

**ISSUES OF PROBLEM-REPRESENTATIONS,
FRAMING, CLAIMS-MAKING AND RESONANCE
IN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN NORWAY, SPAIN
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CROSS-COUNTRY REPORT	1
1.1 Research on Contemporary Women's Movements in Norway, Spain and the UK	1
1.2 Gender, Migration and Women's Movements	3
1.3 Chapter Overview	10
2 THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UK	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Norway	13
2.3 Spain	20
2.4 The United Kingdom	23
3 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS, GENDERED CITIZENSHIP, AND MULTICULTURALISM	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Women's Movements	32
3.3 Gendered Citizenship	36
3.4 Multiculturalism, Minorities Within Minorities, and Intersectionality	38
3.5 Shifting Between Insider and Outsider: reflecting on our own positions as researchers	41
3.6 Concluding Remarks	45
4 POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES, FRAMING PROCESSES AND RESONANCE	47
4.1 Introduction	47
4.2 Political Opportunity Structures: institutional and discursive aspects	48
4.3 Political Opportunities	49
4.3.1 Limiting the concept of political opportunity	50
4.3.2 Stable and dynamic, general and field specific structures	51
4.3.3 The transnational context	52
4.3.4 Explaining change	53
4.4 Discursive Opportunity Structures and Framing	54
4.5 Framing Processes	58
4.6 Political Impact or Resonance	62
4.7 Conclusion	65
5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	66
5.1 Introduction	66
5.2 Research Ethics	68
5.3 Organisational Mapping, Selection and Recruitment	68
5.4 Data Collection: interviewing and researcher's positionality	69
5.5 A Work in Progress	75
5.6 List of Interviewed Organisations in Each Country	76
6 CONTESTED RELATIONS WITHIN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UK	79

6.1	Introduction	79
6.2	The Case of Norway	81
6.2.1	Anger and Irritation: the Intersection of Majority Feminism and Anti-racist Feminism in the 1970s and 80s	82
6.2.2	Charity or Dignity: non-feminist majority women's organisations	92
6.2.3	Absent Allies: Sami Feminism	96
6.2.4	Co-operation during the '70s and '80s	100
6.2.5	Contested Relations in Contemporary Women's Movement: the 1990s and 2000s	103
6.2.6	Current Problem Representations in Norway: Minority Women's organisations	105
6.2.7	Representations of co-operation and alliances by majority women's organisations	111
6.2.8	Representation of feminism and of men in minority women's organisations	115
6.2.9	Representation of feminism and of men by majority women's organisations	117
6.2.10	Representations of religion	120
6.2.11	Different representations of 'women's issues'	122
6.2.12	'Minority Violence' - 'Cultural' or 'Structural' Violence?	123
6.2.13	Feminism as a contested concept	125
6.2.14	'Different' and 'Difficult' issues	126
6.2.15	Summary remarks about the Norwegian case	127
6.3	The Case of Spain	131
6.3.1	Ethnic minority women's organising	132
6.3.2	Framing 'the problem' – majority perspectives	133
6.3.3	Dissonance and dilemmas	138
6.3.4	Solidarity or benevolence	139
6.3.5	Falling between the cracks	142
6.3.6	Romani women: a minority within a minority	143
6.3.7	Veil and violence	146
6.3.8	Dissonance and distance	147
6.3.9	Co-operation and resonance	150
6.3.10	Summary remarks about the Spanish case	152
6.4	The Case of United Kingdom	155
6.4.1	Introduction	155
6.4.2	Historical discourse and problem representations concerning majority-minority relations in the second wave UK women's movement: Some examples	156
6.4.3	Together and apart: minority women's organisations as accepted and legitimated but not fully embraced	162
6.4.4	Towards a common ground: majority and minority women's movement actors come together in strategic co-operation and alliance	165
6.4.5	Current problem representations of co-operation and alliance in the women's movement	172
6.4.6	Framing of men as anti-female or pro-feminist	172
6.4.7	Framing of white and black women's organisations and issues	173

6.4.8	Problem representations of disagreements among ethnic minority women's organisations	177
6.4.9	Religion as a site of disagreement, conflict and contestation for the women's movement	182
6.5	Summary remarks about the UK case	189
6.6	Conclusion	192
7	CLAIMS-MAKING AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM	197
7.1	Introduction and Background	197
7.2	The Case of Norway	197
7.2.1	Selective inclusion: institutional and discursive political opportunities in Norway	198
7.2.2	Limited discursive space	208
7.2.3	Claims-making, opportunities and constraints at the national policy level	220
7.2.4	Co-operation, competition and division of labour between women's organisations	237
7.2.5	Summary remarks about the Norwegian case	244
7.3	The Case of Spain	247
7.3.1	Political party affiliation as opportunity structure	248
7.3.2	A slow journey towards recognition and common spaces, but different interests and influence?	252
7.3.3	Claiming the fight against gender violence: implementation in an 'unjust' justice system?	259
7.3.4	Women's organisations and the creation of national political plans to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women	263
7.3.5	Racism and discrimination in relation to violence against women	269
7.3.6	Summary remarks about the Spanish case	273
7.4	The Case of the UK	274
7.4.1	Institutional and discursive political opportunities	277
7.4.2	Domestic violence or violence against women? The dispute over definitions and strategy	286
7.4.3	Claims-making, opportunities and constraints at the national policy level	300
7.4.4	Summary remarks about the UK case	321
7.5	Conclusion	324
8	CONCLUSION	333
8.1	Introduction	333
8.2	Conceptual and Empirical Contributions	334
8.3	Relations Between Ethnic Minority and Majority Organisations in Women's Movements in Norway, Spain and the UK	340
8.4	Opportunity Structures, Claims-Making and Resonance: women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK	345
8.5	Further Research	353
8.6	Good Practice and Policy Recommendations	353

REFERENCES	356
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	379

FOREWORD

This cross-country report is a joint product with Line Nyhagen Predelli, Beatrice Halsaa, Cecilie Thun and Adriana Sandu as the authors. The report is largely based on three individual country reports from Norway (main authors Beatrice Halsaa and Cecilie Thun), Spain (main author Adriana Sandu) and the UK (main author Line Nyhagen Predelli).

For this cross-country report, Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa have shared the main responsibility for writing, and they have contributed both new material and new interpretations of some of the findings reported in the individual country reports. In particular, Nyhagen Predelli has authored the new Chapter 1 (Introduction) and new summary sections and conclusions in Chapter 7. Nyhagen Predelli has also written Chapter 8, but Halsaa has contributed equally to it in terms of ideas and suggestions for the content. Halsaa has written new summary sections and conclusions in Chapter 6, and a substantially revised section on Spain in Chapter 6. Thun has been responsible for writing Chapter 2, while Sandu has been responsible for writing Chapter 5.

The authors wish to thank all interviewees in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, including women's organisation representatives, civil servants and politicians, without whom neither the country reports nor this cross-country report could have been written. Beatrice Halsaa also wishes to thank Trine Rogg Korsvik and Kristin Aukland for their contributions to the country report from Norway. Adriana Sandu wishes to thank Ana Martinez and Esmeranda Manful for their contributions to the country report from Spain. Line Nyhagen Predelli wishes to thank Kim Perren and Esmeranda Manful for their contributions to the country report from the United Kingdom.

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CROSS-COUNTRY REPORT

1.1 Research on Contemporary Women's Movements in Norway, Spain and the UK

This report summarises findings from three separate country reports that addressed the intersection of gender and ethnicity/race as central features of social protest and public policy. Since the 1970s, inequalities linked to gender and ethnicity/race have emerged as separate but closely intertwined policy fields in Europe. The specific issues addressed, and the timing of their appearance on the political agenda, have differed between countries; however, the topic is highly salient in contemporary multicultural Europe. The focus here is on three countries: Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom (where the main focus is on England)¹, and their histories of organising along gendered and racialised categories in civil society and the state.

This cross-country report is based on case studies of selected women's organisations in the three countries. The women's organisations included in our research are mainly based in the capitals (Oslo, Madrid, London), and they are all seeking to influence national policy-making processes that in various ways impact upon women. Further research should be conducted to explore minority-majority relations in local and regional women's movements, and relations between local and regional women's movements and political decision-making processes at those levels of government. The case-studies herein concentrated on two major aspects of organisational activities:

- 1) Relations between ethnic 'majority' and ethnic 'minority' women's organisations in women's movements, with a special view to representations of co-operation, unity and dispute.
- 2) How women's organisations use political opportunity structures to influence gender policy and anti-racist policy, with a special view to policies on violence

¹ For a discussion of the UK research context, and the tension between the level of the overall state and that of the countries of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, see the separate country report from the UK.

against women (VAW) and issues of racism and ethnic discrimination related to VAW, and the problem-representations and claims-making forwarded by women's organisations in relation to such policies.

Our research focuses on violence against women's issues including domestic violence, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation, and racism and discrimination related to violence against women. The issues of rape, prostitution, and human trafficking, which are also violence against women issues, have not been included in our analysis. This limitation is not intended to signify that such issues are less important, but an in-depth focus has required a focused attention on selected issues.²

Part of a work in progress, this cross-country report is the second major outcome of Strand 1 of a larger study of ethnic and religious citizenship in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. It summarises findings from the three countries, whilst also taking a further step in a research process aiming towards a more comprehensive comparison between the three case studies. The first outcome of Strand 1 was the three separate country reports on which this cross-country report is based. The project is part of the larger FEMCIT integrated project, and constitutes a contribution to one of the six citizenship dimensions of FEMCIT. The main emphasis in Work Package 4 is on women's *ethnic and religious citizenship*, while the dimensions addressed by other FEMCIT Work Packages include political, social, economic, sexual and bodily, and intimate citizenship. Strand 1 of Work Package 4 is especially concerned with *ethnic* dimensions of citizenship practice within the women's movement itself and within the nation-state contexts of Norway, Spain and the UK.

Our research seeks to fill several gaps in the research literature concerning both relations between ethnically 'majoritised' and 'minoritised' (Gunaratnam, 2003) women's movement organisations, and the strategies used and claims-making forwarded by them in Norway, Spain, and the UK. In all three countries, there are

² The issues of prostitution and trafficking have been included in the remit of FEMCIT Work Package 5 led by Joyce Outshoorn.

few empirical studies of contemporary women's organisations, either at national, regional or local levels (for details, see literature reviews in the individual country reports). Moreover, there is an absence of research on the mobilisation of migrant women, ethnic minority women, and indigenous women *in relation to* the mobilisation of ethnic majority women. Through this cross-country report we seek to contribute towards a more comprehensive understanding of differences and similarities between the trajectories and developments of women's movement organising in different parts of Europe.

1.2 Gender, Migration and Women's Movements

We have chosen Norway, Spain and the UK as our case studies because they offer distinct examples of citizenship and gender regimes (defined as current state policies towards immigration/citizenship and gender). The three countries have different emigration and immigration histories, and current and past policies on immigration and citizenship are influenced by these varying historical and geographical contexts.

The history of empire and post-colonial immigration has strongly influenced the UK and has, among other things, led to the formulation of strong anti-racist and anti-discrimination laws and policies. Immigrants with legal residence status are entitled to apply for citizenship after five years of residence in the UK,³ but since 2005 applicants must pass either a "Life in the UK" test requiring English language proficiency and substantive knowledge about British history, politics, and culture, or an ESOL course (English for Speakers of Other Languages), in order to become citizens. The most recent available figures (from the 2001 Census) show that the immigration population in the UK totals 4.9 million individuals or 8.3 per cent of the total population.⁴ The first women's organisations established by ethnic minority women were formed in the 1970s and include the Brixton Black Women's Group, Liverpool Black Sisters, Manchester Black Women's Co-operative, and the Muslim Ladies Circle.

³ If an individual is married to or a civil partner of a British citizen, he or she can apply for citizenship after three years of residence (<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/>; accessed January 15, 2009).

⁴ See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1312&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=224>

In the UK, victims of domestic violence with insecure immigration status were given the right to remain in the UK through government concessions in 1999 and 2002. The concessions were largely given due to pressure from Southall Black Sisters and other women's organisations. Despite the concessions, however, the 'no recourse to public funds rule' in effect denies an estimated 600 women per year access to safety because women's refuges cannot access public funding for housing costs on behalf of immigrant women with insecure immigration status (Amnesty International UK and Southall Black Sisters, 2008).

Post-war immigration to Norway from countries outside Europe took off in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when an increased supply of unskilled labour (called *fremmedarbeidere* – 'foreign workers') was called for by government and businesses. Action was soon taken to restrict immigration, and Norway has formulated and discussed anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies since the 1970s (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, 2008: 198). Migrants living in Norway for three years or more have had the right to vote in local elections since 1983. After seven years of residence, immigrants with legal residence status can become citizens, and must show proficiency in one of the official languages (Norwegian or Sami). Since September 2008, applicants must pass an official test in either of these two languages. The current immigrant population (as at January 1st, 2008) in Norway is estimated at 9.7 per cent of the total population, comprising 381,000 immigrants and 79,000 Norwegian-born individuals with immigrant parents living in Norway.⁵ The first organisation for ethnic minority women, *Foreign Women's Group*, was set up in 1979.

In Norway, spouses of Norwegian citizens who come to Norway from abroad are normally assigned a dependent legal status for a period of three years (commonly referred to as 'the three year rule').⁶ After three years, a permanent resident status

⁵ See http://www.ssb.no/innvbef_en/main.html

⁶ See <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/jd/dok/NOUer/2003/NOU-2003-31/6/1/3.html?id=372823>. See also the Immigration Act of 1988 (utlendingsloven) (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-19880624-064.html>) and § 37, 6 in the regulation of the Immigration Act (utlendingsforskriften) (<http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/ldeles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-19901221-1028.html>). A new Immigration Act was passed in 2008.

can be obtained. Migrant women have fiercely opposed the three year rule, as those who decide to leave a violent partner before the three year period has passed risk losing the residence permit. A legal exception to the three year rule was, however, passed in 1990, which gives women who have been subjected to domestic abuse a right to apply for independent immigration status. The three year rule has remained a contested issue for the women's movement, as the burden of proof lies heavily on the individual woman who has suffered abuse, and immigrant women often remain in violent relationships due to fear of deportation.

Spain has only recently experienced a large inflow of immigrants (see Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2008), and the European Commission against racism and intolerance noted in 2006 a general lack of awareness in Spanish society regarding racism and discrimination (CRI, 2006). Policy formation and implementation in this area has only been seriously addressed at the national level post-2000, and includes a recently established (2005) national observatory against racism and xenophobia. Legal residents born in another country must reside in Spain for ten years before they can seek citizenship. Although there is no formal citizenship test, the law requires basic knowledge of Spanish before citizenship can be conferred (Medrano, 2005). In 2007 there were about 4.5 million foreigners living in Spain, amounting to about ten per cent of the total population.⁷

The first ethnic minority women's organisations in Spain were founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and include *Romi Sersení*, an association of Spanish Romani women established in Grenada in 1990 and in Madrid in 1991, and *Vomade-Vencit*, an association of immigrant Dominican women established informally in 1989 and formally in 1992. Among the first ethnically mixed organisations for women were *Ca La Dona*, established in Barcelona in 1988, and *Association Women Opanel*, established in Madrid in 1991. In Spain, Organic Law 4/2000 established the right to independent residence for immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual exploitation (Protection of Migrants, UN, 2007: 11). An independent residence permit is, however, given for one year only, with access to social benefits but no right to work. According to Amnesty International, immigrant women who

⁷ See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/29/41256399.pdf>

experience domestic violence 'suffer discrimination in law and practice when trying to access justice and essential resources such as financial assistance, psychological treatment and access to shelters' (Amnesty International, 2008).

Both Spain and the UK are EU member states, although with different affiliations to the treaty, and may, thus, directly influence, and be influenced by, European gender equality policies.⁸ Norway has chosen to affiliate with the EU as a member of the Extended Economic Area, and is, thus, indirectly influenced by EU policies and has less direct influence on the formulation and implementation of EU policies.

In relation to policies promoting gender equality, Norway has had a strong national and international position of advocating women-friendly policies and gender equality as both a legal requirement and a substantive aim. Norway has been among the states with the highest percentage of women in political institutions.⁹ The UK has a strong record of prohibiting discrimination based on gender, but substantive measures to reduce gender inequality have largely been absent. Spain has developed gender equality legislation and policies later than both Norway and the UK, but recent developments have put Spain at the forefront of gender equality measures, be they political or legal (see Bustelo and Orbals, 2007).

In 1995, Mazur and McBride Stetson classified Norway as a country with a policy machinery (the Equal Status Council) that provided a high level of policy access for feminist groups and a machinery that had a high level of policy influence on equal employment policies (Mazur and McBride Stetson, 1995: 275-277). Since 1995, the Norwegian policy machinery has been reorganised, and new government institutions supporting gender equality policies have been created. A major reform was implemented in 2006 when the *Equality and Discrimination Ombud* was established to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. The gender equality machinery has continued to provide access for feminist and women's groups, and to influence government policies dealing with equal employment opportunity issues. Both access and influence have, however,

⁸ The UK became an EU-member state in 1973, while Spain joined the EU in 1986.

⁹ See various UNDP reports, including UNDP (2002), *Styrking av demokratiet i en splittet verden*. Copenhagen: Nordic Office.

been unequally distributed between various majoritised and minoritised organisations and between various gender policy areas. For example, minoritised women's organisations have almost exclusively been consulted on "ethnic minority women's issues" related to gender violence (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003). On the other hand, majoritised women's organisations have rarely been consulted on "ethnic minority women's issues" and have more often been engaged in policies relating to private business and the labour market, such as the new law that requires boards of private companies to recruit 40 per cent women, and issues such as equal pay for women and men, parental leave arrangements, etc. In Chapter 7 of this cross-country report we discuss current perceptions and experiences of access and influence among women's movement actors in Norway.

In 1995, both the UK and Spain were classified by Mazur and McBride Stetson as countries with policy machineries that enjoyed high influence on equal employment policies, but the policy machineries in both countries were considered as giving "low access" to feminist groups (ibid.: 275). In the UK, the relatively strong position of the then Equal Opportunities Commission was taken as an indicator of the high influence enjoyed by this specific gender policy machinery on equal employment policies. Since 1997 and the election of the Labour Government, the gender policy machinery in the UK has developed significantly in terms of new institutions and wider access to feminist and women's groups. Today it could be argued that the various parts of the policy machinery in the UK is giving relatively high access to a small and stable number of women's organisations that actively seek to influence government policy (see the UK country report and Chapter 7 herein for more details). The current gender machinery is, however, considered relatively weak in terms of government influence, and feminist groups do not always think it worthwhile to direct their advocacy and lobbying efforts through institutions such as the Gender Equality Unit (previously named the Women and Equality Unit). As in Norway, a significant development towards an intersectional approach to inequality by government has taken place with the establishment of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, which includes gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and belief, and age in its remit. Moreover, parts of the picture from Norway of an unequal distribution of access and influence in relation to types of women's organisations and types of gender policy areas also applies to the UK. Again, minoritised women's

organisations are almost exclusively being consulted on “ethnic minority women’s issues” related to gender violence, and are rarely consulted on other issues such as education, the labour market, etc. In the UK, however, majoritised women’s organisations seem to increasingly engage in “ethnic minority women’s issues”, not only related to gender violence, but also related to the labour market and political participation (the primary example being the Fawcett Society). In Chapter 7 of this cross-country report we discuss current perceptions and experiences of access and influence among women’s movement actors in the UK.

Spain, as we have seen, was also classified by Mazur and McBride Stetson as a country with a policy machinery (the Women’s Institute, or *Instituto de la Mujer*, IM) that enjoyed high influence on equal employment policies, but it was considered as giving “low access” to feminist groups (ibid.: 275). Indeed, in 1995, Valiente noted the close ties between the Instituto de la Mujer and the socialist political party PSOE and that “the IM does not favour the mobilization of the feminist movement (or of public opinion) as a way of advancing demands that go beyond PSOE gender equality compromises” (Valiente, 1995: 234). The IM has continued to play a significant role in Spanish gender equality policies, and both the conservative People’s Party government from 1996 until 2004 and the subsequent (and current) Socialist party government have continued to support gender equality policies. Moreover, the current government has strengthened the gender machinery through the recently created Ministry of Equality and its several entities including the ‘Equality Policies General Secretariat’, signalling the high value it places on gender equality through the appointment of a Cabinet consisting of an equal number of women and men and through the creation of an array of new laws to support gender equality (Bustelo and Ortals, 2007: 207). In terms of political access for feminist and women’s organisations, the picture in Spain is more of a division between majoritised and minoritised organisations. While majoritised women’s organisations are being consulted on various gender equality issues, minoritised organisations have yet to achieve a role in the dialogue, design and implementation of gender equality policies broadly conceived. In Chapter 7 of this cross-country report we discuss current perceptions and experiences of access and influence among different women’s movement actors in Spain.

The United Nations Human Development Index offers comparable data on key indicators related to gender development. In the table below, we show some of the relevant statistics for Norway, Spain, and the UK, thus offering a glimpse into some of the key characteristics of and differences between the three countries. Norway is a top scorer on both the HDI (Human Development Rank; second place) and the GEM (Gender Empowerment; first place) measures. Neither Spain nor the UK score in the top ten on these two measures, with Spain obtaining the 13th and 12th places on the two measures, respectively, and the UK obtaining the 16th and 14th places, respectively. In all three countries women received the right to vote before the second world war, but women have not gained full parity in any of the three parliaments. In Norway, women hold 38 per cent of the parliamentary seats, while in Spain they hold 31 per cent and in the UK only 19 per cent. At the ministerial level, however, Spain is highly advanced with women holding 50 per cent of ministerial posts, while in Norway and the UK women hold 44 and 27 per cent, respectively, of ministerial posts. All three countries have some way to go in terms of gender equality in earnings, with Norway as the most developed country and women earning 77 per cent of men's income, while in Spain and in the UK women earn 50 and 66 per cent, respectively, of men's income.

	Norway ¹⁰	Spain ¹¹	United Kingdom ¹²
Population in 2005	4.6 million	43.4 million	60.2 million
HDI Human Development Rank	2	13	16
Women obtained right to vote	1913	1931	1918, 1928
Women seats in parliament	38%	31%	19%
Women in government at ministerial level	44%	50%	27%
GEM Gender Empowerment Measure	1	12	14
Ratio estimated female to male earned income	0.77	0.50	0.66

¹⁰ http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_NOR.html

¹¹ http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_ESP.html

¹² http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_GBR.html

1.3 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the women's movement in Norway, Spain, and the UK (with a particular focus on England) from the late 1960s to the present day. It, thus, spans four decades, highlighting the central themes of social and political context, women's activism and institutional engagement across this period.

Chapter 3 introduces theoretical reflections that ground our study in the existing research literature on women's movements, gendered citizenship and multiculturalism. Women's movements themselves represent the practising of gendered citizenship through women's mobilisation and activism. Concomitantly, women's movements seek to alter citizenship regimes through challenging, renegotiating and changing the ways in which citizenship is gendered in arenas as diverse as politics, work, religion, the family, intimate relationships, and so on. Our study seeks to capture both of these dimensions of gendered citizenship: how it is practised by women's organisations through their aims, strategies and claims-making, and how the dominant citizenship regime and its disadvantaging of women is challenged and contested by women's organisations. Chapter 3 also offers reflections on our own positions as researchers, and our shifting locations as insiders and outsiders to the women's movement.

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

Chapter 5 describes the research methods used in the three case-studies and the empirical material on which the cross-country report is based. It also lists the specific women's organisations that have been interviewed in Norway, Spain, and the UK. For more detailed information and descriptions of the organisations included in our study, please consult Appendix A in each of the three separate country-reports. Appendix C in the three country reports include all the interview guides that were used in our case-study research.

The next two chapters, 6 and 7, provide summary analyses of the relationship between ethnic minority and ethnic majority women's organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK, as well as their strategic use of political opportunity structures to attempt to influence policies on violence against women in the three countries. The starting point for our analysis is the critique of contemporary white, middle-class women's movements as ethnocentric and blind to the importance of 'race' and ethnicity. Inspired by Julia Sudbury (1998), we seek to understand whether 'majority' women's organisations have embraced and accepted, or resisted and rejected, the interests of 'minority' women. We also examine whether 'majority' and 'minority' women's organisations have formed alliances in order to influence public policy.

Chapter 6 examines how different organisations within contemporary women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK position themselves in relation to other movement actors, and the implications such positioning may have for the building of alliances and co-operation through 'strategic sisterhood'. In Norway and Spain, majority and minority women's organisations, including Romani and Sami organisations, tend to present both themselves and each other in a relationship based on distance, difference, and suspicion, or even hostility and opposition. In such climates, it is difficult for majoritised and minoritised women's organisations to co-operate and form alliances. And yet, we have substantial evidence of issue-specific integration through conflicts that cross ethnic divides and, thus, mobilise both minoritised and majoritised women. In the UK, despite a history of tension between majority and minority feminists in the 70s and 80s, there are several empirical examples of formal networking, co-operation and alliances between ethnic majority and minority organisations in the women's movement. Recent and current

co-operation, networks and alliances within the UK's women's movement are largely issue-based. The chapter also demonstrates the continued existence of separate organisations for majority and minority women in Norway, Spain, and the UK, and highlights differences between the three countries. On the whole, majority and minority women's organisations in Norway and Spain seem to engage less with each other and are largely occupied with separate activities, but there are exceptions to this pattern (such as a televised charity campaign in Norway with the participation of both majority and minority women's organisations). In Norway, there are several gender and ethnically mixed organisations, and a tendency towards an increasingly mixed ethnic constituency in some of the women's organisations. In Spain, however, the tendency is for ethnic minority women to be embedded within gender-mixed immigrant organisations. In the UK we have also detected a development towards more ethnically mixed and integrated organisations that take on intersectional approaches to inequalities. Yet in all three countries, current problem representations and claims-making by different women's movement actors underline continued differences between 'majority' and 'minority' women's interests, and also differences between the interests of various groups of 'minority' women. We suggest that the women's movement is currently faced with potential new divisions related to issues of faith and belief, and that the way forward is to accept differences and integrate them into feminist analysis, policies, and practice.

Chapter 7 discusses the political opportunities and constraints that women's organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK are faced with in their attempts to influence decision-making processes and outcomes. It also examines claims-making and problem representations forwarded by both movement (women's organisations) and government (civil servants and politicians) actors in relation to policy gaps and policy influence at the state level in all three countries.

Chapter 8 offers some concluding remarks about our findings, highlighting some of the differences and similarities between the three countries. It also seeks to describe how Work Package 4 contributes to the overall conceptual development within FEMCIT, and it includes a brief section on good practice and policy recommendations that have emerged during the course of our study.

2 THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of women's movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK. It is based on the second chapter of each respective country report from these three countries, and provides a summary of the historical outlines from the late 60s to the present day, with a main focus on the 1970s and 1980s.¹³ Chapters 6 and 7 of this cross-country report provide additional information about contemporary women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK.

2.2 Norway

A feminist mobilisation took place in Norway in the 1970s. This was a decade where the gender-political landscape changed and an entirely new gender and feminist discourse emerged. New organisations, campaigns and networks were established. The mobilisation of women was a part of a general radicalisation in Norway. It was influenced by social movements abroad but also by some distinct Norwegian features.

The political system in Norway was destabilised at the time and open to feminist demands. The political opportunity structure created possibilities; economic growth depending on increasing labour, new resources for women (contraceptive pill, student loans, etc.) and an expansion in higher education. It was often students who mobilised, but the feminist mobilisation also took place outside the universities. Norwegian women, in general, were situated in the intersection between housewifery and waged labour.

Two early signs of mobilisation were, firstly, *The National Council of Women*, which initiated a campaign in 1967 to increase the representation of women in politics.

¹³ The original second chapter of the UK country report was written by Kim Perren. The part focusing on the UK in this cross-country report chapter is based on the chapter by Perren. For further historical details about the women's movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK, see the three individual country reports.

One effect of this was the so-called 'Women's Coup' in 1971 when women won a majority of seats in three local councils (Halsaa, 1998; Skjeie, 1992). Secondly, the Norwegian Breast Feeding Mother's Support Group (Ammehjelpen) was established in 1968 to stop the decreasing inclination of women to breastfeed. This blurred the distinction between the private and public spheres.

1970s

Three major struggles

The 1970s in Norway was characterised by three major struggles: 1) Abortion on demand; 2) The EEC controversy; and 3) The Gender Equality Act.

Abortion on demand was the main issue and the right 'to control one's own body' played a vital mobilising role during the 1970s. The struggles lasted until 1978 when the pro-choice campaign won.

The second issue was the EEC (EC, EU) controversy which had been a controversial issue since Britain applied for membership in 1961. Prior to the referendum in Norway in 1972 there was a mass mobilisation of protests against the political establishment who advocated membership. Norwegian women argued that it was a gender issue. European women's organisations had not been granted consultative status within the EC, and the EC had not developed a unified policy regarding the position of women. The majority of Norwegian women were against membership and there was a Women's Campaign against Norwegian membership in the EEC. The protesters 'won' the referendum in 1972, and from this struggle the feminist movement gained confidence, political skills and networks.

The third major struggle was related to the Gender Equality Act (*Likestillingsloven*). In 1972 the Equal Pay Council (*Likelønnsrådet*) was transformed to the Equal Status Council (*Likestillingsrådet*). Equality became more broadly defined, and the new council was a consultative agency with a broad representation and a mandate to pursue gender equality. One priority was still to diminish the pay gap. Several strikes took place in the early 1970s; nurses, female cleaners, in the fishing industry and in forestry. The Oslo Federation of Trade Unions Women's Movement was established within the male-dominated Norwegian Federation of Trade Union (NFTU),

Landsorganisasjonen). The Gender Equality Act was finally passed in 1978. The aim was to promote gender equality and, in particular, to promote the position of women. The Act did not only cover working life conditions, but all sectors in life, even family life. The only formal exemption was the case of internal conditions in religious communities. The Gender Equality Ombud (*Likestillingsombudet*) and the Appeals Board (*Klagenemnda*) were set up to monitor the Act (for more details, see Country Report Norway).

Feminists disagreed on the principal framing of the law. The radical feminist Women's Law milieu at the University of Oslo was against the gender-neutral, moderate, limited and passive framing of the proposal from the Labour Party, whereas the liberal Women's Right Association (WRA) generally welcomed this proposal (Lønnå, 1996). The final result reflected a compromise, but the feminist movement managed to broaden the scope of the law (Skjeie, 1992).

Feminist Feuds

The 1970s were characterised by much feminist activity and different organisations, groups and networks joined forces despite different ideological standpoints. However, there were also conflicts of interests, values and ideas within the women's movement in this decade. The New Feminists (*Nyfeministene*, 1970) and the Women's Front (*Kvinnefronten*, 1972) were the most influential new groups at the outset. They both distanced themselves from the established Women's Rights Association (WRA; *Norsk Kvinnesaksforening*, 1884) (Dahlerup and Gulli, 1985). The New Feminists and the Women's Front were both oriented towards women's liberation and socialism, but the New Feminists tended to emphasise patriarchy and gender struggle before class struggle, whereas the Women's Front was a mixture of Socialist and Marxist women who were sympathetic to the newly established Worker's Communist Party of Norway (Marxist-Leninist) (*AKP-ml*) and prioritised class struggle (Haukaa, 1982). A split between the Socialist and the Marxist faction led to the establishment of Bread and Roses (*Brød og Roser*) in 1975 who was in favour of a Socialist Feminist policy.

A Lesbian movement (*Lesbisk Bevegelse*) was also established in 1975. This was partly a reaction to the heterosexual focus of feminist organisations, but mainly a

reaction to the conservative and Marxist-Leninist men in Association – 48 (*Det norske forbundet av 1948*), the only homosexual organisation in Norway (Haukaa 1982). In 1972 homosexuality was decriminalised and in 1981 criminal protection against the discrimination of gays and lesbians was introduced in Norway - the first country in the world to do so.

Violence against women

The issue of violence against women was revived in the 1970s and the framing of the issue was radicalised. The Crisis Centre Movement brought domestic violence to the public's attention and established hotlines and several women's shelters. The public funding of these shelters is an example of the close relationship between the state and the civil society (Bergman, 1999).

1980s

The 1980s saw a fragmentation of the feminist movement in Norway. More women channelled their energy outside the feminist organisations. The work – family balance was a crucial theme and the demand for a six hour working day, equal pay, day-care services, and expanded parental leave were central issues. These issues inspired a new gender-political agenda for the 1980s – and 90s.

Sami feminism

Sami women started to voice their discontent as women, in the mid-70s. They addressed the vulnerable position of women in traditional Sami reindeer husbandry. Their status as housewives or working women was important regarding social security (Wiig, 1984). Another important issue was that of the new Reindeer Herding Regulation in 1978 which affected women in particular (Sàra, 1980; Blom, 1999).

A dramatic protest occurred in February 1981 when 14 Sami women occupied the office of the newly appointed Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. This was part of the campaign to save the Alta River (Lindi, 2004; Hjorthol, 2006). This battle was not won, but the Sami people's struggle for rights and recognition has, otherwise, been quite successful. They have been recognised as an indigenous people and the Sami Parliament was established in 1987.

In 1988 the Sáráhkka-Sami Women's Organisation was established to promote Sami women's interests. This was a transnational organisation with branches in Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Norway. In 1989 Sami women set up a Women's List for the Sami Parliament election. They almost won a seat in 1989, and successfully set up another list for the local elections in 1991. The Women's List was a result of a heated gender debate in the Sami community. The Sáráhkka-Sami Women's Organisation's aim is to improve women's rights both within and outside the Sami institutions, and co-operates also with the Sámi Nisson-Forum (Sami Women's Forum), established in 1993 to promote gender equality. Sámi Nisson-Forum publishes the Norwegian-Sami magazine *Gába*.

Migrant women

In 1979 the Foreign Women's Group (FWG) was formed. This marked the beginning of organised black feminism in Norway. FWG had an anti-racist, feminist agenda and wanted to widen the Norwegian feminist agenda. It focused specifically on the Immigration Act and the requirement for family members to obtain an independent residence permit, which caused problems for female migrants. FWG soon confronted the Norwegian feminist organisations and the public authorities with the problems of migrant women and criticized them for lack of response, understanding and responsibility.¹⁴

FWG was replaced by the MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women in 1989, thanks to grants from a fund-raising campaign run by and for women's organisations (see next section). MiRA continues to play an important role as watchdog in relation to government policies and a support centre for migrant women.

Other organisations focusing on migrant women's interests in Norway, which were established in the 1970s, were the ethnic Norwegian Christian Intercultural Association (KIA), and, in the 1980s, Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees (SEIF) and the Oslo Red Cross International Centre (ORKIS).

¹⁴ See a special issue of the feminist magazine *Kjerringråd* no. 4 1991 on migrant women.

Feminist communities

The 'Conservative [political] wave' (*Høyre-bølgen*) and the economic recession during the 1980s lead feminists to join forces. It was also a result of various initiatives from the new gender equality status machinery which provided political opportunities and a cooperative political atmosphere.

A core issue in the 1980s was the struggle against pornography and prostitution which was an extension of the struggle against violence against women. This struggle also led to an unlikely alliance between the Norwegian Housewife Organisation (*Norges Husmorforbund*), the Norwegian Society of Rural Women, the Centre Party's Women Caucus and the Women's Front which started the Women's United Campaign against Pornography (*Kvinnenes fellesaksjon mot pornografi*) in 1977. The campaign was later reorganised into the United Campaign against Pornography and Prostitution (*Fellesaksjonen mot pornografi og prostitusjon*) and additional organisations, like the WRA, later joined the campaign.

Two international women's conferences during the 1980s also revived the women's and feminist movements: The International Feminist Book Fair (*Internasjonal Kvinnebokmesse*) in 1986 and the Nordic Forum (*Nordisk Forum*) in 1988. Peace was another uniting issue. A Nordic Women's Peace Movement (*Kvinnefredsbevegelsen*) was born, triggered by NATO's new nuclear strategy.

Another example of successful co-operation was the Norwegian Broadcasting Company's yearly fund-raising campaign, 'Women in the 3rd world', in 1989. Forty six women's organisations were responsible for this campaign. A result of this was FOKUS Forum for women and development (FOKUS Forum for kvinner og utvikling) which institutionalised a long-lasting co-operation and, today, more than 70 women's organisations are connected.

Post-1980s

The landscape of ethnic Norwegian women's and feminist organisations has gradually changed since the 1980s. Some of the organisations have been abolished (The National Council of Women, the Norwegian Federation of Women, The New Feminists, Bread and Roses) and new organisations have been established (*Ottar*

and *Human Rights Service*). There has been a general decrease in the ethnic Norwegian voluntary sector. However, there have been prominent changes among women with an ethnic minority or national minority background. Many migrant women's organisations, mostly local and regional, have been established. These are mostly ethnic and cultural organisations (Nyhagen Predelli, 2006). There are only a few national organisations of/for migrants and refugees, but there have been efforts to include ethnic minorities in the political process. 'Ethnic corporatism' (Brochmann and Rogstad, 2007) was institutionalised in 1984 when the Contact Committee between migrant organisations and the government (*Kontaktutvalget mellom innvandrerbefolkningen og myndighetene*, KIM) was established.

In general, there has been an increase in professionalized and centralised organisations that work politically since the 1980s (Selle, 2000, in Berven and Selle, 2001). The same is true among feminist organisations, and there are also more informal networks. Violence against women is still an important issue, and other issues are 'the tyranny of beauty', equal pay and economic independence.

The feminist discourse in Norway has changed; for example there is less talk about the 'oppression' of women. Formal gender equality has been established. There is also less talk about 'sisterhood' and 'solidarity' in a more diverse feminist landscape. The most important change, however, is related to the symbolic merging of gender equality and the migration policy fields. This is a discourse that has set up gender equality as a 'Norwegian value' in contrast to migrant cultures, specifically Muslim culture, which is oppressive to women and connected to issues like female genital mutilation and forced marriages.

Mainstreaming and intersectional policies have been central in the 1990s and 2000s. Mainstreaming, especially in the 1990s, through efforts to integrate gender perspectives into core thinking of public administration and resulting in a downscaling of women-oriented projects. Intersectionality is connected to more recent efforts to simultaneously deal with complex patterns of discrimination, and this approach has been questioned by ethnic Norwegian women's organisations due to a fear of less focus on women's and gender issues.

2.3 Spain

During the Franco regime (1939-1975) in Spain, women's emancipation and women's participation in the labour market were seen as antithetical to 'traditional' conceptions of femininity, and married women were legally subordinated to the authorities of their husbands. The only legal women's organisation of a political nature was The Women's Section of the Phalanx (*Falange*) which was an integral part of the fascist state apparatus (Mendez, 1983; Marin and Lopez Garcia, 1986). Other women's organisations had to function in a clandestine way (Threlfall, 1996). However, women were involved in the resistance movement in the 1940s and 1950s. Women also formed new women's groups in the 1960s and 1970s, and these groups represented new forms of female opposition which started to articulate egalitarian ideas and rights (Sundman, 1999). There was a growing interest in exploring gender relations from a feminist perspective, and an unofficial celebration of the International Women's Year, in December 1975, is seen as a turning point in the history and development of the women's movement in Spain.

Post-Franco Spain: the years of state feminism

After Franco's death on 20th November 1975, women felt that sex discrimination was left out. Issues like democracy and socialism were seen as more important (Threlfall, 1996). There was tension between 'party women' and 'independent feminists'. Newer groups of women and radical feminists felt the need to be organised independently of political parties. They advocated for 'difference' feminism and personal change (Sundman, 1999). Several feminist organisations began to distance themselves from the political traditions of the Left.

Women-friendly and feminist state institutions were established in the 1980s. The Women's Institute (WI) (*Instituto de la Mujer*) in 1983 marks the beginning of state feminism (Gill, 1996). The set-up of WI was influenced by the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol*, PSOE) along with Socialist party feminists. WI has influenced key legislation concerning gender equality and violence against women. Several Women's Equality Plans (1988-1990, 1993-1996, 1997-2000, and 2000-2006) have been launched, and Women's Agencies with their own Equality Plans have been established in all Spanish regions (Bustelo, 2003). The feminist

movement in Spain has supported the introduction of gender-based equality policies (Valiente, 2001).

European institutions have impacted on Spanish gender policy in the 1980s and 1990s. The EU has provided incentives for mobilisation of the Spanish women's movement (Valiente and Jonson, 2003). The creation of the European Women's Lobby in 1990 was followed by the establishment of the Spanish European Women's Lobby (*Coordinadora Espanola para el Lobby Europeo de Mujeres*, CELEM) in March 1993. The CELEM is an umbrella association of nationally-based Spanish feminist groups funded mainly with European money.

Muddling Through – the 1990s

In the period from 1996 to 2004 the conservative party, People's Party (Partido Popular, PP) was in government. This was a quieter time for the feminist movement. The conservative government maintained a certain level of interest in women's issues, but twice rejected the PSOE's proposed gender violence law (Bustelo and Ortals, 2007).

The PSOE's return: 2004 onwards

The socialist administration, lead by Rodriguez Zapatero from 2004 onwards, focused on the establishment of a gender-based state machinery and there was a substantial increase in gender policies, policy measures and gender legislation. The Gender Violence Act was passed in 2004; legislative measures regarding parity government, reform of the Civil Code that allows homosexual marriage in 2005; and the National Equality Law in 2007. The Equality Policies General secretariat was established in 2004 and the Special Governmental Delegation against Gender Violence created in 2008, was, which belongs to the newly established Ministry of Equality. A National Observatory for Violence against Women, which is an inter-ministerial entity, was also established. The mandate is to overview both public and private institutions.

Several women's organisations have been active in lobbying for many of the amendments in legislation. However, their impact is difficult to assess. There is also need for further reforms such as the abortion act and the Foreign Law (including a

'two year' rule; residency requirement for family reunification before a residency permit can be issued, creating a potentially difficult situation for immigrant women experiencing domestic violence). There are also vast variations across regions in Spain concerning the implementation of Equality Plans due to the political and administrative structure.

In the last 20 years, Spanish feminism has been fragmented between women's policy agencies and women's movement activists. However, institutional changes during the 1980s and the 1990s created new possibilities for women's voices at different levels.

A few comments post-2008 national election

The current political environment has provided new political opportunities for the Spanish women's movement to influence gender violence policy. Gender violence issues have recently gained increased political attention, after a series of high-profile domestic violence incidents reported in the national media. Just before the general election in March 2008, women's organisations demanded more involvement from the political parties, and they organised meetings and campaigns protesting against a judicial system that, allegedly, is not fit for purpose in dealing with women's complaints about violence.

Diversity issues in the Spanish context

Until recently, Spain has been relatively racially homogenous, and issues of diversity, inclusion and representation for minority groups have not been a priority for the women's movement. This picture of exclusion from the mainstream feminist agenda also includes the LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual) movement, which has been relatively small, and has had a problematic relationship with the feminist movement (Garcia, 2007). In academe, mainstream sociological gender studies have focused on family, work, education, and politics (Valiente, 2001), while fewer studies have focused on ethnic minority women.

2.4 The United Kingdom

1967 (the Abortion Act) to 1982 (the demise of the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent)

In the UK, the late 1960s saw new legislation that directly improved women's lives: the Abortion Act 1967; the NHS (Family Planning) Act 1967; The Divorce Reform Act 1969; the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act 1969; the Equal Pay Act 1970; and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The Race Relation Acts 1968 and 1976 gave some protection against racism but, in general legislation, have been restrictive regarding migrants. Some triumphs for women's rights were, in fact, undermining the rights of black women, for example a passage in the 1967 Abortion Act which supported fertility control among 'problem' social groups.

Women's activism

In the late 1960s and early 1970s long-established broadly liberal women's groups existed alongside newly formed women's collectives. Groups like the Six Point Group and the Fawcett Society co-ordinated the activities of a range of pressure groups.

Some of the new feminists rejected a traditional political engagement and pursued the 'personal politics' of consciousness-raising and life-style changes. The London Women's Liberation Workshop in 1968 represented the beginnings of a more co-ordinated movement (Caine, 1997). However, the small-scale, localised and non-hierarchical nature of women's activism continued.

The first National Women's Liberation Conference (NWLC) was held in 1970. In the second NWLC the year after, delegates agreed on four demands: equal pay; equal education and job opportunities; free contraception and abortion on demand; and free 24-hour nurseries (Caine, 1997). Two additional demands were articulated at the 1974 Conference: legal and financial independence for all women; and the end to discrimination against lesbians. Yet another demand was added in 1978: freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence and an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women. In 1978 the final NWLC was arranged due to divisions

in the mainstream women's liberation movement (WLM). Radical feminists insisted that masculinity was inherently linked to violence, but socialist and liberal feminists rejected this.

The mainstream women's liberation movement (WLM) attempted to influence public opinion by arranging high profile events and campaigns. The movement received media attention and government responses included designating 1975 the Year of Women.

Black women's organisations

There was a neglect of the intersection of race and gender by white feminists in Britain in which period. The WLM had more focus on social class and issues, such as discriminatory immigration practices, were rarely prioritised. The radical legal organisation Rights of Women (ROW, 1975) was engaged with immigration problems but, in general, white feminists did not accommodate diversity based on ethnicity.

In the early 1970s autonomous black women's organisations were formed: Brixton Black Women's Group; Liverpool Black Sisters; Manchester Black Women's Co-operative; and the Muslim Ladies Circle. These organisations addressed racism. White feminists viewed patriarchy as an over-arching structure that promoted the interests of men to be detriment to women. Black women on the other hand did not necessarily share this world view as black men were barely represented within institutional power structures, and family could be a source for support (Caine, 1997). This was also the case for a white minority, the Irish Catholics, which suffered from institutional racism across this period (O'Shea, 1989). Many black women did not consider themselves to be either feminists or political. However, they were involved in women-only activities that sought social justice and challenged, for instance, racism faced by their children.

The Brixton Black Women's Group was established in 1974 and they addressed colonialism and other Pan-African issues. Southall Black Sisters was formed in 1979 as a campaigning group. They initially represented Asian and Afro-Caribbean women, but increasingly supported South Asian women. In 1978 an umbrella-group

called the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) was established. They co-ordinated responses to issues that affected black communities (Brixton Black Women's Group, 1984). Forming OWAAD is viewed as a watershed in the history of black women's rights activism. They held annual conferences from 1979 to 1982. The term 'womanist' was suggested as an alternative to 'feminist', but not adopted within OWAAD. OWAAD folded in 1982 because of differences based on class, sexuality and region, in addition to differences in country of origin, religion and caste. There were, for example, conflicts between London-based black women's groups and other groups around the country, and also conflict between lesbian groups and other groups.

Both ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities adopted the feminist tenet 'the personal is political' which evolved into an ideology of identity politics and included the merging of personal empowerment and political activism.

Violence against women

The WLM focused on violence against women, and the home as a site of male violence (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). The first women's refuges opened in 1972 and the refuge movement exposed domestic violence as a previously hidden social problem. Women's Aid (WA) was formed in 1975 as an umbrella-organisation for refuges seeking to incorporate core feminist principles. Black women's groups did not engage with the refuge movement. Black women were more often clients than workers or volunteers and black women's groups were reluctant to highlight the existence of domestic violence in their communities. In 1980, however, the Southall Black Sisters broke the community's code of silence by protesting against the killing of an Asian woman and her children by her husband.

Women's groups and the state

Second wave feminists showed, generally, little interest in engaging in dialogue with national government, and the government tended not to listen (Caine, 1997). Feminist groups were poorly represented in the Women's National Commission, established in 1969 by the Labour Government.

The refuges had limited resources and were based on voluntary activity and community fund-raising. However, they needed protection from state agencies and local authorities. In 1975 the government set up the Commons Select Committee on Violence in Marriage with Women's Aid. This contributed to a growth in public understanding of the issue and also resulted in new legislation to protect women from domestic violence.

Groups such as Women Against Rape and Feminists Against Sexual Terrorism organised 'Reclaim the Night' marches (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). This however, caused division between white and black women because these marches were organised in black areas (Sudbury, 1998). Rape crisis centres established from 1976 and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act came in 1976.

In 1979 the Conservatives took over government and this led to a reduction in public spending. Many women who had been active in the WLM opposed Tory policies and many women opposed state violence by joining the peace movement and the Greenham Common protests against Cruise missiles or the miners' wives campaign.

1982 to 1997

Margaret Thatcher's administration showed a lack of interest in gender equality, but some progress was made as a result of European Community (EC) directives. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) were involved in extending the law relating to sex equality and amendments were incorporated in the Sex Discrimination Act 1986.

The Immigration Act, 1980, included the 'one year rule' (foreign spouses must live in the UK with their partner for twelve months before applying for settlement status) and the 'no recourse to public funds' (not claim any state benefits or undertake any paid work) which made foreign women in abusive relationships particularly vulnerable.

Women's activism and the state

The 18-year period of Tory rule was a testing time for a range of feminist endeavours. Projects that delivered services and received state funding met pressure to conform. For instance, the refuge movement could receive funding, but

feminist projects risked eroding. Women's groups that were not performing a valuable delivery role experienced funding cutbacks and many were forced to fold. However, this period saw a growth in 'municipal feminism', and an increasing number of women's units and committees.

Some women's organisations were involved in multi-agency working. Women's Aid (WA) had access to government agencies and was asked to give advice. Also Southall Black Sisters voiced their opinion on the 'one year' and the 'no recourse to public funds' rules. However, few of their concerns were reflected in policy (Gupta, 2003). In the early 1990s women's organisations worked for justice for women who had killed by abusive family members. This coalition included Southall Black Sisters, Women's Aid and Justice for Women, and these campaigns were partly successful (Gupta, 2003).

The issue of female genital mutilation received increased attention due to immigration from the Horn of Africa. In 1983 the organisation Forward was established. This organisation collaborated with organisations such as Southall Black Sisters, The Black Women's Health and Family Support and Akina Mama Wa Africa, and Somali community health groups. Their aim was to eliminate the practice in the UK and Africa and the Female Circumcision Act was passed in 1985.

Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) was established in 1989, after Salman Rushdie's novel 'The Satanic Verses'. WAF wanted to promote secularism and oppose religious fundamentalism. Southall Black Sisters and Brent Asian Women's Refuge were some of the organisations involved in WAF. They worked against divisions based on religion which, in their opinion, eroded the global sisterhood of black feminists.

Feminists had minimal success at influencing social policy during the period of Conservative rule. However, from the mid 1980s, women's groups forged links with the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). In 1987 the PLP created a post of shadow minister for women. The Labour Party in opposition endorsed the incorporation of gender mainstreaming into its policies and collaborated with women's groups.

1997 to the present day

Labour won the election in 1997 and the first Blair administration established the Women's Unit (WU). This unit was rebranded in 2001 as the Women and Equality Unit (WEU), but was criticised by many feminists who claimed that the equality structures were not designed to effect fundamental change (Coote, 2001). However, others argued that the establishment of a minister for women nominally represented an expansion in the influence of female politicians (Lovensduski, 2007). The Government Equality Office (GEO) was set up in 2007 and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was established due to the amalgamation of separate equality bodies.

The New Labour has engaged with the VAW (Violence against women) agenda and this has resulted in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Disorder Act 2004 and the Domestic Violence National Plan in 2005. However, shortcomings have occurred where violence against women intersects with immigration. Protective legislation against so-called honour-based violence has been made (The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003; the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 plus the Forced Marriage Unit), but there has been very different governmental response to violence against women experienced by UK citizens and non-citizens. There has been harsh legislation to repel asylum seekers and the 'no recourse to public funds' condition for those whose claims failed. Some aspects have been gendered, for instance the burden of proof required for a women who is fleeing some form of gender persecution. Also trafficking has been viewed through the prism of immigration. There have been firm penalties for trafficking for sexual exploitation, however, few measures to aid or protect victims.

Women's activism

Almost all the feminist organisations have moved away from the flat, fully democratic structure. This has been a response to the political climate and in order to become more efficient.

In 2005 the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Campaign was arranged by a coalition of organisations across the women's movement which, historically, have had different orientations and limited interaction. The coalition included Women's

Aid Federations from across the UK; Refuge; Rape Crisis; Southall Black Sisters; FORWARD; Imkaan; Fawcett Society; the Women's National Commission; and the Women's Institute.

Women's groups and the state

Organisations working against VAW, including Southall Black Sisters, have lobbied for the repeal of immigration rules such as the 'one year' rule and the 'no recourse to public funds' rule. Eventually, some changes were made, namely that women who could prove that their relationships had broken down as a result of domestic violence could be granted leave to remain; however, they still had no recourse to public funds. The government also extended the probationary period to two years in order to discourage opportunistic marriages as a mode to entry.

Since 2005, End Violence Against Women (EVAW) has conducted an annual 'audit' of government departments. These reports show that the government has failed to develop an overarching strategy to bring together the work of the different departments and it does not tackle intersectional discrimination (EVAW, 2008). Southall Black Sisters, among others, have argued that the government should incorporate the issue of forced marriages into its mainstream policies on violence against women.

Secular women's groups, particularly representing black women have also criticised Labour's commitment to multiculturalism because usually there are male representatives and representatives from religious communities who determine the needs of the community, and they have had little or no interest in promoting women's interests (WAF, 2007).

3 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS, GENDERED CITIZENSHIP, AND MULTICULTURALISM

3.1 Introduction

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

First, however, two notes on terminology are called for. Firstly, we have conducted interviews and literature studies in three different languages, whereas this report is written in English. This means that everything spoken or written in Norwegian and Spanish has been translated to English. Translating academic, political, bureaucratic and everyday language is challenging. We might not always have

succeeded in catching the 'right' words, in spite of our efforts to be loyal to the research participants.¹⁵

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

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

¹⁵ Moreover, with one exception none of the authors of the reports on Norway, Spain and the UK have English as their mother language.

movements in the three countries. We also examine political claims-making and problem representations forwarded by both movement and government actors, with an emphasis on violence against women issues and racism and discrimination issues that are relevant to the violence against women agenda. The anti-violence and anti-racism engagements of the organisations are chosen by the researchers as empirical examples of the intersection of feminism and ethnicity. A selective mapping of policy documents and reports, produced by national governments and by women's organisations, has been carried out to supplement the interviews. In various ways, we address the emergence of gender equality and ethnic diversity as distinct or intertwined policy fields, and relate our research to the growing concern with multiple forms of discrimination (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2007; Squires, 2007).

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

3.2 Women's Movements

We use the terms 'contemporary women's movements' to delineate our focus on the women's liberation movement which gained momentum in many European countries from the late 1960s and early 1970s. We are reluctant to using terms like 'second wave women's movements' because the wave metaphor is more confusing than clarifying in comparative research (Lønnå, 2004). The number of waves and the timing of the waves differ from country to country, i.e., between Norway, Spain and Britain, and the term tends to focus on tops and high-points without reflecting on the

normal level of mobilisation, activity and visibility of women's movements that is taking place in between the crests (ibid.: 41).

Our research includes different geopolitical regions of Europe - the Western (UK), Northern (Norway) and Southern (Spain) regions, a time span of about 40 years, and a major concern with demands voiced by minoritised women's movement actors in relation to majoritised women's movement actors and in relation to the state.

Although our main emphasis is on women's movement organisations with explicit feminist aims and identities, we have also included non-feminist women's organisations, or even gender-mixed organisations, whenever deemed required or desirable. Empirically speaking, our project includes social movement organisations that may not subscribe to feminist identities. An emphasis on contributions and claims-making from ethnic minority women has necessitated such a broad approach. In Spain, for instance, ethnic minority women's groups are often embedded within gender-mixed organisations rather than organising independently of these, and in the UK many black women's organisations identify more with the anti-racist movement than with the women's movement (Siddiqui, 2000). In Norway, organisations without feminist aims and gender-mixed organisations have played an important role in promoting the interests of migrant women.

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

A mapping of Norwegian organisations in the early 1980s defined women's organisations as those whose members and leaders were predominantly women (Dahlerup and Gulli, 1985), and differentiated between eight categories, one of which was 'the women's movements' (women's rights, feminist) (ibid.: 9). The selection of organisations for our own project, more than 20 years later, is based on a mapping of the overall 'gender political' organisational landscape which also includes men's organisations as well as gender mixed organisations. The mapping is focused on

gender issues and on the intersection between women's and migrants' organisations in particular. We have categorised according to profile/aim, gendered composition of membership, organisational activities, and national/local organisational level (Eggebø, 2007).¹⁶

Such categorisations, however, make organisational distinctions appear more unambiguous than they in fact are, concerning gender as well as ethnicity/race. We find West and Blumberg's 'continuum of gender integration in social protest' and the differentiation between independent, gender-integrated and gender-parallel organisations inspiring (West and Blumberg, 1990: 22). Their categorisation include independent organisations, where separate gender groups operate autonomously (women and men have their own gender-specific groups); parallel organisations, where auxiliary women's groups are linked to a single male dominated movement with some mutually beneficial movement aspects; and, finally, gender integrated organisations, which simultaneously engage both men and women pursuing a single objective (ibid.). Similarly, ethnic minority organisations engaged in social protest can be categorised along the same dimensions: whether ethnic minority women have their own independent or separate groups, whether they have parallel or auxiliary groups, or whether they are integrated into gender-mixed ethnic minority organisations.

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

¹⁶ For the mapping by Eggebø see www.femcit.org/files/WP4_WorkingpaperNo1.pdf. The following categories were constructed and used in the mapping: gender political organisations, minority organisations, religious organisations, social and humanitarian organisations, women's committees of organisations and political parties, organisations focusing on gender based violence and local women's organisations.

Table 3.1 The Intersection of Gender and Race/Ethnicity in Social Movement Organisations¹⁷

FOCUS ON RACIALLY/ETHNICALLY BASED DISCRIMINATION	FOCUS ON GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION		
	MAIN FOCUS ¹⁸ (Women's movement organisations)		PARTIAL FOCUS ¹⁹
	FEMINIST	NOT FEMINIST ²⁰	
MAIN FOCUS (Anti-racist/indigenous people's movement organisations)	Feminist + anti-racist/national minority/indigenous people's		Anti-racist/national minority/indigenous people's organisations with a partial concern with women's issues
PARTIAL FOCUS	Feminist organisations with some interest in ethnic discrimination	Women's organisations with a focus on the situation of women of ethnic minority backgrounds	
WEAK/NO FOCUS	Feminist organisations with no focus on the discrimination of ethnic minorities	Women's organisations with no focus on ethnic minorities	

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

¹⁷ The table is inspired by West and Blumberg 1990.

¹⁸ These organisations are 'women's organisations', where the members and leaders are predominantly women, usually regarded as the 'women's movement'.

¹⁹ Organisations where the members and leaders are gender mixed.

²⁰ See the distinction between feminist and women's movements elsewhere in this section.

Ferree and Tripp define feminism as ‘the broad goal of challenging and changing gender relations that subordinate women to men and that thereby also differently advantage some women and men relative to others’ (Ferree and Tripp, 2006: vii). They also claim that whether or not individuals or groups choose to call themselves feminists, ‘their goal of empowering women should be considered feminist’ (ibid.: vii). It follows that organisations which do not self-label as feminist may be described as feminist by researchers employing the understanding forwarded by Ferree and Tripp. Furthermore, Ferree and Tripp distinguish between feminism as a *goal* for social change and women’s movements as organised *constituencies*.

Such a distinction is in keeping with the work of RNGS,²¹ the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State, where feminist movements are seen as a subset of the women’s movement. While ‘women’s movements’ is used for a broad variety of different forms of women’s organising, the term ‘feminist movements’ refers to collective activity that explicitly challenges the dominant gendered power relations or confronts the gender order. In our reports we follow the usage of the RNGS network, thus taking the broader concept of ‘women’s movements’ to include collective action by women presenting gendered identity claims (McBride and Mazur, 2008). In the same vein, a women’s movement discourse will emphasise the identification with women as a group, the use of explicitly gendered language about women, and a demand for representation of women in public life (see ibid.). The concept of ‘the feminist movement’, on the other hand, is in this perspective seen as a sub-category of women’s movements, consisting of women’s movement actors that present a particular movement discourse (feminism) which involves demands towards changing the position of women, including the challenging and changing of women’s subordination and the structures of gender based hierarchies (ibid.).

3.3 Gendered Citizenship

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

²¹ For information about RNGS, see <http://libarts.wsu.edu/polisci/rngs>.

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

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

From the feminist type of argument outlined above it follows that if women do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men to participate in all areas of life, that is, if women are not free to choose whether they want to act as full citizens at work, in the family, in civil society and in politics, then they are not treated as equal citizens and are hence discriminated against. In so far as rights and the freedom to choose do not guarantee equal outcomes for women and men, a radical implication of feminist theories of citizenship is that *practices* should be inclusive of women and

men in all aspects of life. A precondition for inclusive practices, and hence for democracy, is *agency* - '[a] conscious capacity to choose and act at a personal and political level' (Lister, 1997:38). Women's movement actors are on the one hand agents that may put forward citizenship claims and demands in relation to various policy areas. On the other hand, their agency may be constrained or conditioned by the particular characteristics of the social and political structures in which they are embedded. In our project we address bonds or links between civil society (in the form of women's movements organisations) and the public arena (in the form of government and gender machineries) with a particular focus on women's movements and the emerging voices and claim-making of organised 'racialised' and minority ethnic women, and the presence or absence of collaboration and alliances between ethnic majority and minority women.

3.4 Multiculturalism, Minorities Within Minorities, and Intersectionality

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

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

unequal treatment of cultural groups and the 'culture-racism' to which members of minority cultural groups are often exposed' (ibid.: 3).

In line with these authors, our perspective on the multicultural and multiculturalism has been delimited to ethnicity/race, also in harmony with the EU 6th framework programme priority 7.1.2 *Gender and Citizenship in a Multicultural Context* which focuses on: '(...) how notions of citizenship and multiculturalism incorporate a gender perspective, (...) the relations between gender, race, ethnicity, class and different notions and practiced of citizenship' (ibid.: 16).²²

Paradoxically, multiculturalism, when understood as giving not only recognition but also group rights to ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, might undermine the ideal of gender equal citizenship through the production of increased inequalities for minoritised women. Women within a particular minority group might be prescribed a subordinated role, or second-class status, in relation to men within their group. For example, women might be denied a role in public life, with no access to an independent income or to representation in positions of power. If such cultural groups are given the legal right to continue gender discriminatory practices, conflicts inevitably arise between women's rights to equality and the minority cultural group's rights to possibly override women's rights.²³ In this sense, women come to constitute a minority within a minority (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005), disadvantaged by the intersection of multiple structures of oppression. Such power differentials between women and men in minority groups is a contested issue in countries such as Norway and the UK, where the governments have been accused by women's groups of speaking mainly with self-appointed, male, community leaders.

²² ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp6/docs/wp/sp1/g_wp_200202_en.pdf

²³ Such conflicts might also arise between international human rights conventions and practices within member states that are signatories to such conventions. For example, in the context of Islam and human rights, traditional Shari'a law legitimates and even 'requires legal discrimination of women' (Mayer, 1991: 99), and in effect undermines the protection women in Muslim states have under the CEDAW convention (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) (Mayer, 1991: 137; see also Moghadam, 2002 and Nyhagen Predelli, 2008).

In this context the various understandings and interpretations of 'gender equality' forwarded by women's organisations and movements are important, as they can be used in supporting or critiquing policies that purportedly support multiculturalism. For example, a positive view of multiculturalism might engender support for policies that seek to reduce generational conflicts related to forced marriage practices through mediation between the involved parties. A more negative view of multiculturalism might lead to the insistence that mediation should be abandoned in favour of increased support services for individuals who have been subjected to such illegal practices. These are political issues and conflicts that are fought over between women's organisations who seek to influence current government policy.

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

We understand gender, as well as race and ethnicity and other inequalities like social class, to be simultaneously subjective and structural concepts, about everyday practices, identities and social positioning (Brah and Phoenix, 2004). Furthermore, we emphasise the need for complex approaches to structured inequalities, whether they are multiple, compound or intersectional (Danish Institute of Human Rights, 2007: 16). It may be insufficient to 'add on' race, ethnicity, class and other inequalities to that of gender when analyzing the different claims and demands coming from differently positioned women's movement actors. Intersectional approaches acknowledge the inseparable nature of different inequalities, and aims to examine how structures of gender, race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and

religion are interlocked and produce unique experiences from which legitimate political demands might arise (Hill Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1997; McCall, 2005; Verloo, 2006). Patterns of privilege and disadvantage are closely related to structures of gender, race and ethnicity, and class, but such patterns are not set in stone and individuals and groups might move between positions of privilege and disadvantage, depending on the social and cultural context in which they are located at different times. Although a fully developed intersectional approach would include inequalities based on class, age, sexuality, and disability, WP4 focuses mainly on the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity. Other work packages within FEMCIT are dealing with other dimensions of inequality, and our aim is that the integration of all the work packages will lead to the development of a comprehensive understanding of gendered citizenship and the different types of inequalities that intersect with and impact upon gendered practices of citizenship.

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

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

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

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

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

The gaining of trust and confidence from research participants has been handled in different research contexts. For instance, one of the researchers found it particularly useful to refer to Scandinavian examples of gender equality policies and institutions in order to highlight specific features of the UK context. Another researcher thought

she had an advantage as an outsider, while the insider position was found to be an asset in some situations by a third researcher.

An important feature that impacts on our positions as researchers in various contexts is the extent to which the women's movements in general and the relations between majoritised and minoritised women's actors within them in particular, have been researched. The history and development of such relations within the three countries have followed different trajectories. In Norway, little research has been conducted on relations between ethnic majority and ethnic minority women's organisations, and, indeed, such relations have largely been absent in the movement itself. In Spain, the picture is quite similar, in that previous research on the women's movement has largely neglected the claims-making of ethnic minority women, while also the majoritised women's movement itself has overlooked the interests of ethnic minority women in formulating policy demands. In the UK, on the other hand, there is much documentation available on the history and development of ethnic minority women's organisations and their critique of the ethnic majority women's movement. Despite a background of tense relations, majoritised and minoritised women in the UK women's movement have managed to work together effectively in putting forward policy demands, in particular in the area of violence against women. There is less available research in the UK, however, on relations between ethnic minority and majority women's organisations in today's women's movement. Furthermore, there is little empirical research on the current UK women's movement and its engagement with and impact on political decision-making processes at the state level (see Mackay, 2008). Thus our aim is to produce new knowledge about contemporary women's movements in all the three countries.

Realising the importance of our own location as researching subjects, we would like to quote Uma Narayan extensively for her approach, emphasising our positions as political subjects engaged in critical analysis of women's movements:

'There is an important respect in which we all, as feminists, are not outsiders and 'Anthropologists' within our own cultures, nor "Native Informants" whose task is to provide raw materials for the reflections of our 'Others', nor necessarily those most grievously affected by the institutions and practices we criticize. We are political subjects engaged in critical political analyses about

things we consider crucial, and care about, in the variety of contexts that constitute our “locations”. If Western and Third-World feminists are, in crucial ways political subjects, we need to see relationships between us as political relationships that always involve struggle and contestation, as well as prospects for political solidarity and co-operation.’

