

# Integration and language education in Norwegian immigration policy documents 1980–2016

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*During the last decade, Norway has had one of the fastest growing populations in Europe, due to labor immigration and to an increasing number of asylum seekers. More than 16% of the population now has an immigrant family background. In 2015, an agreement across party lines tightened the asylum rules, and Norway got its first Minister dedicated only to immigration and integration. A new immigration policy was introduced to 'ensure the Norwegian welfare state' as the Minister expressed herself. The immigrants' own responsibilities 'to get integrated' are stressed, and from 2016 a certain level of competence in Norwegian and knowledge about Norway are required to be granted residence permit. On the backdrop of these recent changes, the article analyzes six white papers on immigration policy 1980–2016. In focus are changes in the understandings of 'integration' and how 'integration' and language educational policy for adults, kindergarten, and compulsory school are dealt with. The analysis shows that a short-term perspective on integration is taken in the white papers published in 1980, 1988 and 2016, while the three policy documents in between are concerned with long-term integration. The 2016 document distinguishes itself from the other because integration as a two-way process is seldom commented upon. All the papers stress the importance of competence in Norwegian while discussions of mother tongue teaching are most frequently mentioned in 1980. Documents which center on long-term integration stress words like 'inclusion', 'multicultural Norway' and 'diversity'.*

**Keywords:** integration, language education policy, mother tongue teaching, bilingualism, asylum seekers

## 1 Introduction

The first Norwegian Minister of Immigration and Integration was appointed in December 2015<sup>1</sup>. The context was the rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers and agreements across party lines to tighten the asylum rules: the Asylum agreement (*Asylforliket*) and the Integration agreement (*Integreringsforliket*)<sup>2</sup>. Two weeks after the appointment, the new Minister, Sylvi Listhaug (Progress Party), presented a consultation draft on changes in the Immigration Act, introducing

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ISSN: 1457-9863

Publisher: Centre for Applied Language Studies

University of Jyväskylä

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<http://apples.jyu.fi>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17011/apples/urn.201712104586>

restrictions in several areas (Ministry of Justice and Public Security [JD], 2015). In a newspaper interview, the Minister stated that “no one could expect to be carried to Norway in a golden chair” (*En kan ikke bli båret på gullstol inn i Norge*, Haugan, 2015). With the shocking pictures showing consequences of the dangerous refugee routes across the Mediterranean in mind, this characterization was strongly opposed by other politicians, the media and the public. In a follow-up interview, the Minister admitted that the expression was put to extremes. However, she demanded her right to speak frankly in order to make her point clear. The public discussion should be about the immigrants’ own contributions to get integrated, she emphasized (Wedén et al., 2015). According to the Minister, both the acquisition of Norwegian and the immigrants’ own responsibility for language learning are central parts of these required contributions.

‘Integration’ has been an important concept in Norwegian immigration policy since the 1980s. Although the term is frequently used in political discourse, as well as in studies of education (e.g. Engen, 1995a, 1995b, 2010), work life and social policy (e.g. Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011), it is nevertheless considered a vague concept. Brochmann et al. (2017, pp. 165–166) characterize its use as both unclear and controversial. Historically they claim that the term was welcomed in Norwegian immigration policies in the early 1980s as a contrast to the negative associations connected with the former assimilationist policy. The use of ‘integration’ signaled a new understanding of the relation between majority and minority. The minority should not be put under pressure to become like the majority, instead the minorities’ roots and identities should be accepted, and the policy should be based on the needs of different groups.

In 2015, Minister Listhaug’s ways of using the word ‘integration’ in the media sent other signals, not only because of her rhetoric, but also because of her one-sided emphasis on the immigrant’s own responsibilities. During the spring of 2016, the Government presented one white paper on immigration policy (JD, 2016a) and one white paper on adult’s learning (KD, 2016)<sup>3</sup> to Parliament.

In this article I will analyze six white papers representing the Norwegian immigration policy discourse in the period 1980–2016. My focus will be on language policy issues as part of integration policy. To contextualize the analysis, I will start with a short historical presentation of immigration to Norway and then look at how the concept ‘integration’ is used in research on language education.

## 2 Norway as a country of immigration

In January 2016, 5.2 million were registered as residents in Norway. Of these 16.3% had an immigrant family background, representing around 220 different countries, with the largest groups coming from Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Pakistan, Iraq and Somalia (Statistics Norway, 2016). For a long time, more people moved from Norway than to the country. The turning point was in 1967 when male immigrants from Southern Europe, Turkey, Morocco, India and Pakistan were recruited by Norwegian companies (Brochmann, 2003). In 1975, the politicians introduced a halt to immigration, with the reception of family members and refugees as the main exceptions. The halt was explained by the need to put more effort on integration issues like housing, employment and education (KAD<sup>4</sup>, 1980). Around 1980, groups of boat refugees from Vietnam

were welcomed. They had been rescued by Norwegian merchant ships and had lived in refugee camps in the Philippines before coming to Norway as parts of UNHCR's quota program.

From 1985, the number of asylum seekers increased rapidly. People from countries like Iran, Chile, and Sri Lanka found their way to Norway to apply for status as refugees. Soon new discussions on immigration policy emerged. One of the questions was the need to find the right balance between the number of asylum seekers and the number of refugees from the quota system. Another issue was the establishment of The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) which was to be responsible for the establishing and the running of reception centers for asylum seekers (KAD, 1988).

