
Norwegian Jews - Jewish Norwegians

Likelihood of national diversity through national minority protection

Judith E. Lea Scheer



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Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY

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Abstract on Norwegian Jews - Jewish Norwegians

Definition and Concepts ascribed to the official Jewish national minority in the ratification process of the ‘Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities’ are investigated. The investigation is based on the theory of multiculturalism and ‘nation, state & nationalism’ discourse to conceptualize official documents released in the ratification process. The analysis of the Jewish minority is based on the comments of representatives and their foundation in the opinions of the Jewish minority expressed in the survey on “Jewish life in Norway“, then compare between the official Norwegian Jewish minority definition, the Jewish national minority representatives’ group definition and the Jewish minority’s self-understanding. Concluding group labelling, and the good it does to the creation of a diverse and equal liberal-democratic society is discussed.

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Lastly, my essence, my family for being who they are and made me, including my cultural baggage.

The responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies which may have occurred is mine exclusively.

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In memorial of Daphne Miriam Scheer and Hannes Ladinig strengthening my wish to live and finish what I started.

1. Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Design of the thesis

The aim is to compare the official definition and the self understanding of one Norwegian national minority group, the Jewish minority in Norway. The first is the one taken by the Norwegian authorities and requires a conceptualization of the authorities' definitions. The second is the Jewish self-understanding of the Jewish community.

Chapter one is a presentation of the background, the theory, the methodology used including methodological problems.

In Chapter two the multicultural approach towards group specific rights taken by the Norwegian authorities when ratifying the 'Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities' (ETS no.157) is elaborated on 1) by presenting some early multicultural policies and action towards minorities in Norwegian immigration history (Niemi 1985; Niemi, Myhre, Kjeldstadli 2003). 2) Then concepts, necessary for understanding the complexity within taking a political standpoint on defining national identity and national minority in multi-cultural policy making are presented within the discourse of 'nation, state and nationalism' (Anderson 1991, Gellner 1964, 1997, A.D. Smith 2001, Connor 1994, Kymlicka 1995, Beller 2000, Miller 2000). The elements in the concepts of 'national' and 'minority', like history, tradition, homeland, etc. will be related to the definition of the Norwegian national minorities taken in the ETS no 157 (1995) and the Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998).

Chapter three adheres to the elements in the Norwegian national minority concept (Chapter two) to analyze the Jewish minority's self understanding. The former list of elements in the official national minority concepts (see above) will be the main

structure. The Norwegian Jewish minority's self definition and needs are investigated through the report from inter-ministerial working group (Intermin 1998) and helpful informants. The Jewish minority's self understanding is expressed through data that was collected in survey the survey "Jewish life in Norway" (see. 1.4.2). As this analysis includes more than just one source it should give a deeper understanding of the concept of Norwegian Jewish identity, without daring to derogate a general definition of Jewish identity. To structure the concepts of Judaism, Jewish identity & self-understanding interpretations of data and theory by in-field researchers shall be helpful.

In Chapter four, the Jewish minority's self understanding is compared to the official definition in order to find out if a discrepancy exists between these two definitions. The Chapter will further focus on needs that have been expressed by representatives of the Jewish minority, their reflection in the analysis of the Jewish self understanding and partly present the authorities actions towards meeting these needs. Further the first reaction in the hearing before ratifying the Framework Convention and comments on other suggestions (White Paper no.15 (2000-2001) will be presented and discussed. The conclusion of the thesis in Chapter five presents a critical discourse on group labelling in the light of some matters investigated so far. By this I admire 1) to increase understanding of the situation of the Jewish population in Norway 2) give some suggestions and thoughts about possible modes of conduct concerning the effect of education on the public discourse and 'common sense'.

Relevance:

The fact that newspaper articles take up the topic on national minorities makes it a phenomenon interesting to the public (Aftenposten 2005) and a report that was recently published by the Institute of Social Research (Lidén 2005) makes me convinced that the task is of interest for the academic, official and public sphere. Additionally I hope deeply to contribute to a certain degree to enrich and encourage the amount of research done as the ratification report stated "just little research on the situation of national minorities in Norway" (Parliament bill no 80). I deem it further of

great importance to publish about the Jewish population in Norway as I realized the little knowledge about history and origin, which I find expressed in the equalization of the word 'Jew' and 'Israeli' in the media, the discourse on Jewish history, religion and customs in mostly every discourse I was enabled to follow during my 3 years stay in Norway. The influence of education on public opinions and popular culture is an important matter in social sciences. Therefore it is of outermost importance why and how the minority is defined. As the Convention's ratification has implications on education-policies and school curriculum about minorities and the minority's situation this will be explicitly referred to.

1.2 Background

Discussions about how my collective identities are meant to fit in one national identity, raise consciousness about bonds, belonging and roots, feelings of unity, confusion, segmentation and distraction. Where am I free and feel safe at the same time?

Through one discussion I understood, suddenly, the importance of conscious identity politics again. It was on the disengagement plan in Gaza by Ariel Sharon September 2005, between an Iraqi Kurd, a Jewish Israeli-Norwegian and me, a mixed Jewish Viennese, Oslo September 2005. This discussion created biases between the Iraqi Kurd and the Israeli Norwegian girl that recently started off a relationship after having worked on an artist project together¹. The questions of subjective ethnical and national identity arose and I realised how deep questions of ethnical belonging, which are questions of collective identity, are often rooted in ones self definition. The interpersonal relationships we achieve in our lives let us create, mend or overcome cultural and social boundaries. The lives we lead are influenced by shared discourses and histories that determent human beings. The postmodernist Jewish and gentile Youth shows a diversity of human beings, thus parts equipped with both their culture baggage and social antennas that allow a high level of consciousness and awareness about the others feelings, opinions and conclusions. Nevertheless when a person's (cultural) identity is put into question, like it happened in the discussion, when the Kurd questioned the Jewish Israeli-Norwegian girls feeling of belonging to Israel "as the politics in-acceptable". She, having one part of her family rooted in that country, having child and grown-up memories, mostly completely disconnected from the sphere of politics. Suddenly, when an offence, a threat against ones identity is put forward, the wish of its (unchanged) maintenance can arise; at least a wish for the

¹ about transition and connections within the cultural background that every individual carries with them

acceptance of having some feeling of belonging and might it also just be very minor important for ones self definition.

Therefore the question how an authority in a Western liberal democracy decides to relate to minor cultural groups inside the nation state is crucial out of the same reason that every person has to and wants to be seen. Thus it is of crucial matter which place such distinct cultural characteristics are given in politics. “In a shorthand manner we may speak about culture as language and culture as community. (...) but culture also produces its own markers, such as language, religion or ethnic tradition and origin” (Bauböck 2000: 104). Group specific labeling tells us how groups are perceived by the majority, position and place in society and how they will be referred to in public discourse and education.

1.3 Research question

The hypothesis builds upon the assumption that there is a discrepancy between the Jewish minority’s self understanding and their official definition as national minority based upon formerly given information sources.

1) Who is the group we talk about?

Research question:

Is there a difference between the official Jewish national minority definition and the Jewish minority’s self-understanding?

The thesis examines the Norwegian national minority definition that typifies the Jewish minority group along with four other protected national minorities. It

conceptualizes the official Jewish national minority definition gained in the ratification process (1995-1999) of the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’ (further referred to as ETS no.157) and compares it to the Jewish minority’s self understanding. In a normative discourse throughout this thesis the Jewish case is used for exemplifying group labelling in a liberal democratic society with one dominant popular culture. Liberal democracy is the system where "all citizens are considered equal in rights and moral worth, and the individual is given moral primacy over any collectivity" (Føllesdal 1996: 62).

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Documents

The main paper for defining the concepts of minority and the Jewish minority definition is the ratification report to the ‘Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (Framework Convention)’, the Parliamentary bill no.80 (1997-1998) and the actual ‘on the Protection of National Minorities’ by the Council of Europe (CoE). Also important is the report of the inter-ministerial working (Intermin 1998) (se 2.3ff). Additionally I will partly use the White paper no.15 (2000-2001), which is the follow-up of the ratification of the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’ ratification report (Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998)). The latter was of major effect to the first report of Norway (edited by the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development) to the CoE in “the Initial Report submitted by Norway pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1 of ‘The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’” (Initial report). The Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998) and other documents aimed at defining the minority groups, collecting insights for a just distribution of group specific rights to national minorities that were formerly exposed to discrimination, the selection of one

Ministry that coordinates policies on national minorities and evaluating eventual law changes and economical implications.

All translations of the Framework Convention, the Parliament report, the White papers and the Interministerial working group report are exclusively mine.

1.4.2 Quantitative and qualitative data

To conceptualize the Jewish self understanding I use data from the survey “Jewish life in Norway” (2002) that I gained access to through the board of the Jewish community in Oslo. Together with my experiences through my work as a youth coordinator in this Community from Autumn 2004 - Autumn 2005 this data will provide my knowledge on the case, to exemplify tendencies and diversity inside the Jewish Community.

Further relevant for the structuring and interpretation of the data are 1) scientific articles on collective and Jewish identity² (Broberg et al 1988, Hödl 2000, Gellner 1997, A.D. Smith 2001, Graham 2004, Levin 1994a, b) 2) publications and lectures by the Jewish Community’s representatives and/ members (Levin 2004a, b; Mendelsohn 1969, 1986, 1990&1992) 3) personal meetings (Dencik 2005, Murad 2005, Levin 2005, Rapoport 2005) and 4) insights I gained on collective identity, Norwegian national and Scandinavian Jewish identity both through my work in the Jewish Community of Oslo and participation at conferences and seminars.

The original survey is from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in London (JPR). In the Nordic countries the survey is determent to paying members of the Jewish (mosaic) Communities above the age of 18. The survey is part of a Nordic survey

² The issue of Jewish identity is a matter discussed so broadly in an inner Jewish context as much as in sciences of anthropology, religion, sociology and many more that I shall just include parts of the discussion relevant to this thesis without the intention to solve this matter discussed in four millenniums.

about Jewish life. In Autumn 2002 the survey was sent to all members in the Jewish community in Oslo that were 18 years or older and shortly after a reminder was sent. As the survey was anonymous the reminder was sent to all of the recipients, also to those that had already answered. 51% replied (see also 1.4.3). The Norwegian version was mainly the product of a joint work of Prof. Irene Levin (Oslo University College-HIO) and Erik Buchmann (DMT), where the questions were slightly reformulated but presented in the same order. Some similar surveys are referred to in the book of Gitelman (Gitelman et al 2003). Additionally to what I have already explained earlier, the last three years in Norway gave me the chance to practice a religious Jewish lifestyle. Thus, in my upbringing I had the opportunity to experience both traditional Jewish and secular Austrian way of life. This, together with theories on Jewish identity and practice will guide me in the quest to present contemporary Norwegian Jewish self-understanding. With this I intend to present cross tabulations of interesting correlations between different variables.

Levin's articles (2004a, b) and comments (Levin 2005) on Jewish identity and the official Norwegian national identity definition supply interpretations and findings of the data.

All tables are mine as are the figures, if not stated otherwise.

1.4.3 Methodological Problems

External validity

Yin (2003) states that "the short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes (...) your goal will be to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation)" (:10). This case makes a partly statistical generalisation possible, that I will not deepen any further, like other scientists showed in the interpretation of the all Scandinavian survey on "Jewish life in Norway/Sweden/Denmark" (for this research see Dencik 2005). I will thus not stress this results in this essay. Nevertheless they show a clear implication for generalising in terms of an All Scandinavian Jewish Self-understanding. "Establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised." (Yin 2003: 34). The Jewish population's definition as a national minority in Norway is used to present and generalise theoretically on which problems lie in group labelling for policy reasons.

The heterogeneity and the spreading in the population are essential for being able to explain for the frequencies and to present results that actually reflect the population studied. That just 51% of the members of the community answered the survey could make the results less statistical representative for the population in question (Skog:98) see above (concept validity). The problem here is the desertion; if this desertion is random it must not have great effects on the results. Among the net sample the desertion in the variables used for my analysis is not significant to any extend. The fact is that the net sample is representative for the population in regards to gender, age, and for the diversity in the population in the Jewish community in Oslo makes the sample a good basis for the analysis. Unfortunately it is hard to say if the answers given were sent in by active, not so active or non-active members. Further the age-group from 50-

60 yrs is a little overrepresented. I further use the whole population (N=305) after having evaluated whether to minor the sample to members born after 1945 (n=188). The statistical reason for using the whole population for executing the analysis is that "the amount of observations can decrease margin of error. To double the amount of observations decreases them by 71% (as $1/\sqrt{2}=0.71$). This can therefore increase the analysis' plausibility (Skog: 102-103). The substantial considerations is that members born before 1945 were (and partly are) still very active in the community at time of the survey's procedure.

Another implication is that there are Jews in Norway (among them mostly immigrants from Israel) who aren't members of the Jewish community as they have a foremost cultural definition of their Judaism and/or the fact that the Jewish community in Oslo is following the Ashkenazi tradition both in ritual service on holidays, ceremonies might be another element. This is as such a problem, as their opinions might influence the outcome of the analysis as they might not agree in my definition of Judaism, but they might do. The actions that I took in order to handle this problem is 1) there is no data available at this time 2) deciding that the fact that the Jewish community is the minority group that was focused on by the Ministry is sufficient for executing this analysis on comparing the two definitions 3) the implications of such a dilemma is part of the theoretical, normative and political problem of the recognition and distribution of group specific rights.

Construct validity

"Establishing correct operational measures for the concept being studied" (Yin 2003: 34) "Construct validity is further an assessment of how well you translated your ideas or theories into actual measures" (SRM, Idea of Construct validity). The threats to construct validity can be the failure "to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures and that 'subjective' judgements are [not] used to collect the data." (Yin

2003: 35) So to increase construct validity “the use of multiple sources of evidence” and set the construct I want to operationalise within a semantic net (or “net of meaning”). This I do by conceptualising the constructs of ‘national minority’, ‘Jewish identity’, ‘Jewish self understanding’ and explain their meaning for the analysis. To provide evidence for that I control the operationalisation of the constructs I use of documents and theories on Jewish identity, collective identity, national identity and national minority (see 1.4.1, 2.4, 3.3). The analysis and the data used seems to provide good evidence for my theoretical view of relations among constructs. This is further supported by the evaluations of other scientists and their interpretation of the data (1.4, 3)

The statistical analysis of the Jewish minority is based on the elements included in the official definition of Jews as a national minority. I assume the fact that the elements are used in theory, official papers (1.4.1) and the statistical analysis gives the thesis quite stringent concept validity. Nevertheless the concept of Jewish identity, national identity and cultural, collective identities as such are concepts that can be looked upon from several different angles and thus always inherently a matter of discussion. Though, the aim of this paper and therefore my design is to conceptualize the elements in Norwegian national identity in regards to their theoretical placement and the elements resemblance in the Norwegian Jewish self understanding which I hope will give the foundation for satisfactory concept validity.