(Narayan, 1997: 152)

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

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

(Frankenberg, 1993: 6)

In this project, where relations between minoritised and majoritised women are examined, it has been crucial to introduce theories of whiteness not just in relation to

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

3.6 Concluding Remarks

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

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

women's agency in order to change society towards a more gender equal citizenship.

4 POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES, FRAMING PROCESSES AND RESONANCE

4.1 Introduction

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

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

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

'majoritised' and 'minoritised women's movement actors on the one hand, and claims forwarded by interviewed civil servants and politicians and in state policy discourse and decision-making.

4.2 Political Opportunity Structures: institutional and discursive aspects

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

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

4.3 Political Opportunities

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

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

Political opportunity structures are key to understanding the mobilisation, strategies and results of social movements because they operate as 'structuring cues' for social movements (Kjellman, 2007; McAdam, 1996). Such cues, which include the distribution of opportunities and threats, and repression and facilitation, impact differently on different groups of citizens in various political contexts. Because political systems vary across nations, regions and other localities, it is of particular interest to conduct comparative studies in which the possible effects of different

political opportunity structures are taken into account in the analysis of women's movements and the opportunities and constraints they are faced with in trying to change a particular gender regime.²⁴ What counts as relevant features of a political opportunity structure is, however, a contested issue in the research literature, as there is a lack of consensus on relevant dimensions to be included in the concept (McAdam, 1996: 24-25). The adding of new variables has certainly expanded the explanatory power of the concept, but at the same time this has led to a lack of specificity (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 17). Koopmans (1999: 101-102) states that the concept needs clarification, but given the vast variety in social movements and political systems a single conceptualisation might also be unrealistic. Koopmans thus argues that '(political) opportunity structure is a context-sensitive analytical tool *par excellence*' (ibid.: 102).

4.3.1 Limiting the concept of political opportunity

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

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

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

²⁴ For the concept of 'gender regime' see Connell 1987.

constraints that non-governmental actors (such as women's organisations and movements) are faced with.

4.3.2 Stable and dynamic, general and field specific structures

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

Koopmans et al., (2005: 20) have pointed to a weakness of the political opportunities approach; namely, the use of this concept at a too general level. They argue (ibid.: 19-20) that political opportunities are *field-specific* and that both institutional and discursive opportunity structures have general and field-specific dimensions. In other words, a given political system will have general features such as its party system, degree of corporatism, power balances, and so on. The political system will also exhibit field-specific features such that each particular political field (for example, 'gender equality' or 'racial and ethnic discrimination') will be characterised by designated institutions, alliances and ways of working. In our analysis we will pay specific attention to 'women's policy machineries', 'women's policy agencies' or 'institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women' – or those government institutions that 'pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women' (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 3). Research has shown that different policy fields 'offer very different political opportunity structures from women's point of view' (ibid.: 7).²⁵

²⁵ Kantola and Outshoorn here refer to Mazur, 2002 and Holli, 2006 - worth checking out.

4.3.3 The transnational context

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

In our project, both the United Nations and the European context will be taken into consideration when we discuss particular features of women's movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK. The role of the United Nations in the development of national gender machineries in various nation-states, as well as the impact of transnational networks on the formation of domestic policies, have been recognised by scholars (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 9). Moreover, the Council of Europe and the European Union has led individual member states to initiate and effect more radical gender equality legislation, thus also providing women's movement actors with opportunity structures they can take advantage of in their particular locations within nation states or international contexts (ibid.: 10; see also Roth, 2007). The European Women's Lobby (founded in 1990), for example, has carved out a

significant role as representing more than four thousand women's organisations from all the EU member states and advocating policy innovation and change towards the European Union. On the other hand, the European Union itself has been criticised by women's movement actors for being slow in recognising both the interrelatedness of gender, 'race', ethnicity, class and sexuality and a lack of concern for the discriminatory practices faced by immigrant women (EWL, 2007; European Parliament, 1995).

4.3.4 Explaining change

The critical part of any structural or institutional theory is, of course, to explain how change - the mobilisation of protest - can take place. Political opportunity theorists refer to 'changes in either the institutional feature or informal political alignments of a given political system' because such changes significantly may 'reduce the power disparity between a given challenging group and the state' (McAdam, 1995: 224, as cited in Kjellman, 2007: 18). Kjellman (2007), however, emphasises that the notion of a political opportunity structure is inherently contradictory: On the one hand it is a structural concept, and as such refers to the 'relatively permanent features of a society that cannot be easily altered by actors' (ibid.: 22). On the other hand, the concept refers to actions related to the opening and closing of opportunities in the system, and 'essentially contradicts the very definition of structure within the social sciences' (ibid.: 21). Gamson and Meyer have suggested solving this problem through the above-mentioned distinction between the stable and the dynamic aspects of political institutions (Gamson and Meyer: 278-281). McAdam has also suggested that the political opportunity structure is imbued with a *potential* for change (McAdam in Kjellman, 2007: 23), and that a distinction can be made between objective and subjective or imagined opportunities. For this potential to be realized, however, political agents (such as women's movements) must interpret the political opportunity structure to actually include or present such potential. In other words, an opportunity which is not comprehended by movement actors is not an actual opportunity. Thus, even if structural features make certain courses of action more or less likely, we still have to differentiate between objectively given political opportunity structures and the structures which are comprehended and interpreted as presenting either opportunities or constraints (Kjellman, 2007: 23).

In conjunction with the dynamic aspects of opportunities, McAdam and Scott (2005) have been concerned with clarifying 'transforming mechanisms'; the very features which trigger the mobilisation of protest. In this regard we find McAdam and Scott's concept of 'destabilizing events' to be promising. In the context of women's movements, such events could include the eruption of socio-political issues of particular relevance to women due to for example media attention (gender pay gap, violence against women issues, and so on). According to McAdam and Scott, a set of questions should be asked in relation to a particular destabilizing event: Has the event been framed or interpreted as a challenge or as an opportunity by movement actors? How has the event been appropriated? Did the event originate new or innovative actions and agents? And lastly, are there any signs of new institutional alignments in the aftermath of the event (McAdam and Scott, 2005: 18-19)?

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

4.4 Discursive Opportunity Structures and Framing

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

media attention, which claims that resonate with claims by other actors, and which claims that gain legitimacy in public discourse (Koopmans et al., 2005: 19).

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

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

What constitutes institutional versus discursive sides of the political opportunity structure might sometimes be blurred. For example, we would view a state or government's provision of financial resources to women's organisations, which facilitates both the formation and mobilisation of such groups, as part of the institutional opportunity structure. On the other hand, relations between the state and women's organisations that are nurtured through formal and informal dialogue

and co-operation might be seen as part of both the institutional and the discursive side of the political opportunity structure. The practical inclusion of women's organisations in government consultations is, nevertheless, a clear example of an available political opportunity structure - be it institutional or discursive. The strictly discursive side of the political opportunity structure is perhaps more clearly demonstrated by the state's policy documents (such as white papers and consultation papers) relating to the preferred role and legitimacy of women's organisations as part of the voluntary sector. Such documents provide the ideological framework within which the voluntary sector in general and women's organisations in particular must navigate and negotiate. In ideological terms, the state may for example support women's organisations in order to promote such values as democracy, participation, trust, social capital and belonging, learning, and diversity.²⁶ On the other hand, women's movement actors themselves produce discourse, and their policy documents might give us an intake into how they present themselves, other movement actors and the state, and how they view the available discursive political opportunities. We have mapped comments that women's organisations have made in relation to a selected number of national and international reports (see Appendix B in the Country Reports), and the findings are to some extent included in the analysis of resonance in Chapter 7.

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

²⁶ An example of this can be found in the Norwegian government's white paper on the relationship between the Norwegian state and voluntary organisations (*St.meld.nr. 27 (1996-1997)*: 10-11).

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

Different social movements may actually be able or unable to take advantage of political opportunities. Favourable political opportunities, be they stable or dynamic, are no guarantee for the mobilisation of protest. Protest requires the recognition and framing of opportunities. Generally, people need to feel both aggrieved by some or most aspects of their lives, as well as optimistic that collective action can produce change. Snow originally defined framing as 'the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action' (Snow, as cited in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996: 6). Claims-making, on the other hand, is defined in the literature as

‘the collective and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans, 2004: 454). There are thus similarities between the concepts of framing and claims-making, but we are treating claims-making as the prognostic framing of an issue and thus as an essential part of the more general framing process (see below).

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

4.5 Framing Processes

By combining institutional and discursive opportunities, Koopmans and his colleagues (2005) aim to connect elements from the theory of political opportunity structure with that of the framing approach as originally established by Goffman (1974) and later developed by Snow et al., (1986) and by Snow and Benford (1992) in their analysis of the dynamics of social movement theory. The concept of ‘frame’ refers to ‘an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment’ (Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). Social movement actors produce collective action frames that ‘are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation’ (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). Benford and Snow list a range of framing tasks, including ‘diagnostic framing’, ‘prognostic framing’ and ‘motivational framing’. Diagnostic framing involves the identification of an injustice or a problematic issue, while prognostic framing ‘involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and

the strategies for carrying out the plan' (Benford and Snow, 2000: 616). The motivational framing provides the rationale for collective action and a call to mobilise for action (ibid.: 617). When women's movement actors participate in lobbying and advocacy work, they engage intentionally and strategically in such framing tasks. In our analysis we will examine how women's movement actors in Norway, Spain and the UK frame violence against women issues in their attempts to influence public policy.

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

Crucial here is the issue of agency: are we as subjects primarily the users of discourse, or are we (only) constituted in discourse (Bacchi, 2005)? Although this tension characterises the relationship between the (psychological) tradition of discourse analysis and the (political) tradition of analysis of discourse, Bacchi argues that the two approaches should be combined in order to explore both constraints and opportunities in relation to subject agency (Bacchi, 2005). In our research context, it is thus important to consider not only how women's movement actors are embedded within 'naturalised' or dominant discourses, but also how they intentionally use discourse to construct particular problem representations (and possible solutions). In particular, we examine how women's movement actors represent the issue of co-operation and alliance within the women's movement.

According to Bacchi (1999: 40) it can be 'useful to think of discourses as frames, since they provide frameworks or ways of viewing issues'. However, when we start to talk about the ability to choose among competing frames, we have left the discourse theory for framework theory (Bacchi, 2005: 203). Strategic framing²⁷ of political claims is within the tradition of framework theory (Verloo, 2005). Frame theorists see discourse as outside the subject, as cultural constraints, within which intentional subjects can shape useful political collective action frames. A discourse analysis approach sees no subject outside the discourse and the subject therefore has work to do on her or himself to avoid falling into discursive positions which may be exploitative of others (Bacchi, 2005: 206).

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

The first part of this agenda thus involves paying attention to the discourses within which we operate. This requires 'committed attempts to draw in a wide variety of women's voices in order to lessen the chances of adopting taken-for-granted cultural and class-based presumptions in one's analysis' (Bacchi, 2005: 207). By interviewing representatives of both majoritised and minoritised groups of women and their organisations, our study of different types of women's movement actors aims to include a wide variety of voices. The second part of Bacchi's agenda addresses the deliberate deployment of concepts and categories both by those with greater and those with lesser institutional power in their advancement of specific

²⁷ Strategical framing as a concept refers to 'strategical efforts to link frames of social movements to those of prospective constituents or adversaries' (Verloo, 2005: 17).

political projects. According to Bacchi (ibid.), framework theory can here examine 'how social movement actors manoeuvre within discursive limits to shape issues in ways that advance their political projects'. Her thinking is echoed by Kjellman (2007: 28), who suggests that 'the framing of political events may be better seen as part of the way in which a movement quite deliberately goes about constructing the motivational frames necessary to sensitise and mobilise constituents, or plot courses of action'. Likewise, Benford and Snow underline the importance of the 'conscious shaping of frames that act to convert others to your cause and that advance desired political goals' (Benford and Snow, 2000; cited in Bacchi, 2005:203). The question of *who* is speaking a given discourse is of central importance to us (Clifford, 2001 cited in Bacchi, 2005: 207). Both majoritised and minoritised women's movement actors can actively deploy concepts for political purposes. By asking representatives of women's organisations about the strategies they employ to build alliances, promote issues on the political agenda, and influence public policies, we seek to address how majoritised and minoritised women actively frame their agendas and claims.

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

Our analysis, based mainly on interviews with activists but also supplemented with a mapping of selected policy documents, is inspired by Bacchi. 'What's the Problem?' approach is usually applied to analyse policy documents in order to highlight competing constructions of issues addressed in a policy process. However, the

approach can also been used to analyse interviews (see for instance Rönblom, 2002).

When we focus on 1) the representation of co-operation and alliances between majoritised and minoritised women's organisations, and 2) the resonance or dissonance between policy-claims made by women's movement actors and actual government policy in the area of violence and racism/discrimination against women, we seek to address the following questions: How is the issue of co-operation and alliance between majoritised and minoritised women's organisations represented in our interviews? Is it at all represented as problematic? If so, are there specific issues which are presented as problematic? If not, why is that? What is the 'problem' represented to be in relation to the government's development and implementation of policies in relation to violence against women? Is there at all a problem? If so, what are the specific issues which are being presented as problematic? If not, why is that? Are any solutions presented in relation to the problem representations, and can any effects produced by the problem representations be identified? How are subjects constituted within these problem representations? Finally, who is held responsible for the 'problem'? and what effects follow from this attribution of responsibility?

4.6 Political Impact or Resonance

It is a widely held notion that democracy implies the ability of citizens to influence political decision-making. The capacity to exercise influence depends, however, on the extent to which citizens actually participate in governing structures. Women can achieve political influence through their mobilisation in elections as well as by engaging in lobbying efforts and involvement in organisations and social movements. In the words of political scientist Helga Hernes (1987), such mobilisation of women constitutes 'feminism from below'. Moreover, political influence can be achieved if and when a government opens up for, and invites the participation and representation of, women. Such a strategy amounts to a 'feminism from above', where the state actively implements women-friendly gender and social policies (see Hernes, 1987: 136 and 153; see also Skjeie and Siim, 2000). State feminism is a contested term, and a term that has various meanings. Kantola and Outshoorn

(2007: 3), for example, state feminism as ‘the efforts by women’s policy machineries to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women’. In our context, such efforts count as feminist if they are embedded in a discourse that challenges women’s subordination and the structures of gender based hierarchies (McBride and Mazur, 2008; see also Annesley et al., 2007). If they are not embedded in such feminist discourse, then ‘efforts by women’s policy machineries to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women’ would in our usage count as ‘women-friendly’ efforts. If the state is to be an instrument for women-friendly or feminist policies, then there are, from the viewpoint of women, many aspects that may potentially complicate what is, at any point in time, considered as women-friendly. Social structures related to class, ethnicity, and sexuality are some of the complicating factors operating in this field, leading many theorists to argue the necessity of intersectional analyses of women’s positions and roles in society (e.g. Hill Collins 1991, Crenshaw, 1998; Denis, 2008) .

In corporatist systems, interest groups have established formal relations with the state through consultations and representation in committees and advisory bodies (Raaum, 1999: 38). Traditionally, women have not had prominent roles in corporatist systems. Although women’s organisations have been influential in shaping and implementing parts of the welfare state, they have largely done so through more informal channels (Raaum, 1999; see also Hernes, 1987; Berven and Selle, 2001; Nyhagen Predelli, 2003). Relations between the state and civil society were previously understood in much of the research literature in terms of the concept of corporatism, while terms such as ‘governance’ and ‘network’ are preferred by contemporary researchers. Scharpf emphasizes that the concept of policy networks does not relate to formal decision-making structures, but to ‘informal patterns of interaction *preceding or accompanying* formal decisions taken by parliaments under the majority rule, or by negotiated agreement among governments, or in other formally legitimised modes of interaction’ (Scharpf, 1999: 20). A network is relatively stable, and the participants will be specialists in a certain policy field (Scharpf, 1999). Moreover, within a policy network, ‘policy agendas are defined and policy options introduced, clarified, and criticized, in open-ended and largely informal processes in which private individuals, interest groups, public interest organisations, and

governmental actors are able to make contributions to policy formation and policy implementation' (ibid.: 19).

Lobbying can be seen as a form of networking with the aim of influencing political decisions. In the Norwegian context, for example, lobbying has recently become increasingly important in political processes, while corporatism has lost clout as a plausible mode of policy-making (Klausen and Rommetvedt, 1996; Raaum, 1999; for the UK context see Grant, 1985 and 1995; Jones, 2004; Lovenduski, 2007). While formal relations and contacts are central to corporatist systems, informal relations are at the core of lobbying tactics. When the patterns of co-operation between the state and voluntary organisations are fluid, it is possible to talk about a 'pluralistic situation', where different actors choose to co-operate with each other on a case-by-case basis. The organisations do not exercise formal decision-making power but participate in decision-making processes in alternative ways and by exercising 'the power to present ideas or define an issue' (Berven and Selle, 1001: 16) or a 'normative power and the power to define' (Raaum, 1999: 43).

The power to present ideas or define an issue can be viewed in relation to the notions of problem representation and production of collective action frames. As discussed above, different problem representations may compete, and whether or not a problem representation resonates with those in power (politicians and civil servants) and thus gains influence and legitimacy depends, to some extent, on the available institutional and discursive political opportunities. Another way of expressing this resonance is to look at 'the *compatibility* of the framing of women's movement demands with the dominant discourse in the policy area' (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 7; our emphasis). Women's movement actors wanting to introduce new policies or reform established policies will seek to negotiate frames that work politically and through such frames convince powerful actors that their frames, including their claims-making, is actually the right political move to make. In order to achieve this, they might form what Benford and Snow terms as *bridging frames* that fit with existing political discourse and thinking (Benford and Snow, 2000: 624). Rather than talking about any direct political *impact* or *influence* women's movement actors might have, we are interested in the *representation* of such influence by movement actors themselves and by government officials and

politicians, and whether we can detect any resonance between statements uttered by these different actors. The concept of 'resonance' has been specified by Benford and Snow (2000) to include several dimensions related to the credibility of a particular framing and also its 'salience to targets of mobilisation' (ibid.: 621). In our context, we are particularly concerned with the 'perceived credibility of frame articulators' and also with the centrality of movement frames defined as 'how essential the beliefs, values and ideas associated with movement frames are to the [practice] of the targets of mobilisation' (ibid.: 620-621).

4.7 Conclusion

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

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This report is based on case studies in three countries, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and focuses on two major aspects of the activities of selected women's organisations in the women's movements of these countries:

- 1) Relations between ethnic 'majority' and ethnic 'minority' women's organisations in the women's movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK, with a special view to representations of co-operation, unity and dispute.
- 2) How women's organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK use political opportunity structures to influence gender policy and anti-racist policy, and policies on violence against women in particular, and their problem-representations and claims-making in relation to such policies. The violence against women issues included, herein, are those of domestic violence, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation, and racism and discrimination related to violence against women.²⁸

The main data that form the basis of the three country case studies consist of in-depth interviews conducted in parallel in each of the three countries. We have conducted 21 interviews in the UK (14 with women's organisations and seven with civil servants and politicians); 21 interviews in Spain (16 with women's organisations and five with high level civil servants); and 36 interviews in Norway (31 with women's organisations²⁹ and five with civil servants and politicians) (see the end of this Chapter for the names of the organisations that participated in our case studies).

²⁸ The issues of rape, prostitution, and human trafficking, which are also violence against women issues, have not been included in this analysis. This limitation is not intended to signify that such issues are less important, but an in-depth focus has required a focused attention on selected issues. The issues of prostitution and trafficking have been included in the remit of FEMCIT Work Package 5 led by Joyce Outshoorn.

²⁹ We have been able to interview two activists from some of the organisations. These second interviews are meant for Strand 3 of Work Package 4, and are not about the organisations per se, however, some of the interviewees provided information relevant to the organisations' work in general and some of this information has been used in this report.

The interviewed high level civil servants and politicians in the three countries are all engaged in work either on gender equality issues in general, or on violence against women issues in particular. In order to protect the anonymity of these interviewees, their institutional affiliations and background are not revealed in our report. The civil servants and politicians are all working at high level in government departments or in positions of national political power in Oslo, Madrid, or London.

The three individual country reports also include selective mappings of documents, intended to complement the findings from interviews with women's organisations, civil servants, and politicians. The select mapping of documents focused on contemporary claims, issues and outcomes made by women's organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK, and the degree of resonance between these claims and those forwarded by the three states in key policy documents, including national plans on gender equality and on violence against women, and government reports to the United Nations Committee overseeing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Specifically, the mapping sought to identify the issues women's organisations from the three countries have engaged with, focusing on the two main areas of interest of WP 4 Strand 1 as mentioned before: 1) Violence against women, including domestic violence, honour killings, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation; and 2) Racism and discrimination related to violence against women. The full selective mappings of documents and the results obtained for each country can be found in the individual country reports. Only parts of the mappings have been used in this cross-country report.

The three case studies also build on documentary evidence from women's organisations and government institutions. Documents from women's organisations include annual reports, written consultation responses, organisational reports on specific policy issues, and campaign information. Government documents include consultation documents, national plans and strategies, policy statements and summaries, and other public information. Most of these documents are available through government websites, and references to the location of specific documents included in our study are made throughout the report. In our analysis we have also used academic texts produced by feminists, such as articles in *Feminist Review* and

other journals, in addition to scholarly book chapters and books on the women's movements in the three countries.

5.2 Research Ethics

Ethical approval for this research has been obtained from Loughborough University's research ethics committee as well as from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Research participants have received a general letter of information explaining the research scope and objectives, along with a written consent form which stated the respondents' right to withdraw from the study at any time during the research. The respondents were assured confidentiality, and throughout the report they are referred to as 'interviewee', 'respondent', or 'research participant'. We have tried to avoid linking direct quotes from individuals with the organisations they are from. However, the inclusion in our study of some small organisations with a particular profile, such as organisations working against FGM in Spain, makes respondents easier to recognise even if they are not named. Also in Norway, where the feminist activist milieu is small, the issue of anonymity proved to be challenging. In this case, contextualising the analysis in order to keep the interviewee anonymous, may have led to situations where relevant information could be lost. However, we have tried our very best to prioritise the anonymity of individuals throughout the presentation of our research findings. A few interviewees wanted to read the entire interview transcript or their quoted statements, and were, thus, given the opportunity to do so towards the end of our report writing.

5.3 Organisational Mapping, Selection and Recruitment

In all three countries, organisations were selected in order to provide a mix of ethnic 'minority' and 'majority' women's organisations. To cover women's claims that have been put forward over the past 30 years or so, the organisations were selected from traditional and historical women's organisations to more contemporary and recently formed women's organisations. The organisations included in our research have been identified and selected via various routes, including existing academic literature and websites that offer comprehensive listings of current women's organisations. The selection of organisations from such lists has been used in parallel with snow-

ball sampling, using the knowledge and expertise of activists to further refer us to relevant organisations.

One of the main criteria for the selection of women's organisations was whether they include advocacy work and lobbying as part of their organisational activities and strategies and, thus, aim to achieve political influence. With a few exceptions, most of the selected organisations are based in the capital of each of the three countries.

The second main criteria was that roughly half of the organisations should be what we tentatively called 'ethnic majority women's organisations', while the other half should be 'ethnic minority women's organisations'. However, the organisational landscape is not so clearly divided between ethnic majority and minority women's organisations in any of the three countries, and adjustments had to be made. There is a 'mixture' of separate organisations for ethnic minority women and for ethnic majority women, and mixed organisations that cater to both ethnic minority and ethnic majority women; or only to minorities, both men and women, such as in Spain; or mixed ethnic majority/minority and/or mixed-gender organisations, such as in Norway. Indeed, several organisations present a mixed picture, whether in terms of policy-orientation, organisational leadership, or membership.

Our main emphasis is on women's organisations with explicit feminist aims and identities, but we have also included women's organisations that do not necessarily describe themselves as 'feminist'. They do, however, define themselves as part of the women's movement. Our emphasis on contributions and claims-making from both ethnic majority and ethnic minority women's organisations has necessitated such an approach.

5.4 Data Collection: interviewing and researcher's positionality

The interviews have been based on a qualitative approach to research, where in-depth personal interviews have been conducted with the aid of topic guides. Such an approach offers the opportunity to focus on a limited number of cases whilst exploring topics and meaning in depth, resulting in the production of 'thick description' data (Geertz, 1973).

The interviews typically lasted between one and two hours. Four sets of topic guides were developed and used for different categories of interviewees. One guide focused on representatives of ethnic majority organisations, while the second focused on ethnic minority women's organisations. The third guide was addressed to civil servants working on gender issues in various government departments, while the fourth covered research questions for national-level politicians. These guides have been used as flexible research tools, providing the key topics and issues to be discussed in each interview (see Appendix C of each country report for the topic guides³⁰).

In the UK, of the 21 interviews, 19 took place in the offices of the relevant interviewee, while two interviews were conducted via the telephone. All interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription agency. In Spain, all 21 interviews were done face-to face; most of them took place in the offices of the relevant interviewee, with a few taking place in a different public space, depending on the interviewee's time and availability. All interviews in Spain were transcribed by a native Spanish speaker, and excerpts from the transcripts have been translated into English by a tri-lingual (Romanian, Spanish, English) researcher. In Norway, most interviews have taken place in the offices of the relevant interviewee, some have taken place in the researchers' offices, and a few have been conducted at cafes or at places where the organisations had their meetings. The interviews conducted in Norway were transcribed by native Norwegian speaking research assistants, and excerpts have been translated into English by bi-lingual (Norwegian, English) researchers with the assistance of a native English speaker.

The interviews were conducted within the period May 2007 - July 2008. The response rate to our requests for interviews was very good. Only in a few cases did invited participants decline to participate, mainly due to previous commitments and busy schedules.

³⁰ English versions of the topic guides can be found in Appendix C of the UK country report; some sections have been slightly adapted to the Spanish context.

Our analysis has been based on an inductive approach and has, thus, been grounded in the data. Following Rubin and Rubin (2005: 30), we define our approach to interviewing within the tradition of interpretive constructionist thinking, in which 'responsive interviewing' (ibid.) entails the understanding that both the researcher and the interviewee come to the research situation with their own feelings, personality, interests, and experience. Moreover, a dynamic relationship is created in the interview situation which might challenge both the researcher and the interviewee in terms of his or her understanding, and the interview setting thus provides an arena for dialogue and conversation which aims at 'depth of understanding, rather than breadth' (ibid.). A strategy of engagement in the research interview, rather than disengagement and distance, is a valued aspect of feminist methodology and research, and emphasises connections between knowledge, theory and language, and experience (Ramazanoğlu, 2002; see also Kitzinger, 2007).

In the report, the different types of research participants (organisational representatives, civil servants and politicians) are presented and represented through different 'voices' (Baklien and Solberg, 1997: 22). These voices are sometimes expressed through direct quotations from the interview transcripts, while at other times they are expressed through statements produced by the researchers – statements which summarise and interpret what the research participants have said (ibid.). Moreover, our own 'researchers' voices' are expressed through the evaluations and interpretations that are made by us on the basis of interviews and document-based data. While our aim is to keep as much distinction between these different voices as possible, we might not always have succeeded in achieving clear distinctions recognisable by our readers. Again, based on the view that research data are produced through interaction between the researcher and research participants (Kvale, 1997), we acknowledge that it is unrealistic to succinctly separate all the different voices that speak through the discourse produced in our report.

We acknowledge that our own backgrounds and experiences have influenced our research. In applying a discourse analysis approach, the role of the researcher is not to get 'behind' the discourse and find out what people really mean and how the

world is like in reality (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 31). The point of departure is that we experience the world through the way we understand it, i.e. through discourse. Therefore, the researcher's role is to look for patterns in the utterances, and to explore social consequences of various discursive representations of the world. The aim is not to say which understandings are 'right' or 'wrong', even if you can critically evaluate these understandings at a later stage (ibid.). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 31) emphasise that it can be difficult to see discourses as 'socially constructed systems of meaning', especially when you, as a researcher, are part of the culture you are researching. Then it can be difficult to probe the underlying assumptions and the taken-for-granted. Memory work as a methodological tool has been useful for us, as researchers, in this project to enhance our self-reflectiveness (Berg, 2007; Widerberg, 2008).

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

However, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 32) address 'the reflexivity problematic' in regard to the researcher's role, and they argue that from a social-constructivist point of view, the researcher's representations of the world cannot be seen as 'better' than any other representation of the world. The researcher always has a position in relation to the field she is studying and that position will be part of her way of seeing the field. Our initial research questions were influenced by the criticism of the western feminist movement. One of the initial questions for our research project was whether minority women's demands have been rejected or accepted by majority women (see for instance Sudbury, 1998). We have also been influenced by various intersectional approaches, and here the marginalisation of non-white women has been a central issue (see for instance Crenshaw, 2006).

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

In the next step of the research process, however, it is us, as researchers, who are responsible for analysing the interview transcript as text, selecting quotes, interpreting them and writing about the results of the analysis. Therefore, it is important for us, as researchers, to discuss the position from which we construct the analysis and to be self-reflexive about our role as researchers.

The empirical research has been approached from different positions and backgrounds, and we acknowledge that this has influenced, to some extent, various research perspectives and analyses in this work. Individual backgrounds and positions have also influenced how the researchers have been perceived by our research participants. In the main, we are white, middle class European women researchers, but we have moved in and out of shifting positions as insiders and outsiders in relation to our research. None of the researchers have been activists in ethnic minority women's movements. Reflecting on this composition, we have made efforts to ensure a responsible feminist research practice along the lines suggested by Sherene Razack. She proposes that an awareness of our subject positions implies 'tracing the hierarchies in which [we are] both subordinated and privileged' (Razack, 2000).

Two of the researchers are from and live in Norway, and have completed the project work in Norway. One of them has been active in the majority women's movement from the 1970s onwards, while the other researcher is an outsider to the women's movement. The research for the Norwegian case study has, thus, been undertaken by researchers who variously find themselves in positions as insiders (activist, feminist, majoritised) and outsiders (non-activist, feminist, majoritised). Most of the

research for the Spanish case study has been conducted by a Romanian-born researcher with educational background from US, who now works and lives in the UK. She is an outsider to the Spanish women's movement, irrespective of the majority/minority categories. The research for the UK case study has been conducted by a Norwegian-born researcher who lives and works in the UK. She is a non-activist feminist and an outsider to the UK women's movement. The UK country report also includes contributions from an English born feminist who is an outsider to, but interested observer of, the women's movement, and from a Ghanaian-born woman living and working in the UK who is also an outsider to the UK women's movement.

The researchers' majoritised position created often a 'reversed-biased' situation, where we potentially had an increased tendency to be more 'critical' in the analysis of majority women's interviews. In Spain, and in the UK, due to the fact that non-Spanish and non-British researchers conducted the interviews, this was less of an issue. Being a 'foreigner' and an 'outsider' to the Spanish-led women's movement, for example, created a dynamic situation where both majority and minority interviewees talked openly about internal conflicts and tensions. The majority Spanish-born respondents, thus, presented historical developments of the Spanish women's movement, discussing openly various types of divisions within the women's movements: liberal versus radical and socialist feminists; ethnic minority vs. ethnic majority, but seemingly placing themselves in a 'superior' position in relation to 'the others'. Minority women in Spain were also very open and keen to offer their reflections about feeling subordinate to the Spanish majority movement when trying to put forward claims that pertain to 'their own culture'. In the interview context, they freely voiced their experience of racism and discrimination, arguing that they did not have many opportunities to do so in other forums, as these issues have not yet been fully embraced by the Spanish mainstream feminist movement.

As a critical feature of our case study approach, we have attempted to pay particular attention to the context in which women's organisations and movements are situated, considering the historical, political and socio-cultural differences between Norway, Spain and the UK. As we have employed a qualitative approach which may offer comparable data (across individual cases), the findings are situated in each

country context and are not generalised. Strictly speaking, our findings are limited to the organisations included in our study. The findings could highlight issues and problems that are probably indicative of a broader set of women's organisations than those included in our study, and which could be further explored in future studies.

5.5 A Work in Progress

As stated above, the topic guides used by the interviewers in Norway, Spain and the UK were worded the same, and a lot of the time was used to discuss the design of the topic guides in the WP4 project team. We also decided that a select mapping of documents produced by governments and by women's movement actors in each country would add significant data to our analysis of the resonance of women's movements' claims. We have also devoted time to developing new historical accounts of the women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK, and to identifying relevant theoretical approaches to our studies. For the writing up of the individual country reports, we applied the same analytical perspectives, including a political opportunities approach inspired by, among others, Mc Adam (1996), Koopmans (2004), Koopmans et al., (2005), and Tarrow (2006), the discourse analysis approach of 'What's the problem represented to be?' as developed by Bacchi (1999; 2005), and a framing analysis approach as developed by Benford and Snow (2000), Verloo (2005), and others. In hindsight, we believe we should have set aside more time to discussion of the actual writing up of the country reports, as their content could have been more co-ordinated. Likewise, we had not set aside resources for the translation of all interviews to English, which made it difficult for all project team members to read transcripts across the three countries included in our study.

This cross-country report is a work in progress which summarises findings from the three countries and improves the analysis of parts of the national reports. The cross-country report also takes a further step in a research process aiming towards a more explicit comparison between the three case studies. In the writing process for this cross-country report, all four main members of the project team have been able to work across the three countries on one of four topics. While Halsaa and Nyhagen Predelli have each worked through one of the main empirical chapters (dealing with

relations between minority and majority women's organisations, and with women's movements' political claims-making, respectively), Thun and Sandu have worked through the historical outline of the women's movements in the three countries and the research methods applied in the three countries, respectively. Unfortunately Thun has not been able to contribute to chapters six and seven due to maternity leave. In particular, the new summaries provided in chapters 6 and 7, and the new introductory and concluding chapters, are steps towards a more integrated analysis of our findings in the three countries.

5.6 List of Interviewed Organisations in Each Country

In Norway, women representatives of the following organisations have been interviewed:

Foreign Women's Group/MiRA Senteret;
Juridisk Rådgivning for Kvinner;
Krisesentersekretariatet;
Kristent Interkulturelt Arbeid;
Kvinnefronten;
Kvinnegruppa Ottar;
Kurdisk Kvinneforening;
Nett BK - Nettverk for Bosniske kvinner i Norge;
Norske Kvinnens Sanitetsforening;
Norsk Kvinnesaksforening;
Organisasjon mot offentlig diskriminering;
Pan African Women's Association;
Philippine Community Norway;
Sami NissonForum;
Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger;
Somalisk Kvinneforening;
Støttekampanje for Kvinnens rettigheter i Irak.

In Spain, representatives from the following organisations have been interviewed:

Commission for Investigating the Bad Treatment Against Women (Comisión para la Investigación de Malos Tratos a Mujeres - CIMTM);
Women Foundation (Fundacion Mujeres, FM);
Progressive Women's Foundation (Fundación Mujeres Progresistas, FMP);

Centre for Assisting Victims of Sexual Aggressions (Centro de Asistencia a Víctimas de Agresiones Sexuales- CAVAS);
Spanish Co-ordinator of the European Women's Lobby (Coordinadora Espanola del Lobby Europeo de Mujeres – CELEM);
Themis, Association of Women's Lawyers (Asociación de Mujeres Juristas);
Federation of Associations of Separated and Divorced Women (Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres Separadas y Divorciadas);
Association Women Opañel;
CaLadona – Barcelona;
Association Rumiñahui (Ecuadorian Association for immigrants/ women section);
Vomade-Vencit (Madres Dominicanas- Vomade);
Association Barró (Asociación Barró);
Romi Sersení (Madrid);
Roma Association- Drom Kotar Mastipen;
AMAM – Anti Female Genital Mutilation;
Equis – FGM (Equipo de sensibilización sobre Mutilación Genital Femenina).

In the UK representatives from the following women's organisations have been interviewed:

End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW);
European Women's Lobby (EWL);
Fawcett Society;
Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (FORWARD);
Imkaan;
Justice for Women;
National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO);
Newham Asian Women's Project (NAWP);
Refugee Women's Resource Project (RWRP) at Asylum Aid;
Rights of Women;
Southall Black Sisters (SBS);
Women Acting in Today's Society (W.A.I.T.S.);
Women's Aid; and
Women's Resource Centre (WRC).

Further information about each of these organisations can be found in Annex C of each country report.

6 CONTESTED RELATIONS WITHIN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UK

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the intersection of gender and 'race'/ethnicity in civil society, acknowledging the gender dimension within migratory processes and the voices of migrant women. To be more specific, we examine the relations between ethnic majoritised and ethnic minoritised women's organisations in the women's movements, based on case studies of selected organisations in Norway, Spain and the UK. The intersection of gender and race/ethnicity has become urgent during the last decades due to a number of inter- and trans-national changes: Increasing migration combined with new patterns of migration flows into and within Europe is one element, fresh approaches to combat multiple discrimination and to implement international conventions like ICERD and CEDAW, is another. Visible and outspoken local, national and transnational social movements of various kinds claiming justice by redistribution of resources, recognition of cultural diversity and political voice is a third aspect.

Women's issues, as they have been articulated by women's movements, are encompassing because they are intertwined with most, if not all, policy areas. At the same time, women's issues are specific and different according to real women's positioning along other basic social dimensions than gender. The framing of feminist policies has to balance between general demands and the interests of particular groups of women, and to consider the limits of sisterhood in relation to 'the context of multiple differences and inequalities that exist among women' (Verloo, 2007: 25).

The point of departure for our case studies is the general critique from black and ethnic minority women and postcolonial feminism of white women's movements as ethnocentric and blind to the importance of race and ethnicity. Inspired by Julia Sudbury's research, we explore whether 'majority' women's organisations have embraced and accepted or resisted and rejected the interests of 'minority' women. We address the feminism-multiculturalism problem by displaying the claims and

critique articulated by ethnic 'minority' women towards the ethnic 'majority' women's movement.

The chapter examines how different actors position themselves in relation to other movement actors, and how they frame the relations. As stated in Chapter 4, we have been inspired both by Carol Bacchi's concept of 'problem representations', which seeks to bring out silences in discourse (Bacchi, 2005), and Mieke Verloo's approach to framing processes which seeks to illuminate how relations, issues, and events are strategically 'framed' by women's movement actors (Verloo, 2005). In this chapter, we examine some of the historical discourse about relations between ethnic majority and minority women in the women's movement in Norway, Spain and the UK as well as the actual networks and alliances that majority and minority movement actors have built around particular issues and events. Drawing on Carol Bacchi, we explore how the selected actors represent the relations between ethnic majority and minority women's organisations as more or less problematic, how the actors make sense of problematic relations, whom or what they blame and how they imagine steps to solve problems. In so doing, we ask whether minoritised feminisms have been rejected and resisted, or embraced and accepted, by majoritised feminist movements (Sudbury, 1998). We are also influenced by Narayan's writings on the positioning of minoritised feminists as 'emissaries', 'mirrors' or 'authentic witnesses' (Narayan, 1997), and ask how ethnic minority movement actors represent their own collective activism and how they are represented by majority feminists.

The chapter summarises new empirical evidence from interviews with women's movement activists in Norway, Spain and the UK, and also draws on organisational documents, academic publications and movement journals. The chapter aims at understanding how gender and ethnicity, and to some extent class, intersect, providing an examination of the 'whiteness' of the women's movement and notions of racism or ethnic discrimination.

The women's movements has always been characterised by diverging interests, claims and organisational strategies. Disunity is not likely to disappear within an increasingly multiplex European constituency. Despite diverging opinions, however, there has always been a strong strategic urge within the feminist and women's

movements to establish a broad, inclusive agenda in order to make an impact. Sometimes the various groups and factions succeed in mobilising for a common platform, but often they fail. In addition to outlining the framing of relations, our concern in this chapter is to explore traces of formal networking, co-operation and strategic alliances between ethnic minority and the ethnic majority women's organisations. To what extent is the postcolonial feminist critique of white feminism addressed by 'majority' feminists? Are the women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK distinctly polarised along the 'black' and 'white' divide, or according to race and ethnic identities? How have majority women's organisations dealt with the critique of false sisterhood, and how have women with an ethnic minority background been integrated in the various women's movements? These issues of framing, co-operation and conflicts have been dealt with in the three individual country reports.

This chapter is organised in three main sections; one section for each of the countries included in our study, each with a country-specific summary at the end. A fourth and final section draws attention to some of the differences and similarities observed across the three case-studies.

6.2 The Case of Norway

This chapter discusses the contested relations between minoritised and majoritised women in Norway. The first part of the chapter outlines interactions of the 1970s and 80s between various majority and minority women's organisations as they are represented by the activists themselves. Some of the interviewees are still activists, and also comment on the present situation. Then there is a section on the mobilisation of Sami feminism and its relation to the women's movement at large. This section covers the period from the 1970s until today.

The encounters between ethnic Norwegian feminist activists and black feminists are represented as conflict-ridden and stressful.³¹ The discourses of anger and irritation

³¹ A note on the concepts is necessary: Organised migrant women introduced and applied the label 'black feminism' during the late 1970s and we have put the label to use. Sometimes we have contrasted it to 'white feminism', which has never been used by women from majority feminist organisations.

characterise the relations between the two feminist groups, and contrast the types of encounters between non-feminist activists and migrant women activists, discussed in the subsequent sections of the chapter; discourses of charity, of dignity and of a minority within a minority. The potential for a common political agenda is discussed at the end of the chapter. We suggest that despite a number of controversies during the 70s and 80s, there are indications of improved relations between and within the ethnic minority and ethnic majority feminists in Norway. The relations are still complex and controversial, however, and the second half of the section on Norway elaborates the contemporary relations between majority and minority women's organisations. The focus is on the interviewed activist's representations of 'the problem' of co-operation related to a selection of contested conception; 'women's issues', 'violence against women', 'feminism and man' and religion.

6.2.1 Anger and Irritation: the Intersection of Majority Feminism and Anti-racist Feminism in the 1970s and 80s

Black Feminists: Rejected and Angry

When migrant feminists organised themselves in Norway during the late 1970s, racism soon became the uniting issue. Black feminists in Foreign Women's Group were an 'organic' part of the anti-racist movement, and addressed racism as a feminist issue.

The intersection of feminism and anti-racism is illustrated in their basic slogans: 'The struggle against racism is also a struggle against the oppression of women', and 'Independent status for immigrant women'. These slogans introduced a new dimension into Norwegian feminist thinking and expanded the existing feminist agenda. The reception and priority of the black feminist agenda were highly contested, however, to the frustration of black feminists:

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

The interviews with the early black feminist activists display frustration, provocation, anger and disappointment at the reception of their demands by white feminists. According to the black feminist respondents, they witnessed an outright rejection of their agenda. Majority feminists were represented as having a lack of awareness of the complicity of racism, and of showing an unfriendly, cold shoulder. The problems of minority feminists in relation to the majority feminist movement were represented as homelessness and misrecognition.

The Norwegian black feminism was part of a trans-national mobilisation of migrant women, and their thinking evolved in a dynamic interplay with women in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and third world feminists. Still, the black feminist activist respondents underline the development of a unique theorising; a particular 'Norwegian' blend of Black feminism. This theorising was related to Norwegian history and deeply intertwined with the Norwegian self-image, according to one interviewee:

'Because United Kingdom and the US both were explicitly part of an imperialistic world, while we in Norway lived in, let's say, a social and political self-image of being sort of global underdogs, and not a part of the racism going on in the US which one looked at in consternation. So, one needed a gaze from the outside, a strong gaze from the outside to tell how Norway had been a part of Western imperialism or have been a part of Western history ... So I mean, I feel that some of the particularly Norwegian was to fight against this Norwegian self-image. An image of what it means, of Norwegian-ness and generosity [storsinnethet] and simply a form of well this egalitarian self-image was massive, and still is. That is the best and the worst about Norway, sometimes, isn't it. So, this is part of the Norwegian particularities, in addition to this being a tiny country, and one ... The first times we talked about racism in Norway, I experienced, well we used very much time to ease the shock we witnessed in the audience.'

This representation of Norway and Norwegians as having an unjustified self-image, was not exceptional. When presented to ethnic Norwegians, the effect was surprise and even shock. Racism talk bewildered most Norwegians, including majority feminists. According to the black feminist interviewee, black feminists had to spend time and effort to reduce the damage inflicted on the Norwegian self-image by their claims.

Beyond the Pale

Ethnic minority feminists utilised the political opportunity related to the United Nation's International Women's Decade for Equality, Peace and Development 1975-85 and brought their claims to Copenhagen in 1980, to the NGO-Forum. Here they presented not only their own organisation, but also their general critique of Norwegian immigration and equality policies.

When asked about Copenhagen, the representations illustrate gaps in the interests and interpretations of majority and minority feminist activists. One black feminist interviewee talked quite vividly about their Forum workshops and the frustrated encounters with white Norwegian feminists.

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

A respondent from a majority feminist organisation, also present in Copenhagen, hardly remembered the presence of migrant women at all. Contrary to the black feminist respondents, she had absolutely no recollections of conflicts or unpleasant discussions. Her blindness to the presence of migrant women is consistent with the general situation in Norway at that time: The majority hardly 'saw' migrant people nor 'heard' their voices.

The black feminist activists who went to the NGO-Forum in Copenhagen were recently established as a group, and not yet acquainted with the white Norwegian self-image. They soon realised, however, that their critique of Norwegian gender equality policy came as a big surprise, and was not warmly received by the majority feminists. There are several ways to interpret this unfriendly response. One is related to ethnic Norwegian feminist activists being weary of internal conflicts. They had been through a decade of intense political struggle related to abortion on demand, the gender equality legislation as well as bitter, internal conflicts between

and within the new feminist organisations linked to the influence of the Marxist-Leninist (*AKP-m*) affiliated parts of the women's movement. Also, the crest of feminist mobilisation was decreasing, and many activists were tired or they had been absorbed into various institutions. The sharp, outright critique from black feminist activists of the feminist movement was hardly presented at the best time. Justified or not, majority feminists did not like what they heard. To them, the critique was beyond the pale.

Women abroad and at home

Black feminist respondents represented the lack of support from white feminists with a reference to black and white feminist's different interests and priorities, but also to a hierarchy of priorities; *'Our issues were totally subordinated by these enormous issues of the feminist gang, sexual rights and the third world,'* one of them said. This interviewee represented black feminist issues as 'totally subordinated' to white feminist issues.

Black feminists also mocked at the majority feminist's preoccupation with sexual issues and with third world women. Quite rightly, prostitution and pornography were prioritised issues during the 80s, and the NGO-FORUM had stimulated international co-operation and transnational networks, for instance related to the sex industry. The UN Decade for Women - Equality, Development and Peace 1975-1985 (Pietilä and Vickers, 1994), entailed new opportunities, and the Norwegian National Council of Women successfully lobbied for public funding for international development projects (Likestillingsrådet, 1980). Solidarity campaigns were initiated by left-oriented feminist groups, such as campaigns to improve the lives of women in Iran after the revolution in 1979, in Palestine after Sabra and Shatilla massacres in 1982, in the Philippines related to trafficking and mail order brides, for example.

There was a strong ethnic Norwegian interest in women and development, but the representations of this engagement differ between white and black feminists. White feminists describe their third world projects proudly, in wholeheartedly positive ways. Reflections or hints at the issue of migrant women at home are absent, however, racism likewise. Black feminists had a rather critical take on the third world focus of

majority women's organisations because it was completely isolated from race awareness in Norway.

When asked explicitly about their relations to black feminists *in* Norway, interviewees from majority feminist organisations don't remember racism as a feminist issue during the early years. One respondent who had no memories of racism as a structural challenge for her organisation during the late 1970s and early 80s, referred to '*racism, in the way we are conscious about it today that is.*' Then she made an interesting differentiation between discrimination of individual migrant women and discrimination as a structural problem:

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

The citation illustrates on the one hand, a belief that her majority organisation and black feminists had a similar agenda to a certain extent, and that it was style rather than content which was problematic. At the same time, reservations like '*I don't know*', '*I gather*', and finally: '*I did not always understand*', notify something more, and troubling about the relations between majority and minority feminist organisations. Norwegian feminists were deeply influenced by socialist ideas during the 70s, and concerned with oppression as a structural issue. On a theoretical level, we would presume that they were equipped to address and talk about racism at home. In practice, however, their representations rather demonstrated a neglect resembling an 'epistemology of ignorance' (Taylor, 2007), and a national self-image of tolerance and innocence (Gullestad, 2006; Hagelund, 2003).

The majority feminist euphoria of the early 1980s - of imagined feminist communities of mutual understanding, respect and support - contributed to narrowing down the perspective of white feminists. To paraphrase Srivastava, feminism was not 'a place of just practices, egalitarian relations, revolutionary goals and good individuals' (Srivastava, 2005: 36).

Mutual Accusations

When representing their encounters during the first years of black feminism in Norway, activists from majority and minority feminist organisations alike demonstrate a high level of frustration and disappointment. 'Anger and irritation' was a common ground, and yet the representations contradict each other fundamentally. Black feminists were angry; white feminist were irritated. Interviewees from majority organisations represent black feminists as too negative and too critical. White feminists don't accept the verbal attacks; they don't see themselves as 'that bad'. There is a rather unison white feminist discourse of irritation and frustration.

Organised minority feminists argue that their claims of discrimination and racism in the labour market and elsewhere were accurate and well-founded. They maintain descriptions of discrimination of migrants within the Norwegian state and society, and they uphold charges against white feminists for neglecting and ignoring their difficult situation. They were angry, and they represented the justification of their anger as unrecognised.

The effects of the different representations of black and white feminists were, obviously, detrimental to co-operation and alliances. When struggling to understand the failure of Norwegian white feminists to take the black feminist critique inwards, Ruth Frankenberg's observations related to white feminists in the US seem relevant:

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

Frankenberg asks (1993: 4).

This is a reminder of the global prevalence of whiteness as an unmarked category, and the 'multiple ways in which the racism of the wider culture were simply being replayed in feminist locations.' (ibid.: 3) The present discussion is limited to the situation during the 1970s and relates colour blindness to the internal history of white feminism in Norway and to the hegemonic discourses on race and ethnicity. The already mentioned issue of timing seems important: Majority feminists had begun the process of reconciliation, according to one interviewee, at the time when migrant feminist activists started to mobilise. Several majority respondents indicate that a number of activists from the 70s were tired and in no mood for further internal

disputes at the turn of the decade. Confronted with angry descriptions from migrant feminists of their own shortcomings and of the state and society in general as racist, they responded with surprise and partial dismissal. Continuous claims from organised black feminists that majority white feminists should take personal and political responsibility for racism in Norway were received half-heartedly.

White feminists were, according to one majority activist, supportive of the demand for autonomous status for migrant women, and they were ready to support any campaign against direct racist discrimination, but they did not grasp the black feminist discourse of structural, permeating racism.

We interpret the representations of white feminist activists of claims of racism to imply a refusal to recognise that anti-racist struggle was intersecting with feminism. In short, majority feminists, despite benevolence, were totally unprepared for the basic critique of racism ingrained in the black feminist discourse, and they fumbled to find ways of responding. In addition to unfortunate timing of the rise of black feminism, then, the claims collided with the hegemonic feminist discourse. This discourse recognised class and regional differences between women within a rather friendly state-civil society context. The anti-racist discourse did not stand a chance against it, and was not welcomed among white feminists. They had to deal with it, however, and they tried to negotiate the claims of racism within their majority feminist discourse. The representations indicate, however, that regardless of how white feminists managed to accommodate the anti-racist feminist discourse, they failed to fulfil the needs and demands of migrant women and black feminists.

Black feminists were not prepared to accept a partial acceptance of their claims of racism. They did not limit themselves to personal ethnicity based discrimination, but addressed all kinds of structural racism within and outside the (white) feminist movement in Norway. They were deeply disappointed with the lack of sincere support for their anti-racist feminist agenda. The interview with black feminists displayed representations of stubborn and consistent claims-making; and of persistent anger. Their efforts to educate white feminists were represented as unsuccessful, are strikingly different compared to white feminist's representations of sympathy with the claims of migrant women. The lukewarm reception of the efforts

of black feminists to prove the intersections of anti-racism and feminism fortified their conviction of structural racism within the (white) women's movement, and sustained their anger.

White feminists' reluctant attitude to charges of racism reflects Frankenberg's claim that 'White women had a limited repertoire of responses when charged with racism' (Frankenberg, 1993: 2). When accused of racism, the response was a mix of rejection, irritation and reference to the anger of black feminists as excessive. The effects of white feminist responses was that migrant women activists never fundamentally disturbed the 'business as usual' for majority feminists during this period. Despite the partial response to specific claims relating to migrant and refugee women, majority feminists' overarching analysis of gender injustice was not changed.

Hierarchies of Citizenship

The level of conflicts between white and black feminists should, however, be seen within the larger context of the women's movement. The feminist divisions during the 1970s were deeply ingrained within the exceptional political antagonism of this period, represented in numerous testimonies (Grenness, 1975; Haukaa, 1982). The changed context of feminism during the 1980s along with a certain burn-out among activists, had contributed to more peaceful relations among activists from majority women's organisations. The political and personal conflicts of the 70s were not easily wiped out, however, and majority feminist co-operative efforts of the 1980s across previous divides, were fragile. The wounds caused by previous disputes continued to make an impact, indicated in this representation:

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

The struggle against pornography and prostitution brought refreshing ideas and new activists to the majority feminist movement at the turn of the 1970s. Peace soon followed as another mobilising issue. But neither issue was of core concern among black feminist activists, and did little to bridge the gap between majority and minority

feminists. On the contrary, black feminists complained about the white feminist's focus on sexuality.

The general lack of recognition of the black feminist agenda is represented in various ways by the respondents from minority women's organisations. They ranged from disappointment and mild resignation to anger and sorrow, but the respondents were always quite explicit, like this representation:

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

This interviewee demonstrated a striking level of emotion and frustration. In addition to straight political disagreements between majority and minority feminists, she displayed the feeling of being totally overlooked; an experience of degradation.

The effects of representations like this might have been a ban on further contact with majority feminist organisations. But no, despite the unhappy efforts to establish co-operation with ethnic Norwegian feminists, black feminists never withdrew from direct confrontations with white feminists, and never stopped trying to have an impact on the dominant feminist discourse. And vice versa, majority feminists continued to meet and argue with migrant and black feminists.

One way of interpreting the continued but strained relations is that conflicts and struggles were 'business as usual', since they have always been ingredients of the women's movements (see Country Report Norway, Chapter 2). The clashes between white and black feminisms from the end of the 1970s were hardly worse or more uncompromising than the usual ones among white feminists themselves. The 'white' representations of the disputes with minority feminist indicate the 'normalcy' of feminist disagreements, although the anger and stubbornness of black feminists were highlighted. In some ways, however, this dispute was different. This is because the black - white feminist debate introduced a political divide between 'us' and 'them'. In this perspective, this was not simply a split based on different

approaches to 'race' as a foundational feminist category. Rather, it was a gap based on the different, hierarchical positioning of the majority and minority feminists in relation to citizenship status, and this 'othering' fuelled the dispute. '[White] women's organisations are unable to mobilise. It's us and them, in a way,' one respondent said. We suggest, then, that the new feature in Norwegian feminism introduced by black feminism was not the level of disagreements and accusations as such, because '(...) *fighting and quarrelling, that's life, yes*', as one of the black feminist informant maintained. Rather, it was the introduction of race and ethnicity as salient political and theoretical markers. The material conditions between women were unequal along completely new dimensions, and white feminists did not really understand this.

Lack of Respect and Recognition

Black feminist respondents described the problem of relating to white feminists during the 1970s and - 80s as painful and humiliating. They describe derogatory ways of being approached, in explicit, detailed and concrete ways. There are no representations of encounters based on peer relations expressed by black feminist interviewees. Black feminist respondents also sometimes described white women activists as motivated by charity, particularly when it came to some of the non-feminist women's organisations. These organisations were among the first to invite migrant women, but were suspected of doing so out of benevolence.

What then, about black feminist's potential complicity in the shaping of constrained relations to majority feminism? We have hardly noticed indications of reflexions along the lines of remorse among black feminists during our interviews. They may have questioned their potential contributions indirectly by referring to their anger. Blame for the difficult relations, however, was laid squarely on the shoulders of the white feminists. One way of interpreting this is linked to the position of the researcher; an 'outsider' to black feminism, and a 'white feminist' activist. The respondents may have taken the opportunity of the interviews to display how hard it had been for black feminists to be silenced and misrecognised, and - consciously or not - focused on this aspect rather than on other aspects of their relations to white feminists.

Ethnic Norwegian feminists described their encounters with minority feminists in strikingly different ways. Patronising attitudes and motives of charity were absent from their representations, and when majority feminists recalled their uncomfortable relationships with minority women, their approach was quite reflexive. Their representations were comprehensive of the anger demonstrated by migrant women, despite acknowledging their irritation at the time. In general, majority feminists presented their dislikes of the rhetoric of minority feminists, but definitely granted them some justification. Their mixing of being frustrated by the recriminations on the one hand, and of admitting their own shortcomings on the other, was quite different from the representation of non-feminist women activists. These representations may also be attributed to the position of the researcher, but this time as an 'insider' and a majority feminist: White feminist activists may have used the interview as a 'testimonial', within which they appear reflexive and sympathetic. Also, their representations may be coloured by hindsight, for instance when the accusations from black feminists were described.

The absence of modesty and of pluralism in the representations of migrant feminists by white feminists - and vice versa - probably contributed to the production of stereotypes and unilateral perceptions which had the effect of complicating co-operation and alliances.

6.2.2 Charity or Dignity: non-feminist majority women's organisations

Respondents from non-feminist women's organisations described their relations to ethnic minority women differently compared to the white feminists. The divergence was due partly to the fact that the context of relations actually was quite dissimilar; the aims of the majority organisations differed from majority feminist organisations, and their localisation was partly in geographical areas without ethnic/national minority feminist organisations. Minority feminist organisations were neither 'natural' allies nor 'obvious' adversary groups for one interviewee from a non-feminist organisation. Also, the non-feminist majority women's organisations had not been involved in the political and personal conflicts between majority feminist groups within the political left during the 1970s.

‘Poor Migrant Women’

One interviewee from a majority women’s organisation explained that it was difficult to tell us about her relations to minority women’s organisations because they were absent where she lived. Also, she said, there were almost no migrant women at all in her local environment. Living in a scarcely populated area, without a significant migrant population, her representation was a reminder of the uneven percentage of migrants in Norwegian local communities, and the different contexts for developing contact and co-operation between women’s organisations across ethnic divides.

This interviewee represented her tiny personal experience with migrant women as an effect of their physical absence. Her representations contained close to no traces of organisational ties to or moments of co-operation or conflict with minority women’s organisations. The respondent’s descriptions were mostly focused on isolated encounters with individual migrant women or families in her local community.

At the national level, however, the interviewee’s organisation has included a focus on the situation of migrant women since the mid 1980s, and she mentioned a few relevant projects at the national level. Various initiatives by the respondent’s municipality to address issues relating to migrant people were also described. Yet, the absence of migrant women’s organisations in the community precluded direct contact with migrant women activists on an organisational basis. This was represented as an explanation of the marginal focus on migrant women in her local unit.

Despite the lack of relations with ethnic minority organisations, the representations of personal ‘ethnic encounters were interesting, however. They seemed familiar in the sense that they echoed the public discourse on migrants. Migrants were represented as if they were a homogeneous group. Differences between them were rarely addressed, and the interviewee also represented migrants as ‘poor or miserable things’ [stakkars]; as people needing help in various ways, but also as a group that ‘can enrich us’. There was an inclination to translate our research questions about her organisations ‘relations to migrant women’ as synonymous with ‘aid to women in developing countries’, or to women in Eastern Europe. Lastly, in

this interviewee's representations, a 'migrant' woman was almost synonymous with 'a Muslim' woman.

The representations of this women's movement activist were quite different from the majority feminist activists 'irritation'. We have analysed this interview as representing a 'discourse of charity', which is quite in line with the traditional profile of a number of non-feminist women's organisations. Non-feminist women's organisations are not similar, however, as the next section indicates.

Wake Up and Listen!

During the 1970s and 80s, ethnic Norwegians established a few gender-mixed organisations to support migrants and refugees, some of them professional organisations with paid staff. One of the activists interviewed belonged to this kind of non-feminist gender-mixed organisation, with a purpose to promote the integration of migrants and their networking.

The most striking aspect of this interviewee was the humble and prudent representations of her relations with ethnic minorities. This non-feminist activist resonated somewhat with the black feminist critique of majority feminists for not listening to migrant women. For instance, the respondent described herself as a person who eventually had '*woke up from hibernation*'. Here she referred to a time during which she was unable to see and listen to the messages from migrant people. After years of working with migrant people, she had finally been capable of comprehending, and she finally 'heard' what migrant people had tried to tell her for years. Thus, she revealed her own blindness to ordinary, daily problems of exclusion and inclusion:

'Still, it is difficult for them to be included, and this is something I have been looking critically at for a while, this issue of what we Norwegians talk about, I mean what the majority talk about and how we behave together. There are lots of "arrangements" blowing in the wind and hints about things one has done earlier and "thanks for the last time we were together" and "yes, we'll meet" here and there. There are lots of these small things which daily excludes a person who belongs to a minority, you know, and even parents who greet people during parent-teacher meetings whom once were in the same choir, or even attended the same primary school, or went to the same

university. A migrant mother will never, or at least very rarely, encounter somebody who is this natural, if not another migrant from her own country.'

This interviewee recognised that migrant people are excluded by the majority, often unintentionally, from common daily events and situations. Adding up, their systematic occurrence made processes of integration very hard, she said. Her explicit representations of mechanisms of exclusion were hardly reflected in the interviews with white feminist activists. Their silence was consistent with hegemonic discourse of colour blindness and a misrecognition of the challenges facing migrants, contrary to the discourse of this non-feminist activist.

This respondent also talked unstrained about deficiencies in the majority population, such as the tendency to overlook differences within groups of migrants and refugees, or to talk on behalf of migrant women. *'But I have become increasingly more careful about it, and I am more and more pleased to have other people to bring with me or instead of me'*, she said:

The representations of this majority non-feminist activist resembled the black feminist discourse, but they differed in their inclusion of a critical stance towards migrants. This interview portrayed migrant women with dignity but also with defects. Embodied, nuanced representations of ethnic minority and majority women were not in abundance elsewhere among the respondents.

This interviewee also represented a concern with migrant men - husbands and fathers - which was quite unique among the respondents. Related to violence against women, a topic she had dealt with for many years, she expressed the dangers connected with not paying attention to the different meaning marriage and family has among groups of migrants and refugees. Without ever forgetting women's need for support and empowerment, she addressed the despair of male violators. She kept a sustained focus on the shortcomings of the majority population with respect to the complex situation of migrants, and an awareness of the problems and pain ingrained in the position of migrants as aliens. *'The majority isn't aware of how it behaves, really. That's the way it is,'* she bluntly maintained.

6.2.3 Absent Allies: Sami Feminism

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

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

A 'Minority within a Minority': Mobilising Sami feminists

Sami feminists formally began to organise about ten years later (in 1988) than migrant women in Norway, and about ten years after the Sami movement itself gradually emerged. Contrary to the organising of black feminism in Norway, Sami feminism already had a foothold within the institutions: One of the activists was employed at the Sami Council and actively made use of her position for feminist purposes also before 1988. The Sami Council had established a Women's Committee in 1986, and activists were eager to push women and gender equality issues from the margin to the centre. This was partly due to new political opportunities in the wake of the UN International Decade for Women (1975-1985), and partly related to the particularities of the Sami's political situation: Feminist activists and femocrats all over Norway were busy preparing for the conference *Nordic Forum* in the summer 1988, and the Sami community was preparing for the upcoming election for the very first Sami Parliament in 1989. The time was ripe for a feminist Sami organisation.

The idea of a separate organisation for Sami feminists grew out of a long process, according to the interviewee. Inspired by the dissemination of feminist ideas internationally and the UN International Women's Decade in particular, a series of seminars addressing Sami women's issues started in 1975 (see Country Report Norway). The most urgent issue was the situation of female reindeer herders, but social changes in Sami communities, in general, were also contributing to the

establishment of Sáráhká - Sami Women's Organisation in 1988. According to the interviewed Sami feminist activist, Sáráhká has played an important role with respect to the interests of women in the reindeer herding industry (see more in the Norwegian country report), not just in Norway but in the whole Sami area.

According to one interviewee, relations between Sami feminists and feminists from majority organisations played a less prominent role compared to the relations to the Sami community. This was represented to be related to conflicts in the nomination of candidates for the upcoming elections for the Sami Parliament: The first annual meeting of Sáráhká in 1989 took place during the preparation for the election, and the meeting was concerned with various forms of discrimination against Sami women related to the election process and in general. The fear of discrimination was soon justified when a Sami feminist woman was excluded from the top position of one of the candidate lists. Feminist activists were deeply frustrated, according to the respondent, and their protests resulted in a separate Women's List for the election. The List did not win any seats, but Sami feminists established new lists in the succeeding elections, not without rewards.

The Women's List was, according to the interviewee, a protest directed against the Sami community itself. As such, this initiative was contrary to the collective action in 1981, when Sami women occupied the Prime Minister's office in support of Sami men on hunger strike. The Women's List was too much for the Sami community however, and caused a storm of reactions. The feminist activists were called 'traitors', the interviewee said, which was an extreme and highly unusual characteristic within the, generally, low-key Norwegian political context.

According to the respondent, anti-feminist attitudes were quite widespread in the Sami population. Her representations of anti-feminist attitudes are striking, compared to the silence of this issue in the interviews with black feminist activists. This difference may be related to various concerns in the interviews; the interviews with black feminists explicit, addressed their relations to ethnic Norwegian feminists, whereas this topic was less salient in the interview with the Sami feminist activist. Anyway, the Sami feminist activist was exceptional in light of the inclination of a minority within a minority to silence critique levelled against its community, captured

by Crenshaw's concept of 'political intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1997). The concept refers to the difficulties of being situated within two or more subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas.

The Sami feminist, focus on institutional politics and election campaigns during the 1980s is worth commenting. It resembles the ethnic Norwegian feminist movements concern with women, power and politics from the late 1960s onwards, quite unlike the priorities of migrant feminists. The time and energy expended on the Women's List in 1989 and the succeeding election campaigns (until '95), however, drained Sáráhká of resources, according to the interviewee. As a consequence, in 1993, women from four municipalities established another organisation, the SNF-Sámi NissonForum. The informal network was intended to be a platform to continue the work of the Women's List, and was formally established as an organisation in 1998. The new organisation was represented to be complementary to Sáráhká, rather than a competitor, and demonstrates that the impetus for initiating a social movement organisation is not always to defeat existing organisations.