Around 5% of people living in Norway had an immigrant background in 1995 (Statistics Norway, 1996). A few years earlier, in 1989, the share was around 3%. The main groups of asylum seekers in the early 1990s came from former Yugoslavia. In course of three years, 11 000 fleeing from Bosnia sought protection in Norway (Brochmann, 2003). In 1995, the largest immigrant groups outside Western Europe and North America were from Pakistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iran, former Yugoslavia, Turkey and Chile. When Parliament in 1997 again was invited to discuss immigration policy, regulation of immigration for the first time was not the main issue. On the agenda were the challenges and possibilities of diversity (KAD, 1997). Also two following white papers focused on multiculturalism and diversity (KRD<sup>5</sup>, 2004; BLI<sup>6</sup>, 2012).

Although Norway is not a member of the European Union, the country has been a member of the European Economic Area since 1994 and the Schengen agreement since 2001. Thus, the expansion of the EU to Eastern Europe also affected Norway. During the last decade, Norway has had one of the largest growing populations in Europe. The number of labor immigrants almost doubled from 2003 to 2013, workers from Poland, Lithuania and Sweden being the largest groups (Andreassen, Dzamarija & Slaastad, 2013). The last five years, the net labor migration has fallen, while the influx of refugees has increased. In 2016 around 20% of immigrants registered as residents in Norway are refugees. The fastest growing group is immigrants from Syria - increasing from 5 400 in January 2015 to 9 700 in January 2016 (Statistics Norway, 2016). Immigrants and refugees are settled in all parts of Norway, although around 40% live in the capital and its surroundings. Asylum seekers are not included in this statistics, but are still carefully counted (UDI, 2016a). Like several other Western European countries, Norway in 2015 experienced a large increase in the number of asylum seekers. The years before, around 12 000 had applied for asylum each year. In 2015 the total number was 31 145 - most came from Syria (10 500), Afghanistan (7 000) and Eritrea (2 900). One third of the asylum seekers were younger than 18. Around half of these (5 300) were unaccompanied minors, mostly from Afghanistan. In 2014 the corresponding number was 1 204.

During 2016, the official statistics documented that the new immigration policy agreed upon across the party lines in 2015 had been very efficient. Only 2 526 asylum seekers were registered until the end of September 2016. The corresponding figures in 2015 were 13 269 with 16 825 asylum seekers crossing the Norwegian borders in October and November (UDI, 2016 b, c). The total number for 2016 was only 3 460 (UDI, 2017). Not since 1997 have so few sought asylum as this year (JD, 2016b).

The consultation draft of December 2015 suggested amendments to strengthen the border control and to introduce a stricter asylum policy. In a

press release after the decisions in Parliament in June 2016, the ministry described the amendments as a ‘necessary tightening’ (JD, 2016c). The Minister herself stressed the importance of the new policy to ensure the Norwegian welfare model:

We must take a long-term approach and ensure that we have a sustainable immigration policy that safeguards our welfare model for future generations, says Listhaug. (JD, 2016c, p. 2)

Also in newspaper interviews some months earlier, the Minister made explicit references to the welfare state. In one interview she claimed that the welfare state was threatened by the large amount of asylum seekers (Tjernshaugen, 2016), and in another she stressed that immigrants must contribute before they can enjoy the benefits of the Norwegian system, an utterance which has a strong rhetorical effect in Norwegian because of the rhyme between *nyte* (enjoy) and *yte* (contribute): *De som kommer til Norge kan ikke bare nyte, de må også yte* (Suvatne, 2016).

### 3 Integration and language education policy

Both Engen (2010) and Banks (2008) refer to the nation state’s traditional assimilationist policy when they discuss minorities and the educational system. In Norway, the consequences of such a policy are well known from the Norwegianizing of the Sámi, which lasted until the 1960s. Contrary to this policy, both Engen and Banks describe processes in which ‘minority members are included without being expected to be similar to other citizens’ (Engen, 2010, p. 170), and in which schools instead are made more ‘culturally responsive to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural and language groups’ (Banks, 2008, p. 130). Engen uses ‘integration’ for this process, while Banks speaks about ‘nation-states that embrace multicultural citizenship’ (p. 132).

Baker’s (2006, p. 215) typology of bilingual education programs employs ‘assimilation’ and ‘maintenance/pluralism/enrichment’ to describe the societal and educational aims of weak and strong programs for language minority students. His typology is frequently used (e.g. Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2004; Wiley, 2015). In the Norwegian educational context, a continuum model is traditionally employed to explain different ways in which schools adapt programs to language minority students<sup>7</sup> (Engen, 1995a; Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2004). Assimilation perspectives lead to a transitional model which either uses no adaptation at all (sink-or-swim) or adaptation with temporary use of mother tongue and second language teaching (soft assimilation). On the other side of the continuum is segregation, where education of minorities is placed outside the normal school system. In between are models aiming at integration and pluralism, where schools not only adapt their educational models in a transitional period but also offers for example mother tongue teaching and set up aims of bi- or multilingualism. Such educational programs build on the acceptance of the need for long-term investment in both first and second language teaching.

According to Kaldheim et al. (2011, p. 27) the traditional way of using ‘integration’ in political discourse in Norway is, however, as short-term integration: ‘The integration policy is about how newly arrived immigrants as

soon as possible can enter work life and society, i.a. through the learning of Norwegian and participation in qualification programs, and also about what it takes of adaptation and accommodation the first years in Norway' (my translation, hereafter abbreviated MT). Kaldheim led a group which in an official Norwegian report explored integration policy on behalf of the Government. The group claimed that 'integration' should be understood in both a long-term and a short-term perspective. Short-term integration should be about the processes to ensure that newly arrived immigrants quickly can take part in society, while integration as a long-term process should be about realizing that 'attaining the goal not only is about equal opportunities, but also about equal results' (Kaldheim et al. 2011, p. 28, MT). An important dimension stressed in the report is that integration is a mutual process between majority and minority: 'Integration is a two-way process in which immigrants and the majority are both influenced by each other and develop the society' (Kaldheim et al. 2011, p. 28, MT).