2. Chapter two: Norwegian immigration history and national minority concept

2.1 Minorities' history and minority policies in Norway until 1995

The ideology that the geographical position, social and demographic developments have left Norway as a homogenous state until the late 1960's, when Norway started to get a harbour for immigrants due to labour need and supply, must have partly been reconsidered in 1995. This was when the Norwegian state classified five national minorities to be protected under the 'Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS no 157)'. A short presentation of Norwegian immigration history can hopefully shed light to stages and progress towards the acknowledgement of cultural diversity in Norwegian policies.

2.1.1 The history of the five national minority groups

Early Norwegian Minority history and policies until 1940

Up in the North, in the counties of Finnmark and Troms, lived a group with historical ties that "antedate the Christian era" (Initial report: 13) the *Samí* population.

The first *Kvens* came to Norway around the middle ages, the biggest part immigrated in the period from 1720 to the end of the 19th century in the need of farmland and around 1960 when Norwegian fishing industry promised labour. (Intermin 1998: 15)

A finish group further called *Forest Fins*, searching for new resources for sawmills, reached Norway in 1625. But with the Norwegians' increasing interest in those resources, sawmill was prohibited in the year 1648. (Intermin 1998: 17)

The first evidence of *Roma (Gypsies³)* in the Nordic region in a report made to King Hans of Denmark-Norway dates from 1505 (Initial report: 8). They were excluded from entering the Norwegian realm, due to the immigration law executed in 1930.

Travellers (Romani - Tatere) came in the 15th century and their exposure to penitentiary date back to that time (Intermin. 1998: 19). And still in the 1840's mentioned as "bands of tramps" and regarded as a general nuisance like the Framework Convention states (Framework Convention: 9).

Jews first appear in laws and decrees, the earliest dating as far back as 1436 prohibiting the celebration of Shabbat (Framework Convention: 12). In accordance with Christian V's Norwegian Law of 1687 Jews were forbidden to settle in the realm (Broberg et al 1988: 51). Developments in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries reflected an ambivalent attitude towards the Jews. On the one hand, legislation was restrictive, while on the other hand the authorities were very willing to grant safe-conducts to some Jews entitling them, particularly in times of war, to engage in trade enabling them to providing the authorities with the necessary capital needed to wage war.

Norwegian multicultural policies until 1940 - Norwegianisation and early nationalism

From the middle of the 18th century new policies were applied to the above presented groups. Those policies were implemented by the still powerful Evangelic-Lutheran state church, the government, other authorities and private moral organizations.

³ Expression used in the official document (Initial report). For my comments see 6.1

Especially from 1850-70 a strong “Norwegianisation-policy” was executed. “The background was a combination of ideological, economical and security-policy evaluations”⁴ which aimed at assimilating the minority groups (Niemi 1985: 5). Special focus was given to Sami and Romani, whose state of living (travellers) was not regarded as acceptable to mainstream understanding of popular culture.

Around 1880 another nationalistic trend showed Norwegian newspapers referring to foreigners as threat to national resources, and at the same time activating the reader to just buy Norwegian products. This was right the time when the first law on Norwegian citizenship rights was amended by the Parliament in April 1888 claiming that just Norwegian citizens shall have offhand access to the country’s economic resources (Niemi, Myhre, Kjeldstadli 2003: 204). This led to §9 in 1888, stating that “only Norwegian citizens could own and buy land” with the important exemplification that “Norwegian citizenship is mainly acquired by birth” (ibid: 207).

2.2 Council of Europe’s ‘Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (ETS no157)’

First Immigration-wave

The immigrant wave in the 70’s triggered visible changes in the picture of Norwegian towns. “Immigrant- or foreigner-shops” (which is what they are still called) appeared in many cities to enrich the country with nourishment from all over the globe. Until in the early 90’s, when immigration became a mass phenomenon due to political and socio-economic changes, multicultural theory and policy-making peaked in Europe and Canada, and also Norwegian authorities deemed it necessary to make political and legal adjustments that are applicable to the ‘new’ multicultural picture of the

⁴”I løpet av tidsrommet ca. 1850-70 ble imidlertid en streng fornorskingspolitisk linje gjennomført. (...) Bakgrunnen er en kombinasjon av ideologiske, økonomiske og sikkerhetspolitiske vurderinger” (Niemi 1985: 5)

Norwegian society⁵. The adjustments were a closure of immigration laws, meaning that they got more restricted. Therefore that calm and liberal-democratic welfare state had to start revisiting concepts of nation, nation-building and national identity. Questions of common history, myths, language, public culture and national symbols on the one hand and the place of multicultural elements in public education and policies, on the other hand, were addressed. The latter I suppose to have slowly started increasing the public and official consciousness for immigrant and minority issues.

2.2.1 European policy shift

Since 1989 as an effect to the ongoing Yugoslavian war, however, it has proved impossible to evade the question of ethnic minorities in a multinational - cultural - linguistic state. In 1992 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which is *the first comprehensive, universal instrument* in this area. It formulates the obligation of states to *protect the existence and identity of minorities within their respective territories*. “At the same time it adheres to the view that rights are inherent in individual human beings, and that *group rights can be defined only in conjunction with these individual rights*” (Jarle: 2ff [my italics]).

Among the rights of persons belonging to minorities it lists the right to enjoy their own culture; to profess and practice their own religion; to use their own language; to participate in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as in the decision-making process concerning the minority to which they belong; to establish and monitor their own associations; to establish and maintain without any discrimination free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group or other

⁵ I was often told that immigrants from Pakistan were welcomed with great scepticism to say the least, as their way of living, their food - including the smell of garlic - opposed and challenged the tolerance of the established Norwegian society.

citizens of other states to whom they are related by national, or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Lately, the European historical developments lead to a political consciousness towards the inclusion of cultural diversity into national policies. Since then, it is seen as one of the state's duties to protect its minorities; this through policies in all sectors, including education. As International organizations, like UNESCO, work with the promotion of cultural heritage, the government of the formerly homogenous Norwegian state claims that 'cultural heritage of national minorities is part of Norwegian cultural heritage, and that Norway therefore has a special responsibility for preserving the cultural heritage and cultural traditions of minorities' (Initial report, 5.1 § 1: 25).

“The decisive step was taken when the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (CoE)’s member States met in Vienna October 1993. There, it was agreed that *the national minorities which the upheavals of history have established in Europe* had to be protected and respected as a contribution to peace and stability” (ETS no.157, explanatory report: 5[my italics]). To use the phrase ‘history has established’ seems not quite understandable at first site. In my understanding of it one part must be understood as basing on a primordial⁶ idea about nation (see also 2.4). About a year later in 1994, the Committee for the Protection of National Minorities (CAHMIN) was established by the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe and submitted the draft for the ‘Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities’. The Committee of Ministers adopted the text at the 95th Ministerial Session on November 10th, 1994 (ETS no.157, Explanatory report: 6-9).

In 1995, five years after German Unification and in the light of the first big enlargement process of the European Union (EU), the Framework Convention was opened for signature for CoE’s members and non-member states on February, 1st. The

⁶ primordial: “existing before all things“ (Smith 2001: 50)

Convention is the first legally” binding multilateral instrument concerned with the protection of national minorities in general. Its aim is to protect the existence of national minorities within the respective territories of the Parties. The Convention seeks:

"To promote the full and effective equality of national minorities by creating appropriate conditions enabling them to preserve and develop their culture and to retain their identity" (ETS no 157: summary [my italics])

The Convention sets out principles relating to persons belonging to national minorities in the sphere of public life, such:

"as freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and access to the media, as well as in the sphere of freedoms relating to language, education, transfrontier co-operation" (ibid: summary)

2.2.2 European policy shift influence on Norwegian multicultural policies

On the 1st of February 1995 Norway was among the first was among the 21 states to *sign* the Framework Convention in Strasbourg that day. On the 1st of February 1998 the Norwegian government *ratified* the Framework Convention alongside 12 other members of the CoE. The Norwegian ratification procedure for Conventions of international law is based on a dualistic system for international treaties, where a royal decree (§26.1) and an approval by the cabinet of ministers (§26.2.) are necessary in cases of ‘very importance’ (§28), which is due to a probable effect on the Constitution (practically this procedure counts for almost all International Conventions and Treaties (Fiora 2005 [telephone conference])).

The National minority concept is introduced in Norwegian political discourse, following the all-European multicultural policy shift towards the promotion and encouragement of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and/or religious diversity. Preceding the ratification an inter-ministerial working group got the mandate by the government to evaluate how the state's politics towards the national minority groups could be better coordinated. The chair in the working group is held by the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development. Following this evaluation the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development was appointed to coordinate matters related national minority politics; Thus "the ratification can happen independently of the groups work and recommendation" (Parliamentary bill no.80 (1997-1998): Chapter one).

"As a religious group that has maintained its cultural characteristics over a long period" (Parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998))

2.3 The elements in the concept of National minority in Norway

In Norway national minorities are protected after the Framework Convention and decisions count for "*all those, whether individual or group, that wish to make use of them*" (Parliamentary bill no 80: 3.7 (1997-1998)). The 'recognition' of a minority by a subjective identity definition, based on the minority's self definition has several administrative and ideological problems. Who is there to support? Who should be the group's representative, should there be several? And do the ones we have as a representative represent the ones we want to support? Are some of the questions authorities and public administration can and should ask them. There is a wide range of how to possibly take diversity into account. "*The attachment of rights to ethnic categories is perhaps particularly problematic for the so-called ethnic anomalies, which are those individuals who do not find into these categories. Moreover, some*

groups may prefer integration instead of differentiated treatment, and for a number of individuals, ethnic identity may be of little or no importance.” (Bendiskby 1999: 79)

‘Recognition’

Recognition describes a policy approach based on positive discrimination where “*the state gives explicit recognition to the particular cultural identities of its citizens, usually through a system of rights that differentiates between members of different ethnic groups,*” (Bendiksby: 6) granting group-specific rights to minorities on the base of ethnicity, culture, language and religion.

‘Non-Discrimination’

“‘Non-Discrimination’ requires that the state is *neutral* when it comes to the particular cultural identities of its citizens ” (Bendiksby 1999: 6) by granting negative rights to ethnic groups by non-interference in their matters by the state.

I shall in the following refer to all those matters inside the following presentation of the elements in the Jewish minority definition in the ratification process until the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’ (ETS no 157).

2.4 The elements in the concept of ‘National Minority’ in the ratification of the Framework Convention in Norway

Two concepts stand central to the discourse on ‘National minority’: Nation and Minority. I will first define the concepts theoretically to so present the elements connected to the concept of ‘national minority’ in the ratification paper.

In order to explain the elements inherent in the concept of ‘national minority’ in Norway, the Foreign Ministry chose to divide it into a ‘national’ and a ‘minority’ component (Parliamentary bill no.80 (1997-1998), 3.3: 11).

2.4.1 National ‘*Minority*’ definition in the Framework’s ratification paper

Minority

“Minority is a group that is *smaller in size* opposed to majority. Even though no actual amount is given the group’s size will be of significance as it can be questionable if authorities have the duty to set burdensome action for a numerical insignificant group. (Principle of proportionality) and has to have a non-dominant position in society.” (Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998), 3.3.1)

Ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious characteristics

“A group of people with ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious characteristics that makes them differ to an essential degree from the rest of the population” (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.1)

Common will to maintain and develop an own identity

“It is understood as a need that the persons [minority] must express the wish to maintain the characteristics stated above. In case that this element is missing the person does not have a need for distinct protection as a minority group. There is no need to explicitly express this will, thus this wish can for example come to light when a group has maintained its characteristics over time.” (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.1)

Citizenship

“Traditionally citizenship has been included as a criterion for minority definition. This among others as international law has different rules for immigrants, refugees and stateless. In a general pronouncement from the UN Committee on Human Rights (1994) it was stated that one can not set up a request on citizenship. Therefore it is questionable if citizenship can be looked upon as a criterion in a minority definition. Nevertheless, in case of the Framework Convention, citizenship is looked upon as being of current interest for the national element in the protection of national minorities, see below.” (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.1)

2.4.2 ‘National’ Minority in the Framework’s ratification paper

Citizenship

“The decision to use the term national minority is normally interpreted to include a demand on citizenship (...) the Convention will so to say be applicable to persons with Norwegian citizenship. The demand for citizenship doesn't hinder for that the concepts includes single persons that got a residence permit [and belong to a national minority group]” (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.2)

Original or long connection to the territory

“There's an agreement on to demand that the group has original or long term connection to the current state's territory. Therefore new immigrants are not included. Compared to 100 years defined as long term connection in Norway Sweden defined that by several generations (SOU 1997:193)” (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.2).

2.4.3 The Concepts and elements of diversity in Theory

Nation

The conceptualisation of 'nation' is deeply rooted in the already mentioned 'nation, state & nationalism' discourse. The literature provides the interested researcher with a wide range of definitions, rooted in different theoretical and ideological approaches. For the current topic of nation is aiming at framing the concepts of nation and minority, I want to present Roger Brubaker's definition of the concept and the elements A.D.Smith ascribes to it. Roger Brubaker (1996) defines nation as: "a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalised cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening" (:21), A.D.Smith (2001) ascribes to this definition the elements of a "a felt and lived community, a category of behaviour as much as imagination, and that requires of the members certain kinds of action" (:10). A.D.Smith defines nation as "*a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members*" (ibid.:13)

Citizenship

A development started in the beginning of the 19th century when legislature and official discourse changed from a territorial/residential to a birth/origin oriented perspective. One reason given is that Norwegian high court couldn't decide whom to actually address to in a juridical and ergo also civic perspective when using the concept Norwegian, Norwegian subject and resident. "The European trend the importance of the national idea and unity of race as the natural basis for state/society life" influenced also Norwegian politics (Deuntzer in Kjedstadli: 205). "Norwegian citizenship is mainly acquired by birth" (Deuntzer in Kjedstadli: 207).

