THE RISE AND FALL OF IDEOLOGICAL MASS-MOVEMENTS

Organisational Change and Globalisation – the Norwegian Case

Tommy Tranvik and Per Selle

Introduction

Scandinavian politics have been characterised by high levels of institutional centralisation and state friendliness (Kuhnle and Selle 1992). It is, for instance, the state – rather than markets, religious institutions or local community associations – that has been the paramount agent of social and economic reform, most notably the development of comprehensive welfare schemes and the system of corporative economic planning (where the state is the most important participant). It is therefore tempting, especially, perhaps, for political scientists of Anglo-American origin, to conclude that, in the Scandinavian countries, there is too much trust in, and too much dependence upon, the state bureaucracy, while, at the same time, too few checks and balances limiting the scope of state power. Even if it is hard to brush off these (and similar) criticisms of “the Scandinavian polity” as misguided, they tend nevertheless to be informed by a relatively simplistic view of democracy; the so-called protective model.

According to this model, institutional centralisation and state friendliness are at odds with the notion of democracy because democracy works only when power is decentralised, when citizens are legally protected from being interfered with by the “tentacles of the state” and when everyone is free to carry out his or her own life plans as they see fit. The challenge of democracy, as viewed through the lenses of the protective model, is therefore to limit encroach the exercise of state power. In Scandinavia, however, the democratic challenge is

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2 See, for instance, Held 1996.
perceived rather differently. Institutional centralisation is not a problem, it has been reasoned, so long as there are ways for ordinary citizens to influence the exercise of state power. State friendliness, it is further argued, is the clearest manifestation of the democratisation of centralised state power: citizens view the state in a benign light because they are thoroughly plugged into – through ideological mass-movements – the running of the state (Wollebæk et al 2000). It is this social contract – high levels of institutional centralisation balanced by high levels of citizen control – that is now being eroded (Tranvik and Selle 2003).

Globalisation – a catchword, it seems, for everything that cannot be properly explained by old and tried social science theories – probably play a role in the erosion of the democratic infrastructure in the Scandinavian countries. How important the role of globalisation is, and the mechanisms by which globalisation may be undermining this infrastructure, are questions that we will leave unanswered. Rather than addressing the issue of causality (the relationship between global change and national adjustment), we will highlight the structural similarities between globalisation (as described in the social science literature), on the one hand, and political or civic participation in Scandinavia, on the other, focusing on the Norwegian experience. Our argument, in short, is that (1) globalisation is a process that has particular structural characteristics, and (2) these characteristics are giving shape to the new forms of civic participation that is now emerging in Norway (and probably also in the other Scandinavian countries). So, rather than defining globalisation in terms of increasing levels of various types of long-distance interconnectedness, we will view it primarily in terms of structural convergence: globalisation tend to impose certain ways of organising social relationships in various local contexts regardless (relatively speaking) of local contexts (but, of course, convergence is not the same as likeness: the local habitat will still determine
concrete responses to globalisation processes, thereby moulding, to some extent, the shape and strength of globalisation).

What the transformations are all about, we propose, is the attempt to design so-called flexible forms of organization. Flexible organizations can be described in terms of three key features. First, these organizations have a flat hierarchical structure, which means more direct contact between the top and bottom of the hierarchies. Second, they operate with a shorter time frame; this means that flat organizations are meant to work faster and (hopefully) better than before. The third feature is increasing centralization of power; that is, leaders are granted more authority in running the organization’s activities. The result is not only centralization within organizations or institutions, but also across scale levels, i.e. geographic centralization.

We will discuss the structural convergence hypothesis in a stepwise manner. First, we will give a short and oversimplified presentation of the traditional organisational features of Norwegian civic (and political) participation (ca. 1880-1980). Then, we will outline what we believe to be the structural characteristics of globalisation. Finally, we will discuss the new forms of civic participation (ca. 1980 till the present) in light of the convergence hypothesis, focusing on the likely democratic consequences of these new organisational features.³

³ The discussions of civil society changes in Norway are based on the following literature: Tranvik and Selle (2003); Wollebæk and Selle (2002); Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen (2000); Heitmann and Selle (1999); Selle and Øymyr (1995); Rokkan (1987); Rokkan (1970). The historical trends presented in the next section stem from a project entitled “Organizations in Hordaland” (POH), which consists of a survey of all organizational life in rural municipalities in the county of Hordaland in 1980, 1990 and 2000 (Selle and Øymyr 1995; Wollebæk and Selle 2002), and a systematization of the 1940-41 Nazi registration of all voluntary organizations (Leipart and Selle 1983). Even though the data has only been collected from one of Norway’s 19 countries, we believe the developments we discern here are valid for the remainder of the country. In 1980, 4500 organizations were registered. Each received a comprehensive questionnaire, to which approximately 2500 responded (Leipart and Selle 1984). The next registration took place in 1988 (Selle and Øymyr 1989), where information concerning organizational structure and membership was collected. In 1998/99, new data were gathered as part of the “Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project” (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). On this occasion, five of 33 local communities opted out of the project. All registered organizations received a questionnaire, to which 60 percent responded. Two other counties, Buskerud and Finnmark, were also included for 1940 and 1990. The range of different types of organization was significantly narrower in 1940 than it was in 1990 in the three regions (Selle and Øymyr 1995). Individual surveys have also concluded that differences in voluntary organization with regard to location and population density are diminishing. In 1998, the average Norwegian belonged to 1.3
Ca. 1880-1980: Associational Exceptionalism