In the following analyses, I will look into the language education policy towards immigrants as it is described in the official political discourse on immigration policy. I will discuss it using different perspectives on integration: the integration-assimilation dimension in language education programs, short- and long-term perspectives, and integration as a two-way process.

#### **4 Methodological approach**

In the period 1980–2016 changing Norwegian governments have presented altogether six white papers on immigration policy (table 1). As objects of analysis the white papers represent what Wiley (2015, pp. 173–174) calls 'policy-in-intention' in contrast to documents showing 'policy-in-implementation' (e.g. curriculum guidelines), or 'policy-in-experience' (e.g. students' experiences). The white papers are prepared by the ministries, but sanctioned by the Government in their Council of State meetings, and sent to Parliament with the Government's policy recommendations. The parts of the documents which will be in focus in the analysis are the parts which describe what might be called language acquisition planning (Wiley, 2015; Johnson & Ricento, 2015).

I have analyzed the texts in two ways. Five of the documents are in a searchable format. In table 2, I present results from an analysis with the use of some key concepts related to integration and language education in these documents. Then I use these results in the second part of the analysis in which I have done a close reading of excerpts from the summaries and chapters on language policies in all six white papers. I concentrate on paragraphs which describe the aims of the policy and questions concerning language policy for adults, kindergarten (0–5 years) and compulsory school (grades 1–10). In the reading, I lean on my own background knowledge as a teacher and researcher in immigrant education since 1982. All the white papers presented before 2016 I have used earlier in my professional work. But reading the newspaper interviews with the new Minister and the latest white papers triggered me to reread the earlier ones, searching for the changing understandings of integration.

The analysis resulting from the close reading of the documents will be included as part of the presentation and discussion of the policy documents and their social and historical context. The presentation is organized chronologically,

and each policy document is described with a key sentence in the subtitle presenting the document's emphasis of immigration and language education policy.

Since the data are policy texts, information on different governments which have issued them is given in table 1. In addition to the white papers listed, I will include a recent white paper on adults' learning (KD, 2016).

To find the newspaper articles quoted, I have used the Norwegian database of newspaper articles, A-tekst, and searched for articles mentioning 'Sylvi Listhaug' and 'integration' in the period December 2015-August 2016.

**Table 1.** White papers on Norwegian immigration policy 1980–2016.

Year	Norwegian title / English translation	Reference	Government (last name of prime minister / parties included)*
1980	<i>Om innvandrere i Norge</i> / On immigrants in Norway	KAD, 1980	Nordli, Ap
1988	<i>Om innvandringspolitikken</i> / On the immigration policy	KAD, 1988	Brundtland II, Ap
1997	<i>Om innvandring og det flerkulturelle Norge</i> / On immigration and multicultural Norway	KAD, 1997	Jagland, Ap
2004	<i>Mangfold gjennom inkludering og deltakelse</i> / Diversity through inclusion and participation	KRD, 2004	Bondevik II, KrF, H, V
2012	<i>En helhetlig integreringspolitikk. Mangfold og fellesskap</i> / A general integration policy: diversity and community.	BLL, 2012	Stoltenberg II, Ap, Sp, Sv
2016	<i>Fra mottak til arbeidsliv – en effektiv integreringspolitikk</i> / From reception centre to the labour market – an effective integration policy.	JD, 2016a	Solberg, H, Frp

Explanations:

\*Ap (the Labour Party), KrF (the Christian Democratic Party), H (the Conservative Party), V (the Liberal Party), Sp (the Norwegian Centre Party), SV (the Socialist Left Party), Frp (the Progress Party).

As can be seen from table 1, four of the six white papers have been presented by a Government led by a Prime minister from the Labour Party (Nordli, Brundtland, Jagland and Stoltenberg), one by a Christian Democratic Prime minister (Bondevik) and the last one by Solberg from the Conservative Party.

## 5 Exploring some key concepts

Using the traditional definition of integration policy presented by Kaldheim et al. (2011) as starting point, I searched the documents not only for their use of *integrering*<sup>8</sup> (integration), but also for the use of the Norwegian word *rask*<sup>9</sup> (rapid, soon, quick, quickly) as a token of short-time integration (cf. 'as soon as possible'). Other key words used to describe the immigration policy in the title of the white papers are also part of the search: *flerkulturell*<sup>10</sup> (multicultural), *mangfold* (diversity), and *inkludering* (inclusion). Finally, the key concepts connected to language education searched for are: *morsmål/ førstespråk* (mother tongue, first language), *to-/flerspråklig* (bi-/multilingual) and *prøve*<sup>11</sup> (test). *Prøve* is of importance in language teaching policy for adults. Lately tests are also used to decide on residence permit and citizenship.

I went through the results of the searches by using the context of each search result to delete irrelevant use<sup>12</sup>. The results are shown in table 2. The table shows the actual frequency in each document. For each key word the highest frequency across the documents is written with a bold font. The documents are of different size, thus the figures are not directly comparable. The results are used only to look for tendencies.

