

INVISIBLE FENCES: EGALITARIANISM, NATIONALISM AND RACISM

MARIANNE GULLESTAD

Institute for Social Research, Oslo

With its specific combination of a bureaucratic welfare state and an open, globalized capitalist economy, Norway, along with the other Nordic countries, provides a particularly interesting context for the examination of the relationship between egalitarianism, nationalism, and racism in Europe. A racialization of difference takes place, as immigration emerges as a site for racial and racist discourse, and as a site of conjuncture between the welfare state and its citizens. By presenting an analysis of the contemporary debate on immigration in Norway, this article demonstrates how equality conceived as sameness ('imagined sameness') underpins a growing ethnification of national identity. Widely different utterances and points of view refer to metaphors of home and family life, a close link between territory and generalized kinship, and the renewed importance of Lutheran Christianity in contrast to Islam. A model of group identity and relationship is therefore suggested, in which organizational boundaries and cultural substance inflect one another, rather than being the bases of different or even opposed approaches. It is also argued that anthropologists need to take a more serious interest in the European majority populations.

Despite different historical traditions and political cultures, present debates about 'immigrants' are surprisingly similar in many European countries. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s a general shift took place in the direction of more 'realism', implying that the migrant presence is generally regarded as deeply problematic. In this article I want to discuss European debates about 'immigrants' through the specific particularities of the Norwegian case. The first point I want to make is that there are close relations among egalitarian cultural themes, majority nationalism, and racism. My contention is that there is currently a popular reinforcement of the ethnic dimensions of majority nationalism, with a focus on common culture, ancestry, and origin. Analytically, my task is to pinpoint a contested hegemonic 'fixity' (Bhabha 1999), without unduly essentializing or reinforcing it. In other words, I want simultaneously to identify and to historicize an emerging doxic field.

The second point is that the process of ethnification needs to be understood in terms of cultural content as well as in terms of boundaries and relationships. In the rightly famous introductory essay to *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, Fredrik Barth (1969: 15) argued for a focus on 'the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses'. In partial contrast to Barth's formulation, this article suggests a more intricate analytical relationship between

organizational form and cultural content. In Norwegian debates about 'immigration', the boundary is not only organizational, but also cultural. Furthermore, in contrast to Barth's one-sided focus on the self-ascription of ethnic identity, I also want to emphasize the role played by the power to categorize others (see also Jenkins 1997).

The discussion starts with a theoretical presentation of egalitarian individualism, supplemented by a short overview of immigration to Norway. Then follows an interpretative analysis of the underlying categories and ideas of five empirical examples. My interpretation is informed by many years of experience as a native anthropologist. Like all interpretations, it is partial, localized, and not the only possible one. It is therefore meant to be provisional, to contribute to the reader's own production of knowledge from locations different from mine.

The five examples are selected so as to be markedly different with regard to points of view and intentions. They present different genres, uttered in different contexts for different audiences. The first example is an extract from an anonymous letter written by a man who expresses vehement hostility to the presence in Norway of inhabitants with a Pakistani background. The second example is a story told informally by a male university professor of linguistics. The third is a set of quotations from an academic book for a general readership written by a female university professor of social anthropology. The two last examples are the reflections (in an oral interview conducted by a journalist for the popular press and in a book for the general reader) of two Labour party politicians with a Pakistani background. With the exception of the anonymous letter, all the examples are utterances by people who might be classified among the Norwegian cultural and political elite, in a wide sense. All the examples have been translated from the Norwegian by me.

Imagined sameness

While 'egalitarian individualism' is often said to be a characteristic feature of the Western world (Dumont 1986; 1987; Kapferer 1988), many researchers have suggested that a special emphasis can be found within Norway and the other Nordic countries (see, among others, Barnes 1954; Gullestad 1984; 1992; 1996; Jonassen 1983). Alexis de Tocqueville (1969 [1835-40]) suggested that the idea of equality easily leads to a search for identity, in other words to the idea that people have to feel that they are more or less the same in order to be of equal value. This tendency is particularly strong in the Nordic countries, and can be analysed as a culturally specific way of resolving tensions between the individual and the community.

In previous studies (Gullestad 1984; 1985; 1992; 1996), I have formed a set of ideas about egalitarianism in Norway, based on how 'ordinary people' relate to differences in way of life and lifestyle.¹ The central value concept is *likhet*, meaning, 'likeness', 'similarity', 'identity', or 'sameness'.² *Likhet* is the most common translation of 'equality', implying that social actors must consider themselves as more or less the same in order to feel of equal value. When they thus manage to establish a definition of the situation focusing on same-

ness, each of the parties – paradoxically – also gains confirmation of their individual value. In order to have their desired identities confirmed, people need relevant others who are able and willing to recognize and support them. According to the logic involved, the relevant supporters are other people who are regarded as similar. This logic often leads to an interaction style in which commonalities are emphasized, while differences are played down. In this way the sameness cannot always be observed but is, rather, a style that focuses on sameness. For the sake of simplicity I call it ‘imagined sameness’.