The integrative organizational model

Contrary to most other Western European countries, Norway (and the rest of Scandinavia) for a long time did not develop a two-tiered civil society, i.e. one set of organisations on the local level, a different set on the national level, and few (if any) institutionalised channels for between-level communication. The first exceptional feature of traditional Scandinavian associationalism, therefore, was strong vertical (local-to-national) integration. Even if there always have always been some local associations that never showed much interest in joining regional and national organisations, and some national associations that lacked a dense network of regional and local chapters, this has been quite atypical. This meant that even if local and regional chapters were subordinated the central office, but the lower levels still enjoyed a great degree of autonomy, particularly on the local level. Hence, hierarchical subordination in combination with organisational decentralisation were the structural characteristics that made Scandinavian associationalism in general, and Norway’s in particular, different from what we find on the European mainland continent (and, to some extent, in North America). And, Moreover, since these vertically structured associations were membership-based, democratically governed and ideologically motivated, they were concerned with the welfare of society rather than with promoting narrow, special-interest issues. Consequently, the traditional associations – the peasant movement, the labour movement, the prohibition movement, the laymen movement, the New Norwegian organizations, and the regional differences were all but eliminated (Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen 2000). This means that individual and organizational level data point in the same direction.
movement\textsuperscript{4}, social and humanitarian movements\textsuperscript{5}, and, somewhat later, the sports movement – reached out and touched people wherever they lived, thereby turning passive subjects into full-blown citizens.

The second exceptional feature of traditional Scandinavian associationalism – a feature that is probably more pronounced in Norway than in, for instance, Sweden and Denmark – is horizontal integration: civil society organisations became an integral part of the state machinery so that the members of these organisations exercised a fair amount of indirect control over central-government decision-making processes (Kuhnle and Selle 1992, Tranvik and Selle 2003). Tight horizontal integration – what is referred to as corporative pluralism (Rokkan 1966) – must, in the Norwegian case, be explained by a rather weak state, an even weaker market, and no landed aristocracy at the time of the decisive social and political mobilisation processes, that came to shaped the outlook of the political system, were set in motion (during the nation-building and democratisation process in the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century).\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{Nation-state democracy has developed in a process by which the people are integrated into the governing of the nation by being included at the various levels in the hierarchical system, i.e. central, regional and local.} The democratic organization of the nation state is thus the stable

\textsuperscript{4} Organisations that represented the linguistic interests of the so-called counter-culture: rural groups that pitted themselves against what was regarded as the unfair supremacy of the eastern – or Oslo – establishment, and campaigned for greater local-level cultural and political autonomy.

\textsuperscript{5} Historically, the social and humanitarian movements have been among the most significant forces behind the expansion of the welfare state, a policy area where the associational engagement of women proved crucial (see Berven and Selle 2001). The political significance of voluntary welfare organizations in the development of the welfare state, especially women’s associations, however, is largely overlooked by contemporary researchers, which tend to emphasise the role that organisations played (and still plays) in typically male-dominated areas, such as farming, fishing, labour or economic policies.

\textsuperscript{6} To put this in context one has to understand that for approximately 400 years, Norway was subject to Danish rule. In 1814, Denmark, fighting on the loosing side during the Napoleonic wars, ceded Norway to Sweden, and a personal union with Sweden was declared. This union lasted for almost 90 years. In 1905, Norway gained full independence as a constitutional and hereditary monarchy.
hierarchical order: popular demands and interests are communicated from the bottom-up, while binding decisions are communicated from the top-down. In most other European countries, the justification for this hierarchical order is as follows: the center represents the modern and progressive, the periphery the more backward and primitive. For this reason, the survival of the periphery must be ensured through its subjection to the political, cultural and economic leadership of the center. Only in this way can the periphery be brought up to the developmental level of the center.

Norwegians, however, have traditionally held a slightly different view of the relationship between center and periphery. True, Norwegians have also imagined that the farther you get from the Oslo area, the further back in time you go. But, instead of going back to a primitive culture with no tomorrow, the voyage to the periphery has been interpreted as a journey back to the future: to a place where Norwegians found what is original and genuinely Norwegian (for instance, the idea of a glorious Viking past). One has to understand that for approximately 400 years, Norway was subject to Danish rule. In 1814, Denmark, fighting on the loosing side during the Napoleonic wars, ceded Norway to Sweden, and a personal union with Sweden was declared. This union lasted for almost 90 years. In 1905, Norway gained full independence as a constitutional and hereditary monarchy.

But 500 years of foreign rule had left its mark: the urban merchant and administrative centers were thought to have been “contaminated” by outside influence. The proper basis for a new national identity and culture was therefore believed to be hidden in the dimly lit rural peripheries—the parts of the country where the tentacles of alien supremacy had made little impression. This means that for Norwegians, the periphery was both primitive and modern at the same time, in the sense that a reconstructed and synthesized version of periphery
backwardness was catapulted to the apex of Norwegian nationhood. Consequently, preservation of the periphery has been seen as defense of the nation. The idea that the periphery is the cultural cradle of the nation has been manifested in, among other things, Norway’s regional and agricultural policy, the migration of Norwegians to mountains and fjords in their spare time and vacations, Norwegian skepticism regarding the European Union, anti-urbanism, and acceptance of whale and seal hunting.

The Norwegian hierarchical order has, as an outgrowth of this view, maintained three key features which are directly at odds with the structural characteristics of flexible organizations. First, the time frame has been one of historical continuity; that which is particularly Norwegian is found in the idea of the periphery’s popular traditionalism rather than the center’s avant-garde, elitist culture. Secondly, the ideological legitimacy of the periphery has lead to a relatively broad-spreading out of power; in Norway, the area around the capital has not held the dominant political, cultural and economic position that it has in, for example, Sweden and Denmark. And thirdly, in a mountainous country where the center is looked upon with suspicion, and where human dwellings are few and far between, the nurturing of intermediaries has been crucial for maintaining political unity. All this has had direct consequences for the structure of civil society.²

A traditionally weak state implied that the nation-planners in Oslo were badly in need of partners in order to build a modern industrial state that could fend for itself in a competitive international environment. The state establishment was just not strong enough to embark on such an ambitious enterprise all by itself – it did not control the necessary economic resources and manpower. Neither were there very many prospective partners around that could help

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² For an analysis of how this just as strongly has influenced the organization of state-municipal relations, see Tranvik and Selle 2004.
them in this respect. The lack of a landed aristocracy meant that the Eastern European road, nation-building based on agrarian militarism, was blocked (this, incidentally, sets Norwegian and Swedish nation-building processes apart). Also, a small and capital-impoverished domestic market meant that the Western European road, nation-building based on urban trade and commerce, was hardly a tenable alternative (Denmark followed the Western European road to a greater extent than any of the other Scandinavian countries). In Norway, therefore, the most realistic avenue was for the state establishment to join forces with the emerging mass-movements that commanded loyalty among an ever-increasing number of citizens. According to the marriage agreement, the two parties committed themselves to institutional centralisation, as the state establishment wanted, in exchange for citizen control over the centralisation process, as the mass-movements were looking for. The marriage, however, was not without its frictions and skirmishes, reaching an all-time high during the struggle over parliamentarism in the early 1880s. The state establishment was forced to give in, and a loose alliance of periphery groups – the spearheads of Norwegian associational life – gained power. And by putting one hand on the state machinery’s wheel, and a foot on the pedals, horizontal integration spelled state friendliness – the conviction that the centralised state could not do much of significance without the explicit support of “our” organisations. This conviction was underpinned by organisational autonomy, i.e. that neither the state nor the market would interfere with how the associations conducted their internal affairs. Nation-states are geographical entities that link central and peripheral areas in a common political system of governance. The center is usually the area around the capital, in which the most important political, cultural, economic, and financial institutions are located, while the periphery often consists of rural or non-urbanized areas located some distance from the center. The nation-state has therefore demonstrated a more or less clear hierarchical structure, with central bodies

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8 For discussions of various state- and nation-building strategies in Europe, see, for instance, Mann (1993); Tilly (1990 and 1975); Rokkan (1970) or Moore Jr. (1966).
and organizations at the top of the political/bureaucratic chain of governance and with regional and local peripheral bodies subject to central control. Nation-state democracy has developed in a process by which the people are integrated into the governing of the nation by being included at the various levels in the hierarchical system, i.e. central, regional and local. The democratic organization of the nation state is thus the stable hierarchical order: popular demands and interests are communicated from the bottom-up, while binding decisions are communicated from the top-down. In most other European countries, the justification for this hierarchical order is as follows: the center represents the modern and progressive, the periphery the more backward and primitive. For this reason, the survival of the periphery must be ensured through its subjection to the political, cultural and economic leadership of the center. Only in this way can the periphery be brought up to the developmental level of the center.

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So, to summarise thus far, traditional Norwegian associationalism was characterised by vertical integration across scale-levels (from the local via the regional to the national level) and by horizontal integration at all levels (civic organisations influenced decisions made by local, regional and national authorities). An important consequence of this horizontal integration – or co-optation as some will say (Dryzak et al, 2003), is that the Norwegian voluntary sector did not develop a collective identity as a moral force outside -(and partly in opposition) to the state, constituting a self understanding of being a sector of its own. But, because of the extensive contact and cooperation within a segmented state the voluntary field also became strongly segmented. Without any extensive cross-area meeting places Men Her note om at likevel ikkje oppfatta som eigen sektor – slags sektorisering av frivilligheten som gjorde avstanden til stat vanskeleg(Sivesind et al 2002). Another important consequence of this cooperation is that in Norway there is no strong tradition of sub-political groups autonomous of the state since the institutionalization of the welfare state (Grendstad et al, 2004, Dryzak et al 2003).

This system worked because of the popular movements ideological outlook that tended to induced patience and optimism: associational engagement was seen as an political investment that, if it did not pay off immediately, would carry fruits if only the members (and their elected leaders) worked and stuck around long enough and campaigned hard and long enough. Dryzak inn? lack of sub-culture In the end, public authorities would be forced to pay due attention to rightful concerns – a feeling strengthened by the associations’ relative autonomy in relation to the state and the market. Vertical and horizontal integration, moreover,

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9 The “segmented state” (see Egeber, Olsen and Sætren (1978)) is in many ways a consequence of the before mentioned “corporate pluralism”, i.e. the strong integration of different societal actors within different areas of public policy.
foreclosed widespread political marginalisation – all social groups of importance, and from all corners of the country, had a chance to make their voices heard (but, of course, the extent to which the various voices were listened to depended on the resources that the organisations controlled – or on the sympathy that they were able to mobilise in the general population).

**The Growth of Leisure Organisations and the Decline of Ideological Mass-Movements**

The organisational landscape that took shape around 1900 represented the core of Norwegian associationalism up till around 1980. In particular, the gradual emergence of a national social policy from the inter-war period onward, the reconstruction work after the Second World War and Keynesian economic planning from the end of the war to the early 1980s, contributed to the close horizontal integration between the state and the voluntary sector.

Stability and continuity notwithstanding, new trends also emerged over the latter part of this period. Here we are talking about the leisure associationalism that expanded and matured during the 1960s and the 1970s. Leisure associationalism is important because it gives a foretaste of the profound structural changes that are yet to come.

The growth of leisure associationalism is obviously conditioned by the rise of a leisure class, characterised by (a) plenty of spare time on their hands and (b) more money in their wallets than is needed to feed a hungry family. In the leisure society, therefore, “time off” – waking-hours not occupied by work – becomes a social category of its own. And during “time off”, we pay scant attention to protestant ethics: indulgence and meaningful recreation is usually the spirit of leisure. But, to begin with, filling the void of “time off” – engaging in song-, music- and sports organisations or exploring the attractions of various hobby-clubs – was viewed as an integral part of public life: a good citizen devoted some of his or her leisure time
to these new types of organisations. Especially organisations for children – financed and regulated by the state – were supposed to serve as mechanisms for socialisation and national integration. At the same time, women started joining traditionally male-dominated organisations, turning their backs on the social and humanitarian movements (Wollebæk and Selle 2004).\footnote{For an extensive analysis of women’s participation in the voluntary sector and how that changes over time, see Wollebæk and Selle (2004).} As leisure associationalism proliferated – particularly children- and youth-related organisations and the new patterns of female engagement – civil society became much more dense and more differentiated, even in quite small communities.

What seems characteristic of leisure civicness, then, are greater organisational fragmentation, \textit{and} less autonomy in relation to their general surroundings, \textit{state and less political influence towards the state.} Eller autonomi uten innverknad? Furthermore, the leisure organisations had few ties to the popular mass-movements that,\footnote{In the beginning, many of them were related to the social movements, but with great amount of autonomy. Soon however, most of them became fully independent (see Selle and Øymyr 1995).} by this time, showed clear signs of old age: Religious organisations, for instance, or the prohibition movement, stagnated and, before long, experienced severe recruitment crises and a sharp drop in organised activities. In addition, we see a strong generation effect. Those younger than below 25 years of age are turning away from the popular se-mass-movements, and those still who are left are growing increasingly older (Wollebæk and Selle 2003). Meir detaljer her? Generation effect—also supporters growing older are not that strong believers anymore.

These, and a number of other ideological mass-movements, were out of touch as the leisure society brought civic participation closer to home: Leisure, it seems, we could say, also meant “time off” from free of politics and of public duties (politics, like work, is associated with the public sphere, while leisure is closely connected to our private lives). Increasingly, organised
activities had to provide a sense of individual fulfilment, or to be able to satisfy specialised interests (as the narrowly defined hobby-clubs did), while the rather impersonal, var veldig viktige identitetsmarkører – så større endring vi ser her – long-termism of ideologically motivated engagement gradually went out of fashion. The public spirited traditional associationalism was, in other words, in the process of being replaced by the individualised, fast-beating and personalised spirit of the late 20th century society. This, in terribly simplified and condensed terms, seems to have been the state of the Norwegian civicness sphere as modern-day globalisation entered the stage.

In order to appreciate the structural resemblance between globalisation processes and organisational changes in the Norwegian voluntary sector, we must find a way to describe the basic form of globalisation. Fortunately, this work has already been done by a number of social scientists.12

The Structural Form of Globalisation

The structural form that accompanied the industrial globalisation of the 19th century was, it has been argued, hierarchical bureaucratisation (see, for instance, Wilensky 2002; Chandler 1977 or Mumford 1971). Particularly, modern communication technologies, which made it possible to monitor, direct and coordinate physical flows (goods, raw materials, manpower, hardware, etc.) and work operations from one (or a few) location(s), facilitated the rise of large-scale, hierarchical, departmentalised, rule-obeying and time-keeping organisations – in the public as well as in the private and voluntary sectors.

12 For discussions of the new characteristics of globalisation, see, for instance, Sennett (2003 and 1998); Castells (2001); Hobsbawm (2000); Wallerstein (1999); Bauman (1998) or Bourdieu (1998).
Whether or not it is, in fact, true that the hierarchical and bureaucratic form was indeed the trademark of 19th century globalisation (or if there are other (and better) candidates around), is not important in this context. But, as we have already seen, the Norwegian ideological mass-movements that grew and matured between 1880 and 1960 chose this form (or one version of it). Not only because of home-grown inventiveness, but also because it was imported from abroad (exemplified by the prohibition movement, the laymen’s movement and the labour movement), adjusted to local conditions, and, over time, it became the way of thinking, planning and performing civic participation (not least because it proved so effective in connecting large segments of society to the state institutions). The leisure associationalism, on the other hand, deviates from this structural form in the sense that the time horizon – how long you are prepared to commit yourself to civic undertakings before you expect to see results – is shortened.13 Ideologically motivated patience and optimism, it seems, is compatible with the slow-moving, hierarchical and bureaucratic mass-movements, but not necessarily with the smaller, nimbler and more informal leisure organisations. However, according to some social scientists, the shorter time horizon of leisure civicness is one of the defining features of neo-liberal, broadband globalisation. The other two are of course flatter hierarchies and centralisation of control.14

Shorter time horizon means, as indicated, that fixed relationships, roles or commitments are replaced by more temporary ones. The goal is flexibility, for instance, that work can rapidly and easily be reorganised – production processes and social relationships split apart and

13 This also to a certain extent is true concerning the new social movement organizations appearing from the late 1960’s (womens’ groups, environmental groups, peace organizations, etc.), even if these are political in character. Their network approach and ways of operating fits the new and shorter time horizon (Tranvik and Selle 2003, Grendstad et al 2004).

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put together again in new ways – if market conditions demands it. Permanence or inertia is
dangerous in a global market of instant communication, it is argued, because uncertainty and
change is the rule. And since “only the paranoid survive”, as one CEO of a successful Silicon
Valley company assures us, those who are unprepared for change – the bureaucratic and the
lacy – go belly up, while those who see change under every rock – the nimble and the fast-
moving – prosper. Flatter hierarchies means that the intermediary layers of organisational
pyramids are removed or sliced to the bone, usually referred to as down-sizing (employing
strategies such as outsourcing and subcontracting). The point is that you cannot adjust
effectively to change if there are too many layers of red tape separating the top of hierarchies
from the bottom. Instead of long and complicated chains of command, the top should, with
the help of new information and communication technologies, establish direct relationships
with those at the bottom so that orders are passed down and carried out without delay (how
the bottom respond to orders can be monitored in “real time”). Consequently – and here we
are discussing the third feature: centralisation of control – eliminating layers of bureaucracy
means that the surveillance and command powers at the top of hierarchies are strengthened
increased because the hierarchical organisations become more transparent. So, as the work
force is shifted around from one task group to the next (which, especially for highly educated
and high-tech savvy employees, may feel more exiting, fulfilling and democratic than the
drudgery of bureaucratic routines), management have (in theory and, increasingly, in practice)
the tools of “total awareness” at its disposal.

Needless to say, the structural features of neo-liberal globalisation are not defining every
aspect of modern living. There are, for instance, a number of industries that do not need to
reinvent themselves along these lines, and, if they did, they would end up completely
dysfunctional (fine restaurants, for instance, producers of “real ale” or high-end wine makers).
It is, however, fair to say that the neo-liberal model discussed here have become cognitively entrenched: when we think organisation or organisational change, we often find that some combination of shorter time horizons, flatter hierarchies and, implicitly, centralisation of control is the answer most readily on offer (partly because it was so effectively championed by the now discredited gurus of the New Economy. See, for instance, Kelly 1998).

Modernisation efforts in the public sector (desentraliseringsdiskusjonen) (New Public Management), for example, use the neo-liberal model as a standard-setting device, and it is hardly facing any real opposition (for an analysis of NPM reforms, see Christensen and Lægreid 2001).

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The ongoing developments in the voluntary sector (and within local government) must be seen in light of the modern-day globalisation and the accompanying rise of the neo-liberal New Public Management ideology. Within this program, hierarchical governance is

\(^{15}\) For an analysis of NPM reforms, see Christensen and Lægreid (2001) and Tranvik and Selle (2003).
combined with decentralization of executive work, regulation and monitoring (by establishing semi-independent agencies or directorates, and increased use of voluntary and market actors for implementation of public policies, etc.). And the instruments of governance have been adopted from private sector practices (promoted accompanied by slogans like “user participation”, “decentralization”, “pluralism”, and “individualization”). This ideology is providing the direction for the modernization push in the public sector and is changing the relationship between the state and other sectors, making it vital to understand the difference between the “old” system of cooperation between the state and other sectors, based on really founded upon close integration and mutual trust, and the new “contract culture” with more focus on competition, time-limited contracts, legal control and accountability.16

The question, then, is how entrenched are the structural features of neo-liberal globalisation in the Norwegian civic sphere? Her må inn at det er ein samarbeidsmodell som er under avvikling – u-hjelpa. Horisontal integrering ned??

Ca. 1980–2003: The decline of the democratic infrastructure

Dislocated Civicness.

Originally, and despite of the formal hierarchical-bureaucratic structure of the traditional mass-movements, the local level was the most important. It was here that most of the organizational activity took place and it was here that the mobilization potential was found. Local groups thus had autonomy within the bureaucratic system of which they were part, but, of course, local level autonomy was greater in some movements than in others. It was exactly because of this system that Norway (and partly the rest of Scandinavia) developed a

16 For an extensive discussion of this change, see Eikaas and Selle (2002).
geographically and socially integrating organizational society. Elsewhere in Europe, the organizational society was often split in two: some organizations existed only locally, while others worked only at the national level. In Norway, such a division would have been virtually unthinkable: after all, how could there be political influence unless an organization’s roots were firmly planted in the native soil from which, according to romantic notions, the nation grew; remote villages deep in the mountain valleys and fjords and along the North Sea coast?

It was this combination of ideological orientation and hierarchical integration that crosscut the center-periphery opposition that led to the two important characteristics: optimism and patience. For the organizations, optimism meant a belief that organizational participation and involvement could change society for the better, while patience meant a conviction that efforts toward social change would ultimately bear fruit in spite of periodical failure, which was to be expected. This means that the traditional mass-movements represented stable channels of communication between the political center and the peripheral local communities, and thus provided form and content to Norwegian democracy.

It is precisely this democratic infrastructure that is under increasing pressure from new, flexible organizational forms. It started around the mid 1960s when purely local organizations grew increasingly common, especially within the field of culture and recreation, as many of these had neither national nor political objectives. Gradually, therefore, the integrated local-national organizational society was challenged by the dual model. At the same time, a process of local centralization impacted on associational life. Small communities lost many of their previous functions and institutions (e.g. school, post office, local store), and improved communication infrastructures facilitated better and faster contact between small villages and...
municipal centers. Thus, organizational identity became less tied to the village community (Wollebæk and Selle 2002).

Despite these developments, the traditional organizational model did not disappear. In 1980, the vast majority of the local organizations were still part of bigger, democratic-hierarchical structures. But the model’s hegemony was starting to erode, and this transformation speeded up during the 1990s. Among the newest organizations, i.e. those established during the 1990s, only a minority was linked up to national networks (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). As a result, the role of voluntary associations as identity-creating institutions is hollowed out, and participation seems to become more random and short-term. Increasingly, volunteering takes place outside the membership institution, thus weakening the ties between the volunteer and the organization.

The changes were, on the one hand, structural and functional, in the sense that new objectives could more rationally be achieved by new means. On the other hand, there was also a cognitive shift: the view of how to organize became increasingly differentiated – several competing ways of structuring associations were made available to organizational entrepreneurs.

Here we have it, then: the individualized egalitarians. By opting for smaller and faster-moving associations that are not overtly political or rooted in traditional social solidarities, citizens are producing a civil society that reflects the features of flexibility. First, the flattening of organizational hierarchical means that the new associations are not as able to integrate across the center-periphery opposition. Between the local and the national level, the channels of communication or influence are either absent or extremely weak. Consequently,
more and more people are less and less part of the process by which the state exercises power: the organizational society is increasingly unable to bring the needs and wishes of ordinary citizens out of the local community and into the national arena. At the same time, it becomes difficult to gain popular acceptance for decisions made centrally, because support of, or opposition to, various public policies are usually ad hoc, media-driven and fragmented.

Second, a shorter time frame means that organizational activity must be tailored to the members’ particular needs or interests. This coincides with the decline of ideology: the belief that voluntary involvement can bring about social change is losing out to the idea that the individual must feel some personal fulfilment and satisfaction from his or her participation. If participation is not sufficiently suited to individual needs, the members rapidly drop out. Ideological optimism and patience are thus not resources that the flexible organizational society fosters.

Third, the shortened time frame seems to lead to increased centralization of power and professionalization. As members avoid administrative work, help must be hired in to keep up the level of activity, which means that organizations are more dependent on public or private sponsors to finance the hiring of outside expertise. But dependence on sponsors leads to a less autonomous organization, as external funding often brings with it specifications and conditions regarding how the funds are to be spent. This, in turn, means that a flexible civil society is less able to function as a political and ideological counterpart to the state and the market.17 And, of course, professionalization and more external monitoring cause

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17 As e.g. Verba et al. (1995) and Smith (1997b) have pointed out, most types of associations take political stands once their interests are involved. However, we see clear limitations to the value of the democratic involvement of purely local member benefit associations. More often than not, the issues they raise concern specific interests on the part of the associations (e.g. funding for improved training facilities, getting a hole in the road fixed) and their efforts are almost always restricted to the local level (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). By
centralization of power: ordinary members have less say in what the organization does, while the leadership has more. Even so, leadership influence is largely a result of the weak identification of the members with their organization.

Flatter hierarchies and organizational division, shorter time frames for membership and participation, and greater centralization of power and professionalization tell us something about changes in the relationship between center and periphery in Norwegian politics. If the traditional organizational society assumed the form it did as a result of the special significance of the periphery in the nation-building project, then it is also likely that the flexible associationalism’s break with traditional organizational structures is an indication that the national significance of the periphery is declining. And when the cultural position of the periphery is in decline, organizations can be scaled back and made more flexible: after all, in this situation they do not need to build up large-scale democratic-bureaucratic structures to mobilize support and to gain popular legitimacy. The political influence and legitimacy of flexible organizations depends, in other words, not dependent on their presence in the periphery, but become more dependent on the quality of full- or part-time staffers, and their ability to stage events that teases the curiosity of the mass-media. Let us dig a little bit deeper in the structure of this important transformation of our democratic infrastructure.

The contrast, the translocal and representative character of the historically dominant popular movements, have enabled local branches to address broader issues with much greater political impact on a larger scale.

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18 This development is also to be seen as changes in the relationship between state and local government. While municipal governments were previously considered progressive welfare pioneers, they are now portrayed as reactionary obstacles to improved public services. The view is that municipal governments must be poked and prodded through state control and regulation if they are to meet national welfare aims and objectives. And in the battle between state and municipality over how to spend welfare funds, local democracy seems to be the loser (See Tranvik and Selle 2004).

19 The fact that moving from center to periphery is not to the same degree understood as a journey back to the future is also supported by changes in the relationship between state and local government. While municipal governments were previously considered progressive welfare pioneers, they are now portrayed as reactionary obstacles to improved public services. The view is that municipal governments must be poked and prodded through state control and regulation if they are to meet national welfare aims and objectives. And in the battle between state and municipality over how to spend welfare funds, local democracy seems to be the loser (See Tranvik and Selle 2004).
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The Emergence of Real-Time Organisations

The weakening of vertical and horizontal integration

The civil society developments of the last 20 years represent the definitive break with the traditional mass-movement model. Broad-based membership recruitment, cross-level integration (from local to national) and organisational democracy are not the typical features that Norwegians opt for – the mass-movement model has lost most of its attraction as a cognitive model of reference. Instead, we have seen the rise of a new organisational type, what we would call the real-time organisation. The overall logic of the real-time organisation is the rapid satisfaction of immediately felt needs and wishes, i.e. an extreme type of member-focused associationalism. The strong focus on members/supporters – the satisfaction of their needs and wishes – seems to be a result of a sharply reduced time horizon compared to the traditional mass-movements. Rather than ideologically inspired optimism and patience, that tended to foster loyalty and voice, the real-timers work to the beat of a much faster tune: if personal satisfaction or a feeling of individual fulfilment is delayed, members will not stay loyal to the association, but either withdraw from voluntary life altogether or switch to

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20 Many of them, especially at the central or national level are not really membership organizations any more.
21 Many of them, especially at the central or national level are not really membership organizations any more.
organisations that are better at giving the members what they are looking for – we get exit over loyalty and voice. This is clearly expressed through increased turnover rates both concerning organizations and individual membership (Wollebæk and Selle 2002).

Furthermore, the shortening of the time horizon has great implications for (a) the relationship between members and leaders, (b) the vertical integration across scale-levels, and (c) the horizontal integration across sectors (the civic sphere, the state and the market). NSm-korttidsideologi, issue-specific-ideology vs. activity, less org. socialization, nsm og framveksten av supporters (Maloney)

The relationship between members and leaders: For civic participation to be experienced as personally fulfilling, there must be a direct relationship between members and leaders. It is, after all, the decisions of the leadership – what to do or not to do – that determine an organisation’s ability to satisfy the needs and wishes of the members, and, therefore, the short- and long-term success of the organisation. Kva vi finn I miljøboka forskjellar mellom organisasjonane. For this to happen, there must be as few intermediary levels of bureaucracy as possible between the leadership and the rank and file: when time is of the essence, intermediaries must go. Consequently, power and resources that once were held, and decisions that were made, on the intermediary levels tend to migrate towards the top leadership. Centralisation of control is also aided by another one of the real-timers’ distinguished features: the marginal involvement of members in administrative work. And as personal fulfilment becomes one of the most important reasons for civic engagement, action is more significant than planning. It is the excitement of performing civicness – er det det vi snakker om fritidsklubben- integrering-demokrati – sosial kapital, vibrant civil society.

22 Hirschman/Rokkan inn her. This does not necessarily imply that members are more ego-oriented that before. They still, to a large extent, support and engage in altruistic, social and humanitarian causes. But, whatever the motivation for engaging in civic life is, there is little participation without rapid personal gratification: the feeling that your contribution is making a difference (whether this is in fact true or not). Hence, the feedback loop – or the time it takes for your input to be converted into personally meaningful output – must be short.
and not the dullness of planning for making things happen, that seems to be perceived as the real value of voluntary participation. Members, therefore, tend to withdraw from administrative planning processes, and are happy to leave this kind of work to full- or part-time staffers. One indication of this process is the centralisation of control through the professionalisation of administrative work. This means that flatter hierarchies leads to centralisation of control through the professionalisation of administrative work. This is clearly expressed through an increase in board-meetings and the decrease in membership-meetings within the various voluntary organisations of society (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). Måler auke I styremøter og nedgang I medlemsmøter.

**Vertical integration across scale-levels:** Real-time organisations are particularly numerous on the local – or community – level. They are not, however, representing “native-soil” solidarities, cultures or identities, but community-independent leisure-, hobby- or other close-to-home interests. partly they do. Since many of the real-timers are locally oriented, they are usually not cooperating on issues of common interest. Furthermore, we see a clear decrease in cooperation among voluntary organizations over the last 20 years (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). Data inn frå Wollebæk-boka. Neither do they attempt to join or form regional and national organisations. On the national level, the best example of real-timers is the increasing number of social- or health-related self-help associations. Here, we also find a new type of hybrid organisations – national associations that encourages the spinning-off of specialised, professionalised and rather autonomous sub-units. Klart? I og bør her meir stoff inn? And increasingly, some of the nation-level real-timers choose not to be membership-based and democratically governed, because, according to their spokespersons, this would divert

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23 In addition, centralisation of control is a result of media-driven politics: communications experts, fund-raisers, and professional campaigners are indispensable assets when the mass media is one of the main channels of influence. Nsm inn?

24 On the other hand, of course some of them to a certain extent do, and we have also seen an increase in locally based organisations emphasizing historical continuity, i.e. local history and culture.
resources from campaigning or lobbying to “endless internal debates about goals, methods and strategies” (Grendstad et al. 2004). What seems to emerge, then, is that the vertically integrated system of interest representation is gradually coming apart. While the hierarchical and bureaucratic mass-movements proved successful in linking local concerns to national decision-making (and in convincing their members to accept the outcome), the growth of real-timers signals the bifurcation of civil society: one type of associations operating on the local level, another type on the national level, and few (if any) stable channels for cross-level communication. Over time, bifurcation may well increase the institutional and cognitive distance between ordinary citizens and the exercise of central state power, causing greater political alienation and instability than Norwegians have been used to.

**Horizontal integration across sectors:** A bifurcated civil society also means a considerably more fragmented sphere of voluntary action than before. As noted earlier, the rise of leisure associationalism during the 1960s, started the first wave of organisational differentiation: the proliferation, although rather tentatively, of relatively small special-interest organisations. This trend has gained momentum over the last 20 years or so. The real-timers, it seems, have “heeded the call” of neo-liberal globalisation – it is better to be nimble and fast-moving than bureaucratic and slow. Unfortunately, however, speed and flexibility has a price: loss of autonomy. The traditional mass-movements may have been bureaucratic and slow, but they did not let themselves get caught up in encroaching external dependencies, most notably, corporate or state sponsorships.

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25 This is particularly true for not the least so within many of the new social movement organisations operating mainly on the national level. They are not building local branches at all, or are only modestly interested in the weakly visible at the local level (Grendstad et al. 2004).

26 Increased fragmentation implies that the traditional segmentation of the voluntary sector is weakened.
Sure, many mass movements and many of them received financial support from the state, but as long as they enjoyed wide-ranging popular backing, and it was part of the political culture never to interfere in internal organizational processes, their autonomy was never in question. Tight horizontal integration between mass movements and state institutions did not prove to be a significant threat to their autonomy either. Rather than the state taking over the mass-movements, it was the mass-movements that (in some policy areas, at least) “took over” the state. For the real-timers, on the other hand, a different story is unfolding.

Particularly at the national level, since the real-timers are small in terms of popular support (including the new social movements), but, at the same time, large in terms of the resources needed to keep the associations afloat (relative to the number of members). This means that the real-timers are not financially viable without external backing. Her blandes inn mange ulike typer av lag–nivå her, small-scale lag They are quite simply unable to raise enough money from internal revenue sources to pay for the drive towards centralisation and professionalisation (and, of course, those who do not have members at all, rely entirely on

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27 The connection between financial integration and other forms of integration may be weakened in NPM-system now emerging emphasizing “contracting”, while at the same time these financial instruments are undergoing deep change. There is for instance a move away from rather “free” basic grants in which public authorities have laid down few restrictions on how organizations spend the money towards project support where the control and the implications for the organizations are much more profound (for an extensive discussion of this change, see Eikaas and Selle 2002).

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29 This is the core message in Stein Rokkan’s understanding of political mobilization since the mid 19th century (Rokkan 1970). While this certainly has changed, we still see extensive organizational influence in certain field even within the NPM-system. This is particularly true regarding so within foreign aid (Tvedt 2003).

30 However, many of the strictly local associations can survive with very little financial support (even from their own members), and are not really dependent on governmental support to survive (Sivesind et al 2002).
Instead, they either turn to corporate sponsors or local/state authorities (or both) in search of financial aid. This creates a new type of horizontal integration, but now without much autonomy. This is strengthened by government increasingly moving away from rather free basic support towards increasingly relying on project support. The point is that with external funding comes judicially binding rules and regulations – stipulating, for instance, what the money can be used for or how activities should be organised – and new administrative routines for documenting and reporting that the money has been spent as agreed: less trust, more control, in other words. This is intimately related to the implementation of NPM-principles and increased use of “contracting”. Moreover, some real-timers are increasingly becoming a service-producing branch of the state, since they tend to get funding for carrying out specific public service-related tasks or responsibilities, often in cooperation with public institutions and/or market actors. This is true even in the cases where the organizations also play an important part in defining such projects. Contrary to the traditional mass-movements, therefore, the real-timers are about to be “taken over” by the state rather than seeking to influence state policies, i.e. less autonomy and more co-optation.

**Svær diskusjon, bistand annleis??**

**The Question of Causality: Globalisation or Not?**

Hence, a rapidly expanding part of the voluntary sector – which was supposed to be an arena for interest formulation and representation relatively independent of the state and the market – is unsustainable without generous handouts from businesses or over the state budget. In effect, the time-honoured social contract – institutional centralisation in exchange for organised citizen control – is being eroded by an increasing lack of associational autonomy. In a democratic perspective, this is probably particularly worrying in unitary states (like Norway).

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31 For small local organizations this is most often not the case.
because there are usually fewer centres of alternative influence available to the citizens than in federal systems. This is strengthened by the before-mentioned absence lack of strong sub-political groups. Aspecificere lack of sub-politics

The Question of Causality: Globalisation or Not?

All in all what we see is a turning away from the large-scale ideological mass-movements, and while producing a greater interest in smaller, flexible and non-ideological organizations that are better at catering for individual needs and wishes, but poorer at plugging members into the central decision-making institutions. These changes have profound consequences for how our democracy works making insights from the protective model of democracy more relevant even in the Norwegian context. It is no less than a decline in the democratic infrastructure.

Even if the structural form of neo-liberal, broadband globalisation, as described by a number of social scientists, seems to be quite similar to the changes underway in the Norwegian voluntary sector, it is not necessarily a causal relationship between the two processes. Or, put differently, would what has been going on in Norway happened anyway? To answer this question we need, first of all, to document more convincingly than what we have been able to do here that modern-day globalisation has a particular structural form, and that this form is characterised by a combination of shorter time horizons, flatter hierarchies and the centralisation of control. This, of course, is not an easy task. Secondly, if we do find some satisfactory way of sorting out the first challenge, we must start looking for robust mechanisms that can connect globalisation to civil society changes. It seems unlikely to us that there are no connecting mechanisms, but how robust they are, i.e. how much of the
observed changes that they can explain, is a different matter. However, it is interesting to note that Theda Skocpol and her associates at Harvard have found that many of the changes in civil society organisation that we have given a short presentation of here, also seems to some extent to be going on in the United States (see, for instance, Skocpol 2003; Skocpol, Ganz and Munson 2000). This may indicate that there is more in play here than the usual Scandinavian exceptionalism.

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