**Table 2.** Frequency of use of key concepts on integration in five Norwegian white papers on immigration policy.

Year of presentation	1980	1997	2004	2012	2016
<i>Number of pages in the white paper</i>	181 p	100 p	206 p	150 p	123 p
Integrering (Integration)	43	67	104	140	<b>195</b>
Rask (quick, quickly, rapid, soon)	10	12	15	39	<b>82</b>
Flerkulturell (multicultural)	0	36	<b>55</b>	44	7
Inkludering (Inclusion)	0	0	<b>206</b>	82	17
Mangfold (diversity)	3	47	<b>365</b>	164	33
Morsmål, førstespråk (Mother tongue, first language)	<b>114</b>	66	51	27	14
To-/flerspråklig (Bi-/multilingual)	11	<b>38</b>	25	<b>38</b>	14
Prøve (test for adults)	0	4	1	15	<b>30</b>

Some clear tendencies can be seen:

- 'Integration' is used in all documents, but increases during the period.
- The 2016 document is characterized by frequent use of 'rapid', 'integration', and 'test' and less use of all other key words that have been important in earlier documents.
- 'Mother tongue' is less and less used. The most frequent use was in 1980. 'First language' is only used more often than 'mother tongue' in 2012.
- 'Bi-/multilingual' is most frequently used in two policy documents with a Labour Party prime minister (1997, 2012). 'Bilingual' is more frequent than 'multilingual' until 2012.

In the next step of the analysis I will return to these results.

## 6 Changing understandings of integration

### 6.1 Equality, equal opportunities and freedom of choice (1980)

The reasons given in KAD (1980) to maintain the immigration halt from 1975 and to pursue a policy based on restrictions and control is the need to work on integration. The perspective used is integration as a short-term process. At the

same time, integration is described as a two-way process with equality, equal opportunities and freedom of choice as main principles. The individual's rights and duties are described as equal to the majority's rights and duties, and special efforts are acknowledged as necessary in a transitional period 'until the immigrants themselves can take care of their own interests' (p. 28, MT).

Table 2 showed that 'mother tongue' was most frequently used in this 1980 document. Maintenance of the mother tongue is here considered to make the integration process easier, and thus in need of support from the authorities. The immigrants' culture and language are described in connection to the principle called 'freedom of choice':

Immigrants must be able to choose the degree of attachment to Norway beyond what is necessary to function here (the principle of integration). The state does not want to demand that immigrants should become as Norwegian as possible (being assimilated). This is one of the reasons why it is important that the possibilities to maintain own language, religion, and culture are offered. At the same time, the teaching of Norwegian and about the Norwegian society should be offered. (KAD, 1980, p. 6 MT)

In all 46% of immigrant students in compulsory school received mother tongue teaching around 1980, while most students were taught Norwegian as a second language, possibly for three years (KAD, 1980, p. 94). These subjects were however not yet part of the national curriculum. Both labor immigrants, refugees and their adult family members were entitled to 240 hours free teaching of Norwegian. Since the largest group was the labor immigrants, and since it was required of them to hold a job before entering Norway, difficulties with participation in work life was not described as a problem.

## 6.2 Solidarity and respect for the immigrants' language and culture (1988)

In KAD (1988) the aims and perspectives on integration from 1980 are carried on, but with some adjustments. The principle of equality is now called 'genuine equality' (*reell likestilling*), and is explicitly linked to the welfare state's principle of solidarity. The introduction of the principle of cooperation, mutuality and tolerance between immigrants and Norwegians reflects integration as a two-way process. The principle of freedom of choice from the 1980 document is replaced by 'respect for the immigrants' language and culture'. The expression 'freedom of choice' gives wrong associations, according to the white paper, since the immigrants cannot choose to position themselves outside the Norwegian society, but have to accept Norwegian law and core values such as democracy, gender equality and children's rights. Nor can they choose not to learn Norwegian or about the Norwegian society (p. 10). The principle of respect towards the immigrants' language and culture is described in the following way:

The essence in the policy towards immigrants is that they should be able to participate in society – politically, economically and socially – without demands on cultural assimilation. (KAD, 1988, p. 49, MT)

Although the main focus of the white paper is on immigration control, the reasons given for the changes in principles of the immigration policy provide a basis for the long-term perspective on integration which is introduced in later documents.



Competence in Norwegian is considered fundamental to be able to be informed about the society and to take part in education and work life. Thus, the teaching of Norwegian should be given priority for all groups (p. 48). For adults the principle of respect for their language and culture in practical policy means possibilities to apply for funding of immigrant organizations. In compulsory schools, the new curriculum guidelines from 1987 introduced functional bilingualism as a learning goal and counted Mother tongue and Norwegian as a second language among the regular school subjects. The municipalities were required to offer mother tongue teaching if they could find teachers, and kindergartens received financial support to establish mother tongue training. The language education program promoted might be characterized as aiming at integration and pluralism.

### *6.3 To improve the teaching of Norwegian for all groups (1997)*

The white paper presented in 1997 is the first which is not focused on restrictions and control of immigration, but builds on a long-term perspective on integration. Integration is seen as a two-way process when discussing the importance of immigration for the emerging multicultural society (KAD, 1997). Equal opportunities as well as rights and duties to participate in society are stressed (p. 8). The Government wants to give special priority to work against racism and discrimination, improving the teaching of Norwegian to children, adolescents and adults, and qualifying immigrants for work life (p. 11).