Minority

In order to understand the matter of minority, the main point is to understand that a minority is a group minor in size, underrepresented and eventually also "historically disadvantaged" (Miller 2000: 4) "likely to have little bargaining power, so they must

rely on appeals to the majority's sense of justice and fairness, and these will be effective only to the extent that majority and minority sympathize and identify with each other” (Miller 2000: 5). W. Kymlicka, a Canadian philosopher focusing on multiculturalism, focuses on “ethnic memories, myths, symbols and traditions that provide such vital clues to the understanding – and persistence – of cultural identities and communities” (Smith 2001: 86).

As mentioned in the introduction, five groups were appointed ‘national minority’ status: Kvens, Forrest Finns, the Romani People (travellers) & the Roma (gypsies), in addition to the indigenous Sami population (Urfolk) and Jews. One very clear intention for ratifying the convention is stated in the Parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998). Namely, “to grant national minorities equal rights of recognition and protection from discrimination” (ibid: § 3.3.1). Norway (read the Norwegian authorities) decided upon exemplifying which groups are to be the protected national minorities; this was not deemed necessary by all countries that ratified the Convention text. The eligible minorities have to be “a group of human beings with ethnical, linguistic, cultural and /or religious characteristics” and “a group with long connection to the country”. The latter is defined as at least 100 years referring to international law, while 50 years is the Swedish margin (Swedish ratification February, 9th 2000 (White paper no. 15 (2000-2001))). Thus in none of this Scandinavian countries newer immigrants are included, but the parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998) states that other groups might be included later. In hearings following the signing of the Convention in Strasbourg in 1995, the government asked those national minorities in Norway for their statement after informing them of their eligibility to attaining national minority status.

2.5 The official definition of Jews as a national minority

Jews

Jews represented first and foremost a religious minority, and the most of them are organized in the Mosaic Community in Oslo and Trondheim. The group has also cultural characteristics that it has kept through its long history in Norway.

For Kymlicka, who is a philosopher most quoted for his theories on diverse and multicultural states, a nation is “a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture. A ‘nation’ in this sociological sense is closely related to a ‘people’, ‘culture’” (Kymlicka 1995: 11). The problem as the interest of this theory for the thesis lies in the focus of "a historical community".

History and Continuity

Kjeldstadli claims that one undermines a historical heritage, a row of elements that build nations as a political project, if one assumes nations to be pure myths. Though, he assumes, eternal ethnicity and society are created, are changing and thus an eternal continuity and equality to 100 years ago is a constructed ideology.⁷ The future must include elements of both lines of thought. *Gemeinschaft* must unite on something (ex Germany), thus not follow something (ideology), and the cultural baggage should not be irrelevant (ex France) (Kjeldstadli 2005 [lecture, my notes]). I agree in history writing's, teaching's matter of uttermost importance, thus not as a fact or a grant for 'true' ethnic, religious, cultural belonging but more as a means of rebuilding and maintaining national symbols and popular culture based on them assuming 'that's how we always did it' justifies them. The beginning of history sets the beginning of continuity. "The continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and tradition that compose the distinctive heritage of

⁷ radikal utgave av at nasjoner er konstruert: en ren myte, noe galt": da undervurderer en historisk arv. av en rekke elementer, som bygged nasjoner som politisk prosjekt. evig etnisitet, samfunn skapte størrelser. forandret, sakte raskere, likheten: mellom nå og for 100 år siden DETTE er konstruksjon.

nations, and the identifications of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements." (A.D.Smith 2001: 18). M. Hroch (reference later) writes "from national movement to the fully formed nation" that one needs a "theory to develop effective methods for classification and assessment of experiences of nation building as a process set within a wider social and cultural history". Without adding that, as Smith also suggests, cultural identities and communities are as much subject to change as everything else one might end up in a frozen definition of nation and collective identity that makes cultural cohesion impossible.

The definition of nation presented in 2.4.1 gives us an idea of the elements important in the concept of nation. Whether this definition is exclusive or inclusive concerning diversity is important for Walker Connor's definition the nation as "a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related. It is the largest grouping that shares such belief." (Connor 1994: 212) In the Data on Jewish life in Norway over 80% believe that 'an untearable bound is uniting Jews over the whole world'. (question 41) These definitions are assumed being the core of a discussion of group distinctive rights based on ethnicity.

Education in theory and policy plans

The official attitude and actions towards groups in a state has an effect on the way this group is perceived by the public. As the Convention's ratification has implications on education-policies and school curriculum about minorities and the minority's situation. Print languages laid the basis for national consciousness in three distinct ways 1) unified fields of exchange and communication through print-capitalism which 2) gave fixity to language which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subject idea of the nation 3) created languages-of-power of a kind different from older administrative vernaculars. (Anderson 1991: 43) On the basis of such educational effects I want to argue in the words of Ernest Gellner (1964) and

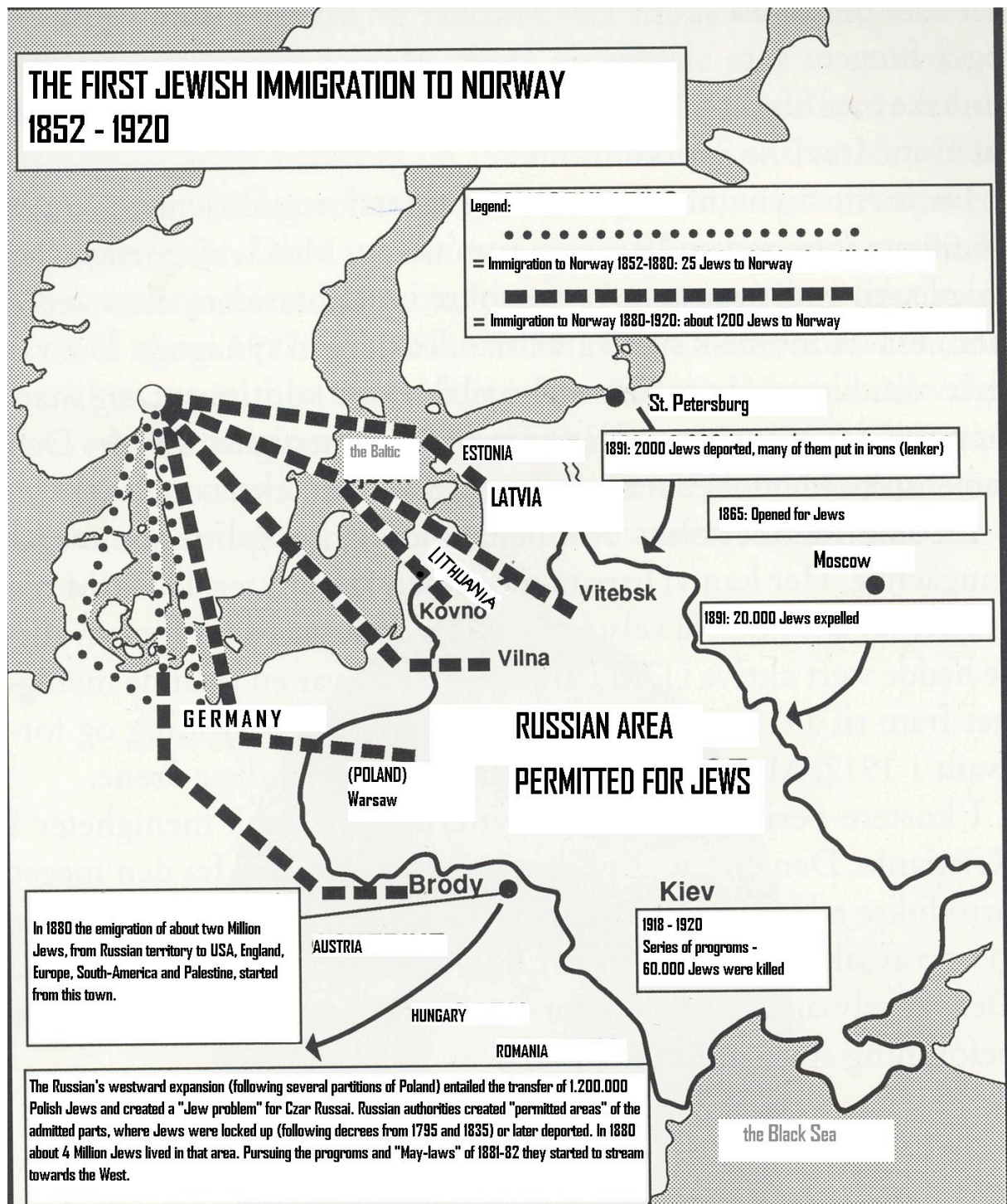
shed light to the fact that “Educational system and its medium of instruction do make a homeland” (: 58)⁸.

⁸ on discussion of education in identity creation see also Conclusion, Chapter six.

3. Chapter three: Jewish minority's self-understanding

3.1 Brief Jewish history in Norway

Mendelsohn (1969&1986) and the Jewish Community's history book state that "most Jews who immigrated before 1880 came from Denmark, Germany, and Austria. After 1880 the "eastern Jews" (østjødene) made up the majority of the arrivals, some which had resided in Sweden 20-25 years" (Mendelsohn in Broberg et al 1988: 51) pictured in the map 3.1 below this text (Reisel 1992: 30 [my translation]).



Map 3.1 First Jewish immigration to Norway [white areas due to my translation]

Around the 1980's the policies slowly changed. Though Jews are still fighting to have Christianity and religious lifestyle education (KRL - see also 1.4.2) erased from the obligatory school curriculum.

'Jew-paragraph' § 2

The Constitution of 1814 permitted free exercise of religion, however the clergy resisted granting Jews access to Norway. "The Evangelic-Lutheran religion stays the state's religion. The immigrants that profess the religion are obliged to bring their children up with it. Jesuits and monastic order shall not be accepted, Jews are still excluded from entering the realm" (Constitution 1814 § 2). The wide discussion about exclusion of Jews, Jesuits and monastic order in § 2 resulted in an amendment prepared by Henrik Wergeland. Henrik Wergeland, who also wrote the book 'The Jew and the Jewess' (1935), is still remembered for this and on the national holiday the speech on his grave is held by a representative of the Jewish Community in Oslo. The discussion on § 2 led to the necessary Parliament majority on July 21st, 1851. Then § 2 was changed to: "All immigrants of the realm have religious liberty. The Evangelic-Lutheran religion stays the stat's official religion. All immigrants that profess religion are obliged to bring up their children in it" (Constitution July, 21st 1851, August 3rd, 1897, Nov 1st, 1956, May 4th, 1964).

Jews in Norway experienced persecution as did Jews in all of Europe, preceded by a rise of anti-Semitism reflected in books like Sverd, Irene (1939): 'Jødeproblemet – og dets løsning' (The Jewish problem - and its solution). Even tough Norway was not occupied before 9. April 1940, the consequences for the Jewish Community were severe. In the period from 1940-1943 a liquidation-board was set into power executing liquidation of flats, inventory and other goods from Jewish (...) population in Norway under the Quisling regime. 1.053 of the 11.500-12.000 entities included was Jewish; this meant up to 2000 persons. The rules that were executed by the occupation regime were not legal in a civil law perspective. So possessions could be reclaimed by their former owners after the war; through the fact that many of the Jewish owners didn't survive the war possessions couldn't be reclaimed by civil law means. Especially because of a lack of death certificates, half of the survived Jewish Norwegians didn't get any reimbursement for their missing possessions.

The Jewish Community in Oslo had about 2200 Jews before WWII, this amount was halved after the war. The former head of the Jewish community, Mendel Bernstein, returned and started right away to build up the Jewish community again in 1945. He found the synagogue in Carlmeyersgata destroyed while the one in Bergstien (that is still in use today) was in desolate conditions but intact. The Synagogue in Bergstien was full of Nazi literature and Jewish property, though the Torah scrolls were in perfect condition. HM (HKH) Crown prince Olav attended the reopening of the Synagogue. Under the string leadership of Harry M. Kortzinsky another 600 Jews that had survived concentration camps were accepted to Norway. Most of them immigrated to Israel in 1948, thus about 200 - suffering tuberculosis after surviving concentration camps - came in the early 50's, were cured and settled in the country that welcomed them. Already in 1948 a memorial was set at the graveyard in Oslo and Trondheim. In 1956 some other followed fleeing the anti-Semitic attacks in Poland.

As the state of Israel was created at the 14th of May 1948 the emotional situation of the community members is described as "for most of the Jews it was something completely different after that day - they were no longer a people without a land". From 1949-1958 the new rabbi Zalman Aronzon was engaged in religious lessons, where he among other things established a ritual called "Bat Chajil", a 'all Norwegian phenomenon', a ceremony for girls at the age of 15/16 to mark the end of their first religious education called "Cheider". This corresponds the age when Protestant, Catholic and Human-ethically based children have their confirmation.

In the 60's the Community house was build with means of Norwegian Jews' donations and the state's partly reimbursement of losses due to the Nazi occupation. This new community house offered a completely different infrastructure with all its space for meetings, education, media, library and an office (DMT 2005: Jewish history in Norway). Another means of support emerged through the steady occupation of several community members with the Holocaust's remembrance and reconciliation matters connected to it; resulting in the restitution case in 1998 with which the new community house was built. Two reasons are mentioned that ratify the necessity of reimbursement

of losses that arose to the Jewish population in Norway especially from 1940-1943 (Parliamentary recommendation no.108 (1998-1999)).

From the 70's until the early 90's the fight against - and the engagement in the prevention of anti-Semitism was put on the agenda.

3.2 Norwegian Jewish minority's Self-understanding - Norwegian Jews or Jewish Norwegians?

The further structuring of Jewish minority's self understanding will be in reference to the elements in the concept of nation. This is based upon the elements A.D.Smith lay in Brubaker's concept of nation were: "a felt and lived community, a category of behaviour as much as imagination, and that requires of the members certain kinds of action" (A.D.Smith:10) and several articles, mainly published by Lars Dencik (2005), Irene Levin (2004a, b) and the Jewish Community or their representatives. The analysis is based upon the survey on "Jewish life in Norway" from 2002, structured by results from the (in main traits) same survey published in the Jewish Policy Research (JPR) report on "European Jewish Identity at the dawn of the 21st century" (Graham 2004).

The analysis

How do Jewish Norwegians actually define themselves? Many different definitions can be found in literature depending not only on ideological but also on social awareness and ethnic sensitivity.

