PERSON, TIME AND CONDUCT IN ALNA[1]

Abstract
The comparative study of personhood has a long and distinguished peerage in anthropology, but it has rarely been applied to research on contemporary migration and diversity in Europe. Drawing on the contrast established by Louis Dumont between hierarchical holism and egalitarian individualism, as well as the subsequent debate, this essay argues that a significant shift takes place in the second generation, from a traditional, sociocentric concept of personhood to a reflexive, individualist one. Using empirical material from Alna in eastern Oslo, the aim is to show that the cultural diversity witnessed in the second generation is founded on individualism and thus compatible with reflexive modernity, even if it is often associated with sociocentrism. The distinction between cultural content and social organisation is essential for the argument.

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In the afternoon of 22 July 2011, at the height of the proverbially drowsy and relaxed Norwegian summer holidays, media programming was interrupted to bring the shocking news of a major explosion in central Oslo, which had killed at least six and wounded more than a dozen, apart from inflicting enormous damage on government buildings. The terrorist, who would later go on to kill 69 persons, most of them teenagers, at the Young Labour (AUF) summer camp on Utøya less than an hour's drive out of the city, was a white Norwegian man with a middle-class background, a *bourgeois déclassé*. At the time, this was not yet known, and this afternoon, suspicion was immediately cast towards Muslim terrorists, and stories went around, on Facebook and by word of mouth, about ordinary Muslims being harassed on the streets according to the simple logic of guilt by association.

A middle-class Pakistani–Norwegian couple, whom we may call Faisal and Aisha, followed the news with sinking hearts on this dark and grim afternoon. They 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 organisations that 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 & 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 towards 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 the murderous attack had been committed by a Muslim, 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 demolished, and they would be left with nothing. Such was their sense of precarity in a country – *their*

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country – where it often seemed as if they would never be completely accepted as equal citizens (Aarset 2014).

But why is this? There are many explanations for the marginalisation of ethnic minorities, the most familiar ones focusing on quests for cultural purity or labour market dynamics. While not rejecting these accounts, I shall argue that differences in conceptualisations of personhood and, not in the least, differences in common perceptions of such are a core feature, often ignored, of the mutual sense of alienation between majority and minorities.

1 Personhood

A fundamental topic in anthropological theory and comparative research, the concept of personhood tends to be understated or ignored in studies of migration and transnationalism. It cannot be explored unequivocally in surveys or questionnaires, and is arguably best approached through direct observation. The question 'What is a person?' is simultaneously too simple and too difficult to elicit the necessary answers. Instead, researchers may – if observed interaction is not available – ask questions about the nature of a good life, both in terms of morality and happiness. And one may ask what it takes to be a good man, a good woman or a good child. At the analytical level, a relevant family of follow-up questions would concern how the answers to such questions are related to a more encompassing view of society, the world, human destiny? This essay aims to show that differing conceptualisations of personhood are in fact fundamental to an understanding of both intragroup and intergroup dynamics in the current situation of cultural and ethnic diversity in Western Europe. Empirical examples are drawn from the collaborative research project 'Exclusion and inclusion in the suburb' and notably from Ida Erstad's and Monika Rosten's PhD research, as well as from Monica Five Aarset's recent submitted PhD dissertation (Aarset 2014), on which I have already drawn for the introductory vignette.

Let us first consider the concept of personhood in some detail, before considering whether it is indeed the case that many of the tensions, frictions, conflicts and misunderstandings arising within minorities and in minority/majority relations arise from different taken-for-granted structures of personhood and notions of what it entails to be a human being. Indeed, it may turn out to be the case that understanding concepts of the person may be just as important as it is to understand family organisation and kinship, if the objective is to make sense of the problems of integration, the tensions and the common perception that constituent groups come across as 'ships passing in the night' in an ethnically complex society. As Geertz says in his celebrated essay about person, time and conduct in Bali, a pervasive orientational necessity

> is surely the characterisation of individual human beings. Peoples everywhere have developed symbolic structures in terms of which persons are perceived not baldly as such, as mere unadorned members of the human race, but as representatives of certain distinct categories of persons, specific sorts of individuals. (Geertz 1973: 363)