Language competence is also here considered of great importance for participation in work life as well as other arenas in the society (p. 13). When it comes to improving the teaching of Norwegian to adults, qualitative changes are discussed, like organizing the courses in modules and developing tests. Each module should have a test to inform the participants on their development and to inform teachers on how to adapt the teaching. At the end of the course, a national test is introduced to give candidates documentation of their oral and written language skills (p. 54).

In the former white papers, kindergarten was not discussed as an arena for learning Norwegian. In KAD (1980), kindergarten attendance was in fact discussed as being a risk of assimilation, and it was even questioned whether the kindergarten period is the best time to learn Norwegian at all (p. 91). In KAD (1988), mother tongue support in kindergarten was seen as an effort to give equal opportunities to children with immigrant parents (p. 48). Ten years later, in KAD (1997), mother tongue training with the help of bilingual assistants is still considered important. However, kindergarten is now described also as having a particularly important function for the learning of Norwegian, and for some children – as the most important arena to develop oral Norwegian (p. 67). This is connected to the political ambition expressed by this Government of full coverage of kindergarten by the year 2000.

In table 2 we saw that ‘bi-/multilingual’ was rather frequently used in the document (‘bilingual’ with 36 occurrences, ‘multilingual’ with 2). Looking closer into how it is used, we see that ‘bilingual’ most often refers to bilingual assistance in kindergarten and to bilingual teaching as a transition to the use of Norwegian as the school language. The goal of functional bilingualism which was introduced ten years earlier is not maintained. In the new curriculum guidelines for compulsory school which were presented the same year, functional bilingualism is in fact invisible as an educational goal. In line with

this, the white paper reduces mother tongue teaching to transitional help in the learning of Norwegian – which is still the situation in 2016. Both in kindergarten and in compulsory school, the improvement of the teaching of Norwegian is the main focus. In practice this meant a replacement of the integration and pluralist model with a transitional model which concentrates on competence in Norwegian as the educational goal. At the time, however, 45% of the immigrant students still received mother tongue teaching (p. 69).

#### *6.4 The Introductory Act – to be self-supportive as soon as possible (2004)*

The white paper presented in 2004 was the first from a minority government led by the Christian Democratic Party. As in 1997, the ambition was to discuss long-term integration. This was signaled already in the title: Diversity through inclusion and participation (KRD, 2004, MT). An overall aim put forward is to work for acceptance of different ways of being Norwegian. Both integration and inclusion are described as two-way processes where adaptation and reciprocity are important. The responsibility of the majority is stressed, since the majority normally has the power to shut people out or to include them (p. 30).

The white paper also addresses welfare policy explicitly when it claims that the integration policy for immigrants arose as an extension of the welfare policy. The overall aim of making people self-supporting and integrated in work life is repeated. The year before, the Government had proposed an important policy change regarding short time integration and the teaching of Norwegian to adults, the Introduction Act (*Introduksjonsloven*, 2003). The purpose is stated in the first paragraph: ‘to increase the possibility of newly arrived immigrants to participate in work and social life and to increase their financial independence’ (MT). Two programs are regulated by the Act: the mandatory courses in Norwegian and social studies as well as a program which prepares for participation in the workforce. The programs require full time work and normally last for two years. Participation according to an individual plan is compulsory, and the participants are paid a kind of salary instead of receiving social security benefits, as was the old system. The aim of this policy is ‘that adult newly arrived immigrants as soon as possible are going to be able to undertake tasks for the good of themselves, their family and society, and support themselves and their family’ (KRD, 2004, p. 74, MT).

The importance of learning Norwegian before children enter school is stressed. Kindergarten is described as an important arena for language learning and the budget allocation which earlier was dedicated to mother tongue training is replaced by the more general ‘support to improve language understanding’. The Government also decided on developing mandatory language tests for four year olds and tests to map the competence in Norwegian for school children. In compulsory school, the gap in school results between children with immigrant background and other students is acknowledged. The consequence drawn is to underline the importance of competence in Norwegian. Although multilingualism is described as a resource several places in the document, the primary concern is to arrange for thorough teaching of Norwegian. The development of minority mother tongues is first and foremost described as the responsibilities of the homes, local language communities and the immigrant organizations (pp. 89–92).

### 6.5 All inhabitants of Norway have duties and rights (2012)

The description of integration as a long-term two-way process is also fundamental in the white paper presented in 2012 by a Minister from the Socialist Left Party in the Stoltenberg II Government. The white paper is called 'a general integration policy'. Integration is explicitly defined as a process which includes both those who live in the country and those who move to the country. The new inhabitants have to adjust to the new society and take part in work-life and social life (BLI, 2012, p. 9). The immigrants are more than in earlier policy papers included in the 'we', for example expressed in this way when describing rights and duties:

All inhabitants of Norway have duties and rights. Everybody shall have the opportunity to participate and contribute in work life and society [...] The most important aim of the Government's integration policy is to ensure that everybody who lives in Norway is able to use their resources and take part in the community (BLI, 2012, p. 7, MT)

To enhance participation in work life, the following measures are considered important: improving the teaching of Norwegian, qualifications adapted to the needs of the work force, and better use of the immigrants' competences. So far, much of this must be said to be in line with the white paper from 2016 (see below). However, in 2012 the foundation is long-term and two-way perspectives on integration. Those who already live in Norway must for example 'acknowledge and recognize that the population is changing and becoming more diverse' (BLI, 2012, p. 9, MT). While problems of immigration and of discrimination are dealt with, the Government also reminds us throughout the document of positive aspects, as in this example:

Immigrants bring economic growth and resources to Norway. The majority of immigrants in Norway work. They speak Norwegian and take part in different parts of society. The difference in living conditions between immigrants as a group and the rest of the population is less than it was ten to fifteen years ago (BLI, 2012, p. 9, MT)

When it comes to language courses for adults, the importance of competence in Norwegian for participation in society is clearly stated. The courses are extended to 600 hours for immigrants with refugee background, and at the end of the course mandatory tests in Norwegian and knowledge about the Norwegian society are introduced (cf. the increase of the use of the word *prøve* in table 2). The reason given for making the tests mandatory is society's as well as the immigrant's need to have documentation of the qualifications (p. 29). When describing the challenges of the educational system, multilingualism is seen as a resource, which also explains the frequency of the word according to table 2. Immigrants are described as persons with competence in several languages (p. 27). However, no real changes are made in the language policy to strengthen mother tongue teaching, and bilingualism is not reintroduced as a goal in compulsory school. An action taken in the policy document is a change in the Educational Act to make it possible to arrange two-year introductory classes for newly arrived students. The aim of these classes is for the students to learn Norwegian as soon as possible so that they can take part in mainstream classrooms (p. 56). Bilingual teaching might be used in this period.

A large competence development program for teachers, *Competence for diversity*, is introduced in the white paper. In this program multilingualism as a

resource, multicultural education and long-term development of the teaching of Norwegian as a second language are main topics. Here the Government follows up on an official Norwegian report on diversity in the educational system (Østberg et al., 2010).

## 6.6 Short-term integration of newly arrived immigrants with refugee background (2016)

### 6.6.1 The responsibility to get quickly integrated

In JD (2016a) the focus is on short-term integration of newly arrived immigrants with refugee background. Furthermore, the focus is on the immigrants themselves. The awareness of the importance of integration as a two-way process is almost invisible, or at least much less explicit than in the former white papers. As can be seen from table 2, ‘inclusion’, ‘diversity’, and ‘multicultural’ are less used. In this document ‘multicultural’ is only used with reference to ongoing projects and name of centers or reports which already use the term.

Table 2 also tells us that ‘integration’ and ‘quick’ are frequently used. ‘Integration’ is very often used in compounds: *integreringsmottak* (integration reception center), *integreringstilskudd* (integration grant), *integreringsarbeid* (work on integration). Although a short-time perspective on integration has been adopted, the perspective still must be characterized as unusual compared to immigration policy formed by earlier governments. It is unusual when it comes to a) not being very explicit on the two-way process of integration, b) the explicit claim that everyone shall provide for oneself and c) the repeated stressing of the tempo. The Norwegian word *rask* is for example used far more frequently in this white paper than in the others (cf. table 2). Most important is the need of rapid entrance into work life (mentioned 29 times), but also rapid learning of Norwegian is often mentioned (22 times).

When the Ministry translates the aims of integration policy from the 2016 white paper to English, the paragraph starts in this way:

The government’s basic premise is that people want to contribute. The aim of the integration policy is to introduce measures that provide incentives for participation in the workforce and in community life. The aim is that everyone that is going to live in Norway finds work or undertakes studies, and becomes a tax payer and contributing citizen. This is important for long-term development, not least in order to maintain a robust and economically sustainable welfare system. In principle, everyone shall provide for themselves and their dependants. (JD, 2016d, p. 11)

The claim that everybody should provide for themselves is also seen when it comes to the description of responsibilities. The policy documents analyzed in this article are often concerned with discussions of what kinds of responsibilities should be put on which governmental level (state or local), or which part of the administration should be responsible for different parts of the policy. This is also discussed in the 2016 document (e.g. seen in the frequent mention of integration reception center and grants), but responsibility (*ansvar*) is also frequently individualized. The immigrants are for example explicitly expected to be responsible for creating their own lives, documenting their own qualifications, learning the language, understanding what rights and duties they have, and ‘getting integrated’ in the local community.

When Minister Listhaug speaks about integration in media interviews, the focus is also usually on the immigrants themselves, as in this quote: ‘The most important factor for successful integration is that the foreigner him- or herself will be integrated’ (Haugan, 2015, MT). The willingness to learn the new language is of high importance, and the Minister argues that if the immigrants are not willing to ‘get integrated’, it must have consequences for them. She mentions the new requirements of passing tests in Norwegian and documenting knowledge about the Norwegian society to be able to apply for permanent residence as examples of policy actions that will have consequences for the individual if he/she is not willing to learn the language. In the interview the Minister refers to the tests as ‘integration tests’.

### 6.6.2 Passing of tests to be granted residence permit and citizenship

‘Integration test’ is not an expression used in the white paper. But as we have seen in table 2, the key word ‘test’ (*prøve*) in connection with adult immigrants is frequently used. The white paper elaborates on different actions taken by the Government. The amendments put forward in JD (2015; 2016e) make language issues more central to the application for permanent residence. In the white paper this follows from the argument that competence in Norwegian is considered a prerequisite to take part in education and work (JD, 2016a; 2016d). A press release presenting the new legislative amendments adopted by Parliament stressed the criteria for permanent residence as efforts to strengthen integration:

New criteria to ensure integration are being introduced for permanent residence in Norway. One requirement is that the foreign national must have been self-supporting in the preceding twelve-month period. Applicants to whom the obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition applies must also have a minimum level of spoken Norwegian and pass a test in social studies in a language they understand. (JD, 2016c, p. 3)

Norwegian language courses have been mandatory since 2005, and taking the tests has been required for applicants since 2013. Until 2016, efforts to learn Norwegian and about the Norwegian society have been considered sufficient. The new system puts demands on the individual’s competence and also requires a minimum level of competence (passing of the tests). The level set by the politicians is A1 in oral Norwegian. This refers to the basic competence level in the Common European Framework, which is defined as follows:

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

Described in such a way it is of course easy to agree that this is not an unreasonable demand on the individual’s language competence. The most important change in the immigration policy is however the introduction of a new principle: the decision to establish a system in which a certain language level and a certain knowledge level about Norway are required to apply for permanent residence. Here I should add that this in a way follows from another

decision made by the Parliament: the controversial issue of requiring competence in oral Norwegian at A2 level and passing of a test on Norwegian society and history in Norwegian (at A2 level) to apply for citizenship (JD, 2016f).

### **6.6.3 Strengthening the teaching of Norwegian on all levels**

In all 69 actions are listed by the Government in the 2016 white paper (pp. 13–15). 24 of them are related to education, four are explicitly mentioning language: develop tests to map student's language competence, demand competence in Norwegian to apply for citizenship, develop information about schools – duties and rights – in several languages, and establish curriculum guidelines in Norwegian for newly arrived upper secondary students.

Improving teacher qualification is put on the agenda, both for teaching adults (p. 63) and school children (p. 84). The teaching of Norwegian is stressed in schools as well as in kindergartens. Kindergarten is seen as an important arena for learning Norwegian, and also as an integration arena for parents with immigrant background. The possibilities for kindergarten teachers to supervise parents are mentioned as part of this, and it is said that revised guidelines for kindergarten will be more explicit on the obligation to follow up on children's second language development. A new law will demand that everyone working in kindergarten is a competent user of Norwegian. Mother tongue training in kindergarten is not mentioned at all. When 'mother tongue' is used in the white paper, it is most often when describing established programs or as part of a definition. In compulsory school linguistic minority students for example are defined as those who have mother tongues other than Norwegian (e.g. p. 82). 'Bi-/multilingualism' as a resource is mentioned twice (p. 84): as a possible resource in language teaching and in connection with the development of digital learning resources for newly arrived children.

When it comes to adults' learning, JD (2016a) refers to the white paper presented earlier the same year by the Minister of Education and Research (KD, 2016). The aims of the policy presented here are reducing the number of people who are not integrated in work life, and securing quick transition to work life for newly arrived immigrants (p. 9). Once more one of the suggested actions is to improve the teaching of Norwegian, both the quality and the effectiveness (p. 16). To do this the Government suggests special qualifications for teachers, adjustment of the regulations of the courses, and the stimulation of workplace oriented language teaching. Another political question raised is the need to find new ways to use the resources immigrants bring to Norway. As a result of this concern, a new national system for recognition of qualifications is planned.

A peculiar part of the Norwegian system has been that different groups of adult immigrants have been met with different requirements when it comes to language education. In the new policy, the differences are maintained: Refugees between 18 and 55 and their adult family members have the right and duty to participate in courses in Norwegian and social studies (600 hours). Until 2016, refugees between 55 and 67 have had the right, but not a duty to participate in the courses. Now they are obliged to participate. Labor immigrants and their family members have to participate in courses in Norwegian and social studies for 300 hours. But they do not have the right to do so, which actually means that they have to pay for the courses.

When Parliament discussed the new requirements, most parties agreed on the Government's proposals. Only the Socialist Left Party expressed counterarguments (Kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen, 2016). All parties, however, agreed on the importance of language (Norwegian) to ensure successful integration. The committee explicitly connected lack of success in language learning to possible failure in integration and warned for the consequences by referring to the high pressure such failure will put on the welfare state. 'To feel comfortable living in Norway, language competence is one of the most important requirements,' they claimed (p. 94, MT).

## 7 Summing up: Lines of development

'Integration' has been a frequently used word in the discussion on Norwegian immigration policy in the period 1980–2016. The analysis shows how the understandings of 'integration' have changed during these decades. Short-term integration is the perspective taken in 1980, 1988 and 2016, while the three policy documents in between (1997, 2004 and 2012) are concerned with long-term integration, as can be seen from the more frequent use of words like "inclusion", 'diverse' and 'multicultural'. While the latest document is concerned with the immigrant's own duties and responsibilities, the other documents are more concerned with immigration as a two-way process. One of the most striking contrasts is between the focus on the individual immigrant in 2016 and the inclusion of the immigrants in the "we" in the 2012 document. Although the need to focus on the large number of newly arrived is an important backdrop in 2016, the changes of course also have to do with political changes, from what is considered the most 'immigration friendly' party being in charge of the immigration policy in 2012 (the Socialist Left Party) to the most 'immigrant skeptical' party being in charge in 2016 (the Progress Party).

Language policy issues are important in both short-term and long-term perspectives on integration. Language competence in Norwegian is considered necessary for participation in work, society and education. This is emphasized in all the white papers. Another recurring theme is the need to improve teaching. For adults' this has been done by extending the length of the courses, by introducing new curriculum guidelines and new organizational models, by developing tests and making them mandatory, by work place involvement, and by raising the competence of teachers. The Introductory Act from 2003 marks a turning point, because language teaching and work are combined, and because participation in the program is regarded as work. A new turning point might be seen from 2016 when documented competence in Norwegian and knowledge about the Norwegian society were introduced as requirements to apply for permanent residence as well as citizenship. Discussions on how to use the adult immigrants' multilingualism is only briefly mentioned in the documents, most explicitly in 2012.