The egalitarian logic can be woven into both egalitarian and hierarchical models of society.³ It is not only tied to the term *likhet*, but also to a whole range of other expressions such as ‘to fit in together’ (*å passe sammen*) and ‘to share the same ideas’ (*ha sammenfallende synspunkter*). Often it implies that there is a problem when others are perceived to be ‘too different’. Then the parties often avoid each other. Open conflicts are seen as a threat to other basic values, such as ‘peace and quiet’. Avoidance can happen prior to the establishment of imagined sameness, and when it is no longer possible to maintain. In this way differences are concealed by avoiding those people who, for one reason or another, are perceived as ‘too different’, and by playing them down in social interaction with those who are regarded as compatible. The result is that the dividing-lines between people in terms of social class have become blurred. At the same time the differences between ‘Norwegians’ and ‘immigrants’ have become discursively salient.

Norway, a case in point

In my current research, I examine how elite people employ egalitarian strategies in relation to ‘immigrants’. In the late 1960s immigrants from Third World countries started to enter Norway, a nation-state of about 4.5 million inhabitants. An immigration ban was imposed in 1975. Since then, newcomers have only been admitted on the basis of being experts, family members (family reunification), students (with the expectation that they would return home after completing their education), and, last but not least, refugees and asylum-seekers. The ‘immigrant’ proportion of the population (including refugees and asylum-seekers) has increased steadily, from 2.0 per cent in 1980 to 5.5 per cent in 1998. In 1970, 6 per cent of the ‘immigrant population’ came from Asia, Africa, and Latin America; in 1998 the figure was 49.5 per cent. Between 1977 and 1998, 109,000 foreign incomers became Norwegian citizens.⁴ Their countries of origin are multiple, with the largest number originating from Pakistan, followed by Sweden, Denmark, and Vietnam. One-third of all ‘immigrants’, and 41 per cent of ‘non-Western immigrants’, live in Oslo.⁵ In this city their presence is highly visible, particularly in certain inner-city neighbourhoods. Many ‘non-Western immigrants’ work in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations as taxi-drivers, hotel personnel, cleaners, and so on, doing many of the jobs that ‘Norwegians no longer want’. Educated ‘immigrants’ often experience difficulties in obtaining employment that fits their educational level.

Although the relative number of ‘immigrants’ is smaller than in countries such as Sweden, Germany, or France, the debates about them are extensive

and polarized. The groups of political extremists (such as self-defined racists and neo-Nazis) are small, comprising only a few hundred individuals (Bjørge 1997; 1998; Fangen 1998). On several occasions, thousands of people have demonstrated publicly against the actions of these marginal groups. At the same time anti-immigrant sentiments are also strong. The Progressive Party (Fremskrittspartiet) – a right-wing populist party fighting for lower taxes, fewer regulations, more money to care for the aged, more police, and a more restrictive immigration policy – can be compared to the *Freiheitspartei* in Austria and to the Front National in France. The leaders of the Progressive Party do not use explicitly Nazi, neo-Nazi, or traditional racist arguments. But as this article will show, many other symbolic resources are available.

Despite their North Sea oil wealth, this specific point in time in Norway is one in which many people feel insecure about where their society is heading. The Cold War is over, leaving Western countries with no clear outside enemy. As in many other European countries, the debates about the European Union split the population in two, with those opposing the EU on the winning side. The so-called ‘modernization’ of the welfare state has triggered much opposition, as does the proliferation of neo-liberal ideas and practices. Unlike many other European countries, unemployment is not extensive, but significant numbers of people still experience the loss of their jobs as a result of downsizing and restructuring in many workplaces. This resistance often takes the form of ethnic nationalism. The way migration is currently interpreted brings out and exacerbates the ethnic subtext in the imagining of the nation.

Hatred of ‘Pakistanis’ expressed by a person with anti-immigrant opinions

My first example exemplifies a line of argument used by people who are vehemently against ‘immigrants’. It is taken from an anonymous letter. The author claims that he has sent to a Pakistani-Norwegian Labour Party politician named Rubina Rana.⁶ In 1999, Rana chaired the organizing committee for Oslo’s Constitution Day celebrations on 17 May.⁷ When it became known that Rana had been elected to chair the committee, she received anonymous letters, including death threats. This particular letter sets out the sender’s views on the relationship between ‘Norwegians’ and ‘Pakistanis’, as seen from a relatively marginal position of little authority:

In Norway 17 May is the day when we celebrate our liberty, the day when we express our love for our country.

Most of us associate Pakistanis with people who have as their aim a long-term occupation of Norway through their rapidly growing numbers, thereby slowly transforming Norway into a Muslim state.

This is the precise opposite of liberty.

You are doubtless proud to have come one step closer to this goal.

Nothing is worse than having a Pakistani in the 17 May procession.

You have so little contact with ordinary Norwegians that you have not yet understood that Pakistanis have become a despised and unwelcome group in Norway and that you are ‘frozen out’ here in Norway. The most obvious sign of this is that the last thing a Norwegian would

do is to give a Pakistani a job. This is the reaction of the Norwegian people to the manner in which you are acting.

It may be of interest for you to have a description of how the vast majority of Norwegians regard Pakistanis and why we do not want you here.

