citizen participation will largely be at the local level.

The urban remains an enormously significant formative arena, not only as the daily space of over half of the world’s population, but also as the supremely visible manifestation of difference and heterogeneity placed together. [...] the ‘being-togetherness’ of life in urban space has to be recognised, demanding attendance to the politics of living together. (2006, 1012)

To foster new narratives about a shared present and future is pivotal for overcoming antagonistic group relations (Bar-Tal 2000b; Staub 2006). These narratives could flourish around e.g. the well-being of the area one lives in. This requires the institutions to provide the means of participation in a dialogue about the issues that are emotionally near to the people living in an area or that touch upon their everyday life. The contact hypothesis (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998), whereby contact between different groups is important to overcome prejudice and which seems to underpin any of the theories and policies of multiculturalism, is important. Recent research (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) following Allport (1954) demonstrate that if four conditions are met<sup>11</sup>, then prejudice against the

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<sup>11</sup> Allport argues that these conditions are essential for optimal intergroup contact.

out-group is more likely to be reduced. These conditions are: equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support. One has to inquire to what extent the norms of the majority society set the stage for contact and the ways in which the minority may feel disadvantaged in the unfolding of the interaction (Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins 2006). The more the authorities support the interaction of individuals on equal terms, the more likely that contact will have positive effects in terms of challenging prejudicial assumptions about the other. Staub (2003; 2006; 2007) following Deutsch (1973) and Sherif et al. (1961) calls for the importance of “deep contact” based on cross-cutting relations. Intergroup cooperation and joint activities such as sport events, educational projects, or community events with common goals ease these relations. In order to promote interaction in schools, cooperative learning procedures in which children work on shared goals (e.g. teaching each other something; carry out a project together) can be introduced and can even promote cross-group friendships (Staub 2007, 349).

I am not rejecting the idea of the nation-state. I argue that to focus on one meaning of community is limiting and that a static focus on national communities legitimises homogenising and excluding practices of citizenship. However, the nation-state plays a pivotal role in granting civil, political and social rights to its citizens which cannot be refuted and, in the words of Lister (1997, 41) it is where one can be a citizen, i.e. enjoy formal rights and formal obligations. Yet, cities are a better site to *act* as a citizen<sup>12</sup>, as one can fulfil the potential of being a citizen by active participation through obligations and duties. In the city the implications of cohesion and the direct and concrete consequences of migration are more vividly felt than at the more distant level of national policy (Penninx and Martiniello 2004, 155)<sup>13</sup>. In a city transformative dialogue can take place.

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<sup>12</sup> Naturally some people for whatever reasons of constraint do not participate in politics in the same way as others. This does not mean that they are lesser citizens. If caring ethics is to inform the values emphasised in the public sphere, we will have a multiple conception of what characterises a “good citizen”, not limited to autonomy and self-sufficiency as the liberal ontology implies. A caring conception of the “good citizen” would be attentive to the capabilities, needs and goals of the individual as part of the society.

<sup>13</sup> Arguably, this way of understanding the relation between national and local levels of governance entails a specific design of municipal institutions and the autonomy and authority of local government vis-à-vis the wider political system. What I am suggesting

## ***Active participation***

A theory of multiculturalism that predominantly focuses on rights risks concealing other interpretations of how injustice could be defined and how needs could be expressed and met. If the focus is mainly on the importance of rights for achieving equality, we run the risk of overlooking normative discussions on civic participation (Young 1990, 116-121). The perspectives on multiculturalism presented earlier emphasise the importance of rights at the same time as they underplay the importance of corresponding duties “inspired by a lively sense of responsibility towards the welfare of the community” (Marshall [1950]1992, 41). By this I mean that they place insufficient emphasis on the role played by people as actors engaging with political and welfare institutions who feel a sense of responsibility to the community they live in, i.e. a community other than their ethnic, religious or cultural one. Multicultural scholars address how racial equality can be achieved (Kymlicka 1995; Raz 1998; Parekh 2005). They typically call for a wide application of anti-discrimination legislation; well developed educational and economic policies which target less-advantaged ethnic groups; affirmative action; and programmes that foster the self-esteem and self-confidence of marginalised groups. While the solutions proposed are valuable, I am concerned that their standpoint is too strictly top-down. It runs the risk of paying insufficient attention to migrants’ (and civil society’s in general) mobilisation in overcoming structural discrimination and pursue an approach to multiculturalism which defines beforehand the needs of the beneficiaries of multicultural policies. Rather than emphasising the importance of a set of formal civil and political rights, in line with a liberal conception of citizenship, a theory of multiculturalism would benefit from an equal emphasis on participation and political action. To foster a sense of civic responsibility for the community one lives in contributes to the transformation of relationships between those committed to otherwise separate and antagonistic realities (and their related practices) to one in which common and solidifying realities are under construction.

Several authors convincingly argue for the strengths of bringing the language of rights with the language of responsibility and active involvement and participation in the determination, practice and promotion of the common good (e.g. Mouffe 1992; Lister 1997; Lister et al. 2007). In this context, Lister

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here entails a larger distribution of power to the local entities and a stronger bottom-up relation between local and national government.

distinguishes between *being* a citizen, and *acting* as one (1997, 41). Feminist scholars have challenged the idea of active participation as it assumes equal access to the public sphere which bears little resonance with the lived experience of many (Phillips 1991). Furthermore, what is considered an obligation that a citizen shall fulfil is the expression of a historical and cultural specific morality which reflects predominant patterns of meaning production (Tronto 1993). Care, for instance, insofar as it is undertaken in the private sphere, tends to be disregarded as an expression of active participation. What should then be regarded as “political participation”? I subscribe to the argument made by Lister (1997, 28) that, in order to include groups traditionally marginalised in the political process, we need to adopt a broad notion of the political which is dialectically interrelated, but still different from, the private aspects of social life (Pateman 1989, 110). A narrow understanding of participation is tightly interwoven with a specific conception of the “competent citizen” characterised by autonomy and efficiency (Haste 2004, 426). This has excluded some from the political: women, elderly, youth, migrants. To reconceptualise participation and thereby including other forms of service to the community is one way to rewrite the moral boundaries that delimit our conception of the political. This would include small-scale political action at the neighbourhood level (Lister 1997, 39) and the re-evaluation of the practices of care (Tronto 1993; Sevenhuijsen 1998) – even when informal (Williams 2002). Rewriting the boundaries of the political helps to build a new sense of political competence which is a necessary condition of active citizenship (Pateman 1989)<sup>14</sup>.

### **3.4 Caring multiculturalism: social change**

Caring multiculturalism aims to present the ways in which existing power relations within and between groups could be challenged. In particular, I focus on the principle of voice as discussed by care ethicists (e.g. Gilligan 1982; White 2000; Williams 2002). Voice refers not only to the process of expressing needs

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<sup>14</sup> Erel (2009) advocates a conceptualisation of citizenship which puts agency at the centre of attention. Drawing from her empirical study on Turkish women in Germany and in the UK, Erel maintains that we need to take seriously migrants’ experiences of citizenship across different social sites and relations by focusing on how they negotiate the meanings of their ascribed and self-chosen identities; how they substantiate their capacities of political, caring and ethical working in relation to other citizens; how they are rights-claiming, as well as rights-bearing, subjects.

and opinions. It also needs to be understood politically in relation to the relative power of actors to affect decision-making. Some voices are louder than others and are able to gain visibility because they resonate with those of the *status quo*. Other less powerful people may not have sufficient power to voice their demands nor have them heard. In the context of caring multiculturalism, the principle of voice is important. First, it is a useful means to address the power of interpreting and expressing the needs of a community. Second, it is important to understand how individuals negotiate intra-group oppression and the possibility to exit their cultural group.

### ***Voice: between needs interpretation and problem setting***

The politics of multiculturalism are not just about political participation which can help to define oneself as a member of a group. They are also about who has the power to define the problems of a community and about who gets to interpret their needs. In the literature on care, the issue of knowledge about the definition of needs is related to a critique of the power of expert knowledge embedded in welfare institutions (White 2000; Williams 2002). Following Nancy Fraser (1989), this can be called the “power of needs interpretation”. To transcend the limitation of expert knowledge, Hankivsky (2004, 44) argues that “we need to take into account the explicit and consistent recognition of context, attentiveness to the expressed experiences of the disadvantaged, and the weighing of actual consequences” for those who are beneficiaries of certain policies. In the context of multiculturalism, feminist scholars have challenged the power of knowledge of ethnic/religious entrepreneurs such as community leaders who set the agenda in regard to the problems their community face (Shachar 2001; Okin 2002; Phillips 2007). I label this the “*power of problem setting*” referring to the authority of the providers of care and of group leaders in defining needs. The principle of voice can help us challenge both forms of power. It contributes to organising the policies of multiculturalism in accordance with the lived experiences and needs of the targets of these policies. This means that in order to challenge the power of needs interpretation and problem setting, we have to listen to the voices that have been silenced due to their positioning as incompetent and incapable of defining their own needs and problems. In what follows, I address how the principle of voice can challenge institutional as well as group leaders’ expert knowledge.

## Power of needs interpretation

In her study of public programmes for youths and families living in deprived conditions, White (2000) demonstrates that a formalistic and technical understanding of the problems of the beneficiaries of the programmes fails to challenge the asymmetries of power between care-providers and care-takers. Rather, these relations of power are reinforced as the knowledge of some individuals is deemed to be more valuable and authoritative than the experience of others. The policy officers often define the needs of the beneficiaries of care as well as the effectiveness of their practices. According to a formalistic approach to needs interpretation and care, experts also have the power to decide when to consult the beneficiaries of care and who should be selected to voice the community's collective needs. This contributes to the institutionalisation of "paternalistic authority" defined as the power "*exercised in the process of speaking for others in the course of defining needs*" (White 2000, 44). This undermines the trust towards the providers of care and triggers a lack of legitimacy in the targeted community. Drawing on caring ethics, White suggests reframing what counts as valuable knowledge. A deep understanding of the mechanisms of policymaking in a specific context is crucial. If policies are to achieve legitimacy, however, the lived experiences of those who are their potential beneficiaries are pivotal. It is important to engage in a dialogue with the beneficiaries of policies about their needs and rights in order to reframe what counts as valuable knowledge. It is also critical to highlight that the role of expertise is embedded in narratives which position some people as more dependent than others and therefore as less autonomous and less able to participate in the public sphere. These narratives can maintain structures of domination between the carer and the cared-for (Tronto 1993, 120-122; White 2000, 68-70; Williams 2002, 507). White argues that one way to identify domination in these instances is to assess the level of participation in the process of defining needs.

[W]hen those who are in need participate in this process of defining needs, this would create a politics of needs interpretation appropriate to our democratic commitment. Furthermore, such participation would open up the space for conflict about what exactly is needed. (2000, 70)

White's position is interesting as it stresses the importance of the context in which issues are perceived as needs (2000, 145). Her attempt to reframe what counts as knowledge and who is dependent is important for the politics of caring multiculturalism. White advocates a strategy of need assessment that directly

involves the targeted community in order to build trust between policymakers and beneficiaries of social policies (2000, 136; 157-160). Crucially, White challenges the connection between dependence and incompetence that legitimises the power of expert knowledge. This has also implications for empowering those who are traditionally positioned as dependent because it opens the way for their participation in the public domain. However, as she calls for a participatory approach to needs interpretation, she overlooks the power of problem setting and representation, i.e. who has the power to make him- or herself heard as the representative of a community? This problem is also faced by multicultural theorists in general, while feminist multicultural scholars have been more prone to address the issue of voice.

### **Power of problem setting**

Authors such as Okin, Shachar, Phillips, and Saharso have analysed how depictions of culture are employed selectively by community leaders in a way that disadvantages certain segments of the in-group. These actors have the power to make certain narratives seemingly more authentic than others and they silence the variety of voices within every group. They obtain this power in a variety of ways. For instance, they are more vocal in the public debate, and as such they are seen as representative interlocutors with the state<sup>15</sup>. How can caring multiculturalism address the power of problem setting? Shachar (2001, 117-145) outlines an approach called “transformative accommodation” which can potentially overcome some of the issues embedded in the power of problem setting.

Transformative accommodation is a form of non-exclusive joint-governance between the state and the group in question, where the two parts have to compete for the loyalty of those people who overlap both jurisdictions. In order to maintain ties to a community, the leaders of the state and of the group have to provide the individuals with choices that can appeal to them. For instance, when a practice is considered discriminatory by some members of a

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<sup>15</sup> This relationship is mutually reinforcing. However, if the state does not consider them as legitimate representatives for a group, the power of these leaders and their presence in the public domain can diminish. For instance the British government has recently suspended ties with Britain’s largest Muslim group (Muslim Council of Britain) and demanded that one of its leaders should be removed from office for allegedly supporting violence against Israel (*The Guardian* March 23, 2009). Prior to this, the Muslim Council of Britain has been one of the main interlocutors of the Tony Blair’s government.

minority group, the leaders of that group will have to change those practices if they want to maintain the loyalty of these members. This shifts the balance of power between leaders and individual members so that “a dynamic new space for meaningful participatory group membership is created” (2001, 123).

Shachar’s perspective is appealing from the view point of caring multiculturalism. She puts an important share of responsibility for achieving change on group leaders and on the state. In this sense, her approach leaves more power to the individual who can “discipline” the relevant power-holders if they “fail to effectively respond to constituent needs” (2001, 122). However, Shachar’s point of departure is a strong, albeit not essentialist, definition of the group<sup>16</sup>. While rejecting the notion of culture as static and unified, she still maintains that cultural belonging and the distinctiveness of each cultural group is important. As Phillips accurately notes, even if Shachar subscribes to a fluid notion of culture, “she ends up allowing for a considerable level of group control over individual behaviour” (2007, 28). I find the strong conception of culture put forward by Shachar to be problematic for yet another reason. In my reading of her work, individuals are given power “by invitation”<sup>17</sup>, i.e. the power to change their group from within is provided only when the rules of the game have already been set in the negotiation between the group and the state and when power is largely provided by the stronger parties themselves. Who defines the boundaries of the group and the legitimacy of their representatives is left unanswered and consequently, the power of problem setting is not addressed.

In order to address the power of problem setting we cannot assume *a priori* the normative significance of culture over others forms of identification. Culture is a web of fluid and contingent discourses and material practices interrelated to each other and which, to a large extent, are interpreted differently by different people. Accordingly, we cannot guarantee rights to cultural groups prior to a deep scrutiny of the strategic dimensions of identity construction. In

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<sup>16</sup> The object of her discussion is “nomoi community” which she defines as “religiously defined groups of people that “share a comprehensive world view that extends to creating a law for the community” [...] This definition can also apply to other types of minority groups, such as those organized primarily along ethnic, racial, tribal, or national-origin lines, as long as their members share a comprehensive world view that extends to creating a law for the community” (Shachar 2001, 2).

<sup>17</sup> Anne White (2000, 157-160) distinguishes between “meaningful” empowerment, when one can participate in decisions about needs and solutions as an equal, and empowerment “by invitation” where participation is “envisioned as a process of ‘buy-in’ on the part of the community designated ‘at risk’” (2000, 158). I borrow this distinction from her.



order to challenge the power of problem setting and the consequent silencing of certain voices, caring multiculturalism advocates a more distanced approach to culture. In arguing this I largely draw on Phillips' view of "multiculturalism without culture" (2007). She develops a theory of multiculturalism that objects to "measures that enhance the regulatory authority of a group over its members, or elevate what some of its members claim to be their cultural norms over the beliefs and interpretations of others from the group" (2007, 169), something I subscribe to<sup>18</sup>. In addition to the position presented by Phillips, I advocate a theoretical framework which builds upon a more robust inquiry about the "stuff" of culture and groups and about the struggles about culture. Hence, caring multiculturalism accepts the fact that people may gather around cultural narratives and symbols and that they may claim certain specific rights in the name of these narratives. It also holds that an analysis of the claims made and the needs expressed must be the first step in the development of a diverse, but still cohesive, society. Such an analysis can indeed show similarities across groups and can create possibilities for specifying other kinds of interrelatedness. Thus, in order to challenge the power of problem setting, caring multiculturalism would not take for granted the in-group homogeneous and harmonious character, but would rather take seriously the personal identification of the individuals with the group in question. Some individuals, whose ascribed identity can position them as members of a minority group, do not necessarily identify with those narratives and they may express affiliations to other memberships. Some others may however have a strong allegiance to certain cultural narratives, but could also feel that their chosen group membership can coerce their agency or even

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<sup>18</sup> There are however parts of Phillips' argument which I find less convincing. For instance she stresses the importance of affirmative mechanisms that can increase the political representation of cultural and national groups. The groups she envisions to be represented are collectivities including "those deemed by themselves and others to constitute its members". She seeks for measures that can increase the political participation of a group of individuals which, because of markers such as gender, culture or religion, are associated with key differences in experience, values and interests that should then be represented in the decision-making process (2007, 166-169). While I agree that it is important to voice the particular experience of people who identify themselves with a specific set of narratives, I do not find Phillips' argument convincing enough. By bringing about measures which increase the political representation of groups qua groups, she does not depart from the view that markers of gender, culture or religion are fundamental to the individuals concerned and therefore legitimate grounds for e.g. affirmative action.

discriminate them. They may therefore want to change their situation. Multicultural theorists have addressed this in terms of right of exit. In the last section of this chapter I address how caring multiculturalism re-conceptualises this right.

### ***The right of exit revisited***

In chapter 2 I have argued how the right of exit, as formulated in the literature on multiculturalism, can be constrained by a lack of material resources; by fear for adverse consequences; and by the psychological attachment one has towards one's community. Multicultural theories try to come to terms with some of these problems by acknowledging that exit is a "slow and painful process" (Margarit and Raz 1990, 444). They leave it up to the individual to decide whether to exit or not, whereby they take away the responsibility for changing discriminatory practices from the hands of the group authorities or the state (Shachar 2001, 40-42), thereby discouraging internally generated change (Phillips 2007, 139). Those who suffer discriminations within the own group are therefore asked to either accept the practices of the group or somehow leave. This, as Saharso underlines (2003, 201), creates an opposition between voluntary and coerced behaviour, thus ignoring the relationships and context within which choices are made.

Shachar (2001) reconceptualises exit in two respects. That a contested social arena can be divided into several sub-matters over which state and group will exercise a joint-governance, and that people have multiple identities and multiple affiliations. She argues that exit can be partial, i.e. one individual can opt out of the way one authority governs over one sub-matter. For instance, if a Catholic woman finds the way the Catholic Church decides over divorce discriminatory or unfair, she can turn to the state while still retaining other aspects of her religion. She will thus not leave her group entirely and, by opting out of a particular sub-matter, she can put pressure on the Catholic Church to reconsider its rules over divorce. Shachar's point is convincing in as far as she provides an alternative to the complete desertion from one's group and suggests ways of transforming a group from within. However, as highlighted by Phillips (2007, 152-153), she has difficulties dealing with real situations, especially in the European context where the joint governance between state and churches is not likely to take place. Furthermore, to opt out of a jurisdiction is in some instances

not enough to trigger internal change. If a member of a group still remains part of it, what are the incentives for change<sup>19</sup>?

Despite these unresolved issues Shachar rises the important point, highlighted also by Benhabib (2002, 131-132) and Phillips (2007, 157), that people may want to remain group members because they may have a strong normative and emotional commitment to it. Caring multiculturalism tries to accommodate freedom of association by stressing the importance of attentiveness to the voice of those who may be discriminated against but still want to stay. The state must act responsibly and offer protection to those who want to exit as well as exercise the right to intervene and regulate the cost of exit in line with principles of individual equality (Benhabib 2002, 132). In doing this, caring multiculturalism departs from the conception of autonomy advocated by proponents of multiculturalism. Caring multiculturalism embraces instead the relational understanding of autonomy developed in feminist ethics (Mackenzie and Stoljar (eds.) 2000). Relational autonomy will help us to reframe the right of exit by adding agency and voice to the discussion. Relational autonomy recognises the dependence of any given individual on the surrounding network of social, economic and political relations (Elias 1991, 50) without, however, neglecting agency. The choices made to resist or question beliefs and customs one grew up with take place within a network of social relations, and as such none of our choices come out in isolation from the context in which we act (Phillips 2007, 101; Held 2006, 49). While an ethics of care stresses the importance of relationships, a caring individual must be able to critically examine her involvement in a web of relationships. If certain relationships are damaging and limit one's ability to care, they can be broken off. Individuals may recognise that their identity is not completely bound up with certain relationships and may therefore choose to end them. In taking responsibility for one's relationships and in critically assessing if they are worthy of preservation, one is autonomous (Clemens 1996, 35-43).

In discussing autonomy we need to be careful not to attribute a value to the content of the choices made *a priori*. As Phillips puts it "even a choice that

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<sup>19</sup> However, my example of the Catholic Church is to some extent a case in favour Shachar's argument. In the past five years, the Court of the Rota Romana (the Court in the Vatican which has the power to annul a catholic marriage) has annulled one marriage out of five. Pope Benedict XVI has recently condemned this development (*Corriere della Sera*, March 15, 2008). It is unclear if the changes within the Catholic Church are dependent on internal pressures or exogenous factors.

involves relinquishing future opportunities should still count as a choice” (2007, 102). Similarly Saharso (2003) makes the case that morally contested practices such as sex-selective abortion and hymen repair should be accepted by the majority society when requested by adult women who are capable of evaluating the consequences of their action. To refuse to perform these and similar practices would infringe on minority women’s right of autonomy. This position is problematic and I do not fully share Sharso’s position<sup>20</sup>. It is important, however, to conduct an attentive analysis of the agency of the individual who decides to embrace practices which are controversial from a Western perspective, before condemning that practice. This would possibly prevent the devaluation of some choices on the basis on one’s normative framework. It is a way of avoiding the stereotype about minority women as either prisoners or as victims of their patriarchal culture (as portrayed by Okin 1999). From a relational and feminist perspective the point is that autonomy is arrived at through processes of critical reflection which are constrained by the embeddedness of individuals in the networks of relationships.

### 3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have presented the main tenets of caring multiculturalism. The scope of the chapter has been to answer the question of how caring multiculturalism can help us to address diversity in such a way that it can expose

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<sup>20</sup> I find it striking that Saharso does not address the issue of how to change practices that are obviously discriminating against one section of a group, in this case women. Women may indeed choose freely to have their hymen repaired or to abort female fetuses, but they do so because they fear community sanctions, as Saharso acknowledges (2003, 207). Saharso’s argument is problematic for other reasons. First her argument is prone to the logic of cultural relativism coupled with a cultural imperialist critique. To her, those who argue against discriminatory cultural practices are depicting minority women as brain-washed. While it may be true of some commentators, in my reading most feminist critiques against discriminatory practices (carried out by minority groups as well as by the majority society) value the agency of women while at the same time seeing that agency as a window of opportunity for starting change within the group in question. This could be done in accordance with less discriminatory patterns while at the same time being attentive to the voice of the individuals who decide to behave in a certain way. Second Saharso’s argument maintains and legitimises narratives about the inferiority of women. Third it reduces the autonomy of other women within the same group who do not want to comply with these practices. As a solution, Saharso calls upon the right of exit which she frames however within an “opt out or shut up” logic.

unequal power relations as well as change psychological orientations, attitudes and feelings towards the “other”. I have focused on the possibilities to change the psychological orientation towards the other and to develop common goals through transformative dialogue and active participation at the local level. In order to challenge unequal power relations within and between groups, I have argued for the importance of voice and have tried to provide a theoretical framework which is not detached from the lived experiences of people.

Caring multiculturalism relies on a weaker understanding of culture, conceived of as webs of discourses and practices in constant flux, and a perspective which inquires what people do with culture and how people “do” culture. This enables me to theorise about the formation of new identifications. Through transformative dialogue, people may overcome initial antagonisms and create new narratives about shared goals and common futures, while at the same maintaining their multiple identities and multiple affiliations. To inquire the “what” and “how” of culture means that we take seriously the voices of the people who either describe themselves or are described as members of a certain group. This means that caring multiculturalism sees individuals as agents, even the most oppressed ones. To give them the support services to voice their needs and to set their problems is crucial if one takes the issue of agency seriously. Working on the implications of how culture is used and interpreted also means that we are attentive to the context in which certain claims are made and in which certain policies are elaborated.

A contextualised understanding of multiculturalism implies an analysis of the institutional and narrative opportunities and constraints in which caring multiculturalism could be applied. This moves us to the dissertation’s empirical aim which is to understand which institutional and narrative opportunities are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. This is addressed in the following chapters.

## 4 Comparative research design and methods

This dissertation's empirical aim is to understand to what extent three local contexts, Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna, hold the potential for adopting caring multiculturalism. The thesis' empirical research questions focus on the institutional opportunities for migrants' political participation and on the narrative construction of integration and of migrants. The answers to these questions aim to provide insights for the theoretical development of caring multiculturalism. We will learn more about the extent to which institutional infrastructures and discursive framework are more likely to stimulate the implementation of caring multiculturalism. I am not looking for a single, absolute, political environment which can favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. The extent to which different political contexts can hold potential for adopting caring multiculturalism can only be understood in relation to, and relative to, each other. Therefore this study adopts a comparative perspective.

In this chapter I outline the empirical research design adopted and the methods used to examine the institutional and the discursive sides of the political opportunity structures<sup>1</sup>. I briefly present the existing comparative perspectives on the field of immigrant policies. I then discuss the comparative research design used in this study. I argue that we as researchers cannot impose our own normative framework, here caring multiculturalism, on social reality. Instead we need to identify and understand the existing opportunities that may favour the potential adoption of such a framework. Following a political opportunity structure approach (Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1998; Kriesi et al. 1995), I argue that the institutional and discursive context of a particular political environment are important factors which shape the possibilities for introducing new policy ideas and norms in line with caring multiculturalism. In the thesis I will compare the institutional opportunity structures which enable migrants to participate in the majority society. These institutional frameworks find legitimacy among the

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<sup>1</sup> Political opportunity structures have been subject of research for decades now. In this thesis I adopt a political opportunity structure approach as an analytical tool and I do not aim to develop this field of work.

public because they resonate with existing discourses about e.g. who is part of the polity or what constitutes a citizen. I argue that these discourses can be expressed in narratives which can be identified in public policies. In section 4.5 I present the material I have analysed. Finally in sections 4.6 and 4.7 I discuss the selection of my cases and present the most relevant characteristics of each city.

## **4.1 Comparative perspectives and different institutional levels in immigrant policies**

Ten years ago, Koopmans and Statham (2000) pointed out that much research in the field of ethnic relations and integration was conducted as single-country case studies. These were often parts of anthologies where each chapter addressed the topic of integration politics for one single country and were not compared systematically<sup>2</sup>. Since the late 1990s, however, we have witnessed an upsurge of systematic cross-national research (e.g. Joppke 1996; 1999; Favell 1998; Koopmans and Statham eds. 2000; Koopmans et al. 2005). This body of work focuses mainly on three related areas. Some concentrate on the national regimes and institutions that shape the socio-political context in which immigrant policies are formed. Other authors analyse the political framework in different countries and the impact it has on migrant mobilisation. A third group of studies focuses on the decline of the nation-state's sovereignty and power and the establishment of new patterns of multilevel governance<sup>3</sup>. The value of these studies is undeniable. The interaction between different institutional levels (national-regional-local) in shaping migrant incorporation strategies is however often overlooked.

In the past fifteen years, urban contexts have increasingly become objects of enquiry, especially within Europe (e.g. Ireland 1994; Rex and Samad 1996; Garbaye 2000; 2005; Martiniello 2000; Penninx et. al. 2004; Odmalm 2005; Caponio 2006). Authors focusing on local immigrant policies argue that local municipalities have to find answers to immediate and concrete questions such as how to provide migrants with adequate housing, how to make education and

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<sup>2</sup> For single-country studies see e.g. Hammar (ed.) 1985; Ålund and Schierup 1991; Layton-Henry 1992; Miles and Thränhardt (eds.) 1995; Skellington 1996; Colombo and Sciortino (eds.) 2002; Grillo and Pratt (eds.) 2002; Solomos 2003; Modood et al. (eds.) 2006.

<sup>3</sup> For a critical review see Koopmans and Statham (2000, 18-29).

health facilities available, how to respond to migrants' demands for recognizing their cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity (Pennix et al. 2004). However, the literature on migrant incorporation approaches at the local level often presents similar shortcomings to the literature on national immigrant policies. They tend to address only one institutional level, in this case the local one, thus relativising the importance of a country's political system (e.g. Garbaye 2000; Pennix et al. 2004; Alexander 2007). In particular, it overlooks the relevance of the national political environment in shaping local responses to immigration and ethnic diversity.

### ***Local immigrant policies within national contexts***

Koopmans (2004) demonstrates that the local responses to immigrant policies are not detached from the national context in which they are embedded. While significant local variation cannot be underestimated, this range of diversity occurs within a specific national political framework. A local administration's political constellations and coalitions; a city's historical experience with earlier immigration and diversity; the availability of resources and instruments to guide certain aspects of integration policy; and the presence of key-actors involved in defining integration policies are important local-level factors which affect local immigrant policies (Ireland 1994; Garbaye 2005). A city's approach to migrant incorporation is however also shaped by factors such as a country's political system, access to citizenship, national integration regimes, as well as the national discursive construction of the relation between migrants and the recipient society. These act as important factors which constrain policymaking at the local level (Kitschelt 1986; Ireland 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995; Koopmans and Statham 2000; Koopmans 2004). That is, the range of approaches to immigrant policies adopted by different cities within the same nation-state are always rooted in broad national, political and discursive patterns. For instance, the degree to which full and equal citizenship is accessible to individual migrants shapes how migrants are able to mobilise at the local level. If migrants have access to citizenship and the right to vote they tend to play a larger role in the public debate, be less oriented toward homeland politics, and focus strongly on proactive demands for rights and participation. In countries with restrictive citizenship rights, migrants tend to show higher levels of homeland activism (Koopmans et al. 2005 chapter 3 and 4). The national and local institutional frameworks and discourses listed above are understood in the literature as political opportunities', i.e. "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent



– dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action” (Tarrow 1998, 76-77).

This is not to say that the local policy approaches are determined by national institutions or that the local level is unimportant for migrant integration. Within the same national framework there is scope for considerable local variation which may present challenges to national patterns. At best, the claims for a new policy approach put forward by local actors (e.g. local politicians) can achieve new legitimacy among the public and bring about change. For instance, good practices developed by a local administration can be taken up by other localities and can, over time, gain cumulative significance which may influence national policies. The process of challenging politics and bringing about change at the national level is, however, shaped and limited by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they are embedded (McAdam et al. 1996, 3). Nevertheless, as argued in chapter 3, the local level political system is still generally more easily accessible for migrants than the national political arena. Also, new shared identities, inclusive of migrant and non-migrant groups, are more likely to develop at the local level.

In this thesis I look at both the national and local levels in assessing the political participation mechanisms provided in each context and the narrative constructions of integration and of the integrated migrant expressed in public policies. An important reason for looking at the two levels interactively is that in some countries the local political system is more powerful than in others. For instance Britain has a more centralised system of government than Italy has. Only by looking at the two levels interactively am I able to account for the role of each in shaping immigrant policies. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the national political opportunity structures pertinent to the domain of immigrant policies in Sweden, Britain and Italy. The following three chapters (6-8) are instead devoted to a comparative analysis of the local political opportunity structures in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna. The policies studied represent the normative frameworks which underpin local immigrant policies, and are in this sense opportunity structures for potential migrant participation in the society of settlement. To my knowledge few studies have focused on the normative frameworks that inform the local policies of integration of resident migrants. Even fewer have applied a feminist perspective. By questioning the values and norms that ground these policies, I am able to analyse whether the norms underpinning caring multiculturalism – attentiveness, responsibility, and responsiveness - have any resonance.

## 4.2 Comparative perspective in the thesis

The available political opportunity structures and constraints conditioned by the political environment in which actors operate mediate social transformation (e.g. McAdam 1982; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1989; Tarrow 1998; Kriesi et al. 1995). I seek to account empirically for which constraints and opportunities enable or disallow cognitive and social transformation. I will be doing this by looking at the institutional and narrative framework which relate to immigrant policies.

The analysis of the political opportunity structures that may favour or constrain the adoption of caring multiculturalism is built on a comparative framework. Local and national political opportunity structures should be conceived of as interrelated. Therefore, in the context of comparison, to study three local contexts embedded in different national political environments reveals a substantial range of possibilities which could potentially favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. The variations between the three cases, at both national and local levels, ensure that I have a relatively broad, albeit not exhaustive, range of policies that could be adopted in the domain of immigrant policies. Comparison enables me to gauge the relative extent to which caring multiculturalism has been adopted in each case. For instance, Bologna has recently adopted incorporation programmes for youth that favour the adoption of transformative dialogue, i.e. interactions which aim to develop new narratives and new common goals that can bring individuals together. On the contrary, Birmingham has established consultative forums which maintain a strong perception of group differences and therefore follows a group-based approach to minorities' incorporation. This does not mean that Bologna supports transformative dialogue in absolute terms, but relatively compared to the other two local administrations. Finally, a comparative approach is particularly useful for teasing out the often taken-for-granted but nonetheless important assumptions about the relation between the state and its polity; about what is acceptable and valuable in a society; and about the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of certain individuals, such as migrants, in the polity (Ferree et al. 2002, 5).

Several dimensions of political opportunity structures may be analysed comparatively, so it is important to specify what will be the focus here. At the national level I emphasise aspects of the political opportunity structure relevant to the field of immigration and ethnic relations politics. Some aspects of opportunity apply across many issues and are general features of the political environment analysed, others are field specific (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Ferree et al. 2004, 62-63. See Koopmans and Statham 2000 and Koopmans et al. 2005,

16-23 for a discussion of political opportunity structure in the migration and ethnic relation fields). In this context I discuss the nature of a country's political system, its welfare-state organisation and the degree of centralisation of institutional power. The field-specific aspects of a nation-state's political opportunity structure that I examine are each nation-state's citizenship regulation, history of immigration, immigration regulations and incorporation strategies. At the local level I examine the institutional and discursive aspects of political opportunity structures. I now elaborate further on these.

### **4.3 Institutional opportunities – mechanisms of political participation**

The institutional component of a political opportunity structure simply consists of the institutional framework that exists in a political context (Gamson and Meyer 1996, 279-283; Koopmans and Statham 2000, 34). In this dissertation I examine the mechanisms of political participation provided by each municipality to migrants. They define an important available channel of access to the polity provided by the local state. The formal bonds between the local state and migrant associations as well as formal bodies of representation are analysed as part of the available institutional opportunity structure.

In particular, in chapter 6 I discuss the most significant initiatives that each municipality has developed for enhancing the political participation of migrants in the territory. If a formal representative body exists at all (Malmö, for instance, does not have one), I discuss the rationale that has led to its establishment, its formal make-up (e.g. if it is elected or appointed) and the formal power it has been given. When relevant, I discuss other forms of political participation, in particular the relation between the local government and migrant associations. Following the tenets of caring multiculturalism, I assess if the mechanisms of political participation adopted tend to maintain group differences or if they favour, at least theoretically, the development of a common sense of identification with the city. I examine how the municipalities deal with intra-group power in defining the needs of a migrant community, what I have called "power of problem setting" in chapter 3. I also assess the extent to which migrants are enabled to participate in the development of immigrant policies. This helps me to gauge how the definition of the needs of the beneficiaries of immigrant policies by individuals deemed "experts" (e.g. policy officers), is addressed by each municipality. In chapter 3, I have labelled this "power of

needs interpretation". Institutional opportunities are characterised by certain stability, but are by no means permanent (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Therefore the relatively wide time-span adopted here (1997-2007) enables me to detect patterns of continuity and change in how local administrations have institutionally dealt with the political participation of migrants.

The analysis of the mechanisms of political participation sheds light on which opportunities or constraints are available for the formal inclusion of migrants in the local polity. Kitschelt (1986) distinguished between open and closed opportunity structures. Applying this insight to the migration field, an open institutional environment in which migrants are encouraged through formal institutions to participate on an equal basis as the majority society, can indicate that the local governments sees migrants as potential members of the political community. A closed one instead can limit the influence of citizens in the decision-making process. The local political participation mechanisms are partly shaped by nationally-defined paths of political participation of migrants, but they are not determined by it. For example, the region Emilia Romagna, where Bologna is situated, has recently established an elected body representing migrants, and therefore provided voting rights to foreign residents, despite the fact that the Italian government has long refused to extend voting rights at the local level to all foreign residents<sup>4</sup>. This national institutional constraint has effectively limited the potential to extend powers of the regional body further, which, as a result, works only on a consultative basis.

Formal institutions are however not the only factors which can influence cognitive and social transformation. If we want to promote a new sense of collective identification which is inclusive of migrated communities, we also need to address the framework of ideas and discourses that privileges certain forms of participation over others; give legitimacy to certain ways of understanding the relation between migrants and the receiving local municipality expressed in immigrant policies; and establish notions of who and what are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate. The term "discursive opportunity" has been used to describe this more informal aspect of opportunities (Koopmans and Statham 2000; Ferree et al. 2002; Koopmans et al. 2005). In order to better understand the extent to which Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna, hold the potential for adopting caring multiculturalism we need to analyse both

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<sup>4</sup> Following the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, citizens of the EU have voting rights on local elections.

dimensions of the political opportunity structures, i.e. the institutional and the discursive one.

## 4.4 Discursive opportunities and policy narratives

For the purposes of this thesis, I use the concept of policy narratives in a similar way to Koopmans et al. (2005) apply the concept of ‘discursive opportunity structure’. They see discursive opportunities and constraints to be derived from institutional opportunity structures:

Institutional opportunities determine a collective actor’s chances of gaining recognized access and new advantages (Gamson 1975) in its interactions with decision makers, as well as the likelihood of repression and facilitation from the side of power holders (Tilly 1978; Koopmans 1999). Discursive opportunities determine which collective identities and substantive demands have a high likelihood to gain *visibility* in the mass media, to *resonate* with claims of other collective actors, and to achieve *legitimacy* in the public discourse. (Koopmans et al. 2005, 19)

In a similar way, I see the policy narratives that are derived from the actions of political institutions to be shaping a discursive environment that either facilitates or hinders the inclusion of migrants. Policy narratives carry specific definitions of the problem of integration and of the constituency group. In this way they frame a specific representation of the relationship between the state and migrants that appears as an authoritative definition in the public domain.

In this thesis, the analysis of political participation mechanisms sheds light on the institutional relations between migrants and the local state, whereas the analysis of discursive opportunities, or in my words policy narratives, allows me to better understand the social construction of public discourses that sustain these relations. As I have discussed in chapter 1, I understand discourse as “specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer 1995, 44). Discourses can be found at the macro-level of social analysis and have a universal character, involving a wide range of actors. By contrast, discursive opportunities consist in the authoritative voices coming from institutions, which shape the field of action available for migrant groups. In this sense, what I call policy narratives operate at the meso- and micro-levels of social relations.

Narratives play an important role not only in popular culture, but also in politics and public policymaking. A growing body of academic work (e.g. Roe 1994; Schram and Neissre (eds.) 1997; Fisher 2003; 2009; Schneider and Ingram (eds.) 2005) emphasises that “when we examine communication in the everyday realm of politics and policymaking, we find people largely explaining things by telling stories” (Fisher 2009, 192). These stories, which are formally regulated because they are used within an institutional framework, are tangible reflections of particular discourses about how a society works or should work, how citizens and the state relate to each other, and what is valued in a society. Narratives also mediate how people understand policy problems. Indeed, regardless of “whether stories are about foreign enemies [...], illegal immigration, welfare dependency, or the state of race relations, the politics of public policy-making is played out in terms of stories that mediate how public problems are comprehended” (Schram and Neisser 1997, 2). Policy narratives, whether used intentionally or not, mediate what policy-makers, analysts, and citizens take to be the reality and objects of concerns of the political process. In other words, policy narratives legitimise the existence of particular institutional opportunities and define the boundaries of a political community, where it begins and ends, who populates it, which of their concerns are to be included and which are to be excluded (Schram and Neisser 1997, 6). Policy narratives can also position citizens in relation to each other and to the state. The contributions to the volume edited by Schneider and Ingram (2005) show that policies express particular understandings of their target population. For instance, Schriner (2005) describes how people with mental handicaps were disenfranchised in American suffrage law. Lina Newton’s analysis (2005) of the Congressional debates over U.S. immigration policy shows that legislators created a clear boundary between good and bad migrants. Mexicans were portrayed as being particularly problematic (Newton 2008). These social constructions connect people to particular social groups which are constructed as deserving or undeserving, good or problematic, capable or non-capable according to particular relations of power existing in a society (White 2000). They are mediated by gender, ethnic belonging, class, etc. (Sevenhuijsen 1998; Bacchi 1999).

The dual function of policy narratives, i.e. to create an understanding of policy problems and to ascribe particular characteristics to citizens, is important in the domain of immigrant policies in two respects. First, it sheds light on the construction of the criteria of inclusion in a society. By understanding what the problem of integration is and who is responsible for coming to terms with it, we can learn more about what is considered to be valuable in a society, who is

considered to be a legitimate member of it and the thresholds to become a member. This is addressed in this thesis' second empirical research question, how is the issue of integration defined in the immigrant policies and programmes at the local levels of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna? Second, the study of policy narratives makes explicit the characteristics a migrant should fulfil to be considered part of the recipient society, i.e. how migrants can contribute to it. It highlights the constructions of which migrants are good for the polity and which are not. This is the focus of the third empirical research question, how are migrants conceived of by public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?

### ***Comparative narrative analysis of immigrant policies***

How do we find narratives in policies and how do we compare them? I have elaborated a set of analytical tools that enables me to discern the narratives relevant for the scope of the study and to classify them so that a meaningful comparison between the cases can be conducted. I have broken the analytical process into three main steps: (1) identification of narratives in the material; (2) construction of a taxonomy; (3) evaluation through the lenses of caring multiculturalism.

#### **First step: identification**

The goal of this step is to identify the narratives that are at work in the material. I do this by breaking down my data into simple narratives or sets of narratives with a beginning, a middle and an end. In policies, the beginning is about the definition of a problem situation to be solved; the middle introduces a policy intervention; and the end turns to the consequences of a policy outcome (Fisher 2003, 168). These narratives causally relate an identified problem (migrants' integration or lack thereof) to its sources (e.g. unemployment; urban segregation) and to who/what is responsible for finding a solution to the problem (Roe 1994; for an application of Roe's method see Newton 2005;). I expect to find a relatively wide range of narratives defining the same issue. In the empirical chapters I present the narratives that appeared most frequently and which I therefore deemed to be the most significant. Some narratives about the same issue could be competing with each other. Jachtenfuchs et al. (1998) argue that institutions exist in an environment that is always characterised by a number of

competing and at times even contradictory narratives<sup>5</sup> (see also Ferree et al. 2002). For instance, in Bologna migrants have long been seen as a threat to public order. Their integration in the city was therefore presented as an issue of public security. Recently however, migrants' integration has also been narrated as an issue of migrants' political participation in the life of the city and policy measures have been taken to come to terms with this.

The identification of narratives is based on an inductive approach. In order to disentangle these narratives I analyse the material on the basis of a set of questions that reflects the main features of an ethics of care and of current feminist methodology (e.g. Bacchi 1999; Sevenhuijsen et al. 2003; Sevenhuijsen 2004; Verloo (ed.) 2007). The main scope of these questions is to offer a framework that can shed light on the relationship between the recipient state and the migrant groups. The questions highlight the normative assumptions of the arguments embedded in institutional frameworks; their gendered effects; and how groups are constituted in policy narratives. These questions are operationalisations of my research questions and aim to be guidelines for the identification of the narratives of the issue of integration and the definition of the integrated subject. Hence, these questions help me to move beyond the mere, albeit important, description of the policies and offer tools to deconstruct the policy issue at stake.

When it comes to the research question of how the issue of integration is defined in the immigrant policies and programmes at the local levels of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna, the operationalising sub-questions are:

- How is "migrant integration" problematised?
- Who is represented to be a problem in the narration of integration?
- What is the suggested solution to integration?
- How is the concept of integration used by institutions?

The process of problem definition is a first important step in understanding the normative narratives that are at play in a society (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gamson 1992). As argued by Bacchi (1999), they already contain a bias in perceiving the problem in a certain way and they ultimately express the way a public actor conceives of and narrates the society in which it is embedded. To give an example: the municipality of Malmö tends to present the issue of integration as tightly interwoven to employment. Hence a greater number of

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<sup>5</sup> The authors label them "normative orders" or "structures of meaning".



policies attempt to address the high level of unemployment among migrants, while other integration programmes, such as cultural mediation, receive less funding. This, as will be shown later, bears consequences for the inclusion of those who cannot or do not want to enter the labour market.

Policy-officers and politicians, when presenting a set of policy solutions to certain issues perceived as problems, rely on a specific, limited range of conceptions of who the beneficiaries of these policies are. Members of the targeted group are implicitly ascribed an identity. In this context Bacchi (1999, 93-111) shows how anti-discrimination laws tend to cast the victims of discrimination as “disadvantaged”, “lesser-than” the implicit norm of what makes a good citizen, thus curtailing their possibilities of action and empowerment (see also Schneider and Ingram (eds.) 2005). Similarly, some migrant communities are conceived of as part of a problematic group. This seems to be particularly true of the second generations. Young migrants are often conceived of as confused, in-between cultures, and often as stressed by a situation where they have to mediate between their parents and the majority society. Empirical research shows that the migrant groups who are targeted as problematic change over time. Japanese Americans were described at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a problem minority. By the 1960s this construction changed and they were increasingly portrayed as hard-working and as contributing positively to the American society (DiAlto 2005). In Britain’s early day of race relations, Asian communities were portrayed as positively cohesive and able to provide an important social network for their members. African Caribbean communities were instead perceived as withdrawing from the rest of society (Cheong et al. 2007). Today, African Caribbean communities are seen as mainstream black British, whereas the cohesiveness of some Asian communities, in particular the Pakistani and Bangladeshi, is seen with more scepticism. This could be partly explained by reference to the recent upsurge of Islamic terrorism following the events of September 11, 2001 which has subjected a large number of Muslims to negative stereotyping and discriminatory practices (Ansari 2004; Modood 2005; Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins 2006). The definitions of the policies’ beneficiaries as distressed, confused, and in-between cultures triggers a set of policies that maintain their position as “disadvantaged”

and thus limits the range of political claims which are made by them<sup>6</sup>. For this reason it is important to detect the migrants' ascribed identity, i.e. how the state and the host society define them both as migrants and as potential members of the polity. This is dealt with in the second empirical research question, how are migrants conceived of by public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna? In order to identify this I ask:

- How are migrants characterised by public policy actors in relation to the majority society?
- How is an integrated political subject defined by the public administration?
- How are the beneficiaries of integration policies narratively constructed in the policy documents?
- How is an idea of community expressed by the public actors?

## **Second step: categorisation**

The narratives of migrant integration and of the integrated migrant vary across different national and local contexts. In order to understand which institutional opportunities and policy narratives are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism, we need to conduct a systematic comparison which allows us to gauge relatively broad, albeit not exhaustive, range of approaches to immigrant policies. A comparative approach calls for the systematisation of the material. Therefore, in a second analytical step I categorise the narratives identified in the first step according to an analytic scheme consisting of four categories describing types of relationships through which people are bound together: social; economic; civic/political; and cultural. In addition, these categories are the dimensions of migrants' integration that are commonly used in the academic and policy literature (e.g. Geddes 2003; Council of Europe 1998).

A "social" narrative can refer to processes of social interaction, of exclusion and inclusion, of contestation and mobilisation that bind people together (Williams 1995, 148). For instance, policies presenting social interaction between migrants and the majority society as a means to integration can be classified as social. A social narrative can also refer to those policy areas that the state assumes it has a public responsibility to address, e.g. social welfare (Bacchi

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<sup>6</sup> On the different character of claims made by migrants and how this is interlocked to the political and discursive opportunity structures provided by the state, see Koopmans et al. (2005).

1996, 6). An important concern of the British government has been to ensure that migrants and ethnic minorities can actually enjoy proper housing, education, jobs and health care in order to achieve a successful integration. This is an example of a social narrative of integration. I label “economic” the narratives that refer to market relations and conditions and organisation of production, e.g. distinction between paid and unpaid labour, skilling processes, commodification (Williams 1995, 148). In Malmö employment is widely seen as a major road towards integration. This means that in Malmö the policy of integration is characterised *inter alia* by economic narratives. The “civic/political” narratives make reference to the institutional frameworks that formally bind people to one another, e.g. core rights and obligations, participation in political decision-making and in civil society. Malmö City Council promotes an understanding of integration which emphasises the importance of involvement in voluntary organisations. I categorise this as a legal political narrative which emphasises participation in civil society. Finally, a “cultural” narrative refers to one’s (imagined) community’s shared beliefs, identity, values, traditions, and myths. In the domain of immigrant policies cultural narratives can be employed in at least two ways. They can refer to the importance of integration into the majority society’s culture, in line with an assimilationist understanding of integration. Or they can refer to the culture of migrant groups and eventually to the importance of preserving their culture, in line with a multiculturalist approach.

These general categories serve as analytic devices which enable me to create a systematic taxonomy of the narratives that may be meaningfully related to integration. They are not meant as tools to evaluate what successful integration is. They allow me to look at the possible range of how the relation between the state and the migrant group could work. Caring multiculturalism has implications for each of these types of relations. For instance ,it promotes a civic/political framework which emphasises the equal importance of rights and of civic responsibilities for the community one lives in. Caring multiculturalism also stresses the importance of promoting active participation in the public sphere which includes a broad range of services to the community, including informal caring activities. Once the identified narratives are categorised their content can be compared. I look for similarities and differences across my three cases. The comparative analysis of the institutional opportunity structures and of the dominant policy narratives sheds light on the policy patterns adopted by the three case study municipalities and relate them to one another. This allows one to reveal taken-for-granted assumptions in each context and to present a relatively wide range of possible institutional and narratives opportunities which could

stimulate or constrain the adoption of caring multiculturalism. Indeed, this thesis studies the local administrations' narrations of the criteria they present as important to access the majority community through integration policies. It is through this study we can begin to grasp the moral boundaries of a society as far as its conceptions of cohesion and belonging are concerned.

### **Third step: evaluation through the lenses of caring multiculturalism.**

In order to understand which narratives in Malmö, Birmingham, and Bologna are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism an assessment of the normative and political implications of the narrative policies is conducted, using caring multiculturalism as a lens. In particular I focus on the three values which inform caring multiculturalism: attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness (see chapter 3)

*Attentiveness* refers to the act of noticing the need to care, noticing the needs of others in an unselfish manner. Are the policies examined in this thesis the result of a dialogue between majority and migrant minorities? To what extent are migrants' voices heard and what opportunities are provided to enable as many migrants as possible to express their voice? Are these narratives based on an idea that pays attention to individuals' positioning in society and to their unequal access to power? Are the particularities and unique differences in human lives investigated or are homogeneous standards utilised for all beneficiaries of certain policies (cf. Hankivsky 2004, 33)? The second value is that of *responsibility* which means assuming the responsibility of care. This is not the same as the republican concept of obligation. Responsibilities go beyond formal or legal ties that a person or a public institution has in relation to other people. Are public actors taking wider responsibility for migrants living in their territory or do the policies they adopt stop short at the formal level of obligations they have towards its residents? The third value that arises out of caring ethics is the *responsiveness* of the beneficiary of care. This requires open forms of interaction between care-givers and care-receivers which are important as a form of control of the quality of care. Is there an evaluative phase of the policies of migrants' integration? Are the beneficiaries of integration policies listened to during the development of integration policies and their evaluative phase?

## 4.5 Material

The empirical material I analyse consists mainly of policy documents concerning migrant integration. I study strategy papers, policy proposals, declarations of intent of the local administrations that touch upon the general domain of immigrant policies between 1997 and 2007. Where possible I study the documentation for the programmes supported by public institutions dealing with migration and integration. In addition, I analyse each municipality's yearly budgets in order to understand which activities have been targets of funding between 1997 and 2007. Policy documents are particularly relevant for this thesis as they inform and legitimise narratives about how a citizen should think and act and about the necessary criteria to enter and be part of a community (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 124). Policy documents may contain competing narratives on the problem definition and possible solutions. If competing narratives appear and are salient, they have been presented in the empirical chapters.

I have also conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with the aim of achieving a more complete picture of how the policies of migrant integration have developed over time. Interviews are an important source of information if one wants to understand the rationale behind the use of certain narratives expressed in policy papers. I have conducted 10 to 15 interviews in each municipality with policy officers, local councillors, trade union representatives, etc. The interviewees were selected because they were key-figures in each municipality's immigrant policies. The first interviews also triggered a "snowball effect" whereby I was introduced to other people who could provide insights into the Councils' immigrant policies. When possible the interviews, which lasted between 35 and 75 minutes, were electronically recorded and transcribed. When I was not able to tape the interview, I took notes during and after the meeting. I conducted all the interviews in the interviewee's language. The interviews followed similar thematic questions. As this study's main focus lies on how the state defines integration, I have not looked in detail at the actions undertaken by the third sector.

I expect the narratives expressed in policy documents to be more consistent and uniform than those in interviews. The councillors and policy officer who were interviewed were presumably not always speaking as representatives of public institution, as their own personal views and takes on the issue of migrant integration may have emerged during the interview. This I have taken into account during the analysis of the interview material and I have

attempted<sup>7</sup> to discern as closely as possible the interviewee's personal opinion from the account of the municipality's immigrant policies.

## 4.6 Cases selection

The three case-study municipalities have been selected for empirical and theoretical reasons. All selected municipality may already have implemented some aspects of caring multiculturalism. Malmö is situated in a context where migrants are guaranteed voting rights, which potentially enable them to actively participate in the polity and to feel parts of it. Birmingham has a long experience of migration and is one of the most diverse cities in Britain. This could have enabled the City Council to conceive of migrants and ethnic minorities as legitimate members of the polity who have the same status as the majority society. Bologna is characterised by a tradition of civic involvement and inclusion. Even if its history of migration is relatively young, it might have developed institutional mechanisms and narratives that include migrants in the polity.

The case-studies are interesting from an empirical perspective as well. The European comparative research on ethnic relations tends to pay little attention to relatively new immigration countries such as Italy and the Scandinavian countries. Several studies have been conducted in Swedish and in Italian, thus preventing these works to reach an international audience<sup>8</sup>. Local immigrant policies in Italy and Sweden are interesting to study because of the dominant national understanding of migration and multiculturalism. Sweden is often portrayed as a country where the policies of integration of migrants have developed towards a multicultural approach (Castles and Miller 1998). However, recent research points at serious flaws in the ways in which migrants are included in the majority society (e.g. SOU 2005:56; SOU 2005:112; SOU 2006:79; Dahlstedt and Hertzberg 2007). Italy is increasingly characterised by a hostile climate against migrants. Not only has migration regulation become

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<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank Stephanie Taylor for pointing this out to me.

<sup>8</sup> See however Odmalm (2005) and Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking (2010) for Sweden. Odmalm (2004a; 2005) discusses the case of Malmö at length. Calavita (2005) has conducted a comparative study of Italian and Spanish immigrant politics. Caponio (2005) and Però (2005; 2007) have conducted significant empirical research on Bologna. Geddes (2003) and Schierup et al. (2006) discuss both Sweden and Italy, but not in a systematic comparative way.

tougher, but the rhetoric against migrants used by some politicians is also becoming increasingly aggressive. For instance, Prime Minister Berlusconi has recently declared that his government is against the idea of a multiethnic Italy (*Corriere della sera* May 9, 2009). It is therefore empirically interesting to see how immigrant policies have been dealt by the municipalities of Bologna and Malmö. In contrast to the relatively under-studied cases of Italy and Sweden, ethnic relations in Britain have been widely analysed. Also, Britain's experience of accommodating migrants and ethnic minorities in its territory is well established. Given the long experience of migration and immigrant policies, I select a British municipality as a third case of comparison. I expect the study of the immigrant policies adopted by a British city with a high percentage of non-white communities to provide valuable insights into how a local administration has dealt with migrants' incorporation.

Although the selected cities are located in very different national political contexts, the three respective municipalities nonetheless exhibit important similarities regarding their socioeconomic and political characteristics. All three cities played a key role in the debates about and the practices of immigrant policies in each national context. They have also generally been seen as pioneers offering a positive image about how they have dealt with diversity. In relative terms, the three cities' size is comparable as they are among the ten largest municipalities in each country<sup>9</sup>. Their absolute size is however different. Malmö's total population is 276 244 inhabitants (2007), Birmingham's is just above 1 million (2006), and Bologna has instead a population of 372 256 (2007). Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna are relatively affluent cities and their economies today benefit from small and medium-sized companies and industries. Politically, all three cities present a long tradition of left-wing government and they have all adopted forward-thinking, interventionist approaches to social problems. Migrants have traditionally allied with left-wing parties and political organisations. For instance, the blue-collar trade unions in Sweden and Italy have tried to include migrants in their political actions. In Britain, "black" ethnic minorities were proactively co-opted by the Labour party during the 1980s and 1990s. Left-wing political organisations therefore tend to be more supportive of migrant rights than conservative ones – at least at the level of rhetoric (Koopmans 2004). Given this characterisation of left-wing politics, one could

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<sup>9</sup> Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden; Birmingham is the second largest city in Britain; Bologna is the seventh in Italy.

expect that the left-wing political tradition in each city might have had a positive impact on the establishment of participatory immigrant policies where the state would play a significant role in removing obstacles to equality and freedom.

Migrants make up a significant share of the population in each city. They are overwhelmingly blue-collar and low-level service-sector workers, with some variations between the groups. Migrants are concentrated in particular areas of each city: the inner-city neighbourhoods in Birmingham, the northern periphery of Bologna, and the inner and eastern parts of Malmö. In the context of international, cross-city comparison it is important to remember that the categories used in each country to describe its migrant population vary, which means that the reported figures are approximate. The Office of Provincial statistics in Bologna counts non-naturalised migrants registered at the Register Office. Malmö's office for local statistics distinguishes between Swedes and people with foreign background (*utländsk bakgrund*), i.e. people born abroad and people born in Sweden with both parents born elsewhere, and discards the naturalisation variable. Finally the British census from 2001, on which Birmingham's statistics are based, counts for ethnicity<sup>10</sup> and country of birth, but not for nationality. For the sake of comparison, it can be useful to look at each city's foreign-born population. The figures for 2007 are: Malmö 27 percent; Bologna 9 percent and Birmingham 16 percent (2001 Census). Using this variable, the three cities represent cases of high, medium and low density of foreign-born population where Birmingham is the middle case. Table 4.1 below summarises the figures just presented.

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<sup>10</sup> The 2001 Census includes questions on ethnic background. Respondents were asked to identify the group that they considered they "belonged" to. Respondents living in England were made to choose between the following ethnic categories: White British; White Irish; Other White, Mixed White and Black Caribbean; Mixed White and Black African; Mixed White and Asian; Other Mixed; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Other Asian; Black Caribbean; Black African; Other Black; Chinese; Other ethnic group. (Office for National Statistics 2006)



	Birmingham (2001)	Malmö (2007)	Bologna (2007)
Total population	977 087	276 244	372 256
Population born abroad (% tot population)	131 091 (13.42%)	75 156 (27%)	33 602 (9%)
Three main countries of provenience (% of population born abroad)	Pakistan (31,8%); India (17,6%); Caribbean (14,9%)	Yugoslavia (11,6%), Denmark (10,4 %), Iraq (9,4%)	Philippine (10,6%); Romania (9,9%); Morocco (8,5%)

**Table 4.1 Case study cities, demographic data.** Sources: Comune di Bologna. Settore Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica (2008); Osservatorio delle immigrazioni (2008a); Strategisk utveckling, Malmö Stad (2007); ONS, Neighbourhood statistics, based on Census 2001.

There is one fundamental difference between the cities I examine: the particular kinds of migration that has affected them. Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna have been affected by very different types of migration. Since the mid-1970s, Malmö has witnessed a significant increase of asylum seekers and family reunifications. Because of the legal constraints which impede asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their claim to work they are more likely to face difficulties in the process of adapting to the recipient society. Furthermore, asylum seekers often come from a traumatic situation and land in a vulnerable and precarious position in the country of settlement. Birmingham instead has a large post-colonial migrant population and has only recently witnessed the increase of asylum seekers and migrants from Eastern Europe. New Commonwealth migrants came to Britain mainly as a work force and they benefit from political rights similar to the ones guaranteed to migrants in Sweden. Finally, Bologna experienced its first migration waves 30 years ago. For a long time the migrant population in the city was composed of individuals, mostly male, rather than families. It is only in the past 10 years that migrants have arrived in Bologna as part of the process of family reunification.

To summarise, the selected cities are similar when it comes to their relative size as a national percentage; their tradition of left-wing government; their economic affluence; and the economic and urban segregation of their migrant population. They instead differ when it comes to the type of migration and the size of the migrant population. The final section of this chapter will present the unique characteristics of each city in order to provide a better contextualisation for the empirical analysis to come.

## 4.7 The case-study cities

### **Malmö**

Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden, situated in the economically “hot” region of *Skåne*, in Southern Scandinavia. During the 1950s, the city was positively affected by the economic expansion that characterised the whole country and until the 1970s it had a well-working industrial sector which employed a large number of migrants. The city has traditionally been described as a working-class city and as an important Social Democratic post, demonstrated by an almost uninterrupted majority of the Social Democratic party in the local administration since the 1950s. The economic crises that affected the city in the 1970s and in the early 1990s had significant consequences for the non-Swedish population of the city. The unemployment rate among migrants skyrocketed and their dependence on welfare provision has increased dramatically. At the same time migration patterns to the city changed. From the mid-1970s and onwards, labour migration ended and an increasing number of people claiming asylum arrived in the city. This culminated in the 1990s due to the war in former Yugoslavia. It has resulted in an increasing urban and socio-economic segregation in Malmö. The municipality’s response has been massive investment in service industry; the establishment of a University college, and the regeneration of urban areas previously used by manufacturing industries (Dannestam 2007). This re-invention has been subject to criticism that points to the neo-liberal economic agenda inscribed in the regeneration programmes (Dannestam 2009).

The first attempts to support the migrant population were established in 1966, when the Council launched an information desk. In 1973 the Swedish municipalities received full responsibility for immigrant policies and Malmö set up the *Invandrarbyrå* (migrant office), which was incorporated into the Migrant office within the Council administration (*invandrarförvaltning*) in 1978. Since 1985, the municipalities in Sweden are responsible for asylum seeker dispersal and the integration services for refugees. However, only in the 1990s did the Council begin to perceive migrants’ integration as an issue (Broomé 2007). This led to the development of employment projects such as Gefas<sup>11</sup> and to the adoption in 1999 of a Strategy plan for integration (Malmö Stad 1999). These

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<sup>11</sup> Swe: *Generalplan för arbete och sysselsättning*.

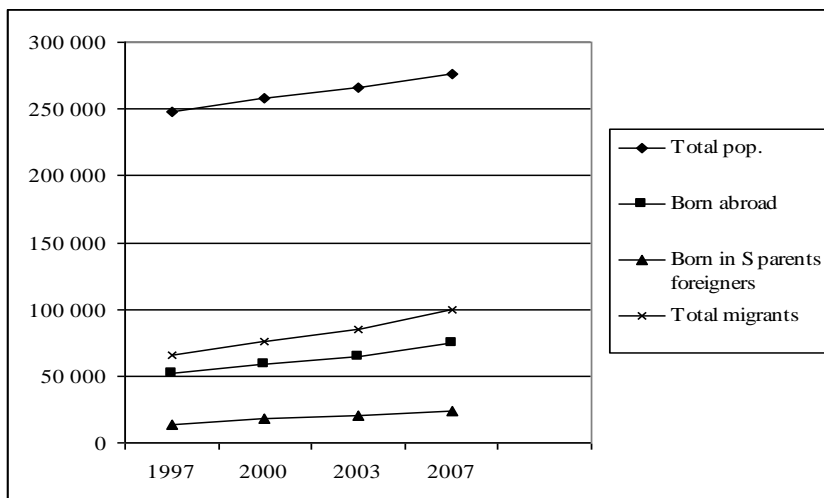
and other measures to address the issue of immigrant policies are discussed in detail in chapters 7 and 8.

According to recent statistics, 36 percent of the population living in Malmö has a foreign background<sup>12</sup>, and the gender balance of the population is equal. The four most represented countries are former Yugoslavia<sup>13</sup> (3,1 percent), Denmark (2,8 percent), Iraq (2,5 percent), and Poland (2,1 percent) (Strategisk utveckling, Malmö stad 2007). No particular national group is therefore dominant. 63 percent of the migrant population has acquired Swedish citizenship. Hence, Malmö has a non-naturalised, migrant population of 13 percent, of which about 8000 people are Danes. The majority of permits of stay were given for family reunification and to asylum-seekers. The city has witnessed a steady increase in its migrant population. The figure 4.1 below shows that the migrant population in Malmö has increased between 1997 and 2007 from 26 percent of the total population to 36 percent. It is interesting to observe that the percentage of people born abroad has increased more steadily than the percentage of born in Sweden by foreign parents. The former group has increased by 6 percentage points while the latter has grown by 3 percentage points.

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<sup>12</sup> People with “foreign background” (Swe. *utländsk bakgrund*) are those born abroad or born in Sweden by foreign parents. This can be compared to the concept of “immigrant” (Swe. *invandrare*), which comprises all those who are born abroad. 24 percent of Malmö’s population is *invandrare*.

<sup>13</sup> Even if Yugoslavia does not exist anymore, the municipality has decided to use this classification to include people that came to Malmö before the Balkan war, mainly as labour migrants. This does not count those who came thereafter, who are instead categorised according to the new geography of the Balkans.



**Figure 4.1 Migrant population in Malmö 1997-2007.** Source: Avdelningen för samhällsplanering, Malmö stad.

The socio-economic and urban segregation of migrants is an issue. 6,2 percent of resident migrants between the age of 16 and 64 are unemployed, compared to 1,4 percent of the majority population of the same age group (Malmö stad, November 2007). Urban segregation has divided the city socially, economically and culturally. The neighbourhoods of Rosengård and Fosie present a migrant resident population of 60 percent and 41 percent respectively. The wealthier areas of Västra Innerstaden and Limham-Bunkeflo have instead a migrant resident population of 11 percent and 12 percent (Strategisk utveckling, Malmö stad 2007). The residential and socioeconomic segregation in the city has recently triggered urban unrests between youth of migrant background and the police in parts of the neighbourhood Rosengård.

## ***Birmingham***

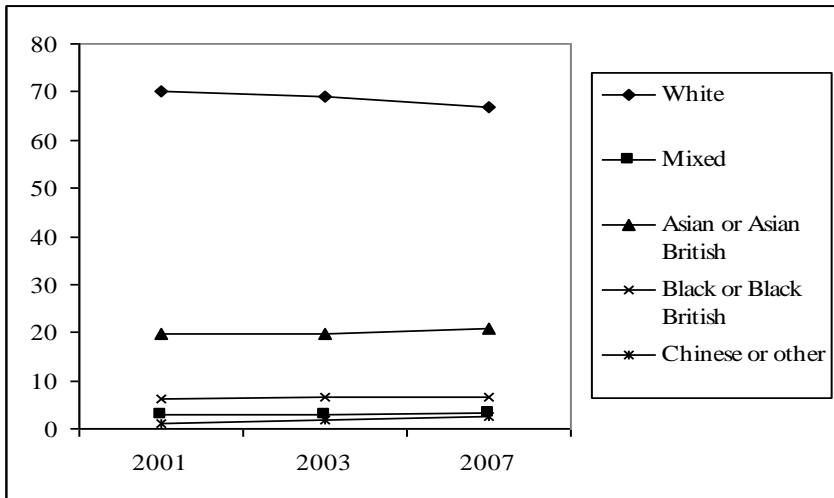
Birmingham, situated in the West Midlands, is the second largest city of Britain and one of the most diverse, with around 28 percent of the population belonging to a non-white ethnic group. The city has traditionally been closely linked to the manufactory industry. It was affected by the economic crisis that hit Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, a period when Birmingham lost 29 percent of all employment. Similar to Malmö, the city's response has been strong investment in the service industry, especially business tourism, and the regeneration of the

city centre and has also embraced an economic approach to urban regeneration. The City Council has been controlled since 1984 by the Labour Party, even though the hegemony of the Labour's left-wing leadership was severely affected after the local elections of May 1992 (Solomos and Back 2000, 156). At the local elections of 2007 the Conservative Party won the majority of the seats in the City Council.

The first half of the 1980s saw a number of violent urban unrests across Britain between different ethnic groups. Two riots occurred in Handsworth, a suburb of Birmingham, in 1981 and 1985. The second riot resulted in the death of two Indian men, 35 were injured and some 1500 police officers drafted into the area. The riots arose from poor social conditions, racial discrimination, poverty, unemployment and dilapidated housing. The riots shook Birmingham and since then the Council has established formalised policies targeting the city's black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The municipality's work with minorities' integration policies involves a large number of public and private actors such as the health authorities, police, businesses, as well as community organisations. These organisations are since 2001 drawn together in the Local Strategic Partnership, called Be Birmingham since 2007. This, as highlighted by Sullivan and Skelcher (2002), reflects the British approach to public governance where public policy is developed and decided by means of partnerships and contractual agreements. The policies adopted by the City Council address mainly the longstanding migrant communities in the city. The West Midlands, through the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, coordinates refugee and asylum-seekers policy and, since 2008, it is responsible for the integration of newly arrived migrants.

Birmingham did not witness any significant migration flows prior to the waves of post-colonial migrants from the late 1940s and onwards with the only exception of Irish migrants. The economic boom of the 1950s attracted mostly young, male migrants from the New Commonwealth who came to work in the industries in the area. Most immigration took place between the 1950s and the early 1970s. More recently, an increasing population of refugees from war-torn societies have settled in the region. However, the relative numbers are exiguous as some 15 000 to 20 000 asylum seekers and refugees are living in the city (1,5 to 2 percent of the total population). As we have seen in Table 4.1, 13 percent of Birmingham's population is born abroad. Figures for 2007 on the population's ethnic background, show that 33,5 percent of the population has a non-white ethnic background. The most dominant ethnic group is Asian or Asian British (21 percent) followed by Black or Black British (6,7 percent) (ONS,

Neighbourhood statistics). Figure 4.2 below shows how the population's composition in Birmingham has changed between 2001 and 2007.



**Figure 4.2 Resident population estimates by ethnic group (%).** Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics.

The figure shows a slight decline of the White population (from 70,3 percent to 66,7 percent) and an increase of the Asian population (from 19,6 percent to 21 percent). In 2007 Pakistani were the largest ethnic minority community (11,2 percent of the total population), followed by Indians (6,1 percent) and Black Caribbean (4,4 percent).

The industrial decline of the West Midlands during the 1970s and 1980s and increased migration flows resulted in continued residential concentrations of ethnic minorities in areas such as Handsworth, Soho and Sparkbrook which in the mid-1990s had a residential concentration of BME communities of more than 66 percent with strong domination of one or a few ethnic groups in each neighbourhood (Rex and Samad 1996, 13)<sup>14</sup>. Ten years after, the areas are still among the most deprived of the city (Cangiano 2007).

<sup>14</sup> The White British population has increasingly left inner Birmingham, leaving the area to South Asians and African-Caribbeans. This demographic change has lead to a dramatic change in tenure composition. For instance Sparkbrook was an area which predominantly consisted of private rented housing with significant amounts of lodging houses. By 1991,

## **Bologna**

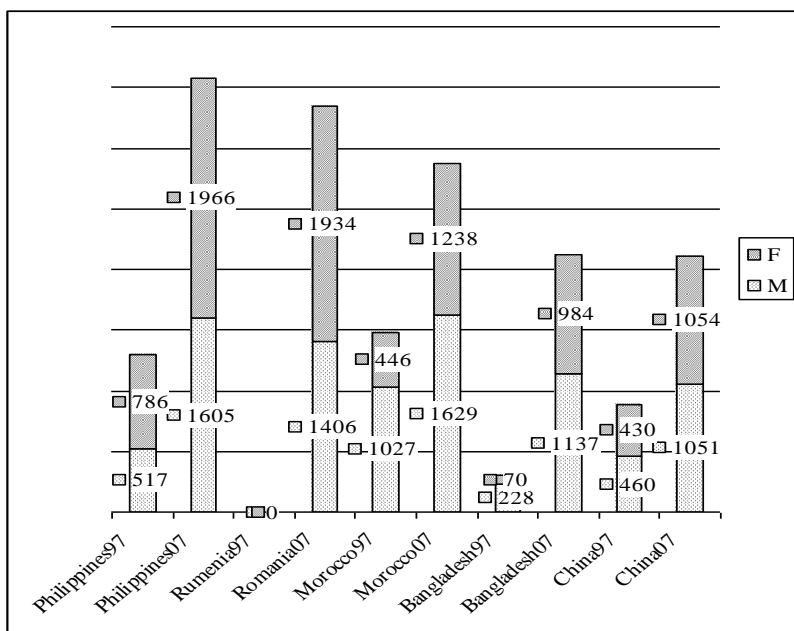
Bologna is situated in the wealthy North-eastern region of Emilia Romagna and is characterised by the development of small and medium-sized companies that have provided employment opportunities to migrants. The Municipality is politically characterised by a left-wing tradition, demonstrated by a 40 year long majority of the Communist Party in local government. At the 1999 elections, a right-wing coalition came into power, but lasted only one mandate (1999-2004). After the 2004 election the left came into power again.

The first migration waves affected Bologna in the early 1980s. The largest migrant groups in that period were composed by Chinese citizens, and Eritrean and Filipino women, employed mainly as domestic workers (Caponio 2005, 941-942). People from North Africa, especially Moroccans, moved to Northern Italy to meet the labour shortages of the small and medium-sized industries in the area. According to the Caritas (2006), in 2005 58,4 percent of the permits of stay issued in Bologna were for working reasons<sup>15</sup>. The migrant population resident in the Municipality of Bologna has grown exponentially in the past decades. In 1992, 1,2 percent of the population had a migrant background, while in 2007 the number increased to 9 percent (Osservatorio delle immigrazioni 2008a). In 2008, the four most represented nationalities among migrants in Bologna are Romanian (11,6 percent of total migrated population), Filipino (10,4 percent), Bangladeshi (8,3 percent) and Moroccan (7,9 percent). This shows a change since 1997 when the main countries of origins were Morocco, the Philippines, China and former Yugoslavia (Comune di Bologna. Settore Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica 2008). It is interesting to observe that since 2002, women are the majority of migrants in the Municipality of Bologna. This is most probably the effect of the large number of care workers who arrive in the area to work in private households as child- or elderly carers and as house-keepers. Figure 4.3 below, on the most important countries of origins by gender in 1997 and 2007, shows clearly a change in the migratory patterns from single male-workers to increased family reunifications as well as the growth of the migrant population.

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only 10 per cent of the housing in Sparkbrook was private rented accommodation. In Sparkbrook ward some 56 per cent of all accommodation was provided by local authorities or housing associations and 35 per cent was owner occupied.

<sup>15</sup> Naturally, it is difficult to provide any accurate number of the so-called *clandestini* (undocumented migrants) residing in Italy but recent estimates argue that about 3 million people might be working in Italy illegally (Segreteria generale CESIS 2007).



**Figure 4.3 Bologna's most significant countries of origins by gender 1997 and 2007.**

Source: Comune di Bologna. Settore Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica (2008).

The figure above shows two interesting things. First, there is an increase of female migration from Morocco and Bangladesh. This indicates the stabilisation of these groups through family reunifications. Second, the fact that there are more women coming from the Philippines and from Romania witnesses the existence of female labour migration. Women, particularly from Catholic countries, are pulled to Italy to cover labour needs in the private care sector (Andall 2000).

## 4.8 Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed the analytical approach adopted in this thesis, political opportunity structures. I have argued that in order to understand the relation between the state and a constituency group, in this case migrants, we need to examine the institutional framework that exists in a political environment as well as the discursive constructions of that relation. The institutional



frameworks studied in this thesis are the mechanisms of political participation provided by each case-study municipality to migrants. This is studied in chapter 6. The policy narratives which express how the local state understands migrants' integration and how it positions migrants in relation to the majority society are studied as expressions of the discursive dimension of each municipality's political opportunity structures. The policy narratives are examined in chapters 7 and 8. I have argued that the study of the political opportunity structures which characterise each political environment will shed light on the possibilities that may favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. I have also presented the methodology used to study institutional opportunities and policy narratives as well as the material analysed in the thesis. I have motivated the selection of my case-study municipalities and have argued that they are comparable on the basis of socioeconomic and political criteria. General information about each municipality has been provided. This has given contextual knowledge about each city's socioeconomic development in the past decades and information about the migratory flows that have affected each municipality. One of the arguments presented in this chapter is that a municipality's political opportunity structures are shaped and constrained by the national context in which each city is embedded. National institutional frameworks set distinct "rules of the game" that shape immigrant policies at the local level. In particular national ideological trends, the history of immigration policies, citizenship laws, and the organisation of central-local relation are relevant factors one has to examine to understand the normative frameworks that underpin narratives on integration at the local levels. The next chapter sets to unravel these factors in the three national contexts which are relevant for my study.

## 5 Setting the context: Sweden, Britain and Italy as countries of immigration

This chapter sets out to present the national environment in which each case-study city is located. If we want to examine whether the values and practices of local immigrant policies show traces of the values and practices suggested by caring multiculturalism, we need to study the local political opportunity structure at play in each context. However, since local immigrant policies are shaped by national traditions of citizenship, notions of national identity, and national policy approaches we need to assess the national political opportunity structures that can shape immigrant policies prior to the study of the local ones. There is an obvious variation in immigrant policies between cities in the same country. This variation is however relative to the political opportunities provided by the state they are part of, as Koopmans (2004) empirically demonstrates. Elements such as citizenship regulation, legal frameworks for community and institutional organisation, the nature of a country's political system, the degree of centralisation of institutional power, as well as its national self-understanding "affect the perceptions of immigrant 'others' and thus the chances for their 'integration'" (Geddes 2003, 23. See also Kitschelt 1986). For instance, a country's welfare organisation shapes the degree and type of minority rights granted to migrants. Britain, which is characterised by a "liberal welfare regime" (Esping-Andersen 1990), has introduced extensive minority rights through the Race Relations Acts on the basis of the principle of individual equality. The Swedish "social democratic welfare regime" (Esping-Andersen 1990) has instead promoted high standard equality, and not on minimal needs. This has shaped Sweden's approach to immigration policies at least until the 1990s. It has granted migrants the status of "denizens"<sup>1</sup> (Hammar 1990) and, following the principle of universal equality, it has also provided migrants with rights, opportunities and material resources to preserve their culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Hammar (1990) defines "denizenship" as full access to legal and social rights to migrants who are not citizens of the country they abode in.

I emphasise aspects of the national political opportunity structure relevant to the field of immigrant policies. Both general and field-specific opportunities are studied. For instance, the conditions of access of migrants to citizenship (field-specific opportunity) are as important as the welfare regime in a country (general opportunity) to understand the valuational underpinning of immigrant policies (Koopmans et al. 2005). Therefore the chapter outlines three institutional opportunities, and follows a country by country overview. First, I present each country's *national policy approach*, focusing on the degree of centralisation and on the type of welfare state each country has adopted. Second, I present each country's *immigrant policies*, i.e. a state's specific incorporation strategies and the conditions provided to resident migrants (Hammar 1985). The ways in which a state understands how migrants should be incorporated in the majority society are illustrative of the norms which underpin that national community. This is accompanied by a discussion of the immigration patterns which have affected each country, as well as of the relevant legislation. Third, I examine each country's *citizenship regulation* and the *mechanisms of political participation* available to migrants and ethnic minorities. The extent to which migrants' voices are heard and represented is largely dependent on whether they can access political, social and civic rights (Statham 1999).

## 5.1 Sweden

The welfare regime of the Scandinavian countries has often been portrayed as a role model for other European countries to follow. In particular, the "Swedish model" of welfare state has been described as exemplary (Esping-Andersen 1990). The application of this model of welfare to immigrant policies has led to a far-reaching extension of political, civil, and social rights to migrants resident in Sweden. These factors have made Sweden something of a model in the eyes of international institutions<sup>2</sup>. However, as the "Swedish model" is changing, so are the country's immigrant policies. They have developed from multicultural, emphasising cultural preservation, to more individualised, self-sufficiency based

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<sup>2</sup> In the recent Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) Sweden "achieved best practice on every single indicator in [...] labour market access. On every other strand, [Sweden] leads the 28 MIPEX countries with the most favourable policies, although they have not yet attained best practice" (Nissen et al. 2007, 2).

understandings of incorporation into the recipient society. Here I present these changes

### ***National policy approach and impact on migration and migrants***

The so-called Swedish model of welfare state has long been considered as one of the world's most egalitarian. This approach falls within what Esping-Andersen (1990, 27-28) has labelled the "social democratic" one. Generally speaking, this model is characterised by de-commodification of social rights, commitment to heavy social-service, and the fusion of welfare and work. In addition to these characteristics, the Swedish model has also been characterised by a long political dominance of the Social Democratic Party (SAP<sup>3</sup>) and a programme of economic management based on a centralised corporatist compact between unions and employers (Schierup et al. 2006, 200).

The Swedish model of welfare state is premised on an understanding of the welfare state whereby all citizens are granted equal, high-standard services and benefits thus promoting equality of status among the citizenry. Esping-Andersen (1990) describes the Swedish system as being universalistic. This depiction is contradicted by the real exclusion of ethnic minorities such as the Sami and Roma. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Sweden was hosting one of the most important research centres in eugenics. In 1934 the government passed the first sterilisation law targeting people with psychological or physical disabilities (*lösaktiga* or *slöa*). In 1943 the law was sharpened and targeted criminals, mainly Roma (*tattarna*). The sterilisation law was abolished in 1975, after circa 63000 people had been sterilised (Catomeris 2004). The depiction of the Swedish welfare state as egalitarian and universal needs therefore to be questioned in the light of the exclusion of particular groups of people.

Originally, the system aimed at developing cross-class solidarity to the nation<sup>4</sup>. In Sweden the universal welfare state is symbolised by the idea of the *Folkhemmet*<sup>5</sup>. In 1926, Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson described the Swedish

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<sup>3</sup> Swe: *Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet*.

<sup>4</sup> Esping-Andersen (1990, 25) notes however that the universalistic model of welfare state runs the risk of promoting class-based dualism. As class structure changes, the better-off turn to private insurance to supplement modest equality, while the poor rely on state-base social assistance.

<sup>5</sup> Eng: People's home.

state as a “good home to all Swedes” (*det goda folkhemmet*) (in Trägårdh 2002, 137). He also compared the state to a home in which there “are no privileged or deprived members, no pets and no step-children. In the good home there is equality, solicitude, cooperation and helpfulness” (in Hobson et al. 2007, 448). The concept of *Folkhem* should be considered in the context of the Social Democratic Party’s conception of the state as a legitimate actor in eradicating inequalities (Trägårdh 2002, 141-144). The state is conceived of as the patriarchal father who will protect his children/citizens from inequalities and injustice at the same time as it is the warm and caring mother, i.e. the *folkhem*, who will provide care and welfare to her citizens/children (Scuzzarello 2008).

Following the principle of universalism, migrant workers, who arrived in the country in significant numbers from the mid-1950s and onwards, received the same social benefits as Swedes. The trade unions had a particular influence in this regard, as they claimed that labour migration could only be accepted if migrant workers were entitled to the same conditions as other workers (Geddes 2003, 108). This is not to be interpreted as mere generosity on the part of the trade unions. During the early 1960s, the unions questioned the size of labour migration to Sweden arguing that labour shortages should be met by Swedes who were not in employment, especially married women. In particular, the blue-collar union *Landsorganisation* (LO) argued that labour migration caused a series of social problems such as increased competition in the labour market and lower average wages<sup>6</sup> (Spång 2008, 46). Therefore, to advocate the same conditions for all workers can be seen as an expression of working class solidarity as much as an attempt to protect native Swedes’ working conditions.

Another characteristic of the social democratic model is the fusion of welfare and employment (Esping-Andersen 1990, 28). It is committed to a full-employment guarantee and at the same time is dependent on its attainment for covering the costs of maintaining it. In Sweden the government has dealt with this by supporting a large public service sector that has a large share of the expenditures on welfare and of employees in the labour market (Schierup et al. 2006, 201). The public service sector boosted female employment from the 1960s and onwards. This however happened at the price of an exceptionally strong occupational segregation by gender: the private sector is heavily male, and the public sector is female-dominated (Esping-Andersen 1990, 215; SCB 2009).

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural problems, among which increased ethnic conflicts, were also mentioned.

Today migrants are increasingly employed in the public sector (Schierup et al. 2006, 206-211).

The long-lasting political power of the SAP<sup>7</sup> has facilitated the implementation of this model of welfare. The Party supported a centralised corporatist structure. According to this model corporate groups, defined according to occupational, ethnic or gender identity, are conceived of as the source of action and authority (Soysal 1994, 37; Rothstein 1992). Groups, not single individuals, are considered legitimate actors who can influence the decision-making process. Originally, the corporatist structure was used for class-based organisations. These groups were considered the legitimate representatives of labourers and were seen as able to provide expert knowledge to evaluate policy proposals which would concern them. The trade unions have become fully integrated in this model and have been allowed to participate in policy-making. For example, the unions had an important role concerning labour migration. Such involvement led the LO to effectively stop labour migration in 1972 as a consequence of the economic crisis of the time (Hammar 1999, 174; Spång 2008, 45-48). This meant that the main legal way to settle in Sweden has been through family reunification or by seeking asylum<sup>8</sup>.

Already in the late 1970s the Swedish model started to show substantial weaknesses since it was too rigid to allow institutional reforms that were in line with the changing character of the global and national economy (Pontusson 1992; Weiss 1998). The Swedish institutional approach to industrial policy was inadequate to meet the market's needs. The Swedish government focused on full employment without providing a strategy for industrial innovation. This means that it was not able to stimulate new wealth and new activities that could reabsorb displaced labour when several mass-producing industries had to close (Weiss 1998, 110). This had a strong impact on migrant workers who were employed in the industrial sector. Their unemployment rate grew considerably in comparison to native Swedes. In particular, refugees experienced difficulties in entering the labour market. However, during the 1980s, migrants' unemployment rate was lower than other European countries' (Schierup et al. 2006, 207-208).

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<sup>7</sup> The Social Democratic Party has been in power from 1932-1976; 1982-1991; and from 1994-2006.

<sup>8</sup> The restrictions in labour migration did not affect the principle of free migration within the Nordic Council states (Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway) which was extended in 1995 to all EU citizens following the Maastricht Treaty.

In the 1990s the so-called “Third way”, which had a strong impact on the post-Thatcher New-Labour Party in Britain, began to affect also the Swedish Social Democrats (Bäck and Larsson 2006). Pontusson (1997) argues that the two parties chose a different way of confronting economic changes. New-Labour chose a wage-cost competition strategy which included the development of low-wage service sectors. The SAP instead attempted to embrace product innovation. This effectively meant the promotion of entrepreneurship, small business development and employability. An “Adult Education Programme” was launched between 1997 and 2002<sup>9</sup>, aiming to improve the vocational educational level of the population in general and including measures targeting migrants in particular (Schierup et al. 2006, 204-205).

The state policies developed since the 1990s followed the dual banner of “growth and social welfare”. This means that the state is still committed to social welfare and solidarity “yet less associated with distributive justice than with a view of the individual as a ‘stakeholder’ with responsibility for enhancing her personal ‘employability’” (Schierup et al. 2006, 205). Yet, traits of the original Swedish model are still present, such as a large publicly funded welfare sector informed by a universalistic principle. An effect of the increasingly neo-liberal approach to politics has been the weakening of the corporatist model. The corporatist structure concerning the relations between state and labour organisations is becoming weaker as many systems of groups’ representation are disappearing (Petersson 2004, 70-71). A more pluralist system, where lobbying is taking a prominent place, is developing. The trade unions and the employers’ organisations are still important actors in the Swedish political arena, but their level of participation in decision-making has clearly diminished if compared to the beginning of the 1990s (Spång 2008, 113). The way of structuring the organisational life in Sweden remains, however, highly regulated and characterised by a strong top-down approach.

### ***Immigration patterns and immigrant policies***

The economic boom that followed the Second World War increased the demand of labour migration in Sweden. In contrast to e.g. the United Kingdom, Sweden could not draw its manpower from former colonies. The demands of the Swedish labour market were largely met through migration from Finland, but there were

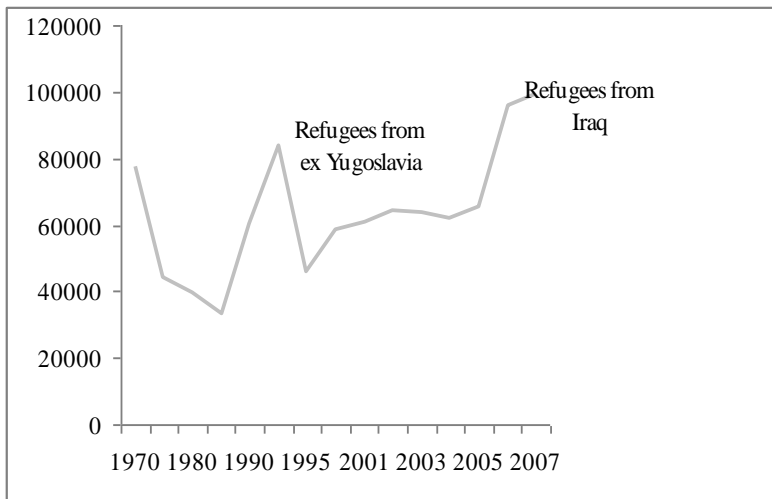
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<sup>9</sup> Swe: *Kunskapslyftet* 2002.

established migration flows from Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (Hammar 1999; Borevi 2002). Prior to this, the country was a net-exporter of labour.

### **1970s: the end of labour migration and the beginning of official multiculturalism**

In 1972, labour migration from non-Nordic countries ended<sup>10</sup>. This changed the immigration routes to Sweden which were now mainly family reunification and asylum seeking migration. Compared to other European countries, between the 1960s and early 1980s Sweden followed a policy of liberal examination of asylum claims, by which almost 80 percent of the claims were accepted. The reason for this was an interpretation of refugee status by the 1954 Alien Act which was more generous than the one given by the Geneva Convention. Figure 5.1 below shows the migration flows to Sweden between 1970 and 2007.



**Figure 5.1 Migration flows to Sweden 1970-2007.** Sources: Historiska befolkningsregistret; SCB 2008.

The inflow of migrants to the country has grown steadily with two main peaks. The first one is in 1994 when Sweden opened up for a large number of asylum seekers from former Yugoslavia. The second one is more recent and relates to

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<sup>10</sup> In 1995 the right of free movement was extended to EU citizens.



the 2003 war in Iraq. Despite relatively large migration flows, Sweden did not have an explicit policy aimed at managing diversity until the 1960s. The 1974 Swedish Instrument of Government (RF 1974:152) officially introduced the notion of multiculturalism in its immigrant policies and was informed by a corporatist rationale, according to which the Swedish government referred to migrant populations by their collective ethnic or national identities. The Instrument of Government, following the tenets of the Swedish model of welfare, stated that immigrant policies should follow the principles of equality, freedom of cultural choice, and cooperation (*jämlikhet, valfrihet, samverkan*). The principle of equality reflected the fundamental principle of universalism of the Swedish welfare state, rejecting the guest worker system (Bevelander 2004, 12). Migrants were therefore to enjoy the same social and economic rights as native Swedes. Furthermore non-naturalised migrants were enabled to vote at and run for local elections already in 1975. Freedom of cultural choice entailed that individuals should determine their affiliation to the Swedish society and it allowed migrants to preserve their culture while living in Sweden. In line with this principle, the state has subsidised migrant associations and supported mother-tongue teaching in the public school system. This reflects a corporatist rationale (Soysal 1994, 47). Partnership can be seen as the need for mutual tolerance and solidarity between migrants and native Swedes.

To have a right does not mean that one is able or willing to exercise it, however. Sweden has seen a significant decline of migrants voting at local elections. In 1976, the first time non-naturalised migrants could vote, the turn-outs were 60 percent. In the latest elections in 2006 the percentage dropped to barely 37 percent (SCB 2009, 82). This should be compared to a reduction from 90 to 78 percent within the population as a whole during the same period. Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2007, 188-190) interpret this as an expression of migrants' distrust for the established political system and their poor socio-economic status. In addition one could argue that the Swedish state has not managed to include migrants in other channels than the mainstream parties, which have strongly been defined according to class politics (Odmalm 2004, 480).

### **1980s and 1990s: from multiculturalism to integration**

The Law Proposal 1985/86:98 entailed a move away from multiculturalism. Soininen (1999, 690) argues that the issue of freedom of choice was reframed in terms of adherence to Swedish law and basic norms and values, and thus confined "to language and culture in a traditional and more limited sense". The

government gave more emphasis to the Swedish language and culture and support for migrant minorities and mother-tongue instructions were subjected to economic cuts (Hammar 1999, 172; Borevi 2002, 105-107). Sweden was “closing the doors” to its welfare state (Hammar 1999). The corporatist model to ethnic groups’ participation was weakened considerably. This partly refutes the view which is still presented about Swedish immigrant politics as highly corporatist (e.g. Odmalm 2004; 2005). In the 1980s the municipalities were given the main responsibility for carrying out the reception of newly-arrived migrants. Some of these responsibilities were later transferred to the private sectors as a more neo-liberal policy approach was introduced to the provision of welfare services (Bäck and Larsson 2006).

During the 1990s further restrictions were put on immigration regulations. In 1989 the Government decided to grant asylum only to those who complied with the Geneva Convention’s definition of refugee which is illustrative of this more restrictive climate. As a consequence, less than half of the asylum claims were accepted (Hammar 1990; Spång 2008, 66). This change reflected a more politicised view on migration due to welfare state and labour market changes (Hammar 1999). The economic recession of the early 1990s generated a huge increase in unemployment rates and it fuelled the public attention towards the economic adjustment of migrants and refugees. At the same time, following the wars in the Balkans, Sweden experienced a growth in the number of people applying for asylum. This increased the visibility of the issue in the public sphere, and provided “raw material” for the development of increasingly anti-migrant feelings among the public, timely exploited by the populist party *Ny Demokrati* which won 6,7 percent of the votes in the 1991 national elections. Geddes (2003, 111) sees mainly two government responses to increased populist feelings: the reduction of asylum seekers being guaranteed a refugee status and a pervasive anti-racist campaign. *Ny Demokrati* was not re-elected, and disappeared from the political scene in the beginning of 2000<sup>11</sup>. The Government’s work against racism was successful in as far as it hindered the entry of populist parties into the national political arena. However this strategy drew attention away from the issue of structural discrimination of people with migrant backgrounds who have increasingly been excluded from the labour and

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<sup>11</sup> Another populist party, *Sverigedemokraterna*, is currently gaining successes. At the local elections in 2005, the party won a considerable number of seats and it now aims at gaining seats in the parliament in the upcoming elections in 2010.

the housing markets. In particular, women have been considered as dependent family members and passive followers of men and little has been done to acknowledge that some women entered the country as independent labour migrants. National and local employment programmes targeting migrant women tend to construct them as more skilled to be employed in health-care employments and retain an image of migrant women as more prone to carry out this kind of employments (Knocke 1991).

In 1997 a new Aliens Act was introduced. It entailed an opening up of the 1989 definition of refugee. It included three particular grounds for granting asylum: a well-founded fear for corporal or capital punishment; protection from non-state persecution (civil war, external conflict or environmental disaster); and a well-founded fear of persecution because of gender or sexual orientation (Geddes 2003, 110). The Act also introduced restrictions for family reunifications, allowing permit of stay only for partners, children under the age of 18 and other members who were originally part of the nuclear family<sup>12</sup>. It also emphasised the importance of a policy of return, which had previously been ignored by Sweden.

In the same year, a Law Proposal concerning immigrant policies was presented (Prop. 1997/98:16). The proposal, which came into force on January 1, 1998, confirmed the change from multiculturalism to individual rights and civic integration. It entailed a discursive shift from “immigrant politics” to “integration politics”. More emphasis was given to integration as an issue that concerned all people living in Sweden. Sweden was now seen as multicultural in the composition of its population. This was however seen as an argument for maintaining Swedish cultural heritage, Swedish law and a democratic ethos (Soininen 1999, 692). The 1997 Proposal outlined three goals for integration. First, to guarantee equal rights and opportunities regardless of one’s ethnic or cultural background; second, to build a cohesive community; and finally to foster a society characterised by mutual respect and tolerance in which everyone should participate and for which everyone should be responsible (Prop. 1997/98:16, 21-24). The principle of equality, emphasised in 1974, was still predominant. The principles of freedom of choice and cooperation instead gained a less prominent role as the government began to highlight the importance of migrants’ participation in the majority society. In particular, participation in the labour

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<sup>12</sup> The regulations for family reunification changed in 2005 and the criterion of member of the nuclear family was removed.

market was seen as an important means for integration. Much greater emphasis was put on individual rights and the rhetoric used referred to self-sufficiency and self-support as means for a successful integration. The Proposition still stated the importance of the right to be different, but ethnic and cultural identity would be a matter for the individual (Prop. 1997/98:16, 23). The importance of participation of migrants *qua* migrants was further downplayed in favour of public support of projects for associations running activities considered to be useful for integration, as defined by the state. As stressed by Hellgren and Hobson (2008, 388), “there has been little attempt to include migrant groups in the making of integration policies; policies were made *for*, not *with*, immigrants”.

Since 1997, the government has encouraged local authorities to adopt far-reaching, independent agendas for integration. The management of immigration flows is still centrally organised through the Immigration Board who signs agreements with the single municipalities regulating the dispersal of asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants<sup>13</sup>. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work<sup>14</sup>. The Proposition 1997/98:16 emphasised the importance of locally organised, non-compulsory introductory programmes for newly arrived migrants. The introductory programmes comprise Swedish language training and internship in an appropriate working environment, i.e. one which corresponds to the qualifications of the individual, and orientation to the Swedish society (NTG-asyl & integration 2008, 12)<sup>15</sup>. A recent evaluation of the introductory programmes shows that there are significant disparities in how the local authorities have implemented national policies (Cvetkovic 2009, 102). The local administrations also deal with immigrant policies within their ordinary administration, i.e. social welfare offices, housing authorities, schools etc.

After a long political debate, a new Aliens Act (2005:716) was introduced in 2006. Its main aim was to build a more transparent asylum seeking procedure

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<sup>13</sup> The national dispersal scheme is not compulsory, however. According to the 1994 Law on independent housing (*Lagen om egetboende*, commonly referred to as *Ebo*) asylum seekers awaiting a permit to stay can move wherever they want to in the country.

<sup>14</sup> If the asylum application is deemed to take more than four months, an asylum seeker can apply for a special permission to work. Asylum seekers who have no money of their own receive a *per diem* by the government (71SEK/day for an adult, ca 6,5 Euro). The payment can be withdrawn if the asylum seeker obstructs the application procedure.

<sup>15</sup> Few migrants successfully complete the language training and few migrants have a qualified internship (Integrationsverket 2007).

and it therefore changed its organisational structure. It also broadened the grounds for granting asylum, emphasising in particular the situation of non-accompanied children (Spång 2008, 88-95). With the enlargement of the EU to the A8 accession countries<sup>16</sup>, Sweden has witnessed an increase in the number of Eastern European workers entering the country. Sweden did not introduce temporary restrictions to A8 migration<sup>17</sup>. However this decision was not taken lightly and a general fear of Eastern Europeans coming to Sweden to exploit the welfare state was expressed by the public and among politicians. The speech of the then Prime Minister Göran Persson is memorable as he argued that: “[Eastern Europeans] are going to exploit our welfare. I cannot accept this social tourism” (Interview *Sveriges Radio, Ekot*, November 11, 2003. My translation). The trade unions, in particular LO, were heavily involved in lobbying for the regulation of migration flows from the new EU members (*Sydsvenskan* October 18, 2003).

With the 2006 elections a centre-right political alliance came to power. As part of the new government approach to immigrant policies, the four anti-discrimination ombudsmen have been merged into one unique body<sup>18</sup> and the Integration board, established in 1997, has been closed down. This has strengthened the individualised approach to immigrant policies. The government largely supports activities that can accelerate the entry into the labour market and that can quicken the process of language-learning.

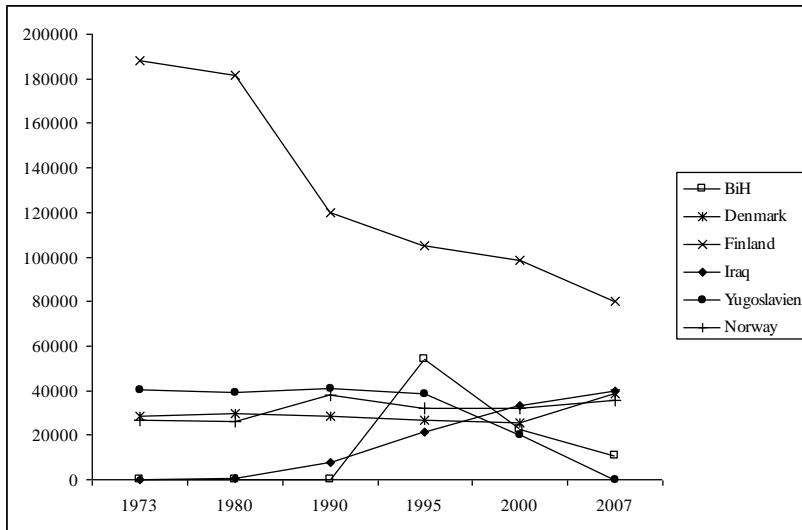
The figure below shows the number of foreign citizens (six most significant nationalities) resident in Sweden between 1973 and 2007.

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<sup>16</sup> The A8 accession countries, which joined the EU in 2004, are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The A2 countries, which joined in 2007, are Bulgaria and Romania.

<sup>17</sup> The only other countries which did not introduced restrictions were Ireland and the United Kingdom.

<sup>18</sup> Sweden used to have one ombudsman for gender equality, one for ethnic equality and discrimination, one for disabled people and one for discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.



**Figure 5.2 Foreign residents in Sweden 1973-2007.** Source [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)

Three observations are worth underlining. First, Finnish citizens are by far the most populous non-naturalised group resident in Sweden. However their number has decreased dramatically, especially since the 1990s, probably due to a better economic environment in Finland. Second, among the six most significant foreign nationalities, three are Nordic – an effect of the principle of free movement of labour between Nordic countries. Third, apart from the Finns, no other nationality is strikingly predominant in Sweden. Instead, the remaining five most important nationalities have a population between 20.000 and 40.000 people.

### Corporatism and immigration policies

The Swedish corporatist model provides an opportunity for the creation of migrant organisations as representatives of the interests of their respective communities. Organisations are supposed to provide a link between the majority society and its institutions and migrants. The state provides financial support to these organisations and channels for their participation at the national level through consultative bodies (Soysal 1994, 47-48; Soininen 1999, 686). The most commonly used category to define migrant population is *invandrare* (migrant). National categories (e.g., Afghani, Iraqi, Turk) are used only secondarily.

As the Swedish approach is built around the category of *invandrare*, migrants are made to mobilise accordingly and make claims as migrants rather than as Turks, Iranians, Asian or blacks (cp. Koopmans et al. 2005, 123-124<sup>19</sup>). The conceptualisation of migrants as *invandrare* diminishes the space available for mobilising along ethnic lines. It has created a dichotomy between Swedes, which represent normality, and *invandrare*, whose ways of being are defined as a problem (Scuzzarello 2008). Furthermore, as the state has already provided the opportunities for maintaining the home country's language and, to a certain extent, customs, the room for mobilisation is further constrained. This group-based approach has been accompanied since the 1990s by an increasing individualisation of immigrant policies which emphasise equal opportunities to enter the labour market through anti-discrimination.

### ***Citizenship legislation and political participation***

Sweden provides ample possibilities to naturalise. The principle of *jus sanguinis* determines natural access to citizenship. Persons born in Sweden but with parents who are non-nationals are eligible for Swedish nationality through a registration process. Non-Nordic residents have to have lived in Sweden for at least five years (or four if the person is a refugee) and should have no criminal record. In accordance with an agreement between the Nordic countries, Nordic citizens can apply for Swedish citizenship after two years of residence. For a long time, there was a sceptical attitude towards dual citizenship. However, since 2001 Sweden has opened up for dual citizenship. Naturalisation is not a formal requirement for accessing most legal, political and social rights. Hammar (in Sainsbury 2006, 237) argues that the underlying principle has been rights based on domicile (*jus domicili*) as their access is dependent upon a long-term residence permit.

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<sup>19</sup> Note that Koopmans et al. do not analyse the case of Sweden.

	1990	2000	2006	2007
Total population	8 590 630	8 882 792	9 113 257	9 182 927
Swedish nationals	8 106 926	8 405 480	8 621 261	8 658 439
Pop. born abroad (nationals and non-nationals) (% of Tot pop.)	790 445 (9,2%)	1 003 798 (11,3%)	1 175 200 (12,8%)	1 227 770 (13,3%)

**Table 5.1 Population of nationals and non-nationals 1990–2007 in Sweden.** Source: SCB (2008)

In 1975, non-naturalised migrants who had been legal residents for three years were given the right to vote in regional and local elections and to stand for local elections. This generous approach to political and social rights reflected the principles of equality and equal opportunities which underpinned immigrant policies at that time. Despite the initial success (ca 80 percent of migrants voted on the local elections of 1976), there is an increasingly lower turnout by migrants. During the latest election (2006), only 36,9 percent migrants voted in local elections. Furthermore, several studies have demonstrated the under-representation of migrants in local and national governmental bodies indicating a fundamental democratic deficit in the Swedish democracy (Soininen and Bäck 1999; Dahlstedt 2005; Dahlstedt and Hertzberg 2007).

Since 1975, the government has facilitated the establishment of migrant organisations and it has partly funded them. In the 2000 budget proposition (Prop. 1999/2000:1), the government established that it would provide two types of funding, one for ethnic organisations and one for any organisations developing integration projects.

The new funding system should give organisations the possibility to, on the one hand, strengthen their own identity and culture and, on the other hand, to carry out cross-cultural activities. (Prop. 1999/2000:1, 110)

This differed from how the organisations' role was conceived of in the 1980s, when their sheer existence was portrayed positively and when the government was less interested in the organisations' activities. Thus, the organisations that come to the fore and make claims on the basis of their ethnicity or religion have been selected centrally and institutionalised. As Odmalm (2004b, 106) points out, the organisations that have reached such a position have become the only voices with which the state establishes a dialogue, albeit paying the price of accepting strong state influence in their work. Migrant groups have the right to



express and develop their cultural heritage, for instance through associations. These organisations are also intended to function as channels for the incorporations of migrants into the majority society. Migrant associations, viewed as representatives of the interests of their particular ethnic group or religion, are therefore considered to be able to work, as means of political socialisation, similar to how trade unions incorporated the working class. The state has put significant emphasis on education and acculturation of migrants through associations (Ålund and Schierup 1991; Soininen 1999; Odmalm 2005). At the national level, umbrella organisations are given the role of the state's formal partners through consultative bodies and advisory councils. In 1975 the government established the Immigrant Council<sup>20</sup>, which was substituted in 1997 by the Council for ethnic equality and integration<sup>21</sup>. Initially the organisation could freely choose their representatives. Since the 1990s however, the government has the right to decide who can represent an organisation among a number of candidates put forward by the organisations. The right-wing government in power since 2006 has disbanded the Council. In 2008 the government has established conventions ("Dialogue on stronger common values"<sup>22</sup>) with selected national migrant organisations where specific topics such as freedom of speech, gender equality and political equality have been discussed.

Notwithstanding the emphasis on corporatism, migrants (as a group) have never achieved the same level of influence on the decision-making process as traditional corporatist actors have done (Spång 2008, 114-116)<sup>23</sup> Some organisations such as Amnesty International and the Red Cross have had a more prominent role in the decision-making process and the commissions of inquiries which have dealt with immigrant policies have consulted them on several occasions (Spång 2008, 114). Migrant organisations have not received the same level of attention. Migrants are not perceived as representing any social class or organisation, and associations that work with immigration and integration have only been able to affect policies through public opinion formation (Spång 2008, 110-116). This approach has created a paradox in Swedish multiculturalism since

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<sup>20</sup> Swe: *Invandrarrådet*.

<sup>21</sup> Swe: *Regeringens råd för etnisk jämlikhet och integration*.

<sup>22</sup> Swe: *Dialog om en förstärkt gemensam värdegrund*. [www.dialogvardegrund.nu](http://www.dialogvardegrund.nu)

<sup>23</sup> Several studies demonstrate the marginalisation of migrants within the trade unions. See among others Mulinari and Neergaard (2004; 2005).

cultural difference has been institutionalised but not given influence in the political arena (Ålund and Schierup 1991).

## **5.2 Britain**

The organisation of British policies is underpinned by an emphasis on individual equality and not on a corporatist logic. This has shaped the country's approach to immigrants' incorporation. Civil rights, labour market participation and anti-discriminatory legislation have been the cornerstones of Britain's immigrant policies. They have been paralleled since the 1960s by a restrictive immigration regulation. Recently the country has moved towards a civic approach to immigrant policies as the importance of becoming and feeling British and to learn the English language have been emphasised by politicians and policy-makers.

### ***National policy approach and impact on migration and migrants***

Historically, Britain has always balanced liberalism and socialism (Schierup et al. 2006, 113). The labour unions had a strong position in bringing social and political rights forward so that the working class could access them and participate in the wider society similar to the other, wealthier social classes. The state has however remained profoundly liberal. Traditionally it has not intervened in interest-group agreements. Instead, it has tailored the welfare state system for low-income groups, traditionally the working class. This model became explicit during the 1980s Conservative governments, which decided to roll back the welfare state. Esping-Andersen (1990) labels this model "liberal welfare state". This model of welfare contains the realm of social rights and provides mainly means-tested benefits. It relies on the principle that the market is the primary regulatory instrument in society. Limited welfare support has generated the propensity to opt for poorly remunerated jobs instead of social assistance. Poor-quality public services has also triggered the private sector to provide alternative services in the realms of health care, education, elderly care, etc. (Schierup et al. 2006, 112-113). The individualistic approach to social incorporation has affected Britain's approach to migrants' incorporation. Civil rights and labour-market participation of individual migrants became the most common instrument of participation. Indeed, "equality of opportunity" and

“good race relations” have been the dominant themes of immigration policies (Soysal 1994, 4; 54-56).

Parties win seats in Parliament if they have strong local support. They are in a position to win a majority of seats, and therefore build government, if this support corresponds to other constituencies. This system has favoured the representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates (Garbaye 2005). In the electoral areas which are populated by a majority of ethnic minorities, parties have tended to promote BME candidates to secure a seat in the Parliament. The British electoral system consolidates the existing bipolar party system as the candidate who wins the election in a parliamentary constituency is the only one who wins a seat in the Parliament regardless of whether s/he has won the absolute majority of votes. This electoral system gives then exaggerated strength to the leading parties and enables them to ignore the demands of many political movements and smaller parties (Odmalm 2005, 105).

The British model of government has traditionally tended to concentrate all the domestic power in the national Parliament. The central government exercises control through the provision of government revenue to local authorities and through its legislative power. Local councils are dependent on the central government for finances even if they can increase their resources through e.g. council taxes<sup>24</sup>. Since the years of the Conservative government (1979-1997), the central government relies on the local authorities, on Quasi-autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations (quangos), and on agencies to implement its programmes, while it retains the power to design policy frameworks. New Labour, in power since 1997, has followed the patterns of deregulation under the philosophy of the “Third way” while at the same time retaining the power to design policymaking at the central level (Davies 2009). Despite the highly centralised approach to government, the local government has the responsibility to deliver some services. Usually in Britain the division of service delivery follows a two-tier system of administration whereby the County Council runs the most important and expensive services such as education and social services, and the District Council delivers services such as housing and street cleaning (Leach et al.2006, 323). England has also 36 Metropolitan districts, of which Birmingham is the largest, which are basically unitary authorities. This means that a metropolitan district is responsible for all local government functions within its area, including housing, education, social

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<sup>24</sup> The national government has however the power to cap the rate of council taxes.

services, transport and planning. This has enabled Metropolitan districts such as Birmingham relative freedom in shaping the delivery of services that affect BME communities in particular (Garbaye 2005, 39).

Britain has been rather successful in enforcing a neo-liberal model of social policy. However, the legacy of a manufactory-based economy on the one side and of an imperial model on the other made the transition to post-Fordism relatively complex. The restructuring of the industrial sector generated a large number of redundant workers, many of whom were African-Caribbean and Pakistani. Britain also faced a demographic crisis during the 1970s and early 1980s which made the kind of temporary, low-paid jobs that used to be occupied by youth progressively taken over by ethnic minorities (Schierup et al. 2006, 127). The British Government reacted to the financial crisis of the 1990s by embracing a wage-cost competition strategy which included the development of low-wage service sectors. This was promoted by Major's Conservative Government as well as by New Labour (Pontusson 1997). This approach to the political economy has had important consequences for ethnic minorities and women. In particular ethnic minorities have been employed in service occupations and by subcontracting firms used by the textile and clothing industry. Part-time jobs have proliferated as they have been stimulated by the government. Part-time employees have however a weak legal position, which makes them potentially subject to exploitation. Hence, the wage-cost competition strategy contributed to maintain a gendered and racially stratified labour market.

Ethnic minorities are overrepresented in unemployment statistics. According to the 2001 census the employment rate of White British male in England and Wales was 77,8 percent, while male unemployment rates were in excess of 10 percent in 2001 for all ethnic minorities (Clark and Drinkwater 2007, 9-10). This is partly due to discrimination of ethnic minorities. Recent research shows however that there is considerable variation by ethnic group and gender. Clark and Drinkwater (2007, 6-17) have compared the data of the 1991 and 2001 censuses and demonstrate that the Chinese and Indians have a higher rate of employment than the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Recent research also shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim men earn 13-21 percent less than white British Christian with similar qualifications (Government Equalities Office 2010). Overall BME women perform better in employment than men. However,

among Pakistani and Bangladeshi women the unemployment rate is higher than it is for men<sup>25</sup>.

### ***Immigration patterns and immigrant policies***

Britain has experienced large migration flows from the 1940s and onwards. This phase of migration was a movement of subjects within an imperial polity, rather than third-country citizens moving to a sovereign territory. The British Nationality Act of 1948 meant that persons born in colonial or Commonwealth countries were permitted to travel and enter Britain freely by virtue of being subjects of the Crown. All British subjects could therefore enjoy the same social, political and legal rights as other Britons. The race riots that took place during the late 1950s triggered public and parliamentary debates expressing fears that social and racial problems would arise with the arrival of more black colonial workers (Solomos 2003, 52). This undermined the political consensus about the desirability of continued migration and fuelled the myth that all British subjects<sup>26</sup> would soon “swamp” the island. This fostered a rationale to control legislation, implemented in the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill which introduced more restrictive measures for immigration control.

### **1960s: Race relations and tight immigration regulation**

The policy logic concerning immigration and incorporation of migrants was that tight control would lead to better race relations. This understanding was promoted by both Labour and Conservative. Hence, the strict 1962 Immigrants Bill was accompanied by an understanding of immigrant policies as “equal opportunities, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance”, as stated by Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1966 (quoted in Joppke 1996, 480). In the 1960s, welfare agencies were set up to deal with the problems faced by non-white migrants and to help white communities to understand migrants. In addition, two Race Relations Acts (RRA) were passed (in 1965 and in 1968). This put down the guidelines for immigrant policies characterised by two elements: anti-discrimination policies inspired by the USA, and “community

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<sup>25</sup> Pakistani men: 16,2%; Pakistani women 18%; Bangladeshi men 20,3%; Bangladeshi women 23%.

<sup>26</sup> Strictly speaking, the 1948 Nationality Act enabled 500 to 800 million people living in the colonies and in the Commonwealth to move to Britain. This population had also an automatic right to vote, even if it was not significantly exercised until the 1970s.

relations” (or race relations) policies at the local level (Garbaye 2005, 46). With the RRAs, Britain officially took measures to combat racism and discrimination and to promote social integration, thus acknowledging that political equality had not lead to full equal treatment in the broader society (Layton-Henry 1992). Garbaye argues that through the RRAs, the government began to see migrants not as mere beneficiaries of policies, but as “actors of politics and consumers of policies” (2005, 49). Even the labelling of migrants changed. From being categorised as “immigrants” they became racial/ethnic minorities. This eased their participation in British politics, both as electorate and as politicians. It also maintained the category of “race” or “ethnicity” as socio-politically relevant since the imperial era. This opened up for British migrants to mobilise as “black” and to make concomitant claims for racial equality and, in turn, closed the opportunities for religious groups such as Muslims to make equality claims in the name of their religion (Statham 1999; Statham et al. 2005; Modood 2007).

Following the 1964 elections, won by Labour, more restrictive measures were introduced to immigration regulation. According to Geddes (2003, 36; 38-40), the restrictive immigration policies were a response to anti-immigration sentiments rather than a proactive stance. A national poll of 1961 indicated that 73 percent of the British population wanted tighter immigration control of, in particular, coloured colonial migrants (Small and Solomos 2006, 243). Conservative Enoch Powell tapped into the strong anti-immigration sentiments among the general public in his 1968 “river of blood” speech. As a reaction, the 1968 Second Commonwealth Immigrant Bill introduced the patriality rule, by which entrance to the UK was allowed only if the person had one parent or grandparent born, adopted or naturalised as a British citizen. This *de facto* excluded the large majority of British citizens living in the Commonwealth.

A new RRA was passed in 1976. It extended the objectives of the law to include indirect discrimination brought about by structural racism. However, police were excluded from the provisions of the law. The Commission for Racial Equality was established and it allowed for “positive action”. It also made the local authorities officially responsible for equality of opportunity and good community relations (Geddes 2003, 44-46; Solomos 2003, 82-85). Politicians kept playing the “race card” (Geddes 2003, 38) when it was resonant among the public. For instance Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1978 said she understood the fear of Britons to be swamped by alien cultures and that it was her duty to prevent these people from joining extreme right movements. Words were translated into practice through the 1981 British Nationality Act which tightened the grip on immigration and restricted the definition of British

citizenship although retaining the right to vote at national elections to Commonwealth nationals resident in Britain. After the introduction of the Nationality Act, the three Conservative governments maintained a passive position on immigration and immigrant policies, mostly reacting critically to the proposals made by Labour (Layton-Henry 1992). The Conservative's passive approach to immigrant policies and Labour's recruitment of politicians among ethnic minority groups and the support of the black and Asian electorates created a particularly strong bond between Labour and ethnic minorities (Garbaye 2005, 57).

Race relations have expressed itself in a variety of legal provisions which, for instance, have allowed ethnic and religious minority group rulings for special requirements for dress, diet or prayer in the workplace and in schools. However, the formal extension of rights to migrants has not matched the development of a fully anti-discriminatory environment. For instance, in the area of political representation, the number of local councillors and MPs of ethnic minority origins remains low. The representatives belonging to an ethnic minority have been elected in areas with relatively large minority populations. One of the results of the anti-discrimination legislation is that the representation of ethnic minorities has tended to be seen as a concern for the ethnic minority population rather than for the society as a whole (Geddes 2003, 47). Recent statistics show that discrepancies in terms of employment, labour market participation and housing follow ethnic lines. It means that members of ethnic and religious minority groups are more likely to be outside the labour market. Those in employment are more likely to be fired than those within it and they are at greater risk of unemployment. This applies even if they are born in Britain and have equivalent age and educational characteristics to the White British population (ONS 2006, 112).

### **Late 1990s: New Labour, the issue of asylum seekers and community cohesion**

When the New Labour came to power in 1997, it was expected to respond concretely to the demands for changes in race relation policies. The 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) was the product of New Labour's initiative and a partial response to the 1999 Macpherson Report into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence. The Act extended the requirement to promote racial equality to all public authorities, including the police and demonstrated a continued support for anti-discrimination policies. However, the geo-political

changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century opened up for a significant shift in policies and discourses on migration and multiculturalism, changing the core of this debate.

In the late 1990s there were increased numbers of asylum seekers. The scale of this was however exaggerated by media and politicians. The category of “bogus asylum seeker” acquired salience in the public debate, claiming that a large share of people seeking asylum in Britain were seeking to exploit the system as their real motive for migration was economic. This positioned asylum-seekers as a social threat to Britain and created a window of opportunity for governments and policy-makers to introduce measures for containing this threat, i.e. immigration (Buonfino 2004, 37). At the same time, welfare provisions were subject to serious cut-backs. To depict asylum-seekers as alien to the British community and as a threat to it provided the discursive basis for positioning asylum-seekers as illegitimate receivers of welfare state benefits (Geddes 2003, 40). Since the mid-1990s the rejection rate of asylum seekers in Britain has been above 70 percent of all applications, with relatively low numbers of rejections in 1999 (52 percent) and 2002 (66 percent), explained by the situations in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq respectively. The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act introduced vouchers for asylum-seekers to replace cash paid welfare benefits and a national dispersal system in order to counter the concentration of asylum-seekers in certain areas of the country. This has in many ways deprived asylum-seekers of the agency to decide over their private economy, putting significant obstacles to their participation and trust in the recipient society. Applications of asylum seekers rose from 41 500 in 1997, to 84 000 in 2002 and, even if the numbers fell to 23,430 in 2007 (Home Office 2008), they fuelled the fear that Britain was going to loose its identity and its welfare if allowing too many asylum seekers to stay<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> This perception is highly resonant today. In a recent interview with the *Guardian*, Minister of State for Borders and Immigration Phil Woolas said that most asylum seekers were not fleeing persecution but were economic migrants (*The Guardian*, November 18, 2008). He has also praised the UK Border Agency for making “the United Kingdom a more hostile place for illegal immigrants” (Home Office UKBA, 2009). The scapegoating of asylum seekers is also prominent in British media. In an attempt to explain the “immigration crisis” in Britain, Alasdair Palmer journalist for the *Telegraph*, claims that Britain is a preferred route for immigration because “it is easier [...] to claim benefits, get council housing and access health and education services”. Palmer also says that immigrants put a disproportionate pressure on public services, in particular schools, NHS and housing. The main reason provided for this is that “[migrants] had more children”. (*The Telegraph*, March 21, 2009).



Year	Nr. Of asylum application	Refused asylum (% of applications)
1990	26.205	N/A
1998	46.015	22.315 (71%)
2000	80.315	62.720 (74%)
2002	84.130	54.305 (63%)
2004	33.960	44.070 (88%)
2006	23.610	17.050 (78%)
2007	23.430	16.755 (73%)

**Table 5.2 Asylum application in the UK 1990-2007.** Source Home Office 2008.

Between May and July 2001 the northern British towns of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley witnessed violent riots between gangs of white and British Asian youths. The same year, the terrorist attacks on the United States changed the public narratives on migrants and, in particular, Islam. The later attacks carried out in Madrid (2004) and in London (2005) exacerbated the debate. Meanwhile, the populist British Nationalist Party (BNP) was gaining more – although by continental standards, still limited - political terrain. These events invigorated the debates about British national identity and British core cultural values and reinforced the understanding that good race relations are dependent on good (meaning strict) immigration regulation.

The developments in British immigrant policies in the 2000s were characterised by a move beyond multiculturalism towards forms of civic integration (Joppke 2004). The Independent Review Team, established by the government to examine the aftermaths of the riots of 2001 and led by Ted Cantle, issued a report that was one of the first documents to indicate this shift. The research team argued that in some areas of the country, due to economic and urban segregation, communities were living “parallel lives” (2001, 9). It criticised local authorities for encouraging these trends, but it was also critical of the tendency among Asian communities in particular to self-segregate themselves (2001, 71). The report concluded that a solution to this would be to strengthen community cohesion, defined as “groups who live in a local area getting together to promote or defend some common local interest” (2001, 14). There had to be a “greater sense of citizenship” (2001, 10), “common elements of nationhood” had to be agreed upon (2001, 19) and “the non-white community [had] to develop a greater acceptance of, and engagement with, the principal national institutions” (2001, 18).

These ideas achieved wide resonance in the public debate. Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality and now head of the

Equality and Human Rights Commission, denounced several times the dangers of “sleep-walking into segregation” (*BBC news* September 22, 2005). At the level of national policy, the call for a re-conceptualisation of British citizenship were implemented in the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act which imposed on candidates to British citizenship to take a pledge of allegiance to Britain - another sign of civic integration. The 2002 white paper *Secure borders, safe haven* was yet an important component of this development. In the White Paper, the government set out the key objectives for the development of citizenship and nationality policy. It argued that “it is vital that we strengthen both our sense of community belonging and the civic and political dimensions of British citizenship” (Home Office 2002, 11). It linked belonging to loyalty to the British state while at the same time under-emphasising any endeavour to enable social participation and emotional identification with it. Furthermore it underestimated the importance of a person’s multiple belongings and the inner tensions among them (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005, 529-532).

In June 2006 the Government launched the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, a fixed-term advisory body. The Commission was meant to analyse ethnic diversity in the local areas and to present possible policy responses to interethnic tensions. The Commission’s final report *Our shared future* (2007) sets out a new definition of integration and cohesion. It argued that an integrated and cohesive community is one where:

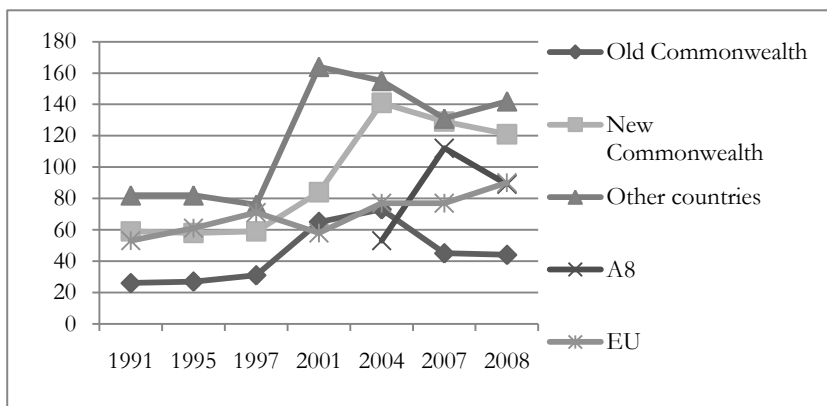
There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country; There is a strong sense of an individual’s rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place [...]; There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests. (2007, 42)

The report argued that integration and cohesion can best be dealt with at the local- rather than at the national level. One of the recommendations put forward by the Commission, with important consequences, has been its doubts about single-group funding. Agencies and statutory funders are now more resilient in funding organisations unless its policies and practices promote integration and cohesion (Kofman et al. 2009, 69).

While the government on the one hand has tried to limit asylum-seeking migration, it has since the 1990s also attempted to re-establish a labour recruitment policy which targets high skilled workers in particular. It is assumed that these migrants will not burden the public services and will easily assimilate.

Since 2008, a point-based system has been introduced to enable a stricter control of migration of students and workers (Home Office 2006). These regulations have important gendered implications. Domestic workers are not given the same status as other workers, despite the labour shortages in the private sphere and in the social sector. This confirms the view put forward by several care ethicists that the work of care is devalued as are the people who do caring work (Tronto 1993, 112-122). This approach has disadvantaged women, who often enter the country as spouses. As their right to stay is dependent on that of the applicant's, i.e. the husband, unequal power relations within the family are enhanced (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005, 520). Family reunification has furthermore been subject to significant interventionism. This is due to a stereotypical view associated with family migration which tends to be seen as introducing practices such as arranged marriages and authoritarian gender relations into liberal societies (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005, 519).

In 2004 the European Union was enlarged to include the A8 accession countries. Britain was one of the countries that put no *interim* limitations to migration flows from these countries. A8 nationals who wish to take up employment in the UK can register with the Work Registration Scheme (WRS). A total of 715,000 applications to the WRS were approved between 1 May, 2004 and 30 September, 2007. Of these, 66 percent were Polish and the vast majority (82 percent) were aged between 18-34. This number is however relatively small compared to the size of migration flows from the new and old Commonwealth and from other parts of the world, as the figure below shows. It is interesting to note that since 2001, migration to Britain has generally decreased – with the exception of migration from the European Union. This is shown in figure 5.3 below.



**Figure 5.3 Long term international migration to the UK 1991-2008 by citizenship (thousands)<sup>28</sup>.** Source ONS 2008.

In 2008, the ethnic minority population in Britain amounted to ca. 8 percent of the total population while third-country nationals resident in Britain made up 6 percent of the population (Eurostat 2008). Table 5.3 below shows the six most important non-naturalised national groups resident in Britain. For the sake of international comparison it is important to provide data on the most significant foreign born population in Britain since a large percentage of ethnic minorities have naturalised.

Nationality	1997	2002	2007
India	404,100	424,600	553,300
Poland	67,800	49,600	424,300
Ireland	534,600	490,600	410,400
Pakistan	222,400	281,600	357,900
Germany	227,900	266,700	255,300
Bangladesh	140,200	179,900	203,800

**Table 5.3 Most significant national groups in the UK 1997-2007.** Source Kofman et al. (2009, 10).

<sup>28</sup> European Union estimates are for the EU15 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Irish Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) from 1991 - 2003, EU25 (EU15 and A8 groupings plus Malta and Cyprus) from 2004 - 2006, and for the EU27 (EU25 plus Bulgaria and Romania) from 2007. Estimates are also shown separately for the A8 countries.

## ***Citizenship legislation and political participation***

By virtue of the 1948 British Nationality Act, anyone born within British territory could claim British nationality. The 1981 British Nationality Act restricted the citizenship legislation and brought patriality into nationality law. The Act reclassified Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies into three categories: British citizenship; British Dependent Territories citizenship; and British Overseas citizenship. Citizens of the former colonies who had either a parent or a grandparent who was born, adopted, naturalised or registered as citizen of the UK, or who were permanently settled in the UK were considered British citizens. British Dependent Territories citizenship would be acquired by those whose parent or grandparent were born, naturalised or registered in an existing dependency or associate state. The third category included all other cases, and was an implicit invitation to those British subjects permanently resident abroad to take on local citizenship (Layton-Henry 1992, 191-194). The Act stipulated that British citizens would automatically carry a right of abode in the UK. The other categories of British nationality would not hold such status. The Act also modified the application of *jus soli* in British nationality. Prior to the Act coming into force, any person born in Britain was entitled to British Citizenship. The 1981 Act introduced a mixture of *jus solis*, *jus sanguinis* and *jus domicili* (Odmalm 2005, 71). It stated that it was necessary for at least one parent of a United Kingdom-born child to be a British citizen or to hold a permanent resident permit in the United Kingdom. Dual nationality is since long accepted.

In 2003, new British citizens have been obliged to attend a ceremony at which they pledge their allegiance to Britain and the crown<sup>29</sup>. In 2005 the government added a language requirement before being able to naturalise. One must demonstrate her/his proficiency of English by either taking and passing an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course which contains

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<sup>29</sup> The person will have to choose between one *oath of allegiance* ("I (name) swear by Almighty God that on becoming a British citizen, I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, her heirs and successors, according to law") or an *affirmation of allegiance* ("I (name) do solemnly and sincerely affirm that on becoming a British citizen, I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, her heirs and successors, according to law"). After the oath or affirmation, she/he will make the *citizenship pledge* (I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom and respect its rights and freedoms. I will uphold its democratic values. I will observe its laws faithfully and fulfil my duties and obligations as a British citizen).

citizenship materials or, if the candidate's knowledge of English is adequate, by passing a standardised multiple-choice test called *Life in the UK* on basic English language, the political system and civic rights (Home Office web-page). Taken together, these two new measures parallel the civic integration approach that has characterised immigrant policies in the past years.

British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens are entitled to vote in Westminster elections. This means that Britain has one of the highest ethnic minority citizenry with a right to franchise in Europe. People from other EU countries resident in the UK cannot vote at general elections. Saggar (1998) finds a high level of electorate registration among BME communities, 92 percent (whites 97 percent). However, there is evidence of lower electoral turnout among younger generations and that fewer ethnic minority women register to vote than men (Russel et al. 2002; Operation Black Vote 2001). BME communities have participated in party politics since the 1970s. In particular the Labour Party has been successful in recruiting and receiving support from Asian and black voters. Their representation in parliament has increased steadily, but they still represent a small minority of MPs which is not representative of Britain's BME communities<sup>30</sup>. Both major parties have race and equalities committees<sup>31</sup> which try to attract BME communities' support and to increase the number of ethnic minority candidates and elected MPs and councillors.

In addition to party-based political involvement, BME organisations have played a role in British political life since the 1950s, in particular at the local level (Solomos 2003, 198). A 1999 Local Government Act has put local governments under the obligation to consult with representatives from communities and civil society. This has had considerable impact on policies concerned with the social and political integration of BME communities. The government supports and encourages voluntary and community activity, including BME groups. In Britain this is done through agreements between the government and the voluntary sector such as *Compact*<sup>32</sup>, a framework of

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<sup>30</sup> In 1997, nine ethnic minority candidates were elected to Parliament. In 2001, 12 became MP and at the 2005 elections, 15 MPs belong to an ethnic minority.

<sup>31</sup> The Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Society has been established within Labour. The Conservative party has inaugurated an Ethnic Diversity Council. The Labour party has a long history of BME interest groups – most notably through the black sections established in between the mid-1970s and the 1980s. See Shukra (1990) and Shukra et al. (2004).

<sup>32</sup> [www.thecompact.org.uk](http://www.thecompact.org.uk)

principles and values shaping relationships between the voluntary and community sector and government (Craig et al. 2005).

The majority of BME associations are organised nationally since the late 1990s in the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations and its associated Ethnic Minority Foundation. In particular, British Muslims are organised nationally through e.g. the Union of Muslim Organisations, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Council of Mosques, and the National Association of British Muslims. These organisations are relatively formally run and the vast majority deal primarily with anti-discrimination issues or are community care groups aimed at specific ethnic groups with particular needs (Odmalm 2005, 185). These umbrella organisations are part of the government policy tables and steering groups and actively respond to policymaking through public consultations. There is however little coherence in policymaking with regard to BME-led organisations at the local and national levels and recent research indicate barriers to meaningful participation by BME-led groups in agenda-setting and policymaking (Craig et al. 2002).

## 5.3 Italy

Italy, similarly to other southern European countries, is usually conceived of as a new country of immigration whose immigrant policies are best described as embryonic (e.g. Geddes 2003). I contest this position and argue that, while the perspective that Italy is a new country of immigration with no consistent understanding of incorporation might have been valid up until the mid-1990s, things have changed significantly in the past two decades. To grasp Italy's experience of migration and to understand how the country has dealt with the incorporation of migrants, it is necessary to understand the informal character of the country's economy, its familiaristic approach to the welfare state and the rise of a anti-immigration and pro-devolution party the *Lega Nord*.

### ***National policy approach and impact on migration and migrants***

In the early 1990s Italy was shaken by the trials of *Tangentopoli* (Bribe-land), which unveiled the political elites' systematic corruption as well as the widespread illegal financing of the two main parties, the Christian Democratic (DC) and the Socialist (PSI). As the old parties collapsed, a window of opportunity was created for new parties to gain electoral support. In 1992 the

*Lega Nord* was founded and it was able to erode the electoral support of the DC<sup>33</sup> in the North. The unveiling of the corruption of the political elites created a fertile ground for the *Lega* to develop a rhetoric of condemnation of clientelism, corruption, and centrist mismanagement of resources. The call for anti-criminality targeted not only the political elite, however, but also migrants who were allegedly conceived of as criminals, clandestines, and culturally deviant (Scheirup et al. 2006, 193). This was contrasted with a mythology of the hardworking, economic diligent and honest “Padania”, what the *Lega* calls the territory north of the river Po<sup>34</sup>. Since the mid- 1990s the *Lega* managed to introduce several restrictive measures concerning immigration regulations, thanks to a unique position between the centre-left and the centre-right in coalition governments. The crisis of the First Republic also saw the entry onto the political stage of an entirely new actor, the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi and his *Forza Italia* (FI) which was founded in 1994 in time for the elections. Berlusconi presented himself as a representative of civil society, and as an alternative against the old system and against the post-communist left. He was incredibly skilful in establishing and keeping together a large alliance with the *Lega* and the post-fascist *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN)<sup>35</sup>. As AN was in favour of a centralist state and the *Lega* had a strong federalist platform, FI built two coalitions. One with the *Lega* in the North and one with the AN in the South<sup>36</sup>.

With the increased prominence of the *Lega* the issue of territorial autonomy was put at the centre of the political debate. After a centralist past, supported during the reunification and later by the Fascist regime, Italy has since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century moved towards a strongly decentralised system. The Law 142 of 1990 in particular introduced a general rearrangement of local governance. The Law gave more power to the regions assigning to them the function of determining general policy objectives and gave more executive powers to the local governments (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007, 187). The Law 59/1997 introduced a municipal property tax, which significantly reduced the municipalities’ dependence on state transfers. The constitutional reform in 2001

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<sup>33</sup> The DC had been until then the most powerful party in post-war Italy.

<sup>34</sup> On the mythology on Padania see e.g. Bull and Gilbert (2001).

<sup>35</sup> The left has been unable to reach the same level of cohesion. Between 1994 and 2008 it was guided at the elections by six different leaders, while Berlusconi led his coalition undisturbed.

<sup>36</sup> AN has been incorporated in 2009, together with FI, in the broad Berlusconi party *Popolo d’Italia*.



(Constitutional Law 3/2001, implemented through the Law 131/2003) defines today's regionalist character of the Italian political system. The regions have exclusive legislative competence in domains such as health care, education, and local police and they have a wider power in the field of economic policy and planning. Provincial and municipal institutions can issue secondary regulations and are responsible for the implementation of the various policy fields (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007, 192-195). Considering the strong economic discrepancies among regions in Italy, the increased regional autonomy has worked to the advantage of the wealthier regions in the North, leaving the South to lag behind once again<sup>37</sup>.

Esping-Andersen (1990, 27) labels Italy's welfare state regime, together with Germany's, Austria's and France's, as conservative and corporate and highly influenced by the Church. The latter's influence promotes the conservation of the traditional family and a morally sanctioned social order. However, authors such as Mingione (1995) have argued that Italy differs from northern European countries such as Germany and Austria in several important respects. In particular, Italy relies on a familial welfare system which has traditionally relied on women for the daily provision of care (Saraceno 1994). Italy makes a significant use of non-means-tested cash provisions and delivers a low percentage of social benefits in kind. Consequently, households have to provide a large share of personal services to their members (Sciortino 2004). The entrance of women into the labour market in the 1970s, triggered by the country's rapid economic growth, created a strong pull factor for the recruitment of foreign domestic workers. Migrants are carrying out most of the household services in Italy and operate in both the formal and the informal sectors of the economy (Sciortino 2004, 119-121). This can explain the existence of sizable female migration flows which covers labour shortages in the domestic sector and which have led to an almost equal gender distribution among migrants (Andall 2000).

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<sup>37</sup> The problems concerning the southern regions, also known as *la questione meridionale*, are incredibly complex and go back to the unification of the country in 1861. In particular the linkages between the patterns of public spending in Italy, the clientelistic political economy and the invasive presence of the organised criminality has created a geopolitical environment which in many ways differs from the rest of Italy. However, because of its complexity, and because it falls outside the aims of this thesis, I will not discuss this any further (see Ginsborg 1990).

Migrants have always been responding to labour shortages in northern Italian factories and in the agricultural and fishing sectors in the South. The deregulation of the labour market at the turn of the millennium has opened the way to more flexible employment practices. This has favoured the development of a working category, composed mainly by young women and migrants, who are employed on compulsory part-time and time-determined contracts. This parallels the already existing and very large informal sector which has been a source of cheap labour for small business and family firms (King 2000, 8-12; Mingione and Quassoli 2000). Because migrants are mainly employed in the informal sector and often without a contract they face particular disadvantages. They are not only cut off from a significant range of social services but are also more easily targets of abuse in terms of pay and work conditions. In addition, they have to handle racist behaviour and black-mailing on the part of some employers as their permit of stay is contingent on their work contract (Calavita 2005, 46)<sup>38</sup>.

### ***Immigration patterns and immigrant policies***

Migration flows to Italy began to assume quantitative significance in the 1970s. Prior to this, Italy had been a country of net-export of labour<sup>39</sup>. Even during the economic growth during the 1960s, the main supply of workers came from the southernmost Italian regions. Therefore the post-Fordist deindustrialisation in Italy did not affect the foreign labour force as it had in Britain and Sweden, but strengthened the already existing underground economy and regional inequalities.

#### **Mid-1980s to 1990s**

Following the ratification of the 1975 ILO Migrant Workers Convention, the Italian government issued the first law which regulated the status of migrant workers in 1986 (Law 943/1986)<sup>40</sup>. With the 1986 Law, foreign workers staying

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<sup>39</sup> Between 1860 and 1970, an estimated 26 million Italians emigrated to other countries. A massive internal migration from the South to the wealthier North also took place after the end of the Second World War, as about 20 million people moved (Schierup et al. 2006, 163).

<sup>40</sup> Within the Italian legal framework, measures concerning immigration and those defining immigrants' rights are usually included in the same provision.

legally in Italy were given equal social rights, and some measures were introduced to ease family reunification. The Italian borders remained basically open to foreigners entering as tourists and the fines for Italian employers providing work for irregular migrants became less severe (Colombo and Sciortino 2004b, 774). This approach, continued in the following decades, turned illegal permanence in the country into *status quo*.

In the late 1980s the formulation of a new immigration law was at the centre of strong parliamentary debates and was opposed by the neo-fascist MSI and the Republican Party (PRI). The proportional electoral system of the time gave a disproportionate influence to relatively small parties such as the MSI and the PRI since they could act as balances of power between the major parties. Statham (1998, 34-35) shows that the PRI played this role particularly well. The Party's leader La Malfa made public speeches against the law proposals preceding the Law 39/1990 where he described apocalyptic scenarios in which migrants would become threats to the social order. These political debates and the waves of racist mobilisation that followed them fostered a general panic over apparently uncontrollable illegal entry. The feelings of panic have dominated the political and public debates ever since and have legitimised repressive measures against migrants. When the Law 39/1990 was passed in February, it was characterised by a restrictive approach which emphasised the issue of securing "public order". It introduced a compulsory visa for all main sending countries and emphasised the importance of expulsions that were now conceived of as an efficient means to control irregular migration. The Law also established an annual inflow decree<sup>41</sup> which would regulate the number of permits of stay for labour migrants. However the decrees did not reflect the actual need for labour, which was absorbed by the second amnesty for undocumented workers<sup>42</sup> and by family reunifications. The amnesty was in reality used mainly for retrospectively

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<sup>41</sup> In the Italian legislative system, a decree is a bill passed by the government, and not by the Parliament which has the legislative power, under extraordinary circumstances. A decree has immediate implementation and has the same power as a law. However, if it is not transformed into law by the Parliament within 60 days the Decree expires retroactively, as if it never existed. The Constitutional Court can declare a decree illegitimate if its principles are deemed non-constitutional. An "inflow decree" (ita. *decreto flussi*) establishes the number of migrant workers allowed to enter the country each year. A migrant is supposed to apply to this scheme of entrance from his/her country of origin. In practice it is often used by migrants who are already present in the territory without a permit of stay.

<sup>42</sup> The first amnesty was granted in 1987.

legalising the status of migrants who stayed in the country without permit (Colombo and Sciortino 2004b, 776; Zincone 2006b, 21). In addition, the 1990 Law broadened the right to asylum, which had previously been limited to citizens of the former Soviet bloc. The number of people who see their asylum claims accepted is however very limited compared to that of countries such as Sweden and Britain, as the table below shows.

Year	Nr. Of asylum application	Refused asylum (% of applications)
1999	24808	24023 (99%)
2000	18360	16745 (91%)
2002	16123	14888 (92%)
2004	9796	9025 (92%)
2006	10348	9470 (91,5%)
2007	14053	12645 (89,9%)

**Table 4 Asylum application in Italy 1999-2007.** Source Ministry of internal affairs.

Faced by increased xenophobic and racist sentiments among the public, the governments introduced repressive measures against neo-Nazi groups (so-called “Nazi-skin”), but did not address the systemic discrimination and racism in the public sphere. This created an opportunity for certain groups to mobilise politically around these racist sentiments and to establish a political movement on these issues.

In the mid-1990s the issue of migration became submerged by the political crisis which characterised the country under *Tangentopoli*. The crisis impacted on the context of immigration regulation and immigrant policies. As the opposition between fascism and communism had lost its symbolic significance with the end of the Cold War, there was a need to find a new scapegoat. Migrants were the most easily picked candidates to serve this function (Statham 1998, 43). The *Lega*, and to a lesser extent AN, depicted migrants as cultural aliens to gain electoral support. Migrants were increasingly defined as *extracomunitari*, i.e. non-members of the European Community (now EU), backward, and criminal (Boswell 2003, 83). The term also denotes their permanent status of non-belonging to the Italian nation and underlines not only an ethno-cultural distance, but also a material one. The *extracomunitario* is the person who has emigrated because he (*sic!*) is poor. As Schmidt (2004, 14-15) highlights, this image has the power to bring up a range of emotions towards migrants, i.e. piety, indifference, concern, trouble. As we will see, the

exclusionary label *extracomunitario* is also reflected in the ethno-cultural definition of the Italian nation used in the citizenship law.

### **The Law 286/1998**

The left-wing government elected in 1996 decided to reform the existing migration regulations. The Law 286/1998 was the result of this. Even if it was amended in 2002, it is still the main piece of legislation regulating the status of migrants in Italy. The 1998 Law was characterised by both inclusionist and repressive aspects. Where the Law 943/1986 limited itself to guarantee equal treatment to foreign workers, the Law 286/1998 conceived of migrants with a permit of stay not shorter than one year as individuals and potential citizens, not just workers (Zincone 2006a, 25). One can therefore say that the 1998 Law marked the first attempt to develop immigrant policies. It had a triple focus on cultural adaptation, access to services and freedom from discrimination (Calavita 2005, 79). It opened up public education and large parts of public health provisions to undocumented migrants as well. The Law also introduced permanent residence cards (*carta di soggiorno*), aimed at creating a denizen status for long-term resident foreigners (Pastore 2004, 39). However, due to restrictive interpretations of the law, only an infinitesimal fraction of non-EU migrants were able to obtain a permanent residence card. The Law 286/1998 did not guarantee any political rights. This means that non-naturalised, non-European citizens cannot vote or run for elections. To come to terms with this, several regions and local administrations have introduced migrant representative bodies, with various degrees of success (Caponio 2004)<sup>43</sup>.

The Law also introduced repressive measures aimed at controlling illegal entries and irregular migrants living in Italy. The most significant measure undertaken in this respect consisted of the possibility of holding undocumented migrants in *Centri di permanenza temporanea*<sup>44</sup> (CPT) for up to 30 days in order to identify and possibly repatriate them. It introduced the possibility of immediate repatriation of foreigners entering the country illegally and the Italian government began to collaborate with the main sending countries to limit migratory flows. Fight against illegal migration became one of the main

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<sup>43</sup> Recently Gianfranco Fini, former leader of AN, has called for the introduction of voting rights for migrants at local election. To date, he has not managed to convince other members of the Parliament to change the electoral law in this respect.

<sup>44</sup> Eng. temporary detention centres.

priorities for the police forces (Colombo and Sciortino 2004b, 780-783). These repressive measures were partly linked to Italy's EU obligations as the country was formally entering Schengen. The government also wanted to respond to public opinion calling for stricter migration control and was able to use the more repressive measures as a bargaining tool which could be used to convince the opposition to avoid filibustering (Zincone 2006b, 25). This resulted in the exponential increase in the expulsions of irregular migrants.

Having said this, the general panic of Italy being invaded by migrants is highly overstated. In 2008, the regularly resident migrant population in Italy amounted to ca. 5,8 percent of the total population<sup>45</sup>. The older migrant groups are Moroccans and Filipinos and the most recent and sizable migration flows originate from Eastern European countries such as Albania, Romania, Ukraine and Moldavia. There is a clear trend by which women from Ukraine, Ecuador, Philippines and Peru arrive to Italy mainly as workers, while women from Tunisia, Albania, Morocco and India tend to be granted a permit of stay through family reunification (ISTAT 2007, 48). As a result of the latest amnesty in 2002, the number of legal residents originally from Eastern Europe has increased significantly, as table 5.5 shows. They were however already present in Italy and most probably working in the country but without a regular permit of stay.

	1992	2000	2004	2007
Albania	3,504	45,270	92,674	375,947
Poland	6,757	20,784	48,837	72,457
Rumania	4,786	29,906	120,892	342,200
Morocco	8,189	43,135	71,970	343,228
China	6,283	25,542	46,848	144,885
Philippines	24,407	44,579	48,190	101,337
Peru	3,201	19,786	32,040	66,506

**Table 5.5 Resident migrants in Italy by most significant country of origin 1992-2007.**  
Sources: ISTAT (2007; 2008).

Migrants in Italy are not evenly distributed across the territory. Since the 1980s the Northern regions have attracted more migrants than the rest of the country as

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<sup>45</sup> Compare to 1992 when the migrant population amounted to ca 1,1 percent of the total population.

the opportunities for employment are higher there. According to the Caritas (2006, 102-104), six out of ten migrants were living in this area. In the south instead only one migrant out of ten has decided to stay.

As Zincone (2006b, 26) highlights, immigrant policies were affected by the general reforms concerning the devolution of power to the local and regional governments. In 2001, following the 1999 public administration reform, the policies to deal with migrant related issues and immigration became the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. This meant that the national government was in charge of security-related issues that concern migration (e.g. regulation of inflows, expulsions) and, through the National Fund for Migrant Policies<sup>46</sup>, it allocated funding to national, regional and municipal projects dealing with migrants' integration and public assistance. The regions kept a large autonomy in deciding which local projects to fund and in developing integration policies. The local administrations were instead mainly responsible for the implementation of immigrant policies.

### **The Law 189/2002 and most recent developments**

When the centre-right alliance led by Berlusconi came to power in 2001, the Law no. 286/1998 was reformed. The Law 189/2002 was introduced after the bargaining proceedings with the centrist Catholic component of the alliance (Zincone 2006b, 31). The Law was also supported by the industrial sector and the general public opinion who called for the need of migrant labour (Colombo and Sciortino 2004b, 783). The Law 189/2002 did not encroach on any social rights given by the previous law to documented and undocumented migrants. This was the result of the concessions made to the moderate parties of the majority (Zincone 2006b, 31).

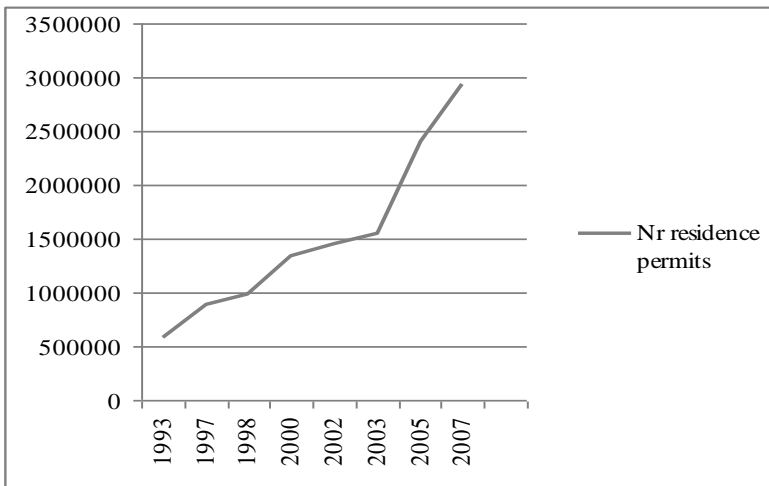
The 2002 Law mainly amended the regulations concerning legal stay and expulsion. It tightened the links between employment and residence permit, abolishing the previously introduced job-seeker's residence permit and reducing from 12 to 6 months the period of unemployment tolerated. The Law 189/2002 *de facto* equated the legal presence to employment (Colombo and Sciortino 2003). It substituted the residence permits with residence contracts. The contracts were issued only if the employer could guarantee a job, housing and could pay for the repatriation when the contract expired. The Law 189/2002 thus defined migrants as guest-workers (Schmidt 2004, 18) in conflict however with the

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<sup>46</sup> Ita. *Fondo per le politiche migratorie*.

characteristics of the Italian labour market largely characterised by seasonal needs and by an informal economy.

As far as the regime of expulsions is concerned, the Law introduced measures legitimising forced repatriation and made possible for a migrant to be submitted to mandatory imprisonment in the CPT for 60 days (instead of 30 days). During the electoral campaign the coalition, and in particular the *Lega Nord*, promised to deliver Italy's most strict immigration laws in Italian history. However during its tenure, the Government issued an amnesty which regulated some 650.000 migrants (ISTAT 2007, 31)<sup>47</sup>. In addition, estimates suggest that during this period the largest levels of legal migration for family reunion, work, and asylum in Italian history took place (Niessen et al. 2007, 98). The figure below shows this development. The inflow decrees continued to provide a very limited number of permits of stay, thus maintaining irregular migration flows.



**Figure 5.4 Number of residence permits in Italy 1993-2007.** Source ISTAT

The Berlusconi Government merged the National Fund for Migrant Policies into the General Social Fund in 2001. The 2003 budget did not allocate any funding for financing migrants' integration. Instead it funded social policies writ large

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<sup>47</sup> Consider that the aggregate number of permits of stay issued in the three previous amnesties since 1990 was 680000 (ISTAT 2007, 50).



and let the regions decide the share of the fund to be allocated for immigrant policies (Caponio 2006, 75). However, given the socioeconomic disparities between regions, there are dramatic differences in how the issues of immigrant policies are dealt with (see e.g. Calavita 2005, 80-81; Caponio 2006, 78-89). Recent research issued by the National Council for Economy and Employment (ONC-CNEL 2009) shows that regions and provinces in the north of the country offer higher opportunities for migrants to integrate in the territory<sup>48</sup>. In particular, the region Emilia Romagna, where Bologna is located, holds in absolute terms the highest potential for migrants' socioeconomic integration (ONC-CNEL 2009, 19)<sup>49</sup>. When the budget of the General Social Fund was subject of sizable cuts, regions had to deal with an increased number of resident migrants and a smaller budget to provide for welfare. Mr. Facchini, employed at the Region Emilia Romagna confirms this:

The Bossi-Fini did not change any of the articles [of the Law 286/1998] concerning migrants' social integration, but it changed the context [in which we are working]. We usually say that it has undermined the foundations of integration policies. Because it has defined the condition for staying in the country in a more uncertain/precarious way, it has also hampered any attempt to enhance migrants' integration and participation in society. (interview)

Despite some differences in how the Left and the Right have been dealing with immigration control and migrants' incorporation, there are some striking similarities that are worth mentioning. Both political blocs have adopted depictions of migrants as security issues. When nearly 1000 Kurdish refugees made an emergency landing in Sicily in early 2002 Bossi, the leader of the *Lega Nord*, declared that

We will make illegal immigration a serious crime [...] stop treating illegal migrants like normal [*sic!*] people. Only those with a work contract can come in. And we need more cops on the borders, helicopters. In America they shoot at illegal migrants. (Quoted in Calavita 2005, 130).

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<sup>48</sup> The research looks at a set of social and economic statistical data such as housing, access to citizenship, family reunification, employment rate, income etc. (ONC-CNEL 2009, 5).

<sup>49</sup> It is important to highlight however that in differential terms, i.e. looking at the differences between migrants' and Italians' living conditions in the same territory, the difference between north and south is not as significant. Rather, it seems that small regions hold higher potential for equal socioeconomic integration of migrants (ONC-CNEL 2009, 21).

The political climate against migration has grown hostile in the past few years, and the Left has not opposed it to the extent that one could have hoped for. The Prodi Government (2006-2008) attempted to re-establish the more liberal pillars of the 1998 Law and it also appointed a special committee to inspect the harshly criticised CPT. As this Government lasted only two years it could not complete its reforms. However, the same Government was the architect of a Law Decree (181/2007) which allowed the prefects (who in Italy represent the Ministry of Interior Affairs at local level) to summarily expel the citizens of other EU member states if they were deemed a threat to public security, subjecting potentially dangerous EU-citizens to the same regulations as other migrants. The Decree was signed after an emergency session following the sexual assault and murder of an Italian woman in Rome by a Romanian man at the end of October 2007 and a series of other assaults and crimes allegedly conducted by Romanians (*Repubblica* October 31, 2007)<sup>50</sup>. The prefect of Rome declared that he would immediately sign the expulsions.

A hard hand is necessary since if one is confronted by beasts, one cannot do anything else than responding with the strongest force. [...] The water has to be cleaned from rotten fish to protect other Romanians who arrive in Italy to work honestly (*Repubblica* November 2, 2007. My translation)

The Decree was criticised by the far left for being racist and from the centre-right coalition for not being hard enough. The same Government signed the Italy-Libya agreements in 2007 which opened up for more cooperation between the two countries to fight illegal migration. The agreement was ratified in 2009 by the Berlusconi Government. It was followed by strong national and international criticism when several hundred migrants found in boats in the open sea had been repatriated to Libya by the Italian police forces without their asylum claims being appropriately verified. Both political blocs and the media tend to categorise migrants as *clandestini* (clandestine) amplifying the stereotypes about migrants as criminals, smugglers, drug traffickers and bogus asylum-seekers.

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<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note that cases of sexual assault by migrants against Italian women are often used by political leaders to stigmatise the migrant community as criminal. This happened in early October 1995 and the *Lega* timely used this to stigmatise migrants as deviant criminals who had offended a woman in their heartland territory. This and other similar examples confirm the suggestions put forward by feminists scholars about the instrumentalisation of rape assaults by foreigners as offences against the whole country's honour and pride (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1997).

Research on representation of migrants in the Italian media confirms that *clandestino* is by far more used than other identifications less tied to criminality (in Calavita 2005, 135). The genuine asylum-seeker is almost absent in news reporting. When their stories reach the public debate, they are described with highly evocative narratives, often with a heavy moralizing dimension (Sciortino and Colombo 2004a, 107). Words such as “desperate”, “slaves” are very common, strengthened by the fact that asylum-seekers are seldom given an active role in the news stories.

### ***Citizenship legislation and political participation mechanisms***

The exclusionary rhetoric at play in immigrant and immigration policies is evident in the existing law on citizenship. Passed in 1992 in order to amend the outdated law of 1912 (which established the *jus sanguinis* principle), the Law 91/1992 reinforces the *jus sanguinis* principle (Pastore 2004, 33). Under the influence of the Italian community abroad, the Law states that direct descendants of Italian nationals up to the second degree are eligible of Italian nationality, thus stressing an ethno-cultural component to nationality acquisition. The bill wants in fact “to enable those who wish to do so to maintain the legal, but also cultural and sentimental, bond represented by nationality” (Law Draft 1460, quoted in Pastore 2004, 33).

The 1992 nationality law also prevents the full legal integration of foreigners. It restricts the conditions for foreigners born in Italy to acquire Italian citizenship putting the conditions of legal and uninterrupted residence from birth until the age of 18 years. In the light of Italian immigration policies which have essentially institutionalised illegality, a considerable number of youth born in Italy of foreign parents face severe difficulties in formally becoming members of the country they have always lived in. The Law has also created a hierarchy between different categories of foreigners. Foreigners who are direct descendents of Italian citizens up to the second generation have to reside in Italy for three years before they can apply for Italian citizenship. For EU-citizens the time is four years; children adopted by Italian nationals, foreigners who have served the Italian state, and stateless have to wait five years; and finally whoever else falls in the category of non-nationals, i.e. the majority of migrants residing in Italy, have to abide in the country legally for ten years consecutively.

The attempts to change the nationality law and the efforts put forward to introduce a denizen status for migrants, discussed in relation to the Law 286/1998, were ignored in the face of electoral concerns and met strong political

resistance. New attempts to reform the nationality law were made in 2006 by the Prodi government, but did not come far. Needless to say, the 1992 law has been efficient in keeping the level of naturalisation of migrants at a very low level and most naturalisations occur through marriage to an Italian citizen. Italy has an annual rate of nationality acquisition of ca. 0,9 percent of its foreign population, among the lowest in Europe (Pastore 2004, 39). Millions of individuals living and working in Italy for decades (but with interruptions) and who are paying taxes and using the public services are not part of the democratic fabric of the Italian political community. More importantly, their off-springs, who are raised and born in Italy, are not able to vote and run for election in what in many ways is their home country.

The formal mechanisms of political participation of migrants in Italy are very weak and poorly organised. This is true of migrant associations and of other national political participation mechanisms (Caponio 2005; 2008). The Law 943/1986 established a national consultative committee on immigration attached to the Ministry of Labour, which provided for the participation of delegates from the six most representative migrants' associations. The implementation proved extremely complicated. It took almost three years to identify the six associations allowed to enter the national committee (Caponio 2005). Similar consultative bodies were to be established by the Regions. Their powers were however very limited. Migrant associations were granted some funding by the Regions by the second immigration law (39/1990), but only small contributions were granted.

The Law 286/1998 introduced a national consultative body for migrant issues<sup>51</sup> within the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. The body includes six representatives of migrant workers nominated by the six most representative migrant associations in Italy, together with representatives of the central and local public administration, trade unions, religious and voluntary associations operating in favour of immigrants for a total of 72 members. This organ met every six months between 1998-2001, to monitor the migrants' situation and to make proposals in this regard. This body as well as the ones established at the regional levels have been criticised for having only a tokenistic value (Caritas 2005). The last immigration law (189/2002) did not abrogate this body but its work was discontinued. Simply it was dissolved and was not reconvened until 2007. In 2005 the Government also established a consultative body for Islam in

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<sup>51</sup> Ita: *Consulta per i lavoratori immigrati e le loro famiglie*.

Italy<sup>52</sup> in the Ministry of Interior Affairs. It aimed to favour a dialogue between the Muslim communities and the national institutions. The consultative body has however been highly criticised after one member organisation allegedly expressed anti-Israel opinions.

## 5.4 Conclusions

This chapter set out to present the national environment in which each case-study city is located. I have presented each country's policy approach, focusing in particular on the level of centralisation and its welfare state regime. Italy has witnessed an increased devolution of powers in favour of the regions and the local government. Regions have the power to decide how to spend their social welfare budget, which also includes immigrant policies. Given the socioeconomic inequalities between regions in Italy, we can expect that the quality of immigrant policies is partly shaped by the region we examine. Also, since regions are relatively independent in shaping the content of their immigration policies we can expect that the long-standing tradition of left-wing politics and civic participation which characterises Emilia Romagna has affected Bologna's immigrant policies. Contrarily, Britain and Sweden are characterised by a centralised state apparatus (Britain more than Sweden). This may leave the local administrations with little room for variation from the broad national pattern of immigrant policies.

The three countries vary significantly when it comes to their approach to welfare. Each welfare state regime has influenced immigration and immigrant policies. Sweden presents clear traits of a social-democratic, universalistic welfare state. In line with this, migrants have been granted extensive socioeconomic and political rights en par to native Swedes. Britain is characterised by a liberal approach to welfare which targets individual inequalities rather than seeing at the interests of groups and corporate groups. This explains the country's emphasis on antidiscrimination regulation rather than on collectivistic group rights. Finally Italy's welfare state is based on a familial model of welfare. This has triggered specific migratory patterns that supply foreign household workers. Since a large share of these migrants is undocumented, they are excluded from a number of socioeconomic rights. Those with a regular permit of stay are entitled to access all the employment-related

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<sup>52</sup> Ita: *Consulta per l'Islam Italiano*.

insurance programmes on the same conditions as natives. Employment-related programmes, however, do not cover household work, and the same applies to most legal protections against employers. The vast majority of migrants are therefore effectively excluded from a number of welfare provisions. The exclusionary management of migrants is even more evident in Italian citizenship laws. The emphasis on *ius sanguinis* has made it very difficult for migrants to be eligible of Italian citizenship. Contrarily, Britain and Sweden have more generous citizenship regulations based on the principle of *ius solis*. The Italian citizenship tradition has entailed that most migrants have remained “foreigners”, or *extracomunitari*, excluded from full equal rights, most importantly the right to vote. As far as political participation is concerned, Britain has one of the highest ethnic minority citizenry with a right to franchise in Europe. Thus, the number of ethnic minority members who participate in the electoral process is relatively high. Sweden has also provided formal access to voting rights at the local level to non-naturalised migrants. Recent data on the turnouts at the voting ballots show however a significant decrease in migrants’ participation in elections. As far as migrant associations are concerned, the three national governments have established some form of collaboration with this type of associations. Sweden had until recently the most formalised relationship between migrant associations and statutory agencies through the Council for ethnic equality and integration. In Britain, BME associations are consulted by local and national institutions but the patterns for these relationships seem to be unregulated. Finally in Italy there have been attempts to establish representative organs of migrant associations at the national and regional levels since the mid-1980s. However the effectiveness of the collaborations between these bodies and state institutions is questionable. The three countries’ attempts to establish collaborations between the national government and migrant associations have been based on an ethnic, religious or national based understanding of group belonging and more rarely on an issue-based conception of issues that might affect migrants. Furthermore, the governments have based their selections of the associations with which they should collaborate not on the basis of explicit democratic principles (e.g. elections). Elements such as the absolute size of the association and the influence of an organisation in voicing particular concerns seem to have been important criteria used by the governments to decide who should be considered an adequate collaborator.

In the chapter I have also provided information about Sweden’s, Britain’s and Italy’s immigration patterns and immigrant policies. The most striking difference, besides each country’s approach to migrants’ integration which is

influenced by its welfare regime, is the character of migration. While the routes of migration to Sweden are through asylum seeking and family reunification, Italy and Britain have favoured labour migration. Italy has been particularly restrictive in accepting asylum claims. The character of the migrated population has partly shaped each country's immigrant policies and has influenced each country's understanding of integration.

What are the potential consequences of these opportunities and constraints for a local administration implementation of political participation mechanisms, understanding of integration, and conceptualisation of the integrated migrant? In Bologna the decentralisation of policy-making, coupled with Emilia Romagna's emphasis on solidarity and civic participation in the public sphere, has enabled the municipality to set up local representative bodies for migrants. However, we may expect that the exclusionary discourses against migrants have affected the establishment of these bodies. The British electoral system, which has granted a certain number of seats to ethnic minorities, may have provided room for the voice of minority communities to be heard within Birmingham City Council. In Sweden migrants have access to a large range of political rights, which formally give them the right to express their voice in the public sphere. However, we have seen that the definition of migrants as *invandrare* has limited the opportunity to mobilise according to ethnic divides and has allowed political representatives to treat them as a homogeneous group. How has the co-existence of these two institutional and discursive opportunities affected the local administration's approach to voice and justice? Who can voice their needs?

The British and Swedish emphasis on economic integration may have affected Birmingham's and Malmö's understandings of integration. The extent to which a liberal and a social-democratic/universalistic welfare state regime (respectively) have shaped Birmingham's and Malmö's approaches to integration is an interesting question to be addressed empirically. Also we can expect that the British increasingly civic understanding of integration, which today goes under the banner of "community cohesion", has had an impact on how Birmingham has worked towards the incorporation of BME communities and of newly arrived migrants. In the Swedish context local authorities have been encouraged to develop programmes to favour the integration of migrants in the wider society. I expect that a municipality with a high density of migrant population such as Malmö could develop narratives of the integrated migrant which are more inclusive than the ones developed at the national level. However, the general aims of immigrant policies have been defined centrally and they

emphasise economic self-sufficiency and integration into the Swedish society (through language training and orientation courses). How does Malmö work with these narratives and institutional opportunities? Equally interesting is to analyse how the Italian exclusionary institutional and discursive opportunities have influenced Bologna City Council's understanding of migrants' integration. Has Bologna's administration been able to break an exclusionary pattern to immigrant policies that characterises the national level's approach? All these issues will be addressed in the following analysis.



## 6 Institutional opportunities: voice and mechanisms of political participation

This chapter aims to identify the institutional opportunity structures in Malmö, Birmingham, and Bologna which are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. The focus is on the formal mechanisms of migrants' political participation. The analysis answers the first empirical question of this study, namely *how is the issue of voice (understood as political participation) addressed by the public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?* Analysing the formal mechanisms of political participation is important for the development of a theory of caring multiculturalism for two reasons. First, in order to bring a wider range of experiences and possibly new priorities in the political arena, it can shed light on which institutional opportunities, relatively speaking, are more likely to be attentive to the voices of less represented individuals within groups. Second, it can highlight which political participation mechanisms provide opportunities for migrants to actively contribute with their experience and knowledge to shaping immigrant policies. I limit my analysis to the formal political participation mechanisms since they are the clearest domain where we can identify a public authority's understanding of participation. For the sake of clarification, all the quotes from the Swedish or Italian material have been translated into English by myself. The chapter is structured as a city by city descriptive overview of the developments of political participation mechanisms. In the final section I analyse the identified mechanisms of political participation comparatively and I assess their potential to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism.

### 6.1 Malmö

Malmö City Council has traditionally emphasised the importance of dialogue between the citizens and the Council. One way this dialogue is carried out is through local elections. Migrants in Sweden benefit from a liberal citizenship law and from extensive political rights and can therefore vote and candidate to local elections even if they are not Swedish citizens. However, several studies demonstrate that migrants are underrepresented in the electorate and among the

elected representatives (e.g. Bäck and Soininen 1998; Dahlstedt 2005; Soininen and Etzler 2006; Dahlstedt and Hertzberg 2007). Despite the importance given to participation by Malmö City Council, very little is mentioned about how to come to terms with migrants' decreasing electoral participation. The Council has instead tended to emphasise the importance of participation in voluntary associations as a means of political participation. The question is what opportunities the associations have to influence the political system since there is no institutionalised cooperation between the associations and the Council. The city's neighbourhood offices have developed *ad hoc* collaborations with migrant associations, however. In this section I discuss the relation between the Council and migrant associations and focus on what type of collaboration there is and on how the role of the associations is conceived by the Council. I then present non-group based political participation mechanisms used by the Council.

### ***Migrant associations and the City Council***

In Malmö, migrant associations are partly funded by the Council, mainly through the Recreational Board. Other sources of funding are the European Social Funding and the Swedish Inheritance Fund<sup>1</sup>. An association registered at the Recreational Board is eligible for funding if it meets the requirements concerning the number and age of its members and when at least three members take the compulsory courses on how to run an association (Malmö Stad 2009, 12). Also, it has to be democratically organised: “[an association] has to be built upon and work according to democratic principles and be openly in favour of democracy” (Malmö Stad 2009, 12). In addition, the Head of the Recreational Board Thomas Sterner explained that the municipality supports associations that “carry out new activities which promote [civic] participation [of their members]” (interview).

There are other sources for funding. In 2004, for instance, the Council set up a special fund within the *Välfärd för alla*<sup>2</sup> initiative. *Välfärd för alla* was a programme for increasing welfare in the city. It was launched in 2004 and was funded for four years. It aimed at taking active measures towards segregation and social exclusion and it focused on five areas: employment, education, housing, safety, and participation (Malmö Stad 2004a). Within *Välfärd för alla* the Council funded associations whose projects “provided a forum where people could meet and get to know each other; encouraged the formation of new social

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<sup>1</sup> Swe: *Allmänna arvsfonden*.

<sup>2</sup> Eng: Welfare for everyone.

networks which may lead to new employment opportunities; and carried out intercultural activities” (my notes, interview Konstantinides). This is clearly stated in the document describing *Välfärd för alla*: “the funding of the voluntary sector should be shaped so to promote and support associations which work for integration” (Malmö Stad 2004a, 13). Intercultural activities mainly refer to those activities where “people can meet, get to know each other, create a reciprocal understanding for each other” (my notes, interview Konstantinides). Furthermore “intercultural meetings entail that people with different backgrounds can share their unique experiences. This should take place in a spirit of reciprocal respect that promotes common values” (Malmö Kulturnämnd 2008, 8).

### Forms of collaboration

In Malmö there are no formal bodies which represent migrant associations within the City Council. Instead the collaborations between them and the Council are either informal or via shared participation in a project. Informal collaborations take place mainly at the neighbourhood level. For instance the public school in Rosengård, a deprived neighbourhood in Malmö highly populated by migrants, has collaborated with the sport trainer and youth recreation leader Diabaté Dialy Mory to create a less violent environment in the school. An example of shared participation in a project is *Helamalmö*<sup>3</sup>. The aim of the project is to promote integration of teenagers through basketball. By building basketball classes with mixed genders and ethnic backgrounds the project wants to teach children tolerance and mutual respect ([www.helamalmö.com](http://www.helamalmö.com)). In the project *Mabimål*, the Council collaborates with Rosengård’s sport association. The project, which began in 2003, targets young people entering the labour market and long-term unemployed adults and supports them to find employment ([www.mabimal.se](http://www.mabimal.se)). Often, in these types of collaborations the Council provides some funding or other material resources such as venues. The city’s neighbourhood offices have at times developed *ad hoc* collaborations with migrant associations. According to the Chair of Rosengård Neighbourhood Office, Andreas Kostantinides:

Migrant associations are important because when we have issues in the neighbourhood we turn to them. They are a great practical resource. (my notes interview)

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<sup>3</sup> Eng: The whole of Malmö

For instance, when in 2008 Rosengård witnessed an escalation of urban unrest as young people rioted in some areas of the neighbourhood, Rosengård Neighbourhood Office turned to local organisations. Adult members of a number of local migrant associations began to walk in the streets at night-time, which contributed to create a calmer environment. The Council, in line with the goal of cooperation which underpins Swedish immigrant policies, collaborates with migrant associations to implement integration. The lack of formal channels of participation and the position of economic dependency on the national and local governments institutionally constrain migrants' mobilisation. They may limit the organisations' independence and steer them towards activities that are in line with the goals and values set up by the Council and they can diminish the opportunities of making ethnic-specific claims (Odmalm 2004b, 112).

Often, the Council collaborates with two umbrella organisations, *Malmö Ideella föreningars Paraplyorganisation* (MIP)<sup>4</sup> and *Malmö Idrottsföreningars samorganisation* (MISO)<sup>5</sup>. These are used as channels through which associations, including migrant organisations, can make their claims. MIP represents 240 associations. Among them there are religious associations (e.g. Malmö's Jewish Association; the Islamic Centre in Malmö), sport clubs, medical associations (e.g. the Asthma and Allergy Association) and national associations (e.g. the Iraqi cultural association; the Finnish association; the Arab academics' association). MIP responds actively to the Council's policymaking through public consultations (*remissinstans*) and it represents its member associations at public institutions and public authorities (MIP statute 2002). MISO represents Malmö's sport clubs. According to its webpage "MISO is a contact body for Malmö City's Recreational Board and other boards, promoting the co-operation between sports and other non-profit associations" ([www.miso.se](http://www.miso.se)). Even if migrant associations have indirect influence in policymaking through MIP and MISO, these umbrella organisations represent such a plethora of associations that any form of collective action in the name of particular groups is watered down.

### **Lack of representative bodies and the significance of ethnicity**

Several studies on the involvement of migrant associations in Swedish public political institutions have argued that the corporatist approach has hindered the inclusion of groups that do not conform to a model of class representation (e.g.

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<sup>4</sup> Eng. Malmö's umbrella organisation for volunteering associations.

<sup>5</sup> Eng. Malmö's coordinating organisation for sport clubs.

Ålund and Schierup 1991; Soininen 1999; Odmalm 2004a; 2004b; 2005). My analysis shows another possible explanation for the exclusion of migrant associations in policymaking processes. The issue of representation was often mentioned as a reason for not institutionalising dialogue with migrant associations. The following quote from Malmö's Councillor for integration and employment illustrates this.

We have no institutionalised dialogue with migrant organisations in the way you can find in Italy or Britain...We often discuss representation. If you are going to talk to me as a Council representative, I have to ask myself who you really represent. Do you represent all Muslims in Malmö? Representation is always a thorny issue. (interview Andersson)

Jesper Tehander, Head of the Employment and Integration unit in Malmö, reiterated this.

There are associations, such as the Iranian association, that have tried to lobby for some issues. [There are no formal representative bodies] but this is something we follow with great interest, we need to develop a systematic method around this. Is this a path we want to follow to support migrant associations? On the other hand we must also see if for instance all Iranians identify themselves with one another. (interview)

The lack of formal channels of representation of migrant associations is legitimised by the Council because it is concerned that these organisations cannot truly speak for the group they claim to be representing<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, participation in civil society and in particular in voluntary associations is presented as pivotal by the Council and by the national Government in order to achieve an equal and cohesive society. The national Politics for Metropolitan

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<sup>6</sup> The lack of formal channels of representation of migrant associations was criticised by some policy officers, however. For instance, the former Head of Employment and Integration unit called for more meaningful dialogue between migrant associations and the Council: "there is some cooperation with the [migrant] associations but I think that one could do this better so that we could truly grasp the contributions coming from them. Sometimes we have dialogue for the sake of it and the true issues are forgotten. I think one could systematise this much more. For instance one could create clear mechanisms to access the Council. What is clear in Malmö is that the public administration is really big and it takes responsibility for a lot of things, but there is the risk that we are not responsive enough to what happens outside" (interview Merlöv). When asked if he would like to see formal representative bodies for migrants within the Council, the interviewee responded positively.

Cities<sup>7</sup> launched in 1998 (Prop. 1997/98:165), emphasised that the successful improvement of socially and ethnically segregated urban areas is dependent on the degree of citizens' participation<sup>8</sup>. Malmö City Council attempted to increase citizens' participation by *inter alia* investing in voluntary associations in the neighbourhoods that were involved in the Metropolitan Cities project.

Generally speaking, the Council has tended to steer the migrant associations away from ethnic-based mobilisation towards a more general mainstream. This is reflected in, for instance, the requirements the Council puts on association when it distributes funding. Details about the projects which were funded by *Välfärd för alla* are also illustrative in this respect. The majority of the 104 projects funded between 2004 and 2007 promoted sport activities. The projects that were addressing integration more explicitly were dealing with general issues, such as providing information about the coming elections (*Det är snart val*) organised by the Association for Iranian refugees, or improving the neighbourhood of Rosengård (*Ett steg framåt för Rosengård*) set up by the Somali association. According to Odmalm (2005, 198-199), this reflects the lack of an ethnic cleavage in the Swedish political environment. A political opportunity structure approach suggests that

If a polity lacks a substantial cleavage with regard to a certain issue, in this case ethnicity, then the space available for these types of claims remains minimal. As a result, the main vehicle for mobilisation - migrant associations - becomes less useful and mobilisation forces are directed elsewhere or diminish. (Odmalm 2005, 199)

Ethnicity has a limited space in the Swedish political environment because ethnicity and particular group equality, is difficult to combine with a universal conceptualisation of equality that characterise the "social democratic welfare model" (Esping-Andersen 1990). Thus, Odmalm argues (2005, 200) that the equality of ethnic minorities has to be framed more generally as immigrants'

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<sup>7</sup> Swe: *Storstadspolitiken*.

<sup>8</sup> The Politics for Metropolitan Cities had a twofold aim. On the one hand it wanted to support the economic growth of the country's largest cities (The cities involved are Malmö, Göteborg, Stockholm, Huddinge, Haninge, Södertälje and Botkyrka). On the other hand it aimed at tackling the development of socially and ethnically segregated urban areas in the major cities. The politics for metropolitan cities were implemented through local development agreements which were signed between the state and the concerned city and approved by the government. Between 1999 and 2004, the state had allocated 2 billion SEK for the politics for metropolitan cities.

equality. One of the few exceptions seems to have been the integration strategy adopted by Hyllie Neighbourhood Office during the Politics for Metropolitan Cities. The most significant migrant communities living in the area were called upon to present and discuss their needs. This was done with the help of three cultural mediators, so-called *Link-workers*. In the Neighbourhood Office's opinion, the main success of Hyllie's strategy was

the establishment of new associations, especially among women and youth; the work done in favour of identifying the competence of migrants living in the area [...] and integration-fostering projects for common events, women's networks, and meeting points. (Andersson et al. 2003, 44)

The quote above shows that the mobilisation of migrants through associations is shaped by the institutional opportunity structures present in Malmö's political environment. Even when the opportunity for ethnic mobilisation was provided, it took the shape of the traditional Swedish associational life emphasising education and acculturation.

### **Migrant associations as educational and civic arenas**

In Sweden engagement with voluntary associations is seen as contributing to a sense of civic duty (*medborgaranda*) and they are conceived of as schools of democracy (Borevi 2002, 140). A 1988 Commission of Inquiry summarised the civic and educational aims of voluntary organisations well. It stated that associations "train people to make democratic decisions and take responsibility" (educational aim) and that "the citizens' different interests are expressed through associations" (civic aim) (SOU 1988:39, 79).

The educational and civic aims of voluntary organisations are important even today. The director of Malmö Recreational Board argued:

Because [associations] *have an important educational and fostering dimension to them, they are a prerequisite for democracy*. By being part of an association you learn the rules of the game, to take other people's views into consideration, that you respect the will of the majority. (in Odmalm 2004a, 479. Emphasis added)

During a public seminar on April 3, 2008 on migrants' integration and the third sector, Councillor Andersson pointed out that active participation in an association increases the opportunities for newly arrived migrants to learn the social codes of the recipient society (my notes). Councillor Andersson illustrated this by claiming that migrants often have a different view of nature and outdoor life than Swedes, who are viewed as being respectful of it. Voluntary

associations could be helpful in teaching migrants how to become as respectful (my notes). Migrants' alleged cultural differences are used to understand and explain their exclusion from Swedish society and to legitimise the need to let them undergo a process of socialization (Osman 2005; Scuzzarello 2008).

The understanding of the third sector as an educational arena is in line with the idea of *folkbildning*, a concept referring to voluntary education through libraries, study circles, associations, etc. Osman (2005, 195) argues that the *folkbildning* is often underpinned by a vision of democratic participation, active citizenship and community cohesion. Associations, ethnic and non-ethnic, are conceived of as arenas in which migrants are socialised into a democratic ethos (Osman 2005, 199). This informs the conditions established by the state for enabling migrants' participation in the public sphere and is reflected in Malmö City Council's approach to migrants' political participation.

### **Migrant associations as gateways to integration**

Voluntary associations are also seen by the Council as gateways to the majority society: "voluntary associations are an important arena for integration, broadly understood" (Malmö Stad 2009, 9). This echoes *Välfärd för alla*'s position: "the voluntary sector in Malmö plays an important role as a meeting point for citizens with different background and experiences" (Malmö Stad 2004a, 13). The one-year project *Integration i förening*<sup>9</sup> provides a useful illustration of this. The project was launched in 2007 and was part of the Council's orientation- and language courses for newly arrived migrants. MIP, supported by the Council and MISO, managed the project. The overall aim was to facilitate newly arrived migrants' integration and introduction into the recipient society because

many newly arrived [migrants] complain that they have very few contacts with Swedes and almost no opportunities to speak Swedish outside of [Swedish language] class. (MIP 2008)

The "needs" that the project aims to address – to facilitate contact between Swedes and migrants and to increase the opportunities to speak Swedish – had not been identified in dialogue with the beneficiaries of the project, i.e. newly arrived migrants (Lagergren and Fundberg 2007, 6). Instead a project manager was employed full-time to manage the project and define the issues it meant to address. Several associations signed up to the programme. Among them there

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<sup>9</sup> Eng: Integration through voluntary associations.



were sport clubs and a refugee association. Each association was to suggest some of their members to function as contact person for the participants. The newly arrived migrants participating in the project were then going to be “matched to an association and its contact person on the basis of common hobbies and interests” (MIP 2008). The contact person would “guide” [*sic!*] migrants in the organisation, introducing them to other members (MIP 2008). The project would not only provide migrants with the opportunity to improve the Swedish language and to meet new people; it would also enable them to learn about Swedish society (MIP 2008). About 700 newly arrived migrants participating in Swedish language courses<sup>10</sup> were informed about the project and 86 of them signed up to participate in it (MIP 2008). 32 of them were matched to an association.

There seems to be a lack of correspondence between the needs of migrants as assessed by the project leader and what the project beneficiaries seem to want in order to engage in the project. The following example may provide some insights in this regard. One young female refugee was matched with the refugee association.

There are few Swedes who are actively involved in the association [the girl] has become a member of. On the other hand [the girl] meets other people than those who live in her neighbourhood. Even if strictly speaking the association is not the best one from an integration perspective, it is very important to her. (Lagergren and Fundberg 2009, 54)

This example partly contradicts one of the aims of the project, i.e. to facilitate social contacts between Swedes and migrants. The girl, who had arrived in Sweden without her parents 18 months before she became a member of the association, seemed to have had other needs than the ones identified by the project’s organisers, such as finding a safe-haven where she could communicate in her mother-tongue. The lack of attentiveness to the needs and voices of migrants in defining the project’s goals may account for this discrepancy. If more attention were put on developing the project together with its beneficiaries, its goals might have been defined differently.

### ***Non-group based forms of dialogue***

As an alternative to group-based involvement, Malmö City Council has developed a number of projects which aim to foster better dialogue between the

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<sup>10</sup> Swe: *Svenska för invandrare*.

local administration and its citizens. For instance, several neighbourhood administrations organise discussion meetings, so-called *Medborgardialog*. The chair of Rosengård Neighbourhood Office described these meetings to me. They take place about eight times a year, but are not held on a regular basis. They are advertised in public spaces such as the neighbourhood offices' bill boards. The topic to be discussed at each meeting is decided beforehand by the chair of the neighbourhood administration and external experts are invited to join the debate with the audience. Mainly general topics such as unemployment or urban violence are discussed. These forums provide the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on issues that can be of concern for people living in the area. Furthermore, citizens are able to present written petitions to their local Neighbourhood Office (*Medborgarförslag*). The Chair of the Neighbourhood Office decides if the petitions are something the Council should address or not. The need to establish these forums has come from politicians themselves in an attempt to come to terms with decreasing participation in local elections. The degree to which citizens use these means to influence policymaking is unclear as figures on the meetings' attendance are not available.

## **6.2 Birmingham**

Birmingham City Council supports two mechanisms for political participation of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. One concerns electoral politics, while the other supports the activities of self-organised voluntary ethnic, political, and religious associations. Electoral politics in Birmingham have been widely studied (e.g. Solomos and Back 1995; Crowley 2001; Shukra et al. 2004; Garbaye 2005). In this section I describe the main developments of how ethnic minority representatives have entered party politics. I then analyse the second mechanism of political participation, i.e. community politics. I focus mainly on two institutional bodies set up by the Council since the mid-1990s: the Standing Consultative Forum and the recently established Community Cohesion Forum. I finally describe a non-group based channel of political participation, the ward committees.

### ***Electoral politics***

From the 1980s and onwards, the BME political presence became a major feature of the Birmingham's political arena. The Labour party was particularly successful in recruiting BME representatives (Garbaye 2005). As former leader

of Birmingham City Council Theresa Stewart stated in an interview, the increased number of BME councillors made the rest of the Party think in new ways around the issues of race:

By the mid-1980s in the Labour group [in Birmingham] there were quite a large number of Pakistani and African-Caribbean councillors. They changed the whole policy of Labour in the city. (my notes interview Stewart)

Even if, at an initial stage, BME communities were recruited for other purposes than sheer interests about their needs and claims, the final result guaranteed that elected representatives of these communities could participate in the decision-making process. Their representation has been increasing since the mid-1980s, when there were six BME councillors. In 2009 the number had risen to about 25 councillors – which is however still unrepresentative of the number of minorities in the population of Birmingham as a whole. Minority women are particularly underrepresented.

During the 1990s, BME councillors were able to develop their careers by breaking free from the Labour Party's constraints and by benefitting from the resources drawn from their own communities. With this model of political participation "minorities sought to articulate the needs of a community constructed with reference to ethnicity, a ward- and neighbourhood-based sense of belonging, and a feeling of alienation from Labour" (Garbaye 2005, 136). Pakistani candidates were particularly able to draw from their local social network to mobilise the electorate in the inner-city wards of Small Heath, Sparkbrook, Sparkhill and Nechells where 70 percent of Birmingham's Pakistani population resided. This group was also mobilised by international factors linked to the political independence movement of Kashmir. This contributed to the establishment of the People's Justice Party (PJP) in 1998. According to Shokat Ali Khan, the leader of the PJP in Birmingham's City Council, the party "represents everyone in the inner city [...] standing for all 'working people' living in one of the poorest areas in Europe" (*The Guardian* June 19, 2002). While Khan was trying to use a working class rhetoric (most of its candidates were former members of the Labour Party) pointing at the socioeconomic deprivation of the inner city wards, it was international politics - in particular, the future of Kashmir - that fuelled party support. Kashmiris formed the biggest minority in the city and, by the PJP's own admission, provided at least half its votes. Its campaign manifesto was eclectic, promising the introduction of single-sex schools for girls, changes to housing grants, and improved street lighting. It also committed itself to the campaigns for the self-determination of Kashmir, the

formation of a Palestinian state and the release of two Kashmiris imprisoned in 1984 for their role in the murder of an Indian diplomat (*The Guardian* June 19, 2002). Voices were raised questioning the relevance of the issue of Kashmir for Birmingham's Asian community and of the PJP's use of an issue which touched upon only one national group.

They are too focused on the Kashmiri issue when there's a whole wad of other issues - such as rubbish mounting up, crime and unemployment. (Asian shop-owner quoted in *The Guardian* June 19, 2002)

They're going in on single race and single community issues. In that respect, they're no different from the BNP [British National Party], but in Birmingham we have different communities and different bonds and we don't favour doing things for one group. (Tahir Ali, Labour councillor of Kashmiri origin quoted in *The Guardian* June 19, 2002)

In the 1998 local elections the PJP won five seats. In the aftermath of the terror attacks on September 9, 2001, Birmingham's Asian communities were attracted by the Liberal Democrats, who were the only party openly opposing the war in Iraq. This impacted negatively on the PJP which won only two seats at the 2005 by-elections. The party was dissolved in 2006, many of its members joining the Liberal Democrats. In the aftermath of the Iraqi war, many Muslim councillors also left the Labour party.

### ***Community politics***

Britain has a long lasting tradition of collaboration with ethnic and non-ethnic voluntary associations. British public governance is in fact developed and determined through partnerships and the management of the delivery of services is usually devolved to third parties (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). It is therefore not surprising that Birmingham's administration shows a long history of collaboration with BME organisations.

### **The Umbrella Groups and the Standing Consultative Forum**

During the early 1990s Birmingham City Council began to support a number of self-organised ethnic- and faith-based Umbrella Groups<sup>11</sup> (UG) which were represented after 1990 through the Standing Consultative Forum (SCF). One of

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<sup>11</sup> By 1993 there were nine UGs. For a list, see Smith and Stephenson (2005, 329).

the reasons for the establishment of such bodies was to avoid the outbreak of riots similar to the ones which took place in several British cities in 1985. The UGs/SCF framework was based on traditional race relations which emphasised the diversity of ethnic groups compared to Britons and which promoted the recognition of such diversity. It also tended to institutionalise ethnic groups and incorporate them in the policymaking process *qua* groups. It clearly legitimised claims for the recognition of ethnic difference as it enabled the representatives of the groups involved to obtain some demands such as the celebration of independence days (e.g. the Pakistani or Indian ones) or the construction of community centres (Garbaye 2000, 287). The UGs had a democratic constitution and people in executive positions were elected. The SCF, which gathered the representatives of each UG, was a consultative body focused on voicing the needs of the BME communities and on giving legitimacy to the policies adopted by the Council under the heading of racial equality (Solomos and Back 1995, 196; Maloney et al. 2000, 813-814). The work within the SCF and between the Council and the Forum was not free of tensions. Especially at the beginning of the SCF's work, the City Council was blamed for lack of commitment to racial equality, witnessed by the lack of funding available (Solomos and Back 1995, 195).

The SCF became heavily criticised during the late 1990s. The Forum was growing inefficient due to internal strife as political power and financial resources became *de facto* allocated by ethnicity creating an intense competition for resources. Graham and Smith point out that the UGs/SCF model, rather than prioritizing cross-community work, resulted in each UG trying to maximise their own interests: "the UGs tended to reinforce racialized divisions" (2005, 341). The issue of representativeness also emerged as a major problem. The City Council criticised the UG/SCF machinery for being based on a "flaw model of specific faith and community groups actually representing their community" (quoted in Smith and Stephenson 2005, 331). The Council's own review of the UG/SCF pointed out that

The perceived notion of homogeneity of minority ethnic communities has informed a great deal of race equality work to date. The effect of this [...] has been to place an over reliance on individuals who are seen to be able to represent the needs or views of a whole community and resulted in simplistic approaches toward tackling community needs. (quoted in Smith and Stephenson 2005, 332)

The UG/SCF framework assumed that BME communities were internally homogeneous thus concealing the multitude of needs, believes, and wishes

within each group. Critics argued that the UG representatives were not able to speak on behalf of the members of their community which were traditionally hard to reach, e.g. women and youth, and that a patronage structure was put into place (Smith and Stephenson 2005, 332). Studies on Birmingham's BME communities demonstrate that young people were not satisfied with the type of demands put forward by their community representatives: "I don't think they should leave it to the community leaders because, obviously, half the time they don't even know" (b:RAP 2002, 45). The dissatisfaction with the UG/SCF framework led to its disbandment in 1999.

### **The Community Cohesion Forum**

After the failed experience of the UG/SCF framework, one would have expected that patterns of consultation would have taken a non-ethnic outlook. However, in order to scrutinise the implementation of the 2005 Community Cohesion Strategy, the Council under the Conservatives set up a Community Cohesion Forum. The Equality and Diversities Unit described the Forum in the following way:

[The] community cohesion forum [...] looks at the whole agenda around community cohesion and broadly it *looks at how we implement the community cohesion strategy* it helps to develop and measure cohesion in accordance to the [Community Cohesion] strategy. In the Community Cohesion Forum *we invite community groups who represent particular heritage groups*. For instance the Bangladeshi multipurpose centre, we have the Pakistani community development network, Indian community development network, the Chinese. (interview Hira)

The Forum has therefore a monitoring aim. It is chaired by Birmingham City Council's Chief Executive and includes senior representatives from the main partner agencies (e.g. the Wardlow road refugee centre) and BME representatives. The councillor responsible for Equality expressed a clear will to develop community cohesion policies by engaging the citizens of Birmingham, as expressed in the excerpt below.

It is important that meet the needs of those who often don't come up to the political stage by going out there to see what the best way of using resources is, to meet associations and see how they work without talking to the big mouths all the times. (my notes, interview Rudge)

However, the set-up of the Community Cohesion Forum signals that the Council is promoting a dialogue with faith and community leaders rather than engaging

with the grass-roots. This runs the risk of focusing on ethnic differences rather than looking at the way in which structural inequalities can disadvantage people regardless of their ethno-cultural background. The little information that is available to the public makes it impossible to give a fair assessment of the work of the Forum. However, several policy officers I have interviewed were disappointed with the setup of this body. A senior policy officer at Be Birmingham, the Local Strategic Partnership for Birmingham, said that the identity and aims of the Forum are not clear.

There is also a cross-partner Community Cohesion Forum, which has been flagging for quite sometimes. It recently had a meeting which was chaired by [name] who tried to drag it back to the realms of reality and said what is it that you actually want to do? What do you want to achieve here? Are you a forum, are you a think-tank, are you a delivery agency, what are you and what are you going to do? If you are a forum make sure you can put pressure on the people who're making the decisions. If you are a think-tank make sure you put some good cohesive ideas together and present them. If you are a delivery agent, start delivering and write down what you want to deliver. So the next step is that the forum meets again and makes sure it knows what its aims are. (interview Ginnely)

She continued by pointing out how it was essential that the Forum's members decided on these matters in order for them to take a unanimous stand on upcoming issues such as the rising of the British National Party in Birmingham and what she called "white-on-white race issues" referring to the tensions between old and new white migrant groups. Another senior officer was critical of the Forum, as the following excerpt illustrates.

[The Council] seem to have this high level Birmingham Community Cohesion Forum with the great and the good, chaired by the chief executive. (interview B2)

The interviewee gave a talk at a seminar organised by the Forum. The results of the seminar were disappointing to her.

We went on and had the presentation, there were 10 minutes for questions, then another presentation on something different and that was the end of the meeting! No discussions about the issues, no terms of reference, no actions about what they had could be taken forward. I expressed my concerns afterwards by email and I never heard anything back. And then I saw someone in the street who was involved with that and he said "we're reviewing it", so... (interview B2)

A senior police officer presented a similar opinion. He said that the Community Cohesion Forum talks to the people representing different ethnic backgrounds

without necessarily addressing the need to integrate communities living in the same neighbourhood (my notes, interview B3). My informants seemed to express dissatisfaction with a model of participation which has not managed to anchor its legitimacy among the people who are targeted by community cohesion policies. The Forum also appears to be a body which is a little more than a symbol. Interestingly, Councillor Rudge, responsible for equalities in Birmingham, did not mention the Forum at all during my interview. The interviewees pointed out the lack of clear goals and a general lack of commitment to an open dialogue. Instead, it seems that community leaders are invited to participate in the Forum in a tokenistic way.

The examples of Birmingham clearly show how migrants' political mobilisation is shaped by the institutional opportunity structures available in a particular context. The electoral system based on wards and on the first-past-the-post principle has favoured the political participation of BME communities in a city like Birmingham where urban ethnic segregation is evident. The prominence of race and ethnicity in the British context has offered an opportunity to minorities in Birmingham to mobilise according to racial and ethnic identities. BME communities have been provided an institutional space both within mainstream institutions such as within the Labour party and in consultative bodies such as the Standing Consultative Forum and the Community Cohesion Forum. This does not mean that political opportunity structures predict one type of mobilisation. We see a significant variation in political participation between the BME communities in Birmingham. The Muslim Pakistani community, for instance, has traditionally been more successful in mobilising politically than other communities (Crowley 2001). A political opportunity is, per definition, an opportunity for action that an actor can or cannot take – it can suggest patterns of political behaviour but it cannot predict them. The tokenistic character of the Community Cohesion Forum suggests however that Birmingham City Council has been following a wider national trend in handling race relations, away from community-based and towards issue-based politics.

### ***Going beyond ethnicity – ward committees***

The Council offers alternative instruments of participation which target individual citizens rather than groups. In this context, a former Labour councillor mentioned the significance of the ward committees (interview B1). Comprised of the three elected councillors in each ward, a committee meets once a month. All the members of the public who live in that area can participate in the meetings.



The issues discussed range from urban planning, neighbourhood security, environment, organisation of local events and unemployment. Several issues, decided beforehand, are discussed each time.

The ward committees are a good illustration of how a city's population could be involved in the policy-making process.

[The ward committee] is a way for people to go to a meeting once a month, knowing that they are going to meet their local councillors and challenge them and discuss with them. They develop ward plans, and the same applies for constituencies, and they select ward priorities and those are determined by residents invited to those meetings. (interview B1)

Obviously one has to look at the public's actual participation. On average, 15-20 members of the public attended the ward meetings in Lozells and East Handsworth between 2004 and 2007<sup>12</sup>. The attendance at the ward committee meetings at Sparkbrook was slightly higher, with about 25-30 members of the public attending<sup>13</sup>. A low participation of the public does not necessarily delegitimise these bodies. The fact that the ward committees' meetings are institutionalised and held on a regular basis provide the democratic opportunity for citizens to mobilise and get involved in the policymaking of the neighbourhood in which they are living. They avoid models of *ad hoc* consultancy, such as the meetings with the public held in Malmö, which instead tend to express a paternalistic willingness to engage with the public on the terms and conditions imposed by the state.

A natural implication of democracy is that not every issue discussed in forums such as the ward committees' meetings will appeal to everybody. In addition, not everybody will have the interest or the resources to attend such meetings. One meeting held in Sparkbrook in 2006 is a case in point. The meeting was attended by approximately 100 members of the public. It is not far-fetched to argue that the high level of attendance was due to the fact that drug issues were discussed at the meeting. The topic was not discussed in later meetings and, according to the minutes, was subject to a lively debate between the residents and the politicians and policy officers. The public was concerned

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<sup>12</sup> The agendas and the minutes for the ward committees' meetings are available at [www.birmingham.gov.uk/democracy](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/democracy). Accessed on September 8, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Lozells, East Handsworth and Sparkbrook are deprived areas dominated by BME communities (more than 60 percent). The participation figures provided here are however higher than the average in a predominantly "white" ward such as Sutton Four Oaks.

that drugs problems in the area were becoming more serious and complained that not enough information about drug prevention initiatives had been distributed at the ward level (Sparkbrook Ward Committee 2006). If the institutional opportunity would not have been in place, citizens may have faced difficulties in expressing their concerns regarding this particular issue. Their voice would have been channelled through other institutions, like established community organisations, for instance, or it would have been ignored. The associations would necessarily have had to fit the issue of drug prevention and treatment into the narratives underpinning their broader agenda. This would have run the risk of departing from the original claims made by the residents.

### 6.3 Bologna

About 15 years ago, Putnam (1993) demonstrated that the Emilia Romagna region, where Bologna is located, is characterised by a vibrant civic and political culture. Electoral turnouts are higher than in other Italian regions; there are greater membership rates in associations such as trade unions as well as high rates of political activism; and its citizens are more likely to be committed to secular and democratic values than those of other regions. Despite this, Bologna has been slow in including migrants in the political structure of the Council. The two most important attempts to provide an arena for political participation have been the *Forum Metropolitano delle associazioni immigrati Bologna e provincia*<sup>14</sup> (hereafter *Forum*), created in 1997, and the *consulte di quartiere dei cittadini stranieri*<sup>15</sup> (hereafter *consulte*), which were established only in 2007. Both present a series of shortcomings related to the lack of power accorded to these bodies and to the ethnicisation of participation. I contrast the experiences of the *Forum* and of the *consulte* with the initiative recently taken by the Province of Bologna to increase migrants' participation, the Migrants' Provincial Council. This body, even if it only has consultative functions, enjoys more extensive power than the *consulte* or the *Forum*. Given that the Italian government has not guaranteed formal political rights to non-EU migrants, the Migrants' Provincial Council is a positive example of political participation.

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<sup>14</sup> Eng: Metropolitan Forum of Immigrant Associations in Bologna and its Province.

<sup>15</sup> Eng: Consultative bodies of foreign citizens at neighbourhood level.

## ***The mid 1990s and the experience of the Forum***

The *Forum* was established in 1997 as an umbrella organisation gathering 40 associations of non-EU migrants resident in Bologna and its province. The admission to the *Forum* was open to any organisation, it was conceived of as providing a good level of representativeness. However, the *Forum* was mainly composed by national organisations (e.g. the Albanian Association; the Association of Solidarity amongst Moroccans). Each association elected a number of delegates to represent them in the *Forum*. The left-wing government in power at the time saw the *Forum* as the only legitimate arena of political participation and concentrated all its efforts in promoting it. The umbrella group was meant to participate on a consultative basis in the development of immigrant policies, administered by the *Istituzione dei servizi per l'immigrazione*<sup>16</sup>, and to increase the representation of migrants in the Council. The *Forum* met only a few times during the 1990s, however. Thus it was not able to provide an arena for substantial political debate and where the Council's immigrant policies could have been discussed. The Council never actively consulted the *Forum*, whose members were also relatively passive in claiming their right to participate in the policy-making process (Peró 2002, 103). Caponio (2005) argues that the *Forum's* lack of engagement was partly due to the disillusionment of the member associations who realised that their opportunities to influence the Council's immigrant policies were minimal. Much of the *Forum's* time and resources were used to discuss internal bureaucratic matters on how the *Forum* could comply with the institutional requirements put forward by the Council (Giardini 2005, 136). It became an institution deprived of true substance.

With the coming to power of the right-wing Guazzaloca government in 1999, the *Forum's* role diminished. It was no longer part of the Council's institutional apparatus and became part of the Intercultural Centre *Zonarelli*. During the years of the Guazzaloca administration, the *Forum* and the *Zonarelli* suffered from significant budget cuts. Only under the left-wing Cofferati administration in power between 2004 and 2009, did the Council start to allocate more funding to the *Forum*. Its functions changed, however. Today it works mainly as a service provider coordinating projects such as free legal consultancy and providing free office space for migrant organisations (<http://www.forummetropolitano.org>). The left-wing Cofferati administration in

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<sup>16</sup> Eng: Institution for migration services.

power between 2004 and 2009 decided instead to put all its efforts into creating an alternative body for ensuring migrants' political participation, the *consulte*.

### **2007: Bologna introduces consultative bodies**

With a new left-wing administration coming into power in 2004, Bologna City Council began to rhetorically promote the active participation of all citizens:

To achieve the common good, the development of true democracy has to be achieved together with the active, and not only formal, participation of the civil society. (Comune di Bologna 2004, 117)

Migrants were also to be part of this.

The concept of “people” [...] has to include all residents, with or without [Italian] citizenship, including foreigners who are living in the municipality's territory and “who then have the same right as [Italian] citizens to address to the public institutions their needs related to their life in the territory” (Cons. St., Sez. II, parere 28 luglio 2004, n. 8007/04) (Comune di Bologna 2007b, 2)

However, it was only in September 2007 that the Council approved the institution of consultative bodies within the neighbourhood councils<sup>17</sup>, the *consulte di quartiere dei cittadini stranieri*. This was three years after the Cofferati administration came to power, 15 years after the first attempt in Emilia Romagna to introduce a body representing migrants' interests<sup>18</sup>, and almost 10 years after politicians in Bologna first mentioned the importance of building a representative organ for migrants.

The nine *consulte* (one per neighbourhood) are composed of five members directly elected on the basis of individual candidacies. Every non-naturalised migrant above the age of 18 can vote and be a candidate for elections to the *consulta* of the neighbourhood in which she or he abodes. Each *consulta* chooses one person to be its representative at the meetings of the neighbourhood councils which she or he can attend upon invitation by the neighbourhood council's president. The *consulta*, through its representative, can express its opinion on all matters that concern migrants' integration in the neighbourhood and it can deliberate on other matters upon the Neighbourhood Council's request. It has no formal decision-making power and the opinions put forward by the

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<sup>17</sup> Ita: *Consiglio di quartiere*.

<sup>18</sup> The municipality of Nonantola introduced in 1994 two elected adjoined councillors.

*consulta* have no binding effect. All the representatives of each *consulta* are gathered, since April 15 2008, in a so-called “city symposium”<sup>19</sup>. The symposium is meant to discuss and coordinate the projects of the neighbourhood *consulte* and could, if requested, work as an interlocutor with the City Council for discussing the policies of integration in Bologna. The *consulte* do not have an independent budget. The Council has allocated additional resources to the neighbourhoods’ budgets to guarantee that the *consulte* can operate during their first year of activity. The symposium is instead funded by the local Office for institutional affairs and neighbourhoods (Comune di Bologna 2007b).

The *consulte* have been created as an expression of increased democracy and participation as a leaflet issued by the municipality to encourage migrants to vote indicates:

Leave a sign of democracy [...] The participation of foreign citizens in this new form of consultation is a concrete and immediate opportunity for the city to broaden the rights of political participation. (Comune di Bologna undated)

The deputy-mayor Scaramuzzino emphasised this:

To support the *consulte* has been a way to come to terms with the flawed system of representation of migrants in Italy. (interview)

The head of the Intercultural Integration Service Tomesani presented a similar opinion.

The right to vote is crucial. This is the real issue: the power you have as a citizen depends on if you can or cannot vote [...] I think that the fact that migrants cannot vote is a major obstacle to their social integration. These are people who have been living here for years but cannot vote at local elections. To us this is a strong contradiction because a local Councillor needs to be able to talk to his/her electorate but cannot do so with 10 percent of the population [the migrant population living in Bologna]. (interview)

The interviewees underlined that the consultative bodies gave migrants the possibility to exercise their rights as citizens of Bologna within the restrictive framework given by the national laws. However it seems that the project, so far, is limited.

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<sup>19</sup> Ita: *conferenza cittadina*.

The power of the *consulte* is severely reduced by the limited institutional opportunities these bodies have to influence the making of immigrant policies and the type of projects they can launch. The *consulte* are embedded in a relation of financial dependency to the local government. This contradicts the Council's official emphasis on participation and democratic empowerment. As they have no autonomous budgets their initiatives have to be channelled through and approved by the public administration. In this respect, this mechanism of political participation is similar to the one used for the *Forum*. Furthermore, their input to the Council's political and decisional apparatus (centrally and at the neighbourhood level) is limited to the particular issues which concern migrants. Their participation in the Neighbourhood Committees' meetings is dependent on the invitation of the council.

My interviewees maintained that the elections of the *consulte* would be an important step in teaching migrants how to exercise their democratic political rights.

The election is meant to give responsibility to migrants, it gives them rights *and* duties [...] it is also an exercise of democracy because many of these people come from countries where they have been denied the opportunity to participate in elections. (interview Scaramuzzino)

The president of the Migrants' Provincial Council reiterated this.

Everyone has his own political background. Many of the elected representatives have a different experience [of political participation] in their country [compared to the one they have in Bologna] [...] This is the main problem: in the third world, like in India or Pakistan [*sic!*] there is a different understanding of this. (interview Raza)

The municipality organised courses for the elected representatives to bridge the gap of knowledge concerning democratic decision-making and Italian institutions. However, the level of attendance was "disappointingly low" (interview Scaramuzzino). The fact that the members of the *consulte* are unremunerated and work on this in their spare time can probably provide an answer to the low interest shown for these courses.

### ***An alternative – the Migrants' Provincial Council***

So far, despite the well-meaning motives underpinning their establishment, the *consulte* have conveyed several exclusionary narratives and practices. Despite the official rhetoric of inclusion, the Cofferati administration has not managed to

break the pattern of exclusionary practises which characterised the *Forum* during the 1990s. It is interesting to compare the *consulte* with a similar project launched the same year by the Province of Bologna, the Migrants' Provincial Council (*Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna*).

In an attempt to meet the quest for an institutionalised model of representation and participation in the political processes, the Province decided to establish such a body in 2005 (Provincia di Bologna 2005, 13). A project was set up to define the characteristics of the consultative body. Representatives from the Province, the municipalities, local institutions, intercultural centres, trade unions, the voluntary sector, migrant associations, and academics participated in the project (Osservatorio delle Immigrazioni 2008b, 5). According to a trade union representative in Bologna,

At the beginning several municipalities responded [to the idea of establishing a consultative body for migrants] with distrust because there was no culture of doing something similar. (interview Bortolotti).

The decisive solution for the integration of migrants was, according to the interviewees, to give them political rights:

I'm of the opinion that the national government should guarantee the right to vote to migrants. Obviously I don't have the power to change this, but I follow a path which interweaves access to services – education, health, social services in general – and that affirms the importance of political rights that provide mechanisms of political participation to foreigners [...] if the issue of voting rights were settled, many problems [concerning integration] would be solved – at least formally. (interview Barigazzi)

[The Migrants' Provincial Council] wants to be an answer to the lack of voting rights for a significant share of the population living in our territory. (interview Paradisi)

The project ended in 2007. On December 2, 2007 the Migrants' Provincial Council was elected. 32 lists were presented with a total of 275 candidates. Of all the lists presented, eight were representing only one nationality. Only one of them, *Alleanza* representing Filipinos, won a seat in the Migrants' Council.

The Migrants' Provincial Council has extensive powers in comparison to Bologna's *consulte*. While it remains a consultative body, the Migrant Council has the compulsory task to express its opinion on the Province's preliminary budget, particularly within the domains that explicitly affect immigrant policies. It can also express its opinion on all other matters deliberated by the Province

and it can make motions calling attention to which acts drawn up by the Province might discriminate against migrants or which should include measures to increase migrants' integration. Whenever a Provincial Organ addressed by the Migrants' Council decides not to take onboard the Council's suggestions, it has to legitimate its decision in writing (Provincia di Bologna 2007, 8-9). The authority and autonomy of the Migrants' Provincial Council are by far broader than the ones given to the *consulte*.

The Provincial Councillor responsible for immigration, Giuliano Barigazzi, explained the rationale behind the extensive power given to the Council in the following way:

If I want to educate [*formare*] that citizen [migrant] and say to him [*sic!*] that he has certain duties, I need to give him the right to express his opinion on all matters. (interview Barigazzi)

He continued arguing for a non-differentiation of policies:

To me, differentiation is the beginning of a ghetto. Obviously these people come here with their culture and personal history, but they are in Italy so their problems will be similar to those met by Italians but complicated by particular issues such as having a valid permit of stay etc. [...] On issues like housing, health, school, transport [migrants] are citizens like everybody else [...] General policies need to find solutions to particular problems. To model an *ad hoc* policy [for migrants] would probably mean to deny them the possibility to become full-fledged citizens. (interview Barigazzi)

The logic underpinning the Provincial Council is that a sense of belonging to the community can only be fostered if the separation between migrants and non-migrants is challenged. The Councillor acknowledged the particular problems tied to one's status as migrant, but he also argued that a one-dimensional focus on differences could jeopardise the development of a sense of common belonging among Italians and migrant communities.

The Council was also seen as providing an opportunity for migrants to learn how the Italian public administration works. Councillor Barigazzi said that

The recognition of political rights allows you to ask for a strict compliance with a set of duties because you have given these people full citizenship [...] It [to guarantee political rights] triggers a sense of responsibility, of compliance to the laws of the state to which one migrates. (interview)

This echoes Bologna City Council's perspective on the *consulte* as educational arenas. The Province has given powers to the Migrants' Council which go



beyond a politically correct appearance, however. Not limiting the Council's area of competence merely to matters concerning immigrant policies and forcing the organs within the Province to be responsive to the opinions of the Council are attempts to move beyond an understanding of migrants as mere ethnic subjects.

It is interesting to observe that the attempts to provide means of political participation in Bologna at both the Provincial and Municipal levels vary from the national political opportunity structures. The Italian government has provided minimal channels for migrant mobilisation through the *Consulta per i lavoratori immigrati e le loro famiglie* and the *Consulta per l'Islam Italiano* and it has not guaranteed voting rights to non-EU migrants (see chapter 5). In this context, the mechanisms of political participation provided in Bologna, in particular the Migrants' Provincial Council, can be seen as reflections of a particularly inclusive local integration regime. Further research is needed to examine comparatively how these mechanisms of political participation have shaped migrants' mobilisation.

## **6.4 Comparison from the light of caring multiculturalism**

This chapter set out to identify the mechanism of political participation given to migrants by the three case-study municipalities. In this section I analyse comparatively the findings presented and assess which opportunity structures provided by the political participation mechanisms described thus far are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism.

All three municipalities promote the active involvement of its citizens in the city's civic and political life. In Malmö, voluntary associations are the channels for political participation of migrants which receive most emphasis by the Council. In Birmingham, BME community members' participation in mainstream institutions, such as political parties, has a long history. In addition, consultative bodies have been established since the 1990s. In Bologna, the Council has recently set up formal consultative bodies. Prior to this, it supported the establishment of a consultative body, the *Forum Metropolitano*. Table 6.1 below summarises the findings.

Channel of political participation	Malmö	Birmingham	Bologna
Electoral politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Non-naturalised migrants have voting rights at the local level.</li> <li>*Low participation in local elections.</li> <li>*Council does not explicitly promote this channel of political participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Non-naturalised, migrants from the new and old Commonwealth have voting rights at the local level.</li> <li>*BME actively recruited by major parties</li> <li>*Number of elected BME councillors has increased since the 1980s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*No voting rights for non-naturalised migrants.</li> </ul>
Community politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*No formal representative body</li> <li>* Informal practical collaborations at the neighbourhood level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*1990-1999 Umbrella Groups and Standing Consultative Forum</li> <li>* 2004-present Community Cohesion Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1997-present <i>Forum Metropolitano delle associazioni immigrati Bologna e provincial</i></li> <li>*2007 <i>Consulte di quartiere dei cittadini stranieri</i></li> </ul>
Non-group based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Several non-formalised, e.g. <i>Medborgardialog</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ward committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* None where non-naturalised citizens can participate</li> </ul>

**Table 6.1 Summary of the mechanisms of political participation**

My analysis suggests that the relationship between migrant associations and Malmö and Bologna Councils is based on a top-down approach. In Malmö, no formal arenas for dialogue exist. Even if the Council in theory is responsive to the suggestions of migrant associations concerning particular issues through informal ties and collaboration on specific projects, it ultimately sets the priorities for immigrant policies and commissions as part of their implementation to associations. As Broomé points out

[a] bottom-up approach, meaning that the targets of these polices should suggest how to use the funding or even manage themselves the money the government provided as never concerned the Council [of Malmö]. Instead a top-down perspective is what characterises the management of these polices. The citizens have probably perceived this as demeaning and disqualifying. (2007, 40)

This top-down approach also sets the boundaries for the fundamental aims of any migrant association funded with public money. They are supposed to work as arenas where people are educated in democratic practices and ethos. Osman (2005) shows that the constraints set by this normative framework do not enable migrant groups to challenge the dominant relations of power. A well-meaning approach turns out to be disciplining those who are constructed as aliens. Already in 1991, Carl-Ulrik Schierup pointed out that migrant associations in Sweden are a “helping hand” for the state carrying out an important share of social work. They are not a significant political force.

Migrant associations, defined as cultural associations and disciplined by the state’s financial support, have not been able to develop genuine political movements that could have supported those politician interested in addressing immigrant policies. (1991, 40)

Schierup’s main point is that migrant associations are not movements that can influence and participate in the political institutions. Participation in voluntary associations is seen as a means to improve migrants’ language skills and knowledge of the society in which they live, as the example of the project *Integration i förening* illustrated. It can contribute to make them full-fledge members of Malmö’s polity. The top-down approach to the organisation of political participation also bears consequences for how the needs of migrants are defined and addressed. For instance, the project *Integration i förening* identified some of the obstacles to integration of newly arrived migrants prior to any discussion with the potential beneficiaries of the project. I am not questioning the good intentions of the staff involved in the project. Yet, such expert-based understandings of the problem (i.e. lack of integration) and of its solutions (i.e. more contact and better language proficiency) leaves unchallenged the division between caregivers (the experts) and the recipients of care, “a division of labor that reinforce[d] a paternalistic model of care” (White 2000, 19). This understanding of policy issues relies on a particular understanding of what counts as knowledge necessary to address the issue of migrants’ incorporation in the majority society. Migrants are seen as recipient of care and not as actors who can define their needs and the quality of the solutions provided.

The approach adopted by Bologna is similar to Malmö’s in some respects. The *Forum* set up in 1997 was a disempowering and patronising project. Its institutional structure was decided top-down by the Council and it was considered to be the only legitimate channel of migrants’ political participation. This created a political vacuum for the associations who decided not to join the

*Forum*. These associations had no other arena of participation which was acknowledged by the Council. It effectively discouraged alternative initiatives by grass-root associations because it monopolised the meaning of migrants' political mobilisation (Pero' 2002). The *Consulte* established in 2007 show similar problems. Even if the project is still in its infancy, it seems that the stronger parts, i.e. the Council and the neighbourhood offices, are maintaining their domination over migrants. The migrants elected in the consultative bodies are able to deliberate on local policymaking only when asked to do so. The lack of power can be explained by reference to how several policy officers and politicians conceived of these bodies, i.e. as schools of democracy. Migrants are seen *a priori* as being ignorant of democratic politics and practices. This should be handled with great care. It is accurate to argue that many migrants in Italy come from authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes and that, if they have been in Italy only for a short period of time, their knowledge about Italian political institutions is limited. However, these and similar statements seem to express a patronizing and exclusionary narrative describing migrants as suffering from a democratic deficit. This relies on the assumption that the Italian electorate is well-informed about the way the democratic political process works and that migrants do not belong to that depiction of normality. It also overlooks the fact that the majority of those migrants who have decided to run for elections of the *consulte* might have been living in the territory for a long time and therefore acquired a significant knowledge of Italian society.

We can conclude that in Malmö and Bologna these kinds of institutional opportunity structures are not likely to support the adoption of caring multiculturalism. The participation of migrants is constrained by the conceptions of what an association is supposed to be doing, i.e. foster a democratic ethos, educate democratic principles and promote integration as defined by the state. In both Malmö and Bologna the participation of migrants is called upon when the Councils need support in addressing practical problems and when they are interested in receiving feedback on particular policies. The form of empowerment they are offered is literally by invitation: migrants are invited to speak and organise particular projects only when the local institutions provide the opportunity for them to do so. Julie A. White discusses the tension between power and empowerment in a way that is useful in this context:

Empowerment by invitation does not necessarily translate into the power to participate as an equal in decisions about what to do with this information and how to organize the division of labour. Professionals are still setting the agenda. [...] Empowerment by invitation seems to amount to the claim that when

professional interests and client interests coincide, clients will be invited to the table; where there is conflict, they may not make the guest list at all. (2000, 159-160)

This seems to be happening to a certain extent in Malmö and Bologna. Both municipalities seem to rely on formalistic and technical understandings of the problems of the beneficiaries of the programmes and of the solutions to their presupposed issues. The knowledge of experts, i.e. project managers, policy officers, politicians, is deemed to be more valuable and authoritative than the experience of others - in this case, the migrants themselves. Experts define the needs of the beneficiaries of immigrant policies as well as the effectiveness of their practices. In chapter 3 I called this “power of needs interpretation” (cf. Fraser 1997). According to a formalistic approach to needs interpretation, experts also have the power to decide when to give voice to the beneficiaries of care and who should be selected to voice the community’s collective needs. This contributes to the institutionalisation of “paternalistic authority” defined as the power “exercised in the process of speaking for others in the course of defining needs” (White 2000, 44). This undermines the trust towards the providers of care and triggers a lack of their legitimacy in the targeted community.

While I appreciate the importance of informal collaborations between the Council and the voluntary sector because they can be less time-consuming and bureaucratic than formal forums for deliberation, one should not exclude the other. It is important to provide formalised and institutionalised arenas where citizens can voice their needs and participate in decisions about how to address particular issues. In this sense, the institutional opportunity structure provided by the British and Swedish electoral system is important for enabling citizens to participate in the political life of the city either by running for election or by voting. From the perspective of caring multiculturalism, Malmö City Council should be more proactive in promoting this mechanism of political participation. Migrants should be considered equally aware of democratic ethos and practices as the majority society, given the fact that a large majority of them has been living in the country for decades or is even born there. Their participation in the city’s political life should be promoted. To assume that even migrants who have been living in Sweden for several decades need some form of democratic education is disempowering and patronising.

In this chapter I have discussed mechanisms of political participation that have specifically targeted migrant and ethnic minorities and others that have not. Which opportunities do they create that may favour the adoption of caring

multiculturalism? The most formalised mechanism of political participation of ethnic minorities is provided by Birmingham City Council. In the past decades the municipality has established consultative forums, the Standing Consultative Forum (SCF) during the 1990s and more recently the Community Cohesion Forum. Despite the fact that in Britain in general and in Birmingham in particular, the approach to ethnic diversity has moved from race relations and recognition of differences to community cohesion, the mechanisms of political participation provided by Birmingham City Council present a relative continuity. In fact both the SCF and the Community Cohesion Forum legitimise claims for the recognition of ethnic difference. Thus, these forms of political participation provide an institutional opportunity structure for the mobilisation of minorities along ethnic, racial and religious lines. They do not however provide the space for questioning the power of non-elected group representatives to voice the needs of those they claim to be representing. In chapter 3 I have called this “power of problem setting”. A study on South Asian minorities in Bradford (Blakey et al. 2006), demonstrates that South Asians’ participation in the city follows particular patterns which excludes some women, the bi- and homosexual communities, people of other religions than Islam, and people belonging to lower castes. These issues were raised in the 1990s and were among the causes that led to the disbandment of the SCF in 1999. It is unclear what has been done by the Council to address these issues within the Community Cohesion Forum which in many ways follows a similar construct as the SCF. A number of young Black and minority ethnic adults interviewed in Birmingham for a recent research report on identity (b:RAP 2002) suggest other paths to participation which could come to terms with the issues of problem setting and representativity.

Like you are doing now, more research. Spend time with the people they are catering for. Like in schools, if they want to know what’s best for schools, spend time with them and see what’s happening. (b:RAP 2002, 44)

First go and talk to [BME communities]. Hold focus groups, surveys, questionnaires. I think you need contact with people if you want to find out what’s really needed. (b:RAP 2002, 44)

Both interviewees suggest that the practice of using spokespeople for whole communities is not as important as being consulted and even involved personally. This takes us back to the issues of power of needs interpretation and power of problem setting. Not engaging the beneficiaries of certain policies, such as immigrant policies or social policies broadly speaking, undermines the trust

towards the Council and triggers a lack of legitimacy in the targeted community. If the Council relies on a few community representatives to grasp the needs of a community it risks at best treating BME communities as homogeneous. In a worse-case scenario the Council could unwittingly promote the interests of a few people and maintain cleavages between groups. Both scenarios have detrimental consequences for solidarity between communities. Hence, the institutional opportunities for participation provided by consultative bodies such as the SCF and the Community Cohesion Forum do not seem to provide positive stimuli for active participation of individual citizens in the life of the city.

A type of consultative body which instead seems to provide more opportunities for the adoption of caring multiculturalism is the Migrants' Provincial Council established by the Province of Bologna in 2007. I identify three main reasons for this. First, the process that led to the establishment of the Council was inclusive of all relevant actors and was driven by the political will to achieve a shared goal. I understand this shared objective to be the establishment of a democratic arena for political participation. Setting up a Migrants' Council was a tool to enhance a sense of belonging to the territory of Bologna and a sense of ownership of the policies that affect migrants. The following quote by one Councillor of the Migrants' Council suggests this:

This experience [working in the Migrants' Council] shows that the role of migrants is crucial for politics [and] that they are subjects of the discussion and not objects of political and administrative organs. (Bouchaib Khaine quoted in Osservatorio delle immigrazioni 2008b, 36)

More research is needed to understand the real effects the Council has had on the migrants' perceptions of their role as citizens of Bologna. The material available and my own interviews seem to indicate that those migrants who had been involved in the setting up of the Migrants' Council do feel that they are playing a significant role in the policymaking of the Province. Second, the Migrants' Council is an instrument of participation based on democratic principles. The model of election was not based on personal candidacies as in Bologna's *consulte* but rather on lists which mainly did not represent one predominant nationality. On average, 13 nationalities were represented in each of the five lists which won most seats. This allows, at least theoretically, for the advocacy of needs which cut across cultural narratives and overcomes the problems embedded in the models of representation of migrants through their associations, i.e. their representativeness. Thirdly, given the statute of the Migrants' Council, the Province must be attentive and responsive to the opinions expressed by it,

even when it decides not to endorse them. Taken together, the institutional opportunity structures provided by the Migrants' Provincial Council seem to be likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. The Provincial Council provides an arena where the knowledge of those who cannot express their political rights counts as relevant. This concerns all matters that might affect migrants as citizens of the Province and not as aliens. The Province's approach to migrant participation thus requires at least a partial rejection of the stranger model that is prominent in the *consulte*. The project is based on the assumption that everyone resident in the territory of the Province of Bologna is a citizen and should have the rights to participate in the decision-making processes. Recognizing the agency of migrants as citizens of a local community is critical to identifying and fostering alternative participation mechanisms that challenge paternalistic and exclusionary patterns of inclusion. The major shortcoming of the Council is its consultative nature. That is, the body does not have any real power to influence or even change the making of a policy in the same way as a political party through its elected representatives has, for instance. We need to analyse the Council in the political opportunity structures offered by the Italian state, however. While in absolute terms the Migrants' Provincial Council has little factual power, it has relatively speaking more power than other similar organs such as the *consulte* of the municipality of Bologna or the advisory bodies within the Ministry of Internal affairs and the Ministry of Labour, for instance. Within the framework of the existing legislation, which does not guarantee any executive power to such bodies, the Province of Bologna has managed to develop a body with extensive powers whose consultative functions are not limited to issues concerning immigrant policies.

Caring multiculturalism subscribes to an approach to political participation which does not "enhance the regulatory authority of a group over its members, or elevate what some of its members claim to be their cultural norms over the beliefs and interpretations of others from the group" (Phillips 2007, 169). The ward committees set up by Birmingham City Council seem to provide the adequate institutional opportunity structure to promote this kind of political participation. The ward committees provide an arena where people can voice their needs and opinions and to engage in issues that touch upon them directly, e.g. how a recreational centre is run or how the ward deals with drug-related issues. The ward committees seem to be an interesting way of engaging citizens in government decision-making processes in a way that does not rely on participation by elite, organised civil society, in the form of predominantly ethno-religious community organisations, NGOs, and other interest groups with



access to resources. Unlike the non-group based forms of dialogue promoted in Malmö, the ward committees are institutionalised arenas for participation which are held regularly. This study has not been able to assess in detail the efficiency of the committees or the community members' experiences of participating in policy-making at this level. Yet, the existence of an institutional structure which enables participation and dialogue on issues that concern the population across ethno-cultural identifiers is a positive illustration of how caring multiculturalism could be practically implemented. Theoretically speaking the ward committees enable the Council to identify policy problems and to find solutions to them beyond the spectacles of race, ethnicity or faith. In this sense, it provides the institutional opportunities to establish a relationship between the state and a constituency group which is based on particular issues and not solely on identity. As recently pointed out by the Birmingham Race Action Partnership (b:RAP),

When ethnicity becomes the primary guiding determinant of community need – as we saw from Birmingham's experience with the Standing Consultative Forum and Umbrella Groups structures [...] – there is a grave danger that this will generate irreconcilable demands for ever more finely delineated 'ethnicised' services rather than fundamental, longer-term change in mainstream services and practices. (2004b, 13)

Models of participation that promote mobilisation beyond the notion that particular ethnic or faith groups can speak on behalf of entire communities may help policy makers address social issues in a more inclusive manner. For instance, it could be more fruitful to focus on the general educational underachievement of boys from socioeconomically deprived families rather than on the educational underachievement of some minorities. In this way ethnicity would not risk to become an explanatory variable for the lower achievements of e.g. Bangladeshi boys in Birmingham. Equally important, the needs and opinions voiced in the ward committees could be used to balance the claims made and needs expressed by community representatives. In this sense, they provide the local government with a more accurate perspective of the real diversity of age, gender, educational background, wealth and class which characterise any community.

## **6.5 Conclusions**

In this chapter I have presented the institutional opportunities provided by each case-study municipality which enable migrants to formally access the polity. I

have discussed which mechanisms of political participation are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. I have argued that in Malmö and Bologna the political participation mechanisms provided by the City Councils are structured according to a top-down approach. This limits the possibilities of adopting caring multiculturalism because it gives migrants the power to engage in policymaking only when the local institutions provide the opportunity for them to do so. Malmö and Bologna City Council are therefore not able to come to terms with what I have called “power of needs interpretation” and they run the risk of exercising paternalistic authority. Birmingham City Council tends instead to rely on ethnicity and faith based consultative bodies. These instruments are not likely to stimulate the implementation of caring multiculturalism because they do not challenge the “power of problem setting”. Other institutional opportunities that are in line with the tenets of caring multiculturalism are adopted by Malmö and Birmingham City Council. These are related to the more generous voting rights guaranteed in Sweden and in Britain which enable migrants (in Sweden) and commonwealth citizens (in Britain) to vote and run for elections. The ward committees in Birmingham are another channel of political participation in line with caring multiculturalism.

The aim of the chapter has not been to provide a blueprint for participation against which every case has to be measured, as is often done by the normative positions presented by multicultural scholars. Following the principle of contextual sensitivity discussed in chapter 3, the dynamics of improving participation have to be found within the actual institutional framework of each case. Having analysed the institutional relations between the local state and migrants, the next two chapters examine the social construction of public discourses that sustain these relations.

## 7 Policy narratives on integration

This chapter addresses the second empirical question of the thesis: how is the issue of integration defined in the immigrant policies and programmes at the local levels of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna? It examines the policy narratives which either facilitate or hinder the inclusion of migrants. The chapter presents how each municipality has discursively constructed the relation between the recipient local state and migrants. In particular, the analysis sheds light on how participation of migrants in the recipient society, i.e. their integration, is understood; what the problems for achieving migrants' integration are according to public policy actors and finally; which solutions the public institutions suggest to come to terms with the identified obstacles. Analysing policy narratives about migrants' integration will provide information about the normative underpinnings of the society we are analysing. Narratives, as I discussed previously in this thesis, reflect established notions of who and what are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate. For this reason, narratives become vehicles for the reproduction of social constructions and, as official utterances validated in policy, they amplify these constructs (Newton 2008, 39).

The chapter proceeds in the following way. First, I present the most significant policy narratives about integration adopted by each municipality. In order to identify the policy narratives that define the issue of integration in my material, I look for the most recurrent patterns in the discursive representation of integration. The study is based on the following operationalising questions: what is the problem of "migrants' integration" represented to be? Who is represented to be a problem in the narration of "integration"? What is the suggested solution to integration? How is the concept of integration used by institutions? The identified policy narratives are then classified. The categories I use reflect the ways in which the relation between a state and individuals or groups can be characterised at the most general level. These categories are: social, cultural, economic and political. Such categorisation enables me to discuss the findings comparatively in the concluding section of this chapter, where I also discuss their potential for favouring the adoption of caring multiculturalism. For the purpose of clarification, all the quotes in this chapter from the Swedish or Italian material have been translated by myself into English.

## 7.1 Malmö

The Strategy Plan for migrants' integration issued by Malmö City Council in 1999 defines integration in the following way:

For a person, [integration] means to have the opportunity to *actively participate in society* and to be *able to influence the development of the society* [where s/he lives] without giving up her/his personal identity. Integration *presupposes communication, mutual understanding* between people and knowledge about each others' culture, perspective and society. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 7)

Two elements stand out in this quote. Integration is understood as participation in society and as mutual understanding between people with different backgrounds. The document, which is still in use, points out that integration has not been fully achieved in the City. It identifies two main causes to this problem. Participation in society is constrained by ethnic and socioeconomic segregation.

Increased segregation [...] is a serious threat to safety, welfare and democracy [...]. The city's neighbourhoods are characterised by ethnic and socioeconomic segregation. It makes the integration of many citizens of Malmö more difficult. Segregation risks making social exclusion and unemployment permanent features [of the city]. It undermines the opportunity for people to participate in society. It creates significant difficulties for children to learn the Swedish language properly. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 19)

The second, interrelated, cause to the lack of integration refers to the lack of communication and understanding between people living in Malmö. This can foster "negative attitudes towards and discrimination of people with foreign backgrounds" (Malmö Stad 1999a, 19). The Council has adopted a number of policy solutions to address the causes of the lack of integration. In this section, I analyse them in terms of policy narratives. I have identified four recurring narratives which define the issue of integration in Malmö between 1997 and 2007. The first two policy narratives target the problem of segregation and are concerned with addressing migrants' unemployment and with promoting engagement in voluntary associations. I label them "employment" narrative and "community engagement" narrative. The other two narratives address the issue of lack of communication and mutual understanding. One refers to the changes that have to be done within the Council, which I call "Council's responsibility" narrative. The other narrative promotes the development of urban areas and facilities which can foster contact between citizens of different backgrounds. I call it "meeting spaces" narrative. Even if these narratives are analysed

separately, they are in reality interrelated to each other and addressing the same problem, i.e. the lack of integration.

### ***Employment narrative***

Migrants who came to Malmö during the 1950s and 1960s could integrate more easily in the Swedish society because they were rapidly absorbed into the labour market.

Earlier migration waves were not a burden to the municipal public sector. [Migrants] got a job straight away, they learned the Swedish language at work... it was much easier. (interview M1)

In the 1990s, Malmö was hit by a severe financial crisis which shook the industrial economy of the city. Many people were made redundant. The transformation of the city's economy from industrial to service-based did not manage to reabsorb the large numbers of unemployed labourers. During the same years, Malmö experienced significant migration waves of asylum seekers and refugees from the former Yugoslavia who found it difficult to enter the labour market. Malmö City Council expressed its concerns clearly: "Malmö's biggest problem is the high unemployment rates" (Malmö Stad 1997b, 2). Migrants were facing particular difficulties in entering the labour market.

We soon realised that the unemployed who did not manage to get back into work were mainly migrants. Obviously young people were facing problems as well, but it was mostly adults who didn't enter the labour market. (interview Merlöv)

Increasing the level of employment among migrants is not only a reflection of the Swedish national Government's labour market policy, aimed at achieving full employment, it is also a concern of Malmö City Council which sees participation in the labour market as important for integration. The Strategy paper for integration states that:

Participation in the labour market is crucial for achieving a successful integration. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 20)

Similarly, the 1997 Municipal Budget points out that

The main concern [for the Council] is undoubtedly unemployment. Related to this is the socioeconomic and ethnic segregation that divides Malmö's neighbourhoods. Therefore, following unemployment, our second main concern is integration. (Malmö Stad 1997c, 3)

Unemployment is depicted as hampering integration and as curtailing migrants' opportunities to participate in society. The strategy for increased welfare among Malmö's citizens, *Välfärd för alla*<sup>1</sup>, adopted in 2004 states the following.

There are groups of people who are socio-economically deprived and who are strongly dependent on social support to make ends meet. Many are concentrated in particular areas of Malmö. The issue has therefore a clear geographic dimension. It has also a strong ethnic dimension because several migrant groups are particularly affected by this. [...] Through economic independence [...] one obtains freedom, increased self-esteem and the opportunity to become engaged in several different social issues [...] Paid work is a precondition for economic self-sufficiency, housing and safety. (Malmö Stad 2004a, 1-2; 6)

A senior officer clarified how employment would benefit integration.

We have come to the conclusion that paid work is very important for integration, possibly the most important factor. This is supported in much academic research. There is so much that follows from it: one can meet new friends, has a reason to learn the Swedish language, can provide for his/her family, get a good place to live and generally one feels better psychologically. This is the reason we put so much emphasis on paid work. (interview M2)

The Councillor responsible for Employment and Integration put it in a similar way:

The idea is that employment, and the autonomy that follows from it, provides a number of choices – you can choose where to live, which cultural expressions you want to adopt etc. [...] If you give people autonomy, they can choose how to integrate [...] and they are then not pushed around by politicians. [...] A lot of integration politics is traditional class politics...it is about having access to employment, education, material resources, contacts...(interview Andersson)

The quotes above show that the employment narrative relies on an understanding that employment would lead to autonomy, self-sufficiency and well-being. It also presents migrants as potential resources for the city and its businesses, as illustrated by the quote below.

Migrants are a necessary resource in order to meet the need for labour created by a strong economic development and for fostering the creativity and entrepreneurship needed to support such a development. (Malmö Stad 1999b, 3)

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<sup>1</sup> Eng. Welfare for everybody

The municipality has emphasised this aspect of the employment narrative in order to stimulate the employment of migrants in the private sector but also to challenge stereotypical assumptions about migration.

To speak about the economic benefits of migration is a way to make private companies interested in migrants. We also have to deal with racist discourses... so it is a way to argue against those who claim that migrants only cost a lot of money and live on social benefits. The public actors in Sweden tell them [the perpetrators of racist discourses] 'without migration there will be no-one to care for you when you're old'. (interview M2)

The Council has adopted a number of policy solutions which try to come to terms with unemployment among migrants, Malmö City Council launched its own programme for employment in 1997, the so-called Gefas<sup>2</sup>. The main goal of Gefas was to change people's status from passive recipients of social benefits and to help them entering the labour market. The municipality decided to focus in particular on migrants who had arrived during the 1990s. "Our opinion was that the vast majority of those who came here during the 1990s could work" (interview Merlöv). Gefas aimed at creating new jobs by supporting the private sector and by providing a number of educational and training programmes targeting long-term unemployed. In December 1999, the City Council signed an agreement with the state on the Politics for Metropolitan Cities<sup>3</sup>. The agreement aimed at improving integration and enabling more people to enter the labour market. As a result, in 2000 the municipality together with the Employment Agency and the Social Services Agency (*Försäkringskassan*) established four employment centres (AUC)<sup>4</sup> in Rosengård, Hyllie, Fosie and Södra Innerstaden, four neighbourhoods characterised by a relatively high level of socioeconomic deprivation and densely populated by migrants. The AUC targeted long-term unemployed who were considered able to enter the labour market or education within two years. According to the former Head of the Employment and Integration Office, the approach of the AUC was successful.

What happened after 2000 with the AUC was that we normalised an understanding that migrants were as good workers as anybody else and that they

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<sup>2</sup> Generalplan för arbete och sysselsättning i Malmö. Eng: General Strategy for employment and training in Malmö.

<sup>3</sup> Swe: *Storstadspolitik*.

<sup>4</sup> Swe: *Lokala arbets- och utvecklingscentra*.

didn't need to do thousands meaningless projects before they could begin to work. (interview Merlöv)

The policy solutions targeting unemployment have become increasingly individualised in order to grasp the qualifications of unemployed migrants: "we have a more tailor-made way to address unemployment" (interview M1). The orientation- and language courses for newly arrived migrants, so-called *introduktionsverksamhet*, are also individualised and have had a clear goal of enabling their students to enter the labour market at the end of the courses<sup>5</sup>.

In practice, during the past 10 years the *introduktionsverksamhet* has focused on both language and employment. That's how we've always done it! I know that [the national government] now says that the *introduktionsverksamhet* has to be flexible, individualised and focused on employment, but that's what we've done for 10 years. (interview Sundman)

There is another aspect of the employment narrative that needs underlining. A high unemployment rate put an undeniable financial pressure on the Council.

The low employment rate in Malmö is the main reason why the city has the highest level of dependency on social benefits. The high costs for this [...] constrain the possibilities for the municipality to make important investments in education and health care. (Malmö Stad 1999b, 4)

A policy officer reiterated this.

Of course, there are financial reasons [for emphasising employment]. We need to do something to reduce the costs that the Municipality faces. Employment is part of this. (interview Bergström)

According to these statements, to have a large percentage of the population outside the labour market puts a particular strain on public expenditures. In 1997, ca. 17 percent of the population in Malmö was unemployed (Malmö Stad 1997b,

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<sup>5</sup> The *introduktionsverksamheten*, which is not compulsory, usually lasts 24 months and is carried out by the City Council in cooperation with the Migration Board, Region Skåne, the State Employment Agency, and private employers. It targets refugees and migrants who have been in Sweden no longer than three years. Participation in the course, based on an individual "introduction plan", comprises Swedish language classes (15-20 hours/week), civic and social orientation, and introduction to the labour market. For some, professional education or internships are provided (interview Sundman; Malmö Stad 2006).



2), the number of people dependent on social benefits was increasing and the Council's budget deficit was the highest in the country. It is therefore understandable that to get people in employment was a major priority for the Council and that unemployment was seen as the cause of socioeconomic segregation and deprivation.

The employment narrative reproduces a norm by which paid work is a route out of dependency into economic self-sufficiency. It is the solution to poverty, inadequate housing, lack of integration, and improved language skills; it is the glue that binds society together; and it is the ultimate responsibility of citizens (Williams 2001, 474). The migrant who is integrated is a "real worker" who is part of the public domain as s/he engages in paid work and therefore is seen as self-sufficient. Her/his participation in the labour market is presented as normal social participation, while unemployment is not. I explicitly asked my interviewees if an emphasis on paid work could have negative consequences for women, who are overrepresented in unemployment figures. The general response was sympathetic towards women who had not entered the labour market.

It's a serious problem which has affected many groups. The Council has launched several projects in this respect, but I don't really think we've been very successful. (interview Merlöv)

It is a major challenge for Swedish integration policy. Look for instance at Afghan women. 25 percent of these women who come to Malmö and enrol to the introductory course have less than four years education. This is impossible for the Swedish system to handle because it is based on the norm that the minimum education is nine or twelve years long [...] We've had a number of projects [targeting women] in the past years, some of which have been quite successful, but.... I mean we have to teach these women to have enough self-esteem to leave their home. They have to learn how to get on the bus, to read numbers, the clock, to read [...] It is a great challenge but we don't have ready-made solutions. We realise that this is an increasing problem. (interview M2)

One project that targeted migrant women was called *Trappan*<sup>6</sup>. The project wanted to improve women's self-esteem and to develop their competence and knowledge of the Swedish language. Among the activities promoted in the

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<sup>6</sup> Eng. "The ladder". The project was launched in 2006 and lasted one year. It was led by the Council in cooperation with AUC Rosengård and ABF/ABL. The targeted group was around 60 unemployed migrant women between the age of 25 and 45, with non- or very limited education. The project entered a second phase (*Trappan i ett Steg 2*) in 2008.

project were long walks, sport activities, and a one-day “open house” in Rosengård where women organised a coffee-shop, a second-hand stall and some activities for children. The evaluation of the project stressed that the women who participated were generally satisfied with the outcome (Hallerström 2007). However, there is no critical assessment of the aim of *Trappan*, i.e. to build a service-oriented cooperative which could provide catering, a mending service, gardening, beauty-care, etc. It maintains a conception of migrant women as those who prefer a traditional role at home and who would like to carry out certain types of jobs. It also perpetuates the establishment of informal social networks which provide moral support, information and assistance in areas such as housing or job-finding. The development of these social networks can be empowering and new solidarities and new identities can emerge from them. However, they also run the risk of placing women “in a position of ‘social exile’ which forces them to rely on each other’s mutual aid and support” (Ålund and Schierup 1991, 55) at the periphery of the public institutions. This characterisation of women is directly reflected in the labour market. Migrant women in Malmö are employed in low-paid, low-status occupations in the public health care sector (Malmö Stad 2008) or in private care employment as nannies or cleaners.

### ***Community engagement narrative***

As discussed in the previous chapter, Malmö City Council conceives of participation in civil society as important for the achievement of migrants’ integration. It is also a way to challenge socioeconomic segregation. This is expressed in the narrative about community engagement.

Voluntary associations are important for cultivating social relations. Associations can be an arena for integration where people gather around common interests, regardless of their background. [...] migrant associations and cultural associations have significant social functions and are places where one’s own language and culture are kept alive. They can provide information about the Swedish society and therefore work as a bridge between [migrants and] the public sector, e.g. schools. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 20)

The quote suggests that engagement in voluntary associations has important social, cultural and political functions. The social side of the community engagement narrative points at associations as places where people can socialise and meet. The cultural side of this narrative emphasises the importance of migrant associations in maintaining ties with their culture while living in Sweden

and reflects the principle of freedom of choice that characterises Swedish immigrant policies. The political aspect is expressed in the description of associations as interlocutors between public policy actors and citizens.

The emphasis on the cultural aspect of community engagement has diminished since the late 1990s, however. The policy documents issued after 2004 tend to stress that voluntary associations are important for fostering civic engagement and creating opportunities to meet across ethnic divides. In particular, they are important for integration because they are where “citizens of Malmö with different backgrounds and experiences can meet” (Malmö Stad 2004, 13). The Head of the Employment and Integration office reiterates this point.

We work with MIP and MISO<sup>7</sup> which are two big umbrella organisations [...] they cover most associations in Malmö and do important things with integration. We support them to get... to develop more associations but also to inform people. (interview Tehander)

Because of the increased emphasis on the social and integrative aspect of community associations, the municipality’s financial support for associations “encourages and sponsors the associations that work with issues related to integration” (Malmö Stad 2005, 20). This has become particularly clear after the introduction of the general welfare programme *Välfärd för alla* in 2004. The Head of the Recreational Board underlined this.

After *Välfärd för alla* the municipality decided to give priority to projects run by voluntary associations that were in line with the aims of *Välfärd för alla*, i.e. employment, education, housing, safety and dialogue. (my notes interview Sterner)

Similarly, the Chair for Rosengård’s Neighbourhood Office said that the decision about which associations to fund is informed by the key-principles of *Välfärd för alla* (my notes interview Costantinides). This does not mean that other migrant associations are not financially supported, but rather that the emphasis on maintaining ties with one’s culture is considered less important than before. Some of the city’s neighbourhood administrations have continued to emphasise the cultural aspect of this narrative, however. The neighbourhood of Hyllie has

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<sup>7</sup> MIP: *Malmö Ideella föreningar Paraplyorganisation*; MISO: *Malmö Idrottsföreningars samorganisation*. See chapter 6 for a discussion of their organisation.

financially supported “ethnic” cultural activities. For instance, it has supported a bi-lingual newspaper *Paiwaston* which publishes articles on Afghan history and culture but also on Swedish society. This is in line with how Hyllie has traditionally understood integration: “it is important that one’s traditions can thrive at the same time as one communicates and meet other people” (Andersson et al. 2003, 48). Hyllie’s approach is different from the one adopted by the Södra Innerstaden Neighbourhood Office. The latter usually supports cultural projects that gather people around a shared interest, e.g. books or dance. This variation is possibly due to the fact that Hyllie has fewer cultural recreational areas than Södra Innerstaden, which has a long tradition of organising a range of activities in public venues such as Sofielunds Folkets Hus and Folkets Park. Because of the lack of public infrastructures, Hyllie’s Neighbourhood Office has tended to rely on migrant associations for organising cultural and social activities in the area.

### ***Council’s responsibility narrative***

Malmö City Council has emphasised its responsibility in dealing with diversity since the mid-1990s. The narrative and institutional means to do so have a clear economic character, emphasising the responsibility of the Council as an organisation to act as a role model. It has also a social dimension because it refers to a policy area that the state has a public responsibility to address. The following quotes illustrate this.

The City Council has an important responsibility and it can be a role model for the rest of society. [...] The Council’s staff needs to reflect the city’s diversity in order to provide its citizens with a high level of service. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 20; 23)

The Council must influence the [private] market and employers in order to find out what kind of resources migrants have and understand the opportunities provided by having diverse members of staff. The Council, as an employer, must be a role model in this regard. Therefore it shall favour the employment of people with other backgrounds than Swedish among its staff. (Malmö Stad 2004b, 6)

The “Council’s responsibility” narrative has partly been adopted to come to terms with difficulties in communicating and providing good services to all residents. The migration waves that affected Malmö in the 1990s challenged the way the municipality and public services were structured and organised.

In the 1990s Malmö City Council had some 30000 employees. It was crucial to do something to make sure they became aware of how to provide good service to the citizens of Malmö, even the new ones. (interview M1)

Asylum-seekers and their families had different needs than labour migrants who came to Malmö in the 1960s and 1970s. The recruitment of people with migrant background was one strategy which would enable the municipality to come to terms with some of the linguistic and cultural differences of the new welfare beneficiaries. The personnel policy paper “P2006” adopted in 1997 stressed that

Diversity is of important value to the development of Malmö [City Council] as an employer. It is important that our organisation has knowledge of other cultures, understands and respects differences, languages, and experiences of other societies than ours. The Council wants to take advantage of migrants’ knowledge and experience. We want the city’s demography to be reflected in the organisation of the municipality. In this way we will promote good service. (Malmö Stad 1997a, 6).

The personnel strategy stressed the Council’s commitment that the staff recruited by the Council should reflect Malmö’s demographic composition. There is evidence that this strategy has been successful in leading to increased employment of migrants. According to a 2008 personnel monitoring report, 25,4 percent of the Council’s total workforce was drawn from migrant communities (Malmö Stad 2008, 16). This does not fully reflect the number of people born abroad who are residents in the city (29 percent), but it is undoubtedly a significant percentage. However, the examination of Malmö’s employees shows that only 10,5 percent of the Council’s leaders has migrant background. The largest concentration of migrant employees is in the lower employment bands (e.g. cleaning staff 57,7 percent; catering staff ca. 50 percent). Furthermore, the majority of migrants were employed by the neighbourhood administrations, and only 12,2 percent were working in the central administrative office (*Stadskontoret*) (Malmö Stad 2008, 16).

My interviewees also said that the policy solutions adopted to improve the communication between the municipality and its citizens were important to change the mindset of its staff, in particular of senior managers.

I think that if you go back 20 years, you could certainly find a good number of senior managers whose opinions could have been described as racist. Therefore we decided to do something about that, because regardless of what you think of bosses, they set the tone for the whole department. (Interview M1)

Another senior policy officer who was directly involved in shaping these policies said:

When I was meeting the Council's staff to describe the positive development that had affected the city [since the crisis of the 1990s] people would come to me and say "I don't get it". On the one hand we were making all these investments with the bridge [between Malmö and Copenhagen], infrastructures, and roundabouts as someone told me. On the other hand the people in the health sector, schools etc. were struggling to keep afloat. That's why we needed these policies to make people understand that we are in this together [...] to create a dialogue [among senior managers] about what we can do to [...] increase and take advantage of Malmö's diversity. It was really bad. Some people said that language issues would lead to terrible mistakes...I heard some absurd things... Some people at the technical office said that if we employ migrants we might risk sabotage...so that was the level and fortunately it's not like that anymore, but it was absolutely important to change the mindset of these people. (interview Lövden)

The Council is addressing two issues through the Council's responsibility narrative. On the one hand it wants to encourage other employers to hire non-Swedish staff. On the other hand it has to change a sceptical mindset among its staff. This was particularly poignant during the late 1990s, as the quotes above show. In this way, the Council put itself as a proactive actor in promoting migrants' integration in the city.

In order to increase diversity within the organisation, the Council promoted a series of awareness-raising projects targeting senior managers. For instance the project "Diversity as human resource" developed a model (so-called KARP<sup>8</sup>) which would help senior policy officers avoid discriminatory behaviour in the hiring process. Another important project in this context was *Engagemang för Malmö*<sup>9</sup> which again targeted senior policy officers and sought to establish and promote a set of specific norms, such as equality, democracy, and tolerance, in the public sector.

The policy narrative of the Council's responsibility created an opportunity for migrants to enter the labour market as it was constructed in terms of increased service and competence among the staff. However, because this narrative is not explicitly addressing migrants' socioeconomic discrimination, it

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<sup>8</sup> *Kvalitetssäkring av rekryteringsprocessen*, eng. Quality assessment in the hiring process.

<sup>9</sup> *Engagemang för Malmö* (Eng. Engagement for Malmö) was an awareness-raising project running in two phases (2000-2002 and 2006) targeting all the executives working in the City Council. It involved around 1000 people.

might fail to challenge discriminatory patterns which tend to position migrants, particularly women, in the lower rungs of society (Broomé 2004). The narrative of responsibility adopted in Malmö tends to be narrated as an organisational issue referring to the lack of cultural and linguistic competence and to service. It also sees the recruitment of migrants in utilitarian terms, i.e. they cover a lacuna in the organisation, and it does not necessarily come to terms with the institutional structure that hampers the possibilities for migrants' to exit socioeconomic exclusion. The Council demonstrates willingness and the capacity to provide for what it perceives to be the issue, i.e. ensuring that all citizens are offered equal service and tackling unemployment among migrants. While this is of crucial importance, it is not sufficient. The Council should have accompanied these actions with more proactive efforts to break the glass ceiling that keeps migrants in low-paid, low-status jobs.

### ***Meeting spaces narrative***

Malmö is a segregated city. Since the first migration waves, migrants have tended to cluster in certain areas of the city attracted by the presence of other migrants from the same community. Some of these areas are among the most deprived in the city. Segregation has been seen as an important cause behind the lack of integration since the 1990s: "there is an ethnic and socioeconomic segregation between neighbourhoods. This hampers integration" (Malmö Stad 1999a, 19). It is however only some groups' segregation that is narrated as an issue. Few discussions concern the Swedes' escape to certain areas of the city, while migrants' segregation is conceived of as problematic, leading to their failed integration. As discussed so far, employment and participation in voluntary associations have been promoted by the Council as means to fight segregation and lack of communication between the city's citizens. Malmö has also emphasised the importance of a different urban planning as a way to improve integration. I call the narrative correlated to this "meeting spaces" narrative.

The earliest attempt to create new meeting places dates back to the mid-1990s, when the municipality was trying to change the identity of the city from an industrial to a "knowledge city". In this period, the Council decided to invest *inter alia* in the establishment of a new university and in developing a new

neighbourhood, Västra Hamnen<sup>10</sup>. The development of new high-standard areas was meant to trigger residential mobility, but this goal has partly failed. The Head of the City Planning Office confirmed this.

We have had a good residential mobility [...] but we can't manage to reach the most deprived groups. It is really, really difficult. That's why we are now planning to work more with Holma Kroksbäck, Rosengård<sup>11</sup>.... (interview Larsson)

To develop urban areas such as Västra Hamnen is important because they can provide a space where people can meet, as the extract below illustrates.

The aim [of building Västra Hamnen] was to attract taxpayers, but we also wanted it to become a place where those who can't afford to live there can still enjoy being there. (interview Larsson)

In these spaces people, who would not meet otherwise, can see and possibly get to know each other.

Answer: one can see meeting places as somewhere a person becomes integrated, but one can also see them as creation of passages whose points of intersection are meeting places [...] it's important to think where we place venues. The skateboard ramp in Västra Hamnen is a meeting place, as is the swimming facilities there, you need to make people circulate and meet [*skapa människoflöde*].

Question: it doesn't mean that people meet only because they happen to be in the same place? People can just walk past each other.

A: you're right, but you are nevertheless involved in a meeting, you can meet the other. (interview Larsson)

The narrative of meeting spaces strongly emphasises the importance of meeting the other. The Council's City Planning Office has been working actively in developing a vision of a city where "people can meet the other, the one who is different from us, in the city's public spaces" (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor 2006, 4). In particular, the Council has invested in developing Norra Sorgenfri, part of the centre of Malmö. The City Planning Office's view on the development is that:

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<sup>10</sup> *Västra Hamnen* is located in the former industrial harbour, in the same area as Malmö University is now situated. High-standard housing has been built there as part of the city's regeneration process from an industrial city to a city of knowledge (see Dannestam 2007; 2009).

<sup>11</sup> These are particularly deprived neighbourhood in the city.



The inner city should function as a meeting place for all Malmö's residents. There should be activities, squares and streets that attract everyone. As different groups of people see each other and meet in the inner city, positive integration is encouraged and the establishment of a common identity as Malmö resident is formed. (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor 2007, 9)

The idea is not to force interaction, but rather to become aware of the existence of the other.

In order to meet in a rewarding way one does not have to talk to another, one does not even have to like what one sees - to see each other in the public realm is *per se* of great value. (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor 2006, 30)

The re-development of Norra Sorgenfri is a move in this direction. Different groups of people will be sharing the same public space and this will foster integration: "closeness to 'the other' promotes understanding and integration" (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor 2007, 12). The re-location in 2006 of Swedish language courses from peripheral areas to parts of the inner city was driven by this rationale. Migrants have now the opportunity to use the inner city to a larger extent than before and to exit the deprived areas where they may live.

The "meeting spaces" narrative and its correlated policies are not the only measures that the municipality of Malmö has adopted to address the lack of integration of migrants. The key assumption on which it relies, i.e. that sheer encounters are good enough to increase integration, leaves an important question unanswered however. It seems that sheer contact and intermingling is supposed to increase tolerance for the other. How can people come to terms with their differences and mute racisms if seeing each other is enough? This does not mean that such attempts are futile, but some aspects could be re-framed. In particular, an ambiguous message is embedded in the narrative of meeting spaces. On the one hand the Council conceives of urban segregation as a problem and as a symptom of discrimination, poverty and social malfunction. On the other, it wants to develop public spaces which would increase the visibility of "the other", ease casual encounters and consequently improve relations between groups *qua* groups. This needs to be addressed with greater care.

## 7.2 Birmingham

A former Labour Councillor pointed out that Birmingham City Council has never had a detailed plan assessing its goals with immigrant policies.

Actually, in Birmingham there isn't any grand plan assessing where [the Conservatives] want to go [with immigrant policies]... but there wasn't one in the previous [Labour] administration either. (interview B1)

The former Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Theresa Steward, reiterated this point and added that the policies addressing ethnic minorities in Birmingham have always focused on ensuring equal opportunity and racial equality.

From 1984 and on [Birmingham] didn't have policies of integration, but rather policies of establishing fairness. (my notes, interview Steward)

Birmingham has based its immigrant policies on race relations policies underpinned by narratives emphasising the differences between ethnic groups and Britons, thus promoting the recognition of such diversity. This approach has been widely criticised. The 2001 report by the Birmingham Stephen Lawrence Commission (BSLC) concluded that as far as race equality was concerned, "things are not working" (BSLC 2001, 12). The Commission was set up in 1999 to consider the implications in Birmingham of the McPherson report on the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The BSLC's report stated that

[D]espite a raft of race equality policies, initiative and structures in place in many key institutions, racial inequality and discrimination are still persistent features in the lives of large sections of the minority ethnic population in Birmingham. Race equality policies were said to be failing because of institutionalised racism, a lack of effective leadership and the absence of a commitment to actively promote race equality or manage policy implementation. (BSLC 2001, 5)

In the aftermath of the urban unrests in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001 a follow-up report by the Commission, echoing the conclusions reached by the Cantle report (Independent Review Team 2001), argued that a community cohesion strategy was vital to avoid similar outcomes in Birmingham.

Last year's unrest [...] was a stark reminder of what can happen when communities do not feel valued or do not believe that they have a stake in shaping the future. Fragmented communities divide a city and dedicated effort is needed to ensure that local communities are robust. Community Cohesion is about helping micro-communities to gel or mesh into an integrated whole. (BSLC 2002, 5)

Prompted by these reports and pressed by the 2000 Race Relation Amendment Act which required public bodies to mainstream race equality issues and to promote good relations between people of different racial groups, Birmingham City Council began to change its approach to community relations. From the late

1990s and onwards, the Council understood racial inequality and discrimination to hamper the development of a cohesive society. This was clearly stated in the 2002 *Valuing diversity* document.

Equality is a key value underpinning the policy. By focusing on equality of opportunity, equality of access and equality in outcomes, the council is determined to challenge discrimination and disadvantage in services provided to local people. (Birmingham City Council 2002b, 3)

The solutions to overcome inequality, discrimination and inter-group tensions were expressed in three policy narratives. The first one is concerned with community cohesion. I label this “community cohesion” narrative. The second significant policy narrative underscores the importance of involving minority ethnic communities and the Black voluntary sector in the implementation of local policies. I call this policy narrative “community engagement” narrative. Finally, the third narrative I present here addresses the issue of anti-discrimination and equality. This narrative is labelled “anti-discrimination” narrative. I discuss each narrative in the following sections.

### ***Community cohesion narrative***

The Standing Consultative Forum was replaced by the Race Equality Partnership, designed by reference to issues rather than to communities, and driven by efficient policy implementation rather than by participation (Crowley 2001, 112). The indisputably diverse reality of Birmingham has also pushed towards the formal abandonment of minority policies. The introduction of the Race Equality Partnership and the Equality Division in 1997 imposed a new narrative which minimised the issue of ethnic diversity in favour of a more homogeneous conception of discrimination. Since then the Council has been trying to promote trans-community issues such as better health, employment and housing policies for everyone, regardless of ethnic background (Garbaye 2000, 306). This shift is expressed clearly by the Council in its 2002 Race Equality Scheme:

The council recently adopted a “post multiculturalism policy framework” which will be the key in redirecting its equalities activities in the area of service delivery, employment and community relations. [...] Key community cohesion values and principles drawn from the flourishing neighbourhoods and integrated communities agenda will also underpin the [Race Equality Scheme]. These will include: integration (cultural, economic and social), quality of life, connecting

communities, cultural diversity, integration and citizenship. (Birmingham City Council 2002a, 8)

The exact meaning of a “post multicultural policy framework” is not explicit in any of the documents I have retrieved. It is important to observe that the Race Equality Scheme emphasises the importance of community cohesion. It furthermore identifies the encouragement of “good relations between different ethnic communities” (Birmingham City council 2002a, 3) to be one of the main priorities for the Council together with the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Corporate Race Equality Strategy for the years 2003-2006 also underlines the importance of community cohesion for tackling social divisions and improving integration.

Growing concerns nationally about social divisions and the recognition of the need for greater integration at social, economic and educational level has resulted in a focus on community cohesion [...]. Community cohesion is a filter over a wide range of complex issues, including employment, education, housing, health, access to service and cultural understanding between different groups. (Birmingham City Council 2004, 182; 183)

It was not until 2006 that the Council agreed on a Community Cohesion Strategy for the city, however. The Conservative local administration, which came into power in 2004, issued the Strategy. The Council describes community cohesion as revolving around five dimensions “living together positively; having a stake in society; building links and relationships; being proud of the city” (Birmingham City Council 2006, 5). Three key-policy areas are to be addressed in order to achieve community cohesion. These are (1) removing structural disadvantages by targeting unemployment; housing; environmental services; social care; education; and health provision; (2) enhancing community engagement through e.g. involving parents in school activities, improving the support for looked after children, and encouraging inter-group dialogue; and (3) encouraging active citizenship by increasing levels of democratic involvement (Birmingham City Council 2006, 11-12).

The community cohesion narrative adopted by the Council encompasses an understanding of integration in the majority society along social; economic; civic/political; and cultural lines. It underlines the social aspect of integration when it refers to “removing social structural disadvantage” (Birmingham City Council 2006, 11) and “improving service delivery and customer care” (Birmingham City Council 2004, 175-176). It addresses the economic aspects of integration as it conceives of employment as a way to contribute to the city:

Some people in Birmingham can face barriers that prevent them from [...] making a full contribution - low educational attainment, unemployment. (Birmingham City Council 2005, 16)

The Council, through the community cohesion narrative also stresses the importance of political/civic participation as it encourages active citizenship through “increasing levels of democratic involvement, volunteering and respect” (Birmingham City Council 2006, 12). Finally, it underscores the importance of cultural integration by stressing the importance of shared values and a shared identity. This is illustrated by the following quote from an article in the *Birmingham Post* by Councillor Rudge, responsible for Equalities.

Community cohesion is not just a vague concept. It is about everyone having a stake in society and being able to join in and influence the decisions that affect their lives. [...] Community cohesion is about ensuring that all people from different backgrounds and communities feel they belong to the place in which they live. (*Birmingham Post*, April 13, 2009)

The “community cohesion” narrative departs from the previous approaches to race relations adopted in Birmingham which stressed the importance of maintaining and celebrating particular identities. The community cohesion narrative instead builds upon an understanding that cohesion is pivotal for the development of the city. It is by virtue of being member of a community that common values and goals emerge.

Without the work of the City Council and other agencies, the City may be more fragmented. We must continue to push for ever greater cohesion. (Birmingham City Council 2006, 3)

Even if community cohesion has been defined as something which “applies across people of differing heritage, gender, location, age, and disability” (Birmingham City Council 2005, 6), until 2007 Birmingham adopted “ethnicised” practices in dealing with community cohesion. This was clearly expressed by the research director of the Birmingham-based think-tank b:RAP.

Community cohesion seems to be for the others, it is them [Black and minority ethnic communities] who have to be cohesive and this reinforces this “them” and “us” division. Community cohesion is about making them wanting to be part of us it is not us wanting to be part of them. (interview Allen)

The “Journey to the Soul” project is illustrative in this context. The project was set up in Birmingham in 2003 and sought to lead a group of young Muslim men

away from crime and increase their stake in their communities, while addressing the racist attitudes held by some of them. The project was partly funded by the Council and partly by the young people themselves, though most of the work was done by two local Muslim voluntary organisations, City Circle and Cure. The project turned out to be successful in that the fifteen boys involved managed to exit criminal networks. While the engagement of faith communities is not necessarily problematic, the assumption that a rehabilitation programme drawing on the boys' cultural and religious backgrounds would be more successful than other programmes is puzzling. The following quote from a policy officer involved in the project sheds some light on the rationale behind the approach adopted.

You can't treat a Muslim as if he is not a Muslim, if you ignore his religious identity, you miss the wholeness. (quoted in CLG 2007, 109)

The project was held up as a good practice in the 2007 Communities and Local Government report '*What works*' in *community cohesion*. This signals the deep-seated British approach that tends to fall back on faith or ethnicity/race as a means to further community cohesion – an approach echoed and promoted by several multicultural scholars (see chapter 2). This disregards, as the quote above shows, the multiple dimensions of identity which is an essential feature of the self, as discussed in chapter 3. Birmingham's narrative on community cohesion, as *de facto* mainly targeting BME communities, runs the risk of reinforcing the distinctions between groups. This narrative also suggests references to an imagined cohesive community that has been eroded and needs to be restored. It builds upon a flawed conception of a homogeneous past which more or less explicitly depicts diversity as a threat that has to be handled with care if it is to be transformed into a new opportunity in relation to economic development.

There is an additional problem embedded in the community cohesion approach which is worth underlining. The breadth of the narrative of community cohesion is reflected in policymaking and is perceived by several of my interviewees as problematic.

So the city has recently produced a community cohesion strategy...[there are] not a lot of detail as to the actions we are going to take. So the challenge would be to turn that into something which is real. (interview Randall)

If you see that community cohesion strategy...it is a two-page document that really goes nowhere. It is only stating very obvious interventions without being creative and innovative about things. (interview Ginnely)

The problem I find [in the Community Cohesion Strategy board] is that you have a lot of processes, strategies, policies but I've never seen how this relates to the actual real person. There is a lot of talk at the City Council level, but how does it actually work at the grass roots level? (interview Allen)

The Councillor responsible for Equalities maintained that it is wrong to see the Community Cohesion Strategy as being too vague. At the same time he pointed out that he did not want to specify the actions to be undertaken too strictly because that would undermine the freedom of the grass roots, e.g. the voluntary sector, to shape their community cohesion activities (notes interview Rudge)<sup>12</sup>. This brings us to the second relevant narrative which defines the issue of integration in Birmingham, the community engagement narrative.

### ***Community engagement narrative***

The loose definition of community cohesion has enabled, according to some interviewees, enough space for the people who are working with community cohesion (e.g. third sector, public offices) to find their own path and to avoid top-down management.

[T]he Conservative's philosophy has historically been one of less involvement from the centre: give money to the voluntary organisations but let them do their own thing. And I think that is the right way about because what it does is that as long as you've got the cheques right, by getting money into the area, it gives the people involved into these groups more confidence and it enables those people to develop. If you say to the people that we want you to do some of the work and we are going to back it with some money it means that people are developing their own capacities as they get involved. (interview B1)

This quote raises the point that Birmingham City Council has been trying to engage the communities and the voluntary sector in order to improve the integration of different groups in the city. This has especially been the case after the Conservatives came to power. The flip-side of engaging the communities is that the Council has been able to delegate the actual work of supporting socially disadvantaged communities as well as newly arrived migrants to the third sector.

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to underline that community cohesion has become a core activity of the Birmingham local strategic partnership Be Birmingham since the mid-2008.

Here the people who are actually doing things, apart from some policy officers like [name], is really the voluntary sector, voluntary community organisations some of which the council supports. (interview B1)

This has not been paralleled by a strong engagement of the voluntary sector in the decision-making process, however. A representative of the Indian Worker Association told the Birmingham Stephen Lawrence Commission that

Black communities don't feel ward sub committees are accessible. Basically, if you are not in the frame of the local politicians, you are not likely to get a fair hearing. (BSLC 2001, 49)

The Commission strongly recommended to provide appropriate support for the voluntary sector and to involve them more directly in the decision-making process. Six years' later, however, the Council was criticised by the Audit Commission<sup>13</sup> for not having engaged Birmingham's minority communities in designing the Community Cohesion Strategy.

[T]he Council corporately does not engage effectively with its BME communities in developing a diverse and inclusive city. Managerial and political leadership in taking forward community cohesion is poor. The Community Cohesion Strategy has only been recently produced despite having been identified as a priority for a significant period, and it was developed without adequate involvement with partners or engagement with Birmingham's diverse communities. (Audit Commission 2007, 13)

The delegation of responsibility to the third sector, while emphasising the importance of community, relies on a normative framework which sees state regulation as constraining the citizens' freedom of action in developing the type of community cohesion work which best suits their needs.

Community cohesion cannot be anything else but flexible. To regulate the work on community cohesion is almost an authoritarian measure that doesn't lead far. You need to support locally, that's where community cohesion can thrive. (my notes interview Rudge)

The community engagement narrative emphasises the social aspects of ethnic minorities' and migrants' incorporation into the majority society. It refers to the

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<sup>13</sup> The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high quality local services for the public.



role of the third sector “to build a more inclusive society” (BSLC 2001, 53), through projects that can bring people together. For instance the Birmingham-based organisation “Sound it out community music” launched a music project called “Infusion” where they worked with a number of musicians with refugee and migrant background and formed a band that fuses different music. In a second stage the band went to the schools in some of the whitest areas of Birmingham and worked with young people teaching them how to develop music (interview B2). This narrative also presents integration as a social issue because it stresses the importance of externalising public services to the voluntary sector:

Birmingham City Council recognises that a sound relationship with the voluntary and community sector is fundamental to developing social capital, community cohesion and delivering quality services. (Birmingham City Council 2003, 43)

The lack of clear guidelines for community cohesion and the limited funding allocated by the Council takes away the burden of responsibility from the local government to foster a cohesive society and to provide the means to do so. This is made evident by the emphasis the Council puts on individual responsibility for creating a cohesive society. The 2002 document *Valuing diversity* states:

In promoting an inclusive environment, it is necessary to encourage a sense of civic responsibility, a common purpose and a shared identity [...] Everyone has a right and is entitled to quality services. The council will ensure those rights and entitlements are enforced. However, it will also seek to ensure that citizens are aware of the personal responsibilities to other people and to service providers which come with those rights. (Birmingham City Council 2002b, 1; 6)

This quote describes responsibility as ascribed and formal, whose content is defined beforehand. This perspective also assumes that formal equality (“everyone has a right [...] to quality services”) entails the existence of substantial equality. It overlooks the structural positioning that constructs some individuals as more powerful than others, thus impeding the less powerful from accessing their rights and performing their responsibilities to the community.

### ***Anti-discrimination narrative***

The British approach to diversity has traditionally been characterised by a strong attention to equality and anti-discrimination, evidenced by the introduction of the first Race Relation Acts in 1965. The Race Relation Unit, which had supported the development of the Standing Consultative Forum, was replaced in 1997 by

the Equality Division which dealt with women's rights, disability issues and discrimination against ethnic groups. The responsibility for the Equality Division was transferred to the Personnel committee and the Council Cabinet member responsible for Equalities and Human Resources, took a lead on equalities (Abbas and Anwar 2005, 63) signalling an understanding of the issue of race relations as an organisational matter rather than something that would involve the whole community. I argue that in Birmingham inequality and discrimination have been narrated as socioeconomic issues. This has entailed a focus away from the perpetrators of prejudice and discrimination. Attention has instead been given to the potential subjects of discrimination.

During the 1990s, the Council set the target that 20 percent of its workforce should be of ethnic minority background (Garbaye 2005, 106), launching programmes such as "Bridges into the Future" which aimed at addressing issues of under-representation. In other policy areas such as employment, the Employment Service initiated in 1998 the "Ethnic minority jobseekers and business strategy" and other employment agencies promoting links with Asian and African Caribbean business networks (BSLC 2001, 25). Nonetheless, the BSLC's review (2001, 30) concluded that, in general, the impact of the initiatives taken by the Council was not as successful as one may have hoped for. It argued that institutional racism was one of the causes behind the underrepresentation of BME communities in the public sector (2001, 6). In response to the BSLC's report, the Council decided not to change its approach to equality and diversity, but rather to expand the existing policies of ethnic minority recruitment. It increased the number of employees with minority ethnic background in the Council, and encouraged the private sector to follow their lead. The reason for this was to

[E]nsure that [public sector authorities] are not discriminating in the services they provide and that they provide services effectively and equitably to all sections of the community. (Birmingham City Council 2002a, 4)

In Birmingham, as in Malmö, economic rationalism seemed also to inform recruitment policy.

There is also a clear business case [...] A diverse workforce should be better able to understand the needs of customers from different backgrounds. (Birmingham City Council 2007, 7).

The quote shows that the narrative of anti-discrimination stresses the importance of having diverse members of staff in order to provide better service to the

citizens of Birmingham. However, a focus on organisational practices means that politicians and policy officers pay less attention to the discriminatory patterns and beliefs that are constructed and maintained in the private sphere. This has at least two consequences. First, issues such as labour distribution in the private sphere or access to education and other welfare services remain invisible in this formulation of anti-discrimination and equality (Bacchi 1999, 96). Second, this approach mainly impacts on the living arrangements of workers' lives. As a result, the policies benefit mainly those who have entered the labour market<sup>14</sup>.

Notwithstanding the importance of broadening the recruitment base of an organisation, if not accompanied by broader measures tackling discriminatory patterns and behaviour among the population, the recruitment of BME community members becomes tokenistic. The analysis of the means developed to achieve equality shows that Birmingham Council has largely been trying to target some of the effects of socio-economic deprivation, such as unemployment, poverty, and poor housing, rather than focusing on attempting to change the psychological orientation of individuals towards out-groups<sup>15</sup>. For instance the 2003-2006 Race Equality Scheme lists the following areas for achieving race equality: education and opportunity; social care and health; housing; community safety; regeneration and employment; employment and training (Birmingham City Council 2003, 186-191). Black and minority ethnic communities are presented as having faced particular problems in most of these areas. For instance the Council commits itself to;

Address the underachievement of Black and Minority Ethnic pupils in particular those from African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. (Birmingham City Council 2003, 188)

I do not seek to diminish the importance of targeting social and economic disadvantages as a way to improve the lives of individuals. However, to use these tools to counter discrimination and racism is problematic for at least two reasons. First, it underestimates the effect of social patterns such as class and gender which prevent people from meeting certain (*a priori* defined) criteria of success and integration in the society. This tends to position the discriminated as the one who has to do the work to end prejudiced behaviour and thus takes the

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<sup>14</sup> The lack of attention on this matter was highlighted by my interviewees (e.g. interviews Barnes; Randall).

<sup>15</sup> The voluntary sector has been more proactive in this respect.

responsibility away from the hands of the discriminator. Second, this way of targeting discrimination still relies on an “ethnicised” understanding of discrimination which conceals the extent to which structural inequality affects segments of both white and BME communities (b:RAP 2004, 9)<sup>16</sup>. It is crucial to address forms of discrimination which target certain people because of their social position. However, to focus solely on ethnicity cannot be the only, or sometimes not even the best, way to deal with the issue as it runs the risk of disregarding other forms of discrimination.

### 7.3 Bologna

Bologna adopted its first migrant policies already in the late 1980s, and in 1986 it built its first shelter for migrants. As the number of migrants increased, the municipality launched the first “Project immigration” in 1990, which put the issue of immigration at the centre of the political discussion and action. Until the mid-1990s, migration was conceived as a temporary phenomenon, however. The City Council initially defined the issue of immigrant policies as a problem of housing, i.e. providing shelters to migrants coming for a short period of time to work in the territory (Bernadotti and Mottura 1999, 31). In 1995, the Council established the *Istituzione dei Servizi per l’Immigrazione*<sup>17</sup> (ISI). The main task of the ISI was to improve migrants’ housing conditions, as the following quote succinctly puts it.

Absolute priority is given to the issue of housing. (Comune di Bologna, 1995a, 3)

To improve housing facilities for migrants was seen as crucial by the Council for improving integration. This was expressed in a narrative of housing. Since 1995, the Council has also emphasised that a major obstacle to migrants’ integration is lack of political participation.

The key to create a city in which people with different backgrounds live together peacefully [...] is to engage migrant communities in the decision-making processes of the Council. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 20)

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<sup>16</sup> It is worthy noticing that after 2007, Birmingham City Council has increasingly moved away from such an approach. As a policy officer at the council said “With the ongoing growth of BME communities in Birmingham, we made a strategic decision not to have a specific Strategy for such citizens” (personal correspondence with the author).

<sup>17</sup> Eng: Office for immigration services.

This was expressed by the Council in a narrative of political participation. A third narrative, stressing the importance of cultural integration has also been adopted by the Council.

The ISI should focus on a number of strategic areas. It should value and acknowledge migrants' human and cultural resources. (Comune di Bologna 1995c, 8)

I label this narrative of cultural diversity. Finally, the municipality of Bologna has always maintained that migrants' integration is hampered by illegal migration and migrants' criminality. This narrative, which I call narrative of security, has influenced the other three narratives that construct the issue of migrants' integration in Bologna. A comparison across time shows that the four narratives identified were used by all the administrations in power between 1997 and 2007. However, each administration used them in ways that reflected their political ideology and the political environment in which they were operating. In the following sections I analyse each narrative separately, beginning with the narrative of security.

### ***Narrative of security***

In Italy the issue of criminality has often been tied to migration (see e.g. Dal Lago 2004; Buonfino 2004). This has also been the case in Bologna. A left-wing coalition led by Walter Vitali came into power for the second time in 1995. The declaration of intent of the Vitali administration states that in order to make Bologna a safer city, one of the priorities was to

Break the perverse links between clandestine migration and criminality. This can be achieved by giving a permit of stay to those who can demonstrate that they are employed and by regulating seasonal employment. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 17)

I was not able to find evidence of clear policy solutions aimed at targeting this. The right-wing coalition<sup>18</sup> led by Giorgio Guazzaloca which won the elections in 1999, instead, made "security" the keyword of its electoral campaign. A survey from 2000 showed that Italians' main concerns regarding migration were criminality and competition in welfare provisions and analogous surveys

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<sup>18</sup> It was the first time since the end of the Second World War that a right-wing coalition came into power in Bologna.

conducted in Emilia Romagna showed similar results (Colombo 2007, 24)<sup>19</sup>. Guazzaloca managed to exploit these opinions to broaden his support among the electorate. His party's electoral programme stated that:

The massive and indiscriminate migration to Bologna, which has incremented criminal behaviour significantly, must be countered by the local administration. (La tua Bologna 1999, 5)

According to Councillor Monaco, their administration was the first one to relate the issue of security to migration.

The situation [in Bologna] became worse with the migration waves from Albania and the Slavic countries, the prostitution from the East [of Europe], and the [migration from] the Maghreb area, which is an area of drug dealing.

Question: This brings us to the issue of security...

Answer: Yes. We won the elections in 1999 because we stressed the issue of security while Vitali and Bartolini<sup>20</sup> were denying this. [...] the problem [of security] was there and it was vividly felt by the citizens as something caused by the *extracomunitari* [...] I remember that back in 1999 [politicians] were surprised that people got robbed in the streets. Until 1999 this had not been translated into an issue related to the *extracomunitari*, it was rather seen as an issue of poor urban security. (interview Monaco)

The narrative that represented migrants as a security issue was reiterated in the Guazzaloca administration's declaration of intent.

Bologna is traditionally a hospitable city [...] but hospitality cannot be confused with blind acceptance of criminality. [...] It is a fact that in the migrant community [*sic!*] living in our city there is a high crime rate. This is mainly due to the state of deprivation in which many *extracomunitari* live. [Criminality] has to be opposed and beaten in an efficient way. (Comune di Bologna 1999, 8)

One of the measures to increase security was the establishment of a Security Office, initially led by former senior police officer Giovanni Preziosa. Furthermore, the administration increased the number of CCTV cameras, increased the number of municipal police officers from 500 to 650, and established the so-called "civic assistants" (*assistenti civici*), voluntary citizens

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<sup>19</sup> Italians were, however, more favourable to migrants in the early 2000s compared to the early 1990s (Colombo 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Silvia Bartolini was running to become mayor of Bologna for the left-wing coalition during the 1999 local election.

of Bologna who were patrolling urban areas considered at high risk of unrest, e.g. schools or public parks. It is clear that the narrative of security under Guazzaloca mainly targeted criminal behaviour rather than investing in improving the life of migrants living in Bologna. The way in which the Guazzaloca administration used the security narrative echoed the ways in which migrants had been depicted by other national parties and by the media. Most notably, the *Lega Nord* was attracting significant public attention in the late 1990s and was campaigning forcefully against migration. In this respect, the Guazzaloca administration used the security narrative as a means to address the lack of social integration of migrants. That is, migrants' integration was hindered by their criminal behaviour which, in turn, was caused by the deprived social conditions in which they lived. As will become evident when discussing the narrative on cultural diversity, Guazzaloca also used the narrative of security in defining the cultural integration of migrants. In proposing an assimilatory approach to cultural integration, Guazzaloca presented migrants' cultural differences as a security issue which could challenge Bologna's identity and traditions.

The change of administration in 2004 to a left-wing coalition did not entail the abandonment of the narrative of security. Some of its aspects changed, however. Cofferati, who became Mayor in 2004, was responsive to the rhetoric adopted by some political parties that depicted migrants as a security threat. He reframed, however, the issue of security as a matter of legality, and not of criminality as Guazzaloca did. The Cofferati administration's declaration of intent for the mandate 2004-2009 devotes one chapter to "people's security and tranquillity" (Comune di Bologna 2004, 103-108). It states the following.

It is not about limiting our actions to short-term resolutions of micro conflicts, but to create shared projects [geared towards prevention] [...] A politics of inclusive prevention must favour social integration of the weakest actors who are more exposed to the risk of criminal behaviour. The actors responsible for preventing [criminality] should not be only the police forces and the State's repressive [*sic!*] organs, but also social institutions. (Comune di Bologna 2004, 104-105)

The policy solutions proposed in the document involve not only the repression of criminality, as emphasised by the Guazzaloca administration. They also referred to increased civil society participation and the prevention of criminal behaviour by socioeconomically deprived people who, as a consequence, are likely to be more exposed to criminality. Migrants are not targeted explicitly in the document, which constitutes another significant difference in comparison with

the previous administration. This is not to say that the municipality under Cofferati did not construct a narrative nexus between security and migration. Cofferati argued that legality was the left's means to protect the weaker groups in society and that the left had forgotten this.

The left has an issue. It seems to be of the idea that solidarity and social justice have higher moral standards than legality. (*Corriere della Sera* June 22, 2005)

The narrative of security, which now emphasised legality rather than migrants' criminal behaviour, was used to frame the issue of integration. In an interview with one of the leading national newspaper, Cofferati said that immigration "is strictly linked to the idea of legality" (*Corriere della Sera* June 22, 2005) and that

Migrants' integration policies are important, but for them to be effective, we need to foster a culture of legality. This concerns those who were born in Bologna as well as those who are coming here. (*Corriere della Sera* June 22, 2005)

This was reiterated in a document from 2005 on legality issued by the mayor's office.

The politics of integration cannot be implemented randomly. They have to be guaranteed to those who have the right to benefit from them, i.e. minors, the weakest ones and those who accept to live here legally. (Comune di Bologna 2005, 1)

Cofferati stated on several occasions that solidarity could not be more important than legality. In reference to his orders to evacuate unauthorized shanty towns along the river Reno in Bologna, the Mayor said that

When facing an unauthorized settlement, I need to face the problem of solidarity towards the children and the women who live there. After I have done that, the settlement needs to be demolished. It is unacceptable to think that because there are people who suffer, I need to stop. This is a mistaken exercise of solidarity. Actually, it is not solidarity at all. (*Corriere della Sera* June 22, 2005)

The use of this narrative has been challenged by other local councillors from the left, most notably by the representatives of the Communist Party. However, the immigrant policies implemented during this mandate were, to a certain extent, informed by this narrative. This became particularly clear in how the issue of housing was addressed.



## ***Narrative of housing***

The main reason behind the establishment of the Office for immigration services (ISI) in 1995 was to find a solution to the issue of initial accommodation (Bernadotti and Mottura 1999, 69). The previous administrations had not been able to provide a sufficient number of accommodations for single migrants or for families, nor had they funded the refurbishment of the existing initial accommodation centres, the so-called *Centri di Prima Accoglienza* (CPA), to an acceptable level. The CPA:s were to function as a first housing for newly arrived migrants who could live there for six months before moving on to a private accommodation. However

For many guests, the [CPA] has become a permanent accommodation. (Comune di Bologna 1995c, 13)

The ISI lacked long-termed perspectives in dealing with the question. This meant that the actions taken in this respect had limited success, triggering frustrations among migrants who claimed to be discriminated against and among Italians who complained about the lack of regularisation of the initial accommodation centres (Bernadotti and Mottura 1999). During the ten years analysed, the municipality presented the issue of housing as a social problem hampering integration, but it emphasised different aspects of the problem.

The main issue concerning housing during the Vitali administration was related to first housing, even if the question of alternative tenancies for families was beginning to become a pressing issue. The statement of intent of the Vitali administration under the heading “immigration policies” underlines that

Tenures for initial accommodation will always be needed. We also need to provide permanent housing which enable family reunifications, however. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 20)

The lack of permanent housing was considered a serious obstacle for the integration of migrants.

Many use the centres of first housing not as emergency accommodations, but as permanent solutions. This is a considerable obstacle to the real integration of a migrant worker who not only lives in precarious conditions, segregated from the city. He [*sic!*] cannot be joined by his family. (Comune di Bologna 1997, 8)

In order to come to terms with the issue of poor housing, the Council began collaborating with private entrepreneurs. This increased the number of first

accommodations available. Furthermore, in 1997 the Office for public housing opened its houses to a significant number of migrant families. These measures partially responded to the lack of accommodation for migrants, even if the demands were still very high. The narrative of housing was not only triggered by a social concern to provide a shelter to newly arrived migrants and to aid established migrants to find more secure housing. It was also informed by a concern for public order and therefore shaped by the security narrative discussed before. Ponzo (2006; 2008) highlights that the nexus ‘public order-housing’ had more to do with the majority society than with migrants. The administration attempted to respond to the demands of the majority society to minimise the presence of migrants “out in the streets” and the Council tolerated the fact that a high number of migrants accessed the initial accommodation centres, also those illegally resident (Bernadotti and Mottura 1999, 76). The head of a migrant association responsible for one CPA said that:

The municipality has tried to keep a low profile, it kept people [clandestines] [in the CPA] so that they didn’t have to sleep in the streets. Otherwise people [the majority population] would have protested. (in Ponzo 2008, 18)

Another reason why unauthorised stay in the CPA was tolerated by the Council was due to its refusal to adopt what they thought to be repressive measures which would have entailed cooperation with the police forces. A former Councillor argued: “the left saw the issue of security as a matter for the right-wing parties. Collaboration with the police forces meant to be repressive, right-wing” (in Ponzo 2008, 9).

The Guazzaloca administration also used a narrative of housing in defining the municipality’s immigrant policies. The administration explicitly said that it wanted to bring legality back in the buildings.

During the last years, the housing services for refugees, Roma, and *extracomunitari* have been dealt with improperly. The new administration will revise and reorganise this policy domain in full respect of the law and of the rights of citizens. (Comune di Bologna 1999)

To do so, the right-wing administration focused on four actions: to replace the old CPA with new and smaller structures equipped with a porter who would control access to the buildings; to restructure the old centres and diminish the number of residents; to change the admittance regulations to the CPA; and to increase the number of alternative accommodations (Servizio immigrazione 2000). The restoration of the buildings, made possible by external funding from the

Region, the national government and private actors<sup>21</sup>, was coupled with increased policing of the centres (Ponzo 2006). As the new centres were provided, the residents of the old CPA were registered and moved to the new buildings. The amnesty granted by the Law 189/2002 entailed that the number of illegal residents in the new housing structures diminished drastically. The introduction of porters' lodges in each building, where security guards were employed, restricted the possibility for illegal occupation of the tenancies. This shows how the narrative of security has again informed policymaking. The Guazzaloca administration improved the living conditions of migrants. It did so in a spirit of surveillance and informed by its will to fight criminal behaviour on the premises, however.

The narrative of housing under the Cofferati administration echoed the narratives of legality and solidarity discussed above. The dynamics between the two narratives are clearly illustrated by the evacuations in 2005 of Romanian Roma, who settled illegally along the river Reno. The shanty town had become dangerous for the people living there as there were no basic sanitary installations or electricity. Furthermore, people living in the surrounding area had complained to the municipality as they feared that the shanty town was a den of thieves (*Repubblica* October 21, 2005). In order to respond to the social obligations the municipality had toward Roma (there was a risk of flood) and to the demands for public order from the majority society, the huts were destroyed on November 17. The evacuations were at first highly criticised as they were organised without informing the responsible Councillor, the deputy-mayor Scaramuzzino, or the social services (*Repubblica* October 21, 2005). 105 Roma were evacuated first to temporary emergency camps and, in the following years to apartments. According to the Head of the Intercultural Integration Service<sup>22</sup>, Chris Tomesani (interview), the evacuations were initially carried out hastily. However, the services provided to Roma after the November's evacuations were characterised by a more conscious approach towards integration.

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<sup>21</sup> In 1999 the Region allocated a large percentage of its share of the money from the National Fund for Migration Policies to build new housing structures. The "Cabirini" house was built thanks to a Regional funding of 185000 Euro. The "Imerio" house was instead built by a private entrepreneur in exchange for a piece of land where an old CPA was located.

<sup>22</sup> The Intercultural integration Service replaced the Immigrants' Service in 2007.

Integration doesn't take place if you keep people in shanty towns. Therefore the least you can do is to get rid of the huts and put the Roma families in apartments where they can live, that is with access to a garden or to other open spaces. (interview Tomesani)

The evacuations were seen as a successful example of Bologna's understanding of immigrant policies, i.e. to provide the same services to all the city's residents (in this case housing) while at the same time being attentive to the specific needs of the services' beneficiaries. One could conclude that the actions against Roma's shanty-towns were directed by solidaristic arguments of providing better housing, while responding to demands for public order from the majority society. It has to be stressed, however, that the Cofferati administration was particularly proactive in evacuating Roma's shanty towns. Only in 2007 did the municipality order more than 100 evacuations of un-authorised camps. This took place when the "Roma-emergency" was at the centre of the national political typhoon and acts of violence were carried out against Roma in other parts of the country.

### ***Narrative of cultural diversity***

The left-wing Vitali administration (1995-1999) presented a new understanding of the issue of integration by emphasising the importance of culture and cultural interaction.

The [*Istituzione dei Servizi per l'Immigrazione*] acknowledges that cultural diversity is a positive value for the collectivity. (Comune di Bologna 1995c, 17)

The administration sought to frame Bologna's multiethnic and intercultural character positively. Migration was narrated as a potential resource to the society as the quote above shows. The Council also wanted to promote cultural interaction and cooperation between Italians and migrants.

The activities of the [*Istituzione dei Servizi per l'Immigrazione*] will focus on [...] the promotion of a multiethnic culture and of projects of cooperation. (Comune di Bologna 1995c, 10)

Particular support will be given to the initiatives organised by migrant associations [...] which favour the increased knowledge of "other" cultures and the fight against stereotypes and prejudices. (Comune di Bologna 1997, 16)

The activities informed by the narrative of cultural diversity aimed at recognizing, in Taylor's (1994) understanding of the concept, cultural diversity and at celebrating it (Caponio 2006, 248-250). To this end the *Istituzione dei*

*Servizi per l'Immigrazione* established the *Centro Interculturale Zonarelli*<sup>23</sup> in 1999. The Zonarelli provides an infrastructure where migrants' and mixed<sup>24</sup> associations can develop and carry out different initiatives (upon scrutiny by the centre's administration). The Zonarelli is meant to provide a space for migrants to preserve their culture, but also where different cultures could meet and cooperate. The Head of the centre said that the novelty of the Zonarelli is its bottom-up approach.

The Zonarelli is quite unique because it grew from the grass-roots, it has always been working with the associations from the bottom [...] To begin with the grass-roots and the associations is the key. (interview Amelii)

The member associations, together with a team employed by the municipality, manage the centre. Up until recently the associations of the Zonarelli organised mainly leisure activities, e.g. ethnic-cuisine classes; batik classes; theatre performances; and seminars. The activities have had positive effects, as they have provided a space for traditionally marginalised groups to meet and establish a dialogue.

This was born as a place where people can meet. This is still the main aim of the centre and we summarise this by saying that organising parties and dinners is a good start. Parties and food and reunions are crucial to favour meeting-points and self-expression. (interview Amelii)

The narrative on cultural diversity changed with the right-wing administration lead by Giorgio Guazzaloca (1999-2004). Cultural diversity was not presented as valuable anymore. Instead there was a need to adopt cultural narratives that would re-affirm the city's identity. The quote from the Pastoral lecture by Bologna's Archbishop Biffi, who was close to the Guazzaloca administration, illustrates this clearly.

The criteria for admitting migrants [in Italy] cannot be only economic or based on solidarity (even though these are important). We need to be seriously concerned with saving the nation's identity. Italy is not a deserted land, without history, traditions, an unmistakable cultural and spiritual profile, which can be populated indiscriminately, as if there were no heritage of humanism and civilisation. (Biffi 2000, 89)

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<sup>23</sup>Eng. Intercultural Centre Zonarelli.

<sup>24</sup> Including Italians and migrants.

This position resonated strongly with the Guazzaloca administration. For instance, the Council organised a series of events in 2000-2001 aiming at discussing the possible coexistence between the citizens of Bologna and migrants and addressed the question of the city's identity. A series of seven books reproducing the most significant talks held during the events were published. Interestingly, none of the published talks were by representatives of migrants' associations, but the Archbishop's pastoral lecture was included. Part of the message of the administration was that migrants were not only a security issue as they were allegedly more prone to commit crimes. Some of them, mainly non-Christians, represented a threat to the identity of Bologna.

The case of Muslims has to be handled with particular care. They have different food (which is not such a big problem), a different holiday, a family law incompatible with ours, a conception of women which is absolutely far away from ours (to the extent that they allow and practice polygamy). [...] More than immigration, we need to respond to the propagation of a "non Christian culture" among peoples belonging to an ancient Christian faith. (Biffi 2000, 90)

Many critical voices rose against the content of the pastoral note. However, the Guazzaloca administration mainly praised it. Migrants' culture was therefore no longer perceived as a resource, but as a potential problem if it was too different from the majority society's culture.

If we want an intelligent immigrant policy, we need to begin from our identity, valorise our history and our roots. (Guazzaloca 2000, 67)

This understanding of cultural integration was explicitly adopted in the Charter of rights and duties that the Guazzaloca administration issued in 2003 and which was supposed to be handed out to migrants when they received their identity card. The introduction of the Charter states that

The Municipality of Bologna acknowledges that each person living and working legitimately within the city area, and who is part of a system of duties based not only on current laws, but also on the social norms laid down by the historical and cultural traditions of the city, which he or she acknowledges and abides by, becomes in this way a citizen of Bologna, i.e. a member of an open local community based on solidarity. (Comune di Bologna 2003, 12. English in original)

The quote above illustrates that the Guazzaloca administration understood integration in cultural terms whereby a migrant was expected to "acknowledge and abide by" the city's social norms and traditions and thus assimilate.

Even if the Guazzaloca administration closed the ISI in 2000, devolving its responsibilities to the Social Welfare Office, several of the office's activities were continued by other agencies, such as the newly established *Servizio immigrati, profughi e nomadi*<sup>25</sup>. Despite the existence of narratives linking security to migration and emphasising cultural assimilation, Guazzaloca continued to fund several multicultural projects. A comparison of the budgets of the two administrations shows that Guazzaloca allocated almost the same amount of money as Vitali on projects aimed at integration. The political environment in which Guazzaloca operated differed in some significant respects compared to the previous administration. First, the Guazzaloca administration could use the funding allocated by the national government through the Law 286/1998 which the previous administration did not have access to. Second, during Guazzaloca most of the initiatives dealing with multiculturalism were planned by the neighbourhoods and not by the City Council and the responsibility for their implementation was given to the third sector and not handled centrally. This, as we have seen in Birmingham, is problematic as the delegation to the third sector relieves the Council not only of the responsibility to address patterns of exclusion and discrimination, but also of the responsibility to care for the most disadvantaged ones. Furthermore, while the Vitali administration supported several projects aimed at recognising cultural diversity, the right-wing coalition largely funded immigrant policies which focused on individual integration, i.e. courses of Italian language and employment courses. The change of administration also entailed decreased funding of the Zonarelli which had to minimise its activities for some years. The Guazzaloca administration was affected by the legacy of the previous left-wing administrations and it therefore supported intercultural projects (Caponio 2006, 194). However, it used a narrative which emphasised the negative aspects of cultural diversity and advocated cultural assimilation.

When a left-wing coalition won the 2004 local elections, the narrative of cultural diversity gained renewed importance. It did not primarily stress the preservation of migrants' culture but rather the development of a common ethos. Changes in migratory patterns, demonstrated by increased family reunifications, as well as by high birth rates among migrants, triggered the Council to focus more proactively on the younger generations of migrants.

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<sup>25</sup> Eng: Service/Office for immigrants, refugees and Roma.

This generation must be helped not only because it has particular difficulties at school and in the labour market, but because it is a very potent means to integration. So they are not only a problem, but also a great resource because they are the natural locus where cultures meet. Working with them means to have some exceptional tools which can foster cultural and social integration. (interview Amelii)

This quote illustrates that with the Cofferati administration, more efforts were made to foster a sense of common belonging to Bologna. In 2007, The City Council decided to give more funding to the Zonarelli and to incorporate it within the municipality's administration (Comune di Bologna 2007a). Since then, a large share of the Zonarelli's budget has been allocated to the development of projects involving teenagers from both migrant and non-migrant backgrounds. The project *2 per uno per 2g* co-funded by the Ministry for Employment, Health and Social Services and by the City Council, which ran between 2008 and 2009, is an example of this kind of projects. Its main aim is to:

Develop the second generations' participation and social visibility through activities which can foster meetings and exchanges between young migrants and the Bolognesi youth. ([www.zonagidue.it](http://www.zonagidue.it))

The Council has been concerned with developing a shared sense of identity not only among young people, but also among adult migrants. Since the mid-1990s, the council has narrated this in terms of migrants' increased political participation in the decision-making processes. This is discussed in the following section.

### ***Participation narrative***

This narrative emphasises the importance of political participation of legally resident migrants in the life of the city. In particular, it stresses the importance of establishing bodies representing migrants in the Council's infrastructure. The Vitali administration was the first one addressing this.

The issue [...] is how to create the conditions which would enable migrants who live in our city to access citizenship rights [...] the way to have a city in which people of different backgrounds and cultures can live together as citizens is to fully engage the migrant community [*sic!*] in the institutional processes and in giving them social, civil, and political rights. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 20)

Given the national legal framework concerning citizenship and migration, the narrative pointing to the need to guarantee "social, civil, and political rights" to



migrants was a critique against the national government's passive approach to the issue. As highlighted in chapter 5, the Nationality Act 91/1992 ignored the reality of changing migratory patterns to Italy, and prioritised an ethno-cultural understanding of citizenship. In order to increase the participation of migrants in the decision-making processes, Vitali intended to introduce "adjoined" councillors selected among migrants.

In order to substantiate full citizenship rights, I find it right and sensible to elect "adjoined councillors" within the Council's cabinet. We should recognise their right to represent fellow migrants [*concittadini immigrati*]. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 20)

These councillors, already introduced in other municipalities in Italy, would have had the power to make proposals and raise claims with regard to local policies affecting migrants in particular, but would not have had decision-making power or the right to vote in the cabinet. Vitali never introduced the adjoined councillors, however. Instead the administration established the *Forum metropolitano delle associazioni dei cittadini non comunitari di Bologna e provincia*<sup>26</sup>. The Forum was not an appointed institution and all the associations who wanted to join the Forum were admitted. The Forum was meant to provide a means for influencing the decision-making process of the *Istituzione dei servizi per l'immigrazione*, and can therefore be interpreted as an expression of a narrative of participation. However the Forum did not have much influence within the *Istituzione dei servizi per l'immigrazione*. Contracts for service delivery remained a prerogative of the main, highly specialised, lay cooperatives, excluding several migrants' associations who were members of the Forum (Caponio 2005, 944). The activities organised by the Forum were therefore limited to the organisation of sport events or ethnic festivals. The narrative of participation in the public sphere, so much emphasised by the municipality, turned out to be an empty shell.

The Guazzaloca administration could not dismiss the existing narrative of migrants' participation. His administration's strategy paper states that

The city council has to prevent criminality, but it also has to award honesty, supporting true integration, involving the migrants' community [*sic!*] and making it responsible. (La tua Bologna 1999, 5).

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<sup>26</sup> Eng. Metropolitan forum of non-communitarian migrants' associations in Bologna and its province.

In order to “fight against degenerating phenomena and favour migrants’ socio-cultural integration” (Comune di Bologna 1999, 4), the administration issued in 2003 a “Charter of Rights and Duties for Living Together in a Civic Community”. It consisted of a list of nine principles and had a twofold aim. First it wanted to provide migrants with information on the rules of the government of the city. Second, it attempted to foster a sense of commitment to these rules and to the city itself<sup>27</sup>. The second principle of the Charter, which deals with integration in the community, states that:

Integration into the life of the city is promoted by actions aiming to [...] support participation by representatives of the local community [...] in the advisory bodies of the various departments of the municipal administration, especially those involved in school, health care and social services delivery, as well as in the special advisory bodies on issues affecting immigrants which may be established. (Comune di Bologna 2003, 14-15)

The policy narrative of participation was never followed by other policy solutions apart from the charter. In fact, Guazzaloca never established the advisory bodies mentioned in the charter. Instead, participation was framed as an individual endeavour. Migrants were supposed to participate in the Bolognese society through paid work (art. 8). To reach this goal, the municipality supported educational and vocational courses. Furthermore, migrants’ participation was supposed to be achieved through an increased awareness of their rights and duties (art. 4). To this end, the municipality provided Italian language courses.

Guazzaloca’s ways of narrating participation echo aspects of a contractarian understanding of the relation between state and society, notably the assumption that individuals will exchange obedience to the state for protection. A number of feminists have criticised social contract theory (most notably Pateman 1988). It is argued, *inter alia*, that it disregards the real inequalities of power between individuals which prevent some to influence the power of the state in determining the premises of the contract. These inequalities are based not only on gendered, but also on racialised categories (Mills 1997; Pateman and Mills 2007). To establish a contract between the city of Bologna and its migrant population is equal to presenting the latter with ready-made solutions to their potential needs.

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<sup>27</sup> The Charter’s impact was limited and it was not used by the successive administration which came to power in 2004 (interview Monti).

The left-wing administration which followed Guazzaloca used a narrative of participation to include not only migrants, but all Bolognesi. The administration's statement of intent stressed the importance of citizens' active participation in the city.

The active and non-formalised participation of civil society is pivotal to achieve the common good and to develop authentic democracy. [...] Participation is conceived of as a resource. (Comune di Bologna 2004, 117)

In order to increase the participation of all citizens, the Cofferati administration decentralised the provision of services and parts of the municipal administration to the neighbourhoods. The decentralisation was not only conceived of as an institutional change, but also as a way to engage citizens to a larger extent through committees and consultative bodies. As far as the participation of migrants is concerned, the document stated that

One of our objectives [...] is to introduce a national law that guarantees migrants the right to vote in local elections. (Comune di Bologna 2004, 6)

The Cofferati administration committed itself to "strengthen participatory organs" and "valorise the role of municipal consultative bodies in shaping particular policy domains" (Comune di Bologna 2004, 119). No mention was made in the declaration of intent as to how migrants' participation would be promoted or how the administration would lobby for changing the national voting legislation.

In September 2007 the City Council approved the establishment of migrants' consultative bodies within the neighbourhoods (*consulte di quartiere*). The administration finally decided on a formal means for political representation because:

The concept of "people" [...] has to include all residents, with or without [Italian] citizenship, including foreigners who are living in the municipality's territory and "who then have the same right as [Italian] citizens to address to the public institutions their needs related to their life in the territory" (Cons. St., Sez. II, parere 28 luglio 2004, n. 8007/04) (Comune di Bologna 2007b, 2)

The introduction of the Regional Law 5/2004 concerning the integration of migrants resident in the region was significant in supporting the establishment of the *consulte*. The RL 5/04 explicitly supported the establishment of consultative bodies at all institutional levels, i.e. region, provinces, municipalities (Stuppini

and Facchini 2004). According to a policy officer employed by the Region, the reasons to support such bodies were both practical and political.

I think that the local administrations are facing practical and political issues. As the phenomenon of migration grows, the public administration has difficulties in working with informal representatives that can help to clarify an issue. Therefore to have an elected body, born out of a transparent process of participation and of responsibility is useful [...] Then there is a political question for those who see today's society as multicultural. We undoubtedly need to offer paths of public participation to those who still don't have the opportunity to have political roles. (interview Facchini)

The political and practical scopes also informed the establishment of the *consulte* in Bologna. The elections of the nine consultative bodies (one for each neighbourhood) took place on December 2, 2007. The turnout at the ballots was 20,9 percent, which was considered a success given the short time provided to prepare for the elections (three months) and the scarce funding (40.000 Euro)<sup>28</sup>. As discussed in the previous chapter, participation of migrants in these consultative bodies was seen as a means for migrants to learn about Italian institutional life and as an “exercise of democracy” (interview Scaramuzzino) but also as a way to foster among migrants a sense of shared identity with other Bolognesi.

The message here is of fundamental importance. If I establish a council for migrants it is not just a technical thing. It is a significant starting point. [...] It suggests a shared horizon, that is to say that the Bolognese society is something we build together instead of saying that you have to enter into an existing context to which you have to adapt [...]. These are two very different messages. The practical actions differ, one's feeling of identification differs and the feeling of being or not part of a broader process differs. [...] This is not just an advertisement slogan like “we have to be better citizens”. I consider this to be a fundamental component of the development of a more civilised community. (interview Amelii)

The narrative of participation was framed as a political narrative which was embodied in the establishment of the consultative bodies. Participation was also understood as participation of the third-sector, granted through the Zonarelli

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<sup>28</sup> Other municipalities in Italy have organised similar elections. For instance at the elections in Rome in 2006 the turnout at the ballots was of 11,6%; Florence 15% (2003); Pisa 23,5% (2006) (Osservatorio delle immigrazioni 2008b).

Centre, which now received more funding, and through the 2007 public deliberation on immigrant policies<sup>29</sup>. The participation narrative assumed again a public character where there was no formal contract with the public institutions, as was the case during Guazzaloca. Instead “active participation”, and not only formal participation, was promoted as a way of building a sense of belonging to the city.

## **7.4 Comparison from the light of caring multiculturalism**

The aim of this chapter has been to identify the policy narratives that have informed the immigrant policies adopted by Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna between 1997 and 2007. Table 7.1 below summarises the empirical findings presented in this chapter. The identified policy narratives have been categorised according to how they express the relationship between the state and a constituency group, in the case of this thesis, of migrants. As I have discussed in chapter 4, this relationship can be described at the most general level as social, economic, civic/political, and cultural. The policy narratives that could be described according to more than one category have been positioned in more than one box in the table. For instance, the employment narrative adopted by Malmö City Council describes the integration of migrants in both social and economic terms because it stresses the social benefits of employment (broadening one’s social network) as well as the economic advantages of it (employment leads to economic autonomy and independence from the welfare state).

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<sup>29</sup> Ita: *Istruttoria pubblica sulle politiche per l’immigrazione*.

	Social	Economic	Civic/political	Cultural
Malmö	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Employment narrative</li> <li>* Community engagement narrative</li> <li>* Council's responsibility narrative</li> <li>* Meeting places narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Employment narrative</li> <li>* Council's responsibility narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community engagement narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community engagement narrative</li> </ul>
Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community cohesion narrative</li> <li>* Importance of communities narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community cohesion narrative</li> <li>* Anti-discrimination narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community cohesion narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community cohesion narrative</li> </ul>
Bologna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Security narrative;</li> <li>* Housing narrative</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Political participation narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Security narrative;</li> <li>* Cultural diversity narrative</li> </ul>

**Table 7.1 Narrative constructions of integration in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna**

In this concluding section I analyse the findings comparatively and to assess the extent to which they hold the potential for adopting caring multiculturalism. First, I discuss the extent to which these narratives hold the potential for stimulating the development of a shared identity which is inclusive of both migrants and the majority society. Second, I analyse comparatively the implications of the normative underpinnings expressed in the policy narratives from the viewpoint of caring multiculturalism.

### ***Enabling cognitive transformation***

Caring multiculturalism advocates change in how people from two allegedly opposed groups perceive each other. Through processes such as humanisation of the out-group and transformative dialogue, a new shared identity could be developed. This shared identity could revolve around a sense of belonging to the same locality and/or be based around the achievement of shared goals. I have

called this “cognitive transformation”. Could the policy narratives identified foster transformation at the psychological level?

In Malmö, the policy narrative which most explicitly addresses the issue of fostering a shared identity is the “meeting places narrative”. The Council maintains that through developing shared public spaces people from different backgrounds will meet and eventually understand each other. The knowledge of shared ownership of a public space is meant to foster a sense of commonality among individuals. Even if sharing and feeling responsible for public spaces might foster some sense of common ownership among people living in the same city, this narrative overlooks the fundamental difference between engaging with one another and being in the same space. Geographers have demonstrated that these arrangements do not necessarily favour multicultural engagement (Amin 2002; Amin and Thrift 2002). From the perspective of caring multiculturalism it would be more fruitful to develop meeting places where people can develop “deep contact” (Staub 2003; 2006) and collaborate towards shared goals. Similarly, Amin emphasises the importance of “prosaic negotiations” in “‘micropublics’ such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centres, sports clubs, and other spaces of association” (2002, 969). Malmö City Council emphasises the importance of migrant associations, sport associations or after-school recreation areas where every-day engagement and contact can take place. However, these are seen as sites of intercultural dialogue *and* cultural representation in the public sphere. This creates a tension between a conception of spaces of associations as places where one can destabilise cultural boundaries *and* as sites where a group can preserve its culture and represent it.

Birmingham City Council has since the early 2000s stressed the importance of sharing common values through the “community cohesion narrative”. The values that underpin community cohesion policies are, as we have seen, so all-encompassing that their potential for fostering a deep sense of shared identification is watered down. Practices such as engagement in the ward-committees, discussed in the previous chapter, may be more significant in developing collaboration toward shared goals. The Bolognese case is interesting as the “political participation narrative” has always been geared towards fostering a sense of identification to Bologna’s polity among migrants. From the perspective of caring multiculturalism, it is fundamental to enable all citizens to participate in the public sphere. I have advocated the importance of broadening our conception of political participation to include small-scale action and the practices of care. However, ensuring representation in the political sphere is particularly important in the Italian context where migrants have no political

rights. Their opportunities to express their needs at the national level are channelled through non-elected consultative bodies and therefore curtailed compared to the Swedish and British cases. From a perspective of caring multiculturalism, the “political participation narrative” used by Bologna City Council is problematic because in practical terms it only addresses one side of its population, i.e. migrants. It does not provide the narrative space to promote transformative dialogue. Caring multiculturalism proposes that transformative dialogue could be a concrete tool to build common narratives of belonging that cut across cultural, ethnic or religious signifiers. Transformative dialogue aims to find points of commonality between allegedly antagonistic groups in order to build a common sense of belonging. Which values should be honoured is a result a community arrives at after deliberation and “deep contact” (Staub 2003). Both sides of the deliberation should then engage and commit themselves to finding common goals. The “security narrative” used by the Bologna City Council hinders the possibility of stimulating cognitive transformation further. It presents immigration as a security issue and as a threat to the cultural and social stability of the city. The way this narrative was used by the Guazzaloca administration was particularly detrimental for the development of a shared identification between migrants and the majority society. This is not to condone the ways in which the “security narrative” has been used by the other two administrations. The Council during the Vitali and Guazzaloca administrations has not managed to improve the poor socioeconomic conditions in which many migrants live. During Cofferati, the municipality did not strongly criticise the national legislative framework which penalises migrants and fails to conceive of them as members of the Italian polity. This lack of action contributes to maintaining stereotypes which link migration to criminality and which portrays migrants as potential threats. As long as a “security narrative” is adopted by public actors, the opportunities to implement caring multiculturalism will be curtailed.

### ***Paid work and integration***

Malmö City Council is the only municipality that explicitly constructs employment as the key to integration. In Birmingham the lack of employment among some ethnic minorities was also narrated as a concern, but it was not portrayed as the main route to integration as in Malmö. As my material has shown, Malmö City Council has adopted an economic narrative based on an employment-independency/autonomy nexus. It follows a normative framework whereby autonomy, understood as the capacity of an individual of freeing



oneself from ties of dependence, is given high moral ground (Held 2006, 14). Fiona Williams, in discussing a similar policy approach adopted by New Labour in Britain, has referred to this policy as one of “ethic of paid work” where the ethos is underpinned by a “financial imperative to get people ‘off welfare and into work’, and a moral imperative to turn people into better citizens” (2001, 474). When seen through the lens of caring multiculturalism, this approach is problematic for several reasons. First, it denies the essential interdependence of human beings which is acknowledged by caring ethics and formulated by caring multiculturalism as relational autonomy. Second, it assumes that employment automatically leads to independence. Thus, the potential exploitation of people in the labour market is left unchallenged. Arguably, people working for a minimum wage and treated disrespectfully by their employer because their job is considered to be of lesser value<sup>30</sup>, may not experience any of the benefits that are allegedly tied to employment. Third, this approach leaves little space to those who are not employed, either because they cannot access the labour market or because they choose not to. Taken together, the “ethic of paid work” used in Malmö glosses over the fundamental status of dependency in which everyone finds him- or herself and it creates a hierarchy between those who are explicitly dependent (on social provisions; on public health care etc.) and those who are not. The former are often socially constructed as un-able, at times un-wanted, parts of a society and their agency is limited accordingly. Malmö City Council’s attempt to approach migrants’ integration into the labour market or in education on an individual basis rather than making sets of ready-made solutions is significant from the perspective of caring multiculturalism, however. It entails an increased possibility that the specific needs of an individual facing socio-economic deprivation are taken into account. Yet, as this is so dependent on an economic understanding of integration, it overlooks other ways to become a member of the recipient society. For instance, the work that migrant women do in the private sphere as carers of their family is seldom recognised as crucial for the development of society. I am not arguing that paid work is negative in absolute terms. However, a single emphasis on paid work as the main way of expressing one’s membership in a community, risks to maintain the devaluation of the work women do in the private sphere and hence to maintain the dichotomy between the public and the private domains. This approach fails to address the importance of caring work in society as well as the values of attentiveness and

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<sup>30</sup> This is the position in which many employed in service works find themselves in.

responsibility in creating humane relationships in daily social interactions (Sevenhuijsen 2000, 14). Caring multiculturalism would instead acknowledge the importance of the paid and unpaid work conducted in the private sphere as crucial for the development of society and it would start from deliberations about how the responsibilities for caring can be supported and enhanced (Sevenhuijsen et al. 2003, 316).

In this context it is interesting to observe that integration through paid work is not constructed as a problem in Bologna. Migrants are seen as an economic resource by both the left and the right because they do the jobs that Italians are not willing to do anymore and they take the largest share of the jobs in the domestic service. Bologna has been particularly attentive to the need of female workers employed in the private sector as carers. In 2005, the Council joined the regional project *Madreperla* which supported policies aimed at empowering female carers, at improving their professional skills, and at informing the families who employed them of the legal and social rights of those involved in private care. I cannot provide a full assessment of the project. From the information I have gathered, however, *Madreperla* seems to follow several of the tenets of caring ethics and caring multiculturalism. It was developed in collaboration with care workers; it was attentive of the needs of both the carers and those cared for, i.e. elderly or families; it provided carers with the information about their rights and duties and it tried to challenge the widespread phenomenon of irregular labour. Another reason why migrants' integration is not defined in economic terms in Bologna is because employment is a precondition for obtaining and maintaining a permit of stay in Italy. Family reunification is allowed only if one family member already living in Italy can demonstrate financial independence and appropriate housing. Because immigrant policies in Bologna are geared towards legally staying migrants, social and economic integration through paid work is not presented as a problem.

### ***Community engagement, participation and responsibility***

Another interesting result is that the three municipalities emphasise that integration can be achieved through participation in the third sector and voluntary associations. In Birmingham the emphasis given to the third sector, and expressed through the "importance of communities" narrative, is not explicitly constructed as a means to improve migrants' and ethnic minorities' civic and political integration. Instead, the "importance of communities" narrative seems to stress the social role of the voluntary sector as service

provider. Viewed from caring multiculturalism, the involvement of community organisations is important as they are closer to the beneficiaries of these policies (cp. White 2000). However, this should not work as a way to relieve the municipality from its responsibility to act as a provider of public care. The delegation of the implementation of immigrant policies by the Council to the third sector is illustrative of an unequal duty of care towards outsiders. If informed by caring multiculturalism, local governments would develop ties of solidarity and responsibility to those who are most in need – among which many migrants can be included. Ultimately, it means that the local government should recognise the constitutive role of the migrant/minority other in what is envisaged as the collective “we” (see also Amin 2006). Furthermore, letting communities implement community cohesion and integration runs the risk of only providing public space to a few representatives of these communities, thus silencing the standpoint of others. The delegation of service provision to the third sector, when coupled with a strong emphasis on the importance of volunteering, is problematic for another reason. Ruth Levitas (2005, 126) notes that “the trouble with active citizenship is that volunteering begins to appear not all that voluntary”. She criticises New Labour’s conception of volunteering whereby those who do not engage in the voluntary sector are positioned as lesser citizens. To this I would add that in the case of community cohesion policies adopted in Birmingham, engagement in a community organisation seems to be a way to tackle the lack of action by the local government.

Malmö City Council represents engagement in the third sector as an important means to foster integration socially, culturally and civic/politically. Voluntary associations are not only arenas where people can meet and, if they so wish, where they can cultivate their culture and traditions, but also where they can participate in the implementation of immigrant policies as discussed in chapter 6. It is notable that migrants’ political integration, understood as participation in electoral politics, or engagement in the decision-making processes of the Council are not presented as ways to improve their integration into the Swedish society. This is remarkable because migrants in Sweden have been given extensive political rights since the mid-1970s. As they have had (in principle) more time to become integral parts of the discourses and the practices of immigrant policies, one would have expected that policy narratives emphasising civic/political integration would have been more prominent. Instead, the contrary seems to be the case. As political rights have been granted, the visibility of political narratives has decreased. This can be contrasted with the case of Italy where migrants have no political rights, but where political

narratives have reached higher levels of visibility. This has not brought about concrete measures for rectifying the lack of political rights, however. Consultative bodies were introduced only in 2007 and their power, as discussed in detail in chapter 6, is seriously limited, making the political narratives of participation substantially hollow.

The efforts made by Malmö City Council in changing its structures and values so that the delivery of its policies could be more attentive to the needs of migrants, seem to be in line with caring multiculturalism. This has been expressed by the municipality of Malmö through the “council responsibility narrative”. However, this narrative has been constructed mainly as a matter of intra-organisational change. In addition, most of the actions taken to address the broader society are conducted within time-limited projects. Their impact is more limited than one would have hoped for.

## **Culture**

All three cases have put little emphasis on cultural preservation as a public matter. During the ten years studied, less funding have been made available and more prominence has been given to activities which are not geared towards one group only. One exception to this is how Birmingham has practically dealt with community cohesion. As my material show, despite the emphasis on moving towards a “post multicultural policy framework”, the Council relies on an ethnic-based understanding of how to address community cohesion. A Community Cohesion Forum has been established to work with this policy domain and most of the actions undertaken under the banner of community cohesion target ethnic communities. These “ethnicised” policy solutions, i.e. activities or means of engagement conducted along race, religion or ethnicity, witness a deep-seated way of addressing inequality in Britain that tends to fall back on ethnic, cultural or faith distinctions (b:RAP 2004a, 15). This disregards how inequality affects other social groups which are not necessarily identifiable with ethnicity or faith. For instance young, male, working class pupils perform worse in educational attainments than young males from certain ethnic groups. From the perspective of caring multiculturalism the development of actions that could build solidarities across ethno-religious divides is positive. However, the relegation of the activities of cultural preservation to the private sphere, as in Malmö and Bologna, risks maintaining interpretations of culture and religion that oppress some segments of a group. To ensure the right to exit, as formulated by caring multiculturalism, is therefore vital. The state should not limit itself to

guaranteeing the formal right to exit one's community. As discussed in chapter 2, formal rights are not the same as substantive opportunities to exercise these rights. Emotional and social constraints may limit the opportunities for some to exit their group. Caring multiculturalism reformulates the right to exit so to take into account the realities of those who are supposed to exercise it. The state should ensure a safe haven to those who do not want to put up with certain norms of their culture or religion as well as provide spaces where different ethos can be questioned and challenged in the spirit of providing true opportunities for new solidarities to be developed.

### ***National-local***

An interesting result is that Malmö and Birmingham, compared to Bologna, show a stronger dependency on the national vocabularies of integration and national self-understanding. Malmö seems to follow a traditional Swedish approach to immigrant policies moulded by a class-based model of inclusion. Soininen (1999) argues that immigrant policies have emphasised the importance of economic equality which would consequently lead to equality in other domains, such as social equality. The findings presented in this chapter show a similar pattern. In line with the traditional Swedish narrative construction of the state as a strong state, Malmö City Council has put itself at the forefront by adopting the "Council's responsibility narrative" emphasising the Council's responsibility in dealing with the city's increased diversity. Similarly, Birmingham City Council has followed the national approach to immigrant policies as well as the rhetoric used by the national government. The Council has embraced a "post multiculturalism policy framework", relying on a narrative which emphasises the importance of community cohesion. However, similar to the national level, the race relations framework is still an important determinant for the management of community cohesion policies. Likewise, the Council's equality and anti-discrimination policies tend to assume an "ethnicised" character targeting mainly black and minority ethnic communities. Thus, the Council has traditionally tended to focus more on the socioeconomic disadvantages of minorities and on improving their representation in the public machinery *qua* ethnic groups, instead of taking issue with stereotypical representations of certain groups by the majority society.

Contrary to the patterns of national institutional and discursive influence found in the British and the Swedish case, Bologna has developed an approach to immigrant policies that challenges the national institutional structures and

narratives which have proven to be detrimental for many migrants living in Italy. This variation could be explained on the basis of at least two factors. Italian local and regional governments benefit from much stronger power to manage welfare policies in general and, more relevant to this study, immigrant policies. This has created opportunities for a rich number of approaches to immigrant policies, but has also enabled less progressive local authorities to ignore the phenomenon of immigration. Second, the traditionally left-wing approach to politics and policy-making in Emilia Romagna, based on solidarity and civic engagement (see e.g. Putnam 1993), has provided a fertile ground for the development of progressive immigrant policies. A left-wing tradition should however not be considered a necessary condition for tolerance and inclusion. For a long time Bologna challenged migrants' exclusion from political rights only at a narrative level, and the Council was not able to or willing to set up any formal body of representation until 2007. Two factors could explain this. One is the dissatisfaction with the half-hearted experiment of the *Forum metropolitano*. Secondly, the coming into power of a right-wing coalition, which based much of its political rhetoric in depicting migrants as threats and as problems for public order. This could have minimised the significance of the policy narratives referring to the establishment of representative bodies. Instead during the Cofferati administration, the Regional Law 5/2004 provided the institutional opportunity needed to support the establishment of such bodies.

## 7.5 Conclusions

I have identified the normative frameworks that inform the approach to immigrant policies in three local contexts. I found the Swedish approach problematic because of its emphasis on economic narratives which unwittingly devalues the unpaid care work carried out in the private sphere. Birmingham has since the beginning of the century rhetorically moved away from traditional race relations policies which institutionalise ethnic groups. However, my findings show that this approach still has a strong legacy in that community cohesion policies seem to target mainly black and minority ethnic communities and focus on their ethnic and religious differences. A second problem with the British case, when analysed from caring multiculturalism, is its reliance on contradictory normative vocabularies which have enabled the public authorities to delegate the responsibilities of the work of community cohesion to the third sector. Finally, the Italian case suggests that the narrative emphasising participation in the polity of Bologna opens up for the development of a common identity bringing together

the majority society and migrants. However, the years of right-wing government have exacerbated a “security narrative” which has fostered a climate of suspicion against migrants, thus preventing the promotion of commonalities between groups. In order to fully understand the potential of each position to adopt caring multiculturalism, we need to analyse the requirements migrants are facing to be considered members of the recipient society. This is done in the final empirical chapter of this thesis.

## 8 Policy narratives: constructions of migrants

Documents addressing immigrant policies construct narrative understandings of how a migrant can become a member of the recipient society. This has been discussed in the previous chapter. The categorisation system that public policy actors adopt to define migrants strongly shapes the degree and the form of claims made by migrants (Koopmans and Statham 1999). I would add that the labels adopted also tell us about the threshold to be passed to be considered a full-fledged member of the majority society's imagined community (Anderson 1983). This chapter aims to examine comparatively the policy narratives used by the three case-study municipalities to define migrants in relation to the majority society. This responds to the third empirical research question of this thesis, *how are migrants conceived of by public actors in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna?* Schneider and Ingram (1993) argue that targeting particular groups in welfare policies is a value-laden process. Even seemingly neutral designations of the beneficiaries of welfare such as "the elderly" are imbued with assumptions about that group. For instance, In talking about care of the elderly, Joan Tronto argues that they seem to be "marked" by an assumption that they need more assistance because of their age (1998). Newton (2008), who applies Schneider's and Ingram's work on American immigration policies, argues that the category of "migrant" serves as a symbol for economic uncertainty, criminality as well as hard work, social mobility and the "American dream". Hence, the analysis of policy narratives sheds light not only on the state's requirements which migrants have to meet if they are to be considered part of the recipient society (addressed in chapter 7), but also on constructions of who should be kept inside or outside of a specific polity. These are examined in this chapter. To study these narratives is relevant from the perspective of caring multiculturalism as the extent to which migrants are defined in exclusionary or integrative terms affects their level of identification with the recipient society as well as the opportunities for introducing shared identities among different groups.

The analysis focuses mainly on identifying, classifying and comparing the narrative constructions of migrants. To identify which policy narratives are most relevant to the narrative construction of migrants. I seek to answer the operationalising questions discussed in chapter 4, such as: how are migrants characterised by public policy actors in relation to the majority society? How is



an integrated political subject defined by the public administration? How are the beneficiaries of integration policies narratively constructed in the policy documents? How is an idea of community expressed by the public actors? I classify the identified policy narratives according to categories which reflect how migrants can be socially constructed in relation to the majority society. These categories are: social, cultural, economic and political. For instance, in Bologna migrants are constructed according to a policy narrative which depicts them as economic resources because they fill labour needs in the private care and agricultural sectors. I classify this narrative as economic. The categorisation enables me to present the findings comparatively in section 8.4, where I also discuss their potential to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. All the quotes in this chapter from the Swedish or Italian material have been translated by myself into English.

## **8.1 Malmö**

I have identified three narratives which represent migrants in Malmö. One is an economic narrative of employment, which depicts the integrated migrant as participating in the labour market. I call it the “employed migrant” narrative. The second is an economic narrative which presents migrants as an economic resource and as a comparative advantage for the city’s labour market. This is called a “narrative of competitiveness”. The third narrative has cultural traits and positions migrants as aliens to the majority society. This is called a “migrant as stranger” narrative. This narrative, while aiming to improve the inclusion of migrants into the Swedish society, positions migrants as strangers and individual bearers of differences.

### ***The employed migrant narrative***

The narrative of employment which underpins Malmö’s definition of immigrant policies shapes the definition of the integrated migrant, positioning him/her as participating in the labour market. Stigendal points out that Malmö City Council adopts an economic reductionist perspective of social relations according to which “human beings express their true nature in the market, in their roles as producers and consumers. If they do not do so, it is a problem” (2007, 35). This is clearly expressed by the documents I have analysed. The Strategy paper for integration states that:

People's participation in the labour market is pivotal for a successful integration. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 20)

Six years later, the Strategy paper for increased welfare, *Välfärd för alla*, underlined that the first objective to be met in order to oppose segregation and social exclusion was that “everyone who is able to work should do so” (Malmö Stad 2004a, 1). Because employment “has a pivotal significance for migrants’ integration” (Malmö Stad 2004a, *förord*), participation in the labour market is a key requirement which migrants have to meet if they are to be considered part of Malmö. Malmö City Council has stated since the mid-1990s that it is important to change its approach to how it supports its citizens “from passive social benefits to active actions [to stimulate] the labour market” (Malmö Stad 1997b, 6). This was reiterated in *Välfärd för alla*: “it is opportune to move from passive social benefits to active actions which will increase people’s skills” (Malmö Stad 2004a, 6).

The quotes above illustrate a juxtaposition of groups, in this case employed and unemployed migrants. The former is constructed as an active, fully employed individual, who can take care of him-/herself and his/her family. The unemployed migrants are described as passive, marked by a sense of shame and by poverty<sup>1</sup>, and relying on welfare provisions. As discussed in the previous chapter, the making of the integrated migrant based on a narrative of employment has important gender dimensions. As it links personal success with wage work, it overlooks the unpaid work mainly carried out in the private sphere by women. The extract below comes from an interview with the Head of the Trade and Industry Office and illustrates this point.

Question: What would you say about the opinion that the unpaid work carried out in the private sphere such as child raising is a way of participating in society, of being integrated?

Answer: But that’s not how contemporary modern societies work, at least not in Sweden... there may be other places where...we are used to have a state which takes care of child rising and education, and what is priced is paid work. (interview Bergman)

The quote shows not only that Malmö City Council adopts a narrative construction of the integrated migrant as a person who is employed. It also illustrates the relationship between the Swedish state and its citizens. Ringmar describes this relationship clearly. He argues that, since the Second World War,

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<sup>1</sup> The word used in Gefas is *fattigvårdstämpel* (Malmö Stad 1997b, 12).

Sweden has been perceived as a “welfare state”, that is “a country in which people’s welfare is in the responsibility of the state” (Ringmar 1998, 23). In order to maintain this relationship, Swedish citizens have to provide a constant inflow of finances through paid employment. Other understandings of who should care for children or elderly, for example, cannot fully fit this model.

### ***Narrative of competitiveness***

This policy narrative presents migrants as an economic resource; as a comparative advantage (*konkurrensfördel*) to the city. They can make Malmö more attractive to investors and, potentially to new residents. The Head of the Trade and Industry Office within the Council exemplifies this.

The big advantage here is that we have a very young city... many migrants came here when they were very young, so we have a labour force in the city which gives us an advantage. The city also has an international competence...people from Malmö know many languages and cultures and this could be something private businesses can gain from. (interview Bergman)

The same narrative is used in a number of policy documents, as the following excerpts show.

Malmö, thanks to its demography is well equipped to meet future labour needs in the region, as well as national and international ones. [...] One should respect and value all cultures and languages and use their competence. (Malmö Stad 2004a, 3-4)

Migrants are crucial if we are to meet the occupational needs created by a strong economic development [and they are also] crucial for strengthening the creativity and entrepreneurship that are needed in such a development. (Malmö Stad 2006, 8)

According to this narrative, migrants constitute a significant resource for the well-being of the city. They are relatively young and have skills that should be valued by the public and private business sectors. In particular, the second generation of migrants is seen as having the double advantage of understanding more than one language and more than one culture.

45% of pupils in Malmö have their background in other countries either because their parents are born abroad or because at least one parent has migrated [to Sweden]. A diverse population is a condition for Malmö’s successful development [...]. Children’ knowledge and experiences should be valued even if they come from other religions and cultures. (Malmö Stad 1999a, 19; 25)

Migrants' access to other cultures and their knowledge of other languages are interpreted through the lenses of a narrative of competitiveness that largely echoes an argument based on human capital, i.e. the economic necessity of integrating migrants into the labour market and employing the capacities that they possess *qua* migrants. It describes migrants in positive terms in relation to the majority society but it does so by positioning them as utterly different from the majority society. In celebrating their diversity as a business resource, Malmö City Council maintains a perception that differences between groups are natural, frozen, and a-contextualized. This relates to a narrative which position migrants as strangers.

### ***The migrants as strangers narrative***

Migrants in Sweden are labelled “migrants” (*invandrare*) or “people with a foreign background” (*utländsk bakgrund*), if they are born in Sweden of one foreign parent. These categories are promoted over others such as “ethnic minority”, which is predominantly used in Britain. The two categories are used in Malmö even to identify naturalised migrants. I asked about the potential pitfalls of applying these categories to naturalised citizens.

Question: Is it a problem to describe a group of Swedish citizens by pointing out that they are not born here?

Answer: One can say that the fact that one is born abroad is more important than the fact that you have a Swedish passport because in Sweden, as in other European countries, there is no real requirement for assimilating into a cultural canon. [...] You can define people who are excluded in many ways because they are poor... they have a poor education, poor social network, poor democratic participation...and among them there is an overrepresentation of lower educated people who were born abroad...then there is a number of people born abroad who are much more integrated than people whose name is Sven, but still...(interview Andersson)

The excerpt above illustrates a tendency to define a particular segment of the population as ultimately different from the majority society. This is expressed through a cultural narrative which I label “migrant as stranger”. The construction of migrants as *invandrare* positions them at the borders of the Swedish society. It fixes their position as strangers, in Simmel's understanding of the concept (1950): they are an element of the group itself, near and far at the same time. They are near as they can import qualities into the host society. At the same time, they are distant since they bring with them a cultural diversity that defines the cognitive boundaries of the host society (see also Perrone 2005). This is similar

to the type of narrative construction of migrants we find in Malmö. Migrants are near because, thanks to their cultural differences, they can make a significant contribution to the economic development of the city. At the same time they are far because of these same differences which separate them from the majority society (Scuzzarello 2008). As the requirements for cultural assimilation are lower in Sweden than in other countries, this narrative puts migrants in a liminal position in relation to the rest of society. This means that they are positioned in a state between two phases, they are “‘betwixt and between’ existing orders” (Norton 1988, 53): they do not belong to the society that they previously were a part of and they are not fully incorporated into the recipient society. This is expressed clearly in the way the Council perceives some of the problems faced by the second generations of migrants.

Today we see that migrants’ children are overrepresented among those who drop out of school. Research has shown that these young people could face more difficulties than their parents in entering the labour market. The reason for this is because many of them do not have employed parents to act as role models. They have also ended up in between two cultures, their parents’ culture and the Swedish culture, and find it difficult to identify themselves with any of them. (Malmö Stad 2004a, 3)

The quote above offers one example of the construction of young migrants as in between two cultures. It reproduces a notion that there is one Swedish culture and one migrant culture and does not create a favourable narrative opportunity for the development of a shared culture. The statement above is also notable because it intertwines the “employed migrant” narrative with the “migrant as stranger” narrative. The opportunities for many young migrants to exit a situation of socioeconomic deprivation are prevented not only by their status of alleged cultural confusion, but also by the fact that their parents do not work.

As strangers, migrants are positioned as in need of a link in order to find their way through the Swedish society<sup>2</sup>. To this end, the City Council has used part of the national fund from the Policies for Metropolitan Cities, to launch a cultural mediator program, “Link-workers”<sup>3</sup>. According to a senior policy officer, the project aims at improving relations between socially and economically isolated migrant groups and the local authorities.

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<sup>2</sup> This paragraph draws extensively from Scuzzarello (2008).

<sup>3</sup> The name of the project has changed several times. For the sake of simplicity I will only use “link workers”.

It was very clear from the beginning. [The Link-worker project] was about creating contact between groups which were isolated in many respects. Isolated from the labour market, but also linguistically and in some sense culturally because they didn't know how the system works. (M3 interview)

A link-worker's primary task is to grasp the needs of the minorities that live in Malmö and work as an intermediary between them and the local authorities

Their primary function is to grasp the citizens' needs and act as an intermediary between different ethnic groups and the Swedish authorities. [...] They also have the task to bring people together in different networks, e.g. people with different ethnic backgrounds, and therefore act in favour of integration. (Malmö Stad 2004a, 13)

The link-workers – many of them previously unemployed, highly educated migrants - work mainly in schools, within health and social care, and with Malmö's fire brigade. According to my interviewee, a link-worker is important not only when it comes to verbal communications and translations but also when cultural translations and clarifications are needed.

Who should adapt to what? How do we create new ways of working in schools? [...] and I mean new in the sense which kind of knowledge do we want to teach, how you deal with a different mother tongue, how you teach history, who you call hero when 90 percent of your pupils have an Arab background? [...] these are issues I wish I could address now, but it is a much bigger project, so the first thing is to give parents a clear understanding of how the school works, about the different...well, yes the different values that the school can have, that it is underpinned by democratic values. [...] They must be clear about how society works. (interview M3)

The excerpts show that the Council intends to include Swedes and migrants and to re-frame what counts as knowledge. The main priority is to inform migrants about the Swedish society, its values and culture, however. According to an evaluation of the project, this cultural dimension is important since “we [the municipality] want to establish an understanding of how one should live and behave in order to improve the chances of a good life in Sweden” (Ewert et al. 2004, 6). I do not wish to diminish the significance of the efforts made by the link-workers in listening to the needs of migrants and in trying to work against stereotypes, racism and social exclusion. The project, however, tends to highlight the deficiencies of migrants: they need a link to the recipient society in order to function properly.

The “migrant as stranger” narrative has clear cultural traits. Cultural differences are narrated in public policies as a matter-of-fact and therefore a link between the cultures is needed. A public evaluation of the project expresses this clearly.

Socio-cultural distance and increasingly different life experiences have strengthened the need to have a bridge between different social domains (school, labour market, health sector, politics, etc.). Migration flows from Africa and Asia during the 1990s have made this need more poignant. (Ewert et al. 2004, 7)

The alleged cultural differences between the Swedes and people from Africa and Asia are assumed to be unbridgeable. Malmö City Council, by using this narrative, runs the risk of simplifying the differences between people on grounds of culture and of overlooking the multiple and shifting identities which are assumed as normal for the majority society.

## **8.2 Birmingham**

Given that the issue of immigrant policies in Britain has traditionally followed narratives of ethnic belonging, it is more difficult to pin down narrative constructions that depict migrants in relation to the majority society. In fact, the distinction between British or Commonwealth citizens belonging to an ethnic minority and immigrants, i.e. non-citizens, has been central to the British immigrant policies since 1968. Furthermore, ethnic minorities, mostly originally from the Commonwealth countries, have been part of the British society for decades. Their presence and political participation, together with the British model of incorporation, have contributed to the development of narratives which to a large extent considers them as part of mainstream British society (Garbaye 2005). This is different from other countries, such as Sweden for instance, where migrants are constructed as objects rather than subjects of immigrant policies. However, in Birmingham we can identify two significant policy narratives that construct non-white groups between 1997 and 2007. One narrative refers to ethnic minorities living in Birmingham and emphasises their role in developing a cohesive city. This is labelled “cohesive community” narrative. The second one positions asylum seekers in relation to the majority society. It presents them as hard-working people and I therefore call it the “working asylum seeker” narrative.

## ***The cohesive community narrative***

Cheong et al. (2007, 31) claim that in the early work on British race relations “a hierarchy of cultural strengths and integration strategies is projected on to trajectories of success in immigrant adaptation to British society”. Scholars such as Rex and Tomlinson (1967) tended to portray the cohesiveness of some Asian communities in Birmingham as a strength which had enabled its members to better integrate into the recipient country. African Caribbean communities, in contrast, were perceived as withdrawing from the rest of society.

Since the mid-2000s Birmingham City Council has represented its ethnic minorities in a different way. The Council has adopted a narrative whereby members of ethnic minority communities in Birmingham would dedicate themselves to the development of a cohesive city by being involved in local and voluntary associations. Birmingham City Council aspires to develop a sense of community where

There is a common and compelling vision for the success of the city across the whole population. (Birmingham City Council 2006, 6)

To engage ethnic minority communities is important for improving the quality of life in the city. For instance, the 2005 Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy states that

Neighbourhood renewal is not something that is “done” to deprived communities. People should have a role in making changes and improvements to their area. (Birmingham Strategic Partnership 2005, 2).

Similarly, the 2005 Community Strategy emphasises the importance of engaging community groups for creating flourishing neighbourhoods.

Active community groups, voluntary organisations and faith networks provide major benefits to individuals, families and localities. They offer opportunities to individuals for involvement and learning, support to communities, and the chance to influence local public services. [...] Faith communities are important in Birmingham, where the proportion of the population who subscribe to a religious faith is above average. [...] We will strengthen communities, helping them to form organisations to deal with common concerns. We will promote positive engagement with public agencies, engaging people and communities in the planning and delivery of services. Faith communities will be part of this important development, as will young people. (Birmingham City Council 2005, 13; 14)



Good community cohesion is projected beyond the ethnic group. At the same time there is an idea of the city as being constituted by different ethnic and religious groups.

We see Birmingham as a city whose diversity is a strength, where people value each other and get on well together. (Birmingham City Council 2005, 17)

The emphasis on achieving a cohesive city and not only to have cohesive groups within it has to be understood in the light of the aftermath of the 2001 urban unrests in northern England. Since then, the cohesiveness of some Asian communities has been interpreted as causing social disruption and the development of “parallel societies” (Independent Review Team 2001)<sup>4</sup>. Their previously “good” cohesion is increasingly being posed as “bad” (Cheong et al. 2007, 31-32). Since the London bombings in 2005 the debate on “bad” cohesion has increasingly been tainted by religious tones whereby Muslim communities are seen with suspicion.

The fact that community cohesion policies mainly target specific areas of the city with a high density of non-white population could indicate that the “cohesive community” narrative positions deprived groups, among which there are several ethnic minority communities, as being responsible for improving cohesion. For example, “worklessness” [*sic!*] and poor educational achievement are listed in the Community Cohesion Strategy among the issues that prevent cohesion. In several instances the Council explicitly points out that some ethnic minorities underachieve in both these areas (e.g. Birmingham City Council 2005, 23; 2006, 11). When it comes to education, this is true of some groups, in particular Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. However, there are tangible gender and class differences within each community which cannot be underestimated. Between 1998 and 2002 the educational achievement of young South Asian women has improved the most while young South Asian men have tended to perform worst than other groups. At the same time, the educational performance of young white pupils has not increased at the same pace as among minority ethnic pupils (Abbas and Anwar 2005, 59). This is not identified as a problem in the policy documents addressing community cohesion, however. The

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<sup>4</sup> The Independent Review Team does not distinguish between the many communities with Asian background and instead refers to *an* Asian community, in singular. In fact, Asian communities are diverse when it comes to religion, socioeconomic background, social mobility in the post-migratory phase etc.

implicit (at times even explicit) mention of ethnic minorities as the main targets of community cohesion policies does not fully challenge the structural positioning that depicts non-white groups as disadvantaged and runs the risk of easing the internalisation of these narrative constructions (Bartky 1990; Bacchi 1999). This approach to community cohesion casts the victims of socioeconomic hardship as the problem. They are labelled “disadvantaged” and this becomes almost an explanation of their social position. This runs the risk of homogenising the targeted group, i.e. ethnic minorities, regardless of the socioeconomic differences between people. It also overlooks the deprivation of other segments of society who do not belong to a minority ethnic community. The price for not taking the disadvantage of, for instance, the white working class is to leave an environment where populist parties, such as the British National Party, can thrive.

### ***The working asylum seeker narrative***

This narrative describes asylum seekers and refugees living in Birmingham in economic and cultural terms<sup>5</sup>. In 2002 the Council issued a “Strategy for the Integration of Newcomers from Abroad in Birmingham” (Birmingham City Council 2002c)<sup>6</sup>. Asylum seekers and refugees are presented in the document as risking social deprivation and exclusion.

In order to avoid [newcomers] economic and social exclusion action is necessary to facilitate integration of individuals and empowerment of their communities. (Birmingham City Council 2002c, 3)

The Strategy lists a long number of areas where newcomers can face particular difficulties, e.g. housing, advice services, education, and health services. Two

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<sup>5</sup> The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act introduced a dispersal programme according to which those with no access to own housing (through friends or relatives) were offered accommodation on a no-choice basis. Refusal to accept the accommodation would lead to the withdrawal of the state financial support (Phillimore and Goodson 2008, 18-19). In the past ten years the West Midlands has become one of the major areas of dispersal of asylum seekers and Birmingham hosts about 6000 asylum seekers and between 10,000 and 15,000 refugees (Jeffares et al. 2008, 11).

<sup>6</sup> Birmingham City Council is not directly responsible for the development of an integration strategy for refugees and asylum seekers. This is instead the responsibility of the West Midlands Strategic Partnership for Asylum and Refugees. The Partnership has recently developed an all-encompassing strategy for integration of these groups (WMSPAR 2007) and a Regional Social Inclusion Strategy in 2006.

topics are raised which are of particular interest for this chapter. The strategy explicitly assumes that employment will favour asylum seekers' integration in the majority society.

The vast majority of asylum seekers are young men who are keen to work. Many of them come from societies where there is no welfare provision, no unemployment benefit so that being without work or a means to provide for yourself (and any dependants) has serious consequences. Being without work may therefore be perceived as shameful and demeaning. (Birmingham City council 2002c, 9)

A similar perspective is given on Birmingham City Council's website.

Refugee communities and individuals have contributed, and continue to contribute to Birmingham's economic and professional life as workers in industry, the service economy or the public sector. They also add to the city's religious pluralism and social and artistic diversity. ([www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk))

These excerpts illustrate a narrative which constructs asylum seekers as possessing a strong work ethics and as being a resource for the city. This narrative challenges the accusations that blame migrants and asylum seekers in particular for living on welfare benefits. It signals that asylum seekers who are going to be considered members of the polity are those who enter the labour market, as the following statements confirm.

I guess we'd broadly agreed that access to employment gives you access to a community at work and it has huge benefits in terms of learning language and understanding the culture as well as making money. Asylum seekers can explore the new environment if you like so [employment] does open a variety of doors. (interview Randall)

Question: can we then say that employment is the key to [asylum seekers'] integration?

Answer: you're absolutely right, you can't preach to a man on empty stomach can you?

Q: indeed, but what is the impact on those who cannot or do not want to work? Is there any support for them?

A: you're right, we have to make a judgment on the basis that our general belief is that you can't live on air, and that employment is not just about having a job, it's not only about getting money and support, it's about one's integrity, one's beliefs about oneself and about purpose in the sense of achievement and membership. So employment has an impact which is much wider than monetary gain. But there are people who are not within that kind of process. (interview Barnes)

As in Malmö, paid work becomes the main route to community membership. Not to be employed is seen as “living on air” and as possibly leading to psychological distress and socioeconomic deprivation. While it is certainly true that unemployment can lead to unwanted dependency, one could question if all forms of unpaid activities can be seen as unrewarding.

The “working asylum seeker” narrative presents not only economic elements, but also cultural ones. Birmingham’s Strategy for the integration of newcomers claims that it is his “cultural background and the strong work ethic it fosters” (Birmingham City council 2002c, 9) which make an asylum seeker a hard worker. Rather than challenging stereotypical depictions of asylum seekers by emphasising the socioeconomic context from which they come, the Council makes culture the explanatory variable for their willingness to work. It is their culture that makes them work hard. The Strategy underlines also the significance of refugee community organisations. They play a

Pivotal role in the settlement of individuals and the integration of new communities. They can offer support to community members that is immediately culturally sensitive and they can interpret the needs of newcomers for statutory agencies and other service providers. (Birmingham City council 2002c, 16)

This narrative presents cultural diversity as a strength. Culture fosters a particularly strong working ethics and cultural groups provide support and means to inclusion in the majority society. Clearly, this document was issued before community cohesion became a buzz-word. Intra-community cohesion was still seen as a positive element in Birmingham and not as a force which could undermine the city’s harmony.

There is a significant discrepancy between the narrative construction of asylum seekers and the correlated policy solutions. Asylum seekers’ integration seems to be under-prioritised by Birmingham City Council. Several of my interviewees said that with the Conservatives coming into power in Birmingham, refugees have been seen with more scepticism than during the Labour government. This has entailed a decreased incidence of the “working asylum seeker” narrative in policy documents.

The Labour party was in control when I took this job. Even though they weren’t standing on the Town Hall shouting “We welcome migrants and asylum seekers” they were quite happy for us to go ahead. The current administration is much less happy. The person who’s responsible for housing has only been persuaded to continue with the contract, as we had to re-contract since he’s been running, because my boss and I demonstrated that this is an effective way of dealing with

refugees. So he's been prepared to renew the contract on that basis only. So there is not so much sympathy for [asylum seekers]. (interview Randall)

We haven't got the same level of political support [in Birmingham as in Coventry] and we actually have had problems which have settled down recently with a particular city councillor who has spoken out negatively to the press about asylum seekers and refugees [...] and that has been quite challenging. (interview B2)

The fact that the Conservative Cabinet member for housing referred to asylum seekers as "some scumbag [who] can jump on the back of a lorry, come over under the tunnel and never expect to do a day's work in his (expletive) life" (*Birmingham Post* February 6, 2008) is telling in this respect. The same councillor imposed a no-luxuries ban on the 260 homes for asylum seekers which should have been furnished only to basic standards and should not include television sets paid for by the Council (*Birmingham Post* February 6, 2008). The fact that, prior to 2003, there were no provisions for refugees shows that this group did not represent a highly prioritised political issue for Labour either. Despite the ambitious policies that were suggested to facilitate the integration of newly arrived migrants, the funding that the Labour administration allocated for implementing the 2002 Strategy was minimal. A large number of planned Strategy actions were not allocated any funding or were granted funding from existing budgets (Birmingham City Council 2002c, 20-22). The policy officers I have been in contact with hardly mentioned the Strategy, which has been replaced by the 2006 Community Cohesion Strategy. The move towards a more generic policy strategy risks disregarding the specific material and psychological needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

## 8.3 Bologna

There are three predominant policy narratives that construct migrants in Bologna. The first echoes the security narrative discussed in the previous chapter and links undocumented migrants to criminality. This narrative, which I call "criminal alien" narrative, presents migrants as potential threats to the social order. During the right-wing administration in power between 1999 and 2004, this narrative became tainted by cultural tones. Migrants were depicted as threats to the cultural survival of the city. The second narrative used by the City Council presents migrants with a legal permit of stay as an economic resource for the city and is labelled "economic resources" narrative. This narrative juxtaposes migrants to Italians and positions the former at a lower level of the social

hierarchy than Italians. The third important narrative constructing migrants partly contradicts the previous two narratives. It stresses the importance of migrants' political participation on equal terms to Italians and has become more predominant since the Cofferati administration won the local elections in 2004. I call this a "participating migrant" narrative.

### ***Criminal alien narrative***

This narrative emerged in all the policy documents I have analysed. It derives from the narrative of security which has defined the issue of integration in Bologna and it links undocumented migrants to criminality. What emerges is a narrative construction of migrants as an essentially deviant group of people. The following excerpts coming from policy documents issued by the three administrations in power between 1997 and 2007 exemplify this narrative.

The Council must break the perverse links between clandestine migration and criminality. This can be achieved by giving a permit of stay to those who can demonstrate that they are employed and by regulating seasonal employment. (Comune di Bologna 1995b, 17)

Bologna must be able to respond seriously to the difficult issue of *extracomunitari*'s immigration and integration. It needs to fight against criminality and the correlated insecurity mainly by controlling this phenomenon. It needs to embark upon a serious repression of all forms of social degeneration linked to migrants' illicit stay, drug dealing, and prostitution. (La tua Bologna 2008)

The City Council must focus on protecting the weakest ones by guaranteeing them full citizenship [...]. At the same time it must be clear that those who behave unlawfully will not be included. (Comune di Bologna 2005, 1)

The "criminal alien" narrative created a causal relationship between illegal migrants and criminal behaviour. This is particularly clear in the first two quotes above. The left-wing Cofferati administration was less explicit in relating undocumented migrants to criminality. However, the administration used the "criminal alien" narrative in such a way that it presents legality as superior to solidarity.

Legality is fundamental if one wants to provide a politics of solidarity and justice which supports the weakest ones. If the law is not respected, it is very difficult to act against poverty. (Cofferati in *Corriere della Sera* May 23, 2005)

The narrative used by the Cofferati administration positioned migrants who lived in Bologna without a regular permit of stay as lawbreakers, disregarding the difficulties faced by migrants in renewing their permits after the introduction of the Law 189/2002.

During the Guazzaloca administration, the “criminal alien” narrative assumed not only social traits (referring to migrants as potential causes of social unrest), but also cultural ones. Migrants were seen as a potential threat to the city’s collective identity. The statements below illustrate this.

We need to be seriously concerned about saving the nation’s identity. [...] not all cultures are prone to coexistence [...] Europe is either going to remain Christian or it will become Islamic [...] there is no right to invasion! A country can decide who will migrate to it. (Biffi, quoted in *Repubblica* September 14, 2000)

This is contrasted with an understanding of Bologna’s identity as essentially Catholic<sup>7</sup>:

Bologna [...] was born and has been shaped by an evangelic culture [...]. The “face” of this city [...] is undeniably a “Christian” face. (Biffi 2000, 75)

The administration supported the Archbishop’s claims and said that

The main responsibility of our administration is to maintain the soul of Bologna and to pass it intact to future generations. (Deputy-mayor Salizzoni in *Repubblica* November 5, 2000)

Anne Norton argues that political identity often emerges with greater clarity when the polity is confronted with individuals whose inclusion is ambiguous: “the differentiation of the subject and the object, self and other, requires both an object of likeness and object of difference” (1988, 53)<sup>8</sup>. During Guazzaloca the

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<sup>7</sup> This disregarded Bologna’s past as the bastion of the Communist party.

<sup>8</sup> This is obviously affected by the socio-political climate of the moment. In the case of Italy, migrants from the *mezzogiorno* were previously considered the other and subjected to strong discrimination and racism. As the socio-economic structure of Italian society changed and the net-immigration to Italy begun to be larger than net-emigration, the *extracomunitario* became the Italians’ new other (see also Buonfino 2004). A diachronic comparison shows that certain groups were positioned as more criminal than others. Albanians have been the target of heavy stereotypification during the 1990s (Mai 2002). In more recent times Romanians, and in particular Romanian Roma, have become the target of racist rhetoric which has exploded in xenophobic raids against Roma camps.

objects of likeness were the citizens of Bologna, whereas the object of difference were migrants and in particular non-Christians.

### ***Economic resources narrative***

This narrative has co-existed with the “criminal aliens” narrative during the Vitali and Cofferati administrations, but was significantly less predominant during Guazzaloca. It portrays migrants as economic resources for Bologna. The Vitali administration presented migrants’ cultural diversity as a resource for the city.

The Municipality of Bologna believes that *differences* (individual, social, cultural, ethnical) are great values and resources to society and that humankind becomes enriched rather than threatened by them (Comune di Bologna 1998, in Pero’ 2005, 839).

A similar rhetoric was adopted by Cofferati. The yearly report from the Intercultural Integration Service states that:

The different linguistic, cultural, professional and relational qualifications of migrants and autochthonous are [...] something we should value. (Comune di Bologna 2008a, 4)

The Guazzaloca administration adopted this narrative as well. Having positioned migrants as a potential security threat, the migrant who might have been considered a member of the polity could not be other than “honest”, “hard-working” and willing to embrace the city’s identity (Comune di Bologna 1999)

During the Cofferati administration migrants’ cultural diversity was not the only aspect to be valued. Several of my interviewees pointed to the fact that migrants were necessary for the city. A union representative pointed to their importance in particular sectors of the labour market.

The municipality provides good public elderly care, but it’s not enough. That’s why maids [*badanti*] are of fundamental importance. (interview Bortolotti)

A senior policy officer drew attention to the city’s changing demographic and urban profile.

Bologna’s demographic development is clear: the autochthonous [*sic!*] population is decreasing and the migrant population is rising. So it’s clear that even if there is a demographic decline, this is contained by migratory flows. [...] There has been some resistance obviously, but I think that [migration] brings significant



advantages. For instance small family-run food shops have reappeared in the city centre... they disappeared for many years and the city centre was like a desert... they disappeared because the big supermarkets made them not profitable, which is true but these economic parameters seem to be good enough for the families who arrive here and re-open these shops. From a service-perspective, this changes a lot for the city because to have a food shop down the road where one lives and which is open till late - something that has never happened in Bologna before - and that can deliver the groceries to the many elderly people living in the city centre...this changes the way one can live in the city. (interview Tomesani)

The deputy-mayor Scaramuzzino reiterated these points.

If you think that we have about 30 percent of the population which is more than 65 years old... without foreigners our city would be only for old people. [...] we must support an economic class which can invest in business and some foreigners have shown that they are able to do so if you think about the many new businesses they have started. [...] [to live in a culturally diverse city is an advantage] because my children may have to go abroad and they must be used to interact with people with different traditions. I think it can help to open our children's minds. (interview Scaramuzzino)

This narrative positions migrants in a very different light compared to the "criminal alien" narrative. The story recast migrants in positive terms as care providers and as necessary for developing the city culturally and demographically. However, the fact that migrants are generally employed in occupations that Italians do not want anymore and that they are often overqualified for the occupations they have in Italy (Fondazione Ethnoland and Dossier Caritas Migrantes 2009)<sup>9</sup>, signals that the "economic resource" narrative works only in as far as migrants are not competing with Italian workers. The quote by a representative of the Italian employers' federation (*Confindustria*) illustrates this perspective.

The businessman is in the weakest position [compared to his migrant workers]. It seems strange but that's how it is because it is only migrants who would do some jobs and you find yourself in a position where the Italians are very disciplined and are kept under pressure by the factory owner and the *extracomunitario* is given a

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<sup>9</sup> Recent research shows that 25 percent of migrants in Italy work under difficult conditions (evening or night shifts; Sunday shifts). Around one third of all migrants work in low-skilled occupations. However, studies show that half of the employed migrants have a university degree, 36 percent has attended high school education, and only 14 percent has attended the education system for five years or less (Fondazione Ethnoland and Dossier Caritas Migrantes 2009).

lot of freedoms according to his [*sic!*] necessities. So if he has to leave for two months and a half he can do that because no-one could substitute him and an Italian would never be able to leave for two months and a half. (interview Bo1)

The “economic resource” narrative implies juxtaposed group constructions, Italians and migrants. Migrants are constructed as taking on jobs which Italians are not willing to do anymore such as running mini-markets or working in factories. This allegedly gives them some advantages as the statement above shows. In a more benign use of this narrative, migrants are portrayed as being satisfied with taking on jobs which give them smaller incomes than the occupations taken by Italians. While this may be true, it does not challenge the socioeconomic structures which constrain migrants’ employment opportunities. Italians, on the other hand, are described as either “disciplined” and supposedly not able to claim the same benefits as migrants or as beneficiaries of the services provided by migrants, e.g. elderly care or grocery delivery.

### ***Cofferati and the participating migrant narrative***

During the Cofferati administration the municipality of Bologna has also used a narrative emphasising the importance of migrants’ participation in the public sphere and in the decision-making processes. As discussed in the previous chapters, the administrations in power before 2004 stressed the value of migrants’ participation. The use of this story was not predominant, however. The mechanism of political participation; the *Forum Metropolitano*, was not consulted by the Council. Hence, while migrants were officially positioned as active actors in defining immigrant policies and while their cultural diversity was conceived of as a resource for Bologna, the analysis of the implementation of these narratives shows that migrants were excluded from the Council’s decision-making process<sup>10</sup>.

The Cofferati administration’s use of the “participating migrant” narrative signalled a shift in how migrants were perceived. As migratory patterns indicated that Bologna’s foreign population was intending to stay, demonstrated by an increased number of family reunifications<sup>11</sup>, migrants were increasingly

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<sup>10</sup> This finding contests Caponio’s argument (2006) which only analyses the official narratives adopted by Vitali.

<sup>11</sup> In the region Emilia Romagna, circa 60-65 percent of the permits of stay are given for working reasons. The second most frequent reason is family reunifications (Regione Emilia Romagna 2008).

positioned as potential members of the Bolognese polity. The excerpt from the City Council's strategy paper issued after the public deliberation on migration illustrates this.

Migrants feel that they are a resource for our country, and rightly so. They ask to fully participate in [the country's] development. (Comune di Bologna 2008b, 1)

This political narrative positions migrants as potentially equal citizens to Italians. The establishment of the consultative bodies at the neighbourhood level in 2007 can be interpreted as the embodiment of this narrative as they are meant to foster a sense of responsibility for and belonging to the community migrants live in. However, considering the limited power given to these organs, one could question their real effect in making migrants participants in the decision-making process. We have seen in the previous chapters that the consultative bodies are not only seen as a means to provide some form of political representation to migrants. To participate in them is also seen as a "democratic exercise". Migrants can learn how politics are made in a democratic country, as the Deputy-mayor Scaramuzzino put it (interview).

The policies targeting youth also expressed the "participating migrant" narrative. These policies aim at building a common sense identification among Bologna's young generations regardless of their ethnic background. For instance the intercultural centre Zonarelli has sponsored the creation of a web-television ("Crossing Tv") organised by 17 teenagers of different backgrounds (Italian and not). The scope of the project was to

Produce representations and imaginaries that go beyond stigmatisations and prejudices [this is particularly important for the so-called second generation of migrants who] can exit the "ethnic" cages and can reinterpret their multiple identifications. The communicative power of these young people lies in being able to use new non-"communitarian" languages. ([www.zonagidue.it](http://www.zonagidue.it) *Il progetto in atto. Crossing Tv*)

In 2009, 24 teenagers were involved in the project and it reaches a large number of young people in the area<sup>12</sup>. The Council has also launched a project in schools where older pupils are given the role of mentors for four or five younger pupils. As a way of acknowledging the importance of their role, mentors are given about 100 Euro every month (interview Scaramuzzino). These and similar projects are

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<sup>12</sup> Exact numbers are however unavailable.

an illustration of how new collective narratives of belonging can be developed and of how trust can be built and used to challenge stereotypical assumptions about a perceived out-group.

During the Cofferati administration there has been a notable shift in how migrants are addressed. It was frequent during the previous administrations to label them *extracomunitari*, stressing their alien-ness and tapping on narratives depicting migrants as criminals and as illegally resident in the country. During Cofferati the label *cittadini stranieri* (foreign citizens) was consistently used to refer to migrants. This affected how the migrants were perceived. They were indeed legally resident in the territory, but they also participated actively in the neighbourhood where they were living, in the school, through third sector organisations and through representative democracy, i.e. through the consultative bodies. To clarify, I do not see a rhetoric shift in labelling migrants as the most important expression of changed attitudes towards them. Yet, to label migrants in more inclusive terms signals a potential shift in the public positioning of that group.

## **8.4 Comparison from the light of caring multiculturalism**

Between 1997 and 2007 the municipalities of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna, respectively, differed in their narrative constructions of migrants. Table 8.1 below summarises my findings. The identified policy narratives have been categorised in terms of how they position migrants in relation to the majority society. As discussed in chapter 4, this relationship can be described at the most general level as social, economic, civic/political, and cultural. The policy narratives that could be described according to more than one category have been positioned in more than one box in the table. For instance, the criminal alien narrative adopted by Bologna City Council has described migrants as criminals in social terms (they may disrupt social order) and in cultural terms (they may threat the city's identity and culture).

	Social	Economic	Civic/political	Cultural
Malmö		*Employed migrant narrative *Narrative of competitiveness		* Migrants as strangers narrative
Birmingham	* Cohesive community narrative	* Working asylum-seekers narrative	* Cohesive community narrative	* Working asylum-seekers narrative
Bologna	* Criminal alien narrative	* Economic resources narrative	* Participating migrant narrative	* Criminal alien narrative (1999-2004) * Participating migrant narrative

**Table 8.1 Narrative constructions of the integrated migrant in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna**

In this concluding section I analyse the findings comparatively and assess the extent to which they hold the potential for adopting caring multiculturalism. I will mainly focus on the extent to which these narratives hold the potential for stimulating the development of a shared identity which is inclusive of both migrants and the majority society.

### ***Migrants as economic resources and the issue of voice***

All the municipalities construct migrants in economic terms. However, the content of these narratives is very different. In Malmö, paid work is conceived of as the gateway to integration. Thus the integrated migrant cannot be anything else but a person in full employment. This excludes parts of the population who, for whatever reason, do not or cannot enter the labour market and it devalues the job that is done by some of them in the private sphere, e.g. caring. Furthermore, Malmö perceives of migrants' cultural and linguistic competences as an economic resource for the city as it could attract international investors. In this sense it casts migrants as a potential resource for the city and as possessing cultural virtues which would make them valued members of the polity. Birmingham presents a similar perspective in its representation of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers possess knowledge that could benefit the development

of the city and their virtues are also expressed in cultural terms. For instance, it is assumed that it is their culture that gives them a strong working ethics.

Bologna City Council, on the contrary, has adopted a narrative which depicts migrants as an economic resource for the city because they take up the employment that Italians are no longer willing to engage in. Bologna's "economic resources" narrative is similar to the stories adopted by Malmö and Birmingham City Councils because it emphasises the economic advantage of migration. It does not present cultural elements, however. Instead this narrative construction is interwoven with narratives of security. This was particularly the case during the right-wing Guazzaloca administration when the good migrant was conceptualised not only as an employee, but also as an honest worker. This is linked to the informal character of the Italian economic organisation where migrants are particularly exploited. However, Guazzaloca put the burden of responsibility on migrants (they had to be honest workers) and not on the employer who, by not providing an employment contract, can avoid tax and social costs. In all three contexts, the integrated migrant is thus someone who is not an economic burden to the society. Another difference in how economic narratives are used by the three municipalities is worth mentioning. Malmö's and Birmingham's economic migrant narratives attempt to position migrants as being able to contribute to the recipient society on the same terms as the majority society. In Bologna instead, migrants are considered as a resource only in as far as they stay in the lower rungs of the socioeconomic spectrum. This means that they are narratively constructed as a resource because they take up jobs that Italians are no longer willing to do and because they provide certain services to Bologna's polity - e.g. care of elderly or grocery deliveries.

I have discussed previously some of the problems related to the narrative construction of integration which sees paid work as the main route into the recipient society. In the context of this chapter it is important to highlight how caring multiculturalism is able to challenge the dichotomy, central to all the case-study municipalities' construction of integration and of migrants, which counterposes the independence given by paid work and the dependence upon welfare benefits. The person who is in the labour market is constructed as a crucial contributor to the society. People who are not on paid work are invariably seen as being in a position of dependence from the state or from their family members and as not contributing to the society's development. This dichotomy focuses mainly on how the state understands dependence and independence and does not take into account the personal experience of dependence.

Caring multiculturalism, while acknowledging that paid work is important, also takes into account the extent to which an individual perceives him/herself to be in a position of unwanted dependency. This provides people with the opportunity to voice their own perceptions of the issue of dependency and of developing and presenting their own understandings of social contribution. What this challenges is the power of expert knowledge to monopolize the definition of how we can contribute to society (White 2000; Williams 2002). This represents an assertion that the experience of migrants and their own definition of their needs are central to the organization and delivery of immigrant policies. Drawing from an ethics of care, caring multiculturalism recognises that we learn the civic virtues of responsibilities, of tolerance of others, of trust, of recognizing diversity, as much through caring activities as through paid work (Sevenhuijsen 1998). Narrative constructions of migrants as potential members of the recipient society need to take in consideration this broader and more contextualised understanding of membership and participation to society.

### ***Cultural narratives and the risk of exclusion***

The findings of my analysis show another interesting similarity between the three municipalities. They all make use of cultural narratives in their construction of migrants. This is not strange *per se*, because an out-group (in this case, migrants) is often defined by its different cultural characteristics compared to the in-group (here the recipient society). I would like to underline some implications of this in the cases studied, however.

In Malmö and in Birmingham migrants and asylum seekers are defined as strangers to the recipient society regardless of the length of their stay in the country. The narratives that define them build upon a dichotomy between the majority society and a stranger *invandrare*/asylum-seeker. These narratives conceal the multiple positions – age, gender, educational background, wealth and class – that form an individual's self, and which has long been recognised for the majority society. We rarely if ever view the Swedish or British community as somehow bonded by its shared ethnicity, or culture. And yet, the dominant narratives in Malmö and Birmingham reproduce this view as far as migrants are concerned. Even when migrants are conceived as economic resources for the city, their differences from the majority society make them valuable. Migrants are supposedly bearers of cultural and linguistic knowledge that Swedes or Britons do not have. Their value lies in being strangers. They are therefore put in

a position of liminality, i.e. “the threshold state ‘betwixt and between’ existing orders” (Norton 1988, 53). This occurs despite the fact that they are not only a crucial component of existing socioeconomic structures, but are also a crucial element in the development of the recipient society’s sense of the self (see chapter 3). This could have negative effects on the possibilities for developing a sense of attachment and belonging to the country of residence<sup>13</sup>.

Birmingham adopts a similarly homogenised understanding of ethnicity when it develops policy narratives about the Black and minority ethnic communities living in the city. This was clearly expressed in the “cohesive community” narrative where Black and minority ethnic communities’ needs were defined through a homogenising perception of groups. From the perspective of caring multiculturalism we need to adopt a non-ethnicised understanding of socioeconomic disadvantage and a different approach to community cohesion. In this context, it is crucial to recast the problem representations embedded in community cohesion policies. Caring multiculturalism would not position minorities as underachievers and disadvantaged. It would rather look at particular issues, e.g. educational underachievement or unemployment, and it would search for common denominators that are shared by people beyond their alleged group belonging. In line with contextual attentiveness, caring multiculturalism would engage the individuals that suffer from disadvantage in the formulation of the projects and policies that aim to improve their disadvantages. We can see some tendencies to work in this direction in the recent policy developments in Birmingham. The City Council runs a city which will soon not have a “white” majority. Therefore the Council has recently arrived at the conclusion that it cannot have a separate policy pillar for ethnic minorities. A new community strategy has been introduced, called “Birmingham 2026”, which mainstreams community cohesion policies to a larger extent than before. The examples of the Community Cohesion Forum and of other programmes supported by the Council seem however to suggest that there is a tendency to retain an understanding of the city as constituted by semi-homogeneous ethnic/faith communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Research conducted in the Netherlands (e.g. Korak 2003; Koopmans et al. 2005) demonstrate that despite the country’s approach to multiculturalism (despite what? – something appears to be missing in this sentence) has served to reproduce a national myth about the country’s presumed tolerance rather than truly promoting migrant participation in society (see also Essed 1991).



In Bologna, one cultural narrative used to define migrants has been very different than the ones adopted in Malmö and Bologna. The “criminal alien” narrative which was defined in social and cultural terms during the right-wing coalition led by Guazzaloca positioned migrants not only as cultural aliens to the Bolognese, and indeed Italian, society and traditions. It also constructed them as threats to their survival. In order to construct a harmonious and singular sense of the self, the Guazzaloca administration created narrative and institutional boundaries between the (essentialised) Bolognese culture and the (equally essentialised) migrants’ cultures. To cope with an abstract feeling of insecurity and unease over the potential loss of a group’s identity, a withdrawal into psychological and physical safe-heavens is a strategy commonly used by groups. In-group members can respond to perceived challenges by strengthening and reconstructing the narratives that define the boundaries of their collective identity (Bar-Tal 2000a; Kinnvall 2004; 2006). In order to secure the boundaries of their collectivity, the Guazzaloca administration reinterpreted the allegedly threatened Bolognese culture through the lens of essentialism. The Bolognesi were Catholics, moved by Christian solidarity and tolerance - despite the anti-clerical past of the city. Migrants, and Muslims in particular, were threatening this unity with their different customs and mores. In such interpretations, identity and culture are understood as finite and self-sufficient bodies of contents, traditions, and customs and are juxtaposed to other equally essentialised cultures. The use of a narrative which recast migrants as deviant and potentially dangerous precludes the opportunities of developing a sense of collective self which includes migrants as well as the majority society. Instead the cultural dimension of the “participating migrant” narrative used by Cofferati opens up for the establishment of such a shared identification.

It is interesting to compare the Swedish and British definition of migrants to the one used in Bologna. As discussed in chapter 5, in Italy migrants are usually defined through negative adjectives that point at their otherness (*extracomunitari*) or at their alleged criminal activities or status (*clandestini*). Yet, my findings demonstrate that migrants in Bologna, particularly during the Cofferati administration, are increasingly being addressed as *cittadini stranieri* (foreign citizens). While they are still positioned as aliens, much of the negative implications in the words *extracomunitari* or *clandestini* is taken away. This illustrates the variations between local and national levels in the categorisation system public policy actors adopt to define migrants. It also signals in my view a willingness to adopt a less stereotypical understanding of migrants which might challenge the widespread negative perceptions of migrants among Italians and

create a fertile ground for the development of common ties. These efforts are however curtailed by the use of a “criminal alien” narrative which foster distrust and possibly fear for migrants among the majority society.

### ***Migrants and ethnic minorities participating in the polity***

Both Birmingham and Bologna make use of civic/political narratives in positioning migrants. They both somehow emphasise that an integrated migrant should participate in the public sphere either through the third sector (Birmingham), or through alternative bodies of representation (Bologna). Interestingly, Malmö City Council does not use narratives which present migrants as potential participants in the civic/political life of the city. This takes place despite the fact that the Council emphasises the importance of participating in the voluntary sector to improve migrants’ integration and notwithstanding the fact that migrants have voting rights in Sweden.

In Birmingham, involvement in local voluntary organisations has always been important. As community cohesion became more predominant as a policy approach, certain community involvement has been emphasised more than other. During the peak of multiculturalism, engagement in one’s ethnic or faith community was often perceived in positive terms. The community cohesion agenda adopted in the early 2000s has instead begun to evaluate community engagement positively in as far as voluntary work could benefit of the wider society and not only particular communities.

These political narratives not only emphasise the importance of participation. The municipalities of Malmö and Bologna assume that migrants lack knowledge about the structure and political processes that characterise a democratic state. Participation in the voluntary sector and in consultative bodies becomes a democratic exercise. Migrants seem to need to undergo a process of socialisation to learn how things are done in the recipient society. In Malmö this was made evident in the development of the project Link-workers. The Link-worker project runs the risk of positioning migrants as deficient in relation to the majority society. While it is important to provide them with correct information about their rights and duties, substantial integration in a post-migratory phase must concern the majority society as well. To provide the opportunity to establish dialogue which can foster new stories focusing on positive reciprocity is pivotal to the construction of a cohesive and diverse society.

The assumption that migrants do not fully know how the recipient society functions homogenises the category of “migrant”. It disregards the fact that

migrants who decide to engage in politics may have a past of political activism and/or may have been brought up in the recipient country, thus receiving the same civic education as the majority society. In this context, it is important to remember that migrants have the right to vote in local elections in Sweden. However the turnouts at the ballots are lower for migrants/minorities than for Swedes. To overlook this means that the causes for such disengagement with party politics are left unnoticed. Malmö City Council seems to assume that the formal right to vote is a good-enough measure of integration. It does not question the lack of substantial participation in the political process or that one needs to be empowered to make full use of access to formal citizenship.

A paternalistic attitude is embedded in the narrative construction of migrants as lacking basic knowledge of the recipient society. Paternalism is the flip-side of care, something caring ethicists warn of (e.g. Tronto 1993; Sevenhuijsen 1998). If not handled carefully, well-meaning practices such as orientation courses can disempower and disable the targets of this type of work, i.e. migrants. Paternalism maintains narratives that position migrants as strangers and aliens to the recipient society. It furthermore institutionalises a class of experts who identify issues and develop certain means to come to terms with them. The crystallization of this relationship silences the voices of those understood as “needy” (White 2000). Caring multiculturalism advocates instead a more participatory process of defining needs and knowledge. Integration policies informed by caring multiculturalism would therefore not assume *a priori* migrants’ lack of knowledge of the recipient society, but assess together with migrants what type of knowledge is needed. A greater degree of participation may foster trust for the state and possibly foster a sense of identification with it.

To narratively construct migrants as potential participants to the social and political life of the society in which they live is in line with caring multiculturalism. The boundaries of what constitutes participation should be developed in an attentive and responsive way, in line with caring ethics. This means it should be defined together with citizens themselves. Understandings of the “common good” and of the “political” could then be redefined in broad terms in order to encompass the kind of informal politics in which women often take the lead and the struggles of oppressed groups more generally (Lister 1997).

## 8.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have identified a number of narratives that construct migrants in relation to the majority society. I found a number of narratives recasting migrants in positive terms. According to these narratives migrants are mainly conceived of as economic resources for the city. The Swedish and the British cases tend to be more inclusive of their definition of migrants as an economic resource. Bologna instead sees migrants as an economic resource for the city only if they do not challenge their position in the lower ends of the social spectrum. They are a resource mainly because they fill particular labour needs. While this in practice may be what happens in Birmingham and Malmö as well, the narratives adopted by the two City Councils are not so explicit. The analysis has also shown that migrants and ethnic minorities in Malmö and Birmingham are defined according to their cultural and ethnic differences. This, I have argued, position migrants and ethnic minorities as alien to the majority society and essentialises their differences. Similarly, the civic/political narratives that define migrants in Bologna position them as lacking basic knowledge of the recipient society. This is also expressed in the “migrants as strangers” narrative used in Malmö. This undervalues some migrants’ knowledge of political life and democratic practices and expresses a paternalistic authority exercised in the process of defining migrants’ needs and skills. In Bologna, during the Guazzaloca administration, migrants were constructed as cultural threats and were alienated if they failed to embrace the city’s identity and culture. The narrative used in Bologna which depicts migrants as a potential threat is particularly problematic when seen from caring multiculturalism. It risks jeopardising any attempt to foster a shared sense of identity which can bring together migrants and the majority society, such as some of the initiatives funded by the municipality of Bologna under the Cofferati administration which targeted young people.

Taken together, the policy narratives used to narratively construct migrants seem to hold little potential for adopting caring multiculturalism. In those cases when the narratives present migrants in positive terms, they do so by emphasising the essential differences between migrants and the recipient society. In other cases, negative narrative constructions of migrants gain visibility in the public debate. During the Cofferati administration, these narratives compete with other narratives which emphasise the commonalities between migrants and the majority society. They jeopardise any attempt to foster a sense of shared identity. In the following concluding chapter, I bring together the findings of the three empirical chapters. This provides us with a more complete picture of which

institutional opportunities and policy narratives in Malmö, Birmingham, and Bologna are more likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism.

## 9 Conclusions

It is a matter of fact that Western European states are becoming increasingly diverse and are affected by migration flow at the political, economic, social and cultural levels. The nation-states have to address the challenges that this may entail. Importantly, they have to develop a balanced relationship between the state, the majority society, and migrant communities. How can nation-states mobilise loyalty from these groups? Do they want to? What kind of rights and socioeconomic goods should the state give in exchange for this loyalty? Multicultural theories have attempted to do so by proposing policy and social revisions and normative frameworks which, albeit appealing, are not anchored in a contextualised understating of social action. A key problem with their de-contextualised understanding of how change can be introduced is that advocates of multiculturalism run the risk of proposing revisions that cannot possibly be implemented across different types of contexts and situations. In contrast to this approach, I have advocated that theories and normative frameworks need to be empirically informed and tested against existing socio-political contexts. This means that a theory of multiculturalism needs to be embedded in the investigation of the discursive contexts in which it is supposed to be applied. We need to ask how the state in question conceives of the issues of immigration and migrants' integration. In this way we will understand the thresholds migrants have to pass in order to become members of that polity. We also need to understand how migrants are positioned in relation to the majority society in order to gauge the extent to which they are considered potential members of the polity. Furthermore, we need to recognise that the national and local institutional environments are of pivotal importance in enabling migrants to participate in the polity and feeling a sense of identification with it.

This thesis has tried to develop a contextualised theory of multiculturalism, called "caring multiculturalism". In this concluding chapter, I first summarise the main tenets of caring multiculturalism and contrast it with other multicultural theories. Secondly I present the lessons learned from the empirical findings. I state which institutional and narrative frameworks offer favourable conditions for adopting caring multiculturalism and which ones create negative stimuli for it. Finally, I discuss how caring multiculturalism can develop further and suggest some future research directions.

## 9.1 Summing up caring multiculturalism

The point of departure of this study is theoretical. In the first part, I have developed a transformative theory of multiculturalism, “caring multiculturalism”, which relies upon the insights of feminist multiculturalism, caring ethics and social psychology. Caring multiculturalism differs from most theoretical literature on multiculturalism in several respects. First, it adopts a narrative understanding of culture and identity which opens up for the introduction of new narratives of belonging. These narratives may foster cognitive transformation understood as a new shared sense of identification which could bring the majority society and migrant groups together. This contrasts to the view put forward by multiculturalism which advocates the establishment of a political community which is not more than the sum of its individual parts, i.e. inhabited by different cultural groups. Second, caring multiculturalism is attentive to the institutional and narrative context in which the practical policies of multiculturalism are implemented. This has several implications. Caring multiculturalism does not suggest a universalistic approach for reorganising immigrant policies. Again, this stands in contrast to multicultural theories which tend to be de-contextualised and, consequently, to suggest solutions to the challenges posed by increased ethnic and cultural diversity which are abstract and difficult to implement. Furthermore, the researcher is able to use contextual attention to propose ways of challenging unequal relations of power between and within groups. From the perspective of caring multiculturalism, a researcher can assess what is considered as valuable knowledge in a particular context, to gauge the extent to which the needs of the targets of immigrant policies are listened to, and to question the power of particular people in putting forward claims about a community.

I have argued that only by examining the political and discursive environment of a specific context we can assess what may favour the implementation of caring multiculturalism. Therefore I have conducted a systematic comparative analysis of the mechanisms of political participation provided to migrants by the municipalities of Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna. I have also compared the policy narratives used by public policy actors to define the issue of migrants’ integration and to characterise migrants. The empirical analysis has provided me with insights about which institutional and narrative opportunities are likely to favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. Through cross-national and cross-city research I have arrived at a nuanced understanding of how immigrant policies operate that would have been difficult

to gauge from a single case-study. The variations between the three cases, at both national and local level, have ensured that I could identify a relatively broad, albeit not exhaustive, range of policies that could be adopted in the domain of immigrant policies. Comparison has enabled me to gauge institutional and narrative opportunities could favour the implementation of caring multiculturalism.

## 9.2 Lessons learned - constraining factors

The empirical analysis of immigrant policies in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna shows that the adoption of caring multiculturalism can be hindered by a number of institutional and narrative constraints. Institutionally, the local state can adopt a strictly top-down approach in developing immigrant policies. This was the case of Malmö and, to a certain extent, of Bologna. None of the municipalities engaged in a dialogue with the beneficiaries of immigrant policies and of their correlated programmes. This was particularly clear in the case of Malmö where there is no institutionalised dialogue with the migrant communities. Instead the municipality relies on expert knowledge in assessing the needs of migrants. This was clear in the projects *Integration i förening* and *Trappan*. In Bologna a body of consultation, the *Forum metropolitano*, has been established since 1997. The City Council hardly collaborated with it, however. A top-down approach to policymaking constrains the implementation of caring multiculturalism. It does not challenge the authority to define what counts as integration and to determine what recipients need. This approach positions people external to the recipient group as having expertise about the latter's needs. It undermines the trust for the policies implemented. It furthermore curtails the possibilities that the recipient group may feel a sense of inclusion to the polity because they are positioned as mere recipients of care rather than as agents involved in interpreting their needs. This is what I have called "power of needs interpretation". Caring multiculturalism advocates instead the expansion of what kind of knowledge counts as relevant and suggests therefore that the recipients of immigrant policies should be included to a much larger extent in the process of defining needs and finding solutions to address them.

An interrelated problem is to establish who has the power to voice the needs of migrants. I have called this "power of problem setting". Leaders may express the needs of their communities, but they may also present stories which exclude a number of members of that community. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Birmingham. The City Council has a long tradition of formalised



consultation with ethnic and faith groups. This was done through the Standing Consultative Forum in the 1990s and through the recently established Community Cohesion Forum. In both cases, the main interlocutors were community leaders. To engage mainly with community representatives runs the risk of listening to only a partial interpretation of a group's needs and to conceal the plurality of experiences and needs embedded in every ethnic or faith community. Malmö City Council is aware of this and has therefore decided not to establish similar forums. However, it has not fully managed to find a balance between a top-down approach to policymaking and engagement with local communities. Caring multiculturalism advocates that the local state should engage with civil society, but that it should be wary of doing so mainly with ethnic/faith communities. An alternative is an issues-based approach in which what organisations and people do or know is used as an underpinning rationale rather than their ethnicity or faith. Shared problems, and shared goals to come to terms with these problems, can bring together people and they can mobilise around them. These groups can be alternative interlocutors with the state without using faith or ethnicity as a measure of entitlement. Dialogue needs to be established on the basis of an issue, service or need rather than on the need to represent some nominal community.

Another institutional constrain which may hinder the implementation of caring multiculturalism is the lack of political representation. As demonstrated by Koopmans et al. (2005), the more exclusive definition of national citizenship – expressed *inter alia* by citizenship rights for foreign nationals and nationality acquisition – the smaller the chances for migrants to intervene in the public debate and to identify with the recipient society. The lack of voting rights for foreign residents signals that the government of the recipient state does not consider migrants full-fledged members of its polity, but rather as a work-force that will eventually leave the country to which they have migrated. This is relevant for the Italian case, where non-EU migrants have no voting rights and therefore no efficient means to influence policymaking. It obviously had an impact on how Bologna City Council has been able to include migrants politically. This hinders the opportunities for migrants to actively participate in the community where they live and, ultimately, to feel a sense of belonging to it. To have voting rights is however not enough if migrants are not empowered to exercise these rights. In Sweden, for instance, migrants are guaranteed the right to vote at local elections. Given this institutional opportunity, we could have expected that the City Council would have narratively constructed political participation as important to migrants' integration. The analysis shows instead

that integration is mainly understood as participation in the labour market and only secondly as participation in voluntary organisations. No mention is done to participation in the elections despite the fact that their turn-outs at the voting ballots are very low compared to the majority society.

To focus mainly on the importance of rights for achieving equality runs the risk of overlooking other forms of civic participation, however. Caring multiculturalism calls for the acknowledgement of other forms of services to the community. This takes us to the issue of expert knowledge: the definition of participation should not be determined only by the state. The meaning of participation should be established in dialogue with the people living in the territory. This must apply even to non-nationals. As Erel (2009) recommends, we need to take seriously migrants' experiences of citizenship by focusing on how they are rights-claiming, as well as rights-bearing, subjects. Participation in the local community and engagement in shared goals which may bring together people from different faith and ethnic groups should be considered as equal important means to become members of a polity. Ultimately, the extension of individual rights to non-nationals should be coupled with inclusive narrative representations of migrants. This brings us to another factor that can hinder the adoption of caring multiculturalism: the existence of negative or separatist narrative depictions of migrants which position them as less-worthy of certain socioeconomic benefits and as non-members of the polity.

The empirical analysis shows that in Bologna migrants have been constructed as a security issue for a long time. Even when they are recast in positive terms as economic resources for the city, migrants are positioned in the lower end of the social spectrum in relation to Italians. They are valued only insofar as they take up jobs that the majority society is not willing to do anymore and because they live in neighbourhoods that have been abandoned by the younger generation of Italians. The fact that immigrant labour has been deliberately used to keep unskilled wages low is hardly acknowledged by Bologna City Council. In this sense, it is positive from the perspective of caring multiculturalism that the Council has recently tried to engage the so-called second generations of migrants in the Bolognese community. However, as long as migrants are portrayed as social and cultural threats to the well-being of the society in which they live any attempt to include them in the Italian society will be curtailed. Instead, repressive and punishing measures to control migrants may find legitimacy among the public. This has been the case with the security package introduced by the national government in 2009. It includes new rules making illegal immigration a criminal offence and banning children of illegal

immigrants from attending school or receiving health-care, something that the Law in immigration 286/1998 instead guaranteed.

Migrants can be excluded from the polity in which they reside through the use of narratives that emphasises their cultural differences. In the case of Malmö cultural differences are recast in positive terms. This, I have argued, contributes to position migrants as strangers to the majority society. They are an element of the group itself, near and far at the same time. They are near as they can import qualities into the host society. At the same time, they are distant since they bring with them a cultural diversity that defines the cognitive boundaries of the host society (Simmel 1950). To emphasise the differences between the majority society and migrant communities undermines the possibilities to engage in a transformative dialogue, where instead differences should be transcended. As Helen Haste (2004) points out, identification and emotional attachment are pivotal to become involved in a polity. It requires that “one have a sense of ownership of the issue, that one define oneself as a member of a group or as a holder of particular beliefs” (2004, 433). If this does not take place, migrant groups may turn away from the political life of the country they live in and rather focus on homeland politics. It has been demonstrated that in the Netherlands the effect of strongly emphasising migrants’ cultural differences has lead migrant communities to channel their identities and activities away from the recipient society’s public sphere (Korac 2003). This could also be the case of Sweden, but further research is needed in this respect. Koopmans et al. (2005, 80) warns that tendencies to emphasise separation between groups could have an impact on the majority society as well because it may work against its strong involvement with the situation of immigrants.

In chapter 4 I have argued that we could expect left-wing parties are generally more supportive of migrants’ integration and that a left-wing political tradition may have a positive impact on the adoption of participatory immigrant policies. The empirical analysis partly supports this. In the Italian case, for instance, the right-wing coalition led by Guazzaloca tended to portray migrants in negative terms and to favour assimilationist immigrant policies. I have demonstrated, however, that the extent to which right-wing parties can be less supportive of migrant rights and incorporation is constrained by the existing local and national immigrant incorporation approaches. The Guazzaloca administration was in part able to change the policy narratives depicting migrants, but it also continued funding immigrant polices thanks to regional and state money made available by the laws passed during the mandate 1999-2004 (most notably the Law 286/1998). Similarly, the Labour party in power in

Birmingham until 2004 adopted a community cohesion policy strategy that in many respects moved away from a traditional race relations approach of promoting groups' diversity. This was influenced by the national policies which promoted a community cohesion agenda following the 2001 Cattle Report (Independent Review Team 2001). However, neither Labour or the Conservative parties in Birmingham have managed to fully disassociate from race relation policies which institutionalise ethnic groups. Both administrations have relied on consultative bodies representing faith or ethnic communities. This shows that a contextualised approach is of fundamental importance in order to understand the opportunities for implementing policy changes in line with caring multiculturalism. Researchers cannot take for granted the specificities of the socio-political environment in which a normative framework might be applied.

### **9.3 Lessons learned – stimulating factors**

The adoption of caring multiculturalism can be favoured by a number of institutional opportunities and policy narratives. On the institutional side, to provide voting rights to non-national can foster a sense of identification with the polity in which migrants live. This has however to be accompanied by other factors. The local government should support and engage with civil society without only turning to ethnic or faith communities. The example of the Zonarelli centre in Bologna is a case in point. It is an arena where people with different backgrounds can meet. More importantly, its member associations have a stake in its organisation and are considered a legitimate interlocutor with which the municipality can engage. In a sense this is similar to Malmö's umbrella organisations MIP and MISO. There is one important difference, however. The Zonarelli is not the only interlocutor with the municipality. Formal bodies of representation such as the *consulte*, and the *Forum* before that, have that role in the first place. Similar organs do not exist in Malmö.

Community-based organisations are generally at an advantage over more traditional service providers because they are more closely embedded in the community and the relationships of trust with the people living there are potentially stronger. They are therefore critical actors who can gather and express the needs of the community. The state needs to build strong networks and cooperation with such communities in order to overcome paternalistic models of care. The empirical study provided examples of how this could be done in a way that comes to terms with the issue of representing faith or ethnic communities. Birmingham's ward committees are an example of how people

living in a community can influence policymaking in their neighbourhood and in their city. They represent a forum where people can express their needs but also where they can engage in a dialogue with others, understand the other's standpoint and possibly revise their own. In other words, the ward committees have the potential of been the locus where transformative dialogue and active participation can take place. Another example that I have discussed is the consultative body established by the Province of Bologna. Given that generally institutional opportunities provided to migrants to participate in the Italian political life are very narrow, the Migrants' Provincial Council has extensive power to influence the Province's policymaking. Because the candidates run mostly for non-ethnicity based lists, the Council's representatives do not represent single ethnic or faith groups, but rather broader interest groups. This enables the council to come to terms with the power of problem setting – at least theoretically. Since they are not spokespersons of particular ethnic or faith communities, the members of the Migrants' Council are not strongly motivated to put forward and favour the view of their community in order to maintain electoral support.

Approaches to immigrant policies that take into strong consideration the needs and lived experiences of migrants favour the implementation of caring multiculturalism. For instance, Malmö has adopted a more individualised approach to employment policies (which are tied to integration policies). In this way the municipality is able to target the individual needs of individuals. It can therefore potentially overcome stereotypical assumptions about migrants' needs and labour skills.

The implementation of caring multiculturalism seems also to be favoured by policy narratives that recast migrants as members of the polity. For instance, Birmingham City Council constructs ethnic minority communities as legitimate populations who are victims of racial discrimination and who have the right to participate. Similarly in Bologna during Cofferati, the Council depicted migrants' participation in the Bolognese political life as important. The changed migratory patterns to the city have made it difficult for the politicians to consider migrants only as workers because they and their families are settling down in the territory. These narrative constructions could have positive implications for both the migrant or ethnic minorities and for the majority society. The two groups are not positioned by institutions in an antagonistic and hostile way and there is therefore scope for engaging in a dialogue which aims at finding shared goals and common narratives of belonging. The use of positive narratives has to be consistent across several institutions to have a significant effect. As I pointed out

in the case of Bologna, if migrants continue to be positioned as potential criminals and if the national legislations which effectively exclude them from the Italian society are not questioned, any attempt to include migrants will be futile.

Another important factor which can create positive stimuli for the adoption of caring multiculturalism is the high level of responsibility taken by a municipality in addressing the exclusion of migrants. Malmö City Council provided the clearest example of how a public institution can operate to challenge discriminatory assumptions within its organisation. Through a range of projects directed at senior staff and through a conscious recruitment of personnel from non-Swedish background, Malmö City Council has not limited itself to the formal obligations it has towards its residents. I have criticised that most of the measures that the Council has supported in this respect have focused on intra-organisational changes and not necessarily targeted other organisations in the city. The rationale was that the Council would work as a role model for other employers and organisations to follow. In 2008 the Council established an Anti-discrimination committee which is supposed to promote human rights and equality. This body can potentially develop into an organism for monitoring and fostering equality in other organisations. However, the committee was funded only for two years and is currently being evaluated by the Council.

A factor that does not seem to play a significant role in promoting changes towards caring multiculturalism is the size of the minority population. We have seen that Malmö City Council has not adopted caring multiculturalism to a larger extent than Bologna, despite the fact that Malmö has a migrant population of 27 percent and Bologna of 9 percent. Malmö has not provided formal channels for political participation and it positions migrants as cultural strangers to the majority society. Obviously, participation in decision making and the existence of a political coalition which support migrants' interests are important (Browning et al. 1997). What also seems to matter is strong commitment from policy officers and politicians to include minorities on a par with the recipient society and not to magnify constructed differences between the groups. This is illustrated in the establishment of the Migrants' Provincial Council which has been given more extensive power than the neighbourhood consultative bodies supported by Bologna City Council. The Provincial Council provides migrants with a means to influence policymaking in domains that are not necessarily related to immigration and immigrant policies. In the context where non-nationals do not have voting rights, this represents an important attempt to view migrants as legitimate population living in Italy.

## 9.4 Possible developments of caring multiculturalism and further research directions

Certain structures of opportunities can favour social and cognitive transformation, the main pillars of caring multiculturalism. It seems to me that two issues must be addressed to a larger extent by caring multiculturalism. First is the question of equality and anti-discrimination. The values of caring ethics could help develop this. In particular, caring multiculturalism has to further unpack the relation between justice, attentiveness, responsivity and responsibility in the domain of immigrant policies. It has to address how a state can guarantee individual justice and listen to the needs of the recipients of immigrant policies without falling into particularism. Secondly, the framework proposed in this study must find a viable way of theorising the balance between the state and civil society. Caring multiculturalism advocates the importance of a strong state which can provide for the welfare of all its citizens and not service provision to the voluntary sector. At the same time it also calls for stronger community engagement for fostering a sense of common belonging to the locality one lives in. A further development of caring multiculturalism should explore the potential tensions between these two levels.

This study has empirically analysed which institutional opportunities and policy narratives may favour the adoption of caring multiculturalism. A natural continuation to this would be to study how migrants have experienced the practices of immigrant policies. Has the introduction of consultative bodies in Bologna affected migrants' sense of belonging to the city? What do migrants in Malmö perceive the problem of integration is? How do they understand of participation in the Swedish society? What do ethnic minority members in Birmingham think of the consultative bodies that the Council engages with? Would they see other forms of interaction with the Council? In this context, it would be important to analyse *how* the substantive participation of migrants and ethnic minorities occurs and what *specific actors* do for achieving this. The focus on the "doing" of participation combined with a focus on a broad range of actors would allow for more careful study of critical actors in migrants' substantive representation and participation. Regardless of the cultural/ethnic/faith community the belong to, these actors can be identified as those who initiate policy proposals on their own and often – but not necessarily – embolden others to take steps to promote policies for migrants, regardless of the number of migrant representatives present in a particular institution. The focus on how

inclusion and participation are acted upon also enables us to understand how the boundaries of political participation are redefined in people's day-to-day life and in their experiences of citizenship.

The combination of my study with the study of the responses to immigrant policies would provide sufficient information to understand the relationship between the majority society, the minority/migrant communities and the state. It would provide information about the top-down opportunities provided by institutions to stimulate cognitive and social change – which has been the aim of this study. It would also shed light on what motivates people to feel a sense of attachment and commitment to the place in which they live as well as what may prevent them from doing so.



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<sup>1</sup> All the details about the interviewees refer to their position at the time of the interview.

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