The three documents using a long-term perspective on integration (1997, 2004 and 2012) do not discuss bilingualism as a long-term educational goal or the importance of developing all languages of children growing up in Norway. Thus, a pluralistic integration model as part of the immigration policy is never really dealt with. It is also surprising that 'mother tongue' is most frequently mentioned in 1980, in one of the policy documents concerned with short-term integration. In compulsory school, bilingualism was an educational aim for only

a few years (1987–1997). Mainstreaming with the possibility of transitional use of the mother tongue and the teaching of Norwegian as a second language is the norm in all white papers since 1997. In 2016, kindergarten is seen both as an important second language learning arena and as an integration arena for the parents. The emphasis on mother tongue training in kindergarten from earlier documents is no longer visible. Principles like respect for the immigrants' language and culture which were emphasized in 1980 and 1988 later became more or less invisible. In the period between the white papers of 1988 and 1997, mother tongue instruction was however a hot political issue.

Rune Gerhardsen, a central local politician in Oslo from the Labour Party, introduced in 1991 the word *snillisme*, meaning an excessive, naive kindness<sup>13</sup>. He confronted what he labelled a naive development of the welfare state where too few demands were put on persons who received social benefits. Immigrants were one of the groups addressed. They should adapt and learn Norwegian (Gerhardsen, 1991, p. 52). Gerhardsen's way of arguing resembles the ways Minister Listhaug argues. In a retrospective interview (Bakken, 2010) Gerhardsen claims that the most important thing achieved with the book was that politicians from the Labour Party started to discuss issues that earlier only were put on the agenda by the Progress Party. While there is no explicit reference to the debate on 'snillisme' in the white paper from 1997, another parallel discussion of mother tongue teaching is referred to. It started as a media controversy between linguistic and educational researchers on one side and sociologist and social anthropologist on the other side. The controversy resulted in the first Norwegian consensus conference on an issue from the social sciences and the humanities. The conference was initiated by the The Research Council of Norway, and ended with consensus on the need of both long-term teaching of Norwegian as a second language, and mother tongue instruction. Mother tongue instruction was considered necessary when learning to read and write, when acquiring knowledge in different subject areas while learning Norwegian, but also to maintain contact with family and for the development of identity (Hyltenstam, 1996, pp. 207–208).

An official Norwegian report on diversity and education (Østberg et al., 2010) is referred to in the two latest white papers. The report underlines the importance of using multilingualism as a resource and arranging for long-term scaffolding of Norwegian as a second language. The current educational model in compulsory school is based on these recommendations. In Baker's typology it must be characterized as a soft assimilationist model.

Summing up, integration is in the period 1980–2016 seen both as a short-term and as a long-term process. Integration understood as a two-way process with mutual responsibilities is clearly expressed until the most recent document, where the new immigrants' own responsibilities are in focus. Traditionally the Nordic model of the welfare state is based on solidarity, equality and community, not on individuals providing for themselves, but on individuals being a provider and a user in different parts of life, and with an acknowledgement of special actions for groups with special needs. In an analysis on immigration and Nordic welfare policy, Djuve (2014, p. 13) observes a shift to an explicit underlining of the duties of the minority to adapt and to participate in the society. This is a development confirmed by the analysis in this article.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Solberg Government is a minority government based on the Conservative Party and the Progress Party. The Progress Party is part of the Government for the first time. It is the most immigrant skeptical party in Norway. The government is supported by the Christian Democratic Party and The Liberal Party.

<sup>2</sup> The agreement consisted of two documents: The Asylum agreement of November 19, 2015 (*Asylforliket: Tiltak for å møte flyktningkrisen*) and The Integration agreement of December 16, 2015 (*Integreringsforliket: Et felles løft for god integrering*). Six of the parties represented in Parliament signed the agreement: The two parties which form the Government (the Conservative Party and the Progress Party), the two parties that support the Government (the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party) and the two main opposition parties (the Labour Party and the Norwegian Centre Party). Only two minor opposition parties did not sign (the Socialist Left Party and the Green Party).

<sup>3</sup> KD is *Kunnskapsdepartementet*, Ministry of education and research.

<sup>4</sup> KAD is *Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet*, Ministry of local government and labor.

<sup>5</sup> KRD is *Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet*, Ministry of local governments and regions.

<sup>6</sup> BLI is *Barne-, likestillings- og integreringsdepartementet*, Ministry of children, equality and social inclusion.

<sup>7</sup> 'Language minority students' (*elever fra språklig minoriteter*) is the official Norwegian term used in the Education Act, section 2–8: 'Pupils attending the primary and lower secondary school who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami have the right to adapted education in Norwegian until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to follow the normal instruction of the school. If necessary, such pupils are also entitled to mother tongue instruction, bilingual subject teaching, or both.' The short version used is 'minority students'.

<sup>8</sup> Both '*integrering*' and the lesser used noun '*integrasjon*' are calculated.

<sup>9</sup> *rask* is used both as an adjective and as an adverb in Norwegian, both uses were included in the search.

<sup>10</sup> For *flerkulturell* I have used the search string '*flerkultur*'.

<sup>11</sup> *Prøve* is used both as a noun and as a verb in Norwegian. Here only nouns are included.

<sup>12</sup> The repeated use of the key word in the header of each page was excluded.

<sup>13</sup> *Snillisme* is a noun made by the adjective *snill* (kind) and '-isme' a form used in nominalization. Directly translated it means 'being kind'.

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Received November 8, 2016  
Revision received April 21, 2017  
Accepted June 13, 2017