The relationship between us broke down from the first day of your arrival. Later it became progressively worse. The most important reason for this is that you have little ability or desire to adapt to our country.

It is clear and evident to every Norwegian, and it has also been stated clearly and precisely from the Pakistani side, that you are proceeding to develop a Pakistani state on Norwegian soil and to isolate yourselves from most of that which is Norwegian.

We will not submit to this self-righteous attitude within our small but close-knit Norwegian family. We love our country too much for that.

This letter contains no direct mention of ‘race’, and no references to Nazism or neo-Nazism. It is a matter of course that Norway is ‘our’ country, and that ‘we’ have the right to determine that ‘we do not want you here’. The ‘Pakistanis’ are homogenized, regardless of citizenship, way of life, and political opinions, and so are ‘we’. In Norwegian, the word *familie* (‘family’) means, depending on context, both kinship relations and the group of people living together in a household. By his choice of words (‘our small and close-knit Norwegian family’) the letter-writer plays on both meanings. Generalized kinship and the intimacy of the home constitute ‘us’, the ethnic nation, as a *moral community*. Implicitly, the moral community is also based on Lutheran Christianity in opposition to Islam.

For many Norwegians, the word ‘occupied’ contains a reference to the Nazi occupation during the Second World War.⁸ At the same time, the term also conveys the idea of the immigrant as an ‘occupant’ in the sense of being a guest who does not conform to the expectations of the host. The author’s fear of a transformation of Norway into a Muslim state plays on rhetorically forceful themes of popular sovereignty and self-determination. According to the author of the anonymous letter, ‘Pakistanis’ bear all the blame for the country’s perceived problems. Indeed, the letter seems actually to endorse practices of discrimination and harassment.

The aim of this first example is to put the four that follow into relief by comparing them with something which is both markedly different and based on similar frames of interpretation. These frames are a marked boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, a tendency to blame the victims, and to imagine the nation as a moral community, based on family metaphors and generalized kinship. My contention is thus that moderate utterances are based on similar doxic forms of imagined sameness as the uncompromising opinions in this letter.

The shifting meanings of the terms ‘immigrant’ and ‘Norwegian’

My second example is my own retelling of a story first conveyed to me by an emeritus professor of Nordic languages.⁹ It is an account of a personal experience originally described to his colleagues from his majority perspective, but it involves the reactions and feelings of a conversation partner with

an immigrant background. Some time ago, the professor received a telephone call from a woman he did not know. She wanted to discuss the notion of the *innvanderer* (immigrant) with somebody proficient in the Nordic languages. The professor was friendly and ready to converse. She told him that she had been born and brought up in India but had lived in Norway for many years. According to the professor, 'she spoke Norwegian well, but not perfectly'. 'Now I have lived in Norway for a long time', she told him. 'I know Norway, and I have become a Norwegian citizen. Therefore I want to know if am I still an immigrant (*innvanderer*)?' 'Yes', answered the professor, on the basis of his lexical understanding of the problem. 'You were born and bred in India, and this makes you an immigrant to Norway.' The woman, who had apparently hoped to throw off this label, voiced her disappointment and posed a further question. 'But for how long will I then continue to be an immigrant?' 'All your life', answered the professor. The conversation then reached its peak, as he later explained it, in that the woman became angry. The professor, who is an amiable person, was sorry to disappoint her, but found that the meaning of this word in Norwegian did not allow him to do otherwise. In order both to explain his view, and to comfort her, he therefore added: 'This is the way it was for the Norwegians who emigrated to America, too. You just have to accept it.'

The conversation was a private one, in that the professor did not himself seek out a public situation to publish his point of view. At the same time the woman had sought him out because of his formally sanctioned academic knowledge. He thus spoke from a position of authority when he explained the meaning of the word *innvanderer* to her. In order to understand the woman's anger one needs a broader cultural analysis of the word's connotations, the surrounding networks of concepts and their contexts of use, and the range of ideas, images, and associations it currently sets in motion. *Innvanderer* is today not only a word in the dictionary, but a rhetorically powerful concept. Within such a frame of analysis, *innvanderer* has become a stigmatizing way of labelling 'them'. In the dictionary (and for the professor), the term denotes all those who come from outside Norway, including Swedes, Danes, and North Americans. But in the streets and the mass media, a more restricted use is emerging. The meaning of the word now seems to oscillate between an implicit code based on 'Third World' origin, different values from the majority, 'dark skin', working class (unskilled or semi-skilled work) and a dictionary definition in which these characteristics are irrelevant. This span of ambiguity is the basis of considerable rhetorical power. For example, the leader of the right-wing Progressive Party often implicitly plays on the term's restricted and racialized meaning, but when he is accused of racism, he shifts to the wider lexical meaning.