Disappointing relations to majority feminism

Allies are important in all kinds of social and political struggle. When asked about co-operation with women's organisations, the interviewee was a bit reluctant and said that co-operation only took place on exceptional occasions. Then she added that *'there are no women's organisations in Northern Norway at all'*, and displayed the Oslo/southern dominance in Norwegian politics, feminism being no exception.

Sáráhká and Sami NissonForum have (had) branches in four countries (Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway). These countries all have Sami populations, and belong to the Sami nation. Close ties to women's and feminist groups in these countries have been self-evident for Sami feminists, the respondent said, despite the high costs of travel, interpretation service and bad funding. Beside trans-national co-operation projects, various Sami women's organisations and networks were represented to be most important allies of Sami NissonForum.

Sami organisations are also members of FOKUS, the umbrella organisation for Norwegian women's organisations involved in foreign aid. A disappointment with

FOKUS was articulated by one interviewee, however, due to a rejected application for financial support when FOKUS adjusted its guidelines to the Norwegian Aid Directorate. Project support from FOKUS is now limited to projects in the 'South', which has quite negative effects for the interviewee's organisation, with a West-East/Arctic axis and not a North-South axis.

The respondent also underlined insufficient communication with public authorities, be they Norwegian or Sami. She deplored the absence of Sami women in the Nordic gender equality work, and the lack of recognition and representation. She pointed to institutional barriers to being recognised as a people/nation with inherent rights to be represented. She represented a claim that recognition and presence are preconditions for decent gender equality efforts: As long as the Sami are not properly recognised, organisations of and for Sami women will have to compete for a seat in Norwegian delegations on the same conditions as all Norwegian women's organisations. This is unfair, according to this respondent, since Sami organisations are, in fact, representing an indigenous people and should be allowed particular citizenship rights as such. The present funding and representation policy of the Ministry and FOKUS were clearly represented to be against the interest of Sami women.

With respect to institutionalization, Sami women always fall between the cracks, according to the interviewee:

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

Potential allies within the formal political institutions were hard to find, according to this respondent, and the formal recognition of the Sami as an indigenous people had not solved Sami women's claim to be present in their own right.

We Are at War up North, Really

Relations between the majority and minority population in Finnmark county were described as racist and beyond the concern of the Norwegian authorities by one interviewee. In particular, the writings in some of the newspapers in northern parts of Norway were represented as the 'worst examples of racism'. They publish anything without demanding any kind of documentary proof according to the respondent. Referring to reforms in the Sami legislation, the newspapers accused the Sami population of having exclusive rights to land at the expense of the Norwegian population:

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

This claim '*actually, we are at war*' is by far the gravest representation of minority-majority relations in this investigation. It speaks about present conditions, but the majority population in the South seems to be unaware of the situation. The gravity of allegations like these against the majority population, and the silencing, resemble the reception of black feminist critique previously discussed. The claim that the gender equality authorities do next to nothing, not even read the newspapers, is also parallel to the black feminists' representations of the state. The privilege of 'whiteness' is yet to be fully addressed in the majority population.

6.2.4 Co-operation during the '70s and '80s

When the interviewees were asked if they had been able to develop a joint feminist agenda, a number of political initiatives were mentioned, in line with the documentation of co-operation presented in Chapter 2 in the Norway Country Report.

The total amount of organizations, campaigns, action groups and networks mentioned by the respondents as allies in various campaigns and actions, indicate that feminist activism continued to have an extensive register after the 1970s.

One interviewee emphasised that there was an increasing number of meeting places, united actions and demands throughout the 1980s. Despite various disagreements in their relations, specific issues of mutual concern emerged among feminist groups such as campaigns against violence against women, prostitution and pornography and issues related to equal pay and a six hour working day. Joint actions mostly took place among majority feminists, but there were also some references to co-operation across the ethnic divide.

Probably the most important united action during this period, with respect to the minority-majority interactions, was the TV campaign 'Women in the Third World' in 1989. This was mentioned by several informants, not because the campaign process was without disputes between majority and minority women, but because it represented the breakthrough for feminist ethnic minority voices within the feminist and women's movement in Norway: a decision to fund the Mira Centre. This was decisive for the transformation of the fragile Foreign Women's Group into the robust, viable Mira Centre. Co-operation between minority and majority feminists were mainly based on pragmatic assessments and strategic framing, however and did not bridge the gap between black and white feminists concerning racism as a feminist issue and hierarchies of citizenship.

The interviews illustrate pronounced differences in the profile of networks and relations of the various types of feminist and non-feminist organizations. Different, but not distinct, fields of feminist/women-oriented activities appeared and display the origins of feminist and women's activism within the broader social movements. Women's organizations were set up as acts of protest against the neglect of women's issues within gender mixed movements.

Attachments to their movements of origin, whether mainly national in the case of majority women, or trans-national in the case of migrant and Sami women, are described as diverse and as changing over time in the interviews. The main networks of the 1970s and '80s identified in the interviews were as follows: The Foreign Women's Group, the Philippine Community Norway and the Kurdish Women's Association had a firm foundation in the trans-national anti-racist movement, and in organisations of/for their specific national or ethnic groups. Sami

feminists related basically to the Sami movement organisations and institutions, in the northern parts of Norway and in the whole trans-national Sami area, and had few relations with ethnic Norwegian majority women's organisations. The Christian Intercultural Association had close ties to a range of religious movement organisations, national and trans-national, and to various State Church institutions. The Women's National Health Organisation related mainly to a number of non-feminist women's organisations, and national institutions within the health field.

The ethnic Norwegian feminist organisations had different affiliations outside the women's movement, and reflect their origin and their present profile: the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights was attached to the liberal left from the 1880s, and developed strong ties to the public gender equality institutions from the 1970s. The Legal Advice for Women was linked to various legal institutions, whereas the Women's Front had close, but contested, connections to the AKP/ml party and to various trans/national solidarity movements and campaigns..

The different aims and profiles of the Foreign Women's Group, the Women's Front, the Sami feminists and the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights indicate the complexities of the feminist organisational landscape.

Foreign Women's Group/the MiRA Centre for Migrant and Refugee Women was, undoubtedly, the spider in the web of social movement organisations focusing on migrant women's citizenship during the 1970s and '80s and had a crucial role in politicising the situation of migrant women. As the first formal organisation for this constituency, and the dominant one throughout the 1980s, the contribution to broaden the feminist agenda and combat the misrepresentations of migrant and refugee women was formidable.

The Women's Front was the ethnic majority feminist organisation with most focus on and relations to ethnic minority feminist groups during this period. This was, in part, an effect of the organisation's focus on international solidarity work, since this was a bridge to recognising the difficulties of third world women in Norway.

In contrast to Foreign Women's Group and the Women's Front, the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights (NAWR) and the Sami feminists were more concerned with institutional politics and relations to public authorities. In the case of the NAWR, this was clearly related to the dual roles of many members as activists and as state feminists during the period. The Sami feminists directed a substantial part of their resources towards the general Sami liberation struggle from the 1970s, and towards political elections during the 1980s. Geographically distant from the headquarters of the women's movements organisations, they sought to make a claim for representation in the newly established Sami institutions.

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

6.2.5 Contested Relations in Contemporary Women's Movement: the 1990s and 2000s

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

(Interviewee from a minority women's organisation)

The organisational landscape changed during the 1990s and 2000s (see Chapter 2). A number of new organisations of and for migrant women were set up, and new issues appeared. Co-operation and conflicts between majority and minority women's organisations took place in a different political context, when problems related to the integration of migrants became prominent in the public debate. Gender-related issues such as arranged and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour killings contributed to a new discourse of what it meant to be Norwegian, with the effect of reinforcing the 'us' as gender equal and the 'them' (migrants) as 'patriarchal'. What happened to the relations between majority and minority women's organisations?

This part of Chapter 6 focus as on problem representations of majority/minority co-operation and alliances, departing from the question of 'sister solidarity' across ethnic and religious backgrounds. The main focus here is on how the 'problem' of co-operation/non co-operation is represented; how movement activists speak about this issue, in particular, elaborate the intersection between 'gender' and 'ethnicity', and the categories 'women' and 'women's issues'.³² The initial quote emphasises the differences within the categories minority and majority women and illustrates one obvious, yet important, finding in this study, namely the vast variation of women's organisations within these two categories.

Our aim is to explore the complexity in the organisational landscape, the various representations, understandings and the meaning implied in the 19 qualitative interviews with activists from the 1990s and 2000s. The aim has been to probe the underlying assumptions of various problem representations, rather than strategic framing for political purposes (see Chapter 4 and 7), to bring silences in problematisations into the open for discussion.

³² The quotes in this chapter are mainly from interviews with the member-based women's organisations in our study. However, the findings are also based on the interviews with the more professionalised NGOs which work with issues related to women's rights, violence against women and ethnic and/or religious discrimination.

In our analysis of how activists from women's organisations talk about majority/minority co-operation, their general representations of 'women's issues' have become relevant; which issues are included and excluded? The inclusion of ethnic discrimination as a 'women's issue' proved to be controversial and seems to divide majority and minority women's organisations. The representations of feminism and of men also turned out to be relevant and lastly, religion was a cause of disagreement and confusion.

6.2.6 Current Problem Representations in Norway: Minority Women's organisations

Exclusion of minority women

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

Interviewees from some of the minority women's organisations emphasise the lack of co-operation with majority women's organisations. One respondent stresses the lack of support regarding international women's rights and minority women's rights in Norway. Norwegian feminists are only focusing on ethnic Norwegian women, and they are not interested in problems women are facing in other parts of the world. In her view, ethnic majority women's organisations do not care about minority women, and there is a huge gap between majority and minority women.

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

This interviewee tells a story of great hopes for sister solidarity with Norwegian majority women's organisations when she first came to Norway and established the organisation ten years ago. However, the expectations were not met, and she also tells a story of disappointment; of voices not taken seriously and of claims towards

the majority feminist organisations being excluded. Her view is echoed by an interviewee from another minority women's organisation:

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

This organisation has been active for quite some time. Back in the 1980s migrants were not seen as part of the Norwegian society, and minority women were being objectified and exoticised, also within Norwegian women's organisations, according to this interview. Black women were seen as receivers of Norwegian aid and they did not see minority women as equal partners. Still today there is exoticification of minority women, she claims, however not as extreme as before. There is recognition of gender and racism as interacting factors, but majority women's organisations and others have started to show an interest for these issues because there is money in it:

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

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

'Our point of departure is that we [women] have to get a residence permit on an independent ground when we come to Norway through family reunion. We must have gender equality in Norway no matter which culture we are from. (...) Another point of departure is to see women as victims of barbaric traditions and you feel sorry for them and give them a residence permit out of charity. (...) What minority women in Norway fought for, was basic human and women's rights.'

In this interviewee's opinion, minority women's critical voices have been marginalised and suppressed, while the others ('charity actors') have confirmed the dominant discourse of migration in society which supports prejudices and stereotypes. The interviewee refers to the 'three year rule',³³ spouses of Norwegian citizens who come to Norway from abroad are usually given a dependent legal status for a period of three years. A migrant woman who leaves a violent husband before three years can lose her residence permit unless she can 'prove' that she has been subject to domestic abuse, which is very difficult (Eggebo, 2007). The situation resembles problems of immigrant women to meet the requirements for evidence of domestic violence in the US (Crenshaw, 1991).

Organising on one's own

Not all the respondents from minority women's organisations talk about the lack of co-operation with majority women's organisations as a problem. Several of them also emphasise the need to 'organise on their own'. One interviewee says that her minority women's organisation has been preoccupied with its 'own' issues until now and it has not tried to initiate co-operation with majority women's organisation. This organisation was established ten years ago because the initiators needed a network, somebody to talk to and they wanted to help each other figure out the Norwegian society. The organisation was concerned with violence against women during the war in their home country, and gender equality and integration into the Norwegian society. Today most of these women are established and well integrated in Norwegian society, the interviewee says, but they still need to meet and keep in

³³ (...) Women who come to Norway through family reunification do not get a residence permit until three years after arrival ('the three year rule'). This means that if a woman gets divorced before three years have passed, she will normally not get a residence permit. For these women the three year rule can seem like an extra punishment sanctioned by society, and a form of structural violence (...). However, the exception from the three year rule is when the woman has been subject to domestic abuse (...).

touch with their own people, their culture and their tradition, otherwise they would lose a part of themselves. Now the interviewee thinks it is time to make an effort to co-operate with majority women's organisations, but there is a lack of meeting places. In the beginning the organisation had an office at a 'women's house', and got help from a well-established minority women's organisation and one majority feminist organisation among others. This house does not exist anymore, the organisation does not have a permanent place to meet, and they have lost this network.

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

'You arrive in a new country where you don't have a network. And you miss a network. (...) So we also have the same problems and therefore we get together. Language is a problem for us, job is a problem, network is a problem, and the social life is very different from where we come from.'

An organisation specifically for women was founded because migrant women with a background from the same continent have similar problems in Norwegian society (language barrier, difficult to get integrated and to get a job, lack of network), according to this respondent. The organisation provides a social network and the women can motivate and help each other. Women from [this region] take care of the family, but raising children with two cultures is a challenge (*'kulturkræs'*) and women have to support these young people:

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

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

'Empowerment' is also a concept which has been mentioned by several of the minority activists. One interviewee says that 'empowerment' is to help each other to understand the Norwegian 'system', the language and simply to listen to each other and be there for each other. To be part of a women's organisation will enable these minority women to handle problems in their daily lives and to face challenges in a new country. 'Empowerment' is also emphasised by another interviewee:

'The work we do in our organisation is based on rights. It is based on women's independent right to decide in her life. (...). We work for empowerment.'

'Empowerment', for this activist, means to raise women's consciousness about women's rights and women's independence, and is also a political strategy; the need to strengthen minority women's own voices.

A common issue in the interviews with minority women's activists is the need to create a 'safe space' and a place where women can meet women who face the same challenges. Several interviewees also expressed a wish to co-operate more with majority women's organisations after the minority organisation had existed for a while. The different organisations have had various experiences regarding co-operating and alliances, and whether their assessments of the lack of co-operation with majority women's organisations is a problem or not.

Representation of ethnic discrimination and racism within 'women's issues'

A general theme among women from the minority organisations is a wish to include the fight against racism and ethnic discrimination within the definition of 'women's issues'. In their view, the majority women's organisations are opposed to racism, but racism is not an integrated part of their work. According to one interviewee, there are minority women who have the same needs and interests as majority women. However, there are some problems that only minority women face which need extra attention, for instance racism in their everyday life. Norwegian feminist organisations should focus both on 'regular' women's issues like a six hour work day, and also open up and include an anti-racist agenda.

'(...) Norwegian women are very concerned with that [gender equality]. She got that through her mother's milk. So that's the main thing. But anti-racism, that is... That is a recent concept due to increased immigration.'

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

'There are many migrant women with a lot of experience and competence which the Norwegian society needs. If they get to know us they can use that competence. But we are seen as one person. "We" and "Them", you know. That's how it is. (...) Many unemployed migrants have studied here, but they don't get a job. They experience discrimination when they apply for jobs. If they see a name that is non-Norwegian, you're disqualified, instantly, without even seeing who the person really is.'

Minority women are facing discrimination in the labour market (disqualified because of a foreign name and so on), and according to the interviewee, they are experiencing 'double discrimination'; both as women and immigrants.

The minority activists say that they have to work for equality, both between women and men and majority and minority. The organisations are concerned with equality both understood as 'gender equality' and 'ethnic equality'. Some of the interviewees from minority women's organisations have the impression that majority organisations mainly focus on female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages related to minority women, rather than ethnic discrimination in the labour market. These interviewees do not identify with what is often considered to be 'minority women's issues' like FGM and forced marriages. One interviewee thinks it is good that majority women raise some of these issues, but these issues are far from what her minority organisation is concerned with. This view is opposed to the claim forwarded earlier in this section, namely that so-called 'honour-related' violence has not been a priority for majority women's organisations. These opposite views illustrate the vast variety within the category minority women's organisations, and their different claims.

6.2.7 Representations of co-operation and alliances by majority women's organisations

Minority women's issues as difficult issues - 'afraid of doing something wrong'

Interviewees from some of the majority feminist women's organisations problematise the lack of co-operation with minority women's organisations:

'I think we have been a bit afraid of putting violence against migrant women on the agenda because one is afraid of doing something wrong and contributing to further stigmatisation and discrimination (...).'

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

'(...) In relation to honour killing and forced marriages, the political Right has been more attentive, rather than the political left and the women's movement. I think that's a pity, both for the women's movement and those who are victims of forced marriages. I think these are extremely difficult issues, of course. (...) I don't think that [my organisation] has a well-developed policy on these issues. But I think we have to realise that forced marriages can be a problem for those who are affected by it. That there are oppressive patriarchal structures in migrant communities that are maybe even strengthened by being in Norway because you feel defensive by being a minority who are being discriminated in the first place (...). To say that it is a real problem without saying that migrants themselves are a problem. (...) I wish the political Left and women's organisations and feminists [would deal with these issues] even if it's very difficult.'

The quote illustrates a fear of being perceived as intolerant, racist and to contribute to further stigmatisation of migrants in Norway. The interviewee says it is difficult to state that forced marriages (and so on) are actual problems among ethnic 'minorities' without saying that migrants themselves are a problem. It is hard to say that racism is a bad thing and, at the same time, criticise migrants because it can lead to further stigmatising of migrants, especially Muslims. In her view, this fits better with the alleged Frp's Fremskrittspartiet, the progressive party 'enemy image' of Islam.

The concerns voiced by this respondent reflect in many ways the debate about feminism and multiculturalism and the dilemma between the recognition of religion and culture and the concern about women's subordination in minority cultures. In her opinion this dilemma makes it complicated to co-operate with organisations representing minority women. There seems to be an underlying 'black or white picture'; *either* you are tolerant regarding other religions and cultures - and do not really know how to handle violence against ethnic minority women - *or* you are intolerant, see other cultures and religions as threats to Western democracy and 'our values', support the Progress Party and speak out about violence against women within minority cultures (but the aim is really to restrict immigration and assimilate ethnic minorities who live in Norway). The interviewee talks about many 'ditches' to fall into and she talks about her own standpoint as 'balancing on a line'. There seems to be a lack of an appropriate language to talk about these intertwined issues.

An interviewee from another majority organisation says that the problem of little co-operation with minority women's organisations is due to failure in communication and concern with different issues:

'It is a lot of focus [on minority women's interests]. We have had discussions, but we have not yet concluded. But of course it is a lot that needs to be done, there is no doubt about that. But maybe it's difficult; at least I think it's difficult to find a way to communicate with them. Migrant women are a very diverse group. There is not one right answer. (...) we [the local branch of the organisation] have tried to make contact with some minority women's groups, but we haven't really succeeded. Of course, things could have been done differently ... to have a good dialogue is hard, I think.'

The organisation she is a member of has tried to make contact, but the attempts have not yet been successful.

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

The interviewee has felt that the organisation has been misunderstood and perceived as dominating, and the earlier attempts to make contact have been rejected. There has not been a dialogue. Both the majority women's organisation and different minority women's organisations are responsible for not cooperating. The interviewee emphasises their different points of departure; her organisation is a pure women's organisation and works from a women's perspective. In her view there are few minority organisations which are only for women. She also focuses on different problems and points of view; minority women have to deal with other problems like housing and employment in a different way than majority women. Minority women may view majority women's issues as 'luxury problems'.

The highlighting of 'difference', is pointed out by Uma Narayan (1997). She writes that phenomena that seem 'Different', 'Alien', and 'Other', like female genital mutilation, cross borders more easily than problems that seem more 'familiar' in an Western context. These issues then become 'Third World gender issues' and receive a lot of attention (ibid.: 100).

'Solidarity is to lead the way'

An interviewee from another majority women's organisation does not consider the lack of co-operation with minority women's organisations to be a problem. What is considered to be a problem though, is the criticism from minority women's organisations that Norwegian feminist organisations do not include 'black women':

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

According to this respondent, her organisation does not co-operate with minority women's organisations because there are no relevant co-operation partners. In her view, most minority women's organisations are not political organisations, and the minority culture is the problem. She argues that minority women have to fight their own battle against cultures in which women are oppressed. In her view, 'sister

solidarity' is to lead the way and show other women that it is possible to make change in society.

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

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

According to this interviewee, to be a woman justifies a separate organisation; regardless of class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. 'Women' as a category is overall a more important category than being an ethnic minority. An underlying assumption in this interview is that structural problems are the main problem for women's liberation and gender equality in Norway, while oppression of ethnic minority women is due to a different family culture and different expectations of girls within their ethnic community. Violence against minority women is explained by 'cultural' factors, while violence against majority women is explained by 'structural' factors. The assumption that minority women are not oppressed by the Norwegian society at large, but by the culture within their ethnic community, is taken for granted.

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

6.2.8 Representation of feminism and of men in minority women's organisations

'I'm not a feminist. I'm not against men.'

One of the interviewees from a minority woman's organisation said this about feminism:

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

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

She also emphasises that there is a big difference between the Norwegian feminist organisations she is referring to and the minority organisation she is a member of in the way that they see men's role. Norwegian feminists are 'against men' and think that only women can work together to improve women's situation. This resembles the welcoming of men by black women's organisations in Britain (Sudbury, 1998). The exclusion of men was seen as an aspect of white women's organisations from which black women wanted to distance themselves. Distancing themselves from the label 'feminist' can also be interpreted as a kind of resistance against majority feminist organisations, and an expression of the experience they have had with a lack of interest from feminist organisations.

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

Some members may call themselves feminists, while others do not, but the organisation, as such, is not feminist. Then she goes on by saying 'we do have families'. This implies that a feminist is a single woman, maybe a lesbian, and 'feminist' in this view seems to be a negative label. A similar view is expressed by a respondent from another minority women's organisation:

C: 'But what do you think the concept 'feminist' means?'

Interviewee: 'It's a bit difficult to say. The way I see it is to be independent, to have the same opportunities. But to go around and saying I'm a 'feminist' ... I don't want to be a 'macho woman', if you see what I mean? I don't want to be a 'macho woman' like that. That's why I'm thinking ... the concept 'feminist' has gotten a label; if you're a 'feminist' you want to be the boss and so on. But it's not like that; it is to have the same opportunities. We are human beings first and foremost. God created a man and a woman and we have different roles actually.'

This interviewee does not call herself a feminist. She thinks it's important for men and women to have the same rights and opportunities to get an education, a job and to share the domestic work. The interviewee understands black feminism in the US and UK as different from black feminism in Norway. She can relate to black feminism in the US where black women also fought for their men because they were repressed. In her opinion black feminism is not visible in Norway, and she thinks the time is not ripe.

Black feminism marginalised in the women's movement

According to an interviewee from another minority women's organisation, black feminism and desi³⁴-feminism are marginalised by the white women's movement and exist in the periphery. Black feminism is a political consciousness and leads to a political engagement with an anti-racist feminist perspective in the fight for women's rights:

'(...) we've had some immense discussions here [in our organisation] among minority women about definitions. One of the reasons why we most often use minority women instead of "Black" women are because it is sort of a consensus concept. (...) "Black" is a political concept, it's a political consciousness. (...) When an Anti Racist movement was established in Norway that definition was used clearly political. Today however, things are different; there are no movements. Today you work for "integration" or

³⁴ 'Desi' is concept used about south Asians living outside Asia.

“inclusion” or whatever you call it, these concepts change. When you work as a professional it is your job and you don't have these clear political definitions. (...) [In our organisation] we discuss these things all the time. Lately it's been desi-feminism.

In her view, the norm for being a feminist in Norway is an ethnic white Norwegian woman. She thinks it is important to acknowledge minority women's work against, for instance, forced marriages and the three year rule. After these issues are put on the agenda, all women should include these issues in their fight for women's rights:

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

A major problem today, according to this interviewee, is the lack of a strong women's movement which could have put pressure on these issues. Today, work with 'ethnic minority women's issues' is done by an 'ethnic industry' and it is based on short-term and project-based work. She claims that the main actors in the field of 'ethnic industry' are professional organisations working for 'integration' or 'inclusion'.

According to the interviewee, majority women are not only discriminated in the work place because they are women, but also because they are minorities and black. She claims that both racism and sexism are structural phenomena, not only cultural phenomena. This interviewee wants to widen the way violence against women is understood in Norwegian society, and include for instance forced marriages. She wants to include 'minority women's issues' in the larger definition of 'women's issues', and to include the fight against racism within the definition of women's issues and make a connection between racism and feminism.

6.2.9 Representation of feminism and of men by majority women's organisations

Majority feminists have different responses to the claims of widening the feminist agenda and include work against honour-related violence, ethnic discrimination and racism. Racism and ethnic discrimination are not women's issues, is one

assumption voiced by a majority activist. Other organisations work with issues which are relevant for minority women and the interviewee mentions, for instance, the Women's Shelter movement and SOS Racism (SOS Rasisme). The respondent's organisation does not work with issues related to ethnic and religious discrimination, and considers these to be different issues. Women's issues are represented as different issues than anti-racism.

Feminist issues represented as 'political' versus ethnic minority issues represented as 'cultural'.

Yet another view on feminism in relation to minority women's issues is illustrated by an interviewee from another majority women's organisation. She emphasises the importance of opening up the space for various feminisms in plural, to enable different kinds of activism. However, this interviewee argues that most minority women's organisations in Norway - with a few exceptions - do not have a feminist agenda:

'It's fine [to open up different kinds of feminism]. (...) but they [most migrant women] have special issues connected to their own ethnicity, being ethnic minorities. It is not connected to society at large. If you are a Pakistani or an Indian migrant girl it is probably harder than being Norwegian. But for the most part that is not because of how the society at large is treating them, it is mainly due to how they are treated by their families.'

The underlying assumption here seems to be that 'cultural issues' which minority women have to deal with are not considered to be feminist issues. In this quote 'cultural issues' are represented differently than 'feminist issues'. The framing of minority violence as 'cultural violence' and violence against majority women as 'domestic violence' has been addressed by Bredal (2007). She argues that more general, societal explanations are used to explain majority violence, whereas minority violence is simply explained by 'culture'.

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

'Liberation has to be your own doing. We are a feminist organisation in Norway. Yes, we have become a more or less homogeneous society, and I

don't mind that. But I still live in Norway and we are a Norwegian organisation, not for Norwegians, but for all sorts of feminists. They [some migrant women] are not feminists of our kind, and we cannot make organisations for them.'

What seems to be unproblematised in this representation of 'feminist issues' versus 'cultural issues' is that the feminist slogan 'the personal is political' does not seem to apply to minority women who deal with gender discrimination due to 'a different family culture'. However, oppression of women in ethnic minority families, is within this representation, not considered to be structural oppression. According to the interviewee, there is a sharp division between the politically engaged minority women and those minority women who are more into 'culture' and cooking 'ethnic' food. This distinction is probably a bit exaggerated by the interviewee in order to stress the point that the former category has a feminist political agenda regardless of ethnic background or colour, whereas the latter category does not have a feminist political agenda. However, this representation of ethnic Norwegian feminists and a few minority feminist women as politically engaged and other minority women as merely interested in cooking, constitute the former category as politically conscious women and the latter category as unconscious housewives. To be a feminist is in this view similar to acting politically in a certain way ('we go out aggressively and tough and that is how we open up room for others (...)', 'we are often furious, but we never whine').

Norwegian feminist (and some minority feminists) are constituted as active in this way of representation 'feminism', whereas minority women with a different agenda are constituted as passive. However, minority women are responsible for putting themselves in that victim position since that is part of their political strategy. The interviewee is also making a distinction between volunteer and democratic grass-roots activism on one side, and actors who are paid by the state on the other. Organisations who receive a lot of money from the state and people who are paid to work for these organisations are seen as less nuanced and less independent, compared to grass-roots organisations based on volunteer work and democratic principles.

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

'In my opinion, feminism is feminism. It is on the basis of gender. It is the same discussion we had in relation to middle class feminism and working class feminism. (...) it is dividing and it is wrong. I mean that in regard to class and in regard to ethnicity. (...) to be a woman is more important than to be black.'

Black feminism is considered to be academic and American/British, in contrast to this 'grass-roots' organisation. However, in her view, Norway has a different history to the US, and there is no structural racial discrimination in Norway.

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

6.2.10 Representations of religion

Minority women's organisations and religion

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

Gender equality and recognition of religion as competing or compatible claims:

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

This interviewee from a minority women's organisation considers women's rights more important than the recognition of religion and regards the struggle for women's liberation as also a struggle *against* religion. She's addressing the tension between claims of minority cultures or religions and the norm of gender equality which Susan Moller Okin (1999) refers to, and like Okin, she sees gender equality and recognition

of religion as competing claims. Her organisation is especially focusing on honour-related violence both in her country of origin and in Norway; problems that women are facing as a 'minority within a minority' in a Norwegian context. In her view 'modern' women have to ally with 'modern' men within the minority community against the 'conservative' men and women within the same community. This perspective can be interpreted within what is called *minorities within minorities* problem in normative political theory; the way groups can oppress internal minorities, in this case women, and the risk that policies of multiculturalism will reinforce power inequalities within groups (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005).

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

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

This interviewee emphasises the connection between Islam and women's rights, and does not consider religion and women's rights to be contradictory. On the contrary, she argues that increased knowledge about the Quran will make women aware of their rights and, subsequently, empower minority women. The minority women's organisation, of which she is a member, works against female genital mutilation (FGM), and they make a distinction between 'religion' and 'culture' by arguing that FGM is a cultural tradition, and it is not required by Islam.

The different quotes above illustrate different views among minority women regarding religion and women's rights, and underscore that the category minority women's organisations is a very diverse category.

Majority women's organisations: Religion as a difficult issue

Several of the interviewees from majority organisations mentioned 'religion' as one aspect that makes co-operation between majority and minority' organisations difficult:

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

Religion is regarded as a 'difficult' issue, and some of the interviewees also found this issue difficult to talk about. Another interviewee addressed the difficult balance between religion and oppression of women:

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

This interviewee expresses a difficult balance between respecting religion and the concern about women's subordination in ethnic minority communities. However, here the problem is not that the minority women are religious, but rather that they are very anti-religious.

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

6.2.11 Different representations of 'women's issues'

Our analysis of the interviews indicate a major difference - despite differences within both categories on how they talk about co-operation or the lack thereof - between majority and minority women's organisations in their representations of 'women's issues'. Minority organisations emphasise ethnic discrimination, especially in the labour market, as an issue within the definition of 'women's issues' (some call it 'double discrimination'). This representation addresses the intersection of racism

and sexism in minoritised women's lives (Crenshaw, 1991). The similarities between majoritised and minoritised women - the common challenges they face as 'women' - are emphasised. However, minoritised women also have to face discrimination in the workplace and in other parts of society because they are women *and* minoritised.

A common theme in the minority interviews was the wish to widen the agenda of the women's movement, and include issues like ethnic discrimination in the labour market and issues related to violence against 'minority' women. These representations of 'women's issues' challenged an 'either/or' rhetoric, where racism is viewed against sexism. The majority women's organisations on the other hand, regard ethnic discrimination and racism as 'different' issues from 'women's issues' - and they are not included in the way they represent 'women's issues'. Racism and ethnic discrimination is not included in the way 'women's issues' are understood.

Some majority interviewees claimed that there is a division of labour among the voluntary organisations. This can be interpreted as a practical concern due to lack of resources, but it can also be interpreted as an exclusion of ethnic discrimination as a 'women's issue'. In some of the interviews with majority activists, there is a representation of categories such as 'gender', 'race' and 'class' as different, and even competing categories. These categories are also ranked, and 'gender' is viewed as a more basic category than both 'class' and 'race'. One assumption among some of the majority respondents is that minority women are not interested in 'women's issues', meaning issues particularly from a women's perspective. This implies that 'women' is defined as ethnic Norwegian women, and here whiteness is treated as an 'unmarked category' (Ferree and Mueller, 2007: 580 with reference to Hull et al., 1982; Spelman, 1988; Collins, 1990). In the interviews with majority respondents, ethnicity is silenced, and when asked specifically about ethnic discrimination, for instance, there was a tendency to exclude this issue in relation to women's issues. The representations illustrate an 'either/or' logic where 'gender' and 'ethnicity' are seen as mutually exclusive.

6.2.12 'Minority Violence' - 'Cultural' or 'Structural' Violence?

There are divergent representations of 'minority violence' in the interviews. One representation is that minority violence is 'special' and explained by 'minority culture'.

An underlying assumption here is that structural problems are the main problem for women's liberation in a Norwegian context, while oppression of migrant women is due to a different family culture and different expectations of girls within their ethnic community. Another assumption in this representation is that minority women are not oppressed by Norwegian society at large, but by the culture of their ethnic community. The fight against racism and ethnic discrimination is not included in the way 'women's issues' are represented. One of the discursive effects of this representation is that violence against minority women is not included in the feminist struggle.

This representation is in line with much of the media coverage of 'honour killings', where this violence is described as 'cultural', whereas cases where ethnic Norwegian men kill their wives are called 'family tragedies'. In this representation, majority violence against women is linked to gender, power and 'structure', while minority violence against women is linked to 'culture' (Bredal, 2007). Issues like female genital mutilation lose their contextual nuance, and become some form of violence against women 'caused by culture', rather than linked to domestic violence as such (Narayan, 1997: 103). It is a tendency to use 'culture' to explain problems in minority communities, but that is seldom used as explanation for similar problems within majority communities (Narayan, 1997: 84-87).

Other representations in our data material challenge this 'culturalisation' of minority violence, and claim that both racism and sexism are structural phenomena, not only cultural phenomena. In this representation 'violence against women' in Norwegian society can include forced marriages, for instance. There is a divergence between the way interviewees from majority and minority women's organisations represent this issue. However, the different problem representations do not follow this majority - minority divide in all the interviews. In some of the interviews with respondents from majority women's organisations, honour killing and forced marriages-so-called 'minority violence' - is represented to be a 'structural' problem due to 'oppressive patriarchal structures in migrant communities'. Here violence by minority men is also connected to 'structural discrimination' by the majority society.

The categories 'gender' and majority/minority intersect, and different meanings of the category 'men' are produced, with different effects. Hence, when women are victims of violence by majority men, this is viewed as a traditional feminist issue where patriarchal structures, are to blame. However, when women are victims of violence by minority men, this complicates the issue. Patriarchal structures are still to blame, but by criticising migrant men, who themselves are victims of ethnic discrimination, this criticism can lead to further discrimination against ethnic minorities. The effect of this problem representation is that minority violence is labelled as 'difficult', and this may lead to passivity and a fear of dealing with these issues.

6.2.13 Feminism as a contested concept

Several of the minority interviewees were reluctant or even opposed to calling themselves or their organisation 'feminist'. They were very much in favour of gender equality, and emphasised the great opportunities for women in Norway. Some also wanted more collaboration with majority women's organisations with regards to achieving a gender equal society and a widening of the feminist agenda. However, many distanced themselves from the label 'feminist' because the concept in their opinion, has a negative connotation. 'Feminist' was viewed as being 'against men' and 'anti-family'; a negative kind of femaleness. Some of the minority interviewees also emphasised that even if men and women should have the same rights and opportunities, men and women also have different roles in the family in their country of origin, for instance in relation to the upbringing of children. This can be interpreted as a different view on gender roles and a more complimentary family model. However, as pointed to earlier in the chapter, the public understanding of feminists as "man-haters" has not been unusual among the majority population in Europe, and also found in countries like Finland and West Germany (Bergman, 2004: 28). In several European countries, many of those who are in favour of gender equality resist the label 'feminist' (Lovenduski, 1997, in Bergman, 2004: 28).

Another representation in the interviews with minority women's organisations is of black feminism as marginalised in the Norwegian women's movement. The concept of 'black feminism' is linked to an anti-racist feminist perspective and the intersections of racism and sexism (see Crenshaw, 1991). 'Black feminism' and 'desi-feminism' are represented to be in the periphery, whereas 'white feminism' is in

the centre. This centre-periphery metaphor represents a picture of majoritised women as the norm for being feminist and also for being a woman in a Norwegian context.

Some of the interviews with majority women's organisations illustrate a representation of Norwegian feminism as inclusive to a certain extent, but there is a divide between 'feminists of our kind' and 'most migrant women'. In this representation there is an underlying understanding of feminist issues as 'political' and minority women's issue as 'cultural'. One of the interviewees argued that there is no relevant co-operation between majority and minority partners because most minority women's organisations are not feminist but they are political organisations.

The feminist struggle to expand the definition of the 'political' in order to include all the so-called 'private' and 'personal' issues, such as violence against women (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28), is left out of this representation. The discursive effect is that there seems to be a line drawn with regards to ethnicity; discrimination because of ethnicity/'race' seems to be excluded from the feminist agenda within this representation of feminism. Racism and ethnic discrimination are viewed as 'special interests', and 'black feminism' is considered divisive in a Norwegian context.

As we have seen in this chapter, the response from majority feminists to the claim of widening the feminist agenda differs. Some interviewees from majority women's organisations were positive about this claim, but found it very difficult to address minority women's issues.

6.2.14 'Different' and 'Difficult' issues

A common assumption by the majority interviewees was that minority women have 'different interests'. This emphasis on 'difference' is very evident in the interview material, and this 'difference' is used either to explain the lack of co-operation or it is a sort of underlying assumption throughout the interviews. The many different representations in the data material clearly indicate that there are a lot of different views among minority women, but the important thing here is that this 'difference' seems to be understood as 'difficult' and confusing. Maybe the 'hypervisibility' in the media of issues like forced marriages and female genital mutilation linked to ethnic

'minorities' (Bredal, 2007: 60) have exaggerated the image of minority women as 'different'.

The majority respondents also express a fear of being perceived as in-tolerant, racist and contributing further to the stigmatisation of migrants in Norway. It was argued that it is 'difficult' to state that forced marriages (and so on) are actual problems among ethnic 'minorities' without saying that migrants themselves are a problem. There seems to be a lack of an appropriate language to talk about these intertwined complex issues: *either* you are tolerant regarding other religions and cultures, *or* you are in-tolerant, see other cultures and religions as threats to Western democracy and 'our values'. The lived effects that are produced by this representation of minority women's issues as 'different' and 'difficult' suggest that there probably won't be any alliances with certain ethnic minority women's organisations. The assumptions that underlie the identified problem representation are firstly, that the view on Islam is too different and secondly, the fear of being perceived as intolerant and racist. We see the link here to the discourse of being 'decent' in a Norwegian context (see Hagelund, 2003, and Chapter 2 and 6A).

6.2.15 Summary remarks about the Norwegian case

Improved relations

Four decades have passed since migrant feminists began to formally organise in Norway, and three decades since Sami feminists organised. Obviously, the political institutions and discourses related to feminism and anti-racism/gender and ethnic discrimination have changed considerably since then. The effects of women's social protest are difficult to assess, but there is a definite message about improved relationships between majority and minority feminists within the interviews with activists from the 1970s and '80s. The representations of majority and migrant feminists alike emphasise a general trend from misrecognition,³⁵ anger and irritation

³⁵ The concept 'misrecognition' is used by Nancy Fraser, for example Fraser 2003.

towards more respect, understanding and trust. One minority feminists put it this way:

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

There has been a growing concern with issues related to migrant women within a number of majority women's organisations, in particular the claim for independent status for migrant women, and also a more inclusive approach to gender violence.

The basic question of racism and feminism as intersecting issues has not been appropriated by majority organisations in general. However, including issues related to discrimination in the labour market, the white feminist movement is, from time to time, publicly accused of neglecting migrant women's issues.

The interactions between majority and minority women's organisations have necessarily increased in number and frequency since more organisations of and for ethnic minority women have been established. FOKUS constitutes an important meeting place, but several interviewees claimed that there are fewer institutionalized meeting places now compared to the 1980s. The interactions have been more constructive and productive, in the eyes of these informants, on both sides of the ethnic divide.

Several issues contribute to improved relations, indicated by this interviewee quoted above: a more open atmosphere and the plurality of voices today compared to the previous policing of understandings; a new generation of women and a new context. We have identified strategic framings which have allowed for joint actions across ethnic divides, such as the TV campaigns in 1989 and 2005 (see Country Report

Norway Chapter 2), and the NGO comments to Norway's reports to the CEDAW committee (see Country Report Norway Appendix B). The three NGO's commenting on Norway's 1994-97 CEDAW report (one minority and two majority women's organisations) all addressed the problem of migrant women's dependent status on their husbands (the three year rule). In 1997, moreover, women NGO's were able, for the first time, to make a proper shadow report.³⁶ The authors were FOKUS, the Norwegian Women's Rights Association, the Women's Front and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Matters concerning violence against women constituted important parts of the NGOs' critique of the Norwegian CEDAW report. They called for:

"A holistic strategy and a nation-wide competence and action centre are required to address gender based violence in all its forms (physical and physiological abuse, forced marriage, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage (sic) and femicide). The purchase of sexual services should be banned by law (...). Programmes are needed to educate young men about gender stereotypes, gender roles, violence against women and prostitution as a means of preventing men from buying sex and becoming perpetrators of sexual violence."

There are exceptions from this discourse of improvements, however. Most importantly with respect to the representation of the relations of Sami feminism to majority feminism, in which even a setback is³⁷ outlined concerning FOKUS and the funding guidelines. The seeds of co-operation between Sami and migrant feminist organisations mentioned by the interviewee compensates for this to some extent, however. We also want to draw attention to the 'absent relations' between majority and minority women's organisations in certain local contexts with a very small or non/existent ethnic minority population.

The growing migrant population has had an impact on the organisational landscape, with a large number of new migrant organisations, gender mixed or women's only. The constituency - if not the leadership - of previous 'ethnic Norwegian only' organisations has gradually become more ethnically mixed, and so have their aims. The general picture is rather mixed, however. On the one hand, the migration

³⁶ Shadow report to CEDAW 7/2007.

http://www.fokuskvinner.no/484/Norwegian_NGO_Shadow_report_to_CEDAW.pdf

³⁷ <http://www.ido.no/en-gb/TopMenu/Current/Forside/The-Equality-and-Anti-discrimination-Ombud/>

policies from the late 1980s, contributed to a certain upgrading of gender equality when 'democracy, gender equality and the rights of children' were claimed to be fundamental Norwegian values (see Chapter 2 in Country Report Norway). The attacks on the Twin Towers in New York 2001 reinforced the embrace of gender equality, but also supported a new equality discourse: patriarchy and the oppression of women mainly relates to 'the others', to the migrants, while the ethnic Norwegian society is perceived to be quite equal in gender terms. The adoption of separate legal regulations in areas directly related to migrant people, such as the 1995 ban on female genital mutilation, and forced marriages in 2006, also reinforce discourses of separate gender cultures according to ethnicity (see Country Report Norway, Appendix B). The majority feminist organisations were not invited to comment on the three proposals particularly addressing 'immigrant women's issues' included in our mapping. This indicates a divided consultation structure which may increase rather than decrease the probability of co-operation between women's organisations across the ethnic divide (see also Skjeie and Teigen, 2007). The majority women's organisations are conspicuous by their absence also among those who actually provide comments, with the important exceptions of The Administration of Women's Shelters and Legal Advice for Women. These two women's organisations obviously contribute to bridging the gaps, but neither of them are ordinary member-based voluntary organisations.

On the other hand, a broad intersectional approach to equality was formally introduced in 2006 when the Gender Equality Ombud was replaced by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (see Chapter 2). It is too early to know if this new opportunity structure will impact the extent of co-operation between majority and minority women and their organisations. Interviews with contemporary activists do indicate, however, a number of discursive obstacles; the talk about majority/minority co-operation or alliances, as we will elaborate in the final section.

One possible effect of the representations of 'women's issues', 'minority violence', 'feminism and men' and 'religion' is that co-operation and strategic alliances between majority and minority women's organisations are not likely to take place more often than hitherto. Unless the discourse is challenged and a new 'language' is adopted, the discursive opportunity structure is unfavourable. A number of majority women's

organisations do not know how to handle the difficult balance between the recognition of religion and the concern about women's subordination, so they end up doing nothing. This passivity and dilemma is addressed by Phillips (2007) when she writes that feminism has 'become prone to paralysis by cultural difference, with anxieties about cultural imperialism engendering a kind of relativism that made it difficult to represent *any* belief or practice as oppressive to women or at odds with gender equality' (Phillips, 2007: 1).

6.3 The Case of Spain

In this section we focus on how selected women's organisations in Spain have framed their struggle, particularly in relation to gender violence. The chapter is based on qualitative interviews with 16 women activists in Madrid and Barcelona, and five civil servants. We explore how the ethnic majority, mixed and minority women's organisations³⁸ relate to each other, with a particular focus on their struggle against violence against women. How do majoritised and minoritised women's organisations assess each other; how do they design, develop and implement policies against violence against women; and how do they position themselves in relation to various ethnic groups of women who use their services? Also, the Spanish case study explores the question of integration of migrant and ethnic minority women's issues within the Spanish women's movement. The report is based on interviews with selected minority women groups from Latin America, Africa as well as groups representing Spanish Romani³⁹ women. The interviewed organisations are located in Madrid and Barcelona.

Before elaborating the interviews, we want to mention that the term 'ethnic minority woman' - a framing introduced by the research team - was not well received by the interviewees. Our respondents argued that it did not capture the variety between

³⁸ The categorisation of selected organisations is described in the Spanish country report, Appendix A.

³⁹ In relation to the Romani people, our interviewees used the term 'Gypsy'. We have retained this usage when interviewees' statements are quoted or when government institutions or voluntary organisations using the term 'Gypsy' in their names are referred to in our report, but otherwise we use the term 'Romani' (see Hancock 2002: xviii). See Country Report Spain for more discussion about the terms used.

minorities living in Spain for generations and the new immigrants. Neither did it distinguish between migrants who are native Spanish-speakers and those who are not, nor different legal categories of migrants such as refugees, legal residents and undocumented migrants; economically independent women or women dependent on their husbands after family reunification. Also worth noting is that the interviewees always referred to Romani people as 'gypsy', a term widely used in Spain even by the Romani themselves.

6.3.1 Ethnic minority women's organising

Immigration to Spain changed dramatically between 1980 and 2007. There was a ten-fold rise in the foreign born population legally residing in Spain from 180,000 in 1980 to about 4,5 million in 2007 (www.oecd.org). During the same period, the national background of the migrants also changed. Moroccans, traditionally the largest migrant community, were overtaken by migrant groups from Latin America and more recently from Eastern Europe (Romanians and Bulgarians). The Romani population in Spain was affected, with the arrival of other Romani groups such as those from East European countries. Generally, a new dynamic of inclusion/exclusion occurred, and citizenship issues related to integration, recognition and participation became urgent - in the women's movement too.

The women's movement in Spain had a fresh start after the fall of the Franco regime in 1975 and the reintroduction of freedom of associations. A number of autonomous feminist groups (*colectivos*) (Lafuente, 2002: 664) and feminist groups affiliated with political parties on the left were established in the years immediately after 1975.

When ethnic minority women began to organise, they were attached to various ethnic minority organisations, and then they began to form women's sections in order to have their own voice inside the organisations. The first independent ethnic minority women's organisations were set up in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and include *Romi Serseni*, an association of Spanish Romani women established in Grenada in 1990 and in Madrid in 1991, and *Vomade-Vencit*, an association of immigrant Dominican women established informally in 1989 and formally in 1992. Among the first ethnically mixed organisations for women were *Ca La Dona*,

established in Barcelona in 1988, and *Association Women Opanel*, established in Madrid in 1991.

Ethnic minority women of various backgrounds have also been known to gather on a more informal basis, often through activities apparently not connected to feminist issues. Such gatherings are not explored in this report, but they need to be taken into consideration for a more comprehensive inclusion of minority women's issues within the broader feminist debate.

The Women's Institute (1983) provided financial support for voluntary organisations. According to a publication from the Women's Institute, there were 1300 diverse women's associations and groups at the beginning of the 1990s in Spain. Sixty described themselves as national, 20 as professional (Lafuente, 2002: 668). Unfortunately, we have not been able to identify a similar overview of women's organisations in Spain to-day.⁴⁰

State support for establishing women's organisations was also introduced by the socialist government in the Third National Equality Plan (1997-2000).⁴¹ The general trend during the previous conservative government (1996-2004), however, was to cut substantially - in particular for developing new organisations - and to grant more substantial funds to fewer organisations. Under the current socialist government (Zapatero, Socialist Party) women's organisations, including ethnic minority women's organisations, receive more public funding:

'Other ethnic minority respondents also recognised that the current socialist government has taken a more active approach to women's organisations, by inviting them to participate in political processes and the delivery of public services, and by providing public funding for various parts of their operations.'

6.3.2 Framing 'the problem' – majority perspectives

Contrary to migrant and ethnic minority women's efforts to organise and the actual existence of a number of ethnic minority women's organisations, ethnic majority

⁴⁰ The most comprehensive list we found, and based our selection of organisations on, was the list provided by the Spanish Co-ordinator of the EWLobby http://www.celem.org/conoce_quien.asp

⁴¹ The National Action Plan followed the UN Beijing Women's Conference recommendations, see our Country report from Spain, Appendix B: 11.

respondents focused the 'un-readiness' of migrant, ethnic and Romani women to participate and form voluntary associations. They stressed minority women's 'inability to organise, associate or protest', and there was a common view held by majority women respondents that *'It's not easy to find organised immigrant women'*:

'I personally do not know that there was any serious, authentic movement in favour of the rights of the immigrant women'

This view was certified also by one of the civil servants, and indicates the failure of the ethnic majority population to 'see' the minorities:

'(...) The problem also lies in knowing who are their representatives. (...) but the immigrant women are not yet organised in Spain.'

In order to explain the (alleged) lack of organising among ethnic minority women, majority women pointed at the migrant culture, as well as the time factor:

'You can see they bring along the culture of associations, especially the Latin-American women, but when they arrive to a new country they go through phases, or degrees [of maturity] in order to get to the point of forming associations. The immigration problem in Spain is not of so many years, and therefore it will get better or the moment will arrive when immigrant women will form associations.'

The citation implicitly claims that migrant women, in this case from Latin America, do not have a 'culture of associations' that is (claimed to be) existing in Spain. This framing, hardly based on actual facts about vital women's movements in Latin America, (re)produces an image of migrant women as apolitical and passive.

Other respondents, however, framed the problem to be insufficient resources and various constraints faced by immigrant women:

'They don't have time, they work long hours and have no childcare, they take their own children with them ... how can they be feminists?'

In this framing, the alleged lack of organisations of and by ethnic minority women was explained in a slightly different way, but the outcome pointed to a more or less similar representation of ethnic minority women. References to constraints could substantiate the opposite conclusion from the one expressed above, however: How can women working long hours with no childcare etc *not* be feminists? Also, this

perception of migrant women's realities could have resulted in additional claims on the majority feminist agenda, addressing these problems. Ethnic majority respondents did, however, acknowledge the existence of informal networks of migrant women, and assumed they would mature and then facilitate formal organisations which could empower women.

The alleged inability of ethnic minority women to organise, associate or protest was clearly stressed only by majority respondents. The additional 'excuse' they made on behalf of migrant women mostly referred to migrant women's double workload, but sometimes also to the situation of living without documents and being subjected to men's strict supervision. The legal situation of undocumented migrant women was not framed as a major concern, however, and neither were solutions to related problems. The implication of such a framing, underlining the 'them' versus 'us' divide, has been meagre recognition, by both feminist majority women and government representatives, of the fact that minority women groups may hold different types of priorities and positions in advancing their agenda.

The ethnic majority women's way of framing the 'problem of (non-)organising' for ethnic minority women follows a wider trend in Spanish (Campani, Salimbeni, Cabral, 2006) and international mainstream literature: Migrant and ethnic women tend to be victimised, and a cultural divide between 'them' and 'us' is established or reproduced as a result (ibid.: 18). Studies discussing how ethnic minorities, especially Muslim women, are perceived in the wider society often point to their different cultural and religious background (UGT, 2001). Migrant women are often framed as submissive, accepting and silent to the point where they are made out as being unable to recognise their own need of 'liberation'.

In the eyes of ethnic majority women, minority women's organisations are not believed to have had a significant influence on the legislation on gender equality and violence against women. Rather, there is a dominant view held by many majority women interviewed of how 'they' learn from 'us', and through informal networks. Although such claims shed light on the lack of integration of minority issues on the majority agenda, they also indicate recognition of majority women's privileged position and their better political opportunities to advance change or introduce new

items - also pertaining to minority groups. Contrary to this, one majority respondent also claimed that ethnic majority women demonstrate little intention to influence the government on issues pertaining to immigrant women:

'I personally do not know that there was any serious, authentic movement in favour of the rights of the immigrant women.'

Some respondents explained the disconnection between ethnic majority and minority women's organisations in light of the government's non-comprehensive immigration policy, while continuing to place the 'blame' on the migrant women's lack of organisation. Majority women respondents' framing of their relations with ethnic minority women were complex, however, and there was evidence of concern:

'The immigration policies are a bit paralysed and this affects directly the way [migrant] women are attended. You can see an intention to take them into consideration [by the government], but it is not altogether developed nor attended to. The problem also lies in knowing who are their representatives. We are now part of Spanish women's associations who are going to defend the rights of the immigrant women, but the immigrant women are not yet organised in Spain.'

Framing the problem – minority perspectives

Minoritised women's framing of the 'problem' of their organising differs significantly from ethnic minoritised women's framing. There is a 'more silent type of division' between majority and minority groups, not always acknowledged.' This division deals less with collaboration to advance feminist ideals than with the barriers that immigrant women have to overcome in order to participate or to be included in the majority women's movement. Most importantly, minority women's organisations placed a bigger emphasis in their debate on the legal disadvantages of Romani and migrant women, and framed their situation as doubly vulnerable compared to majority women.

Undocumented women exposed to gender violence are often unable to approach existing services directed at victims of violence due to their difficult legal circumstances. In addition to not being formally recognised, these women often do not possess the relevant knowledge and information, they do not have support options after initial assistance in a shelter, and they live with the inherent fears of expulsion. These were among the most critical factors minority women stressed

when explaining the disadvantaged position of these groups of migrant women. According to one interviewee *'We cannot talk about equality to participate alongside other women, while such a large number of migrant women do not have their legal status arranged.'* The consequence of this framing of the problem, explicitly described as inequality compared to 'other women', is evident and obvious: legal reforms.

In relation to gender violence, migrant women respondents also stressed how the gender violence law fails to protect migrant women victims. One respondent said:

'[...] vulnerability [...] accompanies the people who have no documents and this makes them denounce less; the majority of women come from countries where you are less able to make charges against the person who maltreated them, because they will be killed and their death won't even be announced in the newspapers.'

Along the same lines, discussing the dependency and vulnerability of immigrant women, another respondent said:

'The woman in general is vulnerable but the immigrant woman is doubly so, for being a foreigner, for not knowing her rights, the social norms, (...) this disorientation is what prompts the vulnerability. The dependency that a woman has on her husband, the lack of economic independence, the lack of liberty when her permanent residency is conditioned to that of her husband, so really the [immigrant] woman is conditioned.'

Explaining how the gender violence legislation fails to impact African women, one respondent said:

'The African women don't have the same voice [as the Spanish women]. Denouncing is a problem [for them], as well as receiving some sort of response. I have seen women that had problems in the marriage and they denounced and now they are suffering more because they don't have a house, they don't have work, they don't have food for themselves and for their children; they are suffering.'

She then added an explanation as to why making a complaint/denouncing the perpetrator is not an option for these women:

'In Barcelona, the women who have problems go to these centres [for abused women]; they explain their problem, in principle there is a little bit of a movement, but after one year, they are told that they have to find a job, because "we can't maintain you here for life" [...] So then the women are

afraid, even if the husbands step on them, they have to endure it, because otherwise they will suffer more because they have no papers, no work permit. Before they arrive in Spain they get a paper that says: "NO right to work in Spain". I also got it when I came here with my children, and I still keep it. But the husband has the residency and the work.'

The implications of the different perspectives on violence against migrant women are twofold. On one hand it is critical to recognize the additional needs and burdens of migrant women. The barriers and challenges created by their vulnerable legal and social status must be addressed accordingly. On the other hand, attention needs to be paid in order not to victimise migrant women further, and not to aggravate their exclusion.

6.3.3 Dissonance and dilemmas

On a few occasions, majority respondents talked about gender violence within specific ethnic groups, such as Muslim or Romani women, as being accepted and culture-specific. One respondent described it almost as a separate issue, almost not pertaining to the overall debate on gender violence.

'The Gypsies ... that is a different story ... they are different, they operate at a different level, they have their world, their own laws ... and the women have a different position there.'

This framing - claiming that violence against minority women has other forms of manifesting itself and that it is dealt with in different ways within ethnic minority communities, has the effect of (re)producing racialised stereotypes and the 'we' versus 'them' divide.

This is quite different from ethnic minority women's efforts to bring up issues of racism and discrimination. Ethnic minority respondents recognised increased support from the government during the recent, socialist years, but stressed the barriers they encounter when they bring up issues of racism and discrimination on the majority feminist agenda.

Related to this, ethnic minority women respondents acknowledged the influence of the mainstream women's movement in terms of impacting gender policy in Spain, but also claimed that locally formed immigrant groups are influencing legislation

regarding racism and discrimination more than majority women feminist organisations. The division of gender equality and ethnic discrimination in different policy fields indicates the difficult positioning of ethnic minority women at the edge of both fields, trying to communicate with both.

The different meanings of 'integration' among ethnic majority and minority groups further illustrates this problematic: For instance, ethnic Spanish women mentioned the integration of migrant women only in relation to the services their organisation delivered to migrant women. Minority women respondents, however, focused extensively on 'the lack of involvement, representation and opportunity for voice that various groups of minority women experience when interacting with majority women's movement. Such claims, while critical towards majority feminism, indicate interaction between the majoritised and the minoritised women's organisations, rather than disconnection.

6.3.4 Solidarity or benevolence

Majority women concerned with the situation of migrant women sometimes pointed at minoritised women's lack of voice. They also expressed their intention to 'give them voice.' One respondent said, speaking of Spanish Roma women:

'I think that fundamentally the problem is in their dialogue. Now, what we [the Spanish women] are doing is to give them voice, that is to speak out about what is happening to them.'

There is a power asymmetry inscribed in the citation. The representation is ambiguous, and can be read rather paternalistically as if 'voice' is something majority women can 'give' to ethnic minority women. Alternatively, 'voice' can be seen as a right, and something which ought to materialise when and if majority women are willing to step aside and allow space for various groups of women.

Minority respondents, while recognising the importance of having their own voice and presence, implicitly framed the issue of voice as a matter of rights, underlining the lack of 'solidarity' shown by majority feminist activists. For instance, one of the interviewees claimed that migrant and ethnic minority women were invited to participate only when required by a third party, such as a government forum,

European or international forum, and less so on a more regular basis. They were not often asked to participate through more ad-hoc consultation groups, in which migrant women have a marginal role.

'Some things [pertaining to immigrant women issues] have been integrated [by the majority organisations] but only in quotation marks "..." [meaning symbolically]. What I want to say is that the immigrant women can talk for themselves, but they are not always in the position to be the voices of their own problems, which would be the just thing.'

Barriers to participation and voice appear both internally within gender mixed ethnic minority groups and externally when ethnic minority women approach majority women's organisations:

'The Gypsy women have a problem with associative Gypsy movement and so we had to make ourselves invited in order to participate in the equality plans, because they were not counting on us. When they were drafting a law or law guideline that they were about to start working on, they did not count with the women's group, it was us who had to demand that they involve us in the government changes (...) They have the perception that we are a step behind them, so they give us things already done, they don't let us participate from the first moment when an initiative is being created. We have to ask to be allowed to participate from the beginning.'

As discussed earlier by other minority respondents, dependency is one of the most critical aspects mentioned in relation to gender violence for African women living in Spain. This affects how women perceive their legal status. The respondents claimed that their dependency on the husband, lack of resources and general knowledge about how to operate in Spanish society, increase their inability to integrate but also to receive help and support on gender violence related issues.

'All the [African] women we have [at the organisation] here are illiterate. Only two can read and write but not in Spanish, I am the only one who can manage in Spanish. This is our problem, and we don't know where to go to ask for money, how to write [...] We, African women, are very poor and we suffer a lot. [In most cases] the husbands took [these] women from the 'field', they don't know how to read or write...and they brought them here [...], but at least, comparing with their situation [in Africa]... [now] they are 50 per cent better off. But the residency depends on that of the husband, if he rejects her, she is left without residency; the police gets her on the streets and they deport her.'

These women, one respondent claimed, lack the knowledge and education to seek support or other opportunities. They are three times constrained in terms of making

choices, first for being immigrants, second for being illiterate and third for living in a closed patriarchal system. Older women in the community have an important role, as it is they who arrange female circumcision procedures (FGM), usually performed by a traditional birth attendant, a midwife, or a professional circumciser.

Respondents further argued that in certain communities there is literally no place for a woman who has not undergone such procedures to be fully accepted.

Issues pertaining to African women are not included by 'western feminist' according to ethnic minority respondent. One of them framed this as African women being 'disconnected' from the fight of the majority women:

'There is too much violence in general, and this is bad, but it is worse for African women [living in Spain]. We see that the western women have a voice now, they can talk, they make demonstrations about their rights, the government supports them, but we, the African women don't have anything'.

Early and child marriages were also claimed to be 'largely untouched by the international community', in spite of the fact that they apply to 60 million women (http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_earlymarriage.html).

Majority women respondents presented these issues as not being representative enough for 'them' to prioritise. They specifically stressed that forced marriage and FGM are topics pertaining to certain groups ('a minority') and therefore not part of the typical gender violence other women are confronted with in Spain. At the same time, minority women involved in fighting such practices in Spain, claim that the lack of involvement by majority women in this area was mirrored by a lack of available funds from key government entities to pursue this task.

Migrant women's problems in their 'internal' ethnic communities are connected to their problems within the external society. This internal/external problematic is a fundamental problem, also highlighted in the debate concerning feminism and multiculturalism. It is a reminder of the necessity to always keep a doubly critical perspective; on the potential discrimination within a minority group ('minorities within minorities'; Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005) as well as on discrimination against minority groups as such.

6.3.5 Falling between the cracks

Ethnic minority women are situated at the intersection of the mainstream female-dominated Spanish feminist discourse and the mainstream male- and migrant-dominated anti-discrimination discourse. The result is that issues pertaining to migrant women's integration in social, cultural and political life easily fall between the cracks. Issues related to gender and cultural complexities/ethnic minorities have not been prioritised on the agenda of mainstream immigrant organisations, and also not on the agenda of various feminist organisations run by native Spanish women. This also includes organisations focusing on gender equality and gender violence issues. Only a few organisations, such as Vomade-Vencit and Rominahui (see Appendix A in the country report from Spain), are actively engaged with gender issues (including gender violence) from an ethnic minority perspective.

Several respondents from majority women's organisations explained that working with violence-related issues pertaining to immigrant groups or following anti-discrimination debates regarding minority women is not the focus of their organisations, despite the fact that fighting violence against women was among their core objectives. One respondent stressed why that was especially the case for them:

'Until now they [the immigrant women] did not reach us, these are difficult cases where making a police complaint is very rare. Maybe there are other organisations that work more specifically with immigrant groups and detect this conflict, because we in this respect do not have the means to reach them. But we do know that there are no such complaints, such as with the prostitution and [female] circumcisions.'

One of the interviewed civil servants confirmed this:

'We have seen during this time the process of the associative movement of the foreigners, which went through a bit of everything. Not always the Spanish groups have known to defend well the interests of women in this case. It depended on if the groups of women primarily consist of men or of women, if the original society of the group was accepting violence [...] For example, in groups that represent Moroccan foreigners it is not so easy, immediately you realise the contradictions they have as a group. It's very complicated.'

The complexities of approaching the problems of migrant women are explicitly noticed, and contribute to clarify the reluctant engagement of Spanish majority

women's associations. On the one hand, violence against women is violence irrespective of the ethnicity of the victim and should be included in any struggle against gendered violence. On the other hand, cultural differences - and prejudices - and structural asymmetry disturb a universal approach to violence. This is not a Spanish problem alone; Kimberle Crenshaw coined the problem as the "strategic silences of anti-racism and feminism" (1997: 183), and addressed intersectionality as a way of dealing with the silencing of black women's problems in feminist as well as in anti-racist contexts.

6.3.6 Romani women: a minority within a minority

The feminist discourse in Spain has been shaped and influenced by trans-national factors such as the development of the European Union. Several minority respondents argued that international players have impacted the minority women's movements in their quests for recognition. Also, they mentioned that they had received critical support during the initial set up of their NGO by organisations such as Amnesty International, Movement for Peace, Disarming and Liberty, Euro Net – FGM and European Network for Gypsy Women.

The increased political activity of Romani in Spain is related to such developments, for instance the recent focus on the situation of Roma by the Council of Europe,⁴² and the development of governmental efforts to implement specific policies. Examples of measures to facilitate the social integration of Romani in Spain and to promote Romani heritage are the National Gypsy Secretary (*Secretariado Nacional Gitano*), the National Council of Gypsy People (*Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano*) and the Gypsy Cultural Institute (*Instituto de Cultura Gitana*). These new entities further promote the development of national associations for Romani people involved with social and political issues. Despite evidence of political and social recognition and inclusion of Romani within the Spanish society, however, the arrival of new migrant Romani groups has increased the complexity of their representation, affiliation and cultural identity.

⁴² The setting up by the Committee of Ministers of a Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) was decided in September 1995. In 2007 European Council acknowledged for the first time ever that the Roma face very specific situation across the EU, and EU leaders called upon Member States and the Union to use all means to improve their inclusion.

The Gypsy Cultural Institute has supported various campaigns for women, such as the recently developed Petition for Gypsy Women (Manifiesto Gitano). The campaign demands more recognition of the rights and influence of Romani women within the Roma community and in the wider society. Their organising makes them visible as a 'minority within the minority' (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev, 2005), and their vulnerability to both ethnocentric and cultural relativistic claims. In the words of Uma Narayan, feminists should be careful not to replace *universal* essentialist generalisations about 'all women' by *culture-specific* essentialist generalisations that depend on totalising categories. 'Attempts to avoid the Scylla of "sameness" often results in moves that leave one foundering on the Charybdis of "Difference"' (Narayan, 2000: 83).

One interviewee claimed that the integration of Roma was improved. Recent programmes and policies initiated by Roma groups and by other non-governmental women's organisations have facilitated their inclusion within the larger feminist discourse and within the society as a whole, she claimed.

