

Rebuilding the ship at sea: super-diversity, person and conduct in eastern Oslo

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Abstract *Researchers on transnationalism and migration in contemporary Europe often insufficiently communicate or even neglect the major shift between the first and second generation. Using empirical material from eastern Oslo, I argue that the dominant conceptualization of the self, of personhood, has shifted from a chiefly sociocentric to a chiefly egocentric form of selfhood, with important consequences for the process of integration into Norwegian society. At the same time, this change in personhood, a result of wide-ranging participation in the institutions of majority society, does not per se lead to a weakening of religious or ethnic identity, although they are now reflexively chosen and not adhered to as a duty or social obligation. This process of individualization creates a situation of multiple, complex adaptations rather than one of stable, coherent diasporic populations, one where even conservative traditions have to be chosen actively because they no longer recommend themselves. Members of the second generation are compelled to balance the demands of two social ontologies, one emphasizing security and group cohesion, the other favouring freedom and individuality.*

Keywords TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS, NORWAY, CULTURE, HYBRIDITY, PERSONHOOD, CHANGE

The article is a revised version of The Sidney Mintz Lecture 2013, presented at Johns Hopkins University, 13 November 2013 under the title 'The global suburb: transnationalism and hybridity in eastern Oslo'.

Preamble

On 22 July 2011, Norway experienced its largest humanitarian disaster since the Second World War when a right-wing terrorist killed 77 and wounded dozens in an attempt to purify Norwegian culture and cleanse the country of Muslims. Somewhat counterintuitively, he did not target Muslims directly, but instead attacked government buildings in the centre of Oslo and, a few hours later, a summer camp organized

by the youth wing of the Labour Party (AUF), in the belief that killing possible future leaders of the country would help reduce the future number of immigrants.

It took several hours to ascertain the identity of the terrorist and when the news about the bomb explosion in the city centre initially broke, suspicion was immediately directed at militant Islamists. I was in my garden pruning some shrubs when I heard a distant rumble, believing it to be a thunderbolt until a friend called me and told me to go online immediately. 'We'll have the press on our heels any minute', he said, adding that 'we're going to have to think fast about how to respond', as we had both for years been publicly known as defenders of minority rights. He implicitly assumed, like most Norwegians, that Muslim terrorists had carried out the attack. The direct broadcast on national TV during the first hour after the blast showed, among other things, a glimpse of the chairperson of the right-wing populist Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), later to become minister of finance, stating in a solemn voice that 'this is an attack on Norway.'¹

In another part of the city, a couple in their mid-thirties, the parents of two young children, were looking anxiously at each other across the kitchen table. Faisal and Aisha were born and bred in Oslo and had no other home. Although they maintained transnational links with relatives in Pakistan and had gone there occasionally on family holidays in their childhood, their primary sense of attachment was to Norway and Oslo. Bilingual in Punjabi and Norwegian, Muslim by faith but secular by political persuasion, well educated and professionally successful, they had embarked on a route of class travel that their parents had wished for them, and they had arrived.

Yet, Faisal and Aisha were perfectly aware of their vulnerability as members of Norwegian society. The everyday politics of exclusion and hierarchy (Gullestad 2006) never allowed them to forget that many white Norwegians considered them second-rate, suspect or undesirable. They were used to witnessing heated media debates about headscarves, female circumcision, cousin marriage, gender hierarchies, welfare tourism and religious fanaticism, often animated by politicians hostile to diversity and supported by individuals and organizations who continued to insist that ethnic and religious diversity was disintegrating and dysfunctional for society. They knew that the term 'Muslim', in the current Norwegian context, had connotations of intolerance, medieval gender relations and general cultural backwardness (Andersen and Biseth 2013; Eriksen 2010). To some members of the majority, being Muslim was simply the semantic opposite of being Norwegian. They were acutely self-aware of being Muslims in an essentially non-Muslim country.

Yet, at the same time, things were looking rather good for this Pakistani–Norwegian couple with their well-paid jobs and spacious flat in eastern Oslo. Opinion polls, moreover, indicated that the majority of Norwegians were positive to diversity and agreed that immigration was, on the whole, good for the economy (Blom 2010). Attitudes to Islam were nevertheless less charitable, and the tide could change abruptly. On this afternoon of horror, Aisha and Faisal were convinced that this was the moment. If a Muslim had committed the murderous attack, as seemed likely, guilt by association would be attributed to all Muslims. It would become emotionally unbearable and physically risky to stay in Norway. Everything that they had patiently

built up over the years – university degrees, networks, jobs, friends, children’s activities, attachments to places and people – was about to be torn apart, and they would be left with nothing. Such was their sense of precarity in a country – *their* country – where it often seemed as if they would never be 100 per cent accepted as equal citizens (Aarset n.d.).

During these afternoon hours of shock and confusion, people verbally abused Muslims around the country. An elderly woman angrily told off a ten-year-old boy in a sweet shop and accused him of being indirectly responsible for the terrorist attack. The father of a young woman wearing the hijab phoned her to say that he would fetch her from her job downtown in his car; he did not want to risk her taking the metro home. Others were, like this couple, seriously doubting their future in the country.

When, by early evening, news came of the shootings at Utøya, the site of the Young Labour summer camp, the hypothesis of the Muslim terrorist group became less likely. By nightfall, it was officially revealed that the perpetrator of both terrorist acts was a white Norwegian man from a middle-class part of Oslo and that the motivation was not Islamic but anti-Islamic. Faisal and Aisha breathed an almost audible sigh of relief.

To Faisal, Aisha and tens of thousands of other Norwegian Muslims, the 22 July terrorist attack nevertheless served as a reminder that they could not take for granted their belonging in their country of residence and, in many cases, of birth – it was negotiable. Many of them do not belong to the precariat economically speaking, but have secure, well-paid jobs, and many are members of the professional middle class; but they belong to a cultural precariat that can, like the economic precariat (Standing 2011), be laid off and expelled from the imagined community whenever the culturally hegemonic see fit. Exclusion from this imagined community often takes place in unspoken and implicit ways; citizenship cannot be revoked, but acceptance can. As one young man of Eritrean origin says, ‘there is something the [majority] Norwegians want us to do in order to be fully integrated, but they never tell us what it is.’

The unease and uncertainty Faisal and Aisha experienced – by all appearances a successful couple, but vulnerable in their relationship to the nation – can be a productive starting point for a closer examination of the social and cultural dynamics unfolding at this particular historical moment, the early twenty-first century, in an ethnically mixed part of Oslo. I shall identify the central tensions in which immigrants live, framed by the views the hegemonic ethnic majority represent of nationhood and processes of exclusion and inclusion. The story of recent non-European migrants to Norway is not straightforward, but a crooked and bifurcating narrative at times resembling Borges’s garden of forking paths (Borges 1944), where emergent social forms and cultural dynamics, as they can be observed today, neither intended nor anticipated, are heterogeneous and diverse, but held together by some common themes.

Diversity and modernity

Although this analysis concerns a particular group of people living in a particular part of the capital of a smallish, remotely located European country, it is a story about the

contemporary age, which reverberates across the world. As social scientists never tire of pointing out, ours is a world of increased mobility, heightened tensions, physical and virtual displacements, hybridities and their counterreactions in the form of identity politics. Yet, as the anthropologist and Caribbeanist Sidney Mintz has time and again reminded us (for example Mintz 1998), neither transnationalism nor mixing is new. But perhaps we may suggest that if the Caribbean was the first truly modern place, then much of the world is now becoming modern in ways not identical to, but in some ways resembling, the individualization, creolization and utter newness of the post-conquest Caribbean societies. My own interest in cultural complexity and migration in Europe began through research in these very creole societies. When, in 1987, I returned from fieldwork on ethnicity and nation-building in Mauritius, a study inspired by seminal earlier contributions such as Barth's model of ethnicity and Mintz's analysis of Caribbean nationhood (Barth 1969; Eriksen 1988; Mintz 1974), I soon began to write about the emergent cultural diversity in Norway. Using Mauritius as a backdrop, I reasoned that since it had dealt with diversity, transnationalism and creolization for 275 years, there might be something that Norway could learn from Mauritian history. Following fieldwork in Trinidad a couple of years later, I wrote my first book about Norwegian cultural complexity (Eriksen 1991). In spite of the obvious differences in history, culture and social organization, to my mind these societies were comparable because they grappled with similar challenges and dilemmas in trying to balance equality and similarity on the one hand with difference and diversity on the other. Here is a brief example. On 8 November 2013, the largest Oslo newspaper, *Aftenposten*, published a letter from a 15-year-old girl writing under the assumed name of Johannah. Entitled 'I have no nationality' (Johannah 2013), it describes the dilemmas of growing up with a Norwegian mother and Eritrean father. Claiming that 'both sides reject me' since she is brown (not Norwegian) but lacks Eritrean language skills and cultural competence, she concludes that she is in fact Norwegian, invoking her own subjective self-definition as a main criterion, in conformity with the standard anthropological model of ethnicity. She was, however, also aware of the other criterion, namely that recognition from others is necessary for identification with a group to be operative. Her sensitive and intelligent letter somehow echoed a song called 'Split Me In Two', a popular calypso in Trinidad in the early 1960s. The calypsonian Clatis Ali, using the sobriquet 'Mighty Dougla' (*dougla* means 'bastard' in Bhojpuri), sings about the many difficulties encountered by people of mixed African-Indian heritage in a society where the either-or logic of identity politics, contrasting the Indo-Trinidadian with the Afro-Trinidadian, was pervasive.

In other words, situations where distinctive ethnic or cultural groups are brought together in the context of a modern state may generate similar reactions and comparable patterns of social organization and cultural dynamics. The outer suburbs of Oslo, in this respect, recall Mintz's historical description of the Caribbean as an *oikoumenê*, a social universe defined not so much through its commonalities as by the 'constant presence of multicultural Others' (Mintz 1996: 295). No tradition can easily be taken for granted in such an environment, where your neighbour serves as a

continuous reminder of alternative options, and where cultural hybridization quietly takes place every day, through details of such things as food, language and behaviour.

In the space of a few decades, following the economic expansion of the postwar decades, decolonization and greater ease of travelling, the larger cities of Western Europe have diversified in terms of their population and, in the new millennium, the diversification has intensified. Perhaps nowhere is this truer than in Oslo, the capital of the booming Norwegian oil economy, which, relatively unaffected by economic crises elsewhere in the continent, continues to attract construction workers from Lithuania, shop attendants from Sweden and engineers from Germany. In addition, its generous welfare state and peaceful reputation has also made it an attractive destination for refugees and asylum-seekers. Between the early 1990s and the early 2010s, the immigrant population of Norway more than trebled, from around 200,000 to around 700,000 (SSB 2013).² Although much of the growth can be attributed to the opening of the European labour market – the largest immigrant group in Norway is now the Poles – ‘immigrant’ (*innvandrere*) in Norwegian really means non-European. Norwegians refer to Danes and Swedes as ‘immigrants’ chiefly in a humorous sense. Moreover, the term ‘immigrant’ increasingly refers, tacitly, to Muslims. They, not Vietnamese or Ghanaians, are perceived to have a ‘problem with integration’ (Bangstad 2014; Jacobsen 2011); to many Norwegians, Muslims are not primarily Somali, Pakistani or Iraqi – nationality becomes invisible – since their religious identity defines them.

A third of the immigrants in Norway live in Oslo, where 27 per cent of the population has an immigrant background (the figure for the whole country is 13 per cent). Moreover, most live in the eastern, largely working-class parts of the city. Although Norway is a relatively egalitarian country with dense social networks and short social distances, Oslo is so class divided that, in order to make sense of it, an urban anthropologist recently found himself unable to resist the temptation of invoking Lévi-Strauss’s analysis of the myth of Asdiwal (Andersen 2013: 66). Just as Muslims such as Aisha and Faisal are precariously positioned relative to the imagined community of the nation, they tend to live in places that are precariously positioned in the Norwegian nation, semantically unstable places that scarcely fit into standard narratives of nationhood. In some of the eastern suburbs, the minority proportion approaches 50 per cent; in certain local communities, the figure may be as high as 70 or 80 per cent, in some primary schools nearly 100 per cent.

A short biography of Furuset

One of these localities is Furuset, an urban satellite located about 20 minutes by metro, somewhat less by car, from the city centre. A metro station, shopping centre, two schools, many kindergartens, a municipal library, welfare office, church, mosques and sports clubs, including an ice hockey team of recent but faded glory, physically delineate Furuset.

Apart from ‘old Furuset’, a chiefly white area of detached family houses and leafy gardens, Furuset is a new place, built during the 1970s as one of a string of satellite

towns that radiate northeastwards from the city centre and largely consist of low-rise blocks of flats. On the main square stands a statue of Trygve Lie (1896–1968), the first general secretary of the United Nations, who grew up in old Furuset. Sometimes invoked as a symbol of the global and cosmopolitan character of the suburb, Lie presides over a population of around 9000 with origins in 140 different countries. Roughly, 70 per cent of the inhabitants have a minority background, but in the two primary schools, the percentage approaches 100 per cent. Youngsters in the suburb have been known to say, slightly tongue-in-cheek, ‘of course we want to be fully integrated into Norway, but how can we integrate when we don’t know any Norwegians?’

Like the other satellite towns along the Grorud valley in northeastern Oslo, Furuset is precarious not only in relation to the view of nationhood that associates Norwegianness with culture and ethnic identity, but also in terms of its architecture and spatial organization. It is *anti-Norway* – urban, industrial, modern, noisy, new and hectic; Norway, as it is depicted in schoolbooks and tourist brochures, is rural, clean, quiet, traditional and ancient (Eriksen 1998).

It is almost as if Steven Vertovec (2007) developed his concept of ‘super-diversity’ to describe places like Furuset rather than early twenty-first century London. Mobility is a constant feature of everyday life there, both in the short, the intermediate and the long term. The turnover of inhabitants is faster than in other parts of the country. The Furuset population encompasses white Norwegians living in houses they have inherited from their parents, second-generation Pakistanis whose attachments to the suburb derive from childhood memories and informal networks, as well as recently arrived refugees and migrants from various parts of the world, including other parts of Oslo. Ethnic Norwegians, 87 per cent of the national population, became a minority locally around the turn of the century. Tendencies of white flight, but also upwardly mobile brown flight, are perceptible (Stambøl 2013).

Another important form of mobility is the everyday. The substantial flow of people across Trygve Lie Square in the mornings and afternoons goes in both directions. It includes people from other parts of the city who work in Furuset as well as Furuset dwellers who work or study in other parts of town. As a result, on any given working day, half of the regular population is gone, and half of the people who are actually there live elsewhere.

At the annual Furuset festival, which local associations organize and the municipality supports, there are displays of some of the wide variety of food, art and music that comes together in the suburb. There is Bhangra and reggae, samosas and paellas, local rap groups and woollen mittens knitted by elderly women at the Senior Centre. In this kind of place, creating a collective local identity entails hard work. A brief comparison with a small town on Norway’s southern coast may illustrate this point. Kragerø, 200 kilometres south of Oslo, has roughly the same population as Furuset, but it is ethnically homogeneous, historically rooted and socially interconnected through a web of multiplex relationships. People sleep, work, study and shop in overlapping spaces, creating what Sandra Wallman (1986) once called ‘homogeneous, overlapping networks’. There the residents can take their sense of place and

community for granted. It enters the habitus of the inhabitants from the moment they utter their first words in the inimitable local dialect. Young people who move from the town express relief at having left the straitjacket of cultural intimacy behind, but many later return to start a family.

At Furuset, the challenge, as local administrators and many of the inhabitants perceive it, is the exact opposite; they wonder how to create a sense of shared identity and belonging where there was formerly none. Unlike in classic nationalism and traditional *Gemeinschaften*, a collective identity in Furuset and in super-diverse places more generally, cannot rely on an ideology and social practices based on shared origins, history and culture. This is where the complexities of identification, whether personal or collective, in Furuset and indeed the new Norway, begin to resemble the social and cultural dynamics seen in New World plantation societies for centuries. Not only does it take hard work to build and maintain a community under such circumstances, but the nature of community – be it based on place, social organization, kinship or cultural ties – is also similarly contested.

Migration and the unexpected force of culture

What non-European migrants ending up in places like Furuset have in common, notwithstanding their mutual differences, is the search for a better life. In a book about her father and his generation, the Pakistani-Norwegian journalist Mahmona Khan (2009) has described the situation of the first Pakistani migrant workers in the country from around 1970. Part of a much broader process, which continues up to the present and has facilitated transnational mobility worldwide, the initial trickle of Pakistani ‘guestworkers’ was never meant to be permanent, neither by the migrants nor by the recipient state. They were in Norway to work in order to return after a few years. Neither citizenship nor family reunification was on the agenda in the early 1970s. Long-term planning was absent. In the event, the Pakistani men were slowly to settle and to form what would become the world’s northernmost South Asian community, to bring family members over from Pakistan and to be joined by other migrants from their networks of caste, kinship and locality. From the 1980s, streams of refugees from many countries boosted the Norwegian immigrant population. Since the early 2000s, labour migrants from the new member states of the EU have also been coming to Norway. Throughout, family reunification has contributed towards increasing the numbers of the group and keeping relationships with the old countries vibrant and laden with moral commitments.

Both in the majority and among the new minorities, there was a tendency to underestimate the force and depth of what we – for want of a better word – may call culture. Neither culture nor religion was on the agenda when immigration and ‘guestworkers’ were discussed in the first years, at a time when issues concerning class, employment and livelihood were at the forefront. This is partly because the vast majority of migrants at the time were men who were either unmarried or had left their families at home, but also because Norwegian politics at the time were chiefly class-based, on the eve of the neoliberal revolution personified by the twin symbols of

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. With the subsequent emergence of migrant *families*, which coincided with the decline of class politics in the 1980s, public attention began to shift towards the cultural implications of migration. Indeed, the immigrants themselves were soon to discover that their ways of life, values and cultural resources were not only different from those of the majority, but were an important existential dimension of who they were, not to be lightly discarded. To many, it also slowly became evident, in practice if not necessarily consciously, that cultural skills were not something you could learn in government-sponsored evening classes on Norwegian language and society. You could learn the language and yet be amiss when it came to its implicit meanings. The learnt resources that enabled you to distinguish right from wrong and, more generally, to navigate meaningfully in the world, were as embodied as they were linguistic, as unconscious as they were conscious.

In the late 1990s, I was invited to write a social studies textbook for second-generation minority youth, with a view to informing them about some of the salient categories of Norwegian majority culture. Some high school teachers in Oslo had discovered that many minority adolescents appeared well integrated into Norwegian society – they dressed and spoke like their white schoolmates – but that there were important aspects of Norwegian culture about which they were clueless. Why, for example, did Norwegians venture out into nature instead of sitting in cafés on a grey and wet November Sunday? Why did they glorify the frugal and simple life associated with the mountain cabin when they could afford not to? What was the significance of equality, including gender equality, and the meaning of ‘peace and quiet’ in mainstream Norwegian discourse? And, what on earth did majority Norwegians do on Christmas Eve (Eriksen 1998; see also Gullestad 1992)? Trying to avoid the complementary risks of sterile deconstructionism and simplistic essentialism, in the book I argued that one could best envision cultural Norwegianness as a three-dimensional room rather than a two-dimensional list. Based on some shared understandings, most of them implicit if not embodied, Norwegians would position themselves differently in the three-dimensional space delineating the boundaries of the discursive space. These were some of the ‘two or three things’ I had learned about culture (Sahlins 1999), and which formed the backbone of this book, which highlighted egalitarian individualism as the key Norwegian value.

The lives of migrants and migrants’ children have become complex in ways that could not conceivably have been anticipated upon their arrival. Their priority was to make a living and support their families in the home country, or – in the case of refugees – to undergo a quest for safety, security and hope. Although many were aware that learning a new language would be both difficult and necessary, they did not anticipate a future life in which their main preoccupation would consist of balancing contrasting, sometimes conflicting, cultural expectations. Because of their complex surroundings and the cultural world of their childhoods, or of their parents, they found themselves having to go so far as to partake in processes of ‘cultural stripping and rebuilding’ (Mintz 1996: 298). Immigrants and their children, as well as everybody else who lives in these ethnically complex parts of the small, big city of

Oslo, notice the significance of cultural meanings every day, especially when they clash or are being challenged.

Cultural continuum and group discontinuity

Ever since the publication of *Ethnic groups and boundaries* (Barth 1969), the central concept of the boundary has been scrutinized critically. Many have felt that it is too stark, too digital somehow to capture the ambiguities of belonging. A. P. Cohen (1994) suggested replacing the boundary concept with that of the frontier, denoting a grey zone of negotiation and ambivalence rather than a red line separating two categories from each other. Later, Rogers Brubaker would, in an acclaimed essay, later a book, on ethnicity without groups (Brubaker 2004), point out that the degree of group cohesion was often exaggerated in ethnic studies, and that the task of the social scientist did not consist of reproducing native categories, but that he or she should instead question them. Don Handelman made a similar theoretical point decades earlier in a short, elegant essay distinguishing between four degrees of ethnic incorporation – the category, the network, the association and the ethnic community (Handelman 1977).

At the same time, to the extent that groups do exist as moral communities based on trust, reciprocity, social control and mutual obligations, it would be irresponsible to deny it. At Furuset, groups do exist. Most of the ethnic categories function as groups when it comes to that most fundamental of human affairs, namely biological reproduction: they tend to be endogamous. Many Muslims go to mosques (not necessarily in the neighbourhood) that cater to their particular nationality, and the Lutheran church in Furuset performs services in various languages. People tend to identify each other because of their country of origin; the mixed category, exemplified in the case of Johannah above, is not predominant. Categorical identification shifts situationally. Sometimes, people from Furuset self-identify on grounds of class, talking about East Enders versus West Enders in terms of opportunity, money and style (Andersen 2013); sometimes, they may speak of ‘us foreigners’ as opposed to ‘those Norwegians’. Even adolescents who have never been outside Norway sometimes identify themselves as ‘foreigners’. They are neither fully inside nor fully outside; they are simultaneously anomalies and entrepreneurs. At the end of the day, nationality or ethnic identity nevertheless prevails, since exceptions to endogamy are rare among Norwegian Muslims. (Interethnic marriages are quite common in Norway, but they are more frequent in the middle class and in certain rural areas, where a female exodus has created a demand for foreign women willing to marry rural Norwegians.)

Although the social boundaries remain firm in some important settings, there are numerous arenas for interaction across boundaries, especially for adolescents. Notably, the local music scene, sports and various youth activities, organized as well as spontaneous, tend to be supra ethnic and colour blind. Yet, adults tend to base their primary groups of reference on kinship and ethnic networks, even if they work and interact regularly with people from all ethnic backgrounds. In this, Furuset bears a

resemblance to the plural societies described by Furnivall (1948) and Smith (1965), and subsequently criticized for exaggerating boundedness and insufficiently conveying the processes of hybridization, creolization and mixing.

In a recent discussion of creolization in the Caribbean, Mintz (2008) argues that the development of new social institutions was more significant than the cultural mixing usually emphasized in the literature on creolization (for example, Hannerz 1996; Stewart 2007). The distinction between social and cultural processes remains relevant in the case of Furuset: at the level of social organization, Furuset has elements of the plural society, but at the level of symbolic culture and meaning, it is a hybrid and continuously hybridizing place. While groups are largely discontinuous, culture is continuous. It flows in promiscuous and unpredictable ways and, while dependent on social processes, it is somehow much more difficult to control and restrict. It is possible for a Pakistani taxi driver to observe a young couple who were not supposed to be together, walking hand in hand in the evening, to phone the girl's parents to report what he has seen. However, it is impossible to gauge and record the impact on notions of selfhood wrought on young people of a subcontinental origin when they watch Norwegian children's television or, later, study at university. Groups can be bounded efficiently; culture cannot.

It is exactly in the gap between group cohesion and cultural flows that the main zones of tension in everyday life appear. The dialectical dance between hybridization and traditional values and practices, with all its permutations and mutual influences; between the wish to succeed in Norwegian society and the desire to satisfy demands from family and transnational kin, makes for a complex, at various times exhausting and rewarding, everyday life. Nevertheless, a significant shift is taking place between the first and the second generation, which originates in changes in social organization, and which results not only in new cultural forms and conceptualizations of the self, but also in new patterns of social integration. It concerns personhood and the self, where the new generation, in fashioning its life-projects and reflecting on its lives, largely conforms to the concept of the reflexive, or self-described, which many authors, most famously Giddens (1991), call late modern.

Zones of tension

In Norway, as elsewhere in the North Atlantic world, much has been written, on the one hand about the exclusion of minorities and racism and, on the other hand, about the presumed unwillingness of minorities to integrate fully and pledge allegiance to their adopted country, or – less charitably – about the dysfunctional shortcomings of their cultural repertoire. As I was revising this article for publication, there was a heated debate going on in the media about some young Norwegian Muslims who had travelled to Syria in the spring of 2014 to join Jihadist forces in the civil war. A common view, which many Norwegian Muslims shared, was that they had failed to integrate completely into Norwegian society. The disagreements – somewhat predictably – concerned whether this was primarily a result of religious brainwashing or exclusion from major arenas in mainstream society. However, these perspectives

ignore the fact that, overall, immigrants and their children are doing rather well in Norwegian society. It remains true that Islam is a controversial religion, but it is equally true that one of the most popular and respected ministers of culture in recent years has been Hadia Tajik, a young Muslim woman from a small town in western Norway, serving in that capacity until the Labour Party lost the elections in 2013. Moreover, it is true that Pakistani-Norwegian women have less paid employment than ethnic Norwegian women do, but the figure rises dramatically in the second generation and, by the third, is likely to equal that of the majority. Social mobility among non-European migrants has been spectacular in just one generation, a fact that right-wing populists and anxious social scientists alike tend to underplay. Although their status as fully-fledged members of Norwegian society remains debated and precarious, the average preoccupations of most immigrants in Oslo concern how to get on with their everyday lives rather than their possible exclusion. Their concerns are not least about striking a balance, or finding an appropriate mix, between systems of value and meaning that do not always go together easily. (This pattern connects much of the material collected by research groups in which I have participated over the last decade.) Seeing no other viable option than having it both ways, being simultaneously committed to their past and to their future, second-generation migrants confront Borges's garden of forking paths every day.

Consider, as an example, conflicting views of mother-child relations. The dominant majority view is that we should train children to become independent, responsible for their own lives and capable of taking their own decisions. The corresponding Punjabi view emphasizes loyalty, diligence and submissiveness. A course that psychologists developed (Hundeide 2003) to facilitate intercultural communication between Pakistani-Norwegian mothers and the municipal childcare authorities presented two contrasting models. Norwegian socialization subjects children to strict rules and regulations, from bedtime routines to table manners, when they are very young, but as they grow older, it grants them increasing personal autonomy. With Pakistani socialization, the course literature argues, the situation is the opposite. When very young, Pakistani children have a great deal of personal autonomy and their parents often allow them to do as they please, but as they grow older, norms and obligations increasingly limit their freedom (Erstad n.d.).

It is easy, from the perspective of contemporary, post-culturalist anthropology, to castigate this contrast as being reifying and essentializing. However, Pakistani-Norwegian mothers nod in recognition when listening to the course teachers, whose perspectives resonate with experienced tensions in their lives. Similarly, when they hear that the majority Norwegian view is that wage work is a universal recipe for independence and therefore happiness, while some immigrants may see things in a different light (Rugkåsa 2012), they also confirm that this is exactly the problem. These women may speak of 'I-cultures' and 'we-cultures' without blinking, blissfully unaware of the deconstruction of the culture concept that has informed and paralysed so much anthropological theorizing for decades.

Another example from the domestic sphere, involving the welfare state's attempts to achieve discipline and control, is a cooking class for recently arrived immigrant

women. Benevolent in intent but oblivious to cultural differences as anything but a shortcoming, the cooking course aims to teach immigrant women how to cook wholesome, nourishing food (Døving and Kielland 2013). Noting that women from countries like Iraq and Afghanistan use large amounts of fat, sugar and salt in their customary cooking, the Norwegian teachers patiently explain ‘how things are done’. For example, they should only allow sweets on Saturdays. However, as it happens, the women resist and revert to their customary ways as soon as the Norwegian teachers turn their back on them. We should not merely seek the explanation for this in stubborn adherence to tradition, but can link it to different views of personhood. The early twenty-first century Norwegian woman is ideally economically independent, physically active and fit, and above all slim. It soon became clear that thinness did not form part of an Afghani housewife’s cultural repertoire, who considered herself middle-aged (she might be 40). While this was likely to change in her daughter’s generation, to her, the suggestion that she should begin to cook weak and almost inedible food for her family was an insult.

What these two examples have in common are tensions surrounding contrasting views of personhood. What does it mean to be a good woman? How do you raise your child in the right way? What are your obligations as a wife and mother? To such questions, mainstream Norwegian culture and that of migrants offer different, sometimes conflicting answers. The ‘problem with Islam’ is, in these cases, that it is associated with a sociocentric view of the person, which is perceived to be at odds with egalitarian individualism, where the self is conceptualized as a reflexive, individual and emergent project, where rights trump duties.

The second generation

In the second generation, the processes of cultural hybridization have progressed further because of social changes. Just as the anthropological concept of culture has been criticized extensively, so has that family of concepts referring to various kinds of mixing (see for example, Mintz 2010; Stewart 2007) been criticized because these concepts seem to presuppose the existence of pre-existing purity. However, as cultural meaning always flows and mixes, and as there have probably never existed any such thing as a culturally homogeneous community, the concept is bogus and contributes to an untenable essentialist view (for example, Friedman 1994). Somewhat surprisingly, in the now very considerable academic literature about cultural mixing, relatively little attention has been granted to people’s own experiences and ways of making sense of their lives. Actually, it is not particularly helpful in 15-year-old Johannah’s daily struggle to carve out a niche for herself, in a society where she is seen as an anomaly, that anthropologists have criticized concepts of creolization and hybridity on the grounds that all cultural phenomena (Palmié 2013), or indeed all phenomena *tout court* (Latour 1993), are hybrid. In her subjective experience, she lives between two cultures, mixing them as she goes along and adding impulses from elsewhere as well. Nonetheless, she is reflexively aware that she has two personal genealogies that come together in a unique way in her body, which make her a hybrid, seen not only

from the racialized discourse to which she is accustomed in her everyday life, but also in a cultural sense.

In the introductory essay to *Imagined homelands*, Salman Rushdie (1991) wrote about cultural creativity, concluding that ‘a bit of this, a bit of that; that is how newness enters the world.’ An ode to the creativity engendered by cultural mixing, with a bitter critique of cultural purists inserted for dialectical drama, Rushdie’s view resonates well with Mintz’s earlier argument about Afro-American cultures. There he writes that they must be conceptualized ‘not simply as historically derived bodies of materials, as patterns of and for behavior, but also as materials actively employed by organized human groupings in particular social contexts’ (Mintz 1974: 18). The second-generation Pakistani-Norwegian couple encountered at the beginning of this article fit this description well. Rather than viewing Norwegian and Punjabi culture as two entities that clash – which is a far more marked tendency among first-generation immigrants – they use the cultural materials at their disposal, sometimes consciously, sometimes not, to create something new. Being of Pakistani descent in Norway thus entails something quite different from being of Pakistani descent in the UK; they are Norwegian all the way down, Pakistani all the way up.

The shift from the first to the second generation, under-reported in much research and debate about migration and transnationalism, should not be underestimated, and let me be explicit about what it entails: it is a shift in the conceptualization of personhood from a communal or sociocentric view of the person to an individualist or egocentric view of the person. As Mintz pointed out in his historically based analyses of the cultural consequences of slavery in the Caribbean (for example, Mintz 2010), the shift from communal to individualized production, uprooting from traditional webs of reciprocity and systems of rank, led to the emergence of a strong individualism. One can observe a similar shift with respect to second-generation migrants in Oslo, which has led to a new set of tensions, this time between the generations. A familiar domestic scene in the outer eastern suburbs is the proverbial family fight over the remote control: Mum and Dad want to watch Turkish TV, while the kids prefer *NRK Super*, the Norwegian children’s TV channel. However, the shift in personhood is less readily observable and, arguably, more consequential. As a study of second-generation Shi’ite Muslims in Oslo indicated (Strandhagen 2008), their Muslim faith was unshattered in the new country, but it had taken on a number of Protestant features, including values such as bad conscience, a strictly individual, personal relationship to God and an increased emphasis on universal values such as human rights.

With Nalini and Naresh, Punjabi Hindus who have both lived in Oslo since early childhood, the shift is even clearer (Aarset 2014). Committed to Norwegian middle-class lives and traditional Hindu values simultaneously, these two have to improvise every day to satisfy the dual sets of expectations, but they tend to shift towards a form of Indianness that is compatible with the predominant view of personhood in secular Protestant Norway. Both spouses work outside the home and they take it in turns to collect and feed the children. Naresh drives his son to football practice, picks him up from his swimming lesson and occasionally collects his parents to babysit so that the couple can go out and watch a Bollywood movie. Nalini works intermittently on her

laptop while the children play or do their homework and she is concerned to teach the children about healthy eating. As in the mainstream Norwegian middle-class, time budgeting – that most Protestant of all contemporary virtues – is a key concern in their lives.

Tensions occasionally arise. As Nalini explains, they could not envision living in an extended household with Naresh's parents because their respective rhythms of everyday life were too different. His parents (and hers) could easily spend all weekend 'doing nothing', while she and Naresh 'had to keep their food and bedtime routines and activate the children in the weekends' (Aarset 2014). When they hosted a social visit from their first-generation relatives, they would invite them for a fixed time, serve dinner soon after they arrived and indicate, in a polite way, when it was time to leave so that they could get the children to bed and prepare for the next day. Rather than bring their young children along for an evening visit to relatives, she preferred to 'put the kids to bed at 7 p.m. and watch a movie with Naresh' because late nights would disrupt the children's routines, making it difficult for them to get up early for school on Monday. Fixed routines, healthy food, regular mealtimes, set bedtimes, catering to the children's needs and ensuring sufficient adult time were the order of the day. Even although the films the couple watch are in Hindi and the food they cook may be Tandoori, the grammar of personhood that Naresh and Nalini chose consists of regulating their lives as middle-class professionals and parents, which is in complete conformity with the secular Protestant outlook characteristic of mainstream Norwegian society. In this, they differ from their parents' generation.

A final example adds further complexity. While Hinduism is unmarked in the Norwegian public sphere, Islam is – as noted – controversial and associated with a subversive, anti-modern and anti-patriotic outlook. The location is a kitchen where Bushra, the mother – a second-generation Pakistani-Norwegian – is busy making waffles (Aarset 2014), a quintessentially Norwegian snack often served with sugar, sour cream and strawberry jam. The two children are watching Norwegian children's TV. Suddenly, the daughter, Bano, shouts: 'He's online!' Picking up her Quran, she goes into a different room to sit down in front of the computer. After a brief negotiation with her mother about whether she can wear her grey hoody with purple hearts instead of the mandatory headscarf, Bano connects with her Quran teacher, who soon greets her with a 'Salaam alaikum'.

What makes this scene especially interesting is that the teacher is in Pakistan, offering lessons to children in rich Western countries via Skype. To Bushra and her husband Bilal, this arrangement is most convenient as it makes it feasible to fit regular Quran lessons into a busy everyday schedule. The whole lesson takes half an hour and afterwards Bano can just stroll over to the living room, continue to watch television with her younger brother and treat herself to a waffle. Had she gone to a regular Quran class in another part of town, the logistics of getting her there and back would have disrupted the entire afternoon for the family. Interestingly, at the time of the anthropologist's visit, Bilal was actually in Pakistan visiting his father, as a reminder of the multiple faces of transnationalism in an age of electronic communication and easy air travel.

As with Nalini and Naresh, this vignette from a Pakistani-Norwegian household shows the concept of personhood shifting towards individualization, while the ‘cultural stuff’ may be variously subcontinental, Norwegian, mixed, or something else. If asked, many in the second generation say that they are committed to living in Norway in a Norwegian way and that they really have no alternative, for this is where they have their networks, careers and attachments. Some move away from Furuset when they can afford a larger flat or house in a leafier environment with better schools and more upmarket shops. However, people with a minority background tend not to move to the western suburbs, but to areas that are less prestigious as seen from a majority perspective, for there the houses are better value and they can live near their relatives on the east side.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that the transnational identities of the largest and most established immigrant group in Norway, the people of Pakistani origin, have changed in a very perceptible way. It is true that many still visit relatives in Pakistan; some dream of spending their twilight years in their country of birth; children still grow up speaking at least some Urdu or Punjabi; and most regard themselves as Muslims. On the other hand, as research on death and burial practices makes clear (Døving 2005), the majority of Pakistani-Norwegians now bury their dead in Norway. In the first period of settlement in the country, the families usually sent their dead bodies to Lahore on the first available flight for burial in the home village. This documented shift towards burying their dead in the country of adoption arguably tells us more about attachment and identity than a thousand questionnaire surveys.

Two grammars of inclusion and exclusion in Norway

It is time to return to the question asked at the outset: how do inclusion and exclusion in the imagined community of the nation function in a country that, until recently, had been accustomed to seeing itself as largely ethnically homogeneous when it finds itself increasingly diverse? To answer this question, it is necessary to return briefly to Furuset.

Two adolescent boys in Furuset are discussing their relationship to Norwegian-ness. They see themselves as structurally similar, not because of their Muslim identity but because they are brown. They share experiences that indicate that majority Norwegians prioritize each other before ‘foreigners’, even if the ‘foreigners’ are fully competent in the majority culture. The mode of exclusion resembles that described many years ago by Steinberg (1981), who pointed out that no matter how similar African Americans became to the white majority, culturally speaking, they would never be acknowledged as social equals.

The boys are aware of their mutual differences, as when the Kurdish boy Erem asks the Pakistani Zahid, ‘hey, I thought you people practised enforced marriage, what’s the deal here?’ (Seim 2006: 118, my translation). However, the main topic of their conversation is their sense of exclusion from greater society. Zahid says, ‘if I’m born and bred here, doesn’t that make me a Norwegian then?’ Erem responds, ‘born and bred here me too; doesn’t make me a Norwegian, gotta use your brains, stupid

idiot!’ (Seim 2006: 129). Zahid, emphasizing the formal rights citizenship entails, concludes, ‘I’m perfectly aware I’m a Paki ... in a way, but I thought, y’know, on paper’ [he is Norwegian with the same rights as everybody else with that citizenship].

As everybody knows, and certainly people with a minority background, formal rights are not identical to full membership in the imagined community. Being considered Norwegian entails something in addition to formal rights and citizenship, just as attachment to Furuset has to mean something more than merely living there.

I have argued that a significant shift in the dominant conceptualization of personhood takes place from the first to the second generation. The latter develops through living in Norway and engaging continuously with the surrounding institutions and opportunity structures, an individualist concept of the person, in ways comparable to the processes of creolization that Mintz (for example, 1996) described for the Caribbean. Although arranged marriages remain widespread in some immigrant groups, they are becoming steadily rarer, as indicated in the declining numbers of family reunifications involving spouses from countries like Turkey and Pakistan (Henriksen 2010). The forms of cultural hybridization witnessed in my second-generation examples resemble, at a structural level, an inverted version of linguistic creolization in the Caribbean according to the African substratum theory. This was the view, immediately controversial, that Creole languages had an African grammar and a European vocabulary. The second-generation or ‘desi’ Norwegians reveal lives that conform to a Norwegian cultural grammar, while they fill it with a hybridized cultural vocabulary where waffles are as normal as Bollywood and formidable mothers-in-law, and a social identity that partially sets them apart from mainstream society. Unlike lives based on the view that a person is defined through duties not rights, that religion trumps the law, and that a child is first and foremost obliged to obey, such hybridity is not objected to in public. People generally tolerate diversity insofar as it does not seem to violate fundamental values such as human rights, gender equality and individualism (Eriksen 2006). The fear that Aisha and Faisal expressed at the beginning of this article was a fear of being associated with a social ontology, which they incidentally do not share, but which rejects parliamentary democracy, places religion above law and science and threatens ‘to turn the clock back’. As long as categorical distinctions based on religion and ethnicities remain operative in society, Muslims and other visible minorities continue to walk on eggs. No matter how much they adjust to the North European secular Protestant way of life, they will not entirely get rid of the stigma if they continue to be associated with a conceptualization of the person not deemed compatible with egalitarian individualism.

Is Furuset a place to which it is possible to belong not only pragmatically but also emotionally? Now, it seems a tall order to talk of it as a community. Its population is mixed and it sometimes seems to have little in common beyond the shared physical space; it is in flux and the suburb has a reputation for high crime levels and poor school results. Moreover, it represents the opposite of what Norway is in the collective mind. At the same time, Furuset may represent the future of Norway, while the imagery associating the country with rural idylls and mountain vistas belongs to dominant nineteenth-century constructions of the nation. If Kragerø represents a

microcosm of the classic modern construction of the nation as *Gemeinschaft* writ large, then Furuset may be a microcosm of twenty-first century nationhood. In all likelihood, the country will continue to be an immigrant magnet in years to come; the predictions are that, by 2040, half the capital's population will have a foreign background. Diversification, hybridization and the attempts to strike a balance between mixing and purity will increasingly be the order of the day. From this perspective, Furuset is not a dead end but rather a vanguard, appropriately located at the birthplace of the United Nations' first general secretary.

At a structural level, the tensions that first- and second-generation immigrants experience resemble those that the majority Norwegian society faces over the future of the country and the nature of social life. Dealt with philosophically in the debate between communitarians and liberals, which petered out instead of being resolved, these tensions are the lived complexities in which everybody tries to strike a balance but in which they face many choices about where to locate the proper equilibrium in their own lives. These are some of the contrasts within which an individual, whose identity does not come by itself but has to be created, has to locate his or her own life, in shifting and situational ways, forever rebuilding the ship at sea:

Figure 1: Two social ontologies

Freedom	Security
Future	Past
Impulses	Traditions
Individual	Group
Choice	Destiny
Change	Continuity
Mixing	Purity
Openness	Boundaries
Boots	Roots

These binaries are ideal types that do not exist empirically in a pure form. In real life, people seek a balance and, for second-generation immigrants from Pakistan and the Middle East, the pendulum has swung and continues to swing towards the left, which is towards an individualist, Protestant conceptualization of the person. This swing precludes neither the continuation of a social identity as Pakistani-Norwegian, nor a religious identity as a Muslim, but indicates that these people now must choose such identities reflexively. In the post-traditional world in which the second generation lives, social and religious identities do not recommend themselves; they must be defended actively relative to their alternatives. In this sense, a fundamental cultural value is increasingly shared across the board in a 'multicultural' society such as

contemporary Oslo, that is the value of individualism (Dumont 1986), which makes it less coherent than a traditional community, but more integrated than a string of beads on a necklace or a fragmented space with no sense of place. Like a Caribbean *oikoumenê*, eastern Oslo is defined through a series of common themes, but no shared, stable cultural form. Walking the garden of forking paths, its residents are continuously rebuilding the ship at sea.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the editors of *Global Networks*, Fred Steier and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University for their useful comments, although any shortcomings are, naturally, my own responsibility.

Notes

1. She would not repeat this statement later, as it soon became clear that the terrorist was a white man who had been a member of her own party for several years.
2. The figure from SSB (Statistics Norway) includes both the first and second generation, but not the third.

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