When the woman in the episode became disappointed and angry, it was presumably because she perceived the label, *innvanderer*, as conveying a meaning of 'not Norwegian', and excluding her from the community of unmarked citizens. The term is often used in a totalizing way, covering many nationalities of origin, and overriding other statuses and identities. For the professor, being a Norwegian citizen did not overrule the woman's status as an 'immigrant'. The term locks her conceptually into a position she thought she had long since left, and it does so for 'all her life'. It thus ties her to a perpetual present

based in the past. She is not somebody who once entered, but is perpetually entering. The professor obviously wanted to treat the woman as an equal. His reference to the Norwegian immigrants in America can be interpreted as a way of attempting to establish sameness between himself and her. In the situation, he did not see his imposition of the term *innvandrere* as contributing to an existing hierarchy of power. The effect of this hierarchy is that the woman in the episode – and others like her – are treated as outsiders. As a matter of course, the identity she wants for herself is not confirmed; she is forced to accept an identity she does not want, and she has no choice when other people make this unwanted identity relevant. For her, one may assume, this means being denied dignity, recognition, and respect. In addition, as someone who was apparently a well-educated, middle-class person, she was probably also offended by the lower-class connotations of the term *innvandrere*. Other ‘immigrants’ to Norway are not well educated, and many do not want to become Norwegian citizens. It is precisely the extremity of her case (her citizenship, her wish to participate as an unmarked citizen, her long residence in Norway, and her proficiency in the Norwegian language) which makes visible the invisible fences inherent in egalitarian interpretative frameworks. Nevertheless, there are more extreme cases: young people who are born in Norway and are native speakers of Norwegian feel that they are not accepted as ‘ordinary Norwegians’. The category ‘second-generation immigrants’ is now reified in official statistics.

Such unacknowledged frames of interpretation operate, so to speak, behind people’s backs. Even when the intention is equality and dialogue, the interpretative frames may still contribute to anger and distance. Such frames are not accidental ornaments, but intrinsic parts of any argumentation. Talking about the relationship between ‘immigrants’ and ‘Norwegians’ means that a specific frame of interpretation is applied, constructing a difference, which then has to be bridged.

The anthropologist as native

Similar invisible fences can also be teased out of my next example, which comes from the work of the social anthropologist Unni Wikan (1995a, 1995b; 1999). Wikan is well known for her many years of anthropological scholarship in predominantly Muslim societies. She has recently published a book on Norwegian immigration policy for the general public, *Mot en ny norsk underklasse: innvandrere, kultur og integrasjon* [*Towards a new Norwegian underclass: immigrants, culture and integration*] (1995). In addition, she has contributed to public debate in Norway through many newspaper articles, interviews, appearances on television talk-shows, public lectures, and so on. Her main message is that the Norwegian authorities do a disservice to the children of immigrants, and especially to girls. The Norwegian authorities practise foolish generosity (*snillisme*), she argues, by supporting the power of Muslim men, and by providing welfare without expecting anything in return. This is ‘doing evil in the name of good’ (‘gjøre ondt i godhetens navn’) (Wikan 1995a: 193).

It is easy to appreciate Wikan’s focus on gender, her concerns about children, and her wish to avoid the creation of a permanent ‘underclass’ in

Norway. But her argumentation also contains a number of ideas and thought figures which invite closer examination. In the following analysis I have attempted to tease out the cultural knowledge that a reader needs in order to understand her arguments. Thus I do not focus on her well-meaning intentions, but on the ideas and categories which make her arguments work rhetorically. Wikan's ideas have had considerable political influence in the 1990s, articulating and legitimizing ideas and opinions that were already in circulation.¹⁰ She has thereby contributed to framing the debates on immigration in certain ways.

The following quotations are duplicated in two different sources, the book mentioned above (Wikan 1995*b*) as well as an article (Wikan 1995*a*):

'Immigrants' and the 'immigration problem' have virtually become synonymous with Muslims.

Why?

Let me state immediately: I do not think that this is due to 'racism'.

When so many Norwegians – including myself – regard Muslims as a problem, there is a reason for this: Muslims in Norway are problematic in many ways: one has the impression that they distance themselves further from basic Norwegian values than do other groups. Many practise segregation. Many oppose their children having Norwegian friends. This does not apply to all, but it applies to far too many (1995*a*: 85–6; 1995*b*: 26).

Every choice has its price, and the price for living in Norway is that one must accept that one's children become Norwegian – if they themselves so wish. For no one 'owns' his or her children ... for me it is also unacceptable that people who have come here and benefited from Norwegian possibilities, such as freedom and material welfare, so readily denounce aspects of the 'culture' we have built up, and that provides the basis for the welfare which immigrants take advantage of. The majority of immigrants to Norway have had a choice – they were not among the worst off in their home country ... They have also had the possibility to return: to go back home. The choice they have made bears its obligations. (1995*a*: 91; 1995*b*: 30–1).¹¹