Another interviewee argued that programmes aimed to reduce gender violence among the Romani community have to be 'culturally sensitive'. She referred to the alleged fact that 'violence' is accepted and almost internalised by women in these communities, where 'going against your partner' by means of making a police complaint (as required by law for action to take place) automatically outcasts and socially excludes a woman from that community. She further argued that this is the reason why the gender violence law in its current form may not be able to reach Romani women. However, she considered that in the long run the legislation is a positive development, by influencing the overall perception of gender violence within these communities:

'I can assure you that if this law [gender violence law of 2007] does not reach somebody, it would be the gypsies, this law is absolutely not reaching them. The Gypsy women will never denounce, so all the benefits after the denouncing, they will not be able to enjoy [them]. That means all the protection that the law brings. The only thing that could be affecting the Gypsy is the educational part the law could have, that if the law is applied you become a delinquent, so through the authorities the mentality can change.'

Respondents working for Romani organisations mentioned that statistically gender violence related death is almost never registered within Romani communities. They further outlined cultural factors, such as different types of 'internal' laws based on extended family relations and internal social networks, and better 'control' of the more 'extreme' cases of abuse and gender violence. One respondent particularly described an incident where an elderly Romani woman intervened and stopped an act of violence against a woman, when this was happening:

'(...) outside the home and in the public domain, by telling the perpetrator "doing this is a crime ('delicto') in this country. Such an acknowledgement by an elderly Gypsy woman means progress in itself.'

She further argued:

'The times have changed, the people themselves begin to recognise violence as a crime, so it's a good step to have the new Gender Violence Law, it raises the consciousness of people even if they don't use the law in a formal way.'

Working on gender issues with and for the Romani community is a very complex task. Besides the tensions with the 'outside' Romani, there are also inter-group conflicts and tensions which often reinforce the weak and vulnerable position in which Romani women often are located. Thus, collaborations with other non-governmental organisations are critical for changes to occur, according to respondents. Unfortunately, opportunities for such co-operations are claimed to be limited.

6.3.7 Veil and violence

Pertaining to the issue of violence, the cultural argument related to ethnic minority women was often articulated by majority women. One respondent, acknowledging the 'dependency' situation of Muslim women, maintained that this was mostly explained by the cultural isolation they live in:

'The capacity to denounce, comes in direct reference to the isolation, for example the Moroccan women, sub-Saharan, or those from Niger (...) are generally women for whom it is very difficult to learn the language, as it is to be involved in the [Spanish/local] customs.'

She further argued that the 'cultural isolation' of Muslim women makes them a very hard to reach group, with little information known to the outside world (including the feminist groups) about the gender violence they might experience.

'We have very few data about Muslim maltreated women, who besides [the language barrier], have a greater acceptance of violence. The Ecuadorian or the Romanian woman, even if they'd have a greater acceptance of violence, for example because of her couple relations or because maybe she suffered from it in Ecuador or in Romania, but they perceive immediately that in Spain things are not like this. So then there is another perception of reality that the others are not perceiving it because they are not going out [of the house].'

The underlying assumption of this statement is that cultural barriers are hard to break, because these women do not go out on the streets. This may be a realistic assessment of problems related to violence against some Muslim women. And yet, the framing resembles the culture-specific essentialist argument Narayan has warned against.

Muslim women are on uncertain grounds in Spain after the veil debate. Most respondents perceive religion as a patriarchal form of oppression of women, and argue that the veil is a symbolic act of accepting oppression on the part of the Muslim women.

One majority woman respondent said:

'I can't tell people to take the veil off. The people have to take the veil off out of their own will. The way we do it here is that we don't tell a woman anything about the way she is dressed. We have some seminars about "women and religions", but not about the Catholic religion, about all religions. The women

began to see the traps that a religion creates for them. One woman started by taking her veil off inside, while there were men around. When she was out of the centre, she ended up dressed like a “European”, with a short skirt [too short for my liking]... But nobody ever told her “take the veil off”.’

This statement also brings up the underlying assumption of white/European hegemony previously mentioned. First, the respondent explains how the imposition of certain (European) norms was avoided. Then, when describing how a Muslim woman assimilated to the European dress code, she implied that this offered her liberation from her oppressed world. Such practice of making people change their views and habits by getting them to think about the wider social context and then focus it onto their own lives, is one subtle way of expressing the hegemony. This further contributes to the representation of a dissonance within the feminist movement in terms of ‘us’ versus ‘them’.

This respondent argued that the negative symbolic value attributed to the use of the veil stemmed from the fact that, historically, the use of the veil has been interpreted as oppressive in relation to generations of majority (Catholic) Spanish women. Other majority respondents also confirmed that religious symbolism is greatly controversial in the current feminist discourse, due to the notion that it represents male oppression of women.

6.3.8 Dissonance and distance

Several respondents from majority organisations said that gender violence pertaining to immigrant groups or following anti-discrimination debates regarding minority women was not their focus.

‘Until now they [the immigrant women] did not reach us, these are difficult cases where making a police complaint is very rare. Maybe there are other organisations that work more specifically with immigrant groups and detect this conflict, because we in this respect do not have the means to reach them. But we do know that there are no such complaints, such as with the prostitution and [female] circumcisions.’

Most organisations interviewed in this study provide gender violence programmes, ranging from preventative and educational programmes (in schools, universities, hospitals) to direct services to victims of abuse and maltreatment. Interesting issues

arose in relation to who the victims are; their ethnic and religious background, cultural and educational levels.

Several majority women argued that all women experience the same oppression in terms of gender violence simply because they are women. According to these respondents, universal services currently available to 'all women' regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or social class were good practices; non-discriminatory and inclusive. Majority women respondents framed the solution as 'equal opportunity service provision', addressed to all women in need. The effect of such policies, however, may be insufficient consideration of the diverse needs of migrant and ethnic minority women. Viewed in light of Bachhi's discourse analysis approach of 'what's the problem represented to be?' (Bacchi, 1999) this may limit alternative options to address the problem. One respondent said:

'[Gender violence] affects all social classes and here we have women of all social classes. It affects all cultural levels, and we attend to women of all cultural levels [...] I receive here a woman politician and then I receive Arabic women or Romanian women [...]. The women can be an academic, professional, journalist, lawyer, medic, engineer or she can be a woman with no education at all. I think we have to do it like this, when we talk of women, we talk of all women and therefore, the representation has to be there.'

The benefits of having gender violence services were stressed by another respondent who emphasised that they are provided to all women without distinction:

'This is not an organisation for immigrant women; it is not pro-immigrants, it is pro-women; it doesn't matter that they come from one place or another'.

Free service provision available to 'all women' regardless of their legal status or nationality is in itself a positive development.⁴³ The concern arises if such provisions preclude diverse experiences of violence and needs among women with dissimilar ethnic backgrounds. A nuanced approach is required in order to identify the types of issues that different groups of women may bring along when accessing these services. The interviewed majority women prioritised actions and claims against

⁴³ Since 2005, after a few organisations campaigned for a change in legislation with the administration of Madrid, to provide free gender violence-related services for all women who live in Spain (regardless of their legal status); before 2003, immigrant women victims of abuse would lose their resident status (obtained through the husband) if the separation happened before the two year limit of family reunion, placing them in illegal circumstances.

gender violence but gave less consideration to the additional barriers which minority women may encounter when trying to access these services. The same approach as noted above was reiterated by one of the respondents when asked to describe if government policy should address women's issues differently depending on their ethnic background:

'I think that the policies carried out currently by the government do not distinguish. For example in our centre [...] the immigrant women can come in the same manner as the Spanish women. They don't have to fulfil more requirements, or less, with veil or without veil.'

One majority respondent, however, suggested that immigrant women may face different types of challenges compared to Spanish women, thus demonstrating that issues related to racial and ethnic diversity are slowly being recognised by majority women's organisations:

'So then the issue of immigrant women is another phenomenon that we are faced with, like in other countries and we are thinking a lot about it. The immigrant women have a different profile than Spanish women in many cases, in others they don't. As with the violence against women, (psychological, physical, sexual, economic abuse); all these are the same, but in other aspects they are not. [...] they [the immigrant women] are now the most needy. This is because the Spanish women (for better or for worse) always have the family resources, friends, work. Moreover for being in a country where they can manage [...] because of the language and with the social workers. But the immigrant woman ... the first she has is fear, that if she denounces her husband, she will be thrown out [of the country].'

The expression 'we are thinking a lot about it' is a reminder of the complexities of dealing with politics in a multicultural society. Good intentions may result in quite bad policy measures if a careful consideration of 'culture', including the majority/white culture, is omitted. African women in particular argued that the lack of engagement with these gender violence issues within the feminist movement make any other types of 'cultural barriers' even more difficult to break. The concern with violence against women among majority and minority women activists may, potentially, be a useful site for learning about cultural complexities and mutual respect.

6.3.9 Co-operation and resonance

However, the interviews with majority and minority activists did not only display disagreements and lack of co-operation. In the broad field of violence against women, the interviews also show that diverse feminist majority organisations have joined forces on several occasions to change Spanish legislation, including with minority organisations on a few occasions. For example, women's organisations called for a comprehensive law against violence against women (VAW) since the early 1990s. A number of campaigns were carried out until 1998, when the Socialist Party took up the challenge and invited women's organisations to prepare the first draft law against gender violence (filed in Parliament by the Socialist Parliamentary Group on December 16, 2001). In 1992, there were numerous campaigns and lobbying by the majority feminist movement when, in particular, the 'Anti-Aggressions Committee' organised several demonstrations in Madrid to change the legislation against gender violence (Organic Law, 3/1989).

Protests and campaigns also took place when the revision of the First Plan of Action against Gender Violence was revised and the focus was narrowed down to domestic violence. The action plan for 2001-2004 was not considered comprehensive by most women's NGOs, and changes were demanded by organisations such as Zero Tolerance to Gender Violence in 2002 (*Tolerancia cero con la violencia de género*) (Red feminista, 2008).

FGM is an area of competing claims and dissonances, but also of efforts to co-operate. In Spain, FGM is still practiced among immigrant groups, primarily from Gambia, Mali and Senegal, of whom a higher percentage reside in Cataluña (www.ine.es). Majority women's organisations' representatives, although recognising this practice as violence against women and as a human rights abuse, only do limited work to prevent or eliminate the practice in the community, or to include it as a top priority on the feminist agenda. However, since the early 1990s, feminist majority organisations have fought to introduce the anti-FGM law in Spain. (Legislation which initially made the practice of FGM illegal was passed in 1995). Later they fought to modify the law to include extra-jurisdiction prosecution, which means that it is now possible to prosecute the offenders on foreign territory (Ley Orgánica, 3/2005).

The two organisations interviewed in Barcelona are among the very few organisations in Spain fighting against the practice of FGM and to implement the law. Both organisations are currently led by Gambian-born women who engage with the African communities residing in Barcelona/Cataluña. The respondents highlighted the barriers they encounter in trying to prevent the perpetuation of this practice, and stressed critical issues such as early marriage and dependency in connection with the practice of FGM. Also, they argued that these issues have not been picked up by the government or by the feminist movement in Spain. These claims illustrate opposite representations of the majority women's movements concern about FGM. A project assessing the FGM situation in Spain prior to 2005, conducted by Fundación Mujeres, (Women's Foundation), listed a few non-governmental organisations involved in disseminating information about combating FGM: CEAR, ACNUR, Amnesty International, Amam España and the Women Lawyers Themis.

Most of those interviewed regarded political involvement as a critical element in developing their political opportunities, in contrast to the rejection of institutional channels during the early stage of the feminist movement (see Chapter 2). At that time, 'Say no to power; feminism is autonomous' was the most popular slogan of the feminist movement in Spain (Mendez, 1994: 665). Also, activists today claim their co-operation and alliances with both government entities and partner women's organisations to be generally good.

The importance of common spaces for feminist debate and struggle is recognized by most respondents. They argue that inter-organisational collaborations are critical, both with respect to influencing government, and also to create informal networks, or to organise events and campaigns.

Some respondents argued that collaboration across the ethnic divide was mostly initiated during various types of feminist encounters. They range from formal spaces, such as forums, round tables, seminars and workshops, where different women's groups come together for legislative proposals, initiatives or changes, white papers or ad-hoc committees, to more informal spaces such as organising events,

campaigns, lobbying and celebrations on November 25th and on the International Women's Day on March 8th.

The organising of these events, however, displayed divisions and controversies. There has been a more open type of division between the radical feminist and lesbian groups, the former extreme left party members and more liberal feminists groups. These historical divisions are, however, presented in positive terms by most respondents, for example, a long time activist who identifies herself as such:

'There is another point of encounter, where there is the more radical feminism with which we have contact, these are necessary people and it is very important that they exist. We meet in Barquillo 48, there are some buildings there (...) Some of them [radical feminists, the majority of whom are not connected to any political party], at some point had some connection with the NP movement, the communist extra-parliamentary party which disappeared, from the extreme left. They are reticent, [but] they are necessary because they know the utopia and beyond, and are almost without any other ties.'

In Spain, the 8th of March is regarded not only as an important feminist symbol, a day of protest against male dominance and a celebration of the struggle for women's liberation and equality with men. It is also a symbol of progress and modernisation of Spain. A variety of collective actors like government agencies and other public institutions, political parties and labour unions are invited along to various groups of feminist activists and women's groups and associations (Sundman, 1999).

6.3.10 Summary remarks about the Spanish case

This study has offered a critical perspective on the relationship among key actors involved in the contemporary women's movement in an increasingly multicultural Spain. By looking at claims, demands and achievements in relation to gender violence policy, the study has highlighted emerging contradictions and tensions. The key finding relates to how women's agency is framed and especially by whom. Based on data from twenty-one qualitative interviews and observations conducted over the course of one year (from 2007 until 2008) with selected members of women's organisations and public administration officials in Spain, this study argues that, depending on how immigrant women's positions are represented or framed, a woman can either be victimised or empowered; represented or not represented in the feminist discourse; with or without a real political opportunity.

One pattern clearly emerged during the interviews in relation to representation, integration and common or dissonant claims made by majority and minority women's organisations in Spain: Majority women do, at least to some extent, recognise the additional barriers encountered by migrant and minority women in their struggle for recognition, participation and voice. Still, they have not been able to include and internalise issues pertaining to 'other' groups of women in a way and on a scale which meets ethnic minority women's demands. Based on our empirical fieldwork, it appears justified to state that there is no common women's rights agenda in Spain across the ethnic divides.

Ethnic minority women stand at a focal point between ethnicity/race and gender as two powerful systems of oppression. Spain is no exception to the critique forwarded by Black and postcolonial feminists of activism and scholarship within the women's movement as dominated by privileged and ethnocentric white women. Currently there is little progress towards an intersectional approach to inequality that recognises the importance of race and ethnicity as voiced by various minority and migrant women's groups in our study. 'Majority' (autóctonas) and 'minority' women seem to take different approaches to gender oppression, patriarchy, and ethnicity and race. Discourses on gender, class, race and ethnicity continue to be mostly shaped by majority movement actors that represent an allegedly universalistic white feminism in Spain. Although the mainstream feminist debate recognises women's diversity, it largely falls short of including or prioritising critical constraints and limitations faced by minority women.

Moreover, issues related to the integration of migrant women have been given low priority on the agenda of mainstream immigrant organisations, but also on that of various feminist organisations run by native Spanish women. Only a very few organisations are actively engaged with gender issues, including gender violence, from an ethnic minority perspective.

Our empirical field work supports the conclusion that the majority led women's organisations have not yet engaged seriously with intersectional approaches to gender and ethnicity.

Postcolonial feminists object to portrayals of women of non-Western societies as passive and voiceless victims and the portrayal of Western women as modern, educated and empowered (see Nayaran, 1997; Mohanty, 1994). However, such images have been prominent during the interviews conducted for this study. Despite progress in social, legal and political areas, racial and ethnic divisions continue to marginalise certain groups of women in the modern democracy of Spain, and this situation has hardly been picked up and addressed by majority feminist women.

Findings from this research demonstrate that the types of barriers encountered by migrant women in both feminist activism and political life, highlight the unspoken divides and reproduce certain patriarchal stereotypes within the current feminist discourse in Spain. Ethnicity, class and race, and in particular whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993), are still silent categories within the women's movement and will remain so unless these silences are problematised and brought into the open for discussion and debate (Bacchi, 1999, 2005). This is congruent with the promises of Bacchi's 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach; to bring silences in problem representations into the open.

Moreover, Bacchi's concern with the effects of problem representations on discourses can be understood in the light of minority women's claims not being fully embraced within the current feminist majority-led discourse. This increasingly important debate on the possibility of alliance and co-operation between ethnic minority women's and ethnic majority women's organisations is still limited in Spain. The claims described in this study, put forward by 'the native Spanish feminists' or '*autoctonas*' (in Spanish) and 'the other' migrant and ethnic minority women, often referred to as 'more vulnerable groups of women', have the potential to create and sustain divisions within the women's movement. However, they could also help create new understandings and new forms of co-operation and alliance if political opportunity structures open the space for both groups to participate and put forward their claims.

The gender-ethnic debate transcends the Spanish feminist movement in several ways. One key question that emerges is whether conceptual clarification points at

injustices and inequalities or helps reinforce them (Stolz, 2004). This was a recurrent theme during the interviews, where both majority and minority respondents moved between empowering and victimising positions, from feeling empowered to feeling 'silenced' by the perceived lack of real opportunities to express their voice.

On the other hand, some majority women talking about minority women, showed sympathy and understanding for the unequal position of migrant/minority women in Spanish society, and they discussed additional forms of support these women might need to improve their overall condition. However, this type of support seemed to be influenced by an ethnocentric feminist stand, overlooking the solutions that some minority women's organisations or groups would have. Several minority women respondents repeatedly said they were willing to be included in the broader feminist discourse on a more consistent and equal basis (author's field notes, Madrid and Barcelona, 2007).

The recognition and framing of minority women's issues needs to be initiated and moved forward by ethnic minority women's organisations themselves, and could profit from more joint efforts by ethnic minority and majority women's actors. This is also necessary in order to compensate for lack of attention to minority women's needs by various male dominated migrant movements.

6.4 The Case of United Kingdom

6.4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how different actors within the contemporary UK women's movement position themselves in relation to other movement actors, and the implications such positioning may have for building alliances and acting cooperatively. It also presents empirical examples of formal networking, co-operation and alliances between ethnic majority and minority organisations in the women's movement, thus illustrating how problem representations may be strategically shared by different movement actors. The chapter is based on empirical evidence from different types of text: interview transcripts, organisational documents, and academic publications (see Chapter 5).

The diminished 'polarization between white feminism and a black women's movement' observed by Lovenduski and Randall (1993: 84) at the start of the 1990s remains a fair description of today's women's movement, but there are still problem representations that reflect disunity between white and black women. Meanwhile other problem representations continue to emphasise discord between women from different ethnic minority backgrounds. Furthermore, other differences between women which cut across the majority/minority distinction have taken on a new significance.

A note on terminology is required. We use the terms 'white', 'majority' or 'majoritised' to refer to privileged individuals and groups of European and North American origin. Usage of the term 'black' is more complex and has a contentious history. Our usage of the term 'black' follows the convention suggested by Mama (1984), and thus includes people of African and Asian descent. Although we use the term 'black women' interchangeably with 'ethnic minority women' or 'minoritised women', we prefer the last two terms as these are more inclusive of a range of groups of minority women (see also Chapter 3). Different actors, moreover, be they located within the women's movement, government or academia, often use different terms to denote ethnic minority women. Furthermore, most of our interviewees use the term 'Black and Minority Ethnic Women' (BME), and we have chosen to follow their usage.

The section immediately below presents some examples of how majority and minority women's movement actors have positioned themselves and others through movement discourse from the 1970s onwards. The sections following on from this discuss current problem representations, positioning and framing in relation to actual and possible co-operation and alliance between different movement actors.

6.4.2 Historical discourse and problem representations concerning majority-minority relations in the second wave UK women's movement: Some examples

In the 1970s, the notion of sisterhood was used both as an ideology and a strategy, that is, as both a means to unite women through an emphasis on common experiences, and a device to argue politically for the need to change society by promoting gender equality. From the outset, however, it was clear that different

groups of women found it difficult to 'unite in sisterhood', as increasingly their differences, rather than commonalities, were highlighted through what later came to be labelled as 'identity politics'.

The notion of a golden age of feminism is challenged by the simple fact that the women's movement was divided into those who adhered to a socialist analysis of women's oppression, those who subscribed to a radical feminism, and those who aligned themselves with a liberal feminist agenda (see Lovenduski and Randall, 1993: 65-67; see also Segal, 1987). Caine (1997: 267) describes conflicts between feminists in terms of 'the bitter differences and divisions of the 1970s'. Separate organising became a feature not only among white women adhering to different ideological standpoints, but also among black women, women with disabilities, Jewish women, lesbian women, and other groups (Harriss, 1989). The alleged golden age might actually have more to do with the radical *methods* employed by women's movement actors at the time. The idealisation of such methods was expressed by one of our interviewees who identified the direct action, campaigning, lobbying and protests of the early years as 'really cool radical stuff going on', while today 'all that stuff has almost died off apart from the lobbying and the advocacy work'. A possible connection was suggested by interviewees between the current system of funding for women's organisations and a focus on service delivery rather than on advocacy and direct action.

Some of the interviewees in our study were active in the women's movement from its beginnings and emphasised an early acknowledgment of difference: 'I don't think there is a homogenous picture ... because I know that some of the organisations I was involved with in London were actually very much [engaged with the realities of black women's lives] (...).' This interviewee, however, also stressed that although the women's movement from the beginning had a commitment to promoting equal opportunities and challenging discrimination, including racism, anti-racism was not necessarily embedded in movement practices. Importantly, although exceptions could be found in inner-city communities, on the whole the women's movement itself was not receptive to black women, despite its early solidarity with anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggles (Caine, 1997: 268): 'Actually it wasn't engaging with the realities

of black women's lives, also with the kind of practice that you needed to include women from diverse communities', said an interviewee.

Another interviewee who perceived the 1970s women's movement as dominated by white women identified two responses by black women like herself: '... black groups were arguing that actually our interests would be better put in black groups rather than in women's groups, but you try to do both. I think the women's movement did suffer as a consequence of not taking into account different perspectives. Even now you can accuse it of not taking into account [the interests of BME women]'. The claim that BME women's voices are not being heard by the majority women's movement continues to reverberate today. As one interviewee put it, unless she is present at meetings or policy forums, 'then the voices of the black, Asian and Chinese women are not heard. So when they form their policies it is basically about who is there forming those policies'. According to the interviewee, issues like forced marriage and female genital mutilation, which constitute different types of violence against women, 'will get picked up as long as there is a [BME woman] representative to highlight it'.

Another interviewee claimed that the 1970s women's movement was 'very involved with anti-racist struggles as well as supporting strikes, which was a big thing in the British women's movement'. Moreover, she was critical of what she labelled 'post-modern' representations of 1970s feminists as believing that 'all women thought alike or all black women thought alike, and that is nonsense. What I would say against post-modernism is that all women have things in common, all women experience violence from men ... Black women have got things in common, mainly racism and not being treated as equal by white society, [...], but that does not mean that all black women think the same or all women think the same'. Although differences were acknowledged, there was, thus, an attempted focus on commonalities which underpinned the overarching idealistic notion of a universal sisterhood. Despite an ideological commitment to difference and to anti-racism, however, the interviewee saw the women's movement at the time as dominated by white women: 'really in the early 1970s it was a white movement but a lot of those women were in groups like Women Against Racism and Fascism, any groups really. According to this interviewee, there were not many black feminists around in the 1970s, and 'the

grassroots black women coming into the movement came in with the 1980s and were very critical about how white the movement was'.

Although identity politics can to some extent be attributed to consciousness-raising and social mobilisation among different groups of women, the call for a universal sisterhood was quickly exposed as a fairly white-dominated affair. While white women's movement participants like some of our interviewees realised from the start that not all women were the same or shared the same experiences, in a drive to formulate a mobilising *politics* for women the movement as a whole failed to consider the experiences of black women and the impact racial and ethnic differences would have on the formulation of a women's movement politics. *Reclaim the night* marches in black and deprived neighbourhoods with banners calling for an increased presence of police to protect women were understandably not well received by black women who had experienced the racist and discriminatory practices of the police in their own communities. Importantly, black women felt a sense of solidarity with black men and refused to categorically define all men as oppressors of women (see Bryan et al., 1985).

Despite differences being acknowledged by white participants in the women's movement, a lack of reflection by white women on their own comparatively privileged positions put a strain on relations between majority and minority actors in the movement. Indeed, the notion that white women were to some extent complicit in the racism and discrimination suffered by black women was justifiably highlighted by black feminists (see, for example, Amos and Parmar, 1984). White women actors described the world as if issues of 'race' and ethnicity did not pertain to themselves, highlighting instead their own internal stratification by class, and the discrimination they faced by their white male peers (e.g. Barrett, 1980). Despite the presence of mixed black and white groups, including mixed editorial collectives behind *Spare Rib* and *Sheba Feminist Publishers*, the 1980s were also characterised by separation between the majoritised and minoritised parts of the women's movement.

Tensions between majoritised and minoritised positions in the women's movement at the time can be illustrated by the formative article 'Challenging imperial feminism' (Amos and Parmar, 1984). Their framing of the broader women's movement as

'white Eurocentric and Western' can be read as an angry response to white women's rejection of black women's claims of racism and discrimination not only within society but within the women's movement itself. In describing the women's movement as oppressive we refer to the experiences of black and working class women of the movement and the inability of feminist theory to speak to their experience in any meaningful way' (Amos and Parmar, 1984: 4). The likelihood or even possibility of universal sisterhood was thus dealt a blow by Amos and Parmar, who deemed it almost impossible for white women to move beyond a limited analysis: 'The historical and cultural traditions from which they write are qualitatively and in essence so different that their analysis, interpretations and conclusions are of necessity going to produce 'naive and perverse' accounts steeped in white chauvinism' (ibid.: 8).

There were of course reactions by white women to such critiques, and Sudbury (1998) has differentiated between four broad types of responses found among white British feminists in the 80s and early 90s. She associates the first approach with an article by Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh's (1985) in which they accepted that the women's movement could be accused of ethnocentrism, but (by Sudbury's interpretation) rejected the claim that white feminist thought in Britain had been racist (Barrett and McIntosh, 1985, 2005; Sudbury, 1998: 207). In a critical reply to Barrett and McIntosh, however, Bhavnani and Coulson (1985; also reprinted 2005) demonstrated that racism was a major feature of the state's immigration laws, and argued that as long as the claims-making and activism of the white women's movement ignored state racism, it was reasonable to state that white women had ignored racism and its impact on women's lived experience.⁴⁴

The second type of response among white feminists identified by Sudbury is that of liberal feminists and their alleged interpretation of black women's oppression as a matter of 'double oppression' arising from a subjugated status as both woman and black (Sudbury, 1998: 209). Racism was thus simply 'added on' as another factor. The importance of racism was thus accepted by liberal feminists, but the impact of race on all women (including white women) was still to be theorised and politicised.

⁴⁴ For further replies to Barrett and McIntosh, see *Feminist Review* 22 (Spring 1986) which includes critical articles by Mirza (1986), Lees (1986), Ramazanoglou (1986) and Kazi (1986).

Some of our interviewees highlighted the 'double discrimination' view as still problematic within the women's movement:

The third type of reaction identified by Sudbury is that of a radical feminist approach which accepts the importance of racism but seeks to deal with it on a personal level, through white women feminists undergoing 'consciousness-raising' in order to enable themselves to confront and deal with their own implication in racist practices (ibid.: 212). Although such an approach can be useful, especially in combination with other approaches,⁴⁵ it risks leaving the issue of racist practices by the state entirely by the wayside (see Bourne, 1983: 15). Lastly, the fourth type of response to black feminist critiques identified by Sudbury is that of 'an anti-racist socialist feminism which could link black and white women in a holistic struggle against racism, sexism and class exploitation' (ibid.: 213). Although Sudbury is optimistic about this type of response, she is pessimistic about its development and claims that 'barriers of fear, defensiveness and antagonism prevented the fundamental transformation of feminist theory implied in this agenda' (ibid.). This problem representation implies that barriers to co-operation and alliance building between black and white feminists are still to be overcome.

Sudbury remains pessimistic about the possibility of a universal sisterhood of minoritised and majoritised women, and concludes that the claim to sisterhood should be abandoned: 'In the context of a recent and painful history between black and white women in Britain, the goal of creating sisterhood between all women is at best unrealistic and at worst arrogant. [...] it is a goal promoted primarily by white feminists, which is not embraced with as much enthusiasm by black women' (ibid.: 218). But opinions and practices within the women's movement are divided: 'We cannot afford wholly to abandon a sense of sisterhood. Without it there can be no basis for feminist politics', argues Ramazanoglu (1989: 174). In the end, however, Sudbury and Ramazanoglu counsel that the way forward is through majority and minority women making connections and aspiring to form alliances where they share concerns.

⁴⁵ In FEMCIT we have used memory work on whiteness and privilege in order to reflect on our own positioning as researchers (see Chapter 3).

6.4.3 Together and apart: minority women's organisations as accepted and legitimated but not fully embraced

The political scientist Stein Rokkan formulated four barriers to political participation as a descriptive means of understanding the degree to which various interest groups are integrated in political life (Rokkan, 1970). The four barriers to participation are legitimation, incorporation, representation and executive power (Rokkan, in Christensen and Raaum, 1999). Importantly, the barriers do not necessarily appear one after the other in a linear fashion; rather, they can co-exist or be challenged at various points in time.

The legitimation barrier in terms of women's interests is generally overcome through the establishment of women's organisations and the acceptance of women's organisations as political actors. In the UK, white women's organisations can be said to have achieved political legitimation with the suffragette movement of the early 20th century as they were accepted as political actors (see Pugh, 2000) black women's organisations achieved legitimation through the founding of organisations during the 1970s.

Ethnic minority women's organisations in the UK have achieved legitimacy and been accepted as political actors in their own right, and to some extent their interests are now being incorporated into, or embraced by, mainstream or white-dominated women's organisations. For example, the *Fawcett Society* has recently (in 2005) started to engage with ethnic minority women's issues. An organisation like the *National Council of Women of Great Britain*, however, has only sporadically engaged with such issues, be it in the form of consultation responses or organisational resolutions.⁴⁶ Moreover, ethnic minority women have yet to achieve significant representation and executive power in white-dominated or mixed organisations (one notable exception in this regard is *Rights of Women*, which for the past seven years has been led by Ranjit Kaur who is of Asian minority ethnic background). We do not intend to advocate that black women's organisations should be subsumed within majority women's organisations; rather, we would argue that majority women's

⁴⁶ See <http://fp.ncwgb.f9.co.uk/index.html> (accessed October 22, 2008).

organisations should engage seriously with intersectional approaches (Crenshaw, 2006; Denis, 2008) by developing policies and organisational structures that account for intersections between different structures of inequality, such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and faith. In our fieldwork we have seen evidence that this is actually taking place in some women's movement organisations, including the Fawcett Society. Recent developments at the level of government also highlight a more general move towards intersectional approaches.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it could be argued that by taking on intersectional approaches, women's movement organisations would position themselves to build increased opportunities for alliance and co-operation across the majority/minority divide within the women's movement.

An acceptance by government and majority women's organisations of minority women's organisations as political actors in their own right is clearly manifest in the formal and informal alliances, networks, coalitions, and umbrella organisations that have developed between and among organisations representing ethnic majority and minority women in the UK. To a large extent, however, this acceptance seems to both presume and perpetuate the existence of *separate organisations* for ethnic majority and ethnic minority women. Furthermore, networks and alliances are largely based on and limited to specific issues. In the main, organisations that at the time of their founding represented either ethnic majority or ethnic minority women have not, it seems, taken significant steps to become more integrated entities. Among the organisations interviewed for this project, the Fawcett Society and the Refugee Women's Resource Project at Asylum Aid stand out as possible exceptions, as race and gender are currently being mainstreamed throughout these organisations. Again, our position is not that BME organisations should be integrated into majoritised organisations.

One interviewee pointed to traditional or mainstream organisations as experiencing difficulties in attracting ethnic minority women. Indeed, as Grant argues, 'most traditional organisations remain overwhelmingly white and middle-aged (or older)' and experience difficulties in relation to recruitment, renewal and relevance (Grant,

⁴⁷ The Equality and Human Rights Commission (established in 2007) has subsumed the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Disability Commission.

2002: 31). Some of the women's movement organisations coming out of the 1970s on the other hand, 'may be specific to a particular ethnic group or black specific, or certainly find it easier to attract a more diverse range of women', said the interviewee. On the whole, the women's movement can thus still be characterised by separate organisations that mainly cater to either majority or minority women. The claim that many black women's organisations are located within the anti-racist movement, rather than within the women's movement, further underscores the separate spheres of activism (Siddiqui, 2000: 84).

However, not all black women have rejected feminism, and some have chosen to unite under the concept of 'Black feminism' (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993: 82; Bryan et al., 1985: 175-176; Mirza, 1997). Our interviewees confirmed that the term 'feminism' is still contested among white and black women's movement actors. 'If you start talking about things like feminism for example, and understanding and calling ourselves a feminist organisation, that is perhaps where the tension is most [visible]'. Calling oneself or labelling an organisation as feminist is, thus, still a contentious issue in the women's movement. The respondent confirmed that it is easier to embrace the term 'womanist' even though she does not advocate one specific definition of feminism but sees it as a concept that allows for 'a diversity of opinions'. She claimed that the women's sector, particularly BME organisations, have not fully understood that the term 'feminism' is not a static, one-dimensional term but one that allows for complex and even contradictory opinions on issues such as prostitution. Another interviewee imparted that she was most comfortable with the term 'African feminist'. There can, thus, be a variety of reasons why women's movement actors do not want to label themselves as feminist, and the rejection of the term 'feminist' may cut across the ethnic minority-majority distinction.

There are important exceptions to the tendency to organise separately and these include umbrella organisations like the Women's Resource Centre and the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), which have been founded with the explicit aim of representing a variety of women's organisations. Although both can be said to have been predominantly white (on NAWO as a white organisation, see Sudbury, 1998: 210), their membership has developed to the extent that today it is fair to say that they represent both minority and majority women's organisations. In

terms of representation, moreover, many 'separate' organisations have board members or members of staff that represent various ethnic backgrounds.⁴⁸ In terms of executive power, however, ethnic minority women within predominantly ethnic majority organisations are often constrained by their under-representation (or non-representation) on management committees. Decision-making opportunities can first and foremost be found in the organisations established and maintained by ethnic minority women themselves, and secondly in majority and mixed organisations where ethnic minority women may be represented on the boards or management committees, sometimes in 'tokenist' ways.

In the next section we discuss some examples of alliance and co-operation within the UK women's movement with a particular emphasis on the policy area of violence against women. The emergence of discord linked to feminism, culture, religion and belief is discussed in the last section.

6.4.4 Towards a common ground: majority and minority women's movement actors come together in strategic co-operation and alliance

This section will focus on what we deem to be some significant events and processes that contribute to the building of common ground between various women's movement actors. These are specific campaigns and alliances, largely formed from the late 1980s, early 1990s, and onwards, where majority and minority women have strategically rallied together and thus paved the way for stronger and more long-lasting alliances in the future.

In general, the interviewed movement actors do not represent networking, co-operation and alliance-building between ethnic minority and ethnic majority women's organisations to be a problem. Rather, such interaction is represented as a 'natural fact'. For example, one interviewee stated that 'one thing the women's movement is quite good at is forming alliances and forming partnerships, and trying not to duplicate'. This was followed up by the question of whether there is a good division

⁴⁸ This information is hard to come by, as it is not readily available on organisational websites. When organisations are working within the area of violence against women, it might be a measure of protection of staff when organisations decide not to publish the names and profiles of members of management.

of labour between different groups, to which the respondent replied 'and a strong progression of coming together around a particular thing'.

This representation contrasts sharply with the historical discourse examined above, which highlighted the tension, if not outright hostility, between white and black women's movement actors in the 1980s. Several factors can be pulled together in an attempt to explain this development. Crucially, British society is not the same today as it was in the 70s and 80s. In 2007, ten per cent of the UK's population were from an ethnic minority background⁴⁹; this contrasts with just 2.5 per cent in 1971⁵⁰. In other words, ethnic diversity has become a fact of life, and no serious organisation, be it in the voluntary, public or private sector, can avoid engaging in the development of non-discriminatory practices towards immigrant and minoritised groups and individuals. In this regard it could be argued that societal changes have prompted changes in the way women's organisations operate.

Although identity politics continues to be salient for many individuals and organisations, there seems to be a willingness among women's movement actors to look beyond this in an attempt to strengthen the mobilisation of collective social protest and achieve political impact. As we will argue below, such willingness is particularly visible in the broad policy area of violence against women. Another factor which may at one and the same time put on hold identity politics *and* strengthen divisions within the women's movement is that of the current contract culture in relation to voluntary sector funding. Most women's organisations are obliged to deal with the state and/or local councils in bids to achieve funding for service provision.⁵¹ As such, it might be strategically important to carve out a niche practice while at the same time developing and maintaining contact with competing organisations.

Against this backdrop, we want to suggest that majority and minority women's organisations have slowly but steadily been finding common ground in the area of violence against women and are increasingly interacting in networks and alliances

⁴⁹ 'Diversity and different experiences in the UK', www.statistics.gov.uk (accessed August 27, 2008).

⁵⁰ 'People and Migration', www.statistics.gov.uk (accessed August 27, 2008).

⁵¹ For a report on funding issues in relation to the women's sector, see WRC 2006.

with the aim of maximising policy impact. Below we present and discuss some examples that illustrate the establishment of such common ground.

The first example of a joint political campaign, established in the 1990s, involves an alliance between Southall Black Sisters and Justice for Women. The campaign sought to redress the injustice meted out to women who kill men who have been violently abusing them. The second example is the campaign by minority and majority women's organisations to abolish the 'no recourse to public funds' rule for immigrants subject to the two-year rule in cases where women experience violence within their marriages. Following lobbying efforts by Southall Black Sisters and other women's organisations, in 1999 and 2002 the government made concessions to the immigration law which allowed victims of domestic violence with insecure immigration status (those subject to the two-year rule) the right to remain in the UK. These examples demonstrate the willingness and capability of ethnic majority and minority women's organisations to join forces in an attempt to influence the political agenda and formulate new policy ideas in the area of violence against women. These are not mere 'paper campaigns' but alliances that work hard, through lobbying and high-profile events, to gather political support for their causes.

A third example of black and white women working side by side is the Women Against Rape (WAR) group formed in 1976, and the Black Women's Rape Project (BWRAP) formed in 1991. At the Women's Centre, black and white women have worked closely together within and across these separate organisations for rape victims, and also within and across organisations such as Housewives in Dialogue, Black Women for Wages for Housework, and lesbian, prostitution and peace organisations (Sudbury, 1998: 215). This example illustrates, according to Sudbury, a 'pragmatic approach to creating coalitions between black women and white feminists' which is based on white women's acceptance of black women's autonomy and a broad and international conception of women's struggles (ibid.: 216-217).

A fourth example is the high profile, broad-ranging and unprecedented national coalition of organisations and individuals in the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW; founded 2005). This coalition includes feminist movement

actors, women's movement actors, and other voluntary organisations and committed individuals.⁵²

These examples of alliance and co-operation illustrate the pragmatic and strategic ways in which ethnic majority and minority women's organisations in the UK join forces. All are concerned, in one way or another, with the issue of violence against women.⁵³ Indeed, the policy area of violence against women seems to stand out as *the* arena where majority and minority women's organisations manage to consolidate their interests and argue with a collective voice, in particular through the high-profile and influential End Violence Against Women Campaign.

The first two campaigns (in support of women who kill their abusers and those who are trapped by the 'no recourse to public funds' legislation) provide examples of closely focused actions which highlight the plight of a relatively small number of women.⁵⁴ The fourth example (EVAW) has a much broader remit and seeks to combat domestic violence, female genital mutilation, 'honour crimes' and forced marriage, rape and sexual violence, stalking, trafficking and prostitution (Coy et al., 2008; End Violence Against Women, 2007). Alliance members have agreed to a broad definition of violence against women, and have endorsed the demand that 'violence against women be understood as a cause and consequence of women's inequality'.⁵⁵ The broad alliance of EVAW member organisations has thus rejected a representation of forced marriage and female genital mutilation as cultural or religious practices associated with particular groups. Instead, such practices are represented as related to gender inequality and the subordination of women by men, thus signalling that they form part of a more universal pattern of violence against women.

⁵² For the full list of coalition members see http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/pages/about_us.html accessed July 15, 2008.

⁵³ A campaign issue not related to VAW is that of the gender pay gap, or supporting equal pay for women and men. A high-profile alliance on equal pay is that between the Fawcett Society, several trade unions, anti-poverty organisations and One Parent Families/Gingerbread (for a joint campaign letter by these organisations, see Katherine Rake et al., 'Time for bold action on equal pay', *The Guardian* June 10, 2008). This specific campaign only includes one women's organisation and thus does not constitute an example of collaboration between different organisations within the women's movement.

⁵⁴ The number of women who fall victim to the 'no recourse' rule in the UK has been estimated at 600 per year (Amnesty International UK and Southall Black Sisters 2008).

⁵⁵ http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/pages/about_us.html Accessed July 15, 2008.

There are also examples of significant events and processes where black and white women have been working together on issues that are not directly or explicitly related to violence against women. One example is the organisation *Women Against Fundamentalism* (WAF), which Southall Black Sisters was instrumental in forming in May 1989 (Connolly, 1991). WAF is dedicated to campaigning against any type of religious fundamentalism, or any '*mobilization of religious affiliation for political ends*' (ibid.: 69). A particular incident, the religious *fatwa* against the novelist Salman Rushdie, spurred the establishment of WAF. WAF quickly achieved an anti-Islamic image (ibid.: 74), but insisted it was neither anti-religious nor interested only in Islamic fundamentalism. Religious observance was thus defined as a matter of personal choice, and it was also acknowledged that 'religion can play a progressive, political role' (WAF, 1996: 1). WAF highlighted the features of religion that were oppressive to women, and argued that feminist politics should be informed by secularism and not by religion (see Siddiqui, 1991). The organisation managed to mobilise a variety of women's movement actors, including both black and white women.

The last example we will present of a collective alliance of women's movement actors is that of the *Why Women?* campaign led by the Women's Resource Centre. This current campaign is focused on the alleged funding crisis facing the women's voluntary and community sector, and seeks to gain the attention of policy - and decision-makers in an effort to highlight the issue and to lobby for increased funding for women's sector organisations. The WRC is in itself an umbrella organisation encompassing both majority and minority feminist and women's movement actors, and the *Why Women?* campaign has sought and gained independent support from all these types of actors.⁵⁶

In addition to such campaigns and alliances around particular issues, there are well-established (national) umbrella organisations counting both majority and minority women's organisations among their members. One such organisation is the above-

⁵⁶ For a full list of organisations supporting the Why Women? Campaign, see <http://www.whywomen.org.uk/supporterslist.htm> (accessed July 15, 2008). The list of WRC's member organisations can be found at http://www.wrc.org.uk/membership/members_listing/default.aspx.

mentioned Women's Resource Centre (WRC), which in 2008 counts a total of 186 organisations among its members (www.wrc.org.uk; listed members counted 15/07/2008). The WRC provides training, resources and support for its member organisations, in addition to campaigning and lobbying on various issues including financial resources for the women's sector and 'no recourse to public funds' for immigrant women in violent marriages.⁵⁷ Another example is the previously mentioned National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), an umbrella organisation with 103 members (www.nawo.org.uk; listed members counted 15/07/2008) that advocates 'women's voices' at the levels of national, European and international politics, and promotes gender mainstreaming in government policies and their implementation.⁵⁸

The existence of formal alliances and coalitions, in the form of both temporary campaigns and more permanent organisations, strongly indicates that minoritised women's organisations have been accepted as legitimate political actors in their own right by majority women's groups. While the interests forwarded by minoritised women's organisations might have been overlooked or resisted throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, today it is justified to say that they have been accepted, although perhaps not fully embraced, by the majoritised feminist movement. 'Accepted' is here taken to mean that ethnic minority women's organisations are viewed as both legitimate and valued actors in the women's sector, as they are taken to represent the (varied) interests of ethnic minority women and provide viewpoints and services that reflect the needs of ethnic minority women. We would argue, however, that ethnic minority women's interests will not be sufficiently embraced until intersectional approaches to gender, race, class and other structures of inequality have been adopted and mainstreamed by white women's organisations. By 'sufficiently embraced' we mean that at least gender and race/ethnicity should be integrated in the concerns and politics of women's organisations.

⁵⁷ See http://www.wrc.org.uk/membership/members_listing/default.aspx for a full list of members of the Women's Resource Centre.

⁵⁸ For a full list of NAWO's member organisations, see <http://www.nawo.org.uk/Member> (accessed July 15, 2008).

One organisation which has started to mainstream an intersectional approach to inequalities experienced by women is the Fawcett Society. Their report 'Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK', published in February 2005 (Fawcett, 2005a), marks the start of a serious engagement by a mainstream women's organisation with the structural inequalities experienced by black and ethnic minority women in the UK. Following on from the report, in 2007, Fawcett initiated its three-year 'Seeing Double' project (see www.fawcettsociety.org.uk). 'Seeing Double' follows three streams of work that Fawcett engages in: Power, Money and Justice, and aims 'to make ethnic minority women's persistent disadvantage visible to policymakers' (ibid.) The project also includes mainstreaming work on race equality within the organisation itself. We would like to suggest that Fawcett's 'Seeing Double' project is a highly significant event, and perhaps even a turning point, both in symbolic and in real terms. Symbolically, it signals that a mainstream and previously white-dominated feminist women's organisation has taken on board criticism which has been voiced by black feminists and black women's movement actors for more than 25 years. In real terms, it actually changes Fawcett itself as it broadens its focus and gives legitimacy to intersectional approaches to inequality. In addition, Fawcett may also be able to effect political change through its evidence-based advocacy work and lobbying on the persistent inequalities experienced by ethnic minority women.

Furthermore, we would like to suggest that Fawcett's 'Seeing Double' project denotes that minoritised women's organisations and their representatives have been assigned a status as 'authentic insiders' (Narayan, 1997: 142). According to a Fawcett publication, 'Seeing Double' aims to enhance the capacity of ethnic minority women's organisations to influence policy, and to 'increase the voice of ethnic minority women so that debates that are about them learn from their perspectives and experiences' (Moosa, 2008: 3). What Fawcett has done is to provide resources and a platform from which ethnic minority women can speak directly and indirectly to the audience that normally listens to Fawcett. Narayan suggests that the 'authentic insider' role can be a positive one, in as much as it is inhabited *strategically*, rather than as a reified and fixed discursive identity (Narayan, 1997: 155).

6.4.5 Current problem representations of co-operation and alliance in the women's movement

In this section we are taking a closer look at how women's movement actors present the issue of co-operation and alliance as problematic along various dimensions. The topics addressed include women's movement actors' framing of men as potential allies (or not), the representation and framing of white and black women's organisations and issues, and the representation and framing of disagreements among ethnic minority women's organisations in relation to forced marriage. Moreover, the section includes a discussion of religion as a site of disagreement, conflict and contestation for the women's movement.

6.4.6 Framing of men as anti-female or pro-feminist

The disparity between radical and other feminists in the 'second wave' women's movement (see Segal, 1987) on their view of men's roles still exists, but it is not as ideological or divisive as it used to be in the 70s and 80s. One of the interviewees pointed out that her organisation includes both black and white women participants, but the organisation is exclusively for women: 'We wanted to keep the men out, they do not understand violence against women, very few men do and if they do it is because they have been educated by women'. She continued: 'Some men are able to learn, but on the whole they do not understand what it is like to live in the world as a woman, to be afraid to walk down the street at night'. Where women's organisations adhere to this view, there is little scope for establishing alliances with men.

Most of the interviewed organisations, however, presented a more positive framing of men. Both self-identified socialist and liberal feminists came forward with the view that men can be potential allies in the feminist cause. One interviewee acknowledged that a focus on women might have been politically necessary in the 1970s. However, she saw limits to how far the gender equality agenda can proceed without having men on board. According to this interviewee, men have a role to play in the feminist movement:

(...) but now I think what is very important is that people who feel part of the political women's movement recognise that in the last 30 years the dramatic

changes in women's rights have not been met by dramatic changes in men's lives and we cannot achieve equality separately from men.'

Describing her own organisation as feminist and interested in reaching both women and men, she also identified other organisations in the women's movement as feminist but focusing exclusively on women. An exclusive focus on women is thus partly presented to be a problem in that it does not secure men's participation in advancing a feminist agenda. The inclusion of men may encourage their participation in the gender equality project and thereby enhance the situation of women. This last perspective proposes that it is fruitful to engage with men when they are seen to be promoting politics that support feminism and gender equality. One organisation, the Fawcett Society, has recently called publicly for men to be part of a broad-based feminist movement.⁵⁹

6.4.7 Framing of white and black women's organisations and issues

Black women's voice and representation is still an important issue in the women's movement, and different movement actors represent different views and practices in relation to the question of who can speak with a legitimate voice for whose interests. Some organisations claim that their voice is more authentic and legitimate than others, because they represent ethnic minority women's experiences. The direct representation of their experience is what gives legitimacy to the engagement of these organisations in black women's issues. One of the interviewees, for example, defined her own organisation and its work on ethnic minority women's issues as differently motivated to other (white) organisations. While her organisation has engaged in such issues due to women members' own experiences, other organisations are perceived as being engaged in ethnic minority issues due to 'political correctness' or 'cynical political thinking'. Through this type of framing, a division is, thus, created between those organisations that are seen to have a legitimate, authentic and deep interest in ethnic minority women's issues, and those organisations that are seen to have jumped on the political bandwagon in an attempt to gain credibility whilst not actually being deeply engaged with the issues per se.

⁵⁹ Katherine Rake, 'The new mass women's lobby must include men', *The Guardian* February 2, 2006.

Reflecting on the work of her own organisation on BME women, the interviewee stated that:

'what we have done is also given prominence to those kinds of issues like forced marriage, asylum seeking women and immigration [...]. But that has not been a cynical change of political thinking, because this is like political correctness, 'we need to now look at black women because we haven't'; ... it is not like that. What has happened is [that] the people involved in the organisation and the management committee has changed over that time, and they have brought their own perspectives as women would do.'

Again, within this type of framing some actors are clearly seen as more legitimate than others, and a focus on BME women is seen as a rather exclusive concern for a particular type of organisation, namely those that represent ethnic minority women directly through their membership.

Other feminist voices, including ethnic minority women, would disagree with the epistemological position embodied in this view. Indeed, as shown earlier in this chapter, much of the criticism of the women's movement by black feminists has been concerned with the alleged lack of engagement with the intersectional structures of race, gender and class by white feminists. One of the interviewees who supported this perspective stated that although some ethnic minority women's organisations are being listened to by the state, they are not necessarily being listened to by white women's movement organisations. She claimed that black women's voices have had little influence on the practice of many white-dominated organisations: 'if you look at [...] most of the white women's organisations, they are not willing to look at the issues. They simply pass them on to BME women's organisations'. She further emphasised that:

'feminism is for all women, regardless of their race or class or even religion. But I think white feminists generally are not really taking that fully on board, not in the methods of work. For example the levels of racism in white refuges. I know that it isn't the fault of those who run the refuges, it is not about fault, it is about what is mobilised for change, how we mobilise for change.'

Similar concerns about the lack of attention on the part of white women to the interests of ethnic minority women were voiced by other interviewees as well. She also pointed to the 'no recourse to public funds' campaign as an issue that demonstrates 'considerable solidarity' between white and black women's

organisations as it is backed by many women's organisations. In this type of framing, it is viewed as a problem that white women's organisations do not engage with BME women's interests, but the possibility of feminist sisterhood among women, across racial, class or religious boundaries, is kept open.

However, some women might be more likely to become 'sisters' than others, while some alliances are more precarious than others. An explicit recognition of the intersection of race, gender and class may be the platform that makes alliance more likely:

'I would say that radical feminists are probably less worried about immigration, whereas socialist feminists are more in support of the kind of demands that we are making. Because there is a better kind of understanding of the dynamics of race and gender there. But I think the kind of groups that we felt were not necessarily feminist, but we also felt let down by some that are part of a wider women's movement, who are not necessarily always feminists but also ... developed services.... And some of them are white women who [...] take on kind of a very patronising approach to minority women, or just downright racist. So ... alliances can sometimes feel very kind of temporary, but sometimes they can be kind of well founded. But it depends on the issue in many cases.'

This interviewee agreed, however, with the observation of an increased level of solidarity and support from white women's organisations:

'Yes, I think it is increasing. I think with some women's groups and not others. There is still – there is the patronising [attitude] in the more conservative women's groups who are not, you know, that we have problems with. And a lot of them will be mainstream groups, but I do think there is obviously a section that is supportive and are increasingly supportive.'

Thus this interviewee frames it as a responsibility also on the part of ethnic minority women's organisations to show leadership and take initiatives in building connections with other movement actors: 'Of course we have less power and less say and may not be listened to, but it is also about us organising and being ... vociferous and arguing our point and demanding leadership and support'.

An interesting academic question is whether only organisations that have been primarily representing white women should actively seek the participation of ethnic minority women and engage in issues relevant to ethnic minority women, or whether

organisations that have primarily represented black women should encourage the participation of white women. When a majority ethnic interviewee was asked why she did not get involved in a black women's organisation, she replied 'because they are a black organisation, they don't have white women'. The same interviewee, however, was involved in a mixed organisation that represented both majority and minority women. On the other hand, a minority ethnic interviewee recounted how she was advised against becoming engaged in an organisation that was perceived by some ethnic minority women as white. These experiences and problem-representations demonstrate how organisations are perceived as either majority women's organisations, minority women's organisations, or mixed organisations that are open to majoritised and minoritised women.

One of the traditionally white women's organisations that might have been referred to indirectly by one of the interviewees above has in recent years managed to develop a more diverse membership base. According to an interviewee, the organisation was perceived as 'not just a white woman's but white, able-bodied, middle-class....', but its current membership reflects a more diverse society. Lately it has taken on political issues perceived to be more relevant to BME women, including their lack of political representation. According to one representative, the organisation does not claim to have had a long-standing interest in BME women: 'I think we would be quite honest about the fact that until relatively recently [we] have not in any particularly co-ordinated way addressed the specific needs of black and minority ethnic women'. The factor she singled out as most important for the organisation's recent evidence gathering and advocacy work related to BME women was a change in leadership, with a new leader having been able to change the focus of the organisation. The addressing of multiple identities in relation to discrimination and oppression, and the intersections of structures like race, gender and class and their effect on policy development was perceived as something the new leader has taken on. Contrary to the perception that it is political expediency that has moved the organisation to take on ethnic minority women's interests, the two interviewees from this organisation both express a strong, although recent, organisational commitment to women's diverse interests.

According to this framing, the organisation took advantage of both the alleged absence of other players and the political room that this presented. Clearly there are other organisations in the UK women's movement that act on a national level to promote the interests of ethnic minority women (e.g., FORWARD, Imkaan, and Southall Black Sisters), but these might have been perceived to be mostly engaged in specific issues such as violence against women, and not in broader issues involving labour market participation, education, political engagement and so on that are also relevant to the lives of ethnic minority women. This might explain the framing of a 'gap' and an opportunity for the organisation to take on such broader issues. In this framing, it is seen as legitimate for any organisation, whether it directly represents BME women or not, to engage in discussing and making visible issues that concern ethnic minority women.

6.4.8 Problem representations of disagreements among ethnic minority women's organisations

Much attention has been paid in this chapter to alliances (and the lack of alliances) between ethnic majority and minority women in the women's movement. In this section, however, the focus is on different problem representations forwarded by ethnic minority women's organisations in relation to a specific issue, that of forced marriage. No category of women, however it is constructed, could be said to represent all the views and interests of women within that category, and all 'ethnic minority women' do not share the same interests and views. The issue of prostitution, for example, has divided white feminists. However, as our study is designed with a focus on violence against women (including domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour killings and female genital mutilation) and racism and discrimination in relation to violence against women issues, disagreements among white feminists have not emerged as central to our analysis (prostitution, and also human trafficking, remain outside the remit of our analysis although it can be argued that these are also violence against women issues). The focus in this section is, thus, on disunity among minoritised women's organisations.

The issue of forced marriage and whether or not its commission should be criminalised has recently been high on the political agenda in the UK. The proposal to criminalise the practice has, however, been highly contested among ethnic

minority women's organisations, while ethnic majority women's organisations seem to have been largely silent on the issue, with exceptions including Fawcett and Women's Aid.⁶⁰ Disagreements have not been concerned with the protection of potential or actual victims of forced marriage. The organisations are united in supporting the government's Forced Marriage Unit, FMU, (established in January 2005 as a joint unit between the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and in calling for government funding of service provision such as help-lines and refuges for victims. The disagreements have been related to the *political framing* of the issue of forced marriage, or how the issue of forced marriage is represented as a problem by different actors within the women's movement.

The recent proposal to criminalise the commission of a forced marriage originated in the government consultation entitled 'Forced marriage: A wrong not a right' (Home Office, 2005). Some ethnic minority women's organisations advocated that forced marriage should become an explicitly criminal offence in the law. They argued that such a criminalisation would 'send a strong message' to possible and actual perpetrators.

Other ethnic minority women's organisations argued vehemently against criminalisation, claiming that criminalisation would not work, partly because victims are not likely to prosecute their own parents: 'We do not think that young women would be keen to take their parents to court and see them in prison. What they do want is to escape violence', said one interviewee. Furthermore, forced marriage is already unlawful (through existing legal mechanisms), and a separate law on forced marriage, outside a more general legal framework of violence against women, was seen as singling out particular ethnic minority communities. Furthermore, said the same interviewee, 'in the end [a] law will not be effective and then relying on stereotypes it will serve only to demonise whole communities further'. This type of problem representation is, however, not accepted by all those who opposed criminalisation:

'For us there were some groups who opposed it [...] on the grounds that it would demonise communities. That is not an argument that we would use,

⁶⁰ For a full list of respondents to the government consultation on the criminalisation of forced marriage, see Home Office 2006: 46-48.

primarily because we have always talked about domestic violence and we have always been accused of demonising communities by the anti-racist movement and creating a backlash and being told not to wash our dirty linen in public and so forth.'

After its consultation round, the government shelved the proposal to criminalise forced marriage. Later developments include the private members bill proposed by Lord Lester for a Civil Protection Act on forced marriage (Lord Hansard, 2007).⁶¹ This bill was drafted in close consultation with Southall Black Sisters. Again, ethnic minority women's organisations were not united in their response to the proposed Civil Protection Act. Imkaan, the umbrella organisation for BME women's refuges, was one of the dissenting organisations both in relation to the criminalisation of forced marriage and the civil protection law. Imkaan consulted with its own refuges, and these responded that a law would not be very useful (Imkaan, 2005). Instead, they argued for more places of safety and alternative routes to safety through increased funding and resources for women's refuges that deal with victims of forced marriage (see also Wilson, 2007).

Another difference in the framing of the problem of forced marriage is found between those who argue that the practice is patriarchal and rooted in gender inequality, and those who argue that it is a cultural problem. A representative of one of the organisations that campaigned against criminalisation emphasised that the disagreements did not express 'a split' between the different organisations, but rather 'a very subtle difference', as they are all in agreement on the overall goal of protecting victims of forced marriage. The organisation has built alliances with other black minority women's groups that work on the issue of forced marriage.

'I mean that is where the kind of solid base support is. But then we have differences with some of them. I mean with [organisation x], for instance, we have a difference around the whole approach, because ... they don't recognise patriarchy [...]. There isn't an acknowledgment of power and gender inequalities and structural inequalities. There is a kind of overt racism and it is mainly, they would argue, that the causes of honour-based violence are rooted in culture rather than patriarchy. And our argument is that it is rooted in patriarchy and the culture can be used for an excuse for control of women. That is our analysis whereas not all women's groups have that analysis and that is where the differences come in.'

⁶¹ See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200607/ldhansrd/index/070613.html#contents>

The quote illustrates the framing of forced marriage as either a form of gender-based violence or as a cultural problem, which in turn frames some organisations as feminist and others as non-feminist.

This framing is also linked to a broader strategy of many women's organisations, including the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW), which seeks to make the government address the issues of forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation within a national strategy on violence against women. Indeed, at the national level, current government websites illustrate the government's non-responsive attitude towards the proposal to integrate issues of forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation into a broader strategy on violence against women. Again, the decision to list these organisations frames forced marriage as an issue which is of exclusive concern to ethnic minorities, and not as part of a broader societal problem of violence against women. One of the interviewees highlighted the limitations of the current governmental approach to violence against women:

'... historically domestic violence was framed in a rather limited way, it didn't recognise the range of abuses that women experience [...]. What we have found is that the narrow focus on domestic violence excludes other forms of harm against women [...] The wider [UN] definition of violence against women is absolutely essential.⁶² So if you think about things like forced marriages and honour crimes and FGM, often they are actually not recognised within that theoretical framework by policy makers, by agencies. And actually, unfortunately, by some women's groups as well.'

These women's groups are seen to include both white women's organisations and 'ethnic minority women's groups who have just not engaged with the politics of the sector, who have recently emerged ...'

⁶² For the UN definition of violence against women, see UN 1993.

A representative of another organisation that applies the UN definition of violence against women in its work emphasised that all types of violence against women should be framed as originating in gender inequality and not as related to specific cultures or groups of people:

'[We must] recognise that violence against women occurs universally, across cultures, across religion and ethnicity, class, and [...] whilst it occurs universally there are specific forms or specific manifestations that do affect specific women or specific groups of women. But what we are talking about is placing that in the context of violence against women and not taking that out of the context and treating it as an individual [and] isolated situation, particularly with BME women, if you are thinking about black and ethnic women it is too easy to fall into the trap of using cultural analysis or focussing on race and religion, when actually what you are talking about is violence and it is gender, and it is gender driven. In the same way that domestic violence in a majority community is driven by all those notions of patriarchy and control and it is the same issue And the problem that we have had is trying to get government, and also the women's sector as well, to recognise that it is an issue of violence against women, it is an issue of gender. And that it is not about race or culture ...'

The problem representation forwarded by this organisation includes a need to lobby the women's movement as well as the government, for example on the issue of forced marriage:

'There was a lot of resistance, or significant resistance, in the women's sector to be looking at forced marriage as a form of violence against women. It was seen as something that only happens to certain women in certain communities and it was looked at in that way. But what we were arguing or trying to persuade women's organisations to do was to take their experience of domestic violence and to apply that, because domestic violence is a form of violence against women, in the same way that forced marriage is. So organisations have 30 years of history of domestic violence and you need to use the domestic violence experience in terms of forced marriage.'

Another interviewee who described the women's sector as 'divided' on the issue of criminalisation of forced marriage, frames the lack of unity as a problem for the sector vis-à-vis the government: In this view it is framed as a problem that not all ethnic minority women's organisations agree. Other interviewees, however, suggested that this was not a problem in so far as organisations agreed on the need for service provision for victims, and that the government itself is more interested in providing effective services than in discussing the political framing of the issue of forced marriage. In other words, it might only be a problem for the women's sector

itself that it is divided on whether to frame forced marriage as a problem rooted in patriarchy or in culture, and in framing it as part of a broader violence against women agenda or as a stand-alone issue.

6.4.9 Religion as a site of disagreement, conflict and contestation for the women's movement

Women's place within religious belief and practice has been a contested issue for feminists since the early beginnings of the 'second wave' women's movement, and, indeed, since the 'first wave' women's movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (see Morgan, 2002). Far from being alienated from the women's movement, religious women have identified with and sought to influence the women's movement in directions compatible with their faith. Some feminists have rejected religion outright, while others have started a process of reinterpreting their religious faith in an attempt to reconcile it with their feminist beliefs. Such reinterpretations have taken place across a variety of religious beliefs, including Christianity and Islam (e.g. Daly, 1994; Mernissi, 1991; Wadud, 1999). In the context of British feminism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam have also been scrutinised by religious and non-religious women alike, and the question of whether religious belief can co-exist with feminist values has been vigorously debated

Today, Christian, Muslim and Jewish feminists, together with feminists from other religious faiths, continue to grapple with questions of faith and gender justice, but Islam has become singled out as the most contested religion of the day due to links between the Islamic faith and religious extremism. Moreover, Islam has become a symbol of women's oppression. As argued above, it is likely that increased diversity, or the development of an increasingly multicultural society, has had an impact on the willingness of the women's movement to take on intersectional perspectives on gender, race, and class. Rather than dismissing or ignoring the voices of religious women as irrelevant or non-conducive to feminism, the women's movement needs to engage with religious women and build alliances with feminist religious women. One example of such engagement is that of the Women's National Commission which has been instrumental in developing and supporting the creation of the *Muslim Women's Network* in 2002 (see below). Moreover, the women's movement needs to voice a clear demand to be heard when the government engages with women's faith

groups, and continue to demand the protection of established women's rights from erosion caused by pressure from conservative religious groups.⁶³ On some issues, faith-based organisations may actually erode or undermine gender equality and women's rights 'by creating pockets in society where 'religious freedoms' justify the marginalisation of women' (Ghodsee, 2007).

Two women's organisations that have voiced public concern about the government's engagement of faith groups through closed forums are Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism. In a submission to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, these two organisations are critical of what they frame as the government's 'construction of faith communities' and its closed consultations with Muslim women on 'issues such as violence against women, immigration difficulties, community pressures, racism and the lack of political presentation – none of which are specific to Muslim women only' (WAF, 2007: 36).

Although largely silent on the issue of religious faith and women's rights, the women's movement is, nevertheless, caught up in the current political climate in which the UK government has taken a new-found interest in Muslim women. Several of our interviewees claimed that this interest has been on the rise since the terrorist attacks in London in July 2005, and perceived it as problematic that the government has made a link between the attacks and its dialogue with Muslim women. This meeting followed a previous consultation process involving Muslim women around the country organised by the government funded *Muslim Women's Network* and *the Women's National Commission* which aimed to 'responsibly record the authentic views of women from the Muslim community' and feed these views into a report (MWN, 2006: 65). The consultation agenda was, thus, initially open to the issues that Muslim women themselves would put forward. However, due to government pressure, some details in the final consultation report were censored and removed. These examples are illustrative of the government's use of a selection of Muslim women as 'authentic insiders' (Narayan, 1997) who are seen as providing

⁶³ In 2008, women's organisations mobilised outside the UK Parliament to protest against proposed changes in abortion laws.

the government with representative and legitimate views from a community coherently defined as 'the Muslim community'.

Such consultation processes have generated much debate. They have given women who are rarely heard in the public domain an opportunity to express their voices, and they have allowed women to come forward with different and contrasting viewpoints. The importance of listening to women, and not only to male community leaders, was highlighted by many participants in the consultation process led by the Muslim Women's Network and the Women's National Commission (MWN, 2006).

Several of the participants in our research expressed critical attitudes towards the engagement of religious groups in political dialogue. They framed it as a problem that the government is choosing to listen to religious groups, and argued that instead it should listen to secular groups like themselves. A problem representation is thus created where religious groups are constructed as being located outside the women's movement and in opposition to the interests of feminist women. For example, one interviewee claimed that there is a 'whole movement towards a faith agenda'. She saw this agenda as highly problematic, and perceived the government to be consulting community and faith leaders, rather than ethnic minority women's organisation, due to an alleged focus on 'the faith agenda'. Both her organisation and other ethnic minority women's groups can be said to be engaged in a battle for legitimacy and representation in terms of whose voices should be heard. Her concerns were echoed by several other interviewees who all claimed that race and faith issues are much higher on the political agenda today than are gender issues, and who are concerned that women are the losers when it comes to political change.

Concerns about the increasing role of religion in the public domain, and specifically the link between religion and the rights and status of women, were voiced by both ethnic majority and minority women in our research. A white interviewee, for example, stated that she is 'extremely worried by the possible clash between no discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief and women's equality. I am extremely concerned about that'. This interviewee also emphasised that women's individual faith is not a problem; rather, conflicts arise when 'faith practices and rules

followed by men or women [...] interfere with women's access to their human rights, their freedoms and their equality [...]. We are always against it [...].'

While on the one hand there are conflicts between women's organisations and faith groups on issues such as sexuality, abortion, and child adoption, there are also conflicts within women's organisations that draw on a multi-faith membership. Issues like abortion and prostitution are, thus, contentious issues within women's movement organisations, be they national or international. 'Sexual reproductive rights and health and abortion, that will come and haunt us. There is no doubt about that. We are seeing a growing conservatism here, I think we will see coalitions of religious groups here, we have a revival of the Catholic church, partly because of migration [...]'. Echoing calls from WAF and SBS, this interviewee also highlighted the need for women's organisations to become visible and engage directly with claims from faith groups:

'The women's organisations should be looking at this and saying [...] this is not about religion, it is not about faith, it is about belief, we should be lobbying the government saying this is about belief, therefore secular women, we, can be involved in this. We need to be involved.'

Above we described the framing of the issue of forced marriage as a dispute between those who adopt a feminist and gender-based perspective and those who adhere to a cultural view. This tension is also found in the framing of religious groups as anti-feminist or against the empowerment of women: 'We have really got to be supporting secular feminist anti-racist organisations, if we really want the liberal policy that is needed to tackle violence against women. Because these other groups [Muslim groups, faith groups, community groups] are not working in our interest. If you really want to empower women this is not what you should be doing', said one interviewee. According to this interviewee, the state has a new-found interest in consulting Muslim women due to terrorist events. 'This is all now about fighting extremism and terrorism. So there are vast amounts of money available, particularly for Muslim groups and initiatives around Muslim communities. So ... now everything has been redefined along religious lines and secularism is under threat and feminism is under threat, because a lot of the demands these groups make are very conservative'.

The category 'Muslim women' is thus not only a contested one but also a limited one that sets Muslim women apart from non-Muslim women, which in turn reinforces the perception of 'Muslim women' as a unified category of women who share the same interests. The interviewee further underlined the importance of listening to a plurality of voices:

'... we need to be looking at the heterogeneous nature of women's experiences across race, class, gender, and all those perceptions. And the emphasis on Muslim women itself, it sets them out as 'the other' and that in itself is problematic because there is a reinforcement that somehow they need to have different treatment to everyone else.'

Another interviewee thought that despite the government's consultation with Muslim women, such women are not being taken as seriously as male community leaders: 'Women ... remain very much on the margins, very much excluded from that process of determining what are the issues in their community, what needs to be raised and how that should be done. It is often not heard, or just doesn't seem important compared to somebody from the Muslim Council of Britain really saying what we need. So that is really frustrating'. Despite an alleged lack of serious government attention to women's voices, however, the interviewee remains sceptical about the engagement of any religious groups. In such problem representations, religion and women's rights are framed as non-compatible, and the notion that 'religion can play a progressive, political role' (WAF, 1996: 1) has been largely abandoned.

Some of the viewpoints expressed by participants in our research are echoed by Hannana Siddiqui of Southall Black Sisters. Siddiqui points to the lack of agreement among women's movement actors and between women's movement actors and other voluntary sector actors, and argues that there are 'key internal divisions' within the ethnic minority women's movement (Siddiqui, 2008: 49). She identifies it as a problem that faith-based women's groups and their calls for 'specific services and initiatives for Muslim women' are given political attention by the government (ibid.). Such initiatives are perceived to 'undermine the secular, feminist demands of ethnic minority women's groups that recognise common experiences between ethnic minority women across religious divides ...' (ibid.). According to Siddiqui, faith-based groups have not offered escape routes to victims of domestic violence, but have

argued for mediation and reconciliation which allegedly puts women at further risk. She frames it as problematic that the state 'continues to give priority to the views and interests of community leaders and/or faith-based organisations, some of which are led by women' (ibid.: 48). Secular ethnic minority women's groups, on the other hand, 'have an expertise and a long history of promoting the rights of minority women challenging gender-based violence' (ibid.). In this view, the solution to the perceived problem is that the state should first and foremost listen to secular ethnic minority women's groups, as these are more rightful bearers of what we might call 'authentic' ethnic minority women's voices. Furthermore, Siddiqui calls for '[a] united feminist ethnic minority women's movement' that builds alliances 'with white feminists as well as anti-racists and other social equality and human rights movements' (ibid.: 56), thus opening up for strategic joint campaigns between women's organisations and other actors.

As discussed above, religious communities are framed by secular women's organisations as arenas where women's voices are silenced or rarely heard even though they need to be heard. At the same time some groups within the women's movement adhere to the view that religious belief and faith-based groups should be kept out of political discourse, some of whom may identify with feminism or with the broader women's movement. Again, from an outsider perspective, it would seem that religion is such a symbolic marker of identity and belonging in today's society that it would be difficult if not impossible to ignore religious voices, including the voices of religious women. Perhaps a legitimate action for non-religious or secular women's organisations would, thus, be to demand a voice alongside religious women and their organisations when the government engages in consultations with local communities, rather than rejecting outright the government's consultation with faith-based women's organisations. That way, the government would hear not only religiously informed views about women's roles in family and society but also secular views which might challenge and contest them.

One particularly visible and contested issue in multicultural Britain is the use of the veil among some Muslim women.⁶⁴ The Fawcett Society, which has recently engaged with inequalities experienced by ethnic minority women, has also entered the religious arena of debate by facilitating a roundtable discussion on the use of the veil and women's rights (see www.fawcettsociety.org.uk). The organisation itself has, however, chosen not to take a stand on whether to support or condone the use of the veil. An interviewee perceived it as 'inappropriate and disproportionate' for the organisation to 'wade in on this one'. We suggested that it might be a good strategic position to take because the issue is a 'minefield' of differing opinions, to which the interviewee replied that:

'... the overwhelming feeling from us at the moment towards debates like that is that women's voices are rarely heard. So for us to wade in there with a professional voice is completely unhelpful because the women that we are talking about have so little voice themselves, not only right now, immediately, in the media, you know it is usually white politicians talking about this issue, but also long-term in terms of their representation in public life. In politics there are not mechanisms in place for them to have that voice at the moment.'

The interviewee was thus concerned that the organisation should *facilitate* discussion, rather than dictate any outcomes and thus reinforce the lack of 'authentic' women's voices.

Because the issue of veiling is so fraught with conflict among minoritised women, it is difficult for both minority and majority women's organisations to take sides and, thus, be associated with a particular type of ethnic minority woman – be it one that rejects or accepts the veil. Other issues, such as the lack of political representation among ethnic minority women, are far easier to take a stand on. The issue of political representation is not as 'dangerous' and not as fraught with conflict among women as are issues related to religion, including the use of the veil. The issue of political representation can easily be interpreted as a question of fairness and justice: it is not fair and it is undemocratic that some women's voices are not represented and thus not heard (*how* to achieve gender parity in politics, such as through quotas or women's lists, is of course still controversial).

⁶⁴ For example, Cabinet Minister Jack Straw has called on Muslim women to remove veils that cover the face (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5411954.stm).

Furthermore, the white women's movement has previously been charged with 'patronising attitudes' if and when they are 'tell[ing] them what their reality is, as if black women were incapable of understanding and judging their own reality' (Kazi, 1986: 87). The charge of displaying patronising attitudes is still relevant, and one interviewee who is open to forming alliances with white women's organisations emphasised that ethnic minority women's struggles should be led by themselves:

'... groups like us [...] well we have always asked for solidarity and support [from the white women's movement]. So we have said, look, of course we want support from you. [But] we don't want you to lead our struggles because we are here, we are leading it ourselves, and we don't want a patronising approach here, and unfortunately some white women tend to be patronising and that is where we have our arguments over race, so where the feminist movement has been supportive and said "we support"... "Support our demands and we will support yours"; that is the alliance building. But we don't expect them to take leadership. I only expect them to take leadership if nobody else is talking about it and nobody else is trying to address it.'

6.5 Summary remarks about the UK case

Above we have discussed some examples of alliance and co-operation within the UK women's movement. We have illustrated some of the diversity and disagreements that have characterised the 'second wave' women's movement in the UK from its inception in the late 1960s and early 1970s through to today. Moreover, we have demonstrated some significant examples of co-operation and alliance, in particular between white and black women's movement actors and with an emphasis on the policy area of violence against women. We have also discussed the emergence of discord linked to feminism, culture, religion and belief.

Divisions among feminists linked to different types of feminism (radical, socialist and liberal) still exist in today's women's movement, but their significance has declined and do not form barriers to working together. Furthermore, there is still disunity between white and black women in the women's movement. The explicit *feminist* demands from white women have, to some extent, alienated black women from the women's movement and made the anti-racist movement a more inclusive arena for black women's activism (Bryan et al., 1985: 173; see also Lovenduski and Randall, 1993: 82).

There remains a clear need for autonomous black women's organisations alongside other women's organisations. Separate organisations for a variety of women and interests are needed and should continue to exist. Our main point is that majoritised women's organisations should seek to develop more intersectional approaches to gender inequality; approaches that acknowledge the importance of minoritised positions and locations.

We do not intend to advocate that black women's organisations should be subsumed within majority women's organisations; rather, we would argue that majority women's organisations should engage seriously with intersectional approaches (Crenshaw, 2006; Denis, 2008) by developing policies and organisational structures that account for intersections between different structures of inequality, such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and faith. In our fieldwork we have seen evidence that this is actually taking place in some women's movement organisations, including the Fawcett Society. Recent developments at the level of government also highlight a more general move towards intersectional approaches.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it could be argued that by taking on intersectional approaches, women's movement organisations would position themselves to build increased opportunities for alliance and co-operation across the majority/minority divide within the women's movement.

Today, we find examples of organisations that are more ethnically mixed than they once were, which in turn is promising in terms of such organisations becoming seriously engaged in more complex and multidimensional analyses of inequalities experienced by women. Such engagement is crucial for the continued formation of strategic alliances in various policy areas between women's movement actors. In all the current calls for intersectional analysis, it is important not to lose sight of gender inequalities and women's experience of oppression. It is these experiences that offer common ground for women and future possibilities for a strategic sisterhood between women who also represent a variety of experiences and interests that cannot easily be accumulated under the terms 'gender' or 'women'.

⁶⁵ The Equality and Human Rights Commission (established in 2007) has subsumed the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Disability Commission.

We have described some of the different problem representations, especially in relation to violence against women, that exist within and across ethnic minority women's organisations. Whilst agreeing on the importance of a victim-centred approach, some of these organisations express problem representations that are of significance to the way in which the women's movement should argue for increased resources for victims. Although politicians might not take on board the importance of differences in how issues are framed and problematised, such differences may have a bearing on whether or not certain politics can claim to be feminist.

We have tried to show that disputes around feminism, culture, religion and faith are located within and across majority and minority women's organisations. A multicultural society where faith-based groups demand to be heard is a 'fact of life' that women's movement actors have paid too little attention to. The women's movement as a whole must take the so-called 'faith-agenda' seriously by starting to voice more loudly their feminist concerns and opinions, and by demanding representation when government attempts exclusively to consult with faith-based organisations. The women's movement will continue to grapple with issues of religion and feminism, but rather than assuming an opposition between them it could extend its demonstrated willingness to forge strategic alliances on particular issues and investigate whether or not alliances to promote feminist politics can be built between secular and religious women.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the relations between majoritised and minoritised women's organisations in Norway, Spain and the UK since the 1970s. The chapter is based on new empirical material – interviews with movement activists but also with some public administrators – as well as research literature, public documents and movement texts. Inspired by Bacchi's (1999) discourse approach and Verloo's (2005) frame analysis, we have explored the representations of co-operation, alliances and conflicts between and within majority and minority women's organisations. We have identified and elaborated some of the major themes that appeared in the interviews related to the ways in which the interviewees talked about their relations to other movement organisations; and we have analysed various possible effects of the identified frames and discourses.

The interviews with activists have displayed a number of differences between Norway, Spain and the UK related to the mobilisation of migrant and ethnic minority women and their relations to the majority women's organisations: We have noticed that ethnic minority women in Norway and the UK began to organise during the 1970s - women in the UK some years earlier than in Norway - whereas this took place at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s in Spain. The institutionalisation of public funding of women's organisations also started much later in Spain compared to Norway and the UK. Ethnic minority women's organisations include indigenous (Sami) women, national minority (Roman) women in Spain and migrant women. The main ethnic communities of migrant women vary because of the different impact of the waves of immigration to Europe from the late 1960s due to dissimilar political and economic histories. Our analysis also indicates different degrees of co-operation and intersectionality; the UK has the most promising example of a majority feminist organisation addressing ethnic discrimination and racism within an intersectional approach. Norway comes second with regard to majority women's organisations' concern with issues related to ethnic minority women while Spain displays the least indications of co-operation and a common political platform across ethnic divides.

The interviews have displayed a number of similar tendencies in Norway, Spain and the UK concerning the mobilisation of migrant and ethnic minority women and their relations to the majority women's organisations: Women's organisations are embedded within the larger social movement industry, and minority women have tended to affiliate with 'their' ethnic group, community or movement before establishing separate women's or feminist organisations. Feminist organising has been an effect of disappointment with various male organisations and gender-mixed movements, across ethnic differences.

The mobilisation of feminism and women's organisations has been deeply influenced by inter- and trans-national trends. The UN Women's International Decade 1975-1995 (Pietilä and Vickers, 1994) opened new policy windows for all kinds of women's organisations and prompted trans-national networking. The European Women's Lobby was set up to influence the EU's gender equality agenda, and has national units in Spain and the UK. Trans-national movements, such as the Sami Movement, the Romani Movement and the Black Liberation Movement, have inspired ethnic minorities to organise at national and local levels.

One major conclusion based on the interviews is that there is a vast variety within and between the categories of ethnic majority and minority women's organisations. Nevertheless, we argue that ethnic minority women's organisations, in general, have become legitimate actors and have been incorporated in majority women's movements within the three countries. Referring to Rokkan's concept of barriers to political participation (Rokkan, 1970), we maintain that they are accepted as political actors in their own right by majority women's organisations. Their interests are more embraced by and better incorporated into majority women's organisations today compared to the 1970s and 1980s. In general, however, ethnic minority women have yet to achieve significant representation and executive power within majority women's organisations.

We have tried to identify broad types of representations of the relations between minority and majority women's organisations: For instance, we suggest two competing discourses among majority and minority feminists during the 1970s and -80s in Norway; one discourse of anger among minority feminists and one of irritation

among majority feminist. Among the non-feminist women's organisations we noticed one discourse of charity and one of solidarity. Inspired by Julia Sudbury (1998), we have analysed responses to the claims forwarded by minority feminist activists among majority feminist activists. There is a general agreement among the minority activists that the majority women's organisations have been ethnocentric in Norway, Spain and the UK. There is little evidence to the contrary in the interviews with majority activists. Intersectional approaches are hard to find. To what extent majority activists have also been racist, is more controversial. Respondents from majority feminist organisations would hardly admit racist attitudes or practices, whereas feminist activists from ethnic minority organisations claim that racism is characteristic not just of public policies but also of feminist organisations as long as they do not include anti-racism in their feminist agenda.

The relations between ethnic minority and majority women's organisations were strained from the outset, indicated by minority women interviewees' talk about being overlooked and misrecognised within the larger women's movements. Discourses of women's liberation and gender equality have not easily been merged with discourses of ethnic discrimination and racism among majority organisations. Feminism is a contested concept, and so are 'women's issues', the relations of men to feminist and women's organisations, and the meaning of religion.

There are important instances of co-operation and strategic framing of claims across ethnic differences in all three countries, however. These are generally linked to issues of gender violence, and to the growing feminist demand for a holistic and integrated public policy against all kinds of gender violence, be it domestic violence, violence in close relations, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so on. In Norway, Spain and the UK, the feminist divisions of the 1970s between liberal, radical and socialist feminism seem less salient, whereas religion and ethnicity has become eye-catching. Gender violence, which is the issue we have chosen to focus, upon, in this research project, seems to be a feminist issue with a considerable potential for co-operation and strategic framing across ethnic differences. Migrant women's concern with the discrimination of migrant women in the labour market is less salient among the interviewed majority activists. This may reflect the focus of our research question, but it is also likely to mirror different political priorities.

A systematic finding across the countries is that religion has become an urgent issue, and also an issue which seems more likely to divide than to unite feminist and women's organisations. The relationship between feminism and multiculturalism is prominent in all three countries, with religion in the sense of Islam, and ethnicity in the sense of everything but whiteness, as the most visible issues. Majority women's organisations are generally not addressing 'whiteness' or their own ethnicity and privilege, although anti-racism and issues related to migrant women have become legitimate issue, within women's movements. Religion seems to be more disuniting, and an incendiary question within and among majority and minority feminist organisations.

The interviews have underlined the enormous variations within our main categories 'majority' and 'minority' women's organisations concerning the question of co-operation and conflict between women's organisations. Several interviewees resisted employing these categories and claimed that they hid more than they revealed. We also notice that changes in the organisational landscapes – with some development towards more ethnically mixed constituencies within what used to be majority women's organisations, and an increased focus on issues related to migrant women among ethnic gender-mixed majority organisations. Today, we find examples of organisations that are more ethnically mixed than they once were. This is promising in terms of a broader engagement with intersectional approaches to women's issues. Our findings of more ethnically mixed organisations further complicate the labelling of categories of women's organisations as majority or minority organisations. They should stimulate a continued debate on how to talk about ethnicity in the organisational landscape and elsewhere.

The presumption that co-operation and the framing of a common platform across ethnic differences would empower the feminist movement has gained some support: We have seen evidence of movement impact when women's organisations co-ordinate their claims and are able to sustain public pressure. This does not imply, however, that we find organising on the basis of ethnicity – white or otherwise – to be politically wrong. Quite the contrary, there is a clear need for autonomous ethnic minority/indigenous women's organisations to articulate the particular interests and

concerns of minority women within and beyond the women's movement, and to pressure the majority women's organisations to address whiteness and privilege. We also believe that majority feminist organisations would profit from elaborating broader, intersectional analyses of women's rights and addressing their own privileges.

7 CLAIMS-MAKING AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS IN NORWAY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

7.1 Introduction and Background

In this chapter we examine some of the opportunities and constraints that organisations within women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK have highlighted during interviews when asked about the possible influence or lack of influence they perceive themselves to have on the formation of the state's gender equality policies and policies aimed towards reducing and alleviating various forms of violence against women. We present and analyse claims-making and problem representations forwarded by both organisational and government representatives (civil servants and politicians) in relation to policy gaps and political influence at the state level. The issue of international work and influence, including the perceived importance of such work among various research participants in Norway, Spain, and the UK, has been dealt with in the three individual country reports.

This chapter is organised in three main sections; one section for each of the countries included in our study, each with a country-specific summary at the end. A fourth and final section draws attention to some of the differences and similarities observed across the three case-studies.

7.2 The Case of Norway

In this section we examine some of the opportunities and constraints that women's organisations in Norway have highlighted during interviews about their possible influence on policy-making. The examination focuses mainly on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism. However, 'women's issues' in general and, especially, issues concerning the intersection between 'gender' and 'ethnicity' have been addressed. The focal point is on the organisational actors' strategies and their experiences in relation to the organisations' political influence. Moreover, we have interviewed key actors among civil servants and parliamentary politicians about their view of the organisations'

political influence. We also refer to the selective mapping of documents which was included in the country report from Norway (Appendix B) and intended to complement findings from our interviews.

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

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

7.2.1 Selective inclusion: institutional and discursive political opportunities in Norway

The Norwegian political system can be described as accommodating, all-inclusive, unitary and relatively de-centralised. It has a factionalised party system and a multiple cleavage structure, with neo-corporatism and an emphasis on consensus politics. The "Norwegian way" of influencing social protests is through selective inclusion or incorporation; and the inclusion of a few selected groups (Kjellman, 2007).

As we shall see, political opportunities have changed considerably since the 1970s for Norwegian women, independent of their construction as majority or minority women. Generally, however, women's political mobilisation during the 1970s and onwards took place within a political system generally characterised by favorable institutional structures. There was a tradition for public funding of non-governmental organizations; hearings and consultations with established groups through a wide system of permanent or ad hoc committees and councils; a legitimate tradition of

lobbying based on a short distance - symbolically - from those affected by policy changes to the decision-makers; and a multiparty political system in majority constituencies - which makes it easier for diverse groups to be represented than in a different political system.

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

In the article "Inclusion or Exclusion? The Norwegian State, Social Movements, and Political Opportunities", Kjellman operationalises political opportunities as the formal institutional structure, the informal procedures of authorities, the parliamentary arena, policy implementation capacity, and the extent of democratic rights (Kjellman, 2007: 141). As to the first dimension, the formal institutional structure, the number of meaningful access points for mobilising groups gives an indication of the centralisation of the state. The Norwegian unitary system provides significantly fewer access points compared to federalist systems (Lijphart 1999, in Kjellman 2007: 144). Another feature of the formal institutional structure in Norway is the established pattern of neo-corporatist interest mediation. Since the mid-80s there has been an increased role for parliament in decision-making, but the corporative channel remains important (Nordby, 1994; Heidar og Bertnzen, 1995; Bortne et al., 2001, in Kjellman 2007: 144).

The second dimension of political opportunities, namely informal procedures, is defined as 'the shared implicit or explicit understandings of the political process and movement groups that guide the actions of authorities' (ibid.: 148). Kjellman (2007: 149-150) emphasises the tradition of consensus politics in Norway, which is based on compromise and negotiation. The Norwegian state is inclusive towards new societal interests. However, this inclusion comes at a price and groups are expected to be moderate and possess skills that are of use to the authorities (Kjellman 2000, in ibid.: 159). In general, states have the power to define the terms of the debate

and inclusion of challenging groups can be a way for states to pacify them and to preserve their own interests (Kriesi et al., 1995, in Kjellman, 2007: 149).

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

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

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

In line with Kjellman we conclude that the Norwegian state is 'selectively inclusive':

'It is, on the one hand, inclusive in that its formal structure allows movement groups access to decision-making processes through the neo-corporate channel, the administrative bureaucracy, and the parliamentary arena. (...) on the other hand, the Norwegian state is also one that can be described as exclusive. Its level of centralization - as compared to federalist states - provides fewer access points for movement groups (...), and by virtue of its lack of an independent judicial branch. It is further exclusive because, while authorities may grant concessions to protesters, they also have the discretionary capacity to keep them outside decision-making processes, grant

access but not influence, or they can attempt to stifle extra-parliamentary challenges through direct repression.’ (ibid.: 79-80).

Integration into the political process is, however, like a double-edged sword. It can lead to co-optation and institutionalisation of movements and the price to pay can be ‘moderation and bureaucratization, as well as alienation from grassroots elements’ (Dryer et al 2003:193, in Kjellman, 2007:82). Another effect of inclusion can be ‘a shift towards hierarchical and professionalised organisational forms’ (Kjellman 2007: 89-90). Selective inclusion also means that certain interests and movements organisations are excluded and there is a risk of creating dissatisfaction among groups not represented (ibid.: 146).

Selective inclusion of women and ethnic minorities

According to Siim and Skjeie (2004) there is an emphasis on active citizenship in Scandinavia. The social democratic conception of citizenship is ‘an active, participatory and egalitarian ideal’ (Hernes, 1987: 139, in Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 150). This social democratic model of the citizen is closer to the republican than the liberal tradition of citizenship.⁶⁶ However, it has been interpreted as a third model of citizenship with a specific gender profile (Hernes, 1987, Siim, 2000, in Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 149). The Norwegian political scientist Helga Hernes has used the term ‘state feminism’ to describe the Norwegian political system (Hernes, 1987). ‘State feminism’ is defined as ‘a combination of women’s political mobilisation “from below”, in social movements and voluntary organisations, and the political integration “from above”, in political parties and institutions’ (Siim and Skjeie, 2004: 149).⁶⁷

The claims of active citizenship are consistent with the conclusions made by Stetson and Mazur in *Comparative State Feminism* (Stetson and Mazur, 1995). Norway was ranked among the “high state feminist countries”, where women participated actively

⁶⁶ The republican citizenship model focuses on participation and the development of joint ethical community, but not so much on redistribution and protection of privacy. The liberal citizenship model emphasises ‘the part-time citizen’ and personal autonomy, rather than participation rights. This social democratic conception of citizenship focuses on participation, the political unity is a cultural and ethnic community, and there is no sharp divide between state and society. But in contrast to the republican ideal, the social democratic model emphasises social equality and economic security (Holst, 2006: 9-10).

⁶⁷ The ideal of ‘state feminism’ has been criticised, however, for having some ‘blind spots’, such as under-emphasising other dimensions than gender, and the reduction of citizenship to representation at the expense of public deliberation (Holst, 2006).

outside feminist groups as well as in established trade unions and political parties, and women were equally attracted to newer autonomous liberation movements and to the mainstream political and moderate reform-oriented groups. Radical feminist groups concentrated on consciousness-raising and moderate feminist groups put pressure on political party elites and politicians to establish a feminist women's policy machinery.

Stein Rokkan (1987) describes two channels for political influence in the Norwegian political system; the numerical-democratic channel and the corporate-pluralist channel. Skjeie and Teigen (2004: 23) write that these two main political structures represent ideal types at each end of a scale. Participation in the parliamentary democracy is based on individuals, whereas participation in the corporate channel is group based. Participation in the *formal* corporate channel includes: 1) tri-partite bargaining between unions, the private sector (capital), and government; 2) publicly appointed boards and commissions that prepare policy initiatives; and 3) participation in hearings (consultations on proposals that a government ministry or department sends to affected parties; public and private institutions, organisations and other government ministries). *Informal* participation includes lobbying and dialogue.

The corporate channel is part of the structure of the political system in Norway which gives collective actors like women's organisations an institutional opportunity to influence policy-making. The corporate channel also has a discursive side, since the invitation structure to public hearings and the composition of publicly appointed boards and commissions will tell us which actors are seen as reasonable, sensible, and legitimate (Koopmans, 2004: 451).

In an article from 2007, Skjeie and Teigen ask whether the term 'state feminism' is an accurate description of the actual decision-making system. They conclude that 'state feminism' is 'limping', and they elaborate this statement by claiming that the politics of inclusion has prioritised individual and gender-balanced representation in decision-making arenas (in the election channel). The inclusion of gender-based political organisations in the corporate channel, on the other hand, has not been implemented on equal terms with other organised interests (Skjeie and Teigen,

2007: 35). Skjeie and Teigen point to exceptions in this overall picture, where organisational interests based on gender and ethnic minority have been included, which are reforms in the gender equality law and legal regulations to reduce forced marriages. However, this suggests a selective inclusion which contributes to isolation and segmentation of gender equality policy (ibid.: 35).

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

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

Most of the organisations in our study receive money from the state. Some, primarily the membership-based majority women's organisations, receive a general operating grant and/or project money for voluntary organisations that work politically with family- or gender-equality issues.⁶⁸ Some of the 'professionalised' non-governmental organisation (NGOs) receive financial support in the form of a general operating grant as nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the membership-based minority women's

⁶⁸ Managed by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). For further details about the funding system and women's organisations perceptions of it, see our country report from Norway.

organisations receive a general operating grant and/or activity/project support as local immigrant or minority organisations.⁶⁹ There are also a few organisations in our study that do not receive money from the state. The Norwegian state's financial support schemes illustrate the separate spheres of 'gender equality issues' and 'immigrant/minority' issues. These institutional opportunity structures also indicate a discursive understanding of majority women's organisations as working politically with 'gender equality issues', whereas minority women's organisations mainly work with 'immigrant/migrant issues'.

Field-specific opportunities: violence against women

According to one of the interviewed civil servants, the gender dimension was brought into immigrant issues in the mid-90s. The white paper No. 17 (1996-1997) about immigration and multicultural Norway⁷⁰ specifically addressed issues relating to women, whereas previously immigrants had been dealt with as one group regardless of gender. Forced marriages were put on the political agenda, which was also helped by the media and the publishing of the book 'Izzat' written by Nasim Karim. The first Action Plan against forced marriages was introduced in 1998. A cross-ministerial working group was set up which included BFD (The Ministry of Children and Family, now the Ministry of Children and Equality), KRD (The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development)⁷¹, and the Ministry of Justice and Police. A parallel process happened with the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), and the first Action Plan against FGM was introduced in 2000. The Ministry of Children and Equality now bears the main responsibility for working against forced marriages and FGM.

The year 2000 was also the year of the first Action Plan against domestic violence. A cross-ministerial working group also prepared this Action Plan; however, the Ministry of Justice and Police had, and still has, the co-ordination responsibility for the first Action Plan and the subsequent two plans against domestic violence. According to one of the civil servants, the decision to place the co-ordination function

⁶⁹ Both managed by the Directorate for Immigration and Diversity, IMDi.

⁷⁰ St. Meld. Nr. 17 (1996-1997) Om innvandring og det flerkulturelle Norge.

⁷¹ KRD was responsible for immigration and integration at the time, now the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.

with the Ministry of Justice and Police was a strategic effort to place the responsibility with a strong Ministry with many resources. It would have been much less of a tactical choice had the responsibility been placed with the Ministry of Children and Family at the time, a weaker ministry with fewer financial resources. In the same vein, the choice of giving the responsibility of co-ordinating the Action Plans against forced marriages and FGM to the Ministry of Children and Equality may be interpreted as a sign of a low political will to implement these action plans.

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

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

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

When asked which authorities they considered important in their political work, several of the interviewed women's organisations mentioned the Parliament (Parliamentary politicians from different parties) and the Ministries, especially the

Ministry of Children and Equality. Some also mentioned the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Research and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (related to international work). Several of the organisations also mentioned Bufdir (the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) and IMDi (the Directorate of Integration and Diversity), both of which manage the different financial support schemes for voluntary organisations. Some of the small local women's organisations also mentioned municipal authorities as important to their work.

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud was mentioned by several of the interviewees. The new Ombud was established January 1st 2006.⁷² The Ombud's mandate is to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. The Ombud upholds the law and acts as a proactive agent for equal opportunity throughout society (the Gender Equality Act, the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion etc. [the Discrimination Act], and the regulations regarding equal treatment provided in the Labour Environment Act and the anti-discrimination regulations provided in the housing legislation). The Ombud is also responsible for checking that Norwegian legislation and practice are in compliance with Norway's duties under CEDAW (United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and CERD (United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).

The interviewees were divided in their response to the new Ombud. Particularly, interviewees from some of the majority women's organisations were doubtful about the new Ombud:

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

⁷² The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud replaced the Gender Equality Ombud (Likestillingsombudet, 1978-2006), the Centre for Equality (Likestillingscenteret, 1997-2006), and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (Senter mot etnisk diskriminering, SMED, 1998-2006) (see <http://www.ldo.no/en-gb/TopMenu/About-ombud/The-history-behind-the-Equality-and-Anti-Discrimination-Ombud/>).

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

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

These interviewees were concerned that 'women's issues' and gender-based discrimination would gain less attention when they became amalgamated with other strands of discrimination. The quotes also indicate that the 'traditional', here meaning 'feminist' organisations, were not consulted during the process of institutional changes. These responses from majority women's organisations indicate that Stetson and Mazur's conclusion from 1995 regarding Norway as ranking high on access and influence may no longer be ascertained (Stetson and Mazur, 1995). In general, the minority women's organisations and the professionalised organisations working on issues relating to ethnic discrimination and racism were more optimistic about the new Ombud. The re-organising of the Ombud was, however, quite new when the interviews were conducted, and many of the interviewees had a 'wait and see' attitude.

An indigenous minority: Sami women in Norway

Sami feminists formally began to organise about ten years later (in 1988) than migrant women in Norway, and about ten years after the Sami movement itself gradually emerged. Contrary to the organising of black feminism in Norway, Sami feminism already had a foothold within the institutions: One of the activists was employed at the Sami Council and actively made use of her position for feminist purposes also before 1988. The Sami Council had established a Women's Committee in 1986, and activists were eager to push women and gender equality issues from the margin to the centre. The Sáráhká – Sami Women's Organisation, was established in 1988, while the SNF-Sámi NissonForum for women was established in 1993. Sami feminist activists have played an important role in arguing for women's rights in the reindeer herding industry, and they have also addressed gender discrimination in election campaigns for the Sami Parliament which was

established by the Sami Act of 1987. The formation of a separate Women's List to the Sami Parliamentary election can be seen as a reaction to the exclusion of a Sami feminist woman from the top of a political candidate list.⁷³

According to interviewees, majority women's organisations have largely been absent in Northern Norway – at least from the perspective of Sami women's agenda and interests. Some instances of co-operation with ethnic majority feminists have been identified, such as in the national television fund-raising campaign for women in 2005, and in the women's umbrella organisation *FOKUS*, whose member organisations are involved in foreign aid. A particular disappointment with *FOKUS*, however, was expressed due to a rejected application for financial support. *FOKUS* has adjusted its funding guidelines and project support is now limited to projects in the 'South'. This has had quite negative effects for Sámi NissonForum, which bases its work on a West-East Arctic axis, and not on a North-South axis.

One of our respondents underlined insufficient communication with public authorities, be they Norwegian or Sami. For example, Sami women are unable to comment on the national CEDAW reports from Norway, as they do not have the necessary resources and feel completely sidelined by government institutions and by the rules governing the election of the Norwegian NGO delegation to the annual meetings of the CEDAW committee. Moreover, government equality agencies in Oslo have appeared to take little or no interest in discrimination experienced by Sami women in Northern Norway. According to one interviewee, the 'Ombud' does not even read newspapers from Northern Norway, 'despite the responsibility of the Ombud to be concerned with racism in the media'. The interviewee also deplored the absence of Sami women in the Nordic gender quality work, and represented the neglect to be a lack of recognition.

7.2.2 Limited discursive space

In this sub-section we focus mainly on the discursive opportunities and barriers that organisational actors face in their political work. While the institutional and

⁷³ Separate Women's Lists were used in the 1989, 1991, 1993 and 1995 elections to the Sami Parliament. For further information, see our country report from Norway.

discursive opportunities are closely linked, we here examine the discursive side: what issues and demands, and also which actors, are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate? (Koopmans, 2004: 451). We focus specifically on violence against minority women, but also on 'women's issues' in general, and the framing and attempts at reframing these issues (Snow and Benford, 1992; Verloo, 2005).

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

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

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

According to this interviewee, the women's movement has succeeded in widening, and thereby reframing, the issue of violence against women. Related to this expansion of the issue of violence against women is the feminist critique of the gendered public/private dichotomy and the definition of what constitutes a political issue (Pateman, 1987 and Okin, 1991, cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28). 'Feminist actors have struggled in favour of a broader definition of the "political" that includes all the so-called "private" and "personal" issues, such as violence against women (...)' (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007: 28).

However, the interviewees mentioned several barriers in their attempts to influence politically:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Norway, Christine M. Jacobsen and Randi E. Gressgård (2002) have analysed the white paper No. 17 (1996-1997) about immigration and the multicultural Norway⁷⁴ and they also found that immigrant tradition and culture is seen as the problem of integration. The issues relating to immigrant women that are mentioned are forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Jacobsen and Gressgård (2002) resemble Nyhagen Predelli (2003) and Skjeie and Teigen (2007) in the problematic way gender and ethnic equality are related: gender equality as the norm and ethnic inequality as the deviant.

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

⁷⁴ St. Meld. Nr. 17 (1996-1997) Om innvandring og det flerkulturelle Norge.

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

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

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

Some of the problem representations of 'minority violence' in the interviews with women from majority women's organisations illustrated a view of 'minority violence' as 'cultural'. This cultural framing may also lead to a fear of interfering:

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

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

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

see all the time - and where all the resources go also - and what we actually see here on a daily basis.'

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

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

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

Another interviewee emphasised the barriers regarding the three year rule:

'(...) Especially when it's about the Immigration law and the Immigration authorities and regarding special considerations to specific problems that women might have. Of course we've met barriers; we meet barriers all the time. Nothing is easy, nothing is for free. We have to work very hard to have

an impact on these issues. (...) abused [immigrant] women and their rights or lack of rights for thirty years, that's the prime example. But in general; to get a problem of principle on the agenda is not easy.'

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

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

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

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

Several of the interviewees also pointed to the general image of 'minorities' as 'the other' and the difficulty in presenting a more balanced picture:

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

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

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

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

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

Reasonable, sensible, and legitimate actors?

The interviewees mentioned several barriers in their attempts to influence politically:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some interviewees from another minority women's organisation have had a different experience:

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

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

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

Views of organisational actors by civil servants and parliamentary politicians

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

feminist women's organisation that has engaged in dialogue with minority women, and as a result they have also taken some political initiatives.

According to several of the interviewed politicians and civil servants, the organisations which have been politically active concerning violence against women are the umbrella organisations representing the Women's Shelters and also the organisations working on rape. The *Administration of Women's Shelters* (Krisesentersekretariatet) and *Norwegian Crisis Center Association* (Norsk Krisesenterforbund) were especially mentioned as very engaged in violence against minority women and they also have an important role as 'watchdogs'. The majority feminist organisations have not been that visible. Some of them, like for instance the feminist group *Ottar*, are active in the public debate about pornography and prostitution. In general, however, the majority feminist organisations have not been particularly active in contacting the parliamentary politicians or the civil servants.

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

Among minority women's organisations the MiRA Centre was mentioned by all the politicians and civil servants as an important actor. According to one of the politicians, there are few other minority women's organisations with strong voices, and the existing organisations are generally small and weak. Although there are many organisations in the 'minority field', coupled with a few strong individual voices, the field is very fragmented and it is difficult to know who the individual voices actually represent. According to one of the politicians, it is particularly difficult to know what most minority women want or think. This resonates with the findings in Nyhagen Predelli's study from 2003, where she argues that the minority women's organisations that are working actively to influence policy-making are few and they

do not represent all the different groups of minority women in Norway (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003: 148). The organisations that represent minority women and work politically and professionally are still very few, and even if they do a good job, one of the interviewed politicians wanted to see more broad membership-based organisations in order for more strong voices to be heard. In general, this politician found it problematic that the majority define minority women's problems, and therefore saw a need for more and stronger minority women's organisations that engage in political issues.

7.2.3 Claims-making, opportunities and constraints at the national policy level

In this sub-section we examine how the interviewed women's organisations in Norway work in order to achieve political influence.

Formal participation: Consultations (hearings), boards and commissions

In our document mapping of selected consultations or hearings we focused on two areas: 1) violence against women; and 2) racism and ethnic discrimination (related to violence against women) (Halsaa and Thun, 2008; see also Appendix B in our country report from Norway). The main purpose was to complement the findings from interviews with women's organisations with documented claims and issues made by these organisations in Norway. We also wanted to identify the extent to which women's organisations have been invited to comment on government policy proposals, and the extent to which they have actually commented. Herein, we focus on the invitation structure, which is important in regards to both the institutional and the discursive opportunity structures: What organisations are invited by the Ministries to participate in these consultations (hearings) and are, thus, seen as legitimate actors within different fields? Moreover, to what extent have the organisations actually commented?

In the mapping we focused on three law proposals concerning violence in close relations, protection against forced marriage, and changes in the Immigration Act.

Three recent national law proposals were selected:

1. Changes in the Penal Code on violence in close relations (and annulling the act on vagrancy): Ot.prp.113 (2004-2005) (*Om lov om oppheving av løsgjengerloven*

*og om endringer i straffeloven mv. (eget straffebud mot vold i nære relasjoner mv.)).*⁷⁵

2. Changes in the Immigration Act (protection against forced marriages and maltreatment in marriage, and protection of foreign employees' working conditions and salary) (2004-2005): Ot. prp. 109 (*Om lov om endringer i utlendingsloven (beskyttelse mot tvangsekteskap og mishandling i ekteskap og vern av utenlandske arbeidstakeres lønns-og arbeidsvilkår mv.)*).⁷⁶
3. Changes in the Immigration Act (On foreigners' admittance to the country and their residence here) (2006-2007): Ot. prp. 75 (*Om lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsloven)*).⁷⁷

This selective mapping does not provide the whole picture of the invitation structure and so forth, but it does provide an insight into the opportunity structures. Our interviews with organisational actors provide their views of consultations or hearings as a channel for influence.

The general picture concerning the invitation structure is that the majority women's organisations were invited by the Ministries to comment on proposals concerning violence in close relations, but not invited to hearings about the Immigration Act. Forced marriages and the three year rule are issues dealt with in the Immigration Act. These issues are related to violence against minority women and address the intersection between violence and ethnic discrimination. Here, however, the majority women's organisations are absent - they were not invited by the Ministries to comment and they did not take the initiative to send in their comments.

Only a few of the minority women's organisations were invited to comment on the proposal concerning violence in close relations. The organisations which receive funding from the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of

⁷⁵ <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/jd/dok/regpubl/otprp/20042005/Otprp-nr-113-2004-2005-.html?id=186166>

⁷⁶ <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/krd/dok/regpubl/otprp/20042005/Otprp-nr-109-2004-2005-.html?id=186028>

⁷⁷ <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/regpubl/otprp/20062007/otprp-nr-75-2006-2007-.html?id=474152>

immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, had been invited to give comments.⁷⁸ This pattern of selective inclusion was also found by Skjeie and Teigen (2007) in their research on two Norwegian government proposals concerning legal regulations to prevent forced marriages.⁷⁹ They concluded that ‘the invitation structure for these two hearings are not exactly tailor-made in order to include minority political and gender political organisational interests’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 30, our translation). Skjeie and Teigen (2007) also emphasise that participation in hearings is demanding and requires resources. Therefore, small and local migrant organisations do not always answer even if they are invited to participate. Their study also shows that gender political organisations, with the exception of organisations with a clear ‘help agenda’, are not invited to participate in consultations about forced marriages.

Skjeie and Teigen claim that ‘(...) objectives of gender representivity and ethnic diversity seem to exist nearly as separate spheres in Norwegian politics (...)’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007:35, our translation). They relate the two separate spheres to the debate about the relationship between the ‘old’ women’s movement and spokespersons for ethnic minorities, and the criticism of the majority feminists in Norway for not having engaged with minority women’s issues (Salimi, 2006; Bredal, 2005, in Skjeie and Teigen, 2007: 30).

The pattern of inclusion suggests a selective inclusion (Kjellman, 2007; Skjeie and Teigen, 2007) where some organisations are ‘institutionalised’ as consultative bodies within certain policy fields, whereas other organisations are excluded (institutional opportunities). The invitation structure also says something about which organisations are seen as legitimate actors within different fields (discursive opportunities). There is little evidence of an intersectional approach concerning violence against women.

⁷⁸ For more details regarding which organisations are invited by the Ministries to participate in these consultations (hearings), to what extent have they actually commented, and what their comments were, in Appendix B to the Norwegian country report.

⁷⁹ One is the proposal from the Ministry of Justice and Police about changes in the Penal Code from 2002 and the other one is the proposal from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion about changes in the Immigration Act concerning forced marriages from 2006.

Our mapping and interviews with women's organisations also support the selective inclusion concerning consultations (hearings). According to one majority women's organisation that works primarily with violence in close relations, they are primarily invited to hearings about violence against women. They have not been invited to hearings about immigration issues, but gave their comments even if the organisation had not been invited to do so. Another interviewee from a majority women's organisation said:

'I don't think that we have given statements during the consultation process on issues where we have not been invited. I guess that is because we haven't felt the need to do it.'

This organisation did not take the initiative to give any comments. This organisation has not been invited to respond to the Immigration Act, and the quote can be interpreted as if the organisation does not consider these issues as relevant 'women's issues'. However, it can also suggest that the organisation is not aware of some of the issues that are included under the laws relating to Immigration, such as forced marriages and the three year rule. Another possibility is that they thought the proposals were adequate and did not need amending.

One of the minority women's organisations was invited to one of the consultations about forced marriages, but that was the first and only time they had been invited to comment on proposals by the authorities:

'We sent our consultation statements to the Ministry [about forced marriages]. We do that sort of thing. We think that it is important, it's to have something to say.'

The interviewee emphasised the importance of having an opinion in this matter and also of participating in this political process.

An interviewee from one of the professionalised NGOs was rather critical of all the proposals that were sent to consultative bodies concerning the new Immigration Act:

'(...) The Immigration Act [Utlendingsloven] - there has been several changes. I don't remember if it was last year or the year before, but calls for consultations came constantly. So we don't write consultation statements in regard to the Immigration Act anymore, I mean in regard to the single changes that come. I

remember one year, if you didn't have a full-time employee to work on that then it was just ... (...)'

According to the interviewee, all the proposed changes and the following consultations actually constituted a “democratic problem” since the intension of the consultation process is to obtain views from affected parties. The organisation received quite a few proposals in a relatively short amount of time, and in the interviewee’s view this impeded a thorough procedure of review of laws and legal measures. The perspectives of minorities, including both positive and negative effects, were supposed to be considered. In the interviewee’s view, however, it was difficult to do this properly when several law proposals, some of them quite extensive, were being sent to the organisations within the space of a few months.

Another reason for not giving a comment on the law proposal on the Immigration Act was that some organisations did not agree with any of the proposals concerning the suggested minimum age of 21 for marriage partners⁸⁰ in order to prevent forced marriages:

'Sometimes it seems like everything is sort of decided beforehand. But sometimes it can still be important to make certain points. For instance in regard to the proposal of a 21 year demand. We didn't answer that hearing because they said that if we introduce this [21 year old demand] then it will be like this or like this or like this. We were totally against this [21 year old demand] and then there is no point in considering these proposals against each other. (...) what we did instead was to have two appeals where we gathered several minority organisations. (...) and the proposal was stopped. It [an appeal] was very good because we could put focus somewhere else and not on this proposal and write consultation statements in regard to that (...)'

According to the interviewee, other strategies were more efficient in this matter, and the use of appeals was successful in order to shift the focus away from the Ministry’s proposal. The co-operation with several minority organisations was also viewed as instrumental in stopping the proposed 21 years minimum age. This sort of response suggests a protest, both to the proposals by the Ministry and also to the way this channel of influence was set up. The Ministry had the initiative and the power to include and exclude organisations and other consultative bodies. The Ministry was

⁸⁰ A demand that both marriage partners have to be at least 21 years of age in order to obtain resident permit for a spouse or co-habitant.

also proposing different law changes and the consultative bodies were merely supposed to comment on some already set alternatives.

Several of the respondents considered participating in consultations as time consuming:

'We do that as well, but we try not to do too much of it because it is very time-consuming. (...) We do it on some issues, but we probably only do a fraction of what [mentions another women's organisation] do. But we do it when we think that we have something to say that no one else will say.'

Even if the interviewee found this time-consuming, she thought it important to give comments to proposals when the organisation can provide a perspective that otherwise would not be heard.

Whether the interviewees thought they exercised any actual influence through commenting on the proposals by the Ministries differed from one informant to the next:

'We try to influence policy-making, we try that all the time. We write statements during consultation processes. (...) We write about anti-discrimination issues. (...) So there are quite a few consultations. It takes a lot of time, but we see that it works because we get accepted and our point of view is being heard in the areas in which we have expertise. It is important to concentrate on what we are competent to do instead of trying to write about absolutely everything.'

According to this interviewee, the organisation has an actual influence through the system of consultations. However, the organisation has to prioritise issues on which they have a special expertise.

Other interviewees also considered this channel of influence to be important, both in order to add different voices and to be recognised as legitimate actors in a certain policy field. One interviewee from a minority women's organisation said that her organisation was very active and they always sent comments on the proposals they are invited to comment on. The comments are cited quite a lot by the authorities, and even if she could not say for sure that their suggestions actually had an impact, she thought that the organisation had an influence on certain issues. She especially mentioned the Immigration Act and violence against women.

Another interviewee from a minority women's organisation also mentioned that the organisation had some influence with regards to the issue of female genital mutilation:

'Some of the points that were already included in the consultation invitation we received was a result of what we have been working on. (...) we sent our consultation statement and the other organisations did as well, and later we were invited to a meeting where several other [minority] organisations participated. (...) also a mosque was there. It was very exciting.'

This quote indicates that the organisation had been working actively on this issue before being invited to comment on the proposal, and it had also been working actively through other channels of influence.

Other interviewees also emphasised the use of alternative channels of influence:

'Consultation statements is not always ... sometimes it's a lot of work and you never know how much impact you'll have until afterwards. I guess I believe more in meetings with Parliamentary politicians and the government in that regard.'

This quote indicates a more ambivalent view of the influence of organisations through this corporative channel. The interviewee was critical of how much influence her organisation actually had in relation to the amount of time spent on writing these comments.

'(...) it is very seldom that a consultation statement changes what's already decided. (...) we don't prioritise consultations. We don't have the possibility to do that. (...) of course, if we get a consultation invitation from The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration [UDI] about gender-based persecution or abuse of women we would answer that.'

This interview suggests that comments on proposals do not have that much influence, and that the issues in the proposal have, in fact, already been decided beforehand. According to this view, the consultative bodies do not have any actual influence and they are merely invited to comment on the proposals because the authorities need legitimacy for a law proposal.

'You need to be involved in advance rather than afterwards. (...) plus it takes a lot of time and it's not always easy. Especially some things can be quite ... how should I put it? The language is sometimes not for ordinary people. (...).'

This quote indicates that the organisation needs to get its views heard and included before proposals are formally sent to consultative bodies. In other words, the organisation's views have to be included already in the proposal from the Ministries. This statement indicates an involvement through other channels of influence in order to achieve "real" impact. The quote also raises another issue which was mentioned in several of the interviews; namely the language in which the proposals are written, which is quite difficult if you are not an expert in law and this can be a real barrier.

Another barrier mentioned by most of the interviewees was the lack of resources which meant that the organisations do not have the capacity to comment on proposals:

'(...) We don't have any employees, and somebody has to do it [write consultation statements]. (...) We have to prioritise, we really have to prioritise. (...).'

This interviewee from a majority women's organisation underlined the point made earlier: namely the time-consuming nature of commenting on proposals and the need to have paid staff in order to be able to make this channel of influence a priority. However, one of the interviewees from a professionalised NGO, which has a paid staff, also said that the issue of capacity was one reason why they were not able to comment on all the proposals they were invited to give comments on:

'We are invited to contribute to many calls for consultations. (...) we prioritise where we can because of capacity. (...) we prioritise issues we actually work with. We get calls about issues concerning immigrants, refugees, first generation [immigrant], second generation [immigrant], and integration. But we don't have a chance to answer all of them.'

An interviewee from a professionalised NGO said this about political strategies for small minority women's organisations:

'They [small minority women's organisations] have to participate, but I don't know. I wouldn't choose that [consultations]. If I had limited resources and had to choose, it wouldn't be the main thing. (...) I would promote issues in a different way. It's not that difficult to get a meeting with the members of Parliament. And it would be good to have a relationship with several of the

Parliamentary committees. It depends what your focus is, but it's good that they know who you are and they know that you exist and what your focus is. It is also worth the effort to send some letters and raise some issues to the Ministers in a certain field and then follow up on it afterwards. Get something in the media, rather than writing consultation statements. If you have limited resources you have to choose.'

Her advice is to prioritise more informal channels of influence, rather than focusing too much on comments to proposals from the Ministries. It is worth noting, however, that several of the interviewees from minority women's organisations wished actually to be invited to more hearings:

'We have received invitations [to participate in consultations] by the Ministry of Justice and Police and the Ministry of Children and Equality. (...) but it has not been directly to [our organisation], rather through other organisations like OMOD or some [minority] organisations which have written letters to us and asked for our support. So we've said: "Yes, we support those issues". (...) I think that is important. The more [organisations] who support, the more likely you are to have an impact.'

This quote illustrates the need for several organisations to collaborate on certain issues, but the interviewee also wanted her organisation to be included in this channel of influence. This can be interpreted as a wish to be seen as a legitimate political actor through inclusion in this formal channel of influence.

One of the interviewed civil servants said that there is a huge challenge in transferring the knowledge of organisations 'out in the real world' and making use of it. Some of the organisations do not have the required ability to impart their knowledge in writing. In general, she thinks there are few formal initiatives taken by the organisations and that they lack knowledge concerning how the central government administration operates. In her experience, there is a good chance of having an influence through the system of public consultations as long as the comments are well written, to the point, and substantiated with sufficient knowledge about the issue. In cases where voluntary organisations can provide civil servants with good arguments, they might be taken into consideration and thus affect the outcome. However, this also depends on the issue, on what opinions other strong actors hold on the issue, and on the political priorities defined at any given time.

Participation in publicly appointed boards and commissions that prepare policy initiatives is another way of influencing policy through the formal corporative channel. Some of the interviewees mentioned this kind of participation as a political strategy where they can influence policy proposals at an early stage:

'You have to see how you use your time and energy; see where you can achieve most influence. Sometimes you have to try to act more in advance rather than after [proposals are made]. (...) we have worked very hard for minority representation in committees that write proposals which will be sent out for hearing. In that way you are taken into consideration in advance.'

This interviewee from a professionalised NGO considered participation in committees to be an effective political strategy:

'We are and we have been part of some committees and boards. (...) one of the reasons to be represented there is the general idea of representation and democracy. Another reason is that things happen in a process and to be there from the start. (...) you might not be heard immediately, but over time you'll have an influence. And also the acknowledgement that you exist at all. (...)'

'Earlier this year a health committee was appointed and one wanted a broad representation; "gender", "geography", and "age", but not "ethnicity". So we asked for an expansion in the committee, and the inclusion of someone with a minority background. Then they told us that they had been thinking about it, but they didn't know of any suitable person with an immigrant background. (...) So we sent this case to the Ombud and they have sent a letter to the Ministry. (...) If you're not present where decisions are made you are not a part of it, you are not visible, and you're not being taken into account.'

These quotes also illustrate the need to be present at an early stage in the policy-making process and thus potentially having a larger impact on the framing and the focus of a proposal. Another issue raised in this quote is the importance of including minority representatives in publicly appointed committees, both because of the representation of different voices and the democratic aspect, and the acknowledgement of living in a diverse society and to prevent certain perspectives from being silenced.

Some interviewees, however, criticised the widely used practise of government-appointed boards and commissions. One interviewee from a minority women's organisation claimed that every issue has a committee and a lot of money is spent on these committees. In her opinion, committees that are writing reports and

proposals concerning minorities often consist of majority Norwegians, usually experts. Critical minority voices are silenced and the work that minority women have done in order to put these issues on the agenda is made invisible, she claimed. Several minority interviewees addressed what they think is a 'stealing of knowledge' from minorities by majority experts in the increasingly professionalised field of 'ethnic minority issues'. One interviewee argued that when decisions are made by committees or groups with members who are appointed by the state (usually experts), minority women's organisations are excluded from deliberations within such entities. Moreover, if a minority woman is included, it is usually at a later stage, and the terms and conditions of the debate have already been decided. It, thus, does not really matter whether she is critical or not because she does not have that much influence anyhow.

Another related criticism put forward by some of the interviewees from minority women's organisations, was that the issues relating exclusively to minority women were being professionalised. Most of the work is done by specialists or experts, and the women's movement is not regarded as an important actor anymore. Nyhagen Predelli (2003: 149) also addresses the issue of increased professionalism in the field of minority women's issues, and links it to the general professionalisation and centralisation of the voluntary sector.

Informal participation: Lobbying and dialogue

The interviewed organisations varied regarding the extent to which they used lobbying as a political strategy. Some interviewees considered informal contact like lobbying and meetings with members of parliament, politicians in the Ministries and civil servants to be an effective way of influencing policy-making:

'It is best to talk face to face. A letter is a bit impersonal. (...) not everybody reads it. (...) but by talking to a person - I've talked to many politicians with direct eye contact - and by using a language that makes it easier for them to understand, rather than writing a letter.'

This interviewee from a minority women's organisation emphasised the personal element and the importance of making personal relations and advocating issues face

to face with politicians. Several of the interviewees argued the importance of knowing whom to contact:

'(...) You have to find people who have strategic positions and who might be visible in the debate.'

'Sometimes an issue concerns many different authorities; then you need to challenge them all.'

'Often we try to aim as high as we can; preferably a Minister. That seldom happens, but maybe the State Secretary. Yes, we try to aim high.'

These interviewees underlined the need to be strategic regarding whom to approach. In their opinion, it is important to locate people in different political parties who have an interest in the issue you are concerned with, and make direct contact with these politicians. You also have to challenge the various relevant authorities. Another interviewee from a professionalised NGO is reluctant to call these initiatives 'lobbying':

'Lobbying is not the right word for the work that we do. If there is a principle problem we go to the public authority, the politicians or the committee or the Ministry that deals with that issue and who can improve the situation. Then we go there directly and address the problem. It is not lobbying, it's rather information sharing and proposals for improvement. (...) lobbying is more that you wander the halls in the Parliament and the Ministries. We don't do that, we don't have the time for that sort of thing.'

According to this interviewee, a direct approach is not the same as "lobbying", which in her opinion is time-consuming and less productive. Several of the interviewees said that it is necessary for organisations to have meetings with politicians, but they do not have the resources and they cannot afford to have someone to do lobbying.

The quote above also illustrates a point made by several interviewees, namely the need to present a concrete or specific suggestion, and not only a general frustration or criticism. There is a greater chance of having an impact if you can provide productive solutions to a problem. The need to be able to document your views is also seen as essential in order to be taken seriously:

'We try to arrange meetings [with politicians in government] when we have people with important information; not just to say: "We think so and so", rather: "This is our experience on this issue and here you have the facts". (...) We try

to have people with a lot of knowledge of the field when we address certain issues. Then it's also easier to get appointments.'

'If we have several cases about the same issue it's easier to engage because then it's not only qualified guessing. Then we have some numbers and statistics to show. We would like to have an impact and we very much want to be able to document what we're saying.'

'We have spent some time getting in contact with the parties that are now in government. They are especially interested in certain cases and we can get a meeting. (...) the smart thing to do, I guess that depends on the case and it varies. The most important thing is that you say something when it needs to be said, you can't cry out every time if you want to be taken seriously on the right issues. You also need to have the documentation and then you'll be heard.'

Several of the interviewees also claimed that a meeting is not the final goal if your organisation wants to have influence, it is merely the beginning:

'If you have a meeting with someone - some people think that a meeting in itself is enough - but you have to understand how to use that meeting as a platform for further work.'

'For the most part we get the meetings we want, as long as we are flexible. (...) however, a meeting in itself doesn't necessarily mean that we'll have an impact. (...) a meeting in itself simply means that they listen to what you have to say and then they do whatever they want to do afterwards.'

These quotes indicate that an informal dialogue meeting can have a downside; namely as a forum where organisations are being heard but are not necessarily having any real influence. However, the interviewees emphasised the need to use such meetings as a platform for further work.

Some of the interviewees were more negative towards the use of informal contact with politicians:

'I can't say that we don't do lobbying, but we try to use that as little as possible. However, there are quite often hearings at the Parliament. (...) but we only do that when we think that we have to. (...) sometimes we take the initiative and other times the Parliamentary politicians do.'

Part of the scepticism towards lobbying can be interpreted as a fear of becoming too 'personal' with people in positions of power and of compromising the role of the organisations as independent 'watchdogs':

'Our goal is neither to kick downwards or to the side, but rather to kick upwards and to make the politicians accountable, that is to politicise the whole thematic [violence against women]. We participate in many reference groups and co-operation groups, also with the police. The police have a lot of power. A policeman said to me once: "it's not easy; one day you kick us in the back, and the next day you sit here [at a co-operation meeting]". I said: 'Yes, I have that role. It's not personal, but I am a "watchdog", and if you don't do your job, it's my job to go out in public and say something. (...)'

'One day we have a meeting with a Minister here (...) and we have a good professional dialogue. The next day, we criticise the same Minister. That is independence.'

'We have been invited to the Parliament to talk about [minority] women's situation. (...) One Member of Parliament called me and asked me if I wanted to be a member of her party and work with their women's movement. But I didn't want to become a member. (...) Then I would always have to think about the party, what the party says, but I'm not like that. I think without limitations. I'm not totally opposed to joining a party, but I think it's best for me not to be member of a party.'

These quotes illustrate in different ways a view shared by several of the interviewees, namely that the independent role of these organisations is paramount.

According to one of the parliamentary politicians, the organisations are usually the ones who contact the politicians in their efforts to have an influence on policy-making. Some organisations have been present at hearings in parliamentary committees. The politicians sometimes contact organisations, usually concerning new political initiatives when they need input from those who are affected by certain issues. Sometimes individuals make contact and have meetings with politicians at which they tell their personal stories. According to one of the politicians, stories of young women who have experienced forced marriage or female genital mutilation have been crucial inputs in policy-making processes in these areas over the past eight to ten years. This also raises the question of legitimacy, which was also addressed in Nyhagen Predelli's study from 2003; the degree of influence by single individuals compared to organisations that represent several members (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003: 149).

A combination of different strategies

Some of the interviewees emphasised a dual strategy in their political work towards the government: they participate both in the formal corporate channel, including boards, commissions and consultations (hearings), and they participate informally by lobbying and setting up meetings with politicians. The media was also mentioned by most of the interviewees as an important strategy to put issues on the agenda:

'Really you have to use many different approaches. One thing is to prepare statistics and reports, so it's not only 'we have experienced...'. (...) you also have to ask for meetings with the political parties and the party groups at the Parliament [Stortinget] and also with the different Ministries. So that is one strategy. The other is to draw attention to certain issues by using the media. The media has an immensely important role. We use the media very purposefully.'

'We have a very important role as instigators. One of the most important means is to draw attention to violence against women. To make this issue visible in the public sphere. You create a debate; you highlight very negative sides of society [violence against women].'

Many of the interviewees considered use of the media as an important strategy in order to get public attention to the issues they are concerned with and, thereby, put these issues on the agenda of politicians in power. However, several of the interviewees emphasised the need to know *how* to use the media:

'(...)it is important how you handle the media. Many people talk too much for too long. You have to know that if you highlight one small thing then it's much easier for the other person to get interested. That decides whether the issue will be taken up or not. And it is also important to see what's happening; to know what's going on today to be able to make your move. You need to make several phone calls and to follow up on that issue. It might not be interesting today, but maybe the day after tomorrow. (...)'

According to this interviewee, the organisations have to be able to present their message in a strategic way in order to get the media attention they want. They also have to follow the media debates and current events closely in order to seize an opportunity for their issues to be of relevance.

Several of the interviewees also emphasised the importance of being well prepared when contacting the media:

'We contact the media when we have an issue of principal importance. Of course if we have some people or cases who can exemplify this matter, that's good. However, if you go to the media you really have to know the issue, otherwise it might 'hit you in the head'. When the media takes on a matter of principal importance it might reach the political agenda. Then you might get to meet politicians to discuss the issue or they want more information about the issue. So by informing through the media, through reports, inform as much as possible, then you might get a chance to sit down and talk with experts and the bureaucracy. You don't always need to talk to a Minister, but you need to present the problem where it belongs and maybe you'll have an impact.'

'We don't scream wolf if there's no wolf. (...) if we beat the big drum; if you go to the media or initiate a meeting and thump the table you have to know what you are doing; you have to know the case really well and you have to know what you are saying. Otherwise it can hit you in the head horribly. (...) so we continue working. We do a lot of serious hard work and then we will be heard sooner or later. (...)'

These quotes emphasise that one has to be prepared to discuss issues that have been put on the agenda, and one has to be able to substantiate the arguments that you put forward. The media attention might give the organisation a platform from which to reach policy-makers and thus be a starting point for further political work:

'When the politicians have decided on priorities and have resources, then you are only at the starting phase. After that you have to do something about it; that's when the serious work comes into the picture. We had an Action Plan against forced marriages in 1998 and we took that Action Plan in 1999 and we used it for all it was worth. We had seminars and meetings around the country, allied with the Shelter Movement, and we raised awareness about this. We started to work with the youth. If we hadn't done that it [the Action Plan] would have been lying in the drawer at the Ministry and collecting dust. So when an issue has reached the political agenda, then you have to do something about it. You have to work in order for change to happen, for improvement.'

When an issue reaches the political agenda and an Action Plan has been worked out, the organisations have to use this plan to push the authorities to follow up and implement policies. One of the interviewed civil servants also emphasised this aspect of the organisations' political work and their role as 'watchdogs' in order to influence political outcomes.

Some of the interviewees emphasised the way they use the media channel strategically also in order to give a more balanced picture of minorities and 'minority violence':

'One of the most important [strategies] is the media. Especially with regards to minorities in order to give a more balanced picture, even if the media always try to paint a "black and white picture". These women are stigmatised because we talk about minorities as if they were one homogenous group. We have, however, experienced that there are huge variations. But you see how the media present murders of women; if there is an ethnic Norwegian man, he's portrayed as a good man, a good worker, a good neighbour, he played with the kids and so on. There is almost an obituary written about him. However, if you see how the media portray men with a minority background: "he was practically a barbarian". It probably feels good for the Norwegian society to say that kind of thing. And then they go on by talking about "honour killings".'

According to this interviewee, the media - even if they often paint a 'black and white' picture - can be used strategically to paint a more nuanced picture. The interviewee claimed that 'majority violence' and 'minority violence' are presented differently in the media, and the organisation wants to contribute a more balanced picture and, thus, draw attention to violence against women in general - regardless of whether minorities or majorities are involved.

The way the interviewees talk about media strategies suggests that they strategically frame their issues in order to get attention and put certain issues on the agenda. One dimension of this is related to forming bridging frames that fit with cultural belief systems or dominant discourses in order to negotiate a frame that will work politically (Benford and Snow, 2000, in Bacchi, 2005: 203). However, the quote above also indicates a strategy of reframing the dominant discourse about "minority violence" and extending the general frame of violence against women.

One of the interviewees from a feminist majority women's organisation described demonstrations as a conscious strategy to get media attention:

'The street is often an underrated arena. But it is all about getting room; room to talk, room to act. That's what it's all about. A demonstration will get you that room to talk; room to talk in all the media channels. A demonstration is important in its own right because it teaches people to do something about an issue with their own hands and feet. It is a very important part of a strong civil society. (...) but we also want to stage demonstrations in order to get attention from the media so that we can go out and argue on all channels, radio, TV and newspapers, afterwards.'

Another strategy has been to present the organisation as a tough and aggressive actor:

'(...) one thing is to build something when there is a situation of progress. Then you can present yourself as more likable. But in order for us to succeed it has been necessary not to be forgotten. Since feminism and women's issues haven't been the most popular things to write about in a positive way, then this has been a good strategy. (...) we don't care if they like us or not as long as they are afraid. This has been a deliberate strategy, very thought through.'

This media strategy has been deliberate in order to increase the attention to feminist issues at a time when such issues have otherwise received little attention.

The experience of an interviewee from another feminist majority organisation was that the media had tried to use them:

'The media often call us, but it is not so often that they contact us after we deliver a press release. (...) sometimes they call us but we don't fit the image they had of a "feminist". (...) they think: "We want some crazy women who thinks that only women should have it all" or something like that, and when we say what we actually think about the issue, it's not that relevant after all. (...) but all in all I think the media contacts us quite often and I don't have that many bad experiences.'

According to the interviewee, the journalist already has a story and a picture of the archetypical 'feminist' that he or she wants the organisation to represent in the story. The quote also indicates that the organisation has experienced difficulties in their attempts to get attention to their issues and to set the agenda in the media.

7.2.4 Co-operation, competition and division of labour between women's organisations

In this sub-section we examine the organisations' views of co-operation and strategic alliance in order to influence political decision-making.

Some of the interviewees claimed that majority feminists are not interested in co-operation with organisations working with 'minority issues':

'However, I say it again, as I've said before (...), ethnic Norwegian women's organisations have not been on the front line for their fellow sisters. That is a fact. (...) in the beginning when we started to address forced marriages or

arranged marriages with a higher or lesser degree of force as we call it. We have met a lot of opposition, both from [minority] communities, also women's organisations within these communities, and from what I call Norwegian well-educated cultural relativists, women who thought that we blew things out of proportion because arranged marriages were a culture and we had to respect that. We said that we are talking about the force in that culture; we are talking about the negative aspects of the culture. It took several years before they - both within and outside the [ethnic] communities - said that arranged marriages are okay, but force is not.'

This interviewee from a professionalised organisation addressed the opposition - both from majority feminist organisations and from minority organisations - when they put issues like female genital mutilation and forced marriages on the agenda. However, there are examples of co-operation between different organisations on certain issues, and several interviewees argued that co-operation on specific issues can be a good strategy to put political pressure on the authorities:

'We have common interests with many others [organisations]. How can we work together? For instance minority youth (...) and minority women's organisations. (...) how can we co-operate in order to put political pressure? (...) one has to think about co-operating on certain issues (...).'

'We know each other in all the organisations, the nation wide organisations [in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees], especially the larger organisations. We know each other, we meet at meetings, and everybody knows who works with what. (...) we know of each other and we co-operate on certain issues, but we are independent organisations. (...) we co-operate on issues if it's necessary.'

'Sometimes we have to think about the big picture, not just single issues and the battles you have to fight to win the war.'

These quotes from different interviewees indicate that the organisations think strategically about co-operation on certain issues. According to some of the interviewees, co-operation can be difficult because different organisations have different views and some issues are seen as controversial, for instance the criminalisation of those who buy sex. One interviewee said that her organisation had been in favour of the criminalisation of buyers of sex acts, but they no longer have an opinion on this issue. They now try to help prostitute women in other ways, and are able to co-operate both with organisations who are in favour of criminalisation and those who are against it. This can be viewed as a strategic effort to make alliances

with different organisations which are very opposed to each other on a controversial issue.

Some of the interviewees mentioned mobilisations where the women's movement - also sometimes in co-operation with professionalised NGOs - have been able to work politically together and to have an impact. One example of successful co-operation that was brought up in the interviews was the 'Volda - case':

'(...) co-operation with [a feminist organisation] and other networks. To illustrate; the 'Volda case'. A female student reported that she had been raped by another student, but the case was dropped. Then he filed for defamation [injuriøksmål] because of slander because she had talked to someone. At the same time sexual violation and a change was out on a hearing. (...) we used March 8th, we had demonstrations (...) we lobbied; wrote letters to the Minister of Justice and we got huge media attention. (...) then the Defamation Act [injurieloven] was passed in 2000. (...) The Supreme Court [Høyesterett] said: "Women who have been violated take precedence over men's honour" and it gave women the right to tell about violations ... It was a big victory. (...) it is a story about the women's movement where we fought together. We went to Volda, we had demonstrations' (...) it shows that the women's movement has power and the importance of working together. Then we can use one single case, like that case in Volda, and accomplish change.'

This story illustrates a mobilisation where the women's movement was able to use a range of strategies and also to influence policy-making.

Another mobilisation in the women's movement mentioned by several of the interviewees was the work regarding the three year rule in the late 70s and 80s.

'We started in the 80s. (...) we have been fighting in all these years. In 1991 it was taken into the regulations of the Immigration Act; a woman who breaks out of the marriage because of abuse might stay ['kan få bli' paragraph]. Then we mobilised women in the Parliament and we were able to change it to should stay ['skal' paragraph]. (...) however, this is a paragraph that the government, the immigration authorities have never liked. So it has been two steps forwards and one step backwards all along for nearly 30 years now. (...) the definition of abuse has been under dispute. (...) so we have fought all the way.'

'(...) there has been talk about changing the three year rule. We have fought for making this three year rule into one year. (...) they talk about different requirements [tilknytningskrav], about earning a certain amount in order to be able to get married [to someone abroad]. I think that is discriminatory in relation to a group of people. (...) it is only to prevent immigration.'

One of the interviewees from one of the oldest minority women's organisations also mentioned the work regarding the three year rule as an issue where they were able to mobilise all Norwegian women's organisations and they all stated that the law was discriminatory to women. They were able to use some cases in order to highlight discrimination in the Immigration Act of 1988.

This mobilisation regarding the Immigration Act of 1988 and the three year rule is an example which was highlighted by several of the interviewees from different organisations, both majority and minority women's organisations and professionalised NGOs that were working on this issue at the time. This example shows that during the 1980s, the women's movement was able to mobilise around an issue at the intersection of women's issues and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. However, there have not been many examples of similar co-operation in the 1990s and the 2000s. The new Immigration Act of 2008 did not lead to a comparable mobilisation. Compared to an issue like forced marriage, the three year rule also received little attention in relation to the new Immigration Act. The mapping of the comments from the consultation process regarding this law and the comments specifically concerning the three year rule indicates that some of the same organisations are still actively engaged in this issue, but among these there were mainly one established minority women's organisation and some professionalised NGOs. However, none of the membership-based majority women's organisations were involved. The organisations included in our study, which commented on this issue, agreed with the proposal by the Committee on Immigration Act's report (NOU 2004: 20) that the regulation should be included in the law, and disagreed with the proposed reversal of the 'shall'- regulation to a 'might'- regulation. They also wanted women who had been victims of violence to be granted immediate residence permits, preferably after one year instead of three. The Ministry of Labour and Inclusion agreed with the first two demands, but not the last.⁸¹

The lack of more extensive mobilisations in the women's movement might also be explained by a combination of an increased professionalisation in the voluntary

⁸¹ See Appendix B in the Country Report from Norway.

sector (Melve, 2003: 173-174) and the institutional opportunity structure which is characterised by separate spheres (Skjeie og Teigen, 2007).

According to the interviewed politicians, many of the organisations have become increasingly professionalised and are having regular contact with politicians: they call and ask for meetings, and they influence policy-making. In the view of the politicians, the strategic thing to do is to make contact with the political parties that initially disagree with the organisation's point of view; if you are able to persuade them, then you can actually have an impact. The most professional organisations are aware of this strategy and have a broad approach where they initiate meetings with different political parties.

Several of the interviewees emphasised the division of labour between the organisations:

'We work more with individual people, case after case after case, one individual after the other. Whereas most of the other organisations [nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees] work more theoretically. (...) one has found one's niche.'

'There are organisations, like OMOD, who work against public discrimination, and the anti-racist centre and so on. So it [ethnic discrimination, anti-racist work] is a specific field of expertise, and we don't replicate. (...) but we work for equal rights and equal value, and that is a basic work against discrimination. We do it our way. (...) so of course we do anti-discriminatory work.'

'We can't say that much about the [minority] women who are oppressed. (...) others work with them. If you go to them [SEIF or MiRA] you will hear about them. We try to cover other areas because that is also very important and it can't be left out of the picture. It is not because we don't think that there are many oppressed women, it is rather that others do that work. Our job is to highlight the ordinary women and their every day lives.'

'We don't work directly with racism because we have organisations like OMOD [Institution against Public Discrimination]. OMOD addresses racist cases. They are a public organisation which is well known for dealing with racist issues. So whenever there are cases like that, we co-operate with OMOD. We are in close contact and give information and support each other. Whenever there are cases like that, we demonstrate together with them. But [our organisation] does not directly address racist issues in relation to the authorities; OMOD and the anti-racist centre do that, and also other organisations that have been in the game longer and have people with expertise in these issues.'

Statements like ‘we don’t replicate work’ and ‘one has found one’s niche’ indicate a strategic division of labour between the organisations. Quotes like ‘it [ethnic discrimination, anti-racist work] is a specific field of expertise’ and ‘[our organisation] does not directly address racist issues in relation to the authorities: OMOD and the anti-racist centre do that, and also other organisations that have been longer in the game and have people with expertise in these issues’, also indicate separate spheres and increased professionalisation.

One of the interviewees from a ‘professionalised NGO’ explained the need for someone to do political work full-time:

‘(...) After a while we saw the need for an umbrella organisation. When there was a consultation: Who’s responsible writing consultation statements? (...) when the authorities contacted us; who should they contact? (...) who should lobby at the Parliament [Stortinget]? (...)’

Some of the small membership-based minority women’s organisations did not think that they had the skills to work politically because they did not have the expertise in certain fields. Some of the larger membership majority women’s organisations also claimed that participation in consultations and political co-operation with other organisations are time-consuming and they do not have the resources to prioritise these types of political strategies. Considering that, for instance, calls for consultations are sent by the Ministry to affected parties, increased professionalisation can be seen as problematic because the membership based organisations either do not have the competence or the financial resources to participate and, thereby, influence policy-making on issues that concern them.

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

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

Another issue that was raised in some of the interviews is the existing competition among the voluntary organisations:

'Organisations often have a tendency to pursue one's own goals. Sometimes you can have a problem regarding co-operation with people who do other things. (...).'

'When I started in this job I must have been the most naïve person in Norway. I went to all the different organisations and said: "I think we can co-operate" (...).'

One explanation for the competition between the organisations put forward by some of the interviewees was the lack of financial resources and the struggle to be seen as legitimate and sensible actors. The interviewees viewed the authorities as partly responsible for this competition because no one has enough money. Even if organisations have found their niche and work with issues from different angles, it can still be difficult to get all the organisations to co-operate about an issue. One interviewee said that she had to navigate and make different alliances with different organisations on different issues.

The interviewees from the small membership-based minority women's organisations emphasised the need to co-operate with others in order to have political influence:

'We [our organisation] can't do that much alone, so we have to find partners to co-operate with in order to be able to influence policy. One part of this work is through the Council for immigrant organisations [Innvandrerrådet]. (...) we try to do it that way. Our organisation is small and we can't do it alone, that's impossible.'

'It is good if we can co-operate with somebody [other organisations] on a campaign and influence the authorities. (...) we [mentions another minority organisation] have written a letter together. (...) this letter will be sent to the media.'

One strategy is to try to influence politically in co-operation with other minority organisations through the Council for Immigrant Organisations [Innvandrerrådet]. The interviewee mentioned issues like ethnic discrimination in the work place, quotas in the public sector, and equality (both gender and ethnic equality). Another strategy is to support each other on certain issues, such as public consultations on forced marriage. The general impression from the interview data is that the small minority women's organisations have mainly made alliances with each other on some issues

and also with professionalised NGOs, primarily working with ethnic discrimination and so on. In relation to political influence there are few examples of co-operation or alliances between the majority and the minority women's organisations.

7.2.5 Summary remarks about the Norwegian case

In section 7.2 we have examined some of the opportunities and constraints that women's organisations in Norway highlighted during interviews about their possible influence on policy-making. We have focused on attempts at influence through the corporate channel (Rokkan, 1987). We have looked at the organisations' participation both in the formal correct channel (including participation hearings, publicly appointed boards and commissions) and their informal participation (including lobbying and dialogue) (Skjeie and Teigen, 2004). Other strategies mentioned by the interviewees are the media, demonstrations and strategic alliances with other organisations. Our study shows that the organisations use a combination of different strategies in order to influence policy-making.

There is evidence of co-operation or alliance across the ethnic divide in our interview material, but there is not much evidence on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism. This finding probably has different explanations. The organisational landscape is complex and dynamic, which means that there is a plurality of representations of the relationship between the organisations. Of course, our study does not present the whole picture of co-operation, alliance and other political strategies that are used by organisations to influence policy-making on 'women's issues' and 'ethnic minority issues'. Our main focus has been on themes related to violence against women and ethnic discrimination/racism, with special attention to issues related to the intersection between the categories 'gender' and 'ethnicity'. Thus, our findings reflect such a focus. Our research is also based on interviews with selected organisations and there are, probably, examples of co-operation and alliance that has not been reflected in our interview material. However, our research findings can indicate some tendencies.

An important finding relates to the relative invisibility and lack of voice experienced by Sami women's organisations in several arenas, ranging from locally, within the

Sami community itself, to national political arenas, and to the Nordic and international arenas. Sami women find themselves without the chance to be heard in the Nordic political system on an independent basis, as well as in international institutional processes such as the CEDAW reporting. A solution to this problem of multi-level exclusion is represented to be the institutionalisation of Sami feminism, perhaps in the form of a Sami women's centre with funding from the national government. On the other hand, responsibility lies not only on Sami women themselves, but also on majority women's organisations and government institutions, who must seek to open up for a broader representation of, and participation by, Sami women in political processes.

Earlier studies indicate a selective inclusion of movement groups (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007; Kjellman, 2007). The pattern of selective inclusion in the areas of 'gender issues' and 'ethnicity issues' point to two separate spheres and certain field-specific opportunities for organisational activists (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007). The financial support schemes illustrate the separate spheres of 'gender equality issues' and 'immigrant/minority issues'. These institutional opportunity structures also indicate a discursive understanding of majority women's organisations as working politically with 'gender equality issues', whereas minority women's organisations mainly work with 'immigrant/migrant issues'. Some organisations are 'institutionalised' as consultative bodies within certain policy fields, whereas other organisations are excluded (institutional opportunities). The invitation structure also says something about which organisations are seen as legitimate actors within different fields (discursive opportunities).

Our own mapping of selected law proposals concerning violence in close relations, protection against forced marriages and changes in the Immigration Act (see Appendix B in the Country Report from Norway), support the claim of selective inclusion. One aspect of the institutional opportunities is the invitation structure in regards to formal consultations of proposals that the Ministries send to affected parties (hearings). The general picture concerning the invitation structure was that the majority women's organisations were invited by the Ministries to comment on proposals concerning violence in close relations, but not invited to hearings about the Immigration Act dealing with forced marriage and the three year rule. These

issues are related to violence against minority women and address the intersection between violence and ethnic discrimination. However, here the majority women's organisations are absent - they were not invited by the Ministries to comment and they did not take the initiative to send in their comments.

Only a few of the minority women's organisations were invited to comment on the proposal concerning violence in close relations. The organisations which receive funding from the financial support scheme for nationwide organisations in support of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, had been invited to give comments. The divide between 'minority violence', like forced marriages and FGM and the 'ordinary' partner violence was institutionalised in 2000, with different government ministries responsible for different sub-types of violence against women. There is little evidence of an intersectional approach concerning violence against women. Nevertheless, the recent reorganising of The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud in 2006 points to a more intersectional approach, but it remains to be seen how the Ombud will actually contribute to implementing such an approach in government policies.

Several of the interviewees from both majority and minority women's organisations underscored that violence in relation to minority and majority women is understood differently: there is a dominant cultural framing of 'minority violence' where this is seen as a form of violence which is 'cultural' and 'special'. Violence against minority women is also seen in 'an immigration perspective', and often linked to a more restrictive immigration policy. When 'minority violence' is understood as 'special' and 'cultural' it also makes it 'their problem', not a general 'women's issue' and 'our problem'. It supports the image of 'them' versus 'us'; the 'suppressed minority woman' versus the 'liberated majority woman'.

Our study shows that the women's organisations (including some majority women's organisations) that have tried to challenge this dominant understanding of 'minority violence' have experienced this as a difficult task. However, some of the interviews indicate a conscious strategy of reframing this definition of 'minority violence' into a 'gender equality frame' and a 'human rights frame'. Several of the organisations working with 'minority issues' have also tried to broaden the focus regarding minority

women, but have found this difficult because the political authorities have mainly been focusing on violence against minority women ('crisis gender equality'), rather than on 'ordinary' equality issues such as education or labour market participation. Our analysis indicates that the narrow picture of minority women as victims of violence is a barrier for addressing other issues concerning minority women.

The common view among the interviewed politicians and the civil servants is that the majority feminist organisations have been absent in relation to minority women's issues. They seem to be more engaged in majority women's issues. In their view, minority women are still not a part of 'we' the women, and there is a divide between 'us' and 'them'. One explanation forwarded was that majority women's organisations are afraid of being accused of being racist. While there are many organisations in the 'minority field' and also a few strong individual voices, the field is very fragmented and it is difficult to know who the individual voices actually represent. On the whole, the organisations that represent minority women and work politically and professionally are still very few, and there seems to be a need for more and stronger minority women's organisations that engage in political issues.

7.3 The Case of Spain

In section 7.3 we discuss relations between women's organisations and various government institutions in Spain that are involved with women's issues (politically and strategically, but also historically) as these have been presented by women activists interviewed in our research. Strategies for participation, ways to overcome barriers, implementation issues and ways to increase women's political representation are discussed in relation to political opportunity structures in Spain.

As noted in Chapter 4, political opportunity structures are defined by Tarrow (2006: 12) as 'features of regimes and institutions (for example, splits in the ruling class, political alignments, the presence or absence of influential allies, the threat or lack of repression, and the changes in any of these) that facilitate or inhibit a political actor's collective action'. Using this definition, the aim is to understand how political opportunities link the state with the women's movement in Spain. While specific women's movements are embedded in particular locations, they are shaped by the

broader set of political constraints and opportunities that characterise both the national and international contexts in which they operate (McAdam et al., 2006: 3).

7.3.1 Political party affiliation as opportunity structure

The relationship between the feminist movement and the socialist government has historically been very close since the 1980s when state feminism constituted a way forward for the women's movement. Most women occupying official positions in the government bureaucracy, as well as some of those who had been active members in political parties, have had some involvement with the feminist movement from early years (field notes, 2007).

Some interviewees expressed a clear preference for the politics of the 'left', explaining that this is due to the Socialist party actively addressing claims made by the women's movement in the past years.

'We had a ferocious campaign in this country to reform the 1989 Code [the Penal Code]⁸². Because even if we had a Socialist party, it was still sexist. We changed that law that year...but since then, everything that we had to integrate in the law since 1997, everything we fought for, no government listened until this one... 10 years with this law in our hands, edited by jurists, but no government wanted to accept it. This is why the women think that JR Zapatero is a myth, he made it possible that the equality law was enacted, we also asked for this ...'

(Interview, June 2007)

Another interviewee argued that such political opportunity structures were created during Zapatero's government to support the claims made by feminists, and stressed how Zapatero's position and ideology has facilitated the feminist movement. She quoted him saying

'You can't be a socialist if you are not a feminist.'

(Zapatero - as quoted by interviewee, Madrid, June 2007)

⁸² *'The accusations of women were made in the name of "honesty"; if she was seen "going out" at 4 am and they assume she was not honest, she could have been raped, abused with no consequences for the aggressor'. (interview, 2007).*

Another respondent explained that they have key political support from the higher rank politicians of the Socialist party:

'Within the Socialist party we have two or three collaborators, who are very close and with direct links to the party (...); the member of the citizenship participation of the executive [committee], is an essential help for the feminist movement.'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

Such views were supported by several other respondents and they highlight political opportunities that were created during the PSOE governance (since 2004) to promote gender equality legislation and anti-violence legislation in Spain. These are examples of how political opportunities operate as 'structuring cues' for social movements, being at the same time key to understanding the results of social movements (Kjellman, 2007; McAdam, 2006). They involve, particularly, two of the institutional opportunity features described by McAdam (2006), namely, the 'openness of an institutionalized political system'; and 'the stability of a broad set of elite alignments' (McAdam 2006: 27).

Another interviewee stressed how, on the other hand, such political opportunities for the women's movement were stopped during the time of the People's Party governance (Partido Popular):

'I have to say it (because we all experienced it like this) that it was an important stagnation regarding gender equality policies while the People's Party governed. Even if they say they invented the equality policies, we know very well that this was a stagnation time (...). We, the feminist women's organisation of that time, about 10 or 12, got together and created a feminist network against gender violence and we drafted an anti-violence law, which we presented to the People's Party. They sent us away saying that they already had an 'integral' plan against violence and that was sufficient.'

(interview, Madrid, June 2007)

Women's organisations can, thus, be said to have attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to create a political opportunity for themselves by drafting the legislation against gender violence which could subsequently be presented to the governing political party at that time. Other interviewees from majority organisations discussed similar aspects in relation to the formal and informal affiliations their organisations have with certain government entities. Paradoxically, however, informal opportunities are,

especially, believed to be created through formal networks, such as those established through party membership.

As suggested in Chapter four, the provision of financial resources to women's organisations facilitates both the formation and mobilisation of such groups, and represents an institutional opportunity structure. Yet, party affiliation can create different political opportunities for women's organisations in relation to financial resources. On several occasions, tensions were mentioned in relation to the perceived level of influence and support (often viewed in terms of financial opportunities) received by women's groups with tight membership to a political party. During our conversations with feminist activists from Madrid, several women's organisations were identified as being affiliated to the Socialist Party (field notes, Madrid, May 2007).

Ethnic minority respondents particularly suggested that the party affiliation of some women's organisations creates 'political allies' that could later facilitate different types of opportunities (financial, social, political), but at the same time they argued that this can act as a mechanism of exclusion, especially for those (newer) groups of women with less political involvement and less access to 'elite' groups or political 'allies'. One respondent explained that none of the current political parties represent their interests as a minority group.

'We as an entity don't have to be linked with any political party. Because ours is a fight for human rights and because today there is one government and tomorrow another. (...). There are partial things that one party has [in its ideology], some very good ones [...], but on the whole, I don't like any. I don't belong to any political party.'

(Interview, February, 2008)

Another respondent talking on the same issues, however, stressed a different type of recognition and inclusion towards the Spanish Romani minorities coming from the recent socialist government:

'The Gypsy group never had their own state and they don't ask for it, but then there is no government that defends their rights and interests. The Gypsies live in all European countries and there are always organisations that are consulted, but there is a high price for having Gypsy representatives in the

politics of this country. But the government of the 'left', I mean in Cataluña, but also the Zapatero Government, created certain entities with a willingness to incorporate them. There is criticism, as always, but at least we have these entities that did not exist before. For example at the national level, the State Council of the Gypsy group was created (Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano).'
(Barcelona, 2007)

Other ethnic minority respondents also recognised that the current socialist government has taken a more active approach to women's organisations, by inviting them to participate in political processes and the delivery of public services, and by providing public funding for various parts of their operations. Moreover, after the last election won by Zapatero and the Socialist Party, a new development within brought a historical change in this respect. For the first time, in July 2008 a woman from an ethnic minority background was placed in a strategic position within executive government, as leader of the party's strategy on integration and community cohesion. This nomination has created an unprecedented political opportunity for minority women and their organisations.

On the other hand interviewees who openly declared their political involvement claimed that their organisations do not receive any additional support due to their party activism. Respondents who acknowledged their political affiliation with the Socialist party explained how this affiliation is based on the socialist ideology which purportedly better reflects a feminist ideology. At the same time they also stressed that this affiliation did not create any formal financial or other types of support for their organisation. One such respondent explained:

'The organisation has no involvement with the Party, not hierarchical, not functional, not economical. The party does not give us money, we are not part of any hierarchical line of the party; nobody tells us which way to go, nor what to do. We, the girls of PSOE, are important, but this is because a certain number of the council of members are party members; but we never ask those who come here if they are from any party, we only ask if they adhere to the feminist ideology.'

(Madrid, June 2007)

Another interviewee who talked openly about party affiliation also argued that her organisation holds similar values to the Socialist party (PSOE). In this case the respondent referred to the stand this party has towards citizenship integration, which purports to be free of stereotyping and ethnic prejudice. She said:

'The left understands that the situations of justice depend on circumstances that can change, and the right understands the circumstances with which one is born and as belonging to their 'nature'. I consider this to be the fundamental difference, therefore I think that the left has ideology, while the right has interest; they are two distinct things. For this reason, when we say that you should vote for the 'left' so we can all be better, we are not only saying 'vote only because this is my party', we are saying a lot more than this.'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

This section has shown that political involvement is viewed by most of the interviewees as a critical element in developing political opportunities. They claimed their co-operation and alliances with both government entities and partner women's organisations to be generally good, although influence is believed to be dependent on the leadership of a particular government (i.e., a socialist government).

7.3.2A slow journey towards recognition and common spaces, but different interests and influence?

The relationship between the state and key women's organisations is nurtured through formal and informal dialogue and co-operation which might be seen as part of both the institutional and the discursive side of the political opportunity structure. This sub-section discusses the opportunities available to majority and minority women's organisations for strengthening this relationship, both with each other and with the state. It is assessed through the use of 'common spaces' created for feminist debate.

Most representatives interviewed for this study talked about the importance of creating such common spaces for debate, where collaborations and interaction with each other and with the government can develop. They argued that inter-organisational collaborations are critical in trying to approach and engage with the government on gender related issues, particularly with respect to promoting

legislation on gender equality and gender violence, but also in creating informal networks and organising events and campaigns.

Some respondents argued that such collaborations are mostly initiated during various types of feminist encounters. They range from formal spaces, such as forums, round tables, seminars and workshops, where different women's groups come together for legislative proposals, initiatives or changes, white papers or ad-hoc committees, to more informal spaces such as organising events, campaigns, lobbying and celebrations on November 25th (International Day against gender violence) and on the International Women's Day on March 8th.

Organising these events has not been free of divisions and controversy. Within the feminist movement there has been a quite open division between the more radical feminist groups, including lesbian groups, former extreme left party members but currently non-political activists, also referred to as 'women of Barquillo', and the more liberal feminists groups. This historical division is, however, by most respondents presented in positive terms. For example, a long time activist who identifies herself as belonging to the left said:

'There is another point of encounter, where there is the more radical feminism with which we have contact, these are necessary people and it is very important that they exist. We meet in Barquillo 48, there are some buildings there (...) Some of them [radical feminists] (the majority of whom are not connected to any political party), at some point had some connection with the [communist] National Party (NP) movement, the communist extra-parliamentary party which disappeared, from the extreme left. They are reticent, [but] they are necessary because they know the utopia and beyond, and are almost without any other ties.'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

In Spain, the 8th of March is regarded not only as an important feminist symbol, a day of protest against male dominance and a celebration of the struggle for women's liberation and equality with men, but also as a symbol of progress and the modernisation of Spain, where a variety of collective actors like government agencies and other public institutions, political parties and labour unions, are invited along to various groups of feminist activists and women's groups and associations (Sundman, 1999).

Social anthropology literature suggests that organised collective events like the women's demonstration in Madrid have significant similarities with religious rituals, which in times of crisis and conflict may produce solidarity in the absence of shared values, unity and consensus (Kertzer, 1988, in Sundman, 1999). Sundman (1999) argues that such rituals and symbols may be used by social movements that lack an overall organisational structure, as they enable the binding together of scattered groups and make the participants and the public see such groups as expressions of a common political force.

In terms of political opportunities created by such events, there is a danger that these 'rituals' create further divisions, especially in situations where the feminist movement speaks for 'other' subordinated, stigmatised, powerless and disadvantaged groups. This is a more silent type of division that has recently emerged between majority and minority women's groups, and this division is not always acknowledged at or during various feminist types of encounters. Such division is discussed less in terms of collaborations to advance the feminist ideals and more in terms of barriers the immigrant women have to participate or be included in the majority's movement.

The National Observatory for Gender Violence is one such critical space that allows women's agency to be directly involved with the government's work on gender violence programs. The Observatory was mentioned numerous times by both majority and minority women interviewees. Such inclusion of women's organisations in government consultations and policy implementation is a clear example of an available political opportunity structure. Other state institutions mentioned by both groups of respondents (majority and minority women activists) as being actively involved in co-operation on gender related programmes, were the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, the Justice Ministry, the Interior Ministry, and especially the Women's Institute. Respondents discussed these relations in terms of opportunities for political interaction and policy change, but more specifically they argued that these formal contacts create financial opportunities for their organisations (as most violence programmes are financed from Government funds). Respondents argued that the Women's Institute (WI) continues to play an important role for most women's organisations in Spain, but some distinctions need to be made in terms of

representation and inclusion of different actors from the women's movement. In a recent article Valiente (2007) explores the role of the WI from 1983 until 2003 in creating policy allies with the feminist movement on various policy areas, including job training, abortion, prostitution, political representation, and unemployment protection. She identifies several conditions that can facilitate the Women's Institute's ability to act as an ally of the feminist movement, such as leadership and informal networks to support the politics of the 'left'. Other facilitating conditions are to debate the issues in the policy arena and to maintain the policy arena open to the intervention of various policy and social actors. However, claims brought forward by the Women's Institute have mostly been related to gender equality and less so to other forms of oppression and discrimination affecting minority and migrant women, as our findings repeatedly suggested.

Importantly, some Romani Spanish minority representatives do not feel represented by any government, despite their recognition of positive recent changes regarding the integration and advancement of the Romani Spanish minority in the society (historically a marginalised and stereotyped group). A Romani minority respondent said that the City Hall of Madrid, as well as the Women's Institute, had provided consistent support to their organisation since its beginnings (including financial support). This had made it possible for her organisation to develop several integration programmes that have been running for the last decade, as well as the latest 'manifesto' (a document claiming equal rights and integration in the labour market for Romani women). She claimed that stronger ties now exist among organisations serving similar groups, such as the Romani organisations or the majority organisations focusing on similar issues (gender violence), or those based on political affiliation.

In Spain, ethnic minority women respondents and their organisations have been less engaged with and involved in the political agenda setting on women's issues than ethnic majority women have. This is reflected in how they are perceived by civil servants interviewed for this study, who consider that not only is there a differentiated influence on gender policy between the two groups, but that the fight is taking place at different levels (of impact). One civil servant said:

'They [the organisations of immigrant and majority women] start from distinct conditions. The immigrant women - if they get together it is because they share a specific problem. The Spanish women meet every time less to share this 'class' of things. The immigrants meet to share problems, and moreover to find solutions, to save time, resources, everything.'

(Madrid, March 2008)

A perception of immigrant women as inhabiting a subordinate position was made explicit when representatives from ethnic minority women's organisations discussed their relation to the state, their involvement with and influence on gender policy. While they recognised having received increased support from the State (more so during the socialist years), they mainly stressed the barriers encountered in bringing up issues of racism and discrimination – (issues typically led and forwarded by immigrant men) - on the majority feminist agenda; an agenda which they argued is generally influential in terms of impacting gender policy.

However, minority women respondents claimed that their influence and relationship with various government entities has progressed since 2006, and that their struggle to integrate a more nuanced approach to gender violence has been recognised and is increasingly being considered by key political players. Key government institutions and partners they mentioned, in addition to those mentioned by majority organisations above, are the Department for Integration and Immigration, the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, and more local women's networks, forums and councils. At the regional level, the Council of Women of the Autonomous Community of Madrid is considered a space that glues together all women's organisations active in the region. Similar structures can be found in other regions in Spain, as part of the decentralised government.

Some minority women respondents observed that at the local level, there is a tendency for political opportunities being increasingly opened to people of immigrant origin (emphasising how Latin American immigrants are perceived as being given preference in local political contexts, compared to other immigrant groups). One minority respondent said:

'The Socialist party in the Community of Madrid included a migrant woman from Colombia to be candidate for a deputy position in the community of Madrid, and [they] put her in a very good position so she can be elected, and this we think is very important.'

At the same time, several ethnic minority interviewees argued that international players, NGOs and various other networks have impacted many of the minority women's organisations in their quests for recognition. They claimed to have received critical support during the initial set-up of their organisation. Support had been received from organisations such as Amnesty International, Movement for Peace, Disarming and Liberty, Euro Net – FGM and European Network for Gypsy Women, among others.

The interviewed civil servants viewed ethnic minority organisations as generally being represented in the higher forums by men, on issues such as discrimination, work integration, and human rights (field notes, Madrid, 2007).

'This makes it hard to recruit women minority organisations that work on the areas of our interest and have impacted policy.'

(Madrid, October 2007)

This argument, which was mentioned several times during the course of this study, demonstrates that minority women's organisations are not believed to have had a significant influence on legislation regarding gender equality and violence against women. Ethnic minority women, thus, appear to have been doubly silenced in Spain: firstly on ethnic minority and immigrant issues, which are dominated by male community and organisational representatives; and secondly on gender equality issues, which are dominated by majority women's movement actors.

Moreover, a dominant view held by many of the interviewed majority women was that 'they' (immigrant or ethnic minority women) learn from 'us' (ethnic majority

women), and through informal networks. Informal networks of ethnic and migrant women are then thought to facilitate more formal voluntary associations in a second stage, where the networks mature and then empower women with less information and knowledge about their rights, such as women who work in the domestic sector, of which 70 per cent are believed to be immigrant women. Through these informal channels, majority respondents argued, migrant women have access to information they would not otherwise have. For example, it was suggested that they may learn how to protect themselves against domestic violence from the Spanish women they work for. Although such views were also shared by minority women respondents, the implications for their alleged inability to organise, associate or protest was clearly stressed only by majority women, with the 'excuse' made on their behalf that they work very long hours, care for their children and often live with no documents and under men's strict supervision.

This led to a situation where little if any recognition is given (by both feminist majority women and government representatives) to the fact that minority women's groups may hold different types of priorities and positions in advancing their agenda. One majority respondent claimed that ethnic majority women have little intention to actually influence the government on issues pertaining to immigrant women:

'I personally do not know that there was any serious, authentic movement in favour of the rights of the immigrant women.'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

Although such a statement sheds light on the lack of integration of minority issues on the majority agenda, it also shows that there is a clear recognition of the fact that majority women have a better position and increased political opportunities to advance change or introduce new items pertaining to minority groups.

Other respondents explained this disconnection in light of the government's non-comprehensive immigration policy, while continuing to place the 'blame' on minority and migrant women's lack of organisation.

'The immigration policies are a bit paralysed and this affects directly the way [migrant] women are attended. You can see an intention to take them into consideration [by the government], but it is not altogether developed nor attended to. The problem also lies in knowing who are their representatives.'

We are now part of Spanish women's associations who are going to defend the rights of the immigrant women, but the immigrant women are not yet organised in Spain.'

(Madrid, June 2007)

Along the same lines, when discussing migrant women's involvement in public policy, another majority respondent who represents an important umbrella organisation mentioned as a critical space for encounters by other respondents, placed the 'blame' for their non-involvement on the allegedly limited immigration policy currently carried out in Spain. She said:

'This is a theme that I know less about, and it is more complicated because it has to do with general social integration politics of all the immigrants in our country, more difficult always for the immigrant women... But this is a topic that we don't work a lot on and therefore it is difficult for me to give you a more detailed opinion.'

(Madrid, June 2007)

Such perceived divisions between minority and majority women's agency is also reflected in how the government addresses migrant women's issues, i.e., on a separate agenda than that put forward by majority feminist activists. The question remains, therefore, who are the more influential players and what are the issues that they put forward on the political agenda? Koopmans et al. (2005: 16) argue that in any given political context there is a fluid and dynamic set of opportunities and constraints that can enable or hinder the success of collective action. However fluid the opportunities are, however, structural inequalities, such as those rooted in ethnic and gender differences, may have a direct impact on mobilisation.

7.3.3 Claiming the fight against gender violence: implementation in an 'unjust' justice system?

As discussed above, majority women interviewed in this study hold values specific to socialist and radical feminism, which tend to focus on women as a group and to challenge the ideologies of capitalism and especially patriarchy. They argued that one of the most powerful ways in which patriarchy is represented in Spain is through certain legal structures, which in their view can hinder the development, the impact and the implementation of several laws aimed at reducing and eliminating gender violence.

For the first part of the 1980s and into the 1990s, gender equality policy has been at the very top of the agenda for most women's organisations in Spain, prompted by an increasingly strong belief that women must work side by side with men, on a gender equal basis, in all spheres of life, from private to public domains. This was followed in recent years (since the mid 1990s) by an uptake of issues regarding violence against women.

Throughout the interviews, the respondents explained that not only did they encounter resistance at the political level, experienced mainly during the conservative years, when there was a limited political will to pass key gender legislation, but it is also reflected in how the judicial process is alleged to (mal-) function. Many respondents described the judicial power of judges as inadequate and perceived judges as lacking a complex understanding of issues pertaining to women who experience gender-related violence, leading to situations where the society blames the women. One interviewee said:

'This is a cultural problem, we have the instruments now [reference to the Law on gender violence passed in 2007] but the very justice system is incapable of understanding the very problem [referring to gender violence]. The women activists who work with these issues [of gender violence] know that this is different from any other penal problem [...] and the [psychological] processes that follow, but the society says "but women withdraw their complaints", "the women don't react".'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

Other respondents perceived the justice system as being flawed by the alleged powerful and non-comprehensive position of the judges. One interviewee said:

'The Gender Violence Law is not providing results because the judges are permanently boycotting [it]. The legislature (Judicatura) in this country, [I am not sure how it is in other European countries, [is it like this, that] the judges left being judges, stricto sensu, for converting into political judges, supporting certain political ideologies. Look what is happening with the Constitutional Court (Tribunal Constitucional) [...] the same goes on with the Gender Violence courts, where they say systematically that women put forward false accusations and complaints. When I started in the Gender Violence Observatory I proposed to investigate if false complaints can be proven. There were none.'

The interviewee further explained how the judges' discretion in gender violence-related cases can hamper implementation of the law:

'The big problem I see is with applying the law because of the judges; this judicial resistance, at least in our country, you could only counter it by imposing imperative laws, if you cut off the arbitrary judicial power. Because they use this arbitrary judicial [power] to undo the law [...] It is about trying to make the law into a protocol. In medicine, the protocols proved to be valuable, especially for treating serious illnesses.'

(Interview, Madrid, October 2007)

Along the same lines, another respondent argued that implementation fails because of the judges who apply the law. She blamed the judges' lack of understanding on an alleged lack of education with respect to gender violence issues:

'The law is applied by the judges; the other day we met a judge who said that it can't be that a woman with a university degree experiences [gender] violence (...). The training of professionals is critical. The training of judges is critical... the problem is that the judges are in charge of their own training. They have this institution that gives them regulations and they don't let anyone enter there (...). They receive training for five hours and [then] they consider themselves gender experts.'

(Interview, Madrid, June 2007)

Focusing on the same types of current barriers to the implementation of the new gender violence law, another respondent stressed the potential of recent legislative changes in the long run:

'The law is very complicated and I think we are still in a very experimental phase. There are a lot of problems with the judges to be able to apply this law. The police are [increasingly] collaborating [and] some others are [increasingly] becoming more aware and familiarised. The Law is only from last year and it will take about 10 years before it will work.'

(Interview, Madrid, February 2008)

The implementation and impact is also considered from a national versus regional/local perspective, as women's movements are believed to have different impact at each of these levels. The national organisations are believed to have more impact on legislation, such as getting laws passed, but also mostly because influential national women's associations are perceived to be linked with party politics, such as the PSOE and the Partido Popular (PP) (field notes, Madrid, 2007). At the regional level, women's organisations are believed to be more influential in implementing policy. However, the local political scenario can also be a critical

barrier for implementation. One example mentioned during an interview was Navarra, where abortion is not practiced despite the fact that abortion is legally permitted through national legislation.

'Women from that region have to travel if they need an abortion, because they would not find a public clinic that would perform abortion, and the private ones cost way too much so they can't afford it. It is a way to exclude women from their rights.'

(Field notes, Madrid 2007)

Another interviewee also focused on the application of the law in different regions:

'This country is a specialist in making a lot of laws, but then you have to follow through ... and this is where the difficulties emerge, I want to say it's failing with many measures of the anti-violence law [...] how they are applied in many autonomous communities. There are a lot of measures taken at the local level, a lot of procedures on women's issues, in a small city hall if you go, you will find that somebody takes care of specific programmes, training, prevention, education, on sex-education, anti-violence, employment ... [...] But those more conservative communities are worse off ...'

(Interview, Madrid 2007)

However, respondents stressed that women's movements from Andalucía, Córdoba, Valencia, Navarra, and Cataluña (in particular Barcelona) have been important in impacting different gender-related laws, such as the divorce law, the gender violence law, and the gender equality law (field notes, Madrid, 2007).

Although key instruments have been developed during the past years to prevent and combat gender violence in Spain, both at the national level and sub-national and local levels, major implementation issues seem to remain. They can be identified on two levels, one formal and one informal. On a formal level such issues are mostly related to the judicial processes and to key actors involved in the organisation and administration of the judicial system. On a more informal level, however, there are critical aspects pertaining to certain women's groups – such as the migrant or minority groups, whose claims and demands regarding gender violence may be altogether missed both by government and by majority women's organisations. These types of implementation issues need to be equally prioritised and brought forward on the feminist agenda in order to advance social integration and representation among all women in Spain.

7.3.4 Women’s organisations and the creation of national political plans to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women

The analysis of qualitative interviews which constitutes the basis of our study in Spain shows that claims made by women’s organisations have come mostly from majority organisations with large membership, well known for lobbying and advocacy on issues of violence against women, as well as those with political influence in the Socialist government. Spanish women’s organisations have called for a comprehensive law against gender violence since 1993. A number of campaigns were carried out until 1998, when the Socialist Party took up the challenge and invited such organisations to prepare the first draft law against gender violence, filed in Parliament by the Socialist Parliamentary Group on December 16, 2001. A vote was taken to accept the proposal, which was finally rejected due to the votes of the then ruling Popular Party. Below are a number of selected women’s organisations that are frequently engaged with the government in amending issue-based policy and legislation pertaining to various aspects of gender violence.

THEMIS – Association of Women Lawyers

Foundation of Separated and Divorced Women

Enclave Feminista

Progressive Women’s Foundation (Fundación Mujeres Progresistas)

Women’s Foundation (Fundación Mujeres)

CAVAS, Association in Support of Women Victims of Rape

Committee for Protection of Bad Treatment Against Women

Network of Feminist Organisations against Gender Violence (La Red de Organizaciones Feministas contra la Violencia de Genero)

Government consultations with women’s organisations increasingly take place through key government entities, such as the Rector Council within The Women’s Institute and the National Observatory against Gender Violence (which also organises issue-based “platforms” and national, regional or local workshops and meetings). In a selective mapping of documents from Spain our emphasis was on the claims-making forwarded by these two institutions and on the outcomes of these claims, as evidenced by governmental policy and legislation (for further details about

the methodology used in the mapping of documents, see the individual country report from Spain).

In the past four years, the current socialist government has placed gender equality at the forefront of its political agenda, recognising that inequality and discrimination are incompatible with a democratic society. The inclusion of gender violence as a form of discrimination against women by the Spanish government followed several developments in the international realm. These include the 1985 Third World Conference on Women organised by the United Nations in Nairobi, when abuse against women was, for the first time, recognised as a form of discrimination, later mirrored in Recommendation 19 of the CEDAW which called on governments to adopt prevention and protection measures in the area of violence against women. Later, in 1993, at the second Congress on Human Rights held in Vienna, violence against women was, for the first time, defined as gender violence (Ag 48/104). In 1994, moreover, the Human Rights commission assigned responsibilities to states for acts of violence against women (Annual Report, National Observatory against Gender Violence, 2008).

As mentioned above, the Women's Institute (WI) has played a major role in developing gender policy in Spain and in bringing women's issues on the government's agenda. Equality plans were initially created by the WI, as main instruments for articulating gender policy. They comprised a structured set of initiatives, approved by the Cabinet, on a variety of issues affecting women, including gender violence. Plan I (1988-1990) initiated the first legislative reforms to create a legal basis for equality, and Plan II (1990-1995) described the practical measures for equal opportunity. Plan III (1997-2000) was the first step for the formulation and development of policies and programmes to achieve equality for women.

The beginning of these equality plans came after the initial campaign against domestic violence in 1983, followed by the opening of the first shelter for battered women in 1984 (Instituto de la Mujer 1994; 1999). By 1997, 129 shelters provided services to victims. By the late 1990s, there was one centre for every 302,000 inhabitants in Spain; a proportion lower than the recommendation forwarded in a

Resolution of the European Parliament in 1997 - a shelter for every 100,000 inhabitants (Public Ombudsman, 1998).

In 1997 gender violence was mentioned as a section within the third National Equality Plan (1997-2000). This plan, issued by the Women's Institute (which at that time was placed within the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs) on March 1997, discussed violence against women (section 7), particularly in response to the fourth Women's World Conference in Beijing from 1995, where it was acknowledged that 'violence against women is an obstacle against gender equality, against peace and development of communities, impeding women to enjoy their rights and fundamental liberties' (fourth Women's World Conference, Beijing, 1995). In the third National Equality Plan, *gender violence* is defined as physical, psychological and sexual maltreatment that can take form in various ways, including rape, abuse, sexual intimidation, trafficking of women and forced prostitution.

A specific area (section 8) of the third National Equality Plan is devoted to women facing social exclusion. According to the plan, women face diverse forms and degrees of social exclusion. The key categories mentioned here are immigrant women, women from the Romani community, women involved in prostitution (often mentioned in connection with drug consumption and HIV infection), women in prison or detention centres, and single mothers. The plan argues that, although very diverse, all these groups experience a precarious economic situation, which further undermines their involvement and full inclusion in society. As concrete measures to address these issues, the plan proposes (among other things) the creation of alternative residence homes, such as Respite Centres as well as Day Centres for women; the promotion of programmes addressing the labour and social inclusion of immigrant and Spanish Romani women; and training support for social professionals working in this area. Another key area mentioned in this plan (following recommendations of the Women's World Conference in Beijing), is to support the creation of associations and non governmental organisations with the purpose of enhancing women's agency and enable women to influence their social, political and cultural lives.

Following the third National Equality Plan, Spain published the first *Plan of Action Against Domestic Violence* in 1998. The plan was developed by the Women's Institute in collaboration with women's organisations. This Action Plan contains proposals for measures to combat violence against women in the fields of prevention, education, support services for victims, health, legal reforms, and research.

Consequently, the Plan of Action against gender violence was revised and developed for 2001-2004. This plan defines goals for each area of action, the actions to be taken, and the bodies responsible for the implementation of various measures. However, only one area of violence against women is addressed, namely domestic violence. The 2001 plan was not considered comprehensive by most women's organisations involved in the lobbying, therefore several protests and campaigns took place that year (such as Zero Tolerance to Gender Violence in 2002, (*Tolerancia cero con la violencia de género*) (*Red feminista*, 2008).

In September 2002 the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General established the Observatory against Domestic and Gender-based Violence to provide follow-up to the treatment of domestic and gender-based violence within the Spanish justice system. The Observatory provides follow-up to individual judicial decisions and resolutions concerning measures to protect the victims of such violence.

The Organic Law 1/2004 on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence was passed in December 2004, as the first of this kind in Spain and in Europe.⁸³ This law began to address some of the recommendations of the fifth CEDAW periodic report from Spain. Several women's organisations, and members of the Rector (Executive) Council of the Women's Institute, participated in policy processes and successfully influenced policy as well as legislative and administrative measures, as reflected in this document (*National Observatory against Gender Violence, Annual Report, 2007*). Additionally, several regional governments

⁸³ The legislation governing this plan up to that point was Law 27/2003, 31st July 2003 (*reguladora de la Orden de protección de las víctimas de la violencia doméstica*).

(*Comunidades Autonomas*) in Spain passed gender violence-specific legislation. The national law completes a series of legislative reforms, which started after Franco's dictatorship was abolished. Since then, the Spanish central state policies with regard to violence against women (VAW) included extensive legal reforms, however with limited services for victims of violence.

A National Plan to Heighten Awareness and Prevent Gender Violence was issued in December 2006, by the Spanish Congress, for a period of two years. This National Plan brings forward additional claims made by women's organisations (through the Rector Council of Women's Institute) as well as trying to address critical issues highlighted in the fifth periodic CEDAW report from July 2003. It is considered the most comprehensive plan developed in Spain so far.

Whilst creating additional services, the National Plan also aims to address some of the implementation critiques forwarded by women's organisations. The plan is structured along two dimensions: prevention, and communication and information. In principle, the strategies identified in the plan along these dimensions should help achieve the plan's strategic objective to improve the response regarding gender violence both within the family environment and within the society.

Throughout the Plan, women's organisations are recognised as mobilising and participating actors, providing expertise and support towards achieving some of the identified objectives. They are mentioned because of their preventative role (through the education programmes they provide), and because of their dissemination of information regarding various aspects of gender violence. They are also referred to in relation to their role in lobbying, campaigning and securing a new political vision for gender violence policy.

Other points of concern that arose from the CEDAW fifth periodic report from Spain (2003/2004) in relation to the position of immigrant women, women in prison, and women with disabilities, have been also addressed in the 2006 Plan. However, recent reports from Amnesty International, together with claims made by ethnic minority women's groups, argue that these efforts have not been prioritised in the same manner as other policies. For example, the National Plan, although

recognising that educational activities to prevent gender violence in the community should pay particular attention to the diversity of pupils, such as those with disabilities, or those pertaining to immigrant or minority groups, does not offer any concrete measures (besides publishing gender violence preventative guides for parents) of how that is to be achieved or who is accountable for implementing such measures.

Several critiques have been forwarded by women's organisations, especially in relation to the implementation of this law, as violence against women continues seriously to affect many women. Between 2001 and 2008, 425 women were killed by their partner or ex-partner in gender/domestic violence cases in Spain, with 71 of the murders occurring in 2007 and 88 women up to October 2008 (*Red Feminista*, accessed October 10, 2008).

In the first phase after the law was issued, proposals from women's organisations included the creation of Violence Against Women Courts staffed by professionals trained in gender violence; increased educational programmes, with a clear focus on the prevention of violence; increased material and human resources for the implementation of the law; and expansion of the reach of the law, especially in health, education, care systems, police interventions, and judicial responses (Amnesty International, 2008).

Some of these issues have been partially resolved in the last two years, such as the set up of 'Violence Against Women Courts' in 2005 (*Juzgado de violencia sobre la mujer*), and several other improvements in the dissemination of the law, such as the issuance of educational materials about awareness, prevention, detection and intervention measures in cases of gender violence to schools, hospitals and other local services, including the police. Training for professionals was also achieved with the support of numerous women's organisations with special grants to combat gender violence from the government.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ In 2007, the Spanish government designated over 280 million Euros for the fight against gender violence directed towards women.

Formal coordination and collaborations between the General Council of the Judiciary (*Consejo General del Poder Judicial*) together with the special Gender Violence Courts and the police in issuing citations (protection orders) was also approved in 2005. These new legislative measures are intended to provide increased legal and psychological assistance to victims of gender violence, including penal and judicial protection, as well as psychological treatment for the aggressors.

However, representatives from women's groups have complained that progress in fighting domestic violence continues to be hampered by delays made by judges and police in enforcing court sentences or orders, and the lenient treatment of perpetrators in some cases. The courts are overwhelmed with cases and are short-staffed, so prosecutions can take a long time. After the creation of the special courts for violence against women in 2005 and the end of 2007, 69,400 men were prosecuted and 48,971 convicted. In 2007 alone, 126,293 complaints were filed. In its latest annual report from 2007, the National Observatory of Gender Violence (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Collection: Against Gender Violence Documents, 2007) also claims that there is too much emphasis on penal and judicial measures, as opposed to few prevention measures, particularly with respect to measures targeted at the education system. The report also argues that treatment services offered to abusers is very unevenly spread across different regions and that overall there is a strong doctrinal resistance to the concept of gender violence and its positioning in the framework of discrimination. The same report calls for a higher level of institutional synergy in approaching gender violence and gender equality.

7.3.5 Racism and discrimination in relation to violence against women

Throughout the Organic Law 1/2004, the National Plan on the Prevention of Gender Violence, The Annual Reports and the latest evaluation of the implementation of the law (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, 2006), there is very little mention of how other gender violence-related issues pertaining to immigrant and ethnic women are to be addressed. As argued previously, issues of racism and discrimination in relation to violence against women need to be further integrated in the larger gender violence debate in Spain.

Following the recommendations of the 5th periodic CEDAW report, the Spanish Government was asked to supply numerical evidence of gains, if any, made by immigrants in bettering their situation, since the government had apparently not been able to evaluate the impact of its anti-discrimination policies on immigrants. In the experience of the CEDAW Committee, the necessary reforms to eliminate discrimination could not be put in place unless there was factual evidence with which to diagnose the problem.

Several amendments were implemented with regard to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The first amendment was to introduce article 149, par. 2 to the Criminal Code, stating that 'any person inflicting any of various types of genital mutilation on another shall be punished with six to twelve years of imprisonment' (Codigo Penal). (FGM was previously mentioned in the Organic Law 11/2003, on Specific Measures related to Law and Order, Domestic Violence and Social Integration of Foreigners as a single offence.) The second change was the Organic Act 3/2005 amending Organic act 6/1985 on Judiciary Power, on the prosecution of acts of female genital mutilation outside Spanish soil. This act empowers Spanish Authorities to pursue female genital mutilation even when the offence is committed abroad (Women's Institute, 2007).

There is little current information about how such changes are carried out in practice. One report about FGM, covering the time period between 1999 and 2004, conducted by The Commission of Women's Rights and Equal Opportunity, was submitted to the European Parliament in July 2001. It reviews all the legislation and proceedings up to that point and requires further action towards abolishing and penalising this crime as a violation of human rights. Following previous recommendations, another project that assessed the FGM situation in Spain prior to 2005 was conducted by Fundación Mujeres, (Women's Foundation) under the Daphne 2003-2004 Programme (Fundación Mujeres, Report on the Spanish Situation, 2004). This report lists local, regional and national legislative efforts to combat FGM and other types of honour-related violence. A few non-governmental organisations involved in disseminating information about combating FGM are listed; they include CEAR, ACNUR, Amnesty International, Amam España and the Women Lawyers' Themis. However, more analysis of the implementation of the latest amendments is needed in order to

assess whether the necessary resources are being put into prevention, detection, and especially follow-up, of FGM higher-risk cases.

Women in minority communities often face multiple discriminations, but due to the fact that immigrant women's issues are currently dealt with by distinct political, administrative and legal bodies, such multiple discriminations are, therefore, not addressed in the necessary comprehensive manner.

The Organic Law 1/2004, mainly tailored to address domestic violence, has little reference to immigrant women. There is, however, explicit description of how Protection orders should be handled when foreign women are the victims of gender violence, which is also reflected by Organic Law 4/2000 of the Rights, Liberties and Social Integration of Foreigners in Spain. This law is the main legal act that establishes the right to independent residence for women foreigners who are victims of domestic violence and sexual exploitation (including those with irregular status in Spain) (Protection of Migrants, UN, 2007). For example, women who initially entered Spain under the Family Reunification Act and who are dependent on the 'abusive partner', can obtain an independent residence permit. Women who reside illegally in Spain, can request, based on the Order of Protection, authorisation for temporary residency for humanitarian reasons. During this time, the sanction due to the illegality should be suspended. The order of protection can not only be required by the victim, but also by family members and by social services. The law recommends that the order of protection be required at the same time the complaint is made, although it is also possible to require it later. The court has to issue the order within 72 hours of the request, after an individual consultation with the victim and the aggressor. However, this residency is only valid for one year, and does not carry a work permit. This can be requested in a similar manner as the residency, on grounds of exceptional difficulties. All victims of gender violence who cannot work, can register with the local authorities and are entitled to receive social benefits (**Renta Activa de Inserción**) provided that they register as active job-seekers and attend specialised training courses. According to Law 1/2004 children of foreign victims of domestic violence have immediate access to schools, even when residency change is required.

However, such protection measures do not thoroughly discuss immigrant women's cultural, legal and economic ability to make use of the law. Amnesty International has, on several occasions, denounced 'the administrative invisibility and vulnerability of undocumented immigrant women', especially those facing gender violence, who are denied a residence permit and access to support and assistance after breaking up with their partner. In the latest report (2007), Amnesty International argued that victims of domestic violence continue to face obstacles in obtaining protection, justice and social services, with migrant women facing additional difficulties in accessing essential resources, such as financial assistance, psychological treatment and shelters.

Amnesty International's report (2007) argues that key provisions of the law are still being developed or are being implemented too slowly. However, some positive measures had been introduced, such as a protocol for health workers dealing with victims of domestic violence. According to the same report, in terms of the use of health services, immigrant women find it easier to obtain an entitlement card in Spain than elsewhere in Europe, even if they have irregular immigration status (Amnesty International, 2007).

In 2005 the Secretariat of State for Immigration and Emigration established the Spanish National Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (Protection of Migrants, UN, 2007). The main objective of this centre is to carry out periodic surveys of the situation of racism and xenophobia in Spain, which involves gathering data, expert analysis and publication of a detailed diagnosis of the situation.

The work of this National Observatory is, however, limited in bringing up migrant and minority women's issues along with those of racism and discrimination. Apart from the trafficking of women (ECRI, 2006), little mention of women migrants is found in such reports.

Both our in-depth interviews and our mapping of selected documents from Spain underscore that further work needs to be done in the area of racism and discrimination, especially with regard to the use of various aspects of the gender violence law, in relation to ethnic minority and immigrant women.

7.3.6 Summary remarks about the Spanish case

In section 7.3 we have emphasised the historically close relationship between the feminist movement and the Socialist party in Spain. Particular advances have been made concerning gender equality and violence against women policies under the current socialist government headed by Zapatero (since 2004). Examples include the new law on gender violence from 2004, and a subsequent national plan on the prevention of gender violence from 2006, on which the women's movement in Spain has had considerable impact.

In Spain an important role is played by a government agency, the Women's Institute, in developing gender equality policies. Despite early fears that the WI would substitute the role of the women's movement in advancing the cause of gender equality and women's rights, the WI has recently been viewed more favourably as it has, increasingly, consulted the women's movement in developing its policies. The WI in general and the National Observatory for Gender Violence in particular, provide potential spaces for both minority and majority women to participate in policy-making processes (see, however, Valiente 2007).

The integration of immigrant and ethnic minority women's interests and concerns has been a considerable challenge in Spain, both within the women's movement as such and within state-formulated policies and action plans. The law on gender violence from 2004 focuses mainly on domestic violence, with little reference being made to immigrant and ethnic minority women. The national plan to prevent gender violence issued in December 2006 does address some issues related to immigrant women, but the plan has been met with criticism about shortcomings in this area.⁸⁵ A particular problem concerns immigrant women with insecure immigrant status who have been subjected to domestic violence. On the whole, there is little evidence of an intersectional approach concerning violence against women.

⁸⁵ A more recent development from January 2009, which lies outside the time period considered in our report, is the new plan to prevent gender violence against immigrant women for the period 2009-2012, published by the Ministry of Equality ('Plan de atención y prevención de la violencia de género en población extranjera inmigrante').

In Spain there appears to be a division between immigration and integration of ethnic minorities as one sphere of politics, while gender equality constitutes a different sphere, with little or no overlap between the two. Those who “fall between the cracks” in both spheres are immigrant and ethnic minority women. The gender equality agenda appears to be mainly, if not exclusively, set by majoritised women in Spain, while minoritised women are largely on the sidelines as a result of a combination of factors (such as a lack of organisations primarily concerned with minority women’s interests, and a lack of inclusion of minority women in the majority women’s movement and in political decision-making processes). In the sphere of immigration and integration politics, minoritised men, often the leaders of immigrant and minority ethnic voluntary associations, are perceived as spokespersons for entire communities. In our analysis we have documented that immigrant and ethnic minority women in Spain are often perceived as victims and as lacking in agency due to alleged cultural forms of oppression. In such a political climate, it will be necessary for immigrant and ethnic minority women themselves to mobilise and demand inclusion in political processes. Moreover, majority women have a responsibility in creating more inclusive forms of participation, in the form of widening the political agenda to include ethnic minority women’s interests, and including ethnic minority women in political discussion, mobilisation, and decision-making processes. Some advances have been made, particularly since 2006, as some ethnic minority women are being heard in political debate. No less than a cultural shift seems to be required, however, in order to change the ways in which both the women’s movement and the state engages with ethnic minority women in Spain.

7.4 The Case of the UK

In this section our analysis focuses on contemporary policy processes in the United Kingdom in the period from 1997 and onwards in which Labour has been the incumbent governing party. Many women’s organisations and feminist academics have been critical of the Labour government’s level of engagement with gender equality politics (Lovenduski, 2005; Benn, 2000; Coote, 2000; see also Chapter 2 of the UK country report); however, at the same time it is widely recognised that this administration has done much more than previous governments to advance policies that promote gender equality (see Annesley et al., 2007). Prior to the 1997 General

Election, the strategy by which the Labour party sought to attract women voters included the promise of a Ministry for Women. After the election this was scaled down to a Women's Unit located within the Cabinet Office and two Ministers for Women (one senior and one junior post). The election of a number of women and feminists to positions of power, both within Parliament itself (partly on the basis of all-women shortlists) and within government, also promised increased opportunities for women-friendly policies formulated from above.

Since 1997, the 'women-friendly' Labour government can be said to have provided a new set of opportunity structures for women's organisations to influence policy; however, there has been resistance within the Labour government to labelling their own policies as 'feminist' and taking on board a fully-fledged feminist agenda. New Labour might to some extent have *feminised* British politics and policy, but whether its emphasis on developing women-friendly policies centred on supporting women's roles in the labour market makes the government and the state *feminist* is a debated issue. If the 'weak' definition of state feminism suggested by Kantola and Outshoorn (also referred to in our Chapter 4) is accepted, namely that state feminism 'denote[s] the efforts by women's policy machineries to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women', then the British state would, arguably, qualify as feminist. If, however, our definition of feminism is limited to activity that explicitly challenges the dominant gendered power relations and confronts the gender order (McBride and Mazur, 2008; see also our Chapter 3), then the implementation of women-friendly policies does not make the British state *feminist* as long as it does not aim to combat more entrenched gendered structures of inequality (see Annesley et al., (2007: 19-20). Although women's movement demands are, to some extent, being advocated 'inside the state' (Lovenduski, 2005 b: 4), by individual women ministers and women MPs, and by women's and gender policy agencies, it might be overstated to claim that the current government has institutionalised a form of 'state feminism'.⁸⁶

A continued, albeit, uneven and incoherent mobilisation from below, through women's organisations, has kept pressures on government to perform on gender

⁸⁶ See however Sones (2005: 174), where Labour government minister Tessa Jowell declares that 'the fact is, this is the most feminist government in history'.

equality policies. This mobilisation has, at times, been characterised by pressure from individual organisations, while at other times organisations have joined in alliance and voiced stronger collective demands. Furthermore, women's organisations have sometimes displayed disagreement by voicing competing and conflicting demands on the state.

The mobilisation of women's groups, organisations and movements in any given social and political context depends partly on the social problems of gender, inequality that are identified as critical and that, as such, merit the mobilisation of collective protest. In the 1970s the women's liberation movement in England identified equal pay, equal education and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand, free 24-hour nurseries, and an end to male violence against women among the critical demands it would forward at a collective level. While some of the old demands have been met through policy changes, others continue to be voiced strongly by participants in the current women's movement, including equal pay and an end to violence against women. New demands from women's organisations that have arisen due to changing social and political contexts often concern the same broad themes that were raised in the 1970s. Current demands related to issues such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, the trafficking in women and prostitution, and the licensing of lap-dancing clubs, have all been added to the violence against women agenda. Compared with the 1970s, however, there is no broad *formal* agreement among women's movement actors on the critical claims of gender equality that should be addressed and prioritised by the state.

The immediate section below outlines the main features of the national political opportunity structure that provide opportunities and constraints for women's organisations in their attempts to influence policy. The focus is on opportunity structures at the state level (Westminster); opportunity structures specific to the devolved governments in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland are not included in the overview. Further sections dealing with the UK case include a discussion of the particular discursive dispute over definitions and strategies that is taking place within the policy area of violence against women, and an examination of the ways in which women's organisations seek to influence policies at the national level and the claims they make in relation to such influence.

7.4.1 Institutional and discursive political opportunities

Following Koopmans et al., (2005: 19- 20), we make a distinction between *general* and *field-specific* institutional and discursive opportunity structures. In the UK, the general institutional opportunity structure reflects the main features of the political system, such as the party system, the system of government, power balances, and so on. Since New Labour came to power in 1997, the corporatist and tripartite features of Britain's political system have generally diminished (if not vanished); however, across this period, pressure groups, including social movement actors, have experienced more inclusive governmental practices (Budge et al., 2004; Jones 2004; Lovenduski, 2007).⁸⁷

Within a pluralist model of competition between different group interests, pressure groups and social movements are expected to voice their particular interests and attempt to influence government policy. Rather than being locked in fixed, corporatist structures, particular organisations may be part of small policy communities with a relatively stable membership of 'insider groups'⁸⁸ that consult regularly with politicians and civil servants on particular policy issues, or part of larger policy networks characterised by a more unstable or 'shifting membership of groups and experts who [are] only occasionally consulted' (Jones, 2004: 255-256; see also Scharpf, 1999). Both formal and informal interaction between different types of actors in such policy communities and networks may influence the formation and implementation of public policy. Although pressure groups and social movement actors do not have any formal decision-making power, their participation in decision-making processes may involve the power to present ideas or definitions of particular issues (Berven and Selle, 2001: 16), or the power to define particular policy problems and how they should be dealt with (Lovenduski, 2005b).

Organisations that seek political influence have alternative means and strategies available in terms of where and how they attempt to exert such influence. Political parties, Parliamentary party groups, individual members of Parliament,

⁸⁷ Tripartite refers to power sharing between government, business, and labour organisations (see Hayward, 2006).

⁸⁸ The term 'insider groups' was coined by Grant (1985).

Parliamentary Select Committees, Ministers and other members of government, and civil servants, are examples of actors being approached by women's movement organisations. Available strategies and tactics that promote non-confrontational and dialogic interaction include participation in public government consultations, participation in working groups and external advisory groups, submitting petitions, lobbying, and informal meetings. As we will see below, the organisations we have interviewed report varying degrees of access to high level ministers and civil servants. While some have informal and direct access to ministers, others are limited to formal contact and/or indirect access through civil servants. Most of the interviewed organisations have contacts with one or more individual MPs. Moreover, they spend a substantial amount of organisational resources on responding to public government consultations. Media coverage may also be used to seek the attention of policy-makers, and further pressure may be exerted through more confrontational tactics, including demonstrations and sit-ins. Demonstrations in which women's organisations have participated in 2008 include a rally organised in support of Southall Black Sisters against Ealing Council's decision to cease funding the organisation, and demonstrations organised outside Parliament in support of current abortion legislation.

The UK political system also exhibits field-specific features such that each particular political field (for example, 'gender equality') is characterised by designated institutions, policy communities and networks, and ways of working. In our analysis we are particularly concerned with 'women's policy machineries', 'women's policy agencies' or 'institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women' – or those government institutions that 'pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women' (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 3). Each political field, such as 'gender equality' might be further broken down into various issues (e.g., gender pay gap; violence against women), and each of these might have their own field-specific institutions and agencies. Research has shown that different policy fields 'offer very different political opportunity structures from women's point of view', and our research supports these findings (ibid.: 7).

It is not a straightforward task to produce an overview of the opportunity structures that are particularly relevant to the women's movement in relation to gender equality

policies and policies on violence against women. The UK gender machinery is fragmented and poses challenges to government attempts at policy coordination as well as to women's organisations that wish to lobby government institutions. Our focus is, therefore, on the main institutions that deal with gender equality policies, with a particular emphasis on policies related to violence against women issues.

As mentioned above, a new government institution called the Women's Unit (WU), later named the Women and Equality Unit, WEU), was established by the Labour government in 1997. In 2007, the functions of the WEU were transferred to the newly created Government Equalities Office (GEO), thus signalling a shift towards a more intersectional approach to structural disadvantage. The GEO is responsible for the government's overall strategy on equality, and currently leads on policies related to the equality strands of gender and sexuality. Responsibility for other major equality strands which are part of the intersectional approach are, however, located outside the GEO, as policy implementation related to the disability and age strands are led by the Department for Work and Pensions, while policy implementation related to the race and faith/belief strands are led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The WEU has, throughout its roughly ten years of existence, been criticised for poor leadership and lack of resources. Our interviews with representatives from both women's organisations and civil servants indicate that the WEU and now the GEO is generally not perceived as central to advocacy and lobbying efforts. This could of course mean that women's organisations do not take advantage of an existing opportunity structure, but alternatively it gives an indication of the WEU's rather weak political position (and the GEO's similarly poor standing with regard to women's issues). The many and shifting locations of the WEU (it has variously been subsumed under the Cabinet Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Trade and Industry, and the Department for Social Security) has signalled a lack of significance within the overall government structure (Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004; Hunter and Swan, 2007: 486). One of our interviewees described the WEU as 'nomadic', as it has moved around in government, 'according to the Minister that was in charge'. This nomadic existence has, according to the interviewee, 'led to it being in a

powerful position at times, and a weaker position at other times, depending on who the Minister was and depending on which Ministry it was [located within]’.

The current Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman, is a long-standing feminist with high credibility among women’s organisations. In recent years, the WEU has been led by various women Ministers, with or without feminist credibility in the women’s movement (see Lovenduski, 2005a: 162). Political scientist Joni Lovenduski is very critical of what she calls ‘the Women’s Ministry’ in terms of its credibility among civil servants and also its capacity to accomplish, and suggests that ‘its fortunes may indicate that it exists largely for cosmetic reasons’ (Lovenduski, 2005a: 164). Lovenduski’s critical view is echoed by some of our interviewees. ‘I think it has made a difference to have a person that is responsible for women’s equality in the Minister for Women. But if she has no resources and no power then it is not very useful’, said one interviewee. Our interviewees also pointed to other ministers with feminist credibility, and these were not exclusively women. Vernon Coaker, Home Office Minister for Domestic Violence, is an example of a male minister with an increasing standing among women’s organisations. ‘Some of the strongest advocates for gender that I have met in the last six months in the government have been male ministers,’ stated one interviewee.

A clearer indication of a government shift towards intersectional approaches to equality is demonstrated through the establishment of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC) in October 2007, which opened up a new opportunity structure for the women’s movement and incorporated the functions of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) which, in particular, was lobbied by the women’s movement on issues relating to the labour market.⁸⁹ Interviews with women’s organisations and civil servants alike showed a welcoming attitude towards the new intersectional thinking embedded in the GEO and the EHRC, but also demonstrated a guarded sentiment in terms of the extent to which women’s concerns and gender issues would be on the agenda within institutional structures where these compete with the faith and race agendas and their concomitant lobbies. Indeed, some of these sentiments are shared by the UN Committee on the Elimination of

⁸⁹ See <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which in July 2008 recommended that the UK government should 'take the necessary steps to ensure that national machinery for the promotion of equality continues to give *priority attention to gender equality and discrimination against women*' (CEDAW, 2008: 6; our emphasis).

In terms of gender equality issues such as pay and pensions, the Department for Work and Pensions provides opportunity structures for the women's movement. Other important departmental opportunity structures are provided by the Department of Health (women's health issues), the Department for Communities and Local Government (funding of the women's sector, including the new government emphasis on engaging with women's faith groups), and the Ministry of Justice (women in the criminal justice system and women at risk of offending). The governmental opportunity structures relevant to violence against women issues are spread over different institutions, including the Home Office (domestic violence, trafficking, prostitution), the Forced Marriage Unit (joint unit between the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office), the Department of Health (female genital mutilation), the Government Equalities Office (overall strategy on gender equality, including violence against women) and the Crown Prosecution Service (prosecution of offenders and support to victims). As we will see below, the fragmented nature of government structures dealing with violence against women issues is a point of contention for the women's movement.

Another important opportunity structure for women's organisations is the *Women's National Commission* (WNC), established in 1969 with an original membership of 50 women's organisations. The WNC is formally a Non-Departmental Public Body financed by the UK government and set up to provide independent advice to the state in policy matters concerning women. As such, it is also an opportunity structure for the government in terms of soliciting views and potentially gaining legitimacy for policies from a broad range of women's organisations. Currently, the WNC umbrella represents more than 450 partners (Donaghy, 2007), defined as 'women and women's organisations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and

Wales'.⁹⁰ It is located 'alongside' the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and is chaired by Baroness Joyce Gould. The WNC's new director from September 2008 is Barbara-Ann Jones, who has recently lead the International and EU Gender Equality Team within the GEO. The work of the WNC is overseen by the Chair and a board of 15 Commissioners who represent the WNC membership.

The WNC has prioritised its work in so-called 'workstreams' which have been followed up through working groups. The Violence Against Women Working Group (formed in 2002 and led by WNC Commissioner and Professor Liz Kelly since 2005) and its sub-groups have been of particular importance. In addition to producing written consultation responses to the government, the VAW Working Group has played a key role in the formation of the End Violence Against Women Coalition Campaign (EVAW) and in the production of the *Making the Grade* reports from 2005 and onwards. These reports have examined and evaluated government departments on their performance in tackling violence against women (WNC, 2006). The VAW working group has a high standing among external actors, including our interviewees, and is frequently visited by '... representatives from the Home Office, Department of Health, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Women and Equality Unit'.⁹¹

The WNC has also been instrumental in developing and supporting the *Muslim Women's Network* which was established in 2002. Patricia Hewett, then Minister for Women, asked the WNC to set up the Network 'to help bring the voice of Muslim women to Government' (WNC, 2006: 6), thus creating a new opportunity structure for both the government and for Muslim women and their organisations. The Network, in collaboration with the WNC, has carried out a 'listening exercise' among Muslim women around the country resulting in the report 'She Who Disputes: Muslim Women Shape the Debate' (Muslim Women's Network 2006).⁹²

⁹⁰ www.thewnc.org.uk/about_is/index.html, accessed November 23, 2007.

⁹¹ www.thewnc.org.uk/wnc_work/violence_against_women.html, accessed March 27, 2006.

⁹² The WNC also played the key role in providing participants for then Prime Minister Tony Blair and then Minister for Women Ruth Kelly who in May 2006 invited Muslim women to talk directly to the government about their experiences (see Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). In another development, Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Communities Secretary Hazel Blears launched the *National Muslim Women's Advisory Group* (NMWAG), an independent and informal group of 19 Muslim women, in January 2008, thus creating a new opportunity for Muslim women to

In addition to its work on violence against women and on creating opportunities for dialogue between the government and Muslim women, the WNC plays an important role in shadowing the government's international work on gender equality, especially in relation to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and to CEDAW. The WNC represents women's NGOs in the CSW, and as part of its remit the WNC writes shadow reports to the national reports submitted to CEDAW by the UK government (WNC, 2005; WNC, 2007). The shadow reports are produced in consultation with WNC's member-organisations, and thus provide women's organisations with the opportunity to influence the institutionalised questioning of the UK government by the CEDAW Committee and, in the longer run, also the opportunity to influence the formation and development of UK gender equality policies.

Other issues the WNC has engaged in recently are women migrants and asylum seekers, women's human rights, and gender and trade. A government-solicited 'light touch review' of the WNC in 2007 highlighted a need for more active engagement with its member-organisations, but confirmed the WNC's role as 'an important mechanism to enable government to connect directly with women's organisations' (Donaghy, 2007: 7). The review also stated that the WNC 'has an impact and influence which justifies its budget', noting a budget size of £330,000 for the financial year from April 2006 to March 2007 (ibid.: 7 and 3). In September 2008, the WNC budget was increased from £330,000 to £434,000, thus signalling a continued importance of the WNC in relation to government.⁹³ In general, interviewees expressed positive attitudes towards the WNC's existence and its work, but argued that its budget size puts real constraints on what it can actually be expected to achieve, both in terms of policy influence and in terms of contact with its member

influence government policies and for the government to solicit views from Muslim women (see www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/680335, accessed September 11, 2008. NMWAG was explicitly formed as part of the government's work against terrorism, but its remit includes advising the government on education, employment and religious issues such as women's role in the mosque.

⁹³ See the press release from the Government Equalities Office, 'Harriet Harman strengthens Women's National Commission', September 8, 2008, available at <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/news/prpage16.htm> (accessed October 23, 2008).

organisations. One interviewee, for example, stated that the WNC 'may not work as efficiently or as effectively as it ought to and it is desperately short of money, always'.

Furthermore, the review noted that the WNC's independent role 'can mean that it is placed in a difficult position at times bringing unpalatable messages to government ministers' (ibid.: 10). As Stokes (2003: 200) has observed, '... there is a fine line between overt lobbying and behind the scenes manoeuvring and as a governmental body the WNC's remit is to collect and present the views of women, not to take a position or to promote those views'. Indeed, the WNC might sometimes find itself in a rather awkward position as an independent but government-financed body which has in its remit to provide *advice*, while WNC member organisations might want the WNC to take a more active role in *lobbying* the government. One interviewee pointed to the limited opportunity the WNC thus provides in terms of influencing the government: 'The Women's National Commission is funded by government, a part of government, but then can only be so critical because it is essentially a part of government'. Some women's organisations and individual feminists have suggested that the WNC is so weak in terms of influencing government that they have proposed the establishment of a new organisation called *UK Women's Voices*. The MP Joan Ruddock has been central to this effort, in conjunction with representatives from the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) and other women's organisations.⁹⁴ According to an interviewee, it is looked upon as problematic that the WNC does not actively use Parliamentarians. 'Now I suppose the WNC might say "but that is not our role. Our role is as a link between ministerial level, government level and the women's groups". But you could also make the case that government is also Parliament', said the interviewee, who would welcome another organisation, but only insofar as it does not undermine the WNC.

In summary, following McAdam (2006) the institutional opportunity structure includes relatively stable elements such as the party system, the Parliamentary system, and government institutions (some changes in the field-specific institutional structures

⁹⁴ The idea of establishing an 'independent consortium [...] to represent a more collective women's voice to government' is noted in the minutes of a *Meeting of Key Women's Groups*, 15 May 2007, minuted by NAWO and accessed on NAWO's website in November 2007. A further meeting entitled *UK Women's Voices* was held in July 2007 and minuted by NAWO (accessed on NAWO's website in November 2007).

have been outlined above, but on the whole the system can be characterised as stable). Moreover, the following dynamic or volatile features of the institutional opportunity structure can be said to encourage collective action and political protest by women's movement actors in the UK: a relatively open political field system (in the sense that non-governmental organisations have access) with a relatively stable set of policy communities and networks, the presence of elite allies within government (Labour feminists in power) and a political will by the governing party to engage in women-friendly policies including violence against women issues. These dynamic aspects allow women's movement actors opportunities actively to engage in government consultations, lobbying and alliances with system representatives (such as politicians and civil servants).

Gender equality policies and policies to counter violence against women are not only formulated and implemented within national borders. Within the UK itself, current VAW policies vary between Westminster and the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Moreover, supra-national institutions like the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations also engage in promoting gender equality and women's rights in their member states, and international agreements, conventions and human rights charters play an increasingly important role in the development of national policies and standards. Women's movement actors also actively use internationally agreed standards and conventions in order to put political pressure on their national governments (see (Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007: 9; Hawkesworth, 2006; Antrobus, 2004). Our country report on the UK includes an examination of the extent to which the interviewed women's organisations engage in international advocacy through various institutions and mechanisms.

In the discussion above we have highlighted *institutional* opportunity structures. However, opportunity structures may also be *discursive*, as suggested by Koopmans et al., (2005). While the institutional side consists of 'the structure of the political system and the composition of power in the party system', the discursive side consists of 'established notions of who and what are considered reasonable, sensible, and legitimate' (Koopmans, 2004: 451). As such, discursive opportunities may determine which claims gain policy and media attention, which claims resonate

with claims by other actors, and which claims gain legitimacy in public discourse (Koopmans et al., 2005: 19). In our research context, that of the women's movement, it is thus relevant to consider which actors are discursively established, either by the state (government actors) or by movement actors themselves as 'reasonable, sensible and legitimate'. One way of studying this is to examine who is talked about as 'natural' to invite to particular events (such as hearings, committee meetings, consultations, etc.), or who is perceived as a legitimate representative of a particular group or issue. Another way is to ask organisations who they have made alliances with or co-operated with, or who they view as central actors alongside themselves in policy areas such as gender equality and violence against women. The discursive side of the political opportunity structure is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the state's policy documents (such as green papers, white papers, and consultation papers) relating to the preferred role and legitimacy of women's organisations as part of the voluntary sector. Such documents provide the ideological framework within which the voluntary sector in general and women's organisations in particular must navigate and negotiate. In ideological terms, the state may for example support women's organisations and include them in policy-making in order to promote values linked to participatory democracy. On the other hand, women's movement actors themselves produce discourse, and their policy documents give us insights into how they present themselves, other movement actors and the state, and how they view the available discursive political opportunities. In addition to the discursive establishment of *actors*, political *issues* and *demands* may also be established as 'reasonable, sensible and legitimate' or as unreasonable or illegitimate. In other words, problem representations and particular types of framing of issues are elements of the discursive opportunity structure that women's movement actors engage with.

7.4.2 Domestic violence or violence against women? The dispute over definitions and strategy

In 2008 the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW) published 'Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence Against Women for the UK' (Coy, Lovett and Kelly, 2008). The document can be seen as a discursive strategy taken up by women's movement actors in order to create new discourse and new political opportunities, with the ultimate aim of

changing government policy. Its authors note that the 'document is the culmination of decades of work by activists and academics who have lobbied for violence against women (VAW) to be recognised as a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and for governments to respond with the measures required by international human rights obligations' (ibid.: acknowledgments page). This long journey of claims-making by women's movement actors includes the following three basic demands on the state:

- To recognise that 'domestic violence' is not a gender-neutral social phenomenon and that it is perpetrated mostly by men against women, and thus to acknowledge that violence against women is linked to inequalities between women and men.⁹⁵
- To recognise that violence against women can take different forms, including domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and violence linked to perceptions of family honour.
- To develop and implement an integrated strategy on violence against women that acknowledges a gender-based framework, a human rights framework, and linkages between different forms of violence against women.

These movement demands have repeatedly been supported through policy statements made by the United Nations and the Council of Europe (Kelly and Lovett, 2005; Hagemann-White and Bohne, 2007), including most lately by the CEDAW Committee, which in its response to the UK's 5th and 6th reports stated its concern regarding the 'absence of a comprehensive national strategy and programme to combat all forms of violence against women and girls' (CEDAW, 2008: 8-9). Despite such high-profile international support, on the whole the demands listed above are still largely unmet by the British government, which continues to pursue single issues through specific action and delivery plans relating to domestic violence, forced marriage, trafficking, prostitution, sexual violence and abuse. In stark contrast, the devolved government of Scotland has produced, with extensive input from Scottish

⁹⁵ The notion that violence against women is rooted in patriarchy has long been advocated by the Women's Aid movement and by feminist academics in the UK. Southall Black Sisters added the notion of a racist patriarchal state to the discourse on violence against women (see Kantola, 2006: 73-99).

Women's Aid, a joined-up strategy on domestic violence (see Mackay, 2008: 28; Coy et al., 2008: 12). The British government's 'silo-approach' to violence against women issues is evidenced in the fragmented and segmented approach to policy, as various government departments and units are responsible for different parts of the policy agenda. However, as we will see below, a significant event which might signal a turning point in the dispute over definitions and strategy is the Crown Prosecution's new Strategy and Action Plans (CPS, 2008). In this section we take a closer look at claims-making by both movement and government actors in relation to definitions and strategies concerning violence against women policies.

An outstanding achievement by the WNC and EVAW is the production, since 2005, of the *Making the Grade* reports which purport to provide 'an independent analysis of government initiatives on violence against women' (EVAW, 2005: title page; see also EVAW, 2006 and EVAW, 2007). For the first *Making the Grade* report, the WNC sent letters to all government departments, stating that it was undertaking an 'audit' of the government's work on violence against women. All departments were asked to provide written replies which would be published in an overall, annual report. In the report, all departments were given individual scores, with an overall score given to the central government as a whole for its work on violence against women.

The WNC, and later on the EVAW campaign, has managed to collect individual responses from government departments. These have been scored and, in most cases, been found wanting. On a scale from zero to ten, only two government departments scored above five in the last report (the Crown Prosecution Service with seven, and the Home Office with six), while the overall score was just above two (EVAW, 2008: 5).

The grading process has been met with critique and resistance from some politicians and civil servants, while others have seen it as a positive contribution towards policy-development. In a strategic move to address criticism, responsibility for the report was changed from the government-funded Women's National Commission to the independent EVAW Campaign, as the WNC's remit is, as noted above, limited to that of providing *advice* to government. The production of *Making the Grade* could potentially be perceived as involving campaigning and lobbying, which therefore

made it more suitable for a non-governmental organisation like ERAW to take it on. ERAW claims to represent 'seven million individuals and organisations across the UK' and is thus among the largest organisational collectives of women in the UK.⁹⁶ Overall, the three *Making the Grade* reports produced to date represent an achievement for the women's movement as a whole and for the ERAW campaign and the WNC in particular, as the reports have raised expectations and increased pressure on the government, while at the same time providing the women's movement and ERAW with invaluable public and political legitimacy provided by the sheer fact that government departments have taken the reporting process seriously.

All *Making the Grade* reports reiterate, among several recommendations, the basic claims that 'the UK Government should develop an overarching strategy and action plan to end violence against women', and that '... the strategy should commit all Departments to working to the UN definition of violence against women' (ERAW 2008: 17). The definition currently used by the Home Office reads: '... domestic violence is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.⁹⁷ Although practices such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation are included in the Home Office definition, the non-gendered nature of the definition contrasts sharply with that of the United Nations' General Assembly Resolution from 1993, which states that 'the term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'.⁹⁸ According to ERAW (2008: 14), the UK signed up to the UN definition in 1995, but usage in government departments varies between that of the Home Office definition and that of the UN. This creates, according to ERAW, a 'definitional soup [that] makes it impossible to compare outcomes and reinforces the silo mentality that dilutes current efforts' (ERAW 2008: 28).

⁹⁶ See www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk (accessed September 16, 2008).

⁹⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/> accessed 16 September 2008.

⁹⁸ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104, December 20th, 1993, 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women' (see [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.48.104.En](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.48.104.En) ; accessed 16 September 2008.

The women's movement has had a clear and indisputable role in putting violence against women issues on the political agenda and in establishing and providing services to women who have been subjected to violence. Currently, however, a central claim by women's movement actors is that the *dispute over definitions* has implications for how policies and strategies are formed and implemented to tackle violence against women; the key issue being whether these are formed and implemented on the basis of definitions that are *gender-neutral* or *gender-based*. The state is perceived as unwilling to accept the claim that violence is gender-based: 'The women's movement, the feminist movement [...] is trying to push forward the violence against women agenda at a time when the government is trying to keep it very gender-neutral'. The claim from women's organisations is that a gender equality framework will make a difference in terms of prevention strategies and service provision (Coy et al., 2008).

Women's organisations representing ethnic minority women have been successful in putting issues like forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and honour crimes on the political agenda, and also in providing specialist services, but they also insist that the government needs to adapt a framing of these issues which acknowledges gender and human rights perspectives, and that different types of violence against women must be addressed through an integrated perspective. 'What is the difference between white killings and honour killings, you know. It is ultimately the same; a lot of violence', stated one interviewee. Several interviewees underscored that the various forms of violence should not be perceived in terms of culture, race or religion, but rather within a wider context of gender inequality and gender violence. Interviewees argued that 'culture' and 'religion' can be used 'as an excuse for control of women', while 'patriarchy' and 'gender inequality' can be used to condemn practices in which men seek to control women. A representative from an organisation which bases its work on the UN definition of violence against women argued that:

'part of that is to recognise that violence against women occurs universally across cultures, across religion and ethnicity and class, and it is also about recognising that whilst it occurs universally there are specific forms or specific manifestations that do affect specific women or specific groups of women. But

what we are talking about is placing that in the context of violence against women and not taking that out of the context and treating it as an individually isolated situation. Particularly with BME women, if you are thinking about black and ethnic women it is too easy to fall into the trap of using cultural analysis or focussing on race or religion, when actually what you are talking about is violence and it is gender, and it is gender driven.'

Furthermore, some interviewees pointed to 'negative policy developments' in relation to immigration controls that are said to have followed from not linking forced marriage practices with gender inequality. The policy developments referred to include the proposal to raise the age requirement for a spouse from abroad from 18 to 21 (Border and Immigration Agency, 2007: 6). Another interviewee lamented that 'the narrow focus on domestic violence excludes other forms of harm against women. [...] The wider [agenda] of violence against women is absolutely essential. So if you think about things like forced marriages and honour crimes and FGM, often they are actually not recognised within that theoretical framework by policy makers, by agencies. And actually, unfortunately, by some women's groups as well'. The interviewee went on to claim that by *not* including such issues in a wider violence against women agenda and *not* linking them to gendered inequalities, the government is perpetuating a stereotypical view of ethnic minority communities in general and of Muslim communities in particular. The interviewee did not deny that these types of crimes occur in ethnic minority communities, 'but it is just the way it is framed and the way it is problematised that is problematic. [...]. We need to be framing it in the wider discourse and that has not happened'. According to the interviewee, the fact that there is a specially designated forced marriage unit within government reinforces stereotypical views of ethnic minorities, and perpetuates a 'colonial framework of looking at violence against women'.

In a response to *Making the Grade 2007*, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) published a 'cross-government narrative' on the work government is doing to tackle violence against women (GEO, 2008). In this document, the current Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman claims that '... in the past several years we have worked across government to ensure an integrated approach to tackling violence against women' (GEO, 2008: 4). Through its claims-making the government, is thus, actively contesting the claim from women's organisations that it lacks an integrated approach to VAW. The 'cross-government narrative' lists current

'cross-government action plans' for the policy areas of domestic violence, sexual violence and abuse, human trafficking, violent crime, prostitution, and rape (ibid.: 7). Three Inter-Ministerial Groups are listed as mechanisms through which coordination across government departments has taken place on the issues of 'domestic violence, sexual violence and abuse, prostitution and human trafficking' (ibid.: 33). Despite the claim to cross-government work, however, the different policy areas are not joined-up in a single strategy and action plan that would cover all forms of violence against women. The women's movement demand for an integrated strategy, thus, remains partly unmet.

Among the interviewed women's organisations there is consensus about the need to continue the dispute over definitions and strategies. One of the arguments is that different types of violence are linked, and that this requires an integrated approach: 'So there are these links between pornography, sexualised clubs, prostitution [and] trafficking, and then there are links to sexual violence, domestic violence, forced marriages and honour crimes. And these things all link up and if they have a strategy that actually deals with it as a whole [...], then it is more beneficial than just picking off individual issues [...]. There is research that shows that the people who were domestic violence perpetrators were also the people who were committing sexual offences on the street. So these sorts of links need to be made'. Another interviewee noted that 'the idea of a strategy' is 'the big thing people are working for and the big thing that the government is resisting, unfortunately'. The interviewee argued that 'if the government does not have an agreed definition of violence against women it is very hard for them to see what they are trying to tackle and where they are making progress. If they have no data, no gender-segregated data on violence against women, they cannot see where the problem is. If they have no targets they cannot see where they are making progress'. When asked why the government might be unwilling to meet the demand for an integrated strategy, the interviewee suggested that although particular individuals in government, including women ministers, might be positive, 'there is no real will within government to do this. There are no votes in it so why would they bother?'

A third interviewee who lamented the lack of an integrated strategy linked this to the state's failure to acknowledge the gender dimension of violence:

'We don't have an over-arching structure in this country, we don't have any strategy, we don't have any action plan, we don't have any law, so we have no recognition of violence against women. We have general criminal law and that is what is used [...]. We said a particular issue for us is rape, then it is rape, it is sexual violence, but that is part of violence against women continuing. So if we are talking about sexual violence, then we also need to be aware of the impact that has on domestic violence, because a lot of sexual violence occurs within domestic violence. So [...] that is why we are pushing to look for a definition of violence against women, but the government is very, very, resistant to that.'

Another interviewee from the same organisation also speculated about the reasons why the government might be resistant to an overall strategic approach to violence against women:

'I wonder if it is resources. If you accept the argument of violence against women, you introduce violence against women legislation, you accept the definition, [and] then you have got to put resources into recognising that all these crimes are crimes against women in the context of violence against women. And I think it is that, it is very easy, isn't it, if you think about it, to pick out areas that you want to prioritise within that, so domestic violence has received a lot of attention, quite rightly. However the other issues have not, quite wrongly. But at the end of the day it is resource led and it is political led, in terms of what issues they want to pick and choose out of that whole agenda and promote those.'

Among the interviewed politicians and civil servants there are mixed views on the debate over definitions and strategies. One interviewee, who agrees with the women's movement claim that the government lacks an integrated strategy on violence against women, stated that 'one of the problems about our policy at the moment [...] is that for instance our domestic violence policy is not gender-based'. The interviewee went on to say that 'there is no point in talking about [forced marriage and so-called honour killings] as if they are different, isolated things. They are all part of a power and gender-based perspective and I think having a more holistic strategy is the way we have got to go'. According to the interviewee, 'ministers who are long-standing feminists understand this', but there is, allegedly, still opposition to this line of thinking both within the government itself and within competing political parties.

Other interviewees who could be said to represent views embedded in the state apparatus, however, are more reluctant to accept a gender-based analysis of violence and the implications this would have for the formulation and implementation of policies. One interviewee, for example, highlighted the importance of policy effectiveness, and did not, as does the women's movement, link the effectiveness to a gendered analysis of the problem of violence. The interviewee stated that 'the government's criteria [for developing policy] would be the effectiveness of that policy [...]. There is not really a motivation in terms of ethnic minority rights or women's rights so much as the motivation to eradicate the practice because of the severity of the abuse'. The interviewee continued: '... from my point of view 15 per cent of our cases are male so we do not treat [the issue] as gender-based. Although we fully recognise that 85 per cent of our case load is female, it does not affect our response. But I think this is the issue, if you get hung up on the politics almost of whether it is violence against women, whether it is violence against minority communities, whether it is culturally motivated, religiously motivated, whatever it might be, it is almost a distraction from what government needs to do and is doing, which is concentrating on finding solutions'. The type of claims-making represented in these quotes seem to suggest that how a problem is defined does not necessarily have any bearing on the type of policy response to that problem, or the effectiveness of a particular policy response. The claims-making forwarded by women's movement actors, on the other hand, suggests that problem definitions are highly relevant and indeed determine policy responses. The basic movement claim is that by acknowledging the gendered basis of violence against women, the government will be able to link policies on different types of violence against women, which in turn will improve the effectiveness of policies aimed at prevention and service provision.

Another type of view forwarded by interviewed government representatives is in tune with the GEO's cross-government narrative and emphasises that the government actually *has* a joined-up strategy on violence against women, and that the women's movement's failure to acknowledge this amounts to a 'perception problem'. One interviewee argued that the government has a strategy on violence against women *in all but name*, and suggested that the dispute over definitions and strategies amounts to a question of *semantics*. The interviewee emphasised that government has action plans on domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking and prostitution. 'Because

we do not have something called the National Violence Against Women strategy everyone thinks we have not got one. [...] we are doing domestic violence, sexual violence, prostitution, and trafficking; what is it we are not doing? Where are the other bits of violence that is not being tackled by government in a coherent and strategic way?' The interviewee pointed to Harriet Harman's narrative of government efforts to tackle violence against women (GEO 2008) as illustrative of the coherent and strategic view taken by government, and continued: 'I think it is a disagreement about perception. I think there is a political lobby which is the feminist lobby that says unless it says violence against women we're not going to have ... We're going to keep pushing until we get one, even though we're thinking well actually if you looked at our strategies, the different strategies we've got, they are all joined up'. The interviewee also argued that policies relating to violence against women will always be relevant to different government departments, and that it would, therefore, not be sensible to demand that a Ministry for Women should deal with all women's issues. Instead, the interviewee emphasised that women's issues should be mainstreamed and 'the prism of gender' should be applied across all government departments. These arguments seem to be in agreement with those of women's movement actors, which also emphasise the mainstreaming of gender, the mainstreaming of VAW, and the need for a government office to 'lead the co-ordination of an approach to VAW embedded in a gender equality framework' (Coy et al., 2008: 34).

A new and different government approach to women's movement demands is exemplified in the new *Violence Against Women Strategy and Action Plans* launched by the Crown Prosecution Service in April 2008 (CPS 2008; hereinafter called the CPS Strategy). The CPS Strategy is in many ways radical as it signals an entirely new policy approach which meets all the basic claims made by women's movement actors in relation to an integrated and gendered strategy on violence against women. As such, it represents a significant victory for the women's movement, which has lobbied strongly towards not only the CPS but also the British government as a whole for such an integrated and gendered approach. Unusually, the CPS Strategy directly acknowledges the impact of the End Violence Against Women Campaign: 'This CPS VAW strategy and action plans take on board the recommendations of EVAW', where the EVAW recommendations included a more joined-up VAW

strategy (CPS, 2008: 5). The CPS Strategy also recognises and gives legitimacy to the *Making the Grade* reports which originated within the Women's National Commission and which have later been undertaken by EVAW.

One of our interviewees described the move CPS has undertaken from a narrow emphasis on domestic violence to a broader violence against women perspective in its policy formulation and implementation, and stated that 'probably the thinking [implied in this move] did come from the campaigning from outside groups'. In particular the interviewee mentioned the End Violence Against Women Campaign 'which originally was run by the Women's National Commission, but now is actually linked to Amnesty International as well as the WNC', and also the Making the Grade reports produced by EVAW. 'That was actually something that was very useful for us internally, to be able to take to our senior management, to say look we are being requested for information on this. And we do work around these strands but we don't have anything that is actually joined up'. The CPS has moved to a joined-up strategy with linked action plans, and the CPS strategy on VAW now includes 'domestic violence, rape and sexual offences, forced marriage, so-called honour crimes, FGM, trafficking, prostitution, crimes against older people because that is predominantly affecting women, child abuse, pornography and sexual harassment at work'. The development of the new strategy was in part based on a three-month external consultation, to which 44 responses were received; 30 of these were from non-governmental organisations including women's organisations such as the Fawcett Society, Women's Resource Centre, EVAW, Welsh Women's Aid, Jewish Women's Aid, Eaves Housing and the Poppy Project, and Refuge.⁹⁹ Such consultation procedures are not new to the CPS as this government department has embedded quite a systematic approach to consulting external organisations and agencies. The claim from women's movement actors that definitions and strategies have an impact on policy formulation and implementation was explicitly acknowledged by this interviewee, who stated that 'a lot of lessons from domestic violence [...] could be passed across some of these issues [rape, forced marriage, honour crimes]. But even more importantly we were aware that actually we often

⁹⁹ For a full list of participating NGOs and statutory agencies, see http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/equality/vaw/vaw_report.html (accessed September 23, 2008).

were reinventing the wheel around policies and practices where things were quite similar ...'. The interviewee argued that both coordination and efficiency were seen to improve from an integrated strategic approach to VAW, and that a gendered framework would produce more targeted interventions: 'This gendered understanding helps us realise the nature and the dynamics that go on in these crimes and we will be able to address them more'.

In terms of internal institutional and political resistance towards the changes in strategy, the interviewee claimed that 'there wasn't any opposition overall, which we were surprised at, though to begin with internally there was not quite as clear an understanding about the gendered framework, why it should be women rather than actually just violence against any vulnerable victim'. Although external resistance and concerns were expected in relation to the explicit gendered approach to VAW expressed in the consultation documents, the CPS strategy did not receive strong opposition; only one response stated disagreement with the gendered approach. The interviewee acknowledged that the changes embedded in the new CPS Strategy followed from claims and demands from the women's movement, and repeatedly asserted that changes made sense as service delivery would probably improve as a result: 'we would have more successful prosecutions, which is what one of our targets is, we will actually support more victims, which is another of our targets'.

This interviewee, together with other research participants, frequently repeated the same names of particular individuals in conjunction with perceptions about receptiveness to ideas and demands from women's movement actors. In particular, the current Minister for Women Harriet Harman, Attorney General Baroness Scotland, and Solicitor General Vera Baird, are regarded as having a positive orientation towards a VAW strategy. However, the level of influence they may exert on government policy remains contested and debated. 'I don't think you would have this systematic implementation if you didn't actually have the sponsorship of those committed individuals within the organisation and at ministerial level', said one interviewee. Another interviewee was sceptical about how influential feminist voices are in government, and claimed that the Minister for Women 'has very little actual power within the Cabinet. She is seen as being disempowered ...'.

During the interviews, all research participants were asked to evaluate the following claim forwarded by EVAW in the first *Making the Grade* report: 'Much of the good work [on violence against women] is dependent on the sponsorship and efforts of committed individuals at both Ministerial and Government official level. As these people move on, resources and personalities shift and the work is jeopardised' (EVAW, 2005: 8). Overall, interviewees expressed agreement with EVAW's claim. Furthermore, some interviewees questioned the Labour government's commitment to gender equality, while others also questioned whether a change of government would jeopardise existing gender machinery institutions. One interviewee who reflected on whether gender equality and women's rights are institutionalised said that 'when something is institutionalised it is not dependent on individuals, it won't change because individuals go, it is embedded in the culture, it is embedded in all those processes and norms and attitudes. Has gender been institutionalised? I am not sure. To a much larger extent than it was 20 years ago'. Another interviewee, however, expressed the view that the Conservative Party is also now taking gender issues seriously: '[they are] taking this on board now, [...] particularly issues of discrimination'. The interviewee mentioned trafficking and domestic violence as issues that have been picked up by the Conservative Party.

Despite the government's attention to 'women-friendly issues' such as child care and parental leave arrangements, and cross-government attention to VAW issues, the interviewees from women's organisations represented the view that in general, gender issues are not prioritised on the government's political agenda. 'If you did a word search of Tony Blair's speeches you would very rarely find women or gender referred to. In fact I suspect never. I could be wrong about that but I know people have done that and found nothing. Gordon Brown [...] is more committed to the principal of equality but he does not understand gender equality ...', claimed one interviewee, while another actually stated that 'Gordon Brown has been the biggest feminist there has ever been in government'. In agreement with other interviewees, this respondent also argued that the government does not currently perceive gender equality as a political issue that represents any electoral advantage, and that it is thus relegated down the list of political priorities. A lack of political will on the part of

government to engage with the women's movement's demand for an integrated strategy was also linked to electoral politics:

'There are no votes in it [an integrated VAW strategy] so why should they bother?'

'So what we have are a small number of women ministers who have a particular axe to grind. So for domestic violence for a number of years women ministers have been campaigning on that issue and they have made some headway. So what you have is little pockets within government of really fabulous things that are happening and particularly on domestic violence, but the idea of getting every part of government to sign up to a [violence against women] strategy is just too difficult. So, not unreasonably, women ministers have said, 'we are not going to bother with any of that. We are just going to do the things that we can do in our department where I have control'.

In summary, the dispute over definitions and strategy in relation to violence against women issues is ongoing, and the women's movement is continuing to exert pressure on the government to change its policies towards an integrated strategy based on a gendered analysis of the problem of violence. The continuing pressure is evidenced most explicitly in the *Making the Grade* reports produced by the WNC and EVAW, and also in attempts by movement actors to 'do the government's job for them' in writing up a template for an integrated government strategy (Coy, Lovett and Kelly, 2008). Further pressure on government to change its definitions and integrate policies is also mounted through international mechanisms such as the CEDAW convention, to which we will return below.

The basic claim which the government should accept, according to women's movement actors, is that violence against women is a gendered issue, rooted in structural gender inequalities, and that any serious attempts to tackle violence against women must be based on a gendered analysis of the problem. But the terms 'domestic violence' and 'violence against women' remain contested, and so far it is mainly one government department that has fully taken on board the women's movement claims for an integrated strategy based on a gendered framework. From our interviews and from government documents as well, it seems that the British state is resisting the claim that violence against women is a gendered issue.

Professor Catherine Itzin, however, who currently heads the government's Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme, has recently pointed to the difference in

policy approaches between ‘damage limitation and harm minimisation interventions’ versus prevention and reduction of the ‘incidence and prevalence of domestic violence’. She is pessimistic about reducing the incidence and prevalence of violence against women unless the UK government recognises that domestic violence ‘is defined as men’s violence and abuse of male power’ (Itzin, 2000: 378).

7.4.3 Claims-making, opportunities and constraints at the national policy level

In this section we examine more broadly the claims-making and problem representations forwarded by organisational and government representatives (civil servants and politicians) in relation to political influence at the state level. The section is not intended to provide a full analysis of recent political advocacy work by women’s organisations and its impact on public policy, but focuses instead on examples of strategies and claims to influence that were emphasised by the interviewed organisational representatives. Further and systematic research will have to be carried out on the extent to which women’s organisations participate in public consultations and the extent to which their consultation statements and other lobbying attempts resonate with actual policy outcomes.

Room for influence

The interviewed representatives from women’s organisations agree that since Labour came to power in 1997, the political climate has become more favourable to putting gender issues on the government’s agenda. The organisations note that since 1997 a political will to engage with women’s organisations has emerged and that access to decision-makers has improved markedly. Increased political will and access are seen partly as resulting from a change in government per se, and partly as stemming from an influx of women politicians, and especially feminist ones, in government and Parliament. One interviewee who saw the Labour government as having made a difference to the organisation’s impact, said ‘that is why our access is so good, that is why a lot of the major changes we have been able to secure, because the party that is in government is feminist in a lot of ways’. This interviewee, as well as other respondents, mentioned in particular Harriet Harman and other high-ranking female politicians in government, and the increased number of women in Parliament since 1997. Most of the interviewed women’s organisations

have contacts with both government ministers and with women Parliamentarians. The influence of particular ministers on specific issues, including violence against women issues, was noted by many interviewees. For example, one interviewee agreed that there is a political will to take on board gender issues: 'I think that is correct, there is the political will with a little 'p' [...] with the senior managers within the organisation. But one aspect that has been a great advantage which has to be looked at as well, is the influence of ministers, which is from above downwards'. The interviewee went on to mention particular ministers 'who have been really pushing on these issues for a number of years'.

Moreover, feminists have become 'insiders' to government not only as politicians and ministers but also as civil servants at state and local levels, and are now in a position where they can draw on previous movement contacts and provide access to women's organisations: 'those of us who are leading on this work have come from the women's movement background, so the history of it is actually we do have quite good connections with the voluntary sector before we actually were working in these posts, and then working in these posts we can [...] use that to an advantage of bringing in the information from those organisations that we have worked with for a long period of time'. The potential for the state to provide 'women-friendly' policies has thus been greatly enhanced by the election of women politicians to positions of power and by the hiring of civil servants with a background from the women's movement. A 'feminism from above' or at least 'women-friendliness from above' can thus be said to be combined with a 'feminism from below' through the continued political mobilisation of women in electoral participation and in women's organisations (Hernes, 1987).

One respondent perceived political successes in relation to violence against women, child care and gender equality as also due to cross-party work, and not only as a result of Labour's exclusive efforts. It is no longer only the Labour Party that can claim an interest in gender issues, as competing political parties have realised that women's votes can be fought over by demonstrating engagement in women's and in gender issues. Another interviewee who emphasised a current political will to engage in women's and gender issues and to engage women's organisations, also

noted that such political will does not exist only in the government but also in the Parliamentary Conservative Party.

Some organisations have more contact with government than others. An interviewee from an organisation with extensive contacts in government said that her organisation has 'very good relationships with government', and links this to the organisation's 'reputation for expertise [...] and for having very high quality, useful data and analysis. So in that way we have access in terms of securing the meetings with the people that we need to meet with'. The organisation also has a high standing in feminist government circles, and contact is a two-way process: 'They also call us and we also call them'. Despite what the interviewee sees as privileged access, however, the organisation does not automatically achieve influence: 'that doesn't necessarily mean that what we say is always taken on board. So we may have the relationship access, but we still have to persuade in terms of this is what we think you should do'. 'The doors are open on having the conversation, but actually influencing the agenda, it has been easier than if it was a different government I think on some issues, but you still have to make the case. You are still trying to persuade, you are still having to do advocacy work', said the interviewee. Another interviewee from the same organisation agreed that 'access has been extremely good' in the last few years. However, barriers to influence arise due to limited organisational capacity, a perceived general lack of public awareness of gender issues, and also a perceived lack of awareness among politicians and civil servants. The interviewee saw a clear connection between the presence and number of women in Parliament and the shape of public policy, and suggested that if further increases in the number of women Parliamentarians were to happen, 'then public policy would [...] be easier to change'.

An organisation that has lobbied on specific violence against women issues relevant to ethnic minority and immigrant women since the early 1990s, echoed the view that the Labour government has brought along increased political opportunities for women's organisations: 'you see the changes really only came about, 1997 when the Labour government came into power and then we started talking to the Home Office Minister'. According to the interviewee, 'there was a kind of momentum' that the organisation was able to take advantage of in attempting to influence government

policy. The organisation has been particularly successful in lobbying towards changes in the rules applied to immigrant women on marriage visas who are subjected to violence and who risk deportation. Its political impact on this issue was recognised by all key players, including other women's organisations, politicians, and civil servants. The interviewee agreed that the organisation has good political access, and it is being approached by government as a key player. However, the interviewee also emphasised that the organisation sometimes has to *demand* access: 'sometimes you have to really push your way in, because otherwise you won't be heard at all'.

Interviewees agreed that the Labour government has given more political attention to gender issues in general, but also to issues pertaining to ethnic minority women in particular. For example, issues such as forced marriage and honour crimes have been placed on the political agenda and policies dealing with such issues have been developed and implemented. Clearly the media has also had a role in putting these issues on the agenda, but women's organisations such as Southall Black Sisters, Newham Asian Women's Project, Imkaan, Rights of Women, Karma Nirvana and others have also been able to influence the agenda and the direction of policy intervention. Some interviewees perceived there to be a particular window of political opportunity now in terms of women's organisations being listened to by government on black and ethnic minority women's issues. However, some respondents found that the government's interest in such issues might have resulted not so much from a genuine interest in women's issues, but more from an interest in curbing violent acts of terror: 'I think a lot of that is down to anti-terror work', said one interviewee.

As noted, the interviewed organisations do not experience the same level of access to and influence with government. One interviewee, for example, stated that 'quite frankly we are not big players with the government. We chip away at stuff and we have small victories'. The interviewee suggested that other organisations, such as the Fawcett Society, Women's Aid Federation England, YWCA, and Refuge have more political influence than the organisation she represented.

The interviewees were asked to name organisations they collaborate with and organisations they perceived to be influential in policy circles. While one interviewee mentioned Southall Black Sisters, CAADA, Women's Aid, Refuge, and Imkaan, another interviewee referred to Women's Aid, Refuge, ERAW, Southall Black Sisters, and Imkaan. This interviewee also mentioned black women's groups in general, but suggested that while Asian women's organisations are being included in policy circles, there is 'a big gap' in relation to Black African and Caribbean women's organisations. A third interviewee referred to ERAW, Women's Aid, Refuge, SBS, Newham Asian Women's Project, Karma Nirvana, Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, and the recently formed Muslim Women's Advisory Group. The interviewee also emphasised the importance of the WNC and its VAW Working Group. A fourth interviewee felt that 'at the moment there is no really very large women's organisation' but mentioned Fawcett, Working Families, the Women's Aid movement, and the Women's Resource Centre as important women's organisations.

These examples illustrate that it is often the same organisations that are being perceived as important or as having access to policy circles. Among those that were most often referred to by interviewees are Southall Black Sisters, Imkaan, Fawcett Society, Women's Resource Centre, Women's Aid, Refuge, and the End Violence Against Women Campaign (ERAW). These organisations are, thus, being discursively framed as important and legitimate actors within the policy community. As suggested previously in this chapter, these women's organisations are part of a small policy community with a relatively stable membership of 'insider groups'¹⁰⁰ that consult quite regularly, either formally or informally, with politicians and civil servants on particular policy issues (Jones, 2004). A similar observation has been made by Lovenduski (2007: 161), who notes the post-1997 'emergence of a feminist policy network of politicians, women's movement actors and policy agencies' dealing with 'women's issues'.

In turn, such formal and informal interaction between 'insider groups' in the policy community impacts on the formation and implementation of public policy. As argued above, although pressure groups and social movement actors do not have any

¹⁰⁰ The term 'insider groups' was coined by Grant (1985).

formal decision-making power, their participation in policy communities and networks, and their occasional media participation, may involve the power to present ideas or definitions of particular issues (Berven and Selle, 2001: 16) or the power to define particular policy problems and how they should be dealt with (Lovenduski, 2005b).

The interviewed women's organisations claim that they are sometimes able to put issues on the political agenda, while at other times they are constrained by the government's own agenda. New issues have been put on the government's agenda partly due to the sustained efforts by women's organisations. For example, women's organisations that since the 1970s have pioneered the delivery of services to victims of violence have been highly successful in putting the issue of domestic violence on the government's agenda. Today, such organisations feel they must argue for the need of continued services to women, and also for specialist services dealing with particular forms of violence against women. Moreover, the closure of refuges and resources for Black and Minority Ethnic and Refugee Women,¹⁰¹ including women seeking asylum, is on the current lobbying agenda of several women's organisations.

Moreover, organisations such as Women's Aid have more recently managed to put the issue of child abuse on the government's agenda, and work to integrate children's needs into service provision. Another example of an issue that has been fought for by women's organisations over a long period of time is that of women who kill their violent partners. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s Southall Black Sisters and Justice for Women have campaigned for this issue to be put on the government's agenda, Justice of Women having been directly inspired by Southall Black Sisters' campaign on behalf of Kiranjit Ahluwalia. 'Optimistically when we set out we thought right, what we have got to do is change the laws and attitudes in society around the issue of battered women who kill', said an interviewee who worked on this issue. 'Let's look at this one issue about women being jailed for life for fighting back against violent men, whereas men get away with murder'. Among the tactics used to get the issue onto the political agenda were national demonstrations, court demonstrations, picketing of the Home Office, and media

¹⁰¹ The term was found on the Women in London website.

attention. Moreover, a central tactic has been to help individual women by supporting them and by assisting with their court cases. Through a long-lasting campaign, women's organisations eventually managed to raise this issue on the political agenda and to change laws as well (see below).

Another issue related to violence against women that has been put on the agenda is that of female genital mutilation. FORWARD has played a unique role in pushing this issue and also in establishing government legislation that criminalises FGM whether it is being performed at home or abroad. None of the interviewed organisations claimed actually to have put the issue of forced marriage on the political agenda, but several of them have played major parts in defining or representing the issue. Both forced marriage and so-called honour crimes are issues that have arisen more recently on the government's agenda. 'We didn't have things like forced marriage and honour crimes talked about ten years ago in the way that they are now', said one interviewee. On the other hand, reflected the same interviewee, 'It is almost like the government are setting the agenda for us and we need to be going back to us setting the agenda around issues that impact on our communities'. The interviewee noted the recent government interest in Muslim women and in specific violence against women issues that are being linked to Muslim communities in particular, and argued that issues like forced marriage and the honour crimes debate are 'almost like a diversion from addressing [...] structural inequalities, responsibility, and accountability'. Larger issues relevant to minority communities, such as education and labour market participation, are neglected by government and overseen by women's organisations that are busy responding to the government's agenda, suggested the interviewee, who found it frustrating to spend a lot of time and energy on one issue like forced marriage when there are so many other inequalities that need to be addressed: 'Access to the labour market, employment, education and all these things, and we are chasing over one [...] issue. It is so frustrating, we want to be doing the other stuff [related to] broader citizenship'. A similar argument has been put forward by Dustin, who claims that 'In the UK, where some black, Asian and Muslim women's groups have now established themselves as 'stakeholders', they are only consulted by government on 'minority women's issues' – 'honour' violence, FGM and forced marriage – and rarely on broader gender and immigration issues' (Dustin, 2006: 14).

Some of the interviewed politicians and civil servants also emphasised that the government has had a key role in putting women's and gender issues on the agenda. One interviewee, for example, saw the women's movement as 'quite effective' in producing lobby material, but stated that 'they have been sporadically effective in terms of the policy agenda'. The interviewee also said that 'some of it is not their fault; we came in with quite a heavy women's agenda ...'. According to this respondent, the women's movement has not been able to set the agenda, while feminist politicians have played a more important role: 'Things tend to have happened, from my perspective, by women MPs [...] So what sticks in my mind are more things that women MPs have initiated but with support from women's organisations'. This example illustrates the relationship between a 'feminism from above', where feminist insiders in government are pushing the agenda, and a 'feminism from below', where the women's movement mobilises independently or in collaboration with actors that possess political power. Another interviewee suggested that the government, and not women's organisations, have pushed forward the intersectional agenda which combines structural inequalities such as gender, age, race, faith, and sexuality within the remit of new government-sponsored institutions such as the EHRC and the GEO. A third interviewee painted a more nuanced picture where women's groups feed directly into policy strategies and there is a 'partnership' between government and such groups: 'there is quite a tight partnership; they are key contributors to our agenda. They don't see it but what they feel we should be looking at is obviously something we give a lot of weight and credence to'.

Strategies to achieve influence

In this section we look at how the interviewed women's organisations work in order to achieve influence on the political agenda and on the development and implementation of public policies. These strategies include, but are not limited to, participation in government consultations, formal and informal meetings with high-level government politicians, MPs, and civil servants, participation in stakeholder and expert groups, giving expert evidence, and participation in policy forums.

The strategy most commonly used by women's organisations to influence public policy is that of participating in governmental consultations, which can be said to be a reactive strategy more than a pro-active one. Occasionally, however, women's organisations are consulted prior to government documents being published, which might give them a chance to provide more direct and active input to government strategies and plans. For example, the Forced Marriage Unit is currently conducting a public consultation on statutory guidance in relation to forced marriage (FMU, 2008). The Unit has involved some organisations, including SBS, Newham Asian Women's Project, and Karma Nirvana, in the drafting stage of the consultation. These and other organisations will have a further chance to respond more formally in the consultation stage.

Every year the government issues many public consultations that are relevant to the interests of women's organisations. We have looked at four specific examples of recent government consultations; two on general gender policy issues and two on policy issues related to ethnic minority and/or immigrant women in particular. An examination of these four consultations does not provide enough information to discuss the participation and possible impact of women's organisations on these policy issues, but it does provide an insight into the types of women's organisations that opt to spend time and resources on them. Put differently, it can tell us something about the extent to which women's organisations viewed these particular consultations as offering opportunities to influence policy.

On the first issue, that of the Equalities Review, an interim report for consultation was published in March 2006 (Equalities Review, 2006). Responses to the review were published in 2007 (Equalities Review, 2007). It is interesting to observe that on this consultation, which included many equality issues relevant to women, women's organisations only constituted about ten of the 124 organisations that are named participants in the consultation. Among these were Engender, the Fawcett Society, The Muslim Women's Resource Centre, WNC, WNC's Violence Against Women Working Group, Women's Voice, and the WRC.

On the second issue, that of the Discrimination Law Review, which includes the proposal to establish a single equality bill covering various forms of discrimination

including gender, faith, age, disability, and sexuality, the government issued a consultation paper in September 2007 (DCLG, 2007). The government's response to the consultation was published in July 2008 (DCLG, 2008) and listed just short of 600 participating organisations. Among these 600, we were able to identify about twenty women's organisations, including EAW, Engender, Fatima Women's Network, Fawcett Society, Muslim Women's Network UK, National Council of Women of Great Britain, Rights of Women, Scottish Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Women's Aid, WNC, and WRC.

On the third issue, that of forced marriage, the government issued a consultation paper entitled 'Forced marriage. A wrong not a right' (Home Office 2005), and asked for responses to proposals that included the criminalisation of forced marriage. A summary of responses was published in June 2006 (Home Office 2006). Women's organisations were divided on the issue of whether a specific criminal offence of forced marriage should be created, but eventually the government decided against criminalisation (see below). Among the 132 named consultation participants (of a total of 157 responses), there are just over 20 women's organisations. These include Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre, Asian Women's Resource Centre, FORWARD, Imkaan, Muslim Women's Helpline, National Council of Women, NAWP, Refuge, Rights of Women, Southall black Sisters, WNC, WRC, Women's Aid, and some local Women's Aid centres.

On the fourth issue to be considered here, that of marriage to partners from overseas, the government published a consultation paper in December 2007 (Border and Immigration Agency, 2007). A policy document following the consultation was published in 2008, entitled 'Marriage Visas: The Way Forward' (UK Border Agency, 2008). Among the 60 listed responses were about 15 women's organisations (ibid: 97). These included FORWARD, Imkaan, Latin American Women's Rights Services, NAWP, Refuge, Rights of Women, Southall Black Sisters, the WNC, and Welsh Women's Aid.

The brief examination of the women's organisations that participated in these four specific government consultations reveals that less than ten per cent of the organisations responding to the Equalities Review were women's organisations and

only three per cent of those responding to the Discrimination Law Review were women's organisations. Considering the long-term impact of these reviews on gender equality policies and legislation, it is perhaps remarkable that so few women's organisations decided to participate in the two consultations. On the other hand, it could be argued that organisations like the Women's National Commission and the Women's Resource Centre, which participated in both, represent a large number of women's groups and, therefore, there is no further need for women's organisations to respond. Budget-limited women's organisations might also find it difficult to justify participation in complex and demanding consultations that would require substantial amounts of resources without guaranteeing any influence on the political outcome.

In the consultation on forced marriage, however, about 15 per cent of the participating organisations were women's organisations, while about 25 per cent of those participating in the consultation on marriage to partners from overseas were women's organisations. These issues might be perceived as more focused or limited, and as more clearly concerned with women, as they deal with aspects of violence against women and women's immigration patterns, and therefore as easier to respond to than the Equalities Review and the Discrimination Law Review consultations. Such factors might explain the higher proportion of women's organisations participating in these two consultations. A quick glance at the organisations involved in all four consultations also supports the previously suggested perception that a limited number of women's organisations are members of a relatively small policy community dealing with women's and gender policy issues. Further systematic research needs to be done on the extent of participation by women's organisations in public consultations and also on the question of whether their consultation responses represent resonance or dissonance with the government's policy outcomes.

Participation in government consultations does not, of course, guarantee that the government will take into account the views forwarded in consultation responses. Nonetheless, the interviewed women's organisations seem to agree that it is a worthwhile strategy in order to achieve impact. Furthermore, consultation responses may highlight the expertise of a particular organisation, and may also in turn lead to

further involvement in policy processes outside the consultation arena. One of the interviewed organisations which has produced about 15 consultation papers in the last 18 months is concerned that women's voices should be heard: 'I have this real concern that often we are the only one organisation that is responding and if we don't respond there is concern that there will be no response from the women's sector'. While anyone (be it an organisation or an individual) is free to respond to public government consultations, some organisations receive direct invitations from government to participate. This organisation receives such invitations, and the interviewee sees it as resulting from continuous work over a long period of time: 'as we have built up the momentum of doing them, obviously we get recognised for that and now they start sending them through'. As a result of its participation in a particular consultation, the organisation was approached by the relevant Minister and asked 'to explain further our argument which we did, we put in a further paper in writing, just for the Minister, and then we were invited to a meeting' with four or five key ministers. Another interviewee stated that her organisation has good relations with several high ranking politicians in national government, and has also recently been invited to discuss priorities with the current Minister for Women, Harriet Harman. 'So, in terms of getting the ears of politicians, [our organisation] does that very well', said the interviewee.

In addition to formal meetings with government ministers, a few of the interviewed organisations also manage to have more informal contact with high level politicians. One organisation listed the following strategies that are being used to achieve direct influence: behind-the-scenes lobbying, meeting ministers and shadow ministers, co-ordinating commissions and networks, responding to consultations, participating in policy seminars, providing evidence, meeting with politicians (including across party lines), and meeting with civil servants in government departments. The organisation is also trying to achieve policy influence more indirectly, through media work and collaboration with other organisations, including non-women's organisations.

The Parliamentary channel is also being used by women's organisations to influence public policy. Getting members of Parliament to sign an Early Day Motion is one strategy used by several of the interviewed women's organisations, whilst direct mailings to all MPs is another. Some of the organisations have contact with

individual MPs who are perceived as orientated towards a feminist agenda, or towards women's issues more generally. One organisation recounted that it got an MP to ask a question in Parliament on its behalf.

Other organisations have developed closer links to civil servants as a way of influencing policy: '... how we work strategically is that we identify the two loopholes that we need to influence. One is the Parliamentarians' input, that loophole. We don't have that much sway with [it]. The other is civil servants, that is the loophole we do target, because that is where we know we can make an influence, can make changes and can have an impact'. This organisation perceives civil servants as key to influencing government: '[it is] very, very much [...] about getting to know and building relationships with civil servants, rather than trying to influence MPs and ministers. So we know where our bread is buttered basically, and try to focus our efforts on that'. Several interviewees mentioned and valued links with civil servants, and one organisation that, until now, has not cultivated relations with civil servants is nevertheless clear that they may provide important political opportunities: '... often it is the civil servants who will determine the agenda in terms of what goes further and I think that is perhaps one of the barriers that we face or one of the issues that we haven't focused on is on building that relationship, because if you can't get through to the civil servant you are never going to get to the minister or the MP'.

Membership in stakeholder or expert groups was also mentioned by several organisations as a potential way of influencing government policy. Furthermore, giving evidence to House Select Committee enquiries was also seen as providing political opportunities. One interviewee mentioned specifically that a final House Select Committee report 'heavily relied on our evidence, there were lots of references to [us]'. Several of the organisations interviewed for our report have given evidence to a more recent inquiry by the Home Affairs Committee on 'Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-Based Violence' (House of Commons, 2008). The list of 73 organisations that gave written evidence to this particular inquiry included the following women's organisations: Newham Asian Women's Project (NAWP), EVAW. Refuge, Imkaan, Women's Aid Federation of England, Fawcett Society, Karma Nirvana, Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, Southall Black Sisters, and Rights of Women (ibid.: 166-167). Again,

these organisations are recognisable as members of a relatively stable policy community of 'insiders' in the gender and VAW policy sectors.

The interviewees expressed divergent opinions on whether it is a useful strategy to influence policy through the Women's National Commission (WNC). While one interviewee stated that neither the WNC nor the the former WEU are 'natural routes into government', other organisations emphasised their membership in the WNC and their work within the WNC as bringing political opportunities. One respondent who was interviewed before the WEU was subsumed into the GEO expressed doubts about the WEU: 'you do need a power base of developing policy and expertise for pushing for change and at the moment we do not know even if the place for us exists'. Yet another interviewee was positive towards both the WNC and the WEU and said that 'those relationships are warm so we can pick up the phone and that kind of thing'. This view was echoed by another interviewee who found the meetings of one of WNC's subgroups to be very useful, as civil servants and ministers are regularly invited to speak to the group. On the one hand, doubts about whether the WNC and the GEO (and previously the WEU) can provide women's organisations with political opportunities may be justified due to the limited amount of resources that the government has allocated to these institutions. On the other hand, one of our interviewees suggested that women's organisations might actually be overlooking an important route for influence by not 'knocking at the door' of the GEO.

Insiders versus outsiders

We have suggested that organisations such as Southall Black Sisters, Imkaan, Fawcett Society, Women's Resource Centre, Women's Aid, Refuge, and ERAW are part of a relatively stable policy community of 'insiders' with access to state-level policy circles. These organisations are regularly drawn on by government to provide either formal or informal input to decision-making processes concerning gender equality issues, including violence against women issues. These organisations have achieved their insider status as a result of their own hard work and in conjunction with the government's policy to engage with community groups and its need to receive policy input in order to achieve legitimacy for policies. Representatives from women's organisations themselves, however, do not label or present their own

organisations as insiders, but rather as outsiders to government, thus emphasising their independence from, rather than possible co-optation by, the state.

One interviewee reflected on the changed political context which has given her organisation political access: 'there was a time when we were outside the political machinery, we were never invited to these things and we were often on the sidelines and just like an add-on. And you know some things have changed. Now many of us do sit on Home Affairs Committee inquiries about violence against women. We are invited to public engagement events [and] we are seen as contributing to the leadership of the community. I get invitations from Harriet Harman and politicians saying you must be involved in this process, we want to hear your voice. Despite 'being allowed in', however, the interviewee does not perceive her organisation as part of the political machinery, and she is sceptical about whether the organisation actually has any political influence: 'even if some of us were there would our interests be reflected? We have just got to make sure that our voices get heard, and we have a right to be heard'. She continued: '[...] often you just think, is it [the government] just paying lip service? It is almost like talking the talk, but actually where is the change? [...] And often they have already made their mind up ...'.

Another interviewee emphasised that her organisation seeks to avoid being co-opted by government, and thus tries to avoid engaging in publicly visible events that can be linked to party politics: 'what you won't see us doing is on a party political platform shaking hands, we just don't get into that'. Another organisation decided to leave its formal position on a Home Office Working Group on forced marriage in a dispute over policy measures and decided to write its own report on the issue. As these examples illustrate, some organisations find that the price to pay for insider status might be too high if it is perceived as compromising their interests and their outsider status. The particular organisation that left the Home Office Working Group has since drafted a bill on forced marriage with a Labour peer in the House of Lords, and is thus not averse to working inside government.

An organisation which has a number of high-level contacts in government also insists on representing itself as an outsider: 'But we are outside of government, we are very much non-governmental and we aim to advocate for our agenda'. The

interviewed representatives from women's organisations are thus keen to portray their organisations as being independent from the state. However, they also find that they have to balance their independence with being listened to by the state and, in several cases, with being funded by the state. 'We are basically representative organisations which are funded by the state. So we have to mobilise within the state [...] That is where we have an impact and that is where the people have the power to do something about it', said one interviewee. The same interviewee noted that her organisation has on occasion been critical of government policy, and suggested that it has sometimes been excluded from debates and meetings due to its critical stance. 'People within the establishment are not keen on dealing with us', said the interviewee. On the other hand, the same organisation is also being invited to meetings by government and sits on government committees. The picture painted by this organisation is thus complex and demonstrates the contradictions between the insider and outsider status that can be experienced at one and the same time.

The same contradictory picture emerges from an interview with another politically influential organisation, where the respondent stated that 'people [the government] do not want to fund us to criticise them'. The respondent suggested that it is difficult to be critical of government policy on the one hand, and receive public funding on the other, and that the organisation feels pressured to deliver 'good news messages, that is all ministers want'. The insider-outsider status is difficult to balance: 'We have to be thinking all the time about how to both appear and be powerful enough to make a difference'.

Specific claims to influence

In this section we are looking at claims-making by women's organisations in relation to specific policy influence. We are thus only presenting the *claims* made by women's organisations and we are not attempting to judge whether or not they have actually had political influence. Further research must be undertaken to assess the extent to which claims made by women's organisations resonate with or differ from actual policy outcomes. Organisations acknowledge that it is problematic to pinpoint particular examples of influence, as it is often the combined but discrete lobbying of several organisations, the existence of a political will and political allies, and also

media focus, which together might produce a policy impact over time. In the words of one interviewee, 'measuring influence in public policy is notoriously difficult to do because there are so many factors that influence it and there are so many other organisations that are working similarly so it is hard to attribute it to specific organisations'.

However, nearly all the interviewed organisations are able to point to specific examples of policy issues where they claim to have had political influence. The issues are related either to general policies or gender policies that impact on women, or to specific policies that impact on women. An example of a general policy area where one organisation claims to have had an impact is that of the recent pension bill which, according to the interviewee, 'basically adopted every single recommendation that we had been making, and that is a huge triumph for us'. Another example of a claim to influence from the same organisation relates to a 2003 Select Committee enquiry into the proposed Equality and Human Rights Commission. The organisation was invited to submit formal evidence and the published Committee report included references to the organisation (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2004). Furthermore, the organisation claims to have been influential in reforming the law against rape. Another interviewee from the same organisation stated that its lobbying efforts also produced 'a significant influence on [...] the instruction of the Gender Equality Duty, and suggested that its research and lobbying efforts have led to an increase in the number of sexual assault referral centres, which is something we have lobbied very hard for'.

An organisation that has played a central role in campaigning for resources for the women's sector has used various strategies to influence government policy on this issue; these include a broad-based campaign involving other women's organisations and parliamentary lobbying through their local MP, including raising support for an early day motion in the House of Commons. In turn, the parliamentary attention given to the issue led to the local MP being invited to meet the Minister responsible for the third sector. Contact with the local MP originated at a time when the organisation was experiencing funding problems and its activities were in danger of being dramatically reduced. The campaign for increased funding to the sector resulted in continued government funding for the organisation itself as well as the

definition and highlighting of a specific policy problem: 'I think it was hugely successful. Hugely successful for us as an organisation in that we didn't have to make redundancies and become a shadow of an organisation that we were. And [...] it really did raise the profile of the women's sector with key decision makers, for example the Minister for the third sector', said the interviewee. Thus, through lobbying efforts the organisation managed to sustain itself and to raise the issue of funding of the women's sector on to the national political agenda. The interviewee reflected that, in general, it is difficult for the organisation to be pro-active, and that the campaign for increased funding to the women's sector is 'the only kind of pro-active thing that we do. We have really small victories, like some government department might mention women's organisations and strategy, which sounds like nothing, but it actually takes an enormous amount of work [for us] for government departments to include women's organisations because they are so not on the agenda'.

The organisation FORWARD has been a pioneer both nationally and internationally in relation to the issue of female genital mutilation. In the UK, it was instrumental in establishing the first legislation against FGM in 1985. FORWARD also argued for the second Act on FGM from 2003, which prohibited and criminalised FGM committed abroad. Prior to the second Act, it was instrumental in pushing for a parliamentary hearing on the issue and participated in the committee that drafted the outcome document from the parliamentary hearing (see House of Commons Library 2003). The organisation soon became internationally recognised and has effectively supported other countries in developing policies on FGM. FORWARD's work has led to policy developments in the UK related to child birth complications, training, and specialist services, and the organisation is actively involved with the NHS and with local health authorities on such issues. It has also worked in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and with the Central London Mosque. In addition, it has taken up the issue of child marriage with a campaign focused on Africa, and in the UK it has engaged in policy discussions about forced marriage, including representation on a parliamentary forum on forced marriage.

In relation to the government's consultation paper which asked for responses to the proposal of criminalising forced marriage, FORWARD argued *for* criminalisation with

the argument that this would send a strong message to the community. In doing so, it went against the advice from other women's organisations, including organisations representing ethnic minority women, who argued that victims of forced marriage would be reluctant to having their family members prosecuted and that criminalisation would contribute to further stigmatisation of ethnic minority communities. One of the organisations that argued against criminalisation and eventually supported a civil bill instead explained:

'Because civil remedies are quite different, and a lot of women who contact us, just to give you an example, on domestic violence injunctions, say the police tried to get them to criminalise, the police try to get them to press charges, but they don't want to press charges because it is not about the criminalisation of these perpetrators, it is about stopping that violence and if a civil remedy can do that and they can still have protection, then that is what they are telling us'.

Women's organisations were thus divided on the issue of criminalisation of forced marriage. When, after the consultation, the government decided against criminalisation, several of the interviewed women's organisations could claim that their resistance to, and lobbying against, criminalisation had in effect had a significant policy impact.

Several of the organisations that argued against the criminalisation of forced marriage thus continued their campaign against such practices by assisting Lord Lester to draft a private members bill which placed legal remedies to forced marriage within the remit of the existing Family Law Act. These organisations, which included Southall Black Sisters, Ashiana Network, Rights of Women, Refuge, Hounslow Domestic Violence Network, Asian Family Counselling Service, Khatun Sapnara, Imkaan, and Newham Asian Women's Project, were all thanked for their efforts in a personal letter from the then Prime Minister Tony Blair.¹⁰² The letter marked a milestone in the campaign against forced marriage as it celebrated new legislation to combat the problem and gave legitimacy and credit to the women's organisations that stood firmly on the anti-criminalisation line.

¹⁰² For the letter which was sent on April 21, 2007, see <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page11504>.

Interviewees from several women's organisations claimed credit for winning the argument against the proposed criminalisation of forced marriage, although not all of them shared the perception that new legislation, albeit placed within the context of the Family Law Act, was needed. One of our interviewees described her organisation's participation in the campaign in the following way: 'We got a big victory really, that it [forced marriage] was placed within the Family Law Act'. Another interviewee claimed that her organisation 'played a significant role in the way in which debates about violence against women in minority communities have played out', including an important role in lobbying on the issue of forced marriage. The organisation has also lobbied on policies related to women's immigration and citizenship, their rights and access to services, and employment issues. In relation to its lobbying efforts on women and citizenship, the organisation does not claim to have had much impact: 'We have been arguing for years for change and nothing has happened [...]. Women who claim asylum and are fleeing gender-based persecution are being returned back to their countries of origin. And we have argued for a number of years now that they should have the right to stay'.

A significant victory for Southall Black Sisters (SBS) and other women's organisations is the concessions made by government to immigration law in 1999 and 2002, which allowed victims of domestic violence with insecure immigration status the right to remain in the UK. SBS worked directly with Home Office Ministers on these concessions, and the changes that were made to government policy provide a clear example of policy impact which is widely acknowledged by the women's sector and also by other actors in the policy community. An interviewee said that although the SBS did not get 'everything they wanted', they achieved something important 'because it does help a significant amount of women who now don't face deportation if their marriage breaks down as a result of domestic violence'.

Another long-standing campaign by women's organisations is the effort to abolish the 'no recourse to public funds' rule, which also affects immigrant women on marital visas who have been subjected to domestic violence. As stated above, concessions to the immigration law allow victims of domestic violence to argue that they should have the right to stay in the UK if they leave their violent partners. Despite the concessions, however, immigrant women are in practice faced with both long and

costly processes in which they have to argue their case. At the time they leave their violent partners, they may find that women's refuges cannot take them in as the refuges cannot access public funding for housing costs on their behalf. According to an interviewee, what is preventing women from leaving a violent relationship is not so much the fear of deportation as the fear of destitution, and the no recourse rule is perceived as 'the biggest problem we are coming across with women'. Amnesty International and Southall Black Sisters have estimated that 600 women each year in the UK fall victim to the 'no recourse' rule (Amnesty International UK and Southall Black Sisters, 2008).

Several women's organisations have joined forces with SBS and are continuing the campaign against the 'no recourse rule'. These include Imkaan, NAWP, Poppy Project (Eaves Housing for Women), Refuge, Women's Aid England, and Women's Resource Centre. The Home Office had previously paid into a temporary 'no recourse fund' located within Women's Aid, and has more recently promised some policy measures that will alleviate the difficult situation for women who are at risk of further violence because they cannot access refuges (see House of Commons, 2008: 77). This change in government policy was also mentioned by one of the interviewed civil servants, who recounted that the current Minister for Domestic Violence, Vernon Coaker 'announced at the Home Affairs Select Committee that we are now introducing [...] support for those women who have got no recourse to public funds but are granted indefinite leave to remain'. Another civil servant who mentioned the Home Office's recent commitment to change its approach to no recourse stated that 'SBS is a huge driver on this' and that no recourse is a 'real issue' for practitioners and those who deliver services, thus acknowledging the importance of the campaign to abolish the rule. Participants in the campaign against the no recourse rule claim this development as another concession on the part of government: 'they [the government] have been working on that now and that has taken a long time and a lot of political pressure and lobbying for many years [...]; we have cracked a nut, because now the government has made an announcement about introducing some reform'. It is unlikely, however, that new changes to the no recourse rule will entirely satisfy women's organisations that also perceive a need for further reform to immigration law.

As mentioned previously, organisations like Southall Black Sisters and Justice for Women have managed to push the issue of ‘battered women who kill’ onto the political agenda. One of our interviewees estimated that about 30 women kill violent men every year. Justice for Women has campaigned for changes to the laws, first via case law (through the Courts) and later on via statute law (through Parliament). The core of the organisation has been a small number of activists, working closely together and with key lawyers. ‘So we decided to work with the current law and see how it could be improved and [our organisation] is a well-known campaign. We have made good use of the media’, said an interviewee. Eventually the campaigning paid off when, in the Appeals case of Emma Humphreys, a ‘cumulative provocation’ defence was allowed and thus established a legal precedent which could be used in future court cases. The interviewee noted that ‘[we] got that change in the law which was excellent’, and stated that the organisation has managed to be influential because it is regarded as representing expertise on the issue: ‘[...] they will listen because we are Justice for Women and they will listen to what we will say, we have got a reputation of being serious people who have made changes in the law, who understand the law. We are experts, it is expert opinion’. The interviewee also noted that Justice for Women had been invited to participate in the government’s homicide law consultation which recently reviewed homicide laws with a particular focus on ‘battered women who kill’ and the defences of Provocation and Diminished Responsibility. Justice for Women received a special hearing in relation to a specific submission made by the organisation to the Law Commission. Recent suggested changes to the law in relation to provocation have also been claimed as a victory for the organisation (see Bindel 2008), but at present it remains an open question whether proposals forwarded by the Law Commission and favoured by Justice for Women will become Law.

7.4.4 Summary remarks about the UK case

Our discussion of the UK case has not set out to assess the extent to which the Labour government has promoted feminist or women-friendly policies; rather it has sought to review the disputes over definitions and strategies in relation to VAW issues. From the discussion, however, it is clear that claims made by the women’s movement about these issues have not been accepted by the government as a whole, despite significant developments within the Crown Prosecution Service.

Current government policies dealing with VAW do not focus explicitly on women and are formulated in gender-neutral terms. This seriously weakens any claim to feminist politics. As long as the state is unwilling to take on board a gendered perspective on VAW issues and also on other policy issues affecting women and men, the state can hardly be said to espouse feminism. The term 'feminism' should be reserved for policies that explicitly challenge the dominant gendered power relations or confront the gender order (see McBride and Mazur, 2008). The label 'women-friendly', however, signals an emphasis on the interests and needs of women as a group (see *ibid.*). Even though the Labour government seems to use gender-neutral language to promote its family-friendly policies, these policies do in fact promote the interests of women and thus amount to being 'women-friendly'. Our analysis equates with that of Annesley and her colleagues who argue that 'New Labour is focusing on feminising politics and policy, which means developing policy for women, rather than engendering politics and policy which seeks to address and alter existing gender structures and patterns. Equating gender with women [...] places distinct limits on what New Labour, however ambitious, can achieve' (Annesley et al., 2007: 20). There is, thus, a clear need for the women's movement to continue its collective mobilisation of women in order to affect policy changes that can both challenge and alter gendered structures of inequality.

In section 7.4 we have seen that, since coming to power in 1997, the Labour government has provided women's movement actors with new political opportunities and has presented and actualised a political will to engage with women's organisations. The state's gender machinery has been developed through the creation of a special Ministry for Women and a dedicated Women's Unit, but the overall machinery dealing with gender equality policies is perceived as fragmented, weak, and under-resourced. These features put constraints on what the government is able to do to achieve gender equality policies, but also on what the women's movement can achieve through lobbying these institutions.

A broad specter of women's organisations in the UK, including majority and minority organisations, participate actively in a discursive struggle with the state over definitions and strategies in relation to violence against women. The women's movement argues that domestic violence is not a gender-neutral phenomenon, but a

phenomenon rooted in inequalities between women and men. Moreover, the women's movement seeks to promote an integrated approach and strategy to violence against women, where different forms of violence are all addressed within a gender-based and a human-rights based framework. The agreement between majority and minority women's movement actors on these issues is noticeable, as is the resistance towards the proposals from the state. Lately, however, the Crown Prosecution Service has taken a leading role in moving the state towards the position of the women's movement on these matters.

We have seen that women's movement actors actively engage in institutional political opportunity structures such as government consultations, expert and stakeholder groups, and formal and informal meetings with high-level politicians and civil servants. Women's organisations are, thus, using a mix of both reactive and pro-active strategies in order to influence policy outcomes. We have argued that a number of organisations, roughly between ten and 20, are part of a relatively stable policy community of 'insider groups' that consult regularly, either formally or informally, with politicians and civil servants on particular policy issues. The extent to which the policy community is open or closed is significant, as it determines the ease with which new groups and organisations can achieve access to policy circles. Although public consultations are in principle open to every organisation, our analysis has revealed that it is often the same organisations that participate in different consultations. Moreover, the same organisations tend to be invited to meetings, to provide evidence, or to sit on expert or stakeholder groups. There seems to be a division between, on the one hand the women's organisations that are insiders in the policy community, and on the other hand the women's organisations that can be said to constitute the broader women's movement.

These findings mirror those from Norway, where women's organisations are 'selectively included' in policy-making processes, such that majority organisations are invited to contribute to 'mainstream' gender equality issues, while minority organisations are invited to contribute to 'crisis gender policies' that address particular issues such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation perceived as relevant to ethnic minority and immigrant women. In the UK, the same distinction between 'mainstream gender equality issues' and 'crisis gender policies' concerning

immigrant and ethnic minority women applies. However, majority and minority women's organisations appear to be increasingly invited to contribute to both 'types' of gender policy issues, as evidenced by the participation of majority and minority women's organisations in some recent government consultations.

7.5 Conclusion

In this concluding section we highlight some of the similarities and differences that have become apparent between Norway, Spain, and the UK during the course of our investigation.

All three countries have developed new field-specific institutional opportunity structures, with opportunities for women's movement actors to mobilise and participate in political decision-making processes concerning gender equality in general and violence against women in particular. Specific governments led by single political parties or a coalition of political parties have opened up new and increased political opportunities for the women's movement in Norway (various Labour and Labour-led coalition governments), Spain (Zapatero's Socialist Party government) and the UK (Blair's and subsequently Brown's Labour government).

As stated in Chapter 1, in 1995 Mazur and McBride Stetson classified Norway as a country with a policy machinery (the Equal Status Council) that provided a high level of policy access for feminist groups, and a machinery that had a high level of policy influence on equal employment policies (Mazur and McBride Stetson, 1995: 275-277). Since 1995, the Norwegian policy machinery has been reorganised, and new government institutions supporting gender equality policies have been created. The Ministry of Children and Equality has a crucial role in developing gender equality policies, while violence against women issues are divided between various government departments, and migrant issues are located within yet another government department. The role of the newly established (2006) Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (which has replaced the previous Gender Equality Ombud), is to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. We have yet to see how, and the extent to which, the Ombud will take on intersectional approaches over time to inequality in practice. Women's

organisations in Norway contested the establishment of the new Ombud. They lamented the loss of both a centre for knowledge about gender inequality and the watchdog role that were previously embedded in the Gender Equality Ombud. Concerns were also voiced about the status of gender inequalities within the new structure.

The Norwegian gender equality machinery has continued to provide access for feminist and women's groups, and to influence government policies dealing with equal employment opportunity and other gender equality issues. Both access and influence have, however, been unequally distributed between various majoritised and minoritised organisations and between various gender policy areas. For example, minoritised women's organisations have almost exclusively been consulted on "ethnic minority women's issues" related to gender violence (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003), while majoritised women's organisations have been consulted on a much broader range of gender equality issues (see below). In general, women's organisations in Norway reported that they lack spaces in which to meet and discuss movement politics.

In 1995, both the UK and Spain were classified by Mazur and McBride Stetson as countries with policy machineries that enjoyed high influence on equal employment policies, but the policy machineries in both countries were considered as giving "low access" to feminist groups (Mazur and McBride Stetson, 1995: 275). In the UK, the relatively strong position of the then Equal Opportunities Commission was taken as an indicator of the high influence enjoyed by this specific gender policy machinery on equal employment policies. Since 1997 and the election of the Labour Government, the gender policy machinery in the UK has developed significantly in terms of new institutions and wider access to feminist and women's groups. Today it could be argued that the various parts of the policy machinery in the UK is giving relatively high access to a small and stable number of women's organisations that actively seek to influence government policy. The current gender machinery is, however, considered relatively weak in terms of government influence, and feminist groups do not always think it worthwhile to direct their advocacy and lobbying efforts through institutions such as the Government Equalities Office.

As in Norway, a significant step towards an intersectional approach to inequality by government has been taken in the UK with the establishment of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, which includes gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and belief, and age in its remit. Moreover, the Government Equalities Office is leading the government's overall strategy on equality with a lead role for policies related to the equality strands of gender and sexuality (other major equality strands include disability, age, race, and faith/belief, but the responsibility for these located within various other government departments). As in Norway, violence against women issues are divided between different government departments, thus creating, according to interviewees and documents from women's organisations, a fragmented 'silo-approach' to such issues. Women's organisations in the UK have demanded a more integrated and gender-based approach to violence against women issues, but have so far been met with a mixture of government resistance, alleged agreement, and accommodation. For example, the Home Office continues to use a non-gendered definition of domestic violence, while the Government Equalities Office claims that the government actually *has* an integrated strategy towards violence against women. The Crown Prosecution Service, on the other hand, has explicitly followed the recommendations of the End Violence Against Women Campaign in its latest national strategy plan.

Moreover, parts of the picture from Norway of an unequal distribution of access and influence in relation to types of women's organisations and types of gender policy areas also applies to the UK. Again, it appears that minoritised women's organisations are often being consulted on "ethnic minority women's issues" related to gender violence, and that they are less often consulted on other issues such as education, the labour market, et cetera. In the UK, however, majoritised women's organisations seem to increasingly engage in "ethnic minority women's issues", not only related to gender violence, but also related to the labour market and political participation (the primary example being the Fawcett Society).

In Spain, recently labelled by the BBC as a country ‘now at the vanguard of the fight for gender equality’,¹⁰³ The Women’s Institute (Instituto de la Mujer), a government institution dedicated to gender equality, is a key player in policy-making related to both gender equality and violence against women. The recently established National Observatory for Gender Violence also provides an important opportunity structure for women’s movement organisations in Spain. Moreover, the recently formed (April, 2008) Ministry of Equality is now overseeing the WI and is developing new measures to combat gender violence among immigrant groups. While Spain has recently made significant advances in gender equality policies, also in comparison with other European countries, the national government institutions in Spain have yet to develop intersectional approaches to inequalities (Bustelo, 2009).

In 1995, as we have seen, Mazur and McBride Stetson classified Spain as a country with a policy machinery (the Women’s Institute) that enjoyed high influence on equal employment policies, but it was considered as giving “low access” to feminist groups (Mazur and McBride Stetson, 1995: 275). Indeed, in 1995, Valiente noted the close ties between the Instituto de la Mujer and the socialist political party PSOE and that “the IM does not favour the mobilization of the feminist movement (or of public opinion) as a way of advancing demands that go beyond PSOE gender equality compromises” (Valiente 1995: 234). The IM has continued to play a significant role in Spanish gender equality policies, and both the conservative People’s Party government from 1996 until 2004 and the subsequent (and current) Socialist Party government have continued to support gender equality policies. Moreover, the current government has strengthened the gender machinery through the recently created Ministry of Equality and its several entities including the ‘Equality Policies General Secretariat’, signalling the high value it places on gender equality through the appointment of a Cabinet consisting of an equal number of women and men and through the creation of an array of new laws to support gender equality (Bustelo and Ortals, 2007: 207). In terms of political access for feminist and women’s organisations, the picture in Spain is more of a division between majoritised and minoritised organisations. While majoritised women’s organisations are being

¹⁰³ ‘Diverging paths on gender equality’, BBC News 10 May 2008
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7375230.stm>

consulted on various gender equality issues, minoritised organisations have yet to achieve a participatory role in the dialogue, design and implementation of gender equality policies broadly conceived.

Despite the presence of field-specific opportunity structures for women's organisations seeking to impact on policies relating to gender equality and violence against women, our case-studies have made it clear that ethnic majority women's organisations in all three countries in reality have more opportunities to mobilise collectively and participate politically than ethnic minority women. A range of factors may contribute to an understanding of this situation. Although further research is needed, our studies indicate that majority women's organisations seem to be consulted on a broader range of issues than minority women's organisations. While majority women seem to be consulted on issues such as education, the labour market, and other social and economic issues, minority women seem to be consulted on issues that are perceived as being specific to minority cultures (e.g., forced marriage, FGM, honour killings, and, at least in the UK, community responses to terrorist activities). Moreover, as these issues are perceived as specific to minority cultures, they are often located in different parts of the government apparatus. Against the advice and claims-making by women's organisations, divisions between 'majority' and 'minority' types of violence against women are thus institutionalised as separate issues (they are located in different government ministries) and are discursively kept apart because they are talked about separately from other 'mainstream' types of violence against women (e.g., domestic violence). Such a fragmented 'silo-approach' to violence against women issues effectively hinders the integration of various violence against women issues and perpetuates a distinction between certain types of issues that are regarded as caused by violent male behaviour, while other types of issues are regarded as caused by 'culture' or 'tradition'. These types of divisions also produce barriers in terms of minority women's participation in more overall political debates, be they either about gender equality or violence against women. Moreover, they produce barriers in terms of majority women's participation in issues that are defined as relevant only to minoritised women. Majority women may feel that issues such as FGM, forced marriage, and honour killings do not concern them, and either the absence of

concern or an actual involvement with such issues are two alternative strategies that may both invoke a fear of being labelled as racist.

Dominant discourse denotes specific forms of violence, such as forced marriage, FGM and honour killings as cultural products, while other forms of violence (e.g., domestic violence) are, to some extent, recognised as being rooted in gender inequality. When forced marriage and FGM are perceived as issues relevant only to immigrant and ethnic minority populations, they are identified as “immigration” or “integration” issues, or as “cultural” issues (cultural here signifying ‘other’ cultures than the dominant one). In other words, the state participates in a cultural framing of specific ‘minority types of violence’, while domestic violence is increasingly framed as a problem arising from male dominance and violence. Domestic violence is, thus, more readily perceived as a gender equality issue and a human rights issue, than is forced marriage and FGM. State resistance towards a gendered framing of domestic violence is, however, evident in the case of the UK, at least on the part of the Home Office, albeit with the important exception of the Crown Prosecution Service which has recently adopted the gendered UN definition of violence against women. The Norwegian and Spanish states seem, on the other hand, to have accepted a link between domestic violence and gender inequality. It is notable that the Spanish government has taken steps to identify violence against women as a gender-based issue, thus signalling a more progressive politics than the UK government. Lacking in Spain is a sustained and integrated approach to different forms of violence against women including forced marriage, FGM, and honour-based violence.¹⁰⁴

Women’s movements in Norway, Spain and the UK seek to reframe all forms of violence against women into a gender equality frame and a human rights frame. A joint movement effort is most apparent in the UK, where majority and minority women’s organisations have joined initiatives such as the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW). In Norway and in Spain, majority women’s organisations have not fully engaged with ethnic minority women, and it could be argued that ethnic minority women’s voices have, to a large extent, been ignored or

¹⁰⁴ See, however, the new plan to prevent gender violence in immigrant communities published in January 2009 (this plan falls outside the time period investigated in our report, but it is an important new development in Spain) <http://www.migualdad.es/noticias/pdf/090109Planinmigracion.pdf>

silenced in the context of the majority women's movements in these two countries. In Norway, however, some majority women's organisations have begun to discuss ethnic minority women's interests (including *Kvinner på tvers*, *Krisesentersekretariatet*, *Kvinnefronten*, *JURK*, *KiA* and *Norske Kvinners Sanitetsforening*). In Spain, on the other hand, the majority women's organisations included in our study have so far not expressed any direct interests in taking up ethnic minority women's interests. In the UK, where organisations are more mixed (there are not so clear distinctions between majority and minority organisations in the UK, as many organisations are now composed of individuals of different ethnic backgrounds), organisations such as Women's Aid and the Fawcett Society have taken significant steps to embrace and accept ethnic minority women's interests and concerns.

In summary, women's movements in all three countries are promoting broader and more integrated definitions of, and approaches to, violence against women. The women's movements seek to reframe violence against women both discursively and institutionally. Discursively, such reframing is sought through the employment of a wide definition of violence against women, and institutionally the reframing is sought through an integration of different forms of violence against women within the same government structures. In this regard the women's movements have some way to go in terms of convincing the governments in Norway, Spain, and the UK about the need for policy changes.

Gender inequality on the one hand, and racial and ethnic equality on the other, appear as two more or less separate and distinct spheres, at least in Spain and largely also in Norway. There is evidence of more sector overlap in the UK, where black women's organisations constitute 'a clear section within the black voluntary sector generally and the voluntary sector as a whole' (Davis and Cooke, 2002: 32). The issues of gender inequality and racial and ethnic inequality are, however, largely dealt with by different government institutions and agencies in all three countries, with recently established government institutions that to various degrees seek to apply intersectional approaches to inequality. Correspondingly, different parts of the voluntary sector participate in policy-making processes in the two areas, albeit with some overlap in the cases of Norway (the MiRA Centre for migrant women) and the

UK (black women's organisations). Although there are exceptions to this picture, we would argue that the sphere of gender equality policy is largely dominated by majority women's organisations, while minority women mainly have a say on particular issues such as forced marriage and FGM (see also Dustin, 2006). Although more research needs to be done, our case studies indicate that the sphere of racial and ethnic equality policy is, on the other hand, largely dominated by ethnic minority and immigrant organisations that are often led by men (at least in Norway and in Spain). A problem identified in interviews with women activists in Spain and the UK is that men are, allegedly, often perceived to represent entire minority communities, as governments engage with male community leaders as spokespeople for both women and men. Women's interests may, *at least in some cases*, at worst be ignored or overlooked, and at best be interpreted and represented by men. As a result, ethnic minority and immigrant women may sometimes effectively be silenced in, or largely excluded from, both spheres of politics. In the case of Norway, our research has supported the notion of a selective inclusion of movement groups (Skjeie and Teigen, 2007), where the government practice reinforces a separation between majority and minority organisations and between particular policy areas. In Spain, we would argue that the inclusion and participation of ethnic minority and immigrant women is a general problem – notwithstanding the actual sphere of politics. Thus, minoritised women in Spain are not fully participating in the gender equality sphere, nor in the racial and ethnic equality sphere. This is clearly a problem, not only for minoritised women themselves, but also for majoritised women and the mainstream women's movement, and for the Spanish state. In the UK, we have observed that minority and majority women's organisations are increasingly responding to issues arising from both spheres.

An important issue that illustrates overlap between the different agendas of gender equality and racial/ethnic equality is that of immigrant women with insecure residence status who experience domestic violence. In all three countries, these women experience a lack of protection due to current legislation. Depending on their length of residence, immigrant women who experience domestic violence may be denied, residence permit and refused access to government support and assistance. Moreover, it can be difficult for women's shelters to take in victims, as they may also be denied government funding. Majoritised and minoritised women's movement

organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK are working to different extents to address this issue, with varying degrees of success (as evidenced by changes and continuities in laws applying to immigrant women with insecure residence status who experience domestic violence).

We have mentioned a recent movement towards intersectional approaches to gender inequality, demonstrated in the UK by the establishment of the EHRC and to some extent the GEO, and in Norway by the creation of the new Ombud. Spain has yet to form a government institution that specifically addresses intersectionality, and the new Ministry of Equality (2008) has, according to Bustelo (2009), only begun to show a concern with intersectional approaches to inequality. Importantly, however, women's movement actors in both Norway and the UK have expressed fears in relation to whether or not priority will be given by such new intersectional institutions to women's and gender equality issues. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) shares such concerns, and in 2007 asked the Norwegian government to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the new machinery – the Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud – as compared to the previous Gender Equality Ombud, which focused exclusively on gender equality.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in July 2008, in its comment to the UK's submitted report, CEDAW argued that the UK government should 'take the necessary steps to ensure that national machinery for the promotion of equality continues to give *priority attention to gender equality and discrimination against women*' (CEDAW 2008: 6; our emphasis). This recommendation should be followed up by all countries interested in developing gender equality policy measures and protecting women's rights.

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix B in the country report from Norway.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter emphasises the main issues and evidence that have emerged during our research for this cross-country report. It starts with a discussion of some of the key conceptual and empirical contributions we attempt to make to the overall FEMCIT project and to wider discussions on the political and academic arenas. It then goes on to summarise and discuss key findings related to the two main themes of our investigation: relations between ethnic minority and majority organisations in the women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK, and political opportunities, claims-making and resonance within the contexts of women's movements in these three countries. The chapter ends with a brief section on future research, and a section on good practice and policy recommendations that have arisen during the course of our case-studies in Norway, Spain and the UK and that are applicable to all three countries.

This cross-country report has sought to summarise and, to some extent, reinterpret findings from the three countries, whilst also taking a further step in a research process aiming towards a more comprehensive comparison between the three case studies. As such, it is to be considered a 'work in progress'. As described in chapters one and five, this cross-country report is based on case studies of selected women's organisations mainly, but not only, based in the capitals of Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, and on select mappings of documents produced by women's organisations and by governments in these three countries. The interviewed organisations are all, to varying degrees, seeking to influence national policy-making processes that in various ways impact upon women. Our focus has been on two major aspects of organisational activities:

1. Relations between ethnic 'majority' and ethnic 'minority' women's organisations in the women's movements, with a special view to representations of co-operation, unity and dispute.

2. How women's organisations use political opportunity structures to influence gender policy and anti-racist policy, with a special view to policies on violence against women (VAW) and issues of racism and ethnic discrimination related to VAW, and the problem-representations and claims-making forwarded by women's organisations in relation to such policies.

As stated in the introductory chapter, our research focus on violence against women issues has included domestic violence, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation, and racism and discrimination related to violence against women. The issues of rape, prostitution, and human trafficking, which are also violence against women issues, are outside the remit of our analysis.

8.2 Conceptual and Empirical Contributions

This project is part of the larger FEMCIT integrated project, and constitutes a contribution to one of the six citizenship dimensions of FEMCIT. The main emphasis in Work Package 4 is on women's *ethnic and religious citizenship*, while the dimensions addressed by other FEMCIT Work Packages include political, social, economic, sexual and bodily, and intimate citizenship. Strand 1 of Work Package 4 is especially concerned with *gender and ethnic* dimensions of citizenship practice within the women's movement itself and within the nation-state contexts of Norway, Spain and the UK.

'Ethnic citizenship' is applied tentatively as a theoretical and empirical concept. As we see it, 'ethnic citizenship' must be linked to demands for justice and a new set of anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies that have developed at different points in time in Norway, Spain and the UK. Such policies might include individual and/or collective protection and freedom from racism and discrimination, and also freedom from religious hatred, and protection of national minorities and indigenous people's rights. Legal, political and social links should also be made between gender and ethnic citizenship.

On the whole, laws on gender equality and racism/discrimination were instituted roughly at the same time in the UK, with Race Relations Acts passed in 1968 and

1976, the Equal Pay Act in 1970, and the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975. A corresponding institutionalisation of relevant government machineries such as the EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission) and the CRE (Commission for Racial Equality) took place in the mid 1970s (1975 and 1976, respectively). In Norway, gender laws were introduced before laws concerning racism and discrimination, with the Gender Equality Act enacted in 1978 and the Anti-Discrimination Act in 2005. The institutionalisation of relevant government machineries in Norway were also phased in by stages, with the Equal Pay Council established as early as 1959, transformed into the Equal Status Council in 1972. Furthermore, the Gender Equality Ombud was established in 1978, and SMED (Centre Against Ethnic Discrimination) was established in 1998 (SMED was closed down in 2005 and its responsibilities were taken over in 2006 by the then new Gender Equality and Discrimination Ombud). In Spain, both legal and institutional mechanisms for the regulation of gender and racial/ethnic relations were introduced at a later stage than in both the UK and Norway. The Women's Institute, a national government agency in Spain, was formed in 1983, and the National Observatory against Racism and Discrimination was established in 2005. In 2003, an intention by government to create a Council for the Advancement of Equality of Treatment and non-Discrimination of People on the Grounds of Racial and Ethnic Origin was announced, but according to Bustelo (2009: 8) this has still not been formally implemented. The gender violence law was enacted in 2004, while the gender equality law was enacted in 2007. In 2000, a law on the rights and liberties of foreigners in Spain and social integration was introduced and later amended.

Citizenship can be viewed in terms of identity, belonging and participation, and ethnic citizenship is directly concerned with the identity, belonging and participation of ethnic/national minority, immigrant and indigenous groups of people. Our focus in this regard has been two-fold: firstly, we have examined the inclusion and participation of minoritised women within the broader women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK, and secondly, we have studied the inclusion and participation of minoritised (and majoritised) women in dialogue and consultation with government in relation to gender equality and violence against women policies.

Anti-racist feminists and women activists have demanded the right to be heard and participate as legitimate representatives of ethnic/national minority, immigrant and indigenous women. In terms of the status of the Sami people in Norway, Semb (2007) has suggested that this particular indigenous people has experienced a change in their citizenship status from citizens to 'citizens plus', as they now enjoy citizen rights both as any other citizen of the Norwegian state *and* additional citizen rights as an indigenous people (Semb, 2007). We would argue that the status of any minority, immigrant and indigenous group which is discriminated against and experience racism and discrimination can be defined as one of 'citizen minus', thus signalling the lack of equal citizenship rights in terms of identity, belonging and participation. In particular, minority, immigrant and indigenous women, who often find themselves to be a 'minority within a minority' (Eisenberg and Spinner Halev, (2005), may suffer from a lack of equal status both within the majority society (as a minority) and within the minority community (as women). The term 'citizen minus' differs from those of 'margizen' and 'quasi-citizen' or 'denizen' (Castles and Davidson, 2006: 94-96), in that it both considers (a lack of) formal citizenship rights *and* goes beyond formal citizenship rights to include more informal dimensions of citizenship linked to identity, belonging and participation in various spheres including, but not limited to, the political sphere, the economic sphere, the social sphere, and the intimate sphere.

But the demand for ethnic citizenship has not only concerned ethnic minority women and their fight to be recognised by the state, and indeed by the larger women's movement, as legitimate voices. Indeed, the demand has also been addressed to majoritised women who are called upon to address their own hegemonic positions both within the women's movement itself and within the broader society. 'Ethnic citizenship' is, therefore, both a concept related to individual and collective rights, and also a concept that refers to *relations* between minoritised and majoritised individuals and groups in society. Equal ethnic citizenship thus signals that both minoritised and majoritised groups and individuals are constantly engaged in dialogues and debates that seeks to change the assumptions by which some groups are constructed as minoritised and majoritised, and to eliminate the conditions by which some groups experience racism and discrimination.

In relation to the state, ethnic citizenship demands have for example been voiced in relation to immigrant women with insecure immigrant status who experience domestic or other forms of violence. On this particular issue, ethnic and gendered citizenship claims come together and force a more intersectional approach to inequality. It can also be argued that ethnic and gendered citizenship claims are being forwarded by women's movement actors who seek to convince the state that a broad and integrated approach to violence against women is needed. In particular, the refusal to deem certain types of violence against women as products of 'culture' and 'religion', while other forms of violence are seen as rooted in male dominance, can be said to constitute a claim for equal citizenship by women of ethnic/national minority, immigrant and indigenous backgrounds.

Our study has been grounded in existing research on women's movements, gendered citizenship, and multiculturalism. Through their mobilisation and activism, women's movements practise *gendered citizenship* by highlighting gendered inequalities and arguing for increased gender equality and justice. Women's movement actors seek to alter citizenship regimes on a broad array of arenas, including politics, work, religion, the family, and intimate relationships. In our study we have paid particular attention to how the majority and minority women's movements' organisations has problematised and framed violence against women issues, including domestic violence, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation, and immigration rules that discriminate against women with insecure residence status who have been subjected to violence in intimate relationships. An inclusive notion of citizenship as practice, together with formal rights protecting women from harm, implies a gender equal society free from these types of violence. In our study, we have sought to examine how various women's organisations, through their strategies and claims-making, work towards protecting women and eliminating gendered violence.

Our analysis has also been based on theoretical approaches which emphasize the importance of political opportunity structures and framing processes. The political opportunity structures approach highlights the specific socio-political context in which a particular social movement is embedded. We have discussed both institutional and discursive aspects of political opportunity structures and how they give rise to

different and changing opportunities and constraints for women's movements in Norway, Spain, and the UK.

Our analysis has shown that all three countries have developed new field-specific opportunity structures, with opportunities for women's movement actors to mobilise and participate in political decision-making processes concerning gender equality in general and violence against women in particular. However, the legitimacy of the institutional gender machineries in Norway, Spain and the UK among women's movement actors vary quite substantially. In particular, the UK government's gender machinery is generally perceived as fragmented, under-resourced and lacking in political clout and initiative. Indeed, some of the most central components of the institutional gender machinery in the UK are perceived by some women's organisations as either irrelevant or too weak to make a difference. In Norway, the institutional gender machinery appears as having, until recently, been quite strong and legitimate among majority women's movement actors, but the newly created Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud has been met with mixed expectations by majority and minority women's organisations. Whether gender equality issues will lose significance in relation to other equality issues within the remit of the new Ombud is an open question. The same scepticism has been raised towards the new Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK. In Spain, women's organisations have been included in political processes first and foremost by the Women's Institute, a government institution dedicated to gender equality, but it remains to be seen how effectively they will be included in consultations by new gender machinery institutions like the new Ministry of Equality. While Spain has recently made significant advances in gender equality policies, the government has yet to develop institutional intersectional approaches to inequality.

In Norway, Spain and the UK, women's and gender issues, including violence against women issues, are dealt with by a plethora of government institutions. This segmentation further fragments the opportunity structure available to women's organisations and, possibly and probably, also weakens the political strength and importance assigned to both institutions and issues. In particular, our study has demonstrated a clear call from women's movements (at least in Norway and the UK) for governments to formulate an integrated approach to violence against women,

which includes not only domestic violence but also issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour-based violence, and human trafficking. The integration of such issues should, according to women's movement actors (and supported by the United Nations and its Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), be based on a gendered and human rights approach to violence against women. Women's movements are, thus, arguing against a gender-neutral approach to violence against women, and against an approach that defines particular types of violence, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour-based violence, as products of culture and/or religion, rather than as products of male domination.

We have also argued for the usefulness of discourse and frame analysis in our study of women's movement actors and their claims-making. In particular, we have sought to examine how different women's movement actors frame themselves, other actors and the issues they engage with. The research has focused on relations between ethnic 'majority' and ethnic 'minority' women's organisations in the women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK. Our interest in these relations originated from a concern with the 1970s and 1980s critiques of contemporary white, middle-class women's movements as ethnocentric and blind to the importance of 'race' and ethnicity. Put simply, we wanted to investigate whether these critiques are still being voiced, and if so, to what extent? Drawing on inspiration from Sudbury (1998), we sought to understand whether 'majority' women's organisations have embraced and accepted, or resisted and rejected, the interests of 'minority' women, and the extent to which 'majority' and 'majority' women's organisations have formed alliances in order to influence public policy.

One of our first insights was that the ethnic 'majority – minority' distinction applied to organisations in women's movements is simply too simple. The sheer diversity and complexity of each of these categories make it difficult to meaningfully use the distinction. On the one hand, organisations that were founded by white feminists in the 1970s might have undergone changes which make it difficult to place them in the 'majority' category. Some organisations were established as majority-minority mixed, or have perhaps developed towards a more mixed internal composition. On the other hand, the category 'minority' includes a variety of ethnic minority groups,

and also immigrant groups and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, local, regional, national and trans-national dimensions intersect with majority and minority categories and make it difficult to delimit any particular group, be it a majoritised or minoritised group. For example, Sami people have roots in several countries in the North, and may see themselves as one Sami nation while in fact living in and moving between different nation states. Another example is Romani people in Spain, where the 'Spanish Roma' are being distinguished from 'the new Roma' immigrating recently to Spain from Eastern European countries. Likewise, group labels such as 'black', 'white', or 'migrant' are complex and sometimes contested, and do not clearly and immediately signify or identify any particular group.

Despite these complexities, we have retained usage of the 'minority' and 'majority' categories, signalling that some groups are non-privileged while others are privileged in some or most relations. How groups of people are labelled and label themselves is in large part determined by existing power relations and power differentials between different groups. We have, therefore, found it useful to apply the concepts of 'majoritised' and 'minoritised', proposed by Gunaratnam (2003), interchangeably with the 'majority' and 'minority' concepts, thus indicating 'the active processes of racialisation that are at work in designating certain attributes of groups in particular contexts as being in a 'minority' (ibid.: 17).

8.3 Relations Between Ethnic Minority and Majority Organisations in Women's Movements in Norway, Spain and the UK

In Chapter 6 we examined how different organisations within contemporary women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK position themselves in relation to other movement actors, and the implications such positioning may have for the building of alliances and co-operation through 'strategic sisterhood'. Our main focus here has not been on unity or disunity between different majoritised organisations, but rather on co-operation, unity and disunity between majoritised and minoritised women's organisations and between ethnic minority women's organisations. Such a limitation is justified by the design and topic of our research, which is limited to the policy area

of violence against women (including domestic violence, forced marriage, honour crimes, and female genital mutilation), and that of racism and discrimination with particular relevance to violence against women. Had our study included other issues, such as rape, prostitution and human trafficking, the focus of our analysis would also have shifted in terms of where we are looking for unity and disunity.

With this proviso in mind, we have investigated empirical examples of women's movement activists' representations of unity and disunity, and examples of formal networking, co-operation and alliances between ethnic 'majority' and 'minority' organisations in the women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK.

In Chapter 6 we discussed the relations between majoritised and minoritised women's organisations in Norway, Spain and the UK since the 1970s. The interviews with activists displayed a number of differences between Norway, Spain and the UK related to the mobilisation of migrant and ethnic minority women and their relations to the majority women's organisations: We noted that ethnic minority women in Norway and the UK began to organise during the 1970s - women in the UK some years earlier than in Norway - whereas this took place at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s in Spain. The institutionalisation of public funding of women's organisations also started much later in Spain compared to Norway and the UK. Our analysis also indicated different degrees of co-operation and intersectionality. The UK has the most promising example of a majority feminist organisation addressing ethnic discrimination and racism within an intersectional approach, and numerous instances of majority organisations addressing ethnic minority issues. In Norway, too there are several majority women's organisations that display a basic concern with issues related to ethnic minority women, while Spain displays the least indications of co-operation and a common political platform across ethnic divides.

The interviews also displayed a number of similar tendencies in Norway, Spain and the UK concerning the mobilisation of migrant and ethnic minority women and their relations to the majority women's organisations: Women's organisations are embedded within the larger social movement industry, and minority women have tended to affiliate with 'their' ethnic group, community or movement before

establishing separate women's or feminist organisations. Feminist organising has been an effect of disappointment with various male organisations and gender-mixed movements, across ethnic differences.

The mobilisation of feminism and women's organisations has been deeply influenced by international and trans-national trends. The UN Women's International Decade 1975-1995 (Pietilä and Vickers, 1994) opened new policy windows for all kinds of women's organisations and prompted trans-national networking. The European Women's Lobby was set up to influence the EU's gender equality agenda, and has national units in Spain and the UK. Norway is not a member of the EU, and lacks a similar women's lobby working towards the European level. Furthermore, trans-national movements, such as the Sami Movement, the Romani Movement and the Black Liberation Movement, have inspired ethnic minorities to organise at national and local levels.

As stated above, an important conclusion based on the interviews is that there is a vast variety within and between the categories of ethnic majority and minority women's organisations. Nevertheless, we argue that ethnic minority women's organisations in general have become legitimate actors and have been incorporated in the women's movements within the three countries. Referring to Rokkan's concept of barriers to political participation (Rokkan, 1970), we maintain that they are accepted as political actors in their own right by majority women's organisations. Their interests are more embraced by and better incorporated into majority women's organisations today compared to the 1970s and 1980s. In general, however, ethnic minority women have yet to achieve significant representation and executive power within majority women's organisations.

We have tried to identify broad types of representations of the relations between minority and majority women's organisations. For instance, we suggest two competing discourses of the relations between ethnic majority and minority women's organisations among majority and minority feminists during the 1970s and 1980s in Norway; one discourse of anger among minority feminists and one of irritation among majority feminist. Among the non-feminist women's organisations we noticed one discourse of charity and one of solidarity. Inspired by Julia Sudbury (1998), we

have analysed responses to the claims forwarded by minority feminist and women activists among majority feminist and women activists. There is a general agreement among the minority activists that the majority women's organisations have been ethnocentric in Norway, Spain and the UK. There is little evidence to the contrary in the interviews with majority activists. Intersectional approaches are hard to find. To what extent majority activists have also been racist, is more controversial. Respondents from majority feminist organisations would hardly admit to racist attitudes or practices, whereas feminist activists from ethnic minority organisations emphasise that racism is characteristic not just of public policies but also of feminist organisations as long as they do not include anti-racism on their feminist agendas.

The relations between ethnic minority and majority women's organisations were strained from the outset, indicated by minority women interviewees' talk about being overlooked and misrecognised within the larger women's movements. Discourses of women's liberation and gender equality have not easily been merged with discourses of ethnic discrimination and racism among majority organisations. Feminism is a contested concept, and so are 'women's issues', the relations of men to feminist and women's organisations, and the meaning of religion.

There are important instances of co-operation and allied strategic framing of claims across ethnic differences in all three countries, however. These are generally linked to issues of gender violence, and to the growing feminist demand for a holistic and integrated public policy against all types of gender violence, be it domestic violence, violence in close relations, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so on. In Norway, Spain and the UK, the feminist divisions of the 1970s between liberal, radical and socialist feminism seem less salient, whereas religion and ethnicity have become more prominent issues. Gender violence, which has been our chosen focus in this research project, seems to be a feminist issue with a considerable potential for co-operation and strategic framing across ethnic differences. Migrant women's concern with the discrimination of migrant women in the labour market is less salient among the interviewed majority activists. This may reflect the focus of our research question, but it is also likely to mirror different political priorities.

A systematic finding across the countries is that religion has become an urgent issue, and also an issue which seems more likely to divide than to unite feminist and women's organisations. The relationship between feminism and multiculturalism is prominent in all three countries, with religion in the sense of Islam, and ethnicity in the sense of everything but whiteness, as the most visible issues. Majority women's organisations are generally not addressing 'whiteness' or their own ethnicity and privilege, although anti-racism and issues related to migrant women have become a legitimate issue within women's movements. Religion seems to be more disuniting, and an incendiary question within and among majority and minority feminist organisations.

The interviews have underlined the variations within our main categories 'majority' and 'minority' women's organisations concerning the question of co-operation and conflict between women's organisations. Several interviewees resisted employing these categories and claimed that they hide more than they revealed. We also noticed some changes in the organisational landscapes – with some development towards more ethnically mixed constituencies within what used to be majority women's organisations, and an increased focus on issues related to migrant women among ethnic gender-mixed majority organisations. Today, we find examples of organisations that are more ethnically mixed than they once were. This is promising in terms of a broader engagement with intersectional approaches to women's issues. Our findings of more ethnically mixed organisations further complicate the labelling of categories of women's organisations as majority or minority organisations. They should stimulate a continued debate on how to talk about ethnicity and race in the organisational landscape and elsewhere.

The presumption that co-operation and the framing of a common platform across ethnic differences would empower the feminist movement has gained some support. We have seen evidence of movement impact when women's organisations coordinate their claims and are able to sustain public pressure. This does not imply, however, that we find organising on the basis of ethnicity - white or otherwise - to be politically unadviceable. Quite the contrary, there seems to be a clear need for autonomous ethnic minority/indigenous women's organisations to articulate the particular identities, interests and concerns of minority women within and beyond the

women's movement, and to pressure the majority women's organisations to address whiteness and privilege.

We also believe that majority feminist organisations would profit from elaborating broader, intersectional analyses of women's rights and addressing their own privileges.

8.4 Opportunity Structures, Claims-Making and Resonance: women's movements in Norway, Spain and the UK

In Chapter 7 we have documented the development of new field-specific institutional opportunity structures in Norway, Spain and the UK, with opportunities for women's movement actors to mobilise and participate in political decision-making processes concerning gender equality in general and violence against women in particular.

In Norway, the Ministry of Children and Equality has a crucial role in developing gender equality policies, while violence against women issues are divided between various government departments, and migrant issues are located within yet another government department. The role of the newly established (2006) Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (which has replaced the previous Gender Equality Ombud), is to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. We have yet to see how, and the extent to which, the Ombud will practice intersectional approaches to inequality. Majority women's organisations in Norway contested the establishment of the new Ombud. In particular, they lamented the loss of both a centre for knowledge about gender inequality and the watchdog role that were previously embedded in the Gender Equality Ombud. Concerns were also voiced about the status of gender inequalities within the new structure.

The Norwegian single equality machinery with a multiple inequalities agenda continues to provide access for feminist and women's groups, and to influence government policies dealing with gender equality issues. Both access and influence have however been unequally distributed over time and between various majoritised and minoritised organisations and between various gender policy areas. For example, most of the minoritised women's organisations have almost exclusively

been consulted on “ethnic minority women’s issues” related to gender violence (Nyhagen Predelli, 2003), while majoritised women’s organisations have been consulted on a much broader range of gender equality issues (see below). In general, women’s organisations in Norway reported that they lack spaces in which to meet and discuss movement politics.

Since 1997 and the election of the Labour Government, the gender policy machinery in the UK has developed significantly in terms of new institutions and wider access to feminist and women’s groups. Today it could be argued that the various parts of the policy machinery in the UK is giving relatively high access to a small and stable number of women’s organisations that actively seek to influence government policy. The current gender machinery is however considered relatively weak in terms of government influence, and feminist groups do not always think it worthwhile to direct their advocacy and lobbying efforts through institutions such as the Government Equalities Office.

As in Norway, a significant step towards an intersectional approach to inequality by government has been taken in the UK with the establishment of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC), which includes gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and belief, and age in its remit. Moreover, the Government Equalities Office is leading the government’s overall strategy on equality with a lead role for policies related to the equality strands of gender and sexuality (other major equality strands include disability, age, race, and faith/belief, but the responsibility for these are located within various other government departments). As in Norway, violence against women issues are divided between different government departments, thus creating, according to interviewees and documents from women’s organisations, a fragmented ‘silo-approach’ to such issues. Women’s organisations in the UK have demanded a more integrated and gender-based approach to violence against women issues, but have so far been met with a mixture of government resistance, alleged agreement, and accomodation. For example, the Home Office continues to use a non-gendered definition of domestic violence, while the Government Equalities Office claims that the government actually *has* an integrated strategy towards violence against women. The Crown Prosecution Service, on the

other hand, has explicitly followed the recommendations of the End Violence Against Women Campaign in its latest national strategy plan.

Moreover, parts of the picture from Norway of an unequal distribution of access and influence in relation to types of women's organisations and types of gender policy areas also applies to the UK. Again, it appears that minoritised women's organisations are often being consulted on "ethnic minority women's issues" related to gender violence, and that they are less often consulted on other issues such as education, the labour market, etc. In the UK, however, majoritised women's organisations seem to increasingly engage in "ethnic minority women's issues", not only related to gender violence, but also related to the labour market and political participation (the primary example being the Fawcett Society).

In Spain, the Women's Institute, is a key player in policy-making related to both gender equality and violence against women. The recently established National Observatory for Gender Violence also provides an important opportunity structure for women's movement organisations in Spain. Moreover, the recently formed (April 2008) Ministry of Equality is now overseeing the WI and is developing new measures to combat gender violence among immigrant groups. While Spain has recently made significant advances in gender equality policies, also in comparison with other European countries, the national government institutions in Spain have yet to develop intersectional approaches to inequalities (Bustelo, 2009).

The WI has continued to play a significant role in Spanish gender equality policies, and both the conservative People's Party government from 1996 until 2004 and the subsequent (and current) Socialist Party government have continued to support gender equality policies. Moreover, the current government has strengthened the gender machinery through the recently created Ministry of Equality and its several entities including the 'Equality Policies General Secretariat', signalling the high value it places on gender equality through the appointment of a Cabinet consisting of an equal number of women and men and through the creation of an array of new laws to support gender equality (Bustelo and Ortals, 2007: 207). In terms of political access for feminist and women's organisations, the picture in Spain is more of a division between majoritised and minoritised organisations. While majoritised

women's organisations are being consulted on various gender equality issues, minoritised organisations have yet to achieve a participatory role in the dialogue, design and implementation of gender equality policies broadly conceived.

Despite the presence of field-specific opportunity structures for women's organisations seeking to impact on policies relating to gender equality and violence against women, our case-studies indicate that ethnic majority women's organisations in all three countries in reality have more opportunities to mobilise collectively and participate politically on a broader range of issues than ethnic minority women. A range of factors may contribute to an understanding of this situation. Although further research is needed, our studies indicate that majority women's organisations seem to be consulted on a broader range of issues than minority women's organisations. While majority women seem to be consulted on issues such as education, the labour market, and other social and economic issues, minority women seem to be consulted on issues that are perceived as being specific to minority cultures (e.g., forced marriage, FGM, honour killings, and, at least in the UK, community responses to terrorist activities). Moreover, as these issues are perceived as specific to minority cultures, they are often located in different parts of the government apparatus. Against the advice and claims-making by women's organisations, divisions between 'majority' and 'minority' types of violence against women are thus institutionalised as separate issues (they are located in different government ministries) and are discursively kept apart because they are talked about separately from other 'mainstream' types of violence against women (e.g., domestic violence). Such a fragmented approach to violence against women issues effectively hinders the integration of various violence against women issues and perpetuates a distinction between certain types of issues that are regarded as caused by violent male behaviour, while other types of issues are regarded as caused by 'culture' or 'tradition'. These types of divisions also produce barriers in terms of minority women's participation in more overall political debates, be they either about gender equality or violence against women. Moreover, they produce barriers in terms of majority women's participation in issues that are defined as relevant only to minoritised women. Majority women may feel that issues such as FGM, forced marriage, and honour killings do not concern them, and either the

absence of concern or an actual involvement with such issues are two alternative strategies that may both invoke a fear of being labelled as racist.

Dominant discourse denotes specific forms of violence, such as forced marriage, FGM and honour killings as cultural products, while other forms of violence (e.g., domestic violence) are, to some extent, recognised as being rooted in gender inequality. When forced marriage and FGM are perceived as issues relevant only to immigrant and ethnic minority populations, they are identified as “immigration” or “integration” issues, or as “cultural” issues (cultural here signifying ‘other’ cultures than the dominant one). In other words, the state participates in a cultural framing of specific ‘minority types of violence’, while domestic violence is increasingly framed as a problem arising from male dominance and violence. Domestic violence is thus more readily perceived as a gender equality issue and a human rights issue, than is forced marriage and FGM. State resistance towards a gendered framing of domestic violence is however evident in the case of the UK, at least on the part of the Home Office, albeit with the important exception of the Crown Prosecution Service which has recently adopted the gendered UN definition of violence against women. The Norwegian and Spanish states seem, on the other hand, to have accepted a link between domestic violence and gender inequality. It is notable that the Spanish government has taken steps to identify violence against women as a gender-based issue, thus signalling a more progressive politics than the UK government. Lacking in Spain is a sustained and integrated approach to different forms of violence against women including forced marriage, FGM, and honour-based violence.¹⁰⁶

Women’s movements in Norway, Spain and the UK seek to reframe all forms of violence against women into a gender equality frame and a human rights frame. A joint movement effort is most apparent in the UK, where majority and minority women’s organisations have joined initiatives such as the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW). In Norway, several majority women’s organisations find it difficult to address issues related to ethnic minority women, and to attract members with a minority background. In Spain, majority women’s organisations have not fully

¹⁰⁶ See, however, the new plan to prevent gender violence in immigrant communities published in January 2009 (this plan falls outside the time period investigated in our report, but it is an important new development in Spain) <http://www.migualdad.es/noticias/pdf/090109Planinmigracion.pdf>

engaged with ethnic minority women, and it could be argued that ethnic minority women's voices have to a large extent been ignored or silenced in the context of the majority women's movements. In Norway, however, a number of majority women's organisations have discussed ethnic minority women's interests. In Spain, on the other hand, the majority women's organisations included in our study have so far not expressed any direct interests in taking up ethnic minority women's interests. In the UK, where organisations are more mixed (there are not so clear distinctions between majority and minority organisations in the UK, as many organisations are now composed of individuals of different ethnic backgrounds), organisations such as Women's Aid and the Fawcett Society have taken significant steps to embrace and accept ethnic minority women's interests and concerns.

In summary, women's movements in all three countries are promoting broader and more integrated definitions of, and approaches to, violence against women. The women's movements seek to reframe violence against women both discursively and institutionally. Discursively, such reframing is sought through the employment of a wide definition of violence against women, and institutionally the reframing is sought through an integration of different forms of violence against women within the same government structures. In this regard the women's movements have some way to go in terms of convincing the governments in Norway, Spain, and the UK about the need for policy changes.

Gender inequality on the one hand, and racial and ethnic equality on the other, appear as two more or less separate and distinct spheres, more so in Spain than in Norway where there are examples of sector overlap. There is most evidence of sector overlap in the UK, where Black women's organisations constitute 'a clear section within the black voluntary sector generally and the voluntary sector as a whole' (Davis and Cooke, 2002: 32). The issues of gender inequality and racial and ethnic inequality are, however, largely dealt with by different government institutions and agencies in all three countries, with recently established government institutions that to various degrees seek to apply intersectional approaches to inequality. Correspondingly, different parts of the voluntary sector participate in policy-making processes in the two areas, albeit with some overlap in the cases of Norway (the MiRAResource Centre) and the UK (Black women's organisations). Although there

are exceptions to this picture, we would argue that the sphere of gender equality policy is largely dominated by majority women's organisations, while minority women mainly have a say on particular issues such as forced marriage and FGM (see also Dustin, 2006). Although more research needs to be done, our case studies indicate that the sphere of racial and ethnic equality policy is, on the other hand, largely dominated by ethnic minority and immigrant organisations that are often led by men (at least in Norway and in Spain). A problem identified in interviews with women activists in Spain and the UK is that men are allegedly often perceived to represent entire minority communities, as governments engage with male community leaders as spokespeople for both women and men. Women's interests may, *at least in some cases*, at worst be ignored or overlooked, and at best be interpreted and represented by men. As a result, ethnic minority and immigrant women may sometimes effectively be silenced in, or largely excluded from, both spheres of politics. In the case of Norway, our research has supported the notion of a selective inclusion of movement groups (Kjellman, 2007, Skjeie and Teigen, 2007), where the government practice reinforces a separation between majority and minority organisations and between particular policy areas. In Spain, we would argue that the inclusion and participation of ethnic minority and immigrant women is a general problem – notwithstanding the actual sphere of politics. Thus, minoritised women in Spain are not fully participating in the gender equality sphere, nor in the racial and ethnic equality sphere. This is clearly a problem, not only for minoritised women themselves, but also for majoritised women and the mainstream women's movement, and for the Spanish state. In the UK, we have observed that minority and majority women's organisations are increasingly responding to issues arising from both spheres.

An important issue that illustrates overlap between the different agendas of gender equality and racial/ethnic equality is that of immigrant women with insecure residence status who experience domestic violence. In all three countries, these women experience a lack of protection due to current legislation. Depending on their length of residence, immigrant women who experience domestic violence may be denied residence permit and refused access to government support and assistance. Moreover, it can be difficult for women's shelters to take in victims, as they may also be denied government funding. Majoritised and minoritised women's movement

organisations in Norway, Spain, and the UK are working to different extents to address this issue, with varying degrees of success (as evidenced by changes and continuities in laws applying to immigrant women with insecure residence status who experience domestic violence).

We have mentioned a recent movement towards intersectional approaches to gender inequality, demonstrated in the UK by the establishment of the EHRC and to some extent the GEO, and in Norway by the creation of the new Ombud. Spain has yet to form a government institution that specifically addresses intersectionality, and the new Ministry of Equality (2008) has, according to Bustelo (2009), only begun to show a concern with intersectional approaches to inequality. Importantly, however, women's movement actors in both Norway and the UK have expressed fears in relation to whether or not priority will be given by such new intersectional institutions to women's and gender equality issues. Indeed, we want to suggest that a possible 'double de-legitimation' of the category 'woman' is now taking place with the establishment of intersectional institutions dealing with multiple inequalities. A first de-legitimation of the category 'woman' can be said to have taken place with the call by women's movement actors to destabilise it because it hides actual differences between women across class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality. The critique of the essentialist construction of the category 'woman' has largely been accepted by women's movements, but movement actors have found it useful to retain the category for political purposes. Arguing for collective women's rights is difficult without using the category 'woman'. The introduction of more intersectional approaches to inequality, which also have arisen from within the women's movement (Crenshaw, 1997), further emphasises differences between women and the importance of interlocking structures of oppression (Hill-Collins, 1991).

Governments in Europe seem to be increasingly taking on the idea of intersectional approaches to inequality through the formation of institutions that base their rationale on such approaches. Both in Norway and in the UK, the establishment of the EHRC and the new Ombud have occurred simultaneously with the closure of already established gender institutions such as the former *Gender Equality Ombud* (Norway) and *Equal Opportunities Commission* (UK). This closure amounts to a significant loss of established political opportunity structures for women's movement actors. The 'double de-legitimation' implied in the essentialist and intersectional critiques of

the category 'woman' risk destabilising the women's movement itself and also political achievements already made by women's movements. When governments' women's and gender agencies are gone, to where will women's movements direct their claims-making, and what legitimacy, if any, will the women's movement have in forwarding claims about women? These are crucial questions that will have to be addressed by both states and women's movement actors alike.

8.5 Further Research

While our focus has mainly been on capital-based women's organisations that seek to influence national policy-making, further research should be conducted to explore minority-majority relations in local and regional women's movements, and relations between local and regional women's movements and political decision-making processes at those levels of government.

We also suggest more in-depth organisational research to explore the extent to which membership, leadership positions and the agenda of originally ethnic majority/minority women's organisations have become more mixed.

Moreover, more systematic studies should be conducted of if, and how, minoritised and majoritised organisations engage with intersectional approaches to inequality, and how this affects their claims-making. As indicated above, with the advent of an institutional 'intersectional era', it will be of utmost importance to study if, and how, the mobilisation and participation of women's movements in policy-making processes will change, and whether and how governments will continue to consult women's organisations in the development of intersectional policy approaches.

8.6 Good Practice and Policy Recommendations

In this last section we present some of the good practice and policy recommendations that have emerged during the course of our study. These recommendations apply to all three cases and will improve women's citizenship in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom (for more country specific recommendations, see the individual country reports).

- Norway, Spain and the UK have all signed up to the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Their governments should apply the United Nations' definition of violence against women in their specific formation and implementation of policies directed towards violence against women. This should include the acknowledgment of VAW as a women's rights and a human rights issue.
- The governments in Norway, Spain and the UK should develop integrated and strategic plans on violence against women which cover all VAW issues, including domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM, honour-related violence, and human trafficking.
- Improved public funding of support services for women who have been subjected to violence, including specialist services targeting ethnic minority and immigrant women.
- Safeguarding the rights and protection of women with insecure immigration status who experience domestic violence, including the provision of public support for housing and social benefits for such women and their children.
- The governments and their gender machinery institutions in Norway, Spain and the UK should support the creation and sustainment of meeting places for women's organisations, including organisations for ethnic minority, immigrant and indigenous women. Likewise, the majoritised women's movements in these three countries should create and support more opportunities for the participation of ethnic minority, immigrant and indigenous women to voice their own interests and concerns.
- Increased public funding opportunities for lobbying and advocacy work done by women's organisations. This would allow women's organisations, including those that represent ethnic minority, immigrant or indigenous women, to allocate specific resources to their participation in government consultations and in CEDAW and CERD shadow reporting processes, and would give them a voice more generally in the formation and implementation of government policy initiatives.
- The international and trans-national work of women's movement organisations (including participation in CEDAW and CERD consultation processes and the

production of shadow reports to these agencies) should be encouraged and developed through increased government support.

- Governments should widen its participation criteria in different policy areas and include both majoritised and minoritised women's organisations in consultation processes dealing with gender equality, intersectional equalities, and racism and discrimination.
- Intersectional approaches to inequalities are generally welcomed by women's movement actors and are a step forward, but the governments in Norway, Spain and the UK should 'take the necessary steps to ensure that national machinery for the promotion of equality continues to give priority attention to gender equality and discrimination against women' (CEDAW, 2008: 6).
- The creation of national, web-based databases of women's organisations in each country. Such databases would be useful for politicians and civil servants who are recruiting participants for government consultation processes. Moreover, it would be useful for women's organisations to create networks, coalitions and alliances amongst themselves; especially inclusive networks supporting the participation of ethnic minority, immigrant and indigenous women's organisations. Such websites are also useful tools for academic researchers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AID	The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion
AMAM	Association of Women against Mutilation in Spain
AYIN	African Youth of Norway
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BAMER	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee
BAWR	Brent Asian Women's Refuge
BFD	The Ministry of Children and Family
BLD	The Ministry of Children and Equality
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BMER	Black and Minority Ethnic or Refugee
Bufdir	The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs
CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
CAVAS	Centro de Asistencia a Víctimas de Agresiones Sexuales (Centre for Assisting Victims of Sexual Aggressions)
CEDAW	United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CELEM	Coordinadora Española para el Lobby Europeo de Mujeres
CERD	The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
CIA	Christian Intercultural Association
CIMTM	Comisión para la Investigación de Malos Tratos a Mujeres (Commission for Investigating the Bad Treatment Against Women)
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
EC	European Community
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
Equis-FGM	Equipo de sensibilización sobre Mutilación Genital Femenina
EVAW	End Violence Against Women Campaign
EWL	European Women's Lobby
EU	European Union
FAMUVI	Federación de Asistencia a Mujeres Violadas
FOKUS	Forum for Women and Development
FWG	Foreign Women's Group
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Fundacion Mujeres, (Women Foundation)
FMP	Fundación Mujeres Progresistas (Progressive Women Foundation)
FMU	Forced Marriage Unit
FORWARD	Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development
GEO	Government Equalities Office
GLC	Greater London Council

HRS	Human Rights Service
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
IMDi	The Directorate of Integration and Diversity
INLO	The Immigrant National Organization in Norway
JURK	Legal Advice for Women
KRD	The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
MiRA	The MiRA Resource Centre for black, immigrant and refugee women in Norway
MP	Member of Parliament
MWN	Muslim Women's Network
NAWO	National Alliance of Women's Organisations
NAWP	Newham Asian Women's Project
NCW	National Council of Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NIWEP	Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
NOAS	The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers
NOU	Norwegian Official Report
NRK	Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
NWLC	National Women's Liberation Conference
Ombud	The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, earlier the Gender Equality Ombud
OMOD	Institution against Public Discrimination
ORKIS	Oslo Red Cross International Centre
Ot.prp.	Propositions to the Odelsting, <i>Odelstingsproposisjoner</i> , or green papers
OWAAD	Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PP	Partido Popular (People's Party)
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Socialist Party)
RCRP	Rape Crisis Research Project
ROW	Rights of Women
RWRP	Refugee Women's Resource Project (at Asylum Aid)
SBS	Southall Black Sisters
SEIF	Self-help for immigrants and refugees
SMED	The Centre against Ethnic Discrimination
SNF	Sami Nisson-Forum
St.meld.	Reports to the Parliament from a Ministry, <i>Stortingsmelding</i> , or white papers
SUS	'Stop under suspicion'
TUC	Trade Unions Congress
UDi	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
UGT	Union General de Trabajadores (National Union of Workers)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence against women

WA	Women's Aid
WAF	Women Against Fundamentalism
WAITS	Women Acting in Today's Society
WANGO	World Associations of Nongovernmental Organisations
WAR	Women Against Rape
WAVE	Women Against Violence Europe Network
WEU	Women and Equality Unit
WHO	World Health Organisation
WI	Women's Institute
WLM	Women's Liberation Movement
WNC	Women's National Commission
WP	Work Package
WRA	Women's Rights Association
WRC	Women's Resource Centre
WU	Women's Unit
WWEN	Wales Women's European Network