Geertz then goes on to describe the elaborate Balinese apparatus of terms used to describe persons, where personal names and personal pronouns – the only terms commonly used in modern, individualist societies – are generally avoided. He tentatively connects this absence of personal, individualist modes of address

to the cyclical forms of time reckoning in Bali and the lack of climax in Balinese culture, previously studied by Bateson and Mead. This need not occupy us unduly here. A generation before Geertz, Marcel Mauss wrote about the relationship between social structure and personhood, in a seminal essay which is more directly relevant to the topic at hand. Mauss (1985 [1938]) notes that a great number of languages express relationships between the speaker and the object about which he speaks, without using reifying pronouns such as 'I' (je) or 'me' (moi). In this observation lies the germ of a subsequent large and lively theoretical literature, much of it with a Melanesian focus, on 'the dividual' as opposed to 'the individual' (Strathern 1988, Josephides 1991, cf. Marriott 1976, LiPuma 1998); the person as being defined through its relationships with other objects, creatures and persons, not as an autonomous, bounded entity. However, Mauss' main concern is to show, from a social evolutionist point of view, 'the succession of forms that this concept has taken on in the life of men in different societies, according to their systems of law, religion, customs, social structures and mentality' (Mauss 1985: 3). He then moves on to examples meant to illustrate historical transitions as well as cross-cultural variation concerning personhood. Regarding the Zuñi, he notes that only a limited number of forenames are in use in each clan, and that the incumbent of each name is assigned a particular place or role. The clan, thus, consists of a finite number of *personnages*. About the Kwakiutl, he says that each individual has two names, one for each season, meaning that the very core of your personhood changes as the season changes. Mauss also mentions that several Australian people name persons for their ancestors in such a way that an individual is made to appear as an exact replica, or reincarnation, of his great-great-grandfather; before going on to remind his audience that the Latin *persona* really means mask. In the subsequent parts of the essay, Mauss traces the transformation of the person in Europe from being a legal entity under Roman law to becoming, in the subsequent centuries of conversion to Christianity, early modern philosophy and Enlightenment thought, a moral, legal and metaphysical entity.

Mauss' essay, described as 'dazzling' by Michael Carrithers (1985), is nevertheless seriously incomplete in that it does not even begin to sketch the connection between social practices and notions of selfhood. Similarly, the philosopher Charles Taylor, in *Sources of The Self* (1989), traces transitions in European thought without connecting them explicitly to changes in society, household organisation and the process of production. In this, Mauss' successor Louis Dumont does better, in his magisterial and controversial writings about *homo hierarchicus* and *homo aequalis* (Dumont 1971, 1977) whereby he contrasts the sociocentric, holistic Indian person with the egocentric, fragmented European. There is *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in Dumont's work, grand theory and great divides, and empiricist anthropologists of an inductivist bent – that is to say, most of the British school – would soon criticise it for not taking into account the diversity of practices (e.g. Barth 1981) and, later, the hybrid and modern cultural forms of contemporary India (Appadurai 1988). This is relevant criticism, and Dumont's contrast comes across as Weberian ideal types – useful at the level of models, but non-existent in a pure form in practice. Yet, Dumont was more nuanced than his critics would concede (Robbins and Siikala 2014). The relevant point in this context is that modern individualism presupposes traditional holism, just as *Gemeinschaft* is prior to *Gesellschaft* in Tönnies' sociology. The individual, in Dumont's terminology, is a special kind of person, unlike the dividual or sociocentric person. Moreover, it may be noted that the distinction between a holist (or sociocentric) and an individualist (or egocentric) conceptualisation of the person does not

necessarily exist just as analytical constructs, but as emic – local – ones as well.

One implication of the rough and arguably simplistic (but far from useless) distinction between individualism and holism is that groups form according to different mechanisms in the two cases. Individualist groups are formed on the basis of persons being brought together, through coercion or choice; while holist groups exist by virtue of convention and tradition. In the latter case, integration goes without saying because it comes without saying (as in Bourdieu's, 1977, concept of *doxa*), while individualist groups are reflexively formed, in a context where tradition no longer recommends itself, but must be actively chosen and defended against its alternatives.

In other words, notwithstanding the current theoretical prioritisation of flows and ambiguity over structure and stability, groups and cultural communities based on continuity and justified by tradition continue to exist in individualist contexts, but not in an unreflexive way. The field of *opinion*, or negotiation, expands at the expense of unquestioned *doxa*. Both group boundaries and the symbolic meaning flowing within and across them are under increasing pressure during a period of transition from a sociocentric to an egocentric conceptualisation of the person. For this reason, it is necessary to take a detour via a brief examination of groups, flows and boundaries before moving on to the juicy stuff.

2 Cultural continuity and group discontinuity

Ever since the publication of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969), the central concept of the boundary has been scrutinised critically. Many have felt that it is too stark, too digital 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. Actually, Don Handelman had made 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. In the suburb where our group carried out most of its research, located in Alna borough, outer Eastern Oslo, 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) based on nationality, and the local Lutheran church performs services in various languages. People tend to identify each other on the basis of their country of origin. At the same time, categorical identification shifts situationally. Sometimes, people from the suburb self-identify on the basis 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 of Norway sometimes identify themselves as 'foreigners'. They are neither fully inside nor fully outside, they are simultaneously

anomalies (Douglas 1966) and entrepreneurs (Barth 1963). At the end of the day, nationality or ethnic identity nevertheless prevails, since exceptions to endogamy are rare among Norwegian Muslims. (Interethnic marriages are not uncommon 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, organised as well as spontaneous, tend to be supra-ethnic and colour blind. Yet the primary groups of reference for adults tend to be based on kinship and ethnic networks, even if they work and interact regularly with people from all ethnic backgrounds. In this, the suburb bears a resemblance to the plural societies described in the classic works by Furnivall (1947) and Smith (1965), and subsequently criticised for exaggerating boundedness and undercommunicating processes of hybridisation, creolisation and mixing.

In a recent discussion of creolisation in the Caribbean, Mintz (2008) argues that the development of new social institutions was more significant than the cultural mixing that is usually emphasised in the literature on creolisation (e.g. Hannerz 1996, Stewart 2007). The distinction between social and cultural processes remains relevant here as well: At the level of social organisation, our Alna suburb has elements of the plural society, but at the level of symbolic culture and meaning, it is a hybrid and continuously hybridising place. While groups are largely discontinuous, culture is continuous. It flows in promiscuous and unpredictable ways, far from independently of social processes, but in ways much more difficult to control and restrict. While 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, and phone the girl's parents to report what he has seen, 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 hybridisation 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.

There is nevertheless a significant shift taking place generally between the first and the second generation, which originates not in intensified cultural flows but in changes in social organisation, and which results not only in new cultural forms and conceptualisations of the self, but also in new patterns of social integration. It concerns precisely personhood and the self, where the new generation, in fashioning their life projects and reflecting on their lives, largely conform to the concept of the reflexive, late-modern self described by many authors, from Bauman and Beck to Giddens.

3 Zones of tension

Much has been written, in Norway as elsewhere in the North Atlantic world, about the exclusion of minorities and racism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on presumed unwillingness among minorities to integrate fully and pledge allegiance to their adopted

country, or – less charitably – dysfunctional shortcomings in their cultural repertoire. There have been heated media debates across Europe, also in Norway, concerning local Muslims who have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join Jihadist forces. A common view, shared by many Norwegian Muslims, was that these persons were incompletely integrated into Norwegian society, disagreements concerning – somewhat predictably – whether this was primarily a result of religious brainwashing or exclusion from major arenas in mainstream society. However, these perspectives ignore the fact that immigrants and their children are, on the whole, doing rather well in Norwegian society and that active jihadism must be understood as a conscious career choice taken by young men (and a few women) who see it as an attractive option (see Jacobsen & Andersson 2012 for a similar argument). 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 Muslim woman from a small town in Western Norway, serving in that capacity until the Labour Party lost the general election in 2013. Moreover, it is true that Pakistani–Norwegian women have less paid employment than ethnic Norwegian women, but the figure rises dramatically in the second generation and is likely to equal that of the majority by the third. The social mobility among non-European migrants has been spectacular in just one generation, a fact which tends to be undercommunicated by right-wing populists and anxious social scientists alike. Although their status as full-fledged members of Norwegian society remains debatable and precarious, the everyday preoccupations of most immigrants in Oslo – a pattern that connects much of the material collected by research groups that I have directed over the last decade – concern not their possible exclusion but how to get on with their everyday lives, which are not least about striking a balance, or finding an appropriate mix, between systems of value and meaning which do not always go together easily. Seeing no other viable option than having it both ways, being simultaneously committed to their past and to their future, precariously balancing holistic hierarchy and egalitarian individualism, second-generation migrants confront Jorge Luis Borges' (1944) *jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* – garden of forking paths – every day.

Consider, as an example, conflicting views of mother–child relations. The dominant majority view entails that children should be trained to become independent individuals, responsible for their own lives and capable of taking their own decisions. The corresponding Punjabi view emphasises loyalty, diligence and submissiveness. In a course developed by psychologists (Hundeide 2003), intended to facilitate intercultural communication between Pakistani–Norwegian mothers and the municipal childcare authorities, two contrasting models are presented: In Norwegian socialisation, children are subjected to strict rules and regulations, from bedtime routines to table manners, when they are very young, but they are granted increasing personal autonomy as they grow older. With Pakistani socialisation, the course literature argues, the situation is the opposite: When very young, Pakistani children have a great deal of personal autonomy and are often allowed to do more or less as they please, but as they grow older, their freedom is increasingly being limited by norms and obligations (Erstad 2015).

It is easy, from the perspective of contemporary, post-culturalist anthropology, to castigate this contrast as being reifying and essentialising. However, Pakistani–Norwegian mothers nod in recognition when listening to the course teachers, whose perspectives resonate with experienced tensions in their lives. Similarly, when it is pointed out that the majority Norwegian view is that wagework

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 theorising 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 is meant to teach immigrant women to cook wholesome, nourishing food (Døving and Kielland 2013). Noting that the women, originating in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, tend to use large amounts of fat, sugar and salt in their customary cooking, the Norwegian teachers patiently explain 'how things are done'. For example, sweets are only legitimately eaten on Saturdays (the main exception being walks in nature, where chocolate is permitted). However, as it happens, the women resist and revert to their customary ways as soon as the Norwegian teachers turn their back on them. The explanation for this should not merely be sought in stubborn adherence to tradition, but can be linked to different views of personhood. The early 21st century Norwegian woman is ideally economically independent, physically active and fit, and above all slim. It soon became clear that for an Afghan housewife who considered herself middle-aged (she might be forty), thinness did not form part of her cultural repertoire. 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 to 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 many 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 conceptualised as a reflexive, individual and emergent project, where rights trump duties.[2]

One might also consider the continued prevalence of the dowry among Pakistani–Norwegians, associated with arranged marriages and the conviction that the marriage bond is not a binary arrangement, but a holistic one involving families, lineages and biraderis (castes), distributing rights and duties across the extended family, or families, in the case of marriage between unrelated spouses.

In an essay on personhood among the Tallensi, Meyer Fortes remarked (1973) that the notion of the person is intrinsic to every society because it is concerned with 'the perennial problem of how individual and society are interconnected' (288) – however, both individual and society may mean quite different things to different people; to take the latter, it may refer to a religious or ethnic community, transnational or localised, or to an anonymous imagined community of citizens, 'a collectivity of individuals or a collective individual' as Dumont once phrased it. In the first generation of subcontinental migrants to Norway, their primary attachment of rights, duties and mutual commitment is by and large to their community based on caste, origin, language, religion and cultural intimacies. In the case of the second generation, the picture becomes more complicated owing to the social forces leading to individualisation.

4 The second generation

In the second generation, not only has individualisation taken hold, but the processes of cultural hybridisation have also progressed further than in the first generation, as a result of changes in the life-worlds and the wider environments of the people in question. Just as the anthropological concept of culture has been criticised extensively, so has that family of concepts referring to various kinds of mixing (see e.g. Stewart 2007, Mintz 2010) been criticised on the grounds that these concepts seem to presuppose the existence of pre-existing purity; but 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 (e.g. Friedman 1994). Yet, if we shift the attention to the life-worlds of the people in question, who frequently experience tensions between two cultures and dilemmas of mixing and purity, these much criticised concepts may take on a new relevance and urgency. As a matter of fact, it is not particularly helpful for children of mixed backgrounds, in their daily struggle to carve out a niche for themselves in a society where they are seen as an anomaly, that anthropologists have criticised concepts of creolisation and hybridity on the grounds that all cultural phenomena (Palmié 2013) or indeed all phenomena *tout court* (Latour 1993) are hybrid. In their subjective experience, they live between two cultures, mixing them as they go along and adding impulses from elsewhere as well, but reflexively aware that they have two personal genealogies that come together in a unique way in their bodies, which not only makes them hybrids seen from the racialised discourse to which they are accustomed to in their everyday life, but also in a cultural sense.

In the introductory essay to *Imagined Homelands*, Salman Rushdie (1991) discussed cultural creativity, concluding in a way that oddly echoes Hume's empiricist philosophy, according to which new ideas can come about *a priori*, but only through new combinations of existing ones: 'A bit of this, a bit of that; that is how newness enters the world'. A celebration of the creativity engendered by cultural mixing, with a bitter critique of cultural purists inserted for dialectical drama, Rushdie's view resonates well with Mintz' earlier argument about Afro-American cultures, where he writes that they must be conceptualised 'not simply as historically derived bodies of materials, as patterns of and for behaviour, but also as materials actively employed by organised human groupings in particular social contexts' (Mintz 1974: 18). The second-generation Pakistani–Norwegian couple encountered at the beginning of this essay 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, in order to create something new. Being of Punjabi descent in Norway thus entails something quite different from being of Punjabi descent in the UK; they are Norwegian all the way down, but they are also Punjabi all the way up. Unlike the parental generation, who left the home environment as adults, they epitomise reflexive modernity, where the self is perceived as a project rather than a given, where biographical scripts are by necessity modified and refashioned as one goes along.

The shift from the first to the second generation, undercommunicated 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 change in the conceptualisation of personhood from a communal or sociocentric view of the person to an individualist or egocentric view of the person, resulting from changes in the opportunity situation in a bureaucratic, meritocratic, individualist society. In the case of the Caribbean, the shift from communal to individualised production entailed by slavery, along with the uprooting from traditional webs of reciprocity and systems of rank, led to the emergence of a strong individualism which can still be witnessed in the Caribbean islands. A similar shift can be observed with respect to second-generation migrants in Oslo, and 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 concerning 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 distinctly 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. The form and content of their religiosity thus reflects conscious decisions, not destiny or adherence to unquestioned tradition.

With Nalini and Naresh, Punjabi Hindus who have both lived in Oslo since early childhood, the shift is even clearer (Aarset 2014). Trying to follow the scripts they associate with Norwegian middle-class lives *and* traditional Hindu values, this couple has to improvise every day in order 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 turns collecting and feeding the children. Naresh drives his son to football practice, picks him up from his swimming lessons 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 is concerned to teach the kids about healthy eating. Like 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, incidentally) 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 invited at a fixed time, serving dinner soon after the guests arrived, and indicating 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 bringing 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', since 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 and regular mealtimes, bedtime, children's needs, adult time: although the films the couple watch are in Hindi, and the food they cook may be Tandoori, the grammar of personhood chosen by Naresh and Nalini, regulating their lives as middle-class professionals and parents, 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 her grey hoody with purple hearts may serve as a substitute for the mandatory headscarf, Bano connects with her Quran teacher, who soon greets her with a 'Salaam aleikum'.

What makes this scene especially interesting is the fact 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 indicates that the concept of personhood is shifting towards individualisation and reflexivity, 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 as this is where they have their networks, careers and attachments. Some move away from the suburb 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 parts of Oslo, but to areas that are less prestigious when seen from a majority perspective, but where houses can be obtained at a better price and they can live near relatives on the east side.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the transnational identities of the largest and most established immigrant group in Norway, that is the people of Pakistani origin, have changed in a very perceptible way. It is true that many still visit relatives in Pakistan and that some dream of spending their twilight years in their country of birth; that children still grow up speaking at least some Urdu or Punjabi, and that most identify 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, dead bodies were usually flown to Lahore on the first available flight in order to have them buried in the home village. This documented shift towards burying one's dead in the country of adoption is arguably more enlightening regarding questions of attachment and identity than a thousand questionnaire surveys.

5 The triumph of individualism

I have argued that a significant shift in the dominant conceptualisation of personhood takes place from the first to the second generation, the latter having developed, 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 creolisation often associated with 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 hybridisation witnessed in my second-generation examples resemble, at a structural level, an inverted version of linguistic creolisation in the Caribbean as it was described in the African substratum theory. This was the view, immediately controversial, that Creole languages had an African grammar and a European vocabulary (see Goodman 1993). The second generation, or 'desi' Norwegians, reveal lives that conform to a Norwegian social grammar, while they fill it with a hybridised cultural vocabulary where waffles are as normal as Bollywood and formidable mothers-in-law, and a collective identity that partly 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. Diversity is generally tolerated insofar as it is not seen to violate fundamental values such as human rights, gender equality and individualism (Eriksen 2006). The fear expressed by Aisha and Faisal at the beginning of this essay was a fear of being associated with a social ontology, which they incidentally do not share, 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 ethnicity remains operational 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 as much as they like; they will not entirely get rid of the stigma as long as they continue to be associated with a conceptualisation of the person not deemed compatible with egalitarian individualism. But if these perceptions do change, then it may well turn out that the presumed incompatibility between Muslim and secular life-worlds evaporates. As the diverse experiences of the Caribbean have showed, cultural diversity is not necessarily a problem as long as there is agreement about the principles of social cohesion.

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Notes
1. The essay is an expanded version of a keynote lecture delivered at the Nordic Migration Research Conference, Copenhagen, on 15 August 2014.

2. The attribution of sociocentric values to Islam is misguided and results from a conflation of religion and cultural traditions. Islam has historically been an individualising factor in the patriarchal, kinship-based societies of the Middle East.

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