These quotations (and the texts from which they are drawn) are well written and pointed. The perspective is with the majority, and the texts are directed towards majority people as implicit readers. At the same time the 'Muslims' are the ones to be criticized. 'Muslims' are assigned the whole blame for the stereotypes about them, without any reflection on the possibility that 'orientalism' (Said 1978) might be an unrecognized part of Norwegian thought habits. In addition, as in much current European discourse, racism is mentioned by way of being denied (van Dijk 1993). The expression 'basic Norwegian values' implies that all variations in Norway are homogenized into a single set of values. But what are these 'basic Norwegian values' other than 'the culture' we have built up? While Muslims, according to Wikan, ought not to be condoned on the basis of culture, the Norwegian-ness they have to adopt is all the same implicitly defined in cultural terms. In her writings, Wikan does not consider the possibility that some of the reasons why immigrants keep to themselves might be related to the familism and home-centeredness of Scandinavian social life which make it difficult for outsiders to be included, that immigrants encounter discrimination in Norwegian society, and that the inward turn of some people may partly be an attempt to retain material and emotional support, as well as dignity and self-respect. She

also does not focus on how integration might be conceived, seen from the point of view of Muslim individuals. The effect of her text is therefore not only to reinforce common stereotypical constructions of 'Muslims', but also, and perhaps as much, to strengthen the national imagination of the Norwegian 'us' as an unmarked, normative, and homogeneous entity in an hierarchical relationship to 'them'.

For me, the most interesting questions are nevertheless the following: what are the criteria to be included in the Norwegian 'we', and what does it mean to have 'built' the "culture" which 'provides the basis for the welfare which immigrants take advantage of'? In the two quoted passages it is taken for granted that the Muslims who began arriving in Norway in around 1970 have not participated in 'building the "culture"', and that they are thus essentially excluded from the Norwegian 'we'. Similar expressions, such as 'building the country', are often used in public debates in Norway, suggesting the closeness of 'culture', 'country', and 'welfare state' on the conceptual level.

Let me try to bring out what I think are the underlying assumptions in these formulations.¹² National history is important, perceived as extending far back over the centuries. Norway was ruled by Denmark for 400 years, and was then in a union with Sweden from 1814. In more recent history, the secession from Sweden in 1905 and the experiences of the Second World War, when Nazi Germany occupied Norway, are central. In many local communities the Constitution Day celebrations focus on monuments commemorating those who died or suffered during the war. In addition, the 'building' of the welfare state in the first three decades after the Second World War is crucial. These years are often perceived as a gigantic national project (*dugnad*).

Wikan's formulation suggests that people perceive culture as being an achievement, and this might imply that they could potentially also perceive it as something which continues to be built, and that anyone who participates becomes part of it. This does not seem to be the case. Instead, the 'culture' is somehow regarded as completed. This point of view may be related to a perceived threat to the welfare state. In contemporary politics it appears for many people as something to be defended, rather than something to be continuously expanded.

While 'immigrants' are excluded from those who 'built the country' in contemporary discourse, young and middle-aged 'Norwegians' are not.¹³ The claims of 'Norwegians' coming of age after about 1970 generally rest on kinship to those who did this. Symbolic kinship is thus indirectly crucial to the imagined sameness of having 'built the country'. Accordingly, being 'Norwegian' is basically an innate quality, not something to be achieved. While the reference to generalized kinship is direct in the anonymous letter, here it is indirect.

It is also interesting that Wikan attaches importance to the fact that the immigrating parents have chosen to come to Norway. The ability to choose is central to modernity. But in her text, choice seems to signify yet another dimension of being excluded from the innate quality of ethnic belonging: 'We' who have not chosen Norway apparently have a more direct, organic, and primordial relationship to the country and its culture. In addition, I am tempted to suggest a parallel to the missionary language of conversion here. The 'immigrants' have, so to speak, converted to a new life in a new nation, and this entails certain obligations. The secularized religious tone in Wikan's

prose ('doing evil in the name of good') supports this interpretation. The unacknowledged religious flavour is, I would argue, fairly typical of public debates in Norway.

The exclusion of 'immigrants' from the national 'we' can be detected in other ways in the quoted passages. For example, Wikan criticizes Muslims for criticizing everything Norwegian. I would argue that the implicit opposite of criticism is not neutrality, but rather praise. Thus, if it is unacceptable to denounce, this might be because it is expected that one should instead extol the country's virtues. Similar demands are rarely made of other Norwegians, except when they are representing Norway abroad. I interpret refraining from criticism as an anticipated compensation for the lack of belonging in terms of ancestry. Citizenship is never quite enough, but if one compensates by not criticizing, and – even better – by praising, the lack of ethnic belonging can be compensated for in part.

This interpretation is supported by Wikan's condemnation of 'passports of convenience' (*beleilighetspass*) in other parts of her book. 'My opinion is that one is not Norwegian in practice (*i gavnet*), only in name (*i navnet*), if one has a Norwegian passport, but distances oneself from fundamental Norwegian values and does not learn Norwegian' (Wikan 1995a: 177–85). On the one hand, it seems to be possible to become Norwegian 'in practice' (*i gavnet*). On the other hand, it seems as if 'immigrants' need to act in ways which make 'Norwegians' perceive them as both loyal and proud to be Norwegian, in order for them to be accepted (Wikan 1995a: 177–85; 1999: 61). Thus 'Norwegians' have the power to set the rules, take part in the game, and act as judges as well.

One might also ask if it is not implicitly demanded that 'immigrants' should be particularly grateful for having been allowed to enter Norway. This interpretation is supported by the fact that in several places in her book, Wikan categorizes 'immigrants' as 'guests who arrive uninvited (*uinnbudt*) on their own initiative' (1995: 178). The metaphor of a host-guest relationship is often applied to immigration in Norway (Gullestad 1997b: 53), as well as in other European countries.¹⁴ The relationship between the Norwegian majority and the 'immigrants' is like a host receiving guests in his home. Even if the metaphor of the guest may seem both well intended and self-evident, it can have serious consequences for the distribution of power. Given the everyday interpretations of the rights and duties involved, a host has the right to control the resources of the home, to decide on the rules of the visit, and, accordingly, to 'put their foot down' when the guest does not conform. The centrality of this metaphor in the debates naturalizes the ethnic boundary as a relation of power. A guest has to be grateful for the hospitality received by not provoking the host by calling attention to his or her difference from the host (see also Hervik 2000). There is thus an expected exchange implied in the host-guest metaphor. The host provides 'freedom and material welfare'; the guest is expected to adopt 'basic Norwegian values'. If 'the Muslims' do not become 'like us', they had better return 'home', Wikan writes. 'Muslims' thus belong somewhere else. This point of view reflects, as do many contributions to these debates, what Liisa Malkki (1995: 495) calls 'the national order of things'. Within an ethnic-national interpretative framework, 'Muslims' in Norway often represent something extrinsic and strange, and not something

internal and essential in relation to 'us'. They are 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966).

If the guest does not adapt to the rules of the host, they might be reclassified as an intruder (*inntrenger*). Wikan's choice of words when she emphasizes that the 'Muslims' have arrived 'uninvited' is particularly interesting. In the Norwegian language the notion of uninvited guests is usually used about criminals stealing somebody's property. In neutral contexts the expression is rather 'unexpected guests' than 'uninvited guests'. I want to argue that when an uninvited guest stays on, he easily becomes not only an 'intruder', but an 'occupant' and an 'enemy' as well. There is thus an intertextual link between the notion of 'occupation' in the anonymous letter and Wikan's notion of 'uninvited guests'. These very different categories seem to belong together in a cluster. The degree to which the cluster is experienced as self-evident can be tied to the central position of the home as experiential grounding and metaphor for the nation (Gullestad 1997*b*). The home as a metaphor establishes sharp boundaries between the nation (the home) and the outside world (the foreign guests). The very categories 'host society' and 'guests' thus construct a hierarchical relationship with the 'immigrant' at the receiving end.

The three examples I have analysed thus far draw on similar underlying frames of interpretation, whether the speaker's opinion is mildly critical or vehemently anti-immigrant. Nevertheless, both of the academic commentators demonstrate what I think is a crucial point: the unintended consequence of a particular set of ideas may be the erection of 'invisible fences', even though the original, or conscious, motivation was precisely to eliminate them.

The reflections of an 'immigrant woman'

In a number of press interviews, the Labour party politician Rubina Rana reflected upon the threatening letters she received before 17 May 1999, and on her situation as a Muslim in Norway. She is drawn into the same meta-discourse revealed in the examples already discussed, a discourse that she partly inhabits and partly resists. The following comprise selected extracts from the interviews conducted both before and after 17 May 1999:

I have found my own rhythm after all these years in Norway. It suits me and Norwegian society, I believe. Even though I have been resourceful, it has not been easy for me. Integration is a difficult process. By moving to Norway I have also lost much. Among other things I miss my family. But on the other hand I have gained new insights. It has been enriching (*Aftenposten* 8 May 1999: 45).

The following passages are taken from an interview immediately after the Constitution Day Procession on 17 May:

This has been a happy day. It was particularly warming when people called out to me, 'Rubina', as I walked with the children in the procession. I felt as if every one was looking at me as a person, not just as an immigrant woman.

(Journalist: You speak about a colourful community on Norway's national day, in front of the Royal Palace. Were you not worried that this might be felt to be provocative?) First, let me say that it was a great honour for me to chair the committee responsible for National

[Constitution] Day celebrations in Oslo. This was a double honour, as I am an immigrant. And I would add that I am pleased to have started a debate on integration. These processes are not simple, and it can be good for children of immigrants to see a person with their own skin colour at the head of the procession. (*Aftenposten*, 18 May 1999: 3).

One year later, on 17 May 2000, Rubina Rana was interviewed on the Norwegian public television channel NRK1. She then emphasized that she had grown in the process, she had become 'more Norwegian' during the celebration of 17 May the year before, 'this most Norwegian days of all days'. 'I did not have historical ties to Henrik Wergeland¹⁵ and Norway, but now I have developed such ties.' She also said that she was 'proud to be an inhabitant of Oslo', and that she 'loves Oslo' (NRK1, 17 May 2000).

Rubina Rana speaks from a very ambiguous position, as an 'immigrant' politician receiving anonymous death threats because she was given a task with high symbolic value. The pleasure of being 'a person and not an immigrant woman' reveals some of the pain of seldom being able to participate inconspicuously, but being treated as a representative of a category.¹⁶ Like the woman in my second example, she conducts a struggle in order to be recognized as a unique citizen.

In her diplomatic way Rubina Rana reveals some of the reasons why she has been able to advance in Norwegian society. As I have indicated in the analysis of Unni Wikan's text, 'immigrants' need to be more positive than 'Norwegians'. There is nevertheless a mild plea in one of the interviews, suggesting the existence of fences with closed gates ('I could have wished Norwegians to be a bit more open towards us'). It is also interesting that Rubina Rana explicitly mentions 'skin colour', implying that Pakistani immigrants and their children are subjected to racialized discrimination.

Rubina Rana is one of many Norwegians with an immigrant background who demonstrates that social realities are not well understood by means of a simple discursive division between 'Norwegians' and 'immigrants'. Nevertheless, for me the most disturbing moment when working with these texts was when I discovered the racialized nationalism in the journalist's question on 17 May ('You speak about a colourful community on Norway's national day, in front of the Royal Palace. Were you not worried that this might be felt to be provocative?'). The very question reproduces the extremist view that 'coloured' Norwegians do not have a place in the 'white' nation, and that the king of Norway is not the king of all citizens. My unease was not first and foremost to discover that the journalist gave voice to such prejudices. The most disturbing was that I had myself overlooked this aspect on initially reading and even re-reading this interview. Ethnic nationalism with racial implications seems inevitable, even for a native anthropologist who has set herself the task of examining underlying doxic themes.

'Decency' and 'dregs'

In order to make sense of the many diverse opinions in the debates on immigration, large sections of the political and cultural elite now discursively limit xenophobia and racism to an imagined part of the population. They characterize this part of the population through metaphors such as the 'undercur-

rents' (*understrømmene*) and 'the dregs of the depths of the popular masses' (*grumset i folkedypet*). In order to exemplify this, I present here a quotation from a book intended for general readership written by a young politician named Kadafi Zaman (1999):

In the future Islam must be debated even more than today, not in terms of history, but in terms of the situation in present-day Norway. We have to relate to the Norwegian Muslim, not to the fundamentalist in Teheran. The dregs in the Progressive party, who barely know their own history, are not qualified to participate in such a debate. Their interpretation is only for the closed room, not for the general public. No, it is the learned people, the writers, the politicians, the artists, the musicians, and the performers who must start building bridges. Xenophobia has now become hatred, even among those who conduct, and establish the premises for, the public debates. Therefore one has to start with this elite, this is the only way to obtain a decent dialogue, a way of communicating which is based on knowledge, not rumours and lies (Zaman 1999: 95-6).

Zaman writes as a Muslim whose parents had emigrated to Norway from Pakistan, as a Labour party politician, as a democrat, as an intellectual, and as a genuine Norwegian national. As a Norwegian Muslim he wants to build bridges between religious groups. As a Labour party politician he sees the 'dregs' as limited to the Progressive party. This party has been demonized in Norwegian debates, and this demonization has made it possible for politicians in other parties to gloss over the xenophobia and racism in their own parties, not least in the Labour party. As a democrat, Zaman wants more public debate. As an intellectual, he has faith in 'learned people, writers, artists, musicians, and performers'.

Zaman's remarks are typical of the thoughts of many elite Norwegians. It is organized around a contrast between 'the dregs' (*grumset*) in the Progressive party and a 'decent dialogue'. The words 'dregs' (*grums, bunnavfall, berme*) and 'decency' (*anstendighet*) implicitly carry two different models of social life, the one elitist and hierarchical, the other a little more egalitarian. In order to identify these two models, one also needs to take into account the notions to which the twin notions 'dregs' and 'decency' are opposed: 'dregs' is linked to its antithesis 'clarity', and 'decency' to 'indecency'. The word 'dregs' is implied in an elitist model of social life. One is invited to see society as a container filled with liquid. Close to the bottom are 'dregs', people with misgivings and hate. The word is associated with something worthless, impure, and superfluous. Close to the surface one finds people with clear thoughts, knowledge, and the ability to build bridges and conduct dialogues. By constructing mental boundaries between 'dregs' and 'clarity', and between 'the depths of the people' and the people with clear minds, elite responsibility for discrimination, exploitation, and exclusion disappears. Discrimination is safely placed in the 'dregs' from which one explicitly distances oneself. This social model makes it possible for elite people to avoid reflecting about their own frames of interpretation.

The word *anstendighet* ('decency') implicitly conveys a somewhat different image of what goes on. The opposite of 'decency' is 'indecency'. In Norwegian discourses these words are often associated with sexual morals, and suggest the existence of an overwhelming desire which needs to be tamed. When the word 'decency' is used in 'immigration debates', elite people in principle have the same feelings as 'the depths of the people'. The only difference is that they

tame their feelings a little better, and provide, so to speak, a facade, in order for the feelings to be less harmful. Sometimes this is coupled with the idea that raw feelings and manners can be polished into something more refined. The social model implied in the contrast between 'decency' and 'indecent' thus allows for the existence of fundamental similarities across different political opinions and class positions. Concerning sexuality, desire is the common denominator. In this article I have attempted to identify some of the common ideas and metaphors of the 'immigration debates'. This social model is thus closer to my argument.

A passion for boundaries

Before concluding, I need to make two caveats. The first is that the five examples in this article do not represent the full discursive universe of Norwegian public debates. There are differences of opinion related to age, generation, gender, educational background, and identification with the city as opposed to the countryside. The younger one is, and the more one identifies with urban life, the more likely one is to welcome 'europeanization', 'globalization', and 'diversity' (*mangfold*) as positive challenges. For example, many Norwegian anthropologists express more 'cosmopolitan' positions in relation to 'immigrants' than that adopted by Wikan.

The other caveat is that it is not only on the discursive level that differences are negotiated and lived in Norway today. A dynamic relationship exists between rigidification at the level of categories and in everyday life practices. Recent literature presents many interesting cases of everyday social life which does not follow fixed dichotomies. In Norway, Viggo Vestel, among others, shows how young people in co-operative housing estates create new forms of action and syncretic symbolic expressions bringing together elements from many different cultural traditions (Vestel 2000). Hilde Lidén has demonstrated that the discourses about 'us' and 'them' constitute only one of many frames of reference shaping how children with different experiences interact at school, and the kinds of common ground they are able to construct together (Lidén 1999). While the discursive dichotomies between 'Norwegians' and 'immigrants' now appear to be rigid and fixed, new spaces for reflection and innovation thus continuously open up.

In the episode involving the Indian-Norwegian woman and the professor, the woman resisted the professor's hegemonic labelling of her as an 'immigrant'. Her anger induced him to turn the incident into a story. Without the anger there would have been nothing to tell, or at least a very different story. The professor's expressions of surprise and uneasiness in the face of the woman's anger demonstrate a destabilization of his sense of the 'natural' or self-evident, and the opening-up of a space for new kinds of reflection. Hegemony is thus contested in everyday life encounters as well as in public discourse.

At the same time, I maintain that by linking the voices of people who can be expected to argue with each other, doxic fields of underlying values and perceptions can be identified. In other words, I do not locate the horizon of understanding in particular types of people, but wish instead to emphasize that

these are *signs* that circulate and are available to all. The frames of interpretation which I have teased out in this article exist as symbolic resources which in given situations might potentially be employed more or less by anyone, regardless of gender, age, class, skin colour, and so on. In addition, I would argue that people in the cultural and political elite are actually instrumental in formulating, reformulating, promoting, and legitimizing such frames of understanding.

Many Norwegians now turn to the simultaneous production of differences and call for sameness. In many contexts the ideal of imagined sameness produces a solution (demands for sameness) to a problem it has itself contributed to creating. It is as though an outsider must be created, in order for the internal sameness, unity, and sense of belonging to be confirmed. History, ancestry, religion, and morality are intertwined in this form of nationalism, ethnicizing the state as an expression of collective identity. 'Immigrants' are asked to 'become Norwegian', at the same time as it is tacitly assumed that this is something they can never really achieve. 'They' are often criticized without much corresponding consideration of 'our' knowledge of 'their' traditions, or 'our' ability and willingness to reflect critically upon 'our' own. 'We' ('Norwegians'), are thus considered more advanced and hierarchically superior to 'them' ('Muslims', 'Pakistanis', 'Vietnamese', 'Tamils', 'our new countrymen from other cultures', and so on).

What seems to be at stake for many 'Norwegians' is not so much a threat from 'immigrants' as socio-economic competitors, as a threat to the imagined moral community and the Norwegian welfare state as the incarnation of this community. In cherished narratives, Norway is a victim of colonization (from Denmark), and not a colonizer.¹⁷ Norway has played an important role in peace negotiations in various regions such as the Middle East, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, and Colombia. And Norway's rate of per capita expenditure on development aid to the Third World is one of the highest in the world. 'Immigrants' who do not play down their difference are perceived as provoking hostility, and thus to threaten such narratives about Norway as a homogeneous, tolerant, anti-racist, and peace-loving society.

Norwegian ideas about sameness, generalized kinship, and the host-guest metaphor can be seen as specific combinations and permutations of ideas which can also be found elsewhere. The consistent and growing use of these ideas is in my view one of the main problems, politically and culturally, in Europe today. Almost everywhere 'race' is a pervasive element of contemporary discourse, often signalled through hints and indirection, as in denials of racism. As ideologies, racism and nationalism have a common historical origin and formal characteristics that may simultaneously overlap and contrast with one another (Miles 1993: 53-79). In contemporary debates, the focus on culture and ancestry often provides an overlapping common ground between racism and nationalism in current signifying practices. The focus on ancestry and cultural sameness implies an invisible fence for the acceptance of 'immigrants' as unmarked citizens who 'belong' in Norway. For many theorists (e.g. Balibar 1991; Barker 1981; Goldberg 1993; Hervik 1999; Rex 1986; Stolcke 1995; Tagieff 1988; Van Dijk 1992; Wiewiorka 1995) 'culture' now replaces 'race' in the rhetoric of the political right. According to these ideas, discrimination is increasingly justified by the existence of irreconcilable cultural

differences rather than by hierarchical 'races'. I see the egalitarian logic as one of the reasons why the perception of incompatible cultural differences has so quickