National, transnational or cosmopolitan?
Local immigrant organisations

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Abstract

This article examines how features of theoretical perspectives on transnationalism and cosmopolitanism can be found in categories that immigrant organisations use to describe their own activities. The empirical basis is the written statutes of 133 local membership-based immigrant organisations in Oslo. The article finds that the organisations mainly use national categories and that national belonging is formulated in terms of cultural activities. The use of national categories is, however, combined with many organisations’ aims to have transnational ties and activities along with features of cosmopolitan consciousness. Three main patterns emerge. Firstly, while all organisations aim to arrange cultural activities among their members living in Oslo, only a few organisations formulate aims of having a comprehensive transnational practice. Secondly, most organisations aim to combine either various forms of transnationalism and/or features of cosmopolitanism with efforts to integrate their members into Norwegian society, while there is hardly any local identity. Thirdly, the concept of cosmopolitanism is not mentioned by any organisation, although around 40 per cent of them refer to features of cosmopolitanism.

Key words: immigrant organisations, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism

Introduction

From different perspectives, several scholars argue that there is a need to construct appropriate new analytical concepts to perceive the interrelatedness of people and populations around the world (Amelina and Faist 2012; Beck 2002; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). The nation-state framework is no longer seen as capable of dealing with major social transformations. Consequently, there is a need to analyse processes and actors crossing the nation-state boundaries. In migration studies, some scholars concentrate on transnational social fields as a means of situating individual migrants within various social relationships
that connect them to various specific places (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller 2010). Other scholars emphasise that we need a cosmopolitan perspective to grasp the erosion of all kinds of boundaries dividing markets, states, civilisations, cultures and life worlds of people (Beck 1999; Fine 2007).

Of special interest for this article is the way in which immigrant organisations and organisational networks are at the core of several definitions of transnationalism (Faist 2010; Morales and Jorba 2010; Portes et al. 2007). The novel element that the concept of transnationalism seeks to capture is the immigrants’ regular and frequent ties and activities across national borders. It is also of interest for this article how several authors argue that transnational organisations and movements, including immigrant organisations, play a crucial role in building a global consciousness and a global civil society (Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Beck 1999; Held 2010). Such actors are seen as crucial because they help to generate the public consciousness and civic trust to open up the national agendas for transnational and cosmopolitan concern (Beck 1999).

The question raised here is if and how immigrant organisations’ crossing of nation-state borders is reflected in their descriptions of their own activities. Or more specifically, what kind of categories are the immigrant organisations using to describe their own activities? To answer this question, I examine the written statutes of 133 local membership-based immigrant organisations in Oslo. In each of these statutes, I investigate how these organisations formulate the main purpose of their organisation’s activities. Examination of the immigrant organisations’ conceptual categories throws light on how they formulate the cultural and political structures of meaning into which their social experiences are placed. These are categories of everyday social experiences, which are developed by ordinary people, and must be distinguished from the experience-distant analytical concepts used by social analysts (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 4). Some concepts, such as ethnicity and nation are marked by a mutual influence among their practical and analytical uses (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamato 2004). Inspired by scholarly works on transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, I determine central features of these analytical concepts. With the aim of identifying a main pattern among the organisations’ main purposes, I examine how these features can be found in the immigrant organisations’ conceptual categories. It is, therefore, not an analysis of the organisations’ actual practice.

Oslo is an interesting case because of the city’s thorough, bureaucratic registration of immigrant organisations. Immigrant organisations in Oslo must register in the public register to receive funding from the municipality. As part of this registration each organisation must formulate written statutes, which must include the main purpose of the organisation, the criteria for membership and how members are included in an internal democratic process. Only immigrant organisations that have adapted to these requirements by sending their statutes to the local administration are included in this analysis. The organisations’
descriptions of their own activities are therefore analysed within the framework of the local political opportunity structures.

Immigrant organisations are, however, not only objects of policies in their cities and countries of settlement, but also agents who pursue their own interests (Bauböck 2006; Hunger, Metzger and Bostanzi 2011; Yurdakul 2009). An increased emphasis on immigrant organisations as agents with civic engagement implies that integration is not seen as an outcome of the local and national political opportunity structures, but rather as a two-way process. Immigrant organisations can be seen as agents, who both cultivate transnational ties and raise socialisation performance, which can be supportive for migrants’ inclusion in their country of settlement (Amelina and Faist 2008).

Local studies, and especially studies of cities, have been increasingly prominent in the scholarly literature on immigrant incorporation (Scholten 2011). Several scholars have recommended a shift in focus from the nation-state towards studies of the city (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011; Sassen 2007). This shift in unit of analysis is related to the fact that most migrants choose to settle in cities, and findings from research in certain cities are often not representative of the whole nation-state (Vathi 2012). Within a Norwegian context, Oslo is special because every third immigrant and Norwegian-born person with immigrant parents in the country resides in Oslo. There are approximately 547,000 immigrants in Norway and 108,000 people born in Norway of immigrant parents. Approximately 170,200 people resident in Oslo are immigrants or Norwegian-born people with immigrant background (Statistics Norway 2012). These represent 29 per cent of the population, which is more than double the national average of 13.1 per cent.

The article is divided into three sections. The first section describes the political opportunity structures in Oslo, the framework for how immigrant organisations formulate their main purposes. The second section defines the analytical concepts, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, and discusses certain features relevant for this study of immigrant organisations’ practical concepts. The third section is an empirical analysis of how features of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are reflected in the immigrant organisations’ main purposes.

Political opportunity structures in Oslo

In the scholarly debate on migration, there is a tradition of studying how political opportunity structures have a bearing on the way minorities organise themselves and participate in civil society through collective action such as immigrant organisations (Bengtsson 2010; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni et al. 2005; Morales and Giugni 2011; Predelli 2008). There are several ways of defining political opportunity structures. A broad definition would cover laws, institutions, policies and cultures, which might be inclusive, but can also be exclusive and put constraints on minorities’ activities (Bauböck et al. 2006: 66).
Of special interest for this article is how local and national political opportunity structures are open to giving support to local immigrant organisations.

In Oslo, immigrant organisations must adapt to the local administrative requirements in order to gain access to public funding. They are not, however, expected to adapt to local or national culture because the maintenance of their cultural identity is seen as an asset to their administrative adaptation. The normative ideal underlying this policy is in line with the Nordic model of voluntary organisation (Takle 2012). Accordingly, immigrant organisations should both be internal schools of democracy for immigrants and represent the ethnic or national group's mutual interests externally in local democratic processes (White Paper No. 39 2006-7). This ideal is reflected in local regulations, which require immigrant organisations to be registered in public records and send their written statutes to apply for funding from the municipality (EMI 2012).

The Unit for Diversity and Integration (EMI) is a local administrative unit that regulates immigrant organisations' special support schemes in Oslo, and is separated from support schemes for other voluntary organisations in Norway. EMI gives immigrant organisations guidelines with advice on what is expected to be included in the statutes. According to these guidelines, the statutes represent an organisation's constitution. The guidelines indicate that the organisation's main purpose should include the ideas behind the establishment of that organisation, and also give organisations aims with which to work. Regarding membership, the municipality recommends the organisations only use one criterion related to their members' age, and it does not recommend any categorisation of membership on the basis of their members' country of origin. Moreover, the statutes should describe how the members are included in an internal democratic process. Neither the support schemes nor the guidelines make reference to the city of Oslo, even though these organisations are categorised as local immigrant organisations both in relation to funding and in the local administrative unit and registers.

Although immigrant organisations are not expected to adapt to the Norwegian national culture, requirements of adaptation to administrative procedures should be understood in light of the close relationship between state administration and national culture (Glick Schiller 2010: 31–2). In Norway, the national consciousness has been crucial to the establishment of state institutions, and there are close interactions between state administration and national culture (Takle 2010). In contrast to the advice the municipality gives immigrant organisations, it categorises immigrant organisations in relation to their members' countries of origin.

Methodology

According to EMI, immigrant organisations are recognised by having members with a background from outside their country of settlement. This definition is
used in this article as the immigrant organisations included are based on the administration’s categorisations, and the empirical data covers documents from EMI archives. In 2012 around 300 immigrant organisations and networks were registered at EMI. While EMI has categorised 164 of them as local, membership-based immigrant organisations with internal democratic structures, the remaining organisations are mainly looser networks and foundations and include some religion-based organisations. The exact number of immigrant organisations constantly changes. This article includes all statutes available from EMI’s archives as at autumn 2012, and these statutes belong to 133 of the 164 local, membership-based immigrant organisations. According to categories used in public registers in 2012, and the 133 organisations included in this analysis, there are 6 organisations with a background from Latin America; 41 from Africa; 49 from Asia east of Iran; 16 from Iran and the Middle East; and 21 from Europe, Turkey and Afghanistan (EMI 2012). Registration is a requirement to apply for funding, but not all organisations are funded.

Immigrant organisations are often difficult to reach in surveys, and therefore many scholars draw conclusions on the basis of low response rates (Predelli 2008). The advantage of using all available statutes as the basis for the empirical analysis is that the response rate is complete. The requirements in the statutes correspond in many ways with the form of a survey, as many paragraphs must be written. Some immigrant organisations are excluded from this analysis. Religious and nationally based immigrant organisations are excluded because they receive funding from the state, meaning support for these organisations is not routed through local administration. Looser networks and foundations are excluded because they are not necessarily membership-based and democratically structured.

Local immigrant organisations’ formulations of their main purposes have two different target groups. On the one hand, the formulations are made by and for the organisations and their members, and thereby formulate the main aims of the organisations and what their members have in common. On the other hand, the statutes are sent to the public registers and are often formulated with the aim of applying for funding, and are therefore adapted to the expectations of the political authorities. These statutes both formulate each organisation’s self-description and are adapted to the Norwegian and Oslo’s integration requirements. These dual target groups make the statutes a good source for studying immigrant organisations’ descriptions of their own activities.

**Defining the analytical concepts**

**Transnationalism**

In migration studies, Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) recommend a shift from methodological nationalism towards a study of transnational communities. Based on a historical approach, these scholars show that migration studies have
developed in close interaction with nation-state building processes. Moreover, transnational ties and activities challenge the political myth of a correspondence of state, territory and nation as the natural social and political form of the modern world. Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) emphasise that, semantically, transnational refers to the non-transnational or simply to the national as the entity that is crossed or superseded. This implies that the national category system is still relevant, but mainly for studying how the nation-states are crossed. According to Glick Schiller (2010) the term transnational social field is used as a means of situating individual migrants within various social relationships that connect them to various specific places and their socially organised relationships such as taxation, employment, education, policing, property ownership, law and public policy. Transnationalism refers to phenomena that take place within limited social and geographical places and emphasise close connections to national and local territories, and can be distinguished from the concept of globalisation and cosmopolitanism (Faist 2010).

It is of special interest for this article how transnationalism is defined as a grass-roots activity, and is distinguished from other forms of cross borders interactions. Portes et al. (2007) present a typology distinguishing between: ‘the international activity conducted by governments and other nationally based institutions; the multinational initiatives of UN agencies, global churches, and corporate actors operating in multiple countries; and the transnational world of grass-roots enterprises and initiatives taken by actors in civil society, immigrants included.’ The main differences in this typology are, however, not the type of activity, but rather how institutionalised and powerful are the actors. Accordingly, Portes et al. (2007) emphasise the regular involvement in ties and activities across national borders, and thereby distinguish transnationalism from migrants’ more occasional cross-border activities in which immigrants always have taken part.

Similar to Portes et al. (2007), Faist (2010: 13) defines transnational spaces as a relatively stable, lasting and dense set of ties reaching across and beyond geographical borders of sovereign states. Moreover, it is interesting how immigrant organisations are central in Faist’s definition: ‘Transnational spaces comprise combinations of ties and their substance, positions within networks and organisations and networks of organisations that cut across the borders of at least two national states’ (Faist 2010: 13). However, immigrant organisations’ transnational ties and activities do not necessarily imply that members travel between countries – the organisations might structure their social and symbolic ties in multiple nation-state contexts (Amelina and Faist 2008).

While transnational ties and activities challenge the political myth of a correspondence of state, territory and nation, this correspondence is also challenged by the concept of long-distance nationalism which links together people living in various geographical locations and motivates them to action in relation to an ancestral territory and its government, but the ideological linkages become a
trans-border enterprise (Glick Schiller 2010). People who adopt the stance of long-distance nationalism continue to consider another territory as their homeland and take action in relation to a homeland state or efforts to establish a state (Glick Schiller 2010). Such actions towards state in a perceived homeland distinguish this concept from transnational activities in relation to non-state actors.

In brief, inspired by how these scholars define transnationalism, this article examines if, and how, immigrant organisations refer to combinations of three features of transnational ties and activities: activities for their members living in Oslo; activities and actions in relation to non-state actors outside Norway, and actions taken towards a state in a clearly defined homeland.

**Cosmopolitanism**

Since the early 1990s, the concept of cosmopolitanism has been increasingly invoked as an analytical concept and as a normative ideal. As an analytical concept, it is presented as a way to overcome methodological nationalism and a way to understand social life in an age of globalisation (Beck 2002, 2006). As a normative ideal, cosmopolitanism is related to the development of prescriptive theories of world citizens, global justice and cosmopolitan democracy (Fine 2007). The analytical concept and normative ideal are, however, intertwined as the development of a cosmopolitan normative ideal is often an important part of the description of the global processes. As, for example, Held argues: 'like national culture and traditions, cosmopolitan democracy is a cultural and political project, but it is better adapted and suited to our regional and global age' (Held 2010: 245).

The combination of the analytical concept and normative ideal is apparent in Beck's (1999) 'cosmopolitan manifesto'. He refers to a cosmopolitan reality of global flows, and argues that these flows lead to transformations of everyday consciousness and national identities because issues of global concerns are becoming part of the everyday local experiences and the moral life worlds of the people (Beck 2002: 17). Therefore, Beck argues that a process taking place within the territory of a nation-state does not necessarily mean that it is a national process, while the national may be located outside the territory of the nation-state (Beck 2002: 23; see also Sassen 2007). According to Beck (2006: 49), the cosmopolitan vision permits people to view themselves both as a part of a threatened world and as a part of their local situation and histories. This 'both-and' consciousness is also central to what Fine (2007) calls the cosmopolitan social theory, which seeks to reconcile the idea of universal species-wide human solidarity with particular solidarities that are smaller and more specific than humankind. According to Fine (2007: 135), cosmopolitanism occupies the space between our humanity as such and our local identities. This way of defining cosmopolitanism combines local and national belongings with a universal element.
It is of special interest for this article how scholars argue that transnational organisations, such as immigrant organisations, play a crucial role in building a global consciousness. Beck (1999) emphasises that they help to generate the public consciousness and civic trust to open up the national agendas for transnational and cosmopolitan concerns. At the individual level, Held (2010: 244) argues that they develop a kind of cosmopolitan competence, which implies that a person is capable of mediating between national traditions, communities of fate and alternative ways of life. Such mediating involves a development of skills of manoeuvring through various structures of meaning.

However, an increasing sensitivity to other ways of living and co-existence need not necessarily imply cosmopolitanism. Transnational ties and activities might be seen as an indication of cosmopolitanism, but they do not necessarily constitute cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, Vertovec and Cohen (2002: 20) argue that a certain kind of conviction, enthusiasm, organisation and action are needed to distinguish cosmopolitanism from transnational activity. The two authors argue that cosmopolitanism suggests something that transcends the nation-state model, is able to mediate actions and ideals oriented both to the global and the local scale, is culturally anti-essentialist, and is capable of representing variously complex repertoires of allegiance, identity and interests (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). In contrast to transnationalism, a cosmopolitan perspective aims to overcome the nation-state category system by not only analysing how the nation-state borders are crossed, but also by emphasising a universal element. It is, however, an empirical question whether exposure to other cultures, religions and lifestyles actually leads to a cosmopolitan competence and consciousness.

In summary, inspired by how these scholars define cosmopolitanism, this article examines if, and how, immigrant organisations’ main purposes refer to combinations of two features of cosmopolitan consciousness: references to openness and dialogue among groups and references to universal values.

**Immigrant organisations in Oslo**

**Measures for their members living in Oslo**

All immigrant organisations in Oslo aim to provide measures for their members living in Oslo. National categories are central to how the organisations formulate these main purposes. As many as seventy-five organisations formulate an aim to provide activities that lead to the maintenance of the national culture of their members’ country of origin. Twenty organisations aim to provide measures for their ethnic groups. It is remarkable that the organisations formulate their national and ethnic belonging in terms of culture and solidarity among members, and neither as political nor economic activities. The activities they aim to provide for their members are either formulated as the aim to maintain the culture and traditions of their country of origin, to create and preserve cohesion and solidarity among people of common ethnic or national backgrounds,
and/or to build social networks among their members. The main purpose of most organisations is to combine these activities. This can be seen as a way to uphold transnational ties to their countries of origin, as the aim is to organise common cultural projects for their members in Oslo.

Only eleven organisations state their main purpose to be the maintenance of the culture of a whole region, and five of these organisations refer to Africa. This might indicate that the immigrant organisations in Oslo with members of an African background have a strong regional identity compared to the other organisations. Latin America is identified as a region by two organisations, Asia by three and Europe by one, while the Middle East is never mentioned as a region. Also the sub-national local entity is hardly mentioned as the basis for the organisations’ arrangements. Only four organisations refer to a local belonging or identity, and these are mostly provinces of Pakistan. These patterns show that mainly national, but also ethnic, belongings are more important for how these immigrant organisations formulate their conceptual categories than their identification with regional or local entities.

Moreover, only sixteen organisations emphasise the importance of helping all kinds of immigrants living in Norway. These organisations have members originating from several different places around the world, and their main distinction is between immigrants and people belonging to the majority society. The finding that most organisations are mainly occupied with improving the situation of their members in their country of settlement is in line with what Morales and Jorba (2010: 290) find in their study of Madrid, Barcelona and Murcia. However, the way immigrant organisations in Oslo refer to various categories of groups (national, ethnic, regional, local or immigrants) might reflect that immigrant organisations are registered on the basis of their national background, and administered in a special administrative unit separate from other voluntary organisations in Oslo and Norway.

**Transnational activities**

The aim of having comprehensive transnational practice in relation to non-state actors outside Norway is formulated by twenty-four immigrant organisations. They display a huge variation in transnational activity. None of the organisations formulate remittance as their main purpose, although studies show that remittance is a central part of several immigrant organisations in Norway (Horst, Carling and Ezzati 2010). Only five organisations’ statutes refer to political transnational actions, and they formulate general aims of promoting human rights and supporting their national group in their country of origin. In contrast, nineteen of these twenty-four organisations state their aim to maintain non-political ties to their members’ country of origin. Two of them are ethnically based organisations, which have as one of their purposes to provide funeral services for their members. Three organisations aim to promote contact between people and business in their members’ country of origin and the Norwegian society, while
six organisations aim to promote cultural ties between countries. The remaining eight organisations, most of which have members with an African background, aim to provide health information, humanitarian aid and to take part in the development of schools and education in their country of origin. This variation of transnational ties and activities is in line with how previous empirical studies of immigrant organisations’ transnational ties conclude that the migrant organisations’ types of practice are extremely varied (Amelina and Faist 2008; Morales and Jorba 2010; Portes et al. 2007). While these immigrant organisations’ transnational activities are directed towards, and based on, the perception of another homeland territory, they are not directed towards a state or government.

Only seven of the organisations’ statutes can be interpreted as a form of long-distance nationalism. The main purposes refer not only to another territory as their homeland, but also an aim to take action in relation to its homeland state or government (Glick Schiller 2010: 29–30). These immigrant organisations with members from Africa, Asia and the Middle East formulate as their main purpose either to support democracy, contribute to the governing of the country and fight repression. One example is a Nigerian organisation, which has formulated as its main purpose that: ‘We, the people of the federal republic of Nigeria, living in Norway, have decided to give constructive contributions to good governance and administration of our homeland Nigeria.’ This organisation’s main purpose refers explicitly to action taken on the basis of a perception of the linkage of categories in long-distance nationalism: people, administration and a homeland territory.

**Combinations of transnationalism and integration**

Most organisations aim to combine transnational ties and activities with efforts to help their members to integrate in the Norwegian society. This combination is also formulated in terms of national categories. This combination is emphasised by fifty-three organisations aiming to arrange cultural activities for their members living in Oslo, twenty one organisations aiming to uphold transnational ties with non-state actors, and six organisations applying long-distance nationalism. All these organisations aim to combine these kinds of activities with assisting their members in improving their knowledge of how to live in Norway. These immigrant organisations in Oslo structure their social and symbolic ties in two, and in some cases more, nation-state contexts. This might indicate that they do not perceive aims of dual, or more, national belongings as competing strategies. Such a perception is in line with how several previous studies of immigrant organisations’ activities have shown that these two aims are not at odds with each other (Amelina and Faist 2008; Glick Schiller 2010; Portes et al. 2007,).

In contrast, twenty-seven organisations have neither formulated any aim of supporting their members’ integration in Norway nor in Oslo. Twenty of these organisations are only committed to arranging cultural activities for their members living in Oslo (Norway). Five organisations only aim to uphold transnational
ties and activities either to states or non-state actors in their respective countries of origin. This focus on cultivating networks and bonds among their members, and on upholding transnational ties to their members’ country of origin is a way of drawing boundaries between the members of the immigrant organisations and other people living in Norway. Such activity is often seen as an integration hindrance in their country of settlement. The fact that these organisations’ main purposes represent exceptions from how most immigrant organisations are orientated towards Norwegian society confirms that immigrant organisations are not only objects of policies, but they are also agents who follow their own aims (Bauböck 2006; Yurdakul 2009).

**Cosmopolitan consciousness?**

The concept cosmopolitanism is not used by any organisation, whereas fifty-four organisations refer to features of cosmopolitanism, such as references to openness and dialogue among groups and references to universal values. Of these, twenty-four immigrant organisations formulate as a main purpose to work for openness and dialogue among different cultural groups. These formulations reflect how the organisations aim to emphasise cooperation among several groups, work for tolerance among cultural groups and build bridges among groups. Moreover, the prevention of discrimination is formulated by two of these groups as main purposes, while one organisation aims to increase its members’ knowledge of international relations. References to conceptual categories related to openness and dialogue might be used to replace a kind of all-or-nothing understanding of identity issues within a nation-state framework with a ‘both-and’ consciousness (Fine 2007). Such inclusive categories might be seen as an indication of a cosmopolitan way of thinking, but they do not necessarily constitute cosmopolitanism (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 21).

The main purpose to work for universal values is formulated by twenty-three immigrant organisations. All these organisations aim to promote human rights, and most of them supplement this by referring to various combinations of promoting universal democratic values, humanitarian aid, humanity, justice and dignity. These organisations’ main purposes include conceptual categories that have features which are central in several definitions of cosmopolitanism (Held 2010; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). They might, thereby, have a cosmopolitan consciousness. Such a conclusion stands in contrast to Castles’ (2012) conclusion on the experiences of most migrant workers, who do not move freely across borders to use their skills wherever the reward is highest. It also stands in contrast to Bauböck’s (2002: 135) argument that it would be naive to attribute a special cosmopolitan consciousness to immigrant organisations. In contrast, he argues that their leaders’ claims are formulated in the traditional vocabulary of nationhood. Although the use of a national category system is confirmed by this study of immigrant organisations in Oslo, the formulations in these twenty-three
organisations' main purposes also combine national categories with features of a cosmopolitan consciousness.

**Combinations of cosmopolitanism and integration**

The immigrant organisations' references to openness among groups and/or universal values are not combined with any other typical patterns of conceptual categories. Those organisations referring to such features of cosmopolitanism also combine these with other national and transnational categories in their main purposes. Of the fifty-four organisations referring to openness and/or to universal values twenty-nine organisations simultaneously aim to maintain their own national or ethnic group's culture. Moreover, forty-seven organisations aim to combine these features of cosmopolitanism with the aim of integrating their members into Norwegian society. This combination of national and universal categories might confirm Beck's (2002) argument that global concerns are becoming part of everyday local experiences, and are included in and combined with local and national categories. Moreover, since only fifty-four of the 133 organisations refer to openness among groups and/or universal values, and it is not formulated as an explicit expectation by Oslo's (Norway's) administration, it can be understood as an outcome of these organisations' own transnational experiences and might reflect a cosmopolitan consciousness.

Two organisations are especially interesting because their main purpose is only formulated in terms of universal values. Their statutes do not mention any other local, national or transnational identities or activities. One of these organisations formulates an aim to promote internationalism and thereby weakens distinctions among the nation-states. In a similar way, the other organisation aims to develop a global society, and emphasises the importance of a universal heritage. Neither of these organisations uses any categories based on solidarity that are smaller than humankind, as is central in definitions of cosmopolitanism (Fine 2007). They also aim to replace the nation-state framework with new conceptual tools. Both organisations show there are no strict criteria for what kinds of categories and concepts the organisations can use within the framework of Norwegian and Oslo's political opportunity structures.

**Norway as a unit into which to be integrated**

As many as 103 of the immigrant organisations refer to Norway as a social unit into which the organisations want their members to be integrated. They are, however, not equally convincing, as it is not always specified with any formulations of how such integration will be achieved in practice. This applies to as many as fifty of these statutes, which only use wide-ranging references to their main purpose as: 'the organisation aims to promote its members' integration in Norway'. Such a formulation might only be paying lip service to Norwegian administrative culture, and/or be something the organisations
formulate because they believe this is expected of them. In contrast, fifty-three organisations formulate concrete aims of helping their members to gain better knowledge of Norwegian society by offering courses and seminars, in which they pass on knowledge of political institutions, welfare schemes and the education system. The main pattern of these activities is the aim to motivate their young members to participate in higher education and to inform parents about young people's schoolwork. There is a general focus on the younger generation's opportunities.

The 103 organisations which formulate the main purpose to implement integration measures demonstrate three different strategies in relation to Norwegian society. Firstly, fifty-three organisations aim to inform their members about Norwegian society, as discussed above. Secondly, thirteen organisations aim to inform Norwegians about their members' cultural heritage. This strategy is mostly combined with a main purpose to maintain the culture of their members' country of origin, and shows these organisations are mainly oriented towards their own cultural activities. Thirdly, fourteen organisations aim to foster dialogue between Norwegian culture and the culture of their country of origin. These organisations combine this dialogue with other main purposes such as working for cooperation and tolerance among groups, in line with features of cosmopolitanism. The remaining twenty-three organisations mix these strategies and have several approaches to Norwegian society. Nevertheless, the way most organisations combine each of these strategies with other aims, shows that these organisations have their own distinctive orientations.

While most immigrant organisations' statutes refer to their members' integration into Norwegian society, only eight organisations refer to Oslo as a unit with which to identify or belong. One organisation has as its main purpose to contribute to its members' integration in the local society, and two organisations aim to have a dialogue with people living in the city. A further four organisations formulate their main purpose as to work for active participation in the local society. While Oslo is hardly mentioned as a social unit, the city is mentioned as a territorial unit or a place in twenty-nine organisations' statutes. Such references to Oslo either refer to the location of the organisation's main office in Oslo, or simply describe the city as the place where their members live.

Only one local immigrant organisation is committed to the aim of establishing a common local society within a sub-municipality of Oslo. This is a multicultural organisation, which aims to develop a local society by arranging various courses and seminars for all kinds of immigrants living in this part of the city. The organisation aims to develop a positive and friendly local society with a network among the people living there and consequently it stands out as something extraordinary compared to the other organisations. This absence of focus on local integration and identity stands in contrast to how scholars emphasise the local place as easier to identify with than the whole nation (Zapata-Barrero 2010). Although such local identity is only formulated by one
immigrant organisation, a larger influence on the local place might be found in practice and at the individual level (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011). The absence of local identity can reveal an adaptation to Norwegian administrative structure. It might also reflect that the immigrant organisations have a transnational or cosmopolitan orientation, and do not care about the place where they live.

Conclusion

This article shows huge variations among the conceptual categories immigrant organisations in Oslo use to formulate the main purpose in their statutes. This variation demonstrates that the political opportunity structures in Oslo (Norway) are open to immigrant organisations’ diverse forms of activities. Moreover, it shows the organisations are agents who follow their own aims, and the main purposes reflect how the immigrant organisations construct their understandings of their own activities. The variation makes the findings from the statutes especially interesting in gaining an understanding of how immigrant organisations in Oslo formulate the cultural and political structures of meaning.

Three main patterns are observed among the organisations' main purposes. Firstly, while all organisations aim to arrange cultural activities and/or build a network among their members living in Oslo, only a few of the organisations formulate aims of having comprehensive transnational practice. Secondly, most organisations aim to combine either various forms of transnationalism or features of cosmopolitanism with efforts to integrate their members into Norwegian society, while there is an absence of local identity. Thirdly, the concept of cosmopolitanism is not used by any organisation, although around 40 per cent of the organisations refer to features of cosmopolitanism.

One common characteristic crosses these three main patterns. The organisations mainly use national categories, and national belonging is formulated in terms of cultural activities. Most organisations refer to main purposes of maintaining the cultural heritage of their members’ country of origin and/or integrating their members into the Norwegian nation-state. Only a few organisations refer to regional, local or multicultural forms of belonging, and those referring to universal values mainly combine this with national categories.

The immigrant organisations’ use of national categories is, however, modified by their aims of having transnational activities and features of cosmopolitan consciousness. Most immigrant organisations’ use of national categories is formulated as aims of structuring their social and symbolic ties in two, or more, nation-state contexts. They never refer to any expectation of a correspondence between state, nation and territory. Furthermore, when immigrant organisations refer to features of cosmopolitanism, they combine national and universal categories. This might confirm that global concerns are increasingly becoming part of the everyday local experiences, at least for some immigrant organisations.
Nevertheless, such combinations demonstrate that features of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are not orientations that unavoidably replace national categories (Amelina and Faist 2012: 1720). Immigrant organisations’ practical conceptual categories are neither in line with a traditional nation-state framework nor entirely adapted to their cross-border activities.

References