The analysis conceptualizes the concept of Norwegian Jewish self-understanding from the documents published in the ratification process from 1995-1999 (see Chapter 2).

The Jewish Community of Oslo, called the Mosaic Religious Community, is the official representative for the Jewish minority inside ‘the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’. Though about 830 people are registered members, the number of Jews in Oslo is esteemed to 1100 people. The focus in the statistical analysis will be on the Jewish self understanding by showing tendencies in the Jewish minority group enrolled by membership in the Jewish Community of Oslo (N= 305) which officially represents the national minority group before the authorities so far. Prof. Irene Levin is one of the Norwegian initiators of the survey on “Jewish life in Norway”. The questionnaire on “Jewish life in Norway” in 2002 was sent out to all its members and was answered by a representative sample of 51 %. The sample is representative for all members regarding age, gender. That actually 51% of the Jewish community took the time to answer this questionnaire without gaining any goods other than stating their opinion in itself shows interest in community matters. Levin highlighted in her articles and her talks to me that 1) the Ministry’s Norwegian Jewish definition lacks the main understanding of what Jewish religious identity actually frames and 2) made remarks about important tendencies in the data concerning the Jewish Community in Oslo.

Those will be referred to using the presented design in 1.1.

Religion, Rituals and Tradition

3.3 Judaism: religion, nation & tradition

Religion is the basis for Judaism. Other factors, like ethnic, cultural identity referred to as peoplehood are extremely important thus always connected to Judaism, whether or not practiced. Traditions build continuity throughout and across generations, often beyond national borders. They create unity and understanding on the inside and help to remain the necessary distance from the surroundings. Necessary, in order to keep an

own, special identity – a self understanding – built upon the banner of a group specific collective identity.

3.3.1 Religious and ethnic identity

Religious practice

How can we describe what Norwegian Jews in regards to religious practice and ritual practice and where the difference lies, ethnic belonging and lifestyle?

The reason for the title of the thesis ‘Norwegian Jews - Jewish Norwegians’ shall be investigated first, as the essence of this question is whether ethnic belonging is a question of Jewish religion or not. Crucial here is if those two concepts are opposing themselves, and if this can be answered with a clear cut, or if new concepts have to be suggested. The latter will, if those concepts do not correspond to the Jewish population’s perception of Norwegian Jewish self-understanding has to be reconsidered in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1: One can have different feelings for "the Jewishness". Which describes yours best? *
Do you feel more Norwegian or more Jewish?

		Do you feel more Jewish or more Norwegian?			
		More Norwegian	equally	more Jewish	Hard to say
Feeling of "Jewishness"	Quite Jewish, other aspects also important	10,70 %	59 %	22,10 %	8,20 %
	Strong feeling	0 %	43,40 %	52,70 %	3,90 %
Total		10 %	48,10 %	34,60 %	7,30 %

In the cross tabulation (see above in table 3.1) we can see that the majority of the respondents possessing a “strong feeling of Jewishness” feel more Jewish 52.7%. Thus, 43.4% choose that they feel equally much Norwegian as Jewish, when given the

chance. It seems like a clear cut, that nobody feels more Norwegian 0%, so to say that the strong feeling of Jewishness makes less Norwegian. Nevertheless out of the whole population (including the ones that don't feel Jewish at all or don't think about it that often) just 10% feel more Norwegian whereas 48% feel equally Jewish and Norwegian and 34.6% feel more Jewish. Additionally if we calculate how many of the whole population with a strong or quite strong feeling feel more Jewish we get to a result of $7.6\%+18.2\%=25.8\%$ of the whole population has a strong or quite Jewish feeling and feels more Jewish. 20.9 % with strong feeling and 28.4% feeling quite Jewish describe 49.3% that feel equally Jewish as Norwegian. The title of the thesis is: 'Norwegian Jew-Jewish Norwegian', is meant in uniting these two questions of the data: Do you feel more a Norwegian Jew or a Jewish Norwegian? The answer to this question lies in the dichotomy of Jewish Norwegian - Norwegian Jew. I asked a young religious community member the question based on a personal conversation. She was uncomfortable with it, as the fact that she is having a strong Norwegian national identity, is best expressed in her wearing a Bunad (= national costume) on the 17th of May⁹. Just as she felt to not have a choice, she chose: A Norwegian Jew. This means that she is one of the 25.8 %, or most likely 7.6% that have a strong Jewish feeling and feel first and foremost as a Jew, then as a Norwegian.

Quite amazing this would oppose the Figur 3.1 on Jewish practice and ethnical identity connected to the level of observance. In the JPR report Graham presents Miller's investigation of the relationship between ethnic identity, belief and observance. He used the following three-way typology (Graham: 35):

Type of observance	Type of Jewish identity
Weak observers	Ethnic identity
Traditional	Ethnic identity
Orthodox	Have dimensions of belief and practice

Figur 3.2 Types of practice and Jewish identity

⁹ The 17th of May is the national holiday, the day when the first Constitution in Eidsvoll was signed in 1814 (Right!, with § 2 still including the exclusion of Jews from the realm). see 2.1

Can one so say that religion in this case actually is, and is the only indicator for a person's ethnic identity?

The matter of concern is whether the definition of Jews as a religious minority, rightly makes them eligible to national minority status instead of being a group of Norwegians with another religion, completely displaced in the national minority framework. To answer this question properly, let's see what Miller's the groups prescribed an ethnic Jewish identity have to say to that question.

Table 3.2: Describe your religious observance * Belief in G'd is not decisive for being a good Jew?

		Belief in G'd is not decisive for being a good Jew				
		Totally agree	Basically agree	Neither or	Disagree partly	Disagree completely
Religious observance	"Traditional", but not religious	45,70 %	32,40 %	11,40 %	7,60 %	2,90 %
	Orthodox	26,70 %	33,30 %	13,30 %	20 %	6,70 %

A short look on the Table above is enough to realise that the even among the Orthodox 26.7% agree in that it is not decisive to believe in G'd to be a good Jew, supported by 45.7% of the Traditional religious group. Judaism is more religion of action than a belief. The beginning of the Midrasch tells I know (Hebrew: Ani jodea) the existence of G'd, not I believe (ani maamin) as it is often translated. Jews are possessing one religion which is called Judaism. They believe in one eternal G'd, which is why pictures as all other statues etc. are forbidden as they would limit G'd. Jews as the chosen people have to burry the burden of following the 613 commandments, positive (you may) and negative (you may not) that shall realize the kingdom of G'd in this world and so also the coming of a messianic (=peaceful) time. The culture they share is based upon the execution of the daily commandments that have their peak in the seventh day of the week, the holidays and Shabbat (Friday sunset until Saturday first three stars) , where Jews are supposed to rest in spiritual enlightenment like G'd did after creation was finished.

The matter of concern is whether the definition of Jews as a religious minority, rightly makes them eligible to national minority status instead of being a group of Norwegians with another religion, completely displaced in the national minority framework.

Religion does not seem to be the prior factor. Among the respondents of the questionnaire just 8, 6 % look upon themselves as a religious group. So the first conclusion is that they look upon them foremost as an ethnic group as 40% define the group as “both”. Though asked if they would describe the Norwegian Jewish group as “a religious” or “as a part of a Jewish people”, 48 % choose the latter. Jewish life is a lifestyle passed on from generation to generation, from mother to child. Though Judaism is not (anymore) a Missionary religion, 13,8 % of the respondents have converted (see Chapter on Jewish identity) as the Community of Oslo has the means, tools and resources to offer a Conversion course. 5,7 % in the Jewish Community of Oslo look upon them as being “orthodox” whereas around 40 % can be looked upon as “traditional”. Which elements lie in the latter category?

Table 3.3: Describe your religious observance * Do you feel more Jewish or more Norwegian?

		Do you feel more Jewish or more Norwegian?			
		more Norwegian	equal	more Jewish	Hard to say
Religious observance	Not religious	29 %	38,70 %	19,40 %	12,90 %
	Jewish, in general meaning	20,30 %	52,50 %	22 %	5,10 %
	"Liberal" Jewish	5,10 %	55,90 %	30,50 %	8,50 %
	"Traditional", but not religious	2,60 %	50,40 %	39,10 %	7,70 %
	Orthodox	0 %	18,80 %	81,30 %	0
Total		9,60 %	48,90 %	34 %	7,50 %

What does this tell us about the perception on religion of Norwegian Jews? The ones that feel the Jewish group is equally a religious and an ethnical minority shall be stressed here. This can be explained out of the definition of Judaism (given above 3.3.1) where religion is like the umbrella organisation structuring a very diverse society. Nevertheless I doubt this being worth a little further investigation. When we oppose the answers given on “more Jewish or more Norwegian” to the answers given on “religious or ethnical group” we get the following results.

The Jewish Community in Oslo is an orthodox community, meaning member can only be who is Jewish, as Judaism is a materialistic system, this means to be born by a Jewish mother or having converted to Judaism him-/herself. Do the community members practice the official line?

Table 3.4: Describe your religious observance * What is your opinion about DMT's religious level

		Opinion about DMT's religious level			
		Good as it is	A little too orthodox	Too orthodox	I know too little about it
religious observance	Not religious	32,30 %	0 %	29 %	38,70 %
	Jewish, in general meaning	43,10 %	1,70 %	37,90 %	17,20 %
	"Liberal" Jewish	33,30 %	5 %	53,30 %	8,30 %
	"Traditional", but not religious	79,20 %	2,80 %	15 %	2,80 %
	Orthodox	75 %	18,75 %	0 %	6,25
Total		55,70 %	3,70 %	29,10 %	11,40 %

An important practice - Who is eating kosher¹⁰ and how?

A very important matter in traditional Jewish way of living is the performance of the eating rules. They are called kosher rules. All allowed food is called kosher to the point where it is rendered 'treif' (unkosher, unclean). The well known prohibited food is pig, but in addition all meat that is not slaughtered in accordance with the commanded rules, seafood without fins and scurf, in addition no vine and cheese, and no milk or eggs from non-kosher animals is allowed. It is forbidden to mix milk and meat whereas meat can be eaten after milk when rinsed with water, and an amount of time has to pass between the consumption of milk after meat. Here different country's rabbinical authorities decided on different amounts of time that has to pass between the consumption of milk and meat. While it is common among religious Jews in Israel to let 6 hours pass, Norwegian authorities decided upon one hour. 37 % of the Norwegian Jews follow the kosher rules completely or partly. The fact that it is asked and answered for "following the kosher rules partly" is by itself a little ironic and can be set as one of the basic foundations of Judaism. The concept of free choice is given to human beings and the actual doing of things "to ones best ability" is most important, though up to each and everyone. Can the commandment to eat the kind of and in the way of food that the Torah has commanded be followed partly, or does this mean to actually not follow it at all? 15, 4 % seem to have no problem with claiming that they actually follow this commandment by performing it partly. In addition one can investigate another little absurd All-Scandinavian phenomenon, 70% "eat kosher with shrimps" while Shrimps obviously don't have fins or scurf. Up to 78% eat unkosher slaughtered meat including pig and shrimps outside their house.

¹⁰ Hebrew: clean

Table 3.5: Kosher & eat shellfish			
		Eat Shellfish?	
Keep kosher	Yes	Yes	No
		21,60 %	78,30 %

Table 3.6 :Kosher partly & eat shellfish			
		Eat Shellfish?	
Keep kosher	Yes, partly	Yes	No
		47,80 %	52,20 %

In an analysis of the part of the population that describes themselves as religious or traditional the results get even more obvious. Among them 13 answered both questions "do you keep kosher" and "do you eat shellfish" (which exclude each other absolute) with "Yes". Further 21 eat shellfish and probably therefore "partly kosher".

How the society around looks at us, which form of prejudice and hatred are socially "allowed" and other global and social phenomenon influence the way we perceive ourselves. So also the way Jewish Norwegians look at their Jewishness and their Norwegianness. Problem of polarisation lies to the base of this question so that the actual sense of belonging is hard to grab.

This is demonstrated in the following Table 3.7. The fact that 39.6% celebrating Hanukka and 78.6% not celebrating Hanukka give each other Christmas presents interprets Levin (Dencik, Levin 2003:2) by the fact that "members of the Jewish community in Oslo keep not only their Jewish traditions more severe than their Scandinavian neighbours, but also the Christian"(:4)

Table 3.7: Do you tend to celebrate Hanukka? Christmas presents*

		Presents	
		Yes	No
Celebrate Hanukka	Yes	39,60 %	60,40 %
	No	78,60 %	21,40 %
Total		47,90 %	52,10 %

3.3.2 Ethnical belonging and tradition

To understand the demography of the Jewish minority today and relate this to their size in Norway see Map 3.2 on Jewish population in Europe below.

Map – Jewish population of Europe

Maximum and minimum estimates of the size of the European Jewish population (various dates 1997-2002)



Map 3.2 - Jewish population of Europe (Graham 2004: 5)

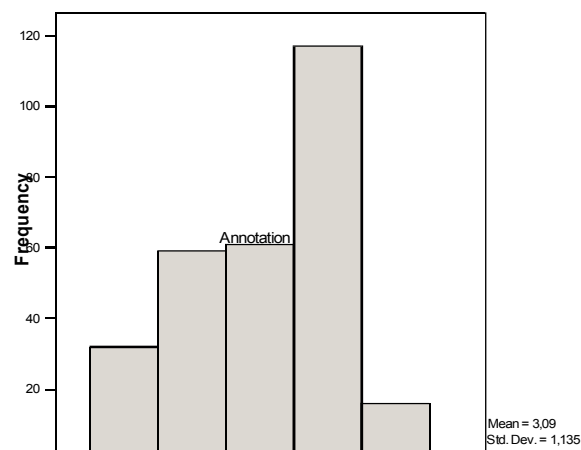
“Yet most of Jewish history was spent outside that home [Israel]. Abraham was forced, by famine, into exile. So was Jacob. Genesis (the first book of Moses) ends with the patriarchal family in Egypt. Deuteronomy (the fifth book of Moses) ends with Moses in sight of the Promised Land but not destined to enter it. Jewish history is a story of exiles – to Assyria, then Babylon, then the long series of dispersions from the Roman conquest to the birth of the modern State of Israel in 1948” (Sax 2005: 2). As Isaiah Berlin (2001) noted: “It was once said by the celebrated Russian revolutionary, Alexander Herzen, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, that the Slavs had no history, only geography. The position of the Jews is the reverse of this. They have enjoyed rather too much history and too little geography” (:143).

Traditions

From those historic, socio-economic and social developments, different forms of Jewish practice evolved depending on the self-understanding in regards to tradition, degree of religiosity, religious practice, assimilation and integration of the host country's traditions and rituals. In the state of Israel those various groups become visible, a place where secularism and orthodoxy, modernity and traditionalism live side by side, as many discussions i.e. around the disengagement plan of Gaza visualised. Thus the situation in Israel poses a big difference to the situation of Jews in the Diaspora, as this is the only place where Jews are the majority, Jewish religion and culture is popular culture.

The primary areas of Jewish settlement in the Diaspora were Spain - until Isabella from Spain's inquisition in 1492 – then South France, North Africa (Sephardic tradition), Central & Eastern Europe (Ashkenazi tradition) and Yemen (Yemenite tradition).

Figure 3.1



Sense of Belonging, Community

One of the first questions in the survey addresses the question of “feeling of Jewishness”. This question was answered by 96%. 44.9% have a strong Jewish feeling or consciousness and all together 86.7% have a strong or quite strong feeling of being Jewish. Compared to that just 0.7% say that it is a matter of concern to them. The latter gives a clear indicator that more or less all of them feel Jewish. Thus, another 11.3% answered that they do not think about that too often. This can be “due to the fact that they are integrated or assimilated to a high degree” (Dencik, Levin 2003: 1). If the latter is the case, the fact that they are still members of an orthodox religious made me curious.

What lies in this concept of feeling Jewish, how do they perceive their Norwegianness as opposed to their Norwegianness?

To answer that I analysed another question that focuses on the relationship between being Jewish and being Norwegian formulated as “Do you feel more Jewish or more Norwegian”? Asked if they define themselves more as Jews or Norwegians 34,7% claims to feel more a Jew compared to just 10% that claim to feel more Norwegian. 48, 1% % feels equally Jew and Norwegian. The reasons for that can be wide. One might be that the Norwegian identity is set as the ‘normal’ while the Jewish identity is felt to be the one in question. (Dencik 2005 [personal meeting]).

Another way to define a minority group is probably the tendency of the group members to stick together. 26% think it is better to be with other Jews and about half the respondents claim more or half of their closest friend to be Jewish. This is quite astonishing taking into account that only about 5 % of the population in Oslo are Jews, which resembles 0, 7 % of the whole Norwegian population of 4.6 mill.

3.3.3 Jewish Culture – Rituals

Like mentioned earlier their lifestyle and their history of Diaspora (the spreading of the Jewish people over the world since the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, also ‘exile from Israel’), persecution and extinction has lead them to move and to attain several different traditions whereas the Ashkenazi, the Sephardic and the Yemenite are the main categories of distinction as they possess their own language which is Yiddish, Ladino and Yemenite. The first is German, Slavic and Hebrew, the second Spanish and Hebrew and the last – who would have guessed – Yemenite and Hebrew. Today's Jews, as later shown with the quantitative data, speak mostly the country of citizenship’s language, in some cases Modern Hebrew (language spoken in Israel) and sometimes have a slight understanding of their tradition’s dialect. As said, the uniting element is the religion, one infinite G'd, and all that becoming one lifestyle in the light of Judaism.

Religious or cultural rituals

Table 3.8: Describe religious observance * Are your sons circumcised?			
		Are your sons circumcised?	
		Yes	No
Religious observance	No religious observance	38,50 % (5)	61,50 %
	Jewish, general meaning	79,20 % (19)	20,80 %
	"liberal" Jewish	84,40 % (38)	15,60 %
	"traditional", but not religious	89,90 % (62)	10,20 %
	orthodox	100% (6)	0 %
Total		82,80 % (130)	17,20 %

38.5% is quite a high percentage among a group that completely rejects to be religiously observant (the number in parenthesis resembles observations). Levin stresses that the data shows about 43% of the Community’s couples (married or livin

community) are with non-Jews. "This implies that boys are circumcised independent from whether or not they are born in a mixed-marriage." (Levin 2004 a: 7)

Can that be perceived as a ritual?

Webber (2003) notes in reference to Stanley Waterman's question if Jews could form an equally small but perfect society like Iceland:

"I would not think so myself: Jewish culture reconstructing itself after the Holocaust could certainly aim to become perfectly formed, but in the meantime it should recognize the need to do two quite contradictory things. These are: a) to receive and assimilate outside influences; b) to go back and learn from its own sources" (Webber 2003: 326)

The concept of Jewish religion or Judaism is opposed to the concept of Jewish culture. The classical anthropological definitions of culture refer to an abstraction: namely, the social heritage or socially acquired life-style of a group of people. This can be seen in the performance of rituals.

In traditional, often also called orthodox, circles Judaism is looked upon as a religion where Halakha forms a life-style that reflects the daily devotion to G'd. Opposing the more secular or less religious circles tend to define Judaism as a life-style constituted by culture and rituals. In this sense culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities acquired by people as members of society. (Gitelman et al 2003: 319)

The problem with this later definition in relation to Jewish culture is just that it refers to a society, a social entity united by shared heritage. In the case of Jewish culture as used in projects leading for example to the "European Day of Jewish culture and heritage" Jewish culture is not necessarily Jewish in a sense of religion, probably not even in a sense of a people. It refers to a type of music, jokes, behaviour, stories,

nourishment, sense of community & relationships that originated by Jews influenced by the surroundings, and is therefore split up in the different Jewish cultures, like Sephardic, Ashkenazi, maybe also tannin, Hoodoo and other varied forms of Jewish Diaspora life-style. Webber (2003) states that ‘Jewish culture’ includes religion, language, and knowledge of history. But in practice, what many Jews would see as their "culture" is often a rather arbitrary selection; (...) one could say it is a form of Jewish consciousness, a state of mind. But then, it needs to be said, Diaspora Jewish culture, in the original anthropological sense of the nature of Jewish life-style, has always included non-Jewish elements of the environment. The lighting of Shabbat candles is assumed being a matter of both ritual and symbolic importance. It is necessary and one of the rituals most propagated for by orthodox circles. The ritual is the lighting of the candles to start the Shabbat. To separate light from dark, holy from ‘profane’.

Who is it that performs Hanukkah¹¹?

Table 3.9: Describe your religious observance * Christmas presents

		Presents	
		Yes	No
Religious observance	No religious observance	83,90 %	16,10 %
	Jewish, in general meaning	66,00 %	34 %
	"Liberal" Jewish	50 %	50 %
	"Traditional", but not religious	28,70 %	71,30 %
	Orthodox	28,60 %	71,40 %
Total		47,30 %	52,70 %

96, 6% think it is important to show loyalty to their Jewish heritage, thereof 69% think of this being a crucial matter. To mend the gap between the concepts of culture as a social unity and as social interaction and artistic exchange Roger Brubaker (1996,

¹¹ Holiday around Christmas; celebrating the regaining of the Temple through the Maccabees by the ritual of the miraculous oil lamp that burned in 8 days instead of one, which was the amount of oil given

2000) revisited the idea of culture and identity. He refers to it as a cluster of common concepts, emotions, and practices of any (!) group of people who regularly interact.

And even though it is true that in the real world people are indeed aware, or made aware, of boundaries and also of shared culture; that in practice (or perhaps of pride in their sense of "belongingness") they may choose to overlook a lack of homogeneity within their society and to ignore internal contradictions, ambiguities, self-doubt, or incompleteness. Herbert Grans calls Jewish "symbolic religiosity", i.e., residual, minimalist Jewish observance, on the one hand, and the quasi and the quasi-mystical, mythological, and essentialist view of Jewish peoplehood on the other. The lighting of candles is often perceived as symbolic, where one welcomes the Queen of Shabbat, and the actual act of lighting the candles is at the same time as the beginning of Shabbat (including the extra timeframe) which 70% do always or mostly.

An article in the book on Jewish identities tries to sort out which part of a personal identity refers to the Austrian and which to the Jewish identity. And results in "Austrian citizen of Jewish race & German culture" are potential conflicting loyalties (Rechter 2000:199)

German/ Austrian	cultural identity
Jewish	religious ethnically tinged identity

Tradition

Levin refers to those differences inside the Jewish religious and cultural identity being beautifully expressed in several answers to the questionnaire "Jewish life in Norway". Tendencies in the quantitative data show thus that the Jewish religious Community members do not necessarily define themselves on traditional religious terms. Here the main element is a halakhic lifestyle, which means living after the commandments given by G'd to the people of Abraham, to Moses on the mountain Sinai. Even though the Jewish Community in Oslo presents a traditional-orthodox Jewish Community,

meaning that the members subscribe to living a halakhic Jewish lifestyle which includes acts as keeping the eating rules (kosher), celebrating Shabbat (holy day friday-saturday) just 5,7 % of respondents define themselves as orthodox (observant), though 41 % define themselves as ‘traditional’. The other important part, the aspect of Jewish peoplehood, can probably be expressed through a feeling of Jewishness that 44% say they possess. The fact that the Community is keeping an orthodox tradition despite the degree of religiosity among their members is part of my argument on an eventual discrepancy between the official and the Jewish self-definition and therefore not a methodological problem but of outermost importance for this paper. Additionally, just a minor part of the population disagreed when asking them whether the Community should keep this orthodox tradition. 83% of the Jewish Community are circumcised, and up to 47% actually describe themselves as traditional or orthodox (thus, 41 % traditional).

The Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Oslo, Rav Itzhak Rapoport, states that “The nation defines itself by lifestyle (related to religion), the covenant between G’d and us.” He derived from his assumption that the name should thus not be “the mosaic community” but “the Israelitian community”¹² because the community members are B’nei Israel – children of Israel. I asked if this doesn’t exclude the Jews from the Norwegian nation and the Rabbi answered that it is a “Naf Schach”¹³-situation, meaning to be caught either way. One is supposed to feel connected to a Jewish nation, togetherness with the Jewish people.

3.3.4 Norwegian Jewish Self-understanding

¹² When I searched the webpage of the Jewish Community in Vienna to try to find ways to translate Israelitische Glaubensgemeinschaft, I realized that the Main Jewish Community in Vienna is called „Israelitische Kultusgemeinde“, which they didn’t intend to translate in the English version of the website.

¹³ Means: or loose-loose

The Jewish self-understanding is inherently a double-identity based. The first based in the concept of life style, where cultural, religious and ethnical characteristics are part of one collectively shared identity definition and secondly, the national identity of the host country. I assume that some of the percentages in Table 3.8, show clearly that Jewish Norwegians perceive their self-understanding as one identity, with a Norwegian civic identity including national customs, like eating habits (Table 3.5, 3.6) and national holidays (Table 3.9) and a Jewish religious, cultural one.

The fact that those identities can exist besides each other is also visualised in the table of uniting national holidays with religious/ritual ones, Table 3.10:

Table 3.10 Celebrate Hanukkah and having Christmas presents

Table 3.10: Do you tend to celebrate Hanukkah?* Christmas presents			
		Presents	
		Yes	No
Celebrate Hanukkah	Yes	39,60 %	60,40 %
	No	78,60 %	21,40 %
Total		47,90 %	52,10 %

Thus Judaism is by its definition not just a religion but is a religion with a history that created a culture that by influence of the Diaspora¹⁴ shaped several traditions¹⁵. The basic definition of the Jewish people as “Am Israel” (Israel nation/people) expresses the Jewish focus on peoplehood, community and common fate, though the religion is the common denominator, the uniting principle. It might therefore be more appropriate to call Judaism for a lifestyle (Rapoport, Levin) as the existence and the actual performance of religiously commanded duties is guiding a Jewish life.

¹⁴ Exil from the land of Israel

¹⁵ Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Yemenite

Jewish identity can with equal right be perceived as a Jewish lifestyle which is based on elements of peoplehood, namely shared history, shared myths, shared language, shared culture, connection to a homeland and eventually shared rituals.

Still, Jewish identity can also be just a feeling, a feeling of belonging to a unity and a tradition.

Jewish identity is a collective identity shared by the people of Jewish faith. Jewish religious identity is resulting of a Jewish life style determined by the 613 commandments transmitted in the Torah (the written and the oral tradition) framing the Jewish law¹⁶. A way of religious life (Hebrew=daati) built upon a belief in the existence of a personal G'd¹⁷, that made the Jewish people a Covenant through 1) Abraham their father and 2) their prophet Moses at Mount Sinai. Judaism, Jewish life style, is passed on by birth (maternal); and in case of conversion defined differently between traditional (read also orthodox), reform (read also conservative) or other.

All those different perceptions created different traditions and lifestyles, thus, it is just by already taking a theological position possible to say whether the one or the other definition fall under the umbrella of Judaism or not. From a traditional (read orthodox/religious) perspective the actual practice of the religious commandments define Jewish life style and divides between to be Jewish versus to (just) be a Jew, the latter refers to people of Jewish origin who do not practice (all) of the commandments. Further many other directions of Jewish practice, sentiment and culture exist, from reform/conservative to name another big one to people that have some Jewish ancestry

¹⁶ Hebrew: Halakha

¹⁷ I write G'd in that way, as it resembles the way orthodox Jews write God as one is not supposed to say the name (Hebrew: Haschem) of G'd, write it. Even though this three letter phrase does not resemble the name of G'd one does it as a reminder, a respect, etc. to not use the name of G'd and to not end up in actually doing Blasphemy. After having rendered me conscious of that and the moral argument that this makes it easy for an interested orthodox person to read my paper, I decided to write the expression like that.

or do not and feeling a more or less deep connection to the Jewish religion and/or people .

Beller (2000) states at least three levels of Jewishness: An innate Jewishness (DNA), a perceived Jewishness (feeling), and an active Jewish life (being Jewish - see above) (:15).

Thus, for all those cases I want to present religion in Judaism more like an umbrella, the uniting element that creates shared tradition, kept living by common myths and culture in the sense of creating the framework for Jewish lifestyle. Jewish lifestyle in this sense means a life to a greater or lesser degree determent by religious observance. Thus what I assume and want to find out with this analysis is how the Jewish population is keeping the 613 (!) commandments 'to thy best ability'. The latter is based on the trinity always inherent in Judaism, as a system of belief, a religious lifestyle. In this case the trinity describes 1) the intention 2) the action 3) the result. Even tough I know many Jews that never heard of this trinity in Jewish jokes often build upon how to do something you should not, by intending to not do it. The saying: "Everybody should act to his own abilities" has the same root.

4. *Chapter four: Comparison between official and Jewish group definition*

4.1 Hypothesis: Does the Jewish minority's self-understanding differ from the Ministry minority definition?

The starting question is why Jews are actually defined as a national minority while already possessing the right of *free* religious expression. Thus the thesis supposes that an official misunderstanding of the essence of the Jewish minority's "complicated" identity definition and the Norwegian national identity result in the Jewish minority's national minority status. This resulted in their double protection as both religious and national minority.

Many suggestions are possible whereas the one, that the Norwegian authorities didn't quite understand the concept of Judaism is the most probable. In Christianity belief is prioritized whereas Judaism focuses on belief in regards to the actual spiritual act in daily life, if not the actual doing even exceeds the importance of the believing part. As summarized in Chapter 3.3.4, Jewish self-understanding is 'by its definition not just a religion but is a religion with a history that created a culture that by influence of the Diaspora shaped several traditions.'

Compared to the clear faith-based concept of Evangelical-Lutheran religion, Jewish religion is more diffuse. The Jewish community was defined as a religious minority. This, though some members first and foremost perceive themselves as a cultural or linguistic minority. Additionally to this definition the Jewish minority was defined as one of the national minorities in 1995.

The essence is that the definition is in no way discriminating the Jewish minority group, nevertheless is clearly defining a very exclusive concept of the Norwegian nation.

Reason:

Before the ratification of that Convention “there has been no coordinated research on the situation of Jews, Forest Finns and Roma/Gypsies” (Initial report: 45) and therefore some of the assumptions lying to the base of the Jewish identity definition are just based upon first meetings with national minority group representatives before and after the Ratification as well as on historical findings.

Some proves:

A demographic explanation is used in White paper no.15 (2000-2001) to describe the Jewish minority’s origin as being of Sephardic origin and tradition, Jews from Spain, North Africa, in disposition to shown in Chapter 3.1 on Jewish history where it is stated clearly that Jewish Norwegian’s origin is Ashkenazi, from Central and Eastern Europe.

- The expression ‘Gypsies’ is so mentioned in the texts of the Ministry but is official set upon as a political incorrect name as it was used in negative connotation throughout many years. The majority are Vlachos-gypsies or Roma as they call themselves (Intermin. 1998: 21).Some proves:

1) This is described by the fact that the elected national minority groups have been residents in Norway since before the creation of the nation state based on the Constitution of 1905 (ending of the Swedish Union).

2) Evangelical-Protestant religion is still the state's religion manifested by Article two in the Norwegian Constitution.

But at Miller (2000) clearly states “Nationality must not of its nature be an all-embracing identity. It need not extend to all the cultural attributes that a person might display. So one can avow a national identity and also have attachments to several more specific cultural groups: to ethnic groups, religious groups, work-based associations and so forth” (Miller 2000: 34).

(For further normative arguments see Chapter 5.1, 5.2)

For presenting a working definition of Jewish national identity, I shall focus on the elements in the national minority concept, so on the official definition in the Ratification paper of the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)’, the parliamentary bill no.80 (1997-1998). Jewish religion is the main element as Jews are “first and foremost defined as a religious minority, and most of them are organized in the Jewish communities of Oslo and Trondheim. The group has also cultural traits that it has kept through its long lasting history in Norway.” (Parliamentary bill no. 80, 3.6.7 (1997-1998) “The purely religious categorization of Jews never quite succeeded in normalizing Jews in Central Europe, making them the same as everyone else, or at least putting them on the same footing” (Beller 2000: 19). Therefore I introduce the second main element, Jewish peoplehood, as the definition of Jews as a national minority is both of their definition as a religious minority (see above) and the authority's realization that "Jews look upon themselves as both a religious minority, but also as a cultural and a linguistic minority" (White Paper no.15, 5.2.1.2 (2000-2001)). Elements in the concept of peoplehood, closely related to the concept of nation, are also a proper name, a history, a shared language (Hebrew), a homeland (Israel,-not the state of) and a uniting faith. In short it fulfills the criteria necessary for a nation including shared myth, creating a uniting bond. A nation guided by norms and values, morals and ethics preparing the ground for tradition and a popular culture.

The Jewish concept of peoplehood is not as easy to explain. First and foremost, the question of language might be interesting here.

Tradition

The biblical language of Jews is definitively Hebrew, used in Synagogue service (Jewish house of meeting/prayer), all over the world. Thus, there are three official languages Ashkenazi, the Sephardic and the Yemenite created out of dialects (see Chapter 4.2.4). A nation with needs one origin, this can biblically be traced to one father (Abraham) and one Prophet that talked to G'd face to face (Moses), and many receivers and interpreters. This idea of a perennial, primordial nation makes the actual inclusion or incorporation of Jewishness in a state's national identity easy; The Jewish peoplehood is connected to ones religious (when also secular) identity while nationality is connected to the national identity of the current state (see Chapter 4.2.3).

Continuity

As Jewish people have been living in the Diaspora (outside Israel) in about 2000 years, they have a culturally transmitted long term view on continuity. The involvement in politics, economy etc. are normal results of the need to always be updated, to be able to know and can react to the current situation. The history is one of threads, persecution, exclusion and a constant search of acceptance, fighting for survival. Thus, at the same time a people having the strength that travelers have, the strength of a nomadic tribe where loyalty is even both to the Jewish people as to the current state and its citizens, for that matter. This results in a double loyalty to a state (authorities and nation) and the Jewish peoplehood. I assume that this loyalty to the peoplehood never really poses a loyalty conflict to citizenry. Meaning that a person can feel a Jew connected to the Jewish people and likewise be and feel fully loyal to Norwegian society, economy and politics. Thus, the ability to be more than 'monoloyal' is often

misunderstood or even disliked, assuming that it leads to treason¹⁸ what further causes prejudices. Still it is not every humans ability to accommodate two identities, and than they can be felt as conflicting each other. Then the creation of a nation-state gets a problem if both are acquired by birth (see also Niemi, Myhre, Kjeldstadli 2003: 207)

"In the mid-nineteenth century (...) Many Jews in Austria, were prepared to give up any Jewish ethnic identity and become German precisely because a German national identity was seen a greater leveler as unifier which destroyed the distinctions in corporate society from which Jews suffered so much." (Beller 2000: 19)

What was focused on to be part of the definition of national minorities from the beginning was that groups have to have been in Norway for more than 150 years. Immigrants that came later did not qualify for the criteria [for being counted as a national minority]. Sami had been in the country that long that they got the position as indigenous people (some Kvens mean they should also have gotten that status). DMT [the Jewish Community of Oslo] said yes to be counted as a national minority because of the protection they held out expectations of. Public funds should be set aside yearly. Our needs and wishes should be heard and taken care off at any time. Jews have an absolute need for protection against discrimination. Look at Neo-nazism, anti-Semitism and the threat of terror."

4.1.1 The Jewish minority's reaction - before and after the ratification

Right after signing the convention the minority groups were asked to state their goodwill in hearings towards a Norwegian intrastate ratification of the Convention paper (on the Jewish minority's definition see also Chapter 4.1.2). Through inter-

18 1. Violation of allegiance toward one's country or sovereign, especially the betrayal of one's country by waging war against it or by consciously and purposely acting to aid its enemies. 2. A betrayal of trust or confidence.

ministerial meetings lead by the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development the minorities got the possibility to express their opinion on 1) their inclusion among the protected national minority groups 2) the way they have been defined to in the national minority concept. The Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development got the responsibility for national minority issues, but works together with the specialized Ministries dependent on the case.

The Jewish communities (Trondheim, Oslo) were most sceptical towards the national minority status they attained, as they could so be perceived as a minority with another nationality. This caused their reaction especially in the light of recent history and the prejudice towards double loyalty. “We are rarely concerned about special treatment or in actively marking distance to Norwegian society. We look upon us as fully integrated Norwegians with another religion and different traditions as the majority.” (Parliament bill no 80, no 80, (1997-98) [my highlights]) After having rendered confident that the minorities did agree to a certain extend and including some of the hearings (White paper no.80, Chapter 6) the Convention text was approved for ratification, thus wishing that "the proposals and documents present collected information about the degree that those groups were (formerly) exposed to discrimination" (Parliamentary bill no.80 (1997-1998)).

The Jewish community in Oslo and Trondheim were sceptical to Norwegian ratification especially because they are “to a small degree concerned with their minority status regarding receiving special treatment or actively distance themselves from society as a whole. We look upon us first and foremost as completely integrated Norwegian with another religion and other traditions than the majority”.

Thus, they felt responsible and stated that they: “as a minority group undertake to work so that the authorities carry out the endeavours the Conventions contents. Further we deem it being of importance to be loyal to minority groups in the rest of Europe, where some of those live under completely different circumstances than we. Support

of participating in common platforms outside of Norway are therefore important to us.” (Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998), 6:17)

Some demands or needs were presented (Intermin 1998, 3.5.4: 24)

Economical support

Jews don't receive economical support for organizations or cultural activities and the need to receive business support. Therefore the Jewish minority presented following needs to communicate on their own premises what the status of being a national minority actually needs. The possibility to participate in debates, hearings and committees is reduced due to lack of economical resources. Economical support is needed to establish following institutions and matters.

Christianity and lifestyle subject (KRL)

One important point in this discussion is the introduction of Christianity and lifestyle subject (KRL) in the Norwegian schooling system. To not create further division between Norwegian-protestant and other pupils, the subject KRL was created. The aim is to teach 50 % Christianity, 25 % other religions and 25% philosophy. When the Convention was ratified in 1995 the Jewish Community once again asked for making this subject an optional subject, which was denied until that moment.

Schächting/ Shechita - ritual slaughtering

This is seen as being of interest as members of this group are already given the right of free religious expression¹⁹. Nevertheless the ritual way of slaughtering is not permitted since the early 30's. Thus, the Sami population is allowed to slaughter reindeer with a knife while Joyking. Additionally the import of kosher (ritually slaughtered) meat is

¹⁹ In reference to the law of ritual Jewish slaughtering, which is forbidden in Norway, some disagree.

permitted, but the Jewish community experienced more than one time that the order didn't reach the demanders (a ship from Amsterdam full of chicken, was sent back with the reason of having Salmonella). Because of the reasons given, the grant of free Jewish religious expression should implicate equal official support in regards to religious, cultural, ritual and educational needs. The bureaucratic efforts necessary to import meat turn into a burden, thus the import of kosher slaughtered meat is a necessity for the performance of Judaism for a religious Jew.

Cultural Activities & Education

Biblical Hebrew used in Synagogue service. Modern Hebrew is part of the Community's Native language, religious and cultural education. If the community should teach their children on their account, economical support is needed.

Further resources for school-education, writing, editing and publishing of information materials are necessary.

Security

Jewish property and institutions are seen to need physical protection and the establishment of routines deems necessary.

One department

Jewish representatives looked at it as problematic, that no single Ministry is responsible for minority matters.

"Some found it a burden to be stigmatized again, at a point where one felt well integrated into society. I know that Michael Melchior was one that sat in the initial group that said 'Yes' to be part of it [the protected groups]. We fulfilled the criteria of having been in Norway in more than 150 years. We needed extra support and

understanding from the state f.ex. in connection to security." (Murad 2005 [telephone interview])

Here also the results of the survey have to be taken into consideration. Summarised 34% agreed that it is important that the youth visits Israel regularly to keep a Jewish consciousness and identity. 57% of the Jewish community in Oslo would give monetary support first to Israel. 91% have a feeling of belonging to Israel, while 89% have been there and 75% have family or friends in Israel. The latter is most likely significant lower than the percentage in Sweden (83%) due the Norwegian Jews "harder exposure" to persecution, extermination and emigration in WWII (Dencik, Levin 2003: 3).

4.1.2 Do Jews fit the national minority framework? - The reason for Jewish national minority protection

"Dual-level of national minority, thinking of themselves as both members of a smaller nation and a larger group" (Miller 2000: 6)

My policy-suggestions at the end of the paper are most likely first and foremost applying to people that have a Norwegian civic and religious, ethnical Jewish (religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic) identity – to what ever extend. Whether this is the case can barely be excerpted from the analysis as ethnic Norwegianness is set in opposition to ethnic Jewishness and thus, is no longer a matter of 'civic national identity' but a matter of opposing 'ethnical national identities'. Such ethnical definitions of national identity are very hard to unite with ethnical identities apart from popular culture.

Does popular culture matter? To be able to ask a question opens for possible answers, is a sentence I once read in a methodological essay. Karl Marx wrote a critical answer to Bruno Bauer's essay on "the Jewish question" in 1843, which has to be seen in the

history of Deutschtum, where the focus on the ‘real’ German identity was on its peak. Many Jews were very assimilated and outspoken propagandists for this German identity. This was also the time before the big pogroms in Russia (see Map 4.1.1) and the beginning of the immigration of traditional Jews from Poland and Russia, perceived as a threat by many assimilated Jews in Central Europe because of their traditionalism and strong connection to Jewish religion and culture making them visible different from the rest of society. So he asks “The Christian state takes cognizance only of privileges. In it the Jew has the privilege of being a Jew (...) the Christian state can only behave toward the Jew in the manner of the Christian state – that is, permitting the separation of the Jew from other subjects as a privilege but making them feel the pressure of the other separate spheres of society, and feel them all the more heavily, since he stands in religious opposition to the predominant religion.” And before that “No one in Germany is politically emancipated. We are not free ourselves. How shall we liberate you? You Jews are egoists when you claim a special emancipation for yourselves as Jews. As Germans, you should work for the political emancipation of Germany, as men, for the emancipation of mankind; and you should feel the particular form of your oppression and shame not as an exception to the rule but rather as its confirmation.” Seen in the light of the formerly expressed historical and political situation, this would mean that a Jewish person – wishing to perform his Judaism – can not be an emancipated citizen. And the actual performance of Jewish rules and rituals makes still today a clear distinction between a Jewish and a Christian Norwegian citizen. They can not eat in the same restaurant (as there is not a single kosher one in Oslo), not have a glass of wine (as regular wine is not kosher) or barely order wine (as the wine monopoly doesn’t show which wines are kosher on their website, and sporadically have some bottles in the stock), thus a glass of beer is not a problem regarding kosher-rules (always kosher), but on Friday evening, when everybody is having a beer, an observant or also partly traditional Jew will most likely sit at home surrounded by family and friends celebrating the beginning of Shabbat, the weekly day of rest.

Traditions & Rituals

Historically bequeathed traditions and rites are very important for the Jewish peoplehood. Like every nation also the Jewish nation has its rites, myths, norms and values, history and connection to the homeland (A.D.Smith 2001, Gellner 1997, Hobsbawn 1992). Those are reflected in the celebration of the Jewish religious and cultural holidays, feasts, and days of reunion. Can those matters be solved by officials, or can't they?

“The classic example from the ‘home’ of civic nationalism was the French Republic’s treatment of the Jews in their midst. ‘To the Jew as an individual everything, to the Jew as a Jew nothing’” (A.D.Smith 2001: 41). Smith talks further about the civic nationalism’s failure to endorse minority group rights by referring to France, where individual rights were granted, thus rights and duties included “to learn and conduct affaires in the dominant (French) language, to learn and recite the majority (French) history and literature, to observe French customs, to recognize French political symbols and institutions, and so on.” “For Jews, this meant splitting their unitary self-concept and their ethno-religious community into a religious confession and an ethnic affiliation, stripping them of the latter, and assimilating them into the host nation – a procedure applied by liberal civic nationalism to minorities in many national states this day (A.D.Smith 2001:41). In both cases the authorities’, by the definition of Jews as national and religious minority, and the head of the survey think-tank’s, by opposing National and Ethnical identity as two conflicting identities, this splitting was inherent in the way the decision was given.

I assume that the reason for including Jews among the national minority groups in Norway is 1) basically due to the religion as such and protestant popular concept of religion still inherent in Norwegian national identity 2) further due to the Norwegian understanding of religion as belief and therefore logically defines and protects the Jewish minority as a religion *and* a culture (see also 4.1.4). Opposing Jewish self definition builds upon a religion of action and not of believe. The performance of this

kind of religion, or lifestyle, triggers traditions, rituals, and a culture that are under the guidance/umbrella of this one religion, called Judaism.

For this matter Marx (1843) suggests: “The political emancipation of the Jew, the Christian, or the religious man generally is the emancipation of the state from Judaism, from Christianity, from religion in general. In a form and manner corresponding to its nature, the state as such emancipates itself from religion by emancipating itself from the state religion, that is by recognising no religion and recognising itself simply as the state” (: 1153).

Beller (2000) shares his view on the "modern" society, being " a society not designed for groups such as them [the Jews], but rather for a model of the industrious citizen who was assumed to be of the dominant state religion and of unproblematic "national" (ethnic) descent. (...) The closest fit for Jews seemed, at the beginning of the modern state and society in Central Europe, to be a categorization as a religious confession. (:18).

The fact that Catholics are not included inside the national minority framework was striking me a lot in the beginning. If Jews are included in side the national minority framework, why are Catholics not included as well.

I assumed this decision being made on the base of cultural difference, as ethnical Norwegians are Protestant, but foremost lead by Christian values which both Catholics and Protestants share. Thus, if one is arguing in the line of values, thus, liberal-democratic values are often referred to as Judeo-Christian values (including constitutional state, human rights, humanism). Therefore I chose to argue for the inclusion of Jews but not Catholics based on a concept of (popular) culture, where Christian culture is seen as opposing Jewish culture, and consequently are Jews seen “as a religious group that has maintained its cultural characteristics over a long period” (Parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998)). The focus must so be on the second, namely, the culture. Thus, also the United States are build on “the cultural base of a Protestant

English *ethnie*, slavery, conquest of the native Americans and successive waves of immigration have turned it into a truly polyethnic and plural nation, yet bound by a common language, common laws, shared political symbols and a ‘secular religion’ – saluting the flag, celebrating public holidays, the cult of the Constitution and the founding fathers...” (A.D.Smith 2001: 42)

Though the Norwegian Jewish minority was granted freedom of religious expression and accepted as a religious community supported by the state no other cultural or social support was provided. Therefore it was the Jewish minorities own responsibility to educate their members and here especially their youth in cultural matters. The positive promotion and maintenance of their characteristic culture(s), education and rituals was left to them alone without much support of any official Norwegian institutions. On the other hand they engaged in acquiring their religious and cultural acceptance as in the right for pupils to resign from the subject "Christianity and Lifestyle subject" (Kristendomsundervisning) which once again became a matter between Norwegian departments and the Jewish group with the introduction of "Christianity-and religious lifestyle-subject" in 1997. Nevertheless the fact that the Jewish minority is also among this group through the discrimination and extinction this group experienced throughout WWII and due to anti-Semitism that is statistically declining and rising in waves in many European societies until today.

Before the ratification of that Convention “there has been no coordinated research on the situation of Jews, Forest Finns and Roma/Gypsies” (Initial report: 45) and therefore also some of the assumptions lying to the base of the Jewish identity definition are just based upon first meetings with national minority group representatives before after the Ratification as well as historical findings. As the Evangelical-Lutheran faith and church is still followed by the majority and still the state's religion referred to in the constitution, the Jewish community was defined as a religious minority. This, though some members first and foremost perceive themselves as a cultural or linguistic minority. Additionally to this definition the Jewish minority was defined as one of the national minorities in 1995.

The absurdity to protect Jews as a national minority generated out of the formerly presented thought.

Thus through my investigations I am not convinced that it is so absurd. The threat? of terrorism that leads whole Europe, following the path of USA, to strengthen security policies seems like a last desperate scream to protect the old order. The strategies of assimilation (Norway until the 70's), integration (big parts of Western Europe) and ignorance (France) lead nowhere but to a Europe with high walls and chaos on the inside. Project like the constitution of Europe pause because of the discussion whether underlying Christian values are acceptable, while Norwegian authorities fight for the maintenance of Christianity and Lifestyle subject, opposed to the wish of the Jewish community to be able to choose whether or not their kids shall learn 40% about Christianity. Thus, for some traditional/orthodox Jews the teaching about Jesus like G'd's son, or the use of pictures to present an image of G'd, Saints is totally opposing the concept of Judaism and can inherently be perceived as offence or even blasphemy. All the time I wondered about how I should refer to that "it can be questionable if authorities have the duty to set burdensome action for a numerical insignificant group (Principle of proportionality) and has to have a non-dominant position in society" (Parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998) (see Chapter 3.3). Both the examples of policies and the definition of minority seem to me like attempt to keep the 'old order' until a certain degree, and both are so helpless against the opposing systems of power, mass engagement and nationalistic and ideological movements as to the fact that diversity means to give up characteristics of national identity that derogate from more than citizenship.

Effects of the national minority protection

The increased awareness about multicultural history was shown on several occasions. The Jewish minority definition was partly revised from "Jews are first and foremost a

religious minority. (...), the group has also cultural characteristics that it has kept through its long history in Norway” to “Jews *regard themselves* as a religious minority, but also as a cultural and linguistic minority”[my highlights] in White Paper no 15 (2000-2001) in the Parliamentary bill no 80 (1997-1998) on the ratification. This can most clearly be counted as a positive effect of actually hearing and listening to the minority group’s self understanding, which is one of the arguments for a policy of ‘recognition’. Thus, special recognition that resulted among others in the redistribution of Jewish property, the restitution-case, started the same year. This resulted in a statement which presents the first step to reconciliation (conflict mediation after Transcend method): “The government regrets the Norwegianisation policy which all the national minorities have been subjected to, and apologizes on behalf of the state for the way in which the minorities have been treated” (Framework Convention: 3). Though further developments and ongoing political discourse doubt the necessity and also especially the fruitfulness of such group-specific rights it definitively changed the popular concept of nation and national belonging to a point that a contemporary multiculturalism discourse is at all possible today. Projects like Complexity, Diversity and Inter-religious dialogue in Norway blossom in the social and human sciences and related subjects.

A newsletter is sent out frequently. From 2005 the Ministry of Integration and Diversity was added to focus on politics by and with and not for immigrants" while the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development rests in charge of national minorities.

Concluding, the Jewish communities were against their labelling as "Others", a group of people severely culturally different from mainstream society. Thus, they concluded that they needed the support that was given through their acceptance as a national minority. The report summarizes their claims on economical support to provide religious, linguistic and cultural education to their members. Additionally their incapability to edit informational resources requested mainly due to the lack of information material given in "Christianity and Lifestyle subject" by schools. This lack

of economical support is now partly given through under the conducts of Jewish national minority protection. Nevertheless, as also the statement by the representatives of the Jewish communities clarifies, us the concept of Norwegian Jewish self understanding not directly met through their definition as a religious minority. They don't have differing national costumes, hymns, rituals than the rest of society but they do practice a religion that includes certain set of cultural, linguistic and ritual differences not exactly met by a national minority definition.

5. Chapter five: Conclusion

5.1.1 Arguments for and against the protection of Jews as a national minority

Arguments for the protection of Jews as a national minority is to certain extend that the protection of Jews inside of the 'Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities' given seems to be the only way to reach protect the minority's cultural characteristics.

For the discussion of some actual effects and changes see 4.1.6

"A group of people with ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious characteristics that makes them differ to an essential degree from the rest of the population" (Parliamentary bill no. 80 (1997-1998) 3.3.1). Especially the Table 4 gives an idea of how closely and privately those matters are. Some perform Hanukka with Christmas presents, some without. Some don't perform this holiday at all, and most do parts. The Jewish minority has a distinct religious identity but here comes the question: Why are Catholics not part of the national minority framework? The best answer I could get was by one (anonymous) representative in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development: "I don't think anybody ever thought about that...they are ethnically Norwegian".

'Recognition' and 'Non-discrimination'

So to say, by means of recognition, or positive discrimination as some might call it, the authorities achieve a situation where minority's can be protected. Their characteristics are summarized under the umbrella of a collective identity and rights are given by means of belonging to this group. Some might suggest that Recognition always results

in that that some identities are given more weight than others. Perhaps some identities are given more weight than others by most citizens, or are suffering from a larger degree of marginalization and discrimination, but it still remains likely that a great number of the expressive needs of individual members of society cannot be addressed by the State. According to 'non-discrimination', the negative stereotypes and internalized images of inferiority are sought changed by ending the cultural monopoly of the dominant group in the State (Bendiksby 1999:121). Bendiksby takes up an argument of Gerald Doppelt (1998) stating that "a genuinely liberal-democratic societal culture, or a set of such cultures, must foster a *universal identity* among its members based upon respect for common human dignity, and for all persons' individuality as people with more particular cultures and identities (Doppelt 1998: 246)[emphasis in the original] This and the following argument that recognition ties the enjoyment of polyethnic rights to membership in particular groups are urging a different approach towards minority policies, based on the inclusion of multiethnic elements in one state.

Therefore a definition of a nation by civic elements would be more inclusive and open for making it more accessible to citizens with another cultural, linguistic and religious background. "What best meets the needs of minority groups is a clear and distinct national identity which stands over and above the specific cultural traits of all the groups in the society in question" (Miller 2000:35)

Education is as earlier mentioned an important matter in this discussion by means of formation as maintenance of a state and its structure.

"The Government considers it a goal to ensure, as far as possible, that the needs of minority groups are met within the framework of the general policy, for instance by adapting general schemes that also meet the needs of national minorities. However, the Government recognizes that some minority needs can only be met by means of special measures designed for these groups as a community, for instance in the media and

education sectors”(Initial report: 3). The survey asked about whether or not Norwegian Jews would like to send their kids (be sent) to a Jewish dayschool?

Table 4.1: Gender * Do you want a Jewish Private Day school?

Gender	Private Day school		
	Yes	No	unsure
Man	21,4% (25)	50,4% (59)	28,2% (33)
Woman	16,2% (26)	55,3% (89)	28,6% (46)

Therefore a definition of a nation by civic elements would be more inclusive and open for making it more accessible to citizens with another cultural, linguistic and religious background. “What best meets the needs of minority groups is a clear and distinct national identity which stands over and above the specific cultural traits of all the groups in the society in question” (Miller 2000:35)

6. Critical discourse on group marking – does it do multicultural society any good?

An element in the conclusion of this thesis must definitively be Ernest Gellner who in his last writing before his death, 'Nationalism' (1997), highlights that:

“Nationalists and others tend to assume that the state is a universal institution of human society. (...) But in fact, states are not universal (...) the problem of nationalism in the main arises only in a world in which states are taken for granted and required, (...) It is simply not the case that, at all times and in all places, men wanted the boundaries of social units and of cultures to converge, or put it in a manner closer to their own style, that they wanted to be among their own kind, excluding ‘others’”

Ernest Gellner(1997): 6ff

The fact that Norway included the Jewish minority, and for that matter also all the others, gives the basis for a clear conclusion that Christian popular culture is guiding Norwegian politics. Thus, I am deducing the relevance of this thesis by the fact that the minority's official definition, by means of recognition through a Convention, has an effect on the way this minority group is perceived by the public. The concept of nation in Norway is pertained to a distinct popular culture; distinct in a way that assimilation into it is made impossible and as it seems also unwanted. The argumentation has to be as follows. First, the decision to name those highly integrated and long time settled, ethnical, linguistic and even religious groups as 'minorities' and second to further exclude them of the concept of a common Norwegian nation- and peoplehood by creating a category of themselves namely the 'national minority' category shows that clearly. The fact that the ratification of the Framework Convention is and that the implementation of rules and norms connected to that is built upon the wish to protect them of discrimination and extinction does not help the case. Nevertheless, the decision gives the conscious reader of this paper an idea of the still persistent dominance of the state religion being on place two of the Norwegian

Constitution. This argument is most obviously supported by the fact that Jews, a religious group, with a definition of religion, based on life style, clearly opposing the concept of Christianity, based on belief, are inside the Norwegian national minority framework.

The Norwegian definition of five national minorities chose elements like culture, ethnicity, tradition, history, lifestyle and religion - all elements of the concept of nation- to differentiate between the majority and the minority. In order to decide which group shall and which group shouldn't be included, authorities based their definitions in international law, here especially the UN Convention on Civil Rights, Council of Europe protocols and various other documents. The reason is the 'Convention on the Protection of National Minority's lack of an actual national minority definition. The following refers to "association with a national minority" in the non-discrimination clause provided for in Article 14. Recommendation 285 (1961) proposing a phrasing for the draft article on the protection of national minorities:

"Persons belonging to a national minority shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, and as far as compatible with public order, to enjoy their own culture, to use their own language, to establish their schools and receive teaching in the language of their choice or to profess and practise their own religion." (ETS no.157, explanatory report: 1) The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage. (Framework Convention: Article 5). "The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media."(ibid: Article 6) Further, "the Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the

culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority."(ibid: Article 12).

This is an interesting point for the analysis. What means appropriate conditions especially when seen in relation to matters of education, language, religion and other elements of public culture? The idea is clearly to create policies so a diverse society can blossom.

To manage cultural cohesion and social inclusion we have to be “observant both when it comes to actions and the use of symbols” (Barth 1994: 192). Modood (1998) reminds us that one has to pay attention to not define groups where there maybe are none. Moreover his argument that “a reactive pride identity can generate new cultural practices or revive old ones” (Modood: 386) is a reason why uttermost attention has to be shown to the presentation of ‘common sense’ and we will most simply have to sit back and revise our concept of nation as a fixed community with one national origin is my opinion.

Modood suggests a theory of multiculturalism in which we respect and recognise people’s sense of belonging, regardless of whether that identity is a context of choice or not” (ibid.:390). Bendiksby takes up an argument of Gerald Doppelt (1998) stating that “a genuinely liberal-democratic societal culture, or a set of such cultures, must foster a *universal identity* among its members based upon respect for common human dignity, and for all persons' individuality as people with more particular cultures and identities” (Doppelt 1998: 246)[emphasis in the original]. The first step towards a peaceful society of equally accepted citizens is truly to excuse for mistakes that have been made and to suggest a new mode of conduct “both within their own group and in community with the rest of society.” (Initial report:3)

While walking in the streets of Norway and teaching myself both the national language, Norwegian, being engaged in organizations and labour, I once had a silent thought, quite innocent actually. The sentence written down on a grey November day,

where the clouds hang as deep so to feel the Vikings' fear of the sky falling on their head inherently, was: *"In Norway the more silent is the more powerful"* (Scheer 2004).

The Norwegian moral concept of society and common sense is still built upon a very Protestant ideology of keeping the private in private. Thus the public sphere has to be severely structured and is therefore guided by means of conformity, purity and especially not diversity. The creation of a national minority category in the year 1995, as an in my opinion first handed reaction to the enormous changes in Yugoslavia and the first time enlarged EU; a project that does not support the quest for enabling a diverse society to blossom. In fact, it could even be looked upon as an action taken to control diversity to maintain the nation-state's existence in the current geographical areas. Those minority policies actually focus on the accreditation of diversity's existence by giving economical support top down. Those concepts inherent in the ideology of Puritanism are, and I regret that I have to take that conclusion, still manifest in Norwegian popular culture, and thus also policy making. To start with the creation of a society where all citizens have a place for their civic identity, with full rights and obligations, and a place for their ethnic identity, with all their culture, languages, music, religion and other spheres of conduct, would be a different project. If not revised in its underlying elements of nation, the development of Norway towards a multicultural society based on diversity is, if, a wishful thinking, thus a project deemed to failure. The Norwegian Convention's legal interpretation to include citizenship as a demand on the eligibility for national minority protection supports the argument for exclusiveness of Norwegian authorities' national identity definition. "Nevertheless, in case of the Framework Convention, citizenship is looked upon as being of current interest for the national element in the protection of national minorities, see below." (Parliamentary bill no.80, 3.3.1) This is so as the protection of national minorities not as such but in their function of being 'cultural' citizens of the current state makes them eligible. Bauböck suggests that "although individuals are recognized in their singularity in the sphere of informal and intimate relations, they are at the same time deprived of important public aspects of their identity." Where Bauböck uses the example of housewives that are deprived of social recognition by

their fellow citizens and fellow employees, I want to put national minorities deprived of social recognition in their Norwegian national history, culture, and ethnicity. Like that Sami used to have their place in the Norwegian National Gallery, as I heard, but now there is a little corner left, the rest is at the Sami museum. Instead of being part of the national gallery they get a special cultural centre, something exotic, which might be nice, but in my opinion not uniting.

The need for the Jewish community is easier access to kosher meat, non-obligatory KRL, and the support of cultural activities.

*Table 4.2: Keep Kosher ? * When you eat outside your home, which way do you follow?*

		When outside, which ways do you follow?				Total
		Just ritually prepared (slaughtered) meat	Just vegetarian	Meat, but no pork	All meat incl. Pork	
Keep kosher?	Yes	40,3% (25)	27,4%(17)	25,8% (16)	6,5% (4)	100% (62)
	Yes, partly	8,7% (4)	(11)	54,3% (25)	13% (6)	100% (46)
	No	0 %	1,1% (2)	51,7% (92)	47,2% (84)	100%

						(178)
Total		10,1% (29)	10,5% (30)	46,5% (133)	32,9% (94)	100%(286)

Christianity and lifestyle subject - Cultural activities & Education

Many discussions have been going on about that subject. Very clear needs were presented by the representatives of the Jewish community, to make this subject a free subject (with the ability to choose whether or not children should attend it). Thus, it after having changed it so that it should include just 40% Christianity, the rest ethics and other religions, taught by a normal teacher the authorities decided that it is not going against the law.

Sechitah²⁰

If Jewish lifestyle should be protected - they need to have kosher food supply. Thus, Sechitah is still forbidden, the import of meat products very strict which makes people have to drive to Sweden, or even Israel to get meat, and putting them in an illegal situation because of meat-import is illegal after Norwegian law, but eating non-kosher meat is forbidden by Jewish law.

Thus I have analysed eating kosher at home and the habit of eating outside in a cross tabulation. The analysis shows that 25, 6% eat completely or partly kosher. Of those 49% (!) just eat kosher meat. This number should be well respected following the principle of proportionality in the Parliamentary report no 80 (see also Chapter 2.4.2).

By defining religion in the way of belief, one could call that in a Christian way, “the public sphere is [then] governed by norms which appear to be universal and culturally neutral, but which in fact reflect the cultural values of the dominant social categories”

²⁰ Hebrew: the ritual slaughtering

(Miller 2000: 63) which Levin calls this for “model monopoly” (Levin 1994, 2005 [personal meeting 1]).

Several conceptualizing efforts have been made to explain and so frame the concept of Jewish identity in Norway and the applicability of this understanding on the Framework Convention’s criteria. To show the actual distribution inside the Jewish community that can help explaining the concept of Norwegian Jewish identity was a minor challenge. Though, one of the main difficulties was to position this Jewish self understanding/various self understandings inside the Norwegian national minority concept.

The theoretical discussion here has to focus on why there is a need for the authorities to define Jews as a national minority to be able to support them. One argument is an underlying idea about the Norwegian homogenous, Christian society. The fact that all the supported minority groups are being a country with

”Control of education and the mass media is material in this respect – as communicators of a myth-symbol complex and identity shaping horizons” (Bakke 1995: 25)

Several debates and policies on national minority issues are reflected in an increasing amount of articles and commentaries that run through the media. The internet version of Aftenposten, one of the main Norwegian newspapers published an article about a group of pupils that from next semester are supposed to learn about national minorities (Aftenposten1 2005). This is due to policies following the Ratification of the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National minorities’, shortly mentioned above (on ETS no.157 see also Chapter 1.3.2, Chapter 2, 3, 5 and 6). On the basis of such educational effects I want to argue in the words of Ernest Gellner (1964) and shed light to the fact that "Educational system and its medium of instruction do make a homeland" (: 58).

Therefore the 'Christianity and lifestyle subject' in school is a matter where such considerations have to result in political action. I suggest that the subject is parted in two: 50% of the time shall be focused on comparative "research", which anyhow is needed in school, on common elements in religious and lifestyle communities and their origin including teaching on ethics. For the other 50% the class shall be separated into groups, where they can deepen their understanding 1) about their own religion, which shall be taught by a religion or lifestyle representative and can 2) for the matter of progressivism be attended by pupils of all different religions- and lifestyles. So, the pupils and their parents can evaluate whether or not the child shall get a deeper knowledge about own religion or can take part in others. Like that the important resource of parental guidance can be included "Additionally are parents often a resource that can be used." (Aftenposten 2005:2) Very important is how one is recognized and seen. One essential element, especially in the educational sector, is definitively history raising us to attain a common sense on values and opinions about how Gesellschaft is looked upon and defined whom Gemeinschaft includes and excludes. "The essence is whether there are certain values, institutions and historical traditions that are shared by a core area. A history can always be presented in a way that underlines the things we have in common, while toning down the rest" (Bakke 1995:23)

The first step towards a peaceful society of equally accepted citizens is truly to excuse for mistakes that have been made and to suggest a new mode of conduct "both within their own group and in community with the rest of society." (Initial report: 3)

Especially in the 90's, mainly due to developments in the former Soviet Union, researchers confronted themselves with the question of multiculturalism. This can be seen as a continuation of the discourse of nationalism and its effects on state formations and inner national conflict. In the last 10 years also the developments inside the European Union, its enlargement and the task of one shared European identity got a widely discussed matter. One Canadian researcher named Will Kymlicka is quoted regularly in relation to ethnicity and group rights. Kymlicka argues that

promotion of cultural diversity through the introduction of minority rights would be beneficial to the majority as well as to the minorities (Kymlicka 1995: 121-123).

“The report discusses ways of ensuring equal conditions for participation in society and the preservation of language, culture and cultural identity, and describes official plans for further work in this field. Government policy is based on the principle that cultural plurality is positive. Everyone living in Norway, regardless of their background, shall have genuinely equal opportunities, equal rights and equal obligations to participate in society and make use of their resources. Racism and discrimination are contrary to our fundamental values and must be combated actively. In its report to the Parliament, the Government also states that it will seek to promote a society that fosters the conditions necessary to enable persons belonging to minorities to express, maintain and develop their identity” (Initial report :2-3)

Referring to the example given above I most certainly agree with the positive effects of the resources given to the minority group by the state after possessing national minority status. One critic would be that this can lead to manifest (further) differences between the minority group and society through rendering the public conscious of the differences by making them part of the school curriculum (Aftenposten 2005). Thus another convincing argument is that multiculturalism is to be seen, cultural differences are to be promoted in order to make people aware and have a positive perception of diversity in society. This is mainly the case when information available on the group is missing or imperfect. The latter, the interdepartmental report mentions among the Jewish minority needs, due to lacking information material provided to official institutions (schools, etc..) and general public. Another critic is that such group specific recognition has encouraged new immigrants to bind together, very often across ethnic lines, to form religious communities and institutions (Bowlby 2003: 45). And thus he is against recognition on an ethnical or other group specific basis. This especially because he believes that group specific rights enforces group building apart from mainstream society. Opposed to this stands another researcher greatly recognized for his book "ethnic boundaries" (1969).

Ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories (Barth 1994: 10).

My critical conclusion is that the multicultural policies in Norway from the 90's up to today enforced the building and maintaining of minority cultures. And others like Hiebert (2003) go as far as such policies enforce the process that minority enclaves are at all emerging. Bowlby (2003) doubts the state's intention to support a diverse society when stating that "official multiculturalism is fundamentally about creating a coherent and prosperous society by incorporating diversity as legitimate" just to conclude that "this typifies a kind of assimilation on slow motion". (Bowlby: 46) While I want to present my concern about pluralism in Sander's words:

"Pluralism is acknowledging the existence of other axioms and values (...) and accepting that these life ways can contribute constructively to the consensus of a heterogeneous community. (Sander and Davies, 1990: 253)

The power of definition is a matter that a democracy after my opinion can hardly handle. Who decides who we are, is still defined after majority rule.²¹

²¹ Anton Steen (STV)

røde tråd: funksjonsdyktig utenfor store konflikter og utfordringer.

viktig skille.

1) det multikulturelle at det skal være mangfold er sentralt, kultur, religion, ... helt sentralt at det er en del av et åpent liberalt samfunn

H") hva da med deltaelse i storsamfunnet. familie: motarbeide at kvinner kunne ta utdanning.

Privat: innretter seg, bringe med seg inn bagage.2) legge til rette for en form av assimilering --> segmentert assimilering: alle skal ikke bli norske. segmentert norsk: utdanning, arbeid, jobb, anti diskriminering. tiltak - stimulere: f.eks, utdannings godkjenning

‘The Others’ are on the inside and ‘the Us’ supports and controls them. We, who are arguing for universal identity are both ‘the Others’ and ‘the Us’, but who is legitimate to belong to ‘the Us’ is hard to grab.

Basic protection will just postpone the greater question of how to integrate and create a society that we are able to feel everybody is part of this ‘Us’. And to use the word of Atilla Lajos: " Nobody can afford to allow the proper performance of the month of Ramadan. And as long as you can not see a really multicultural society, where everybody performs its culture, multiculturalism means a dish on the corner, an other colour of ethnicity, another religious group that performs its rituals to or among the extend allowed by the commonly agreed modes of conduct." (Lajos 2005 [voksenåsen])

Though like Atilla Lajos claimed, to create diversity is changing the common identity, ethnicity. To include diversity in Sweden would mean to arrange a society parlt after the 12 % that are not protestant. He this doesn't see bog chances for multiculturalism, little chance for assimilation and on the long run the need of specific group rights.

In the light of the formerly fragmentary presented multicultural theory the wide range of possible multicultural policies triggered my interest in this topic. The concept of ‘recognition’ were the state gives explicit recognition to the particular cultural identities of the citizens, and ‘non-discrimination’ that requires that the state is ‘neutral’ when it comes to the particular cultural identities of the citizens are already two outer parts, while non-interference suggests that the state is ‘blind’ to multicultural difference in regards to policy making.

The latter two concepts doubt that affirmative action, meaning the support of group-specific rights, guides a society to more tolerance and less ethnic segregation. Two matters are of central concern to that thesis: First, my intention is to draw a case that shows the need to investigate in depth before labeling an ‘Other’, be that a nation, an

ethnic group or one human, and second, from a political standpoint I hope to increase the consciousness about that taking cultural diversity into account not only supports diversity but opposes (reconciles) discrimination and can even enforce the creation of ethnical boundaries where they didn't exist despite good intentions. And to finish I want to use the words of my father "Good and bad intentions can be worse than to not have done nothing at all". This quoting has to be seen in the concept of Jewish religion that is a religion of action and every action has three parts, knowing how, the intention to do so and the actual act. Many Mizwot²² start by having the intention to do it, and somebody that lives all his life in the intention to do everything the best he can, he shall be forgiven and accepted.

²² The actual doing of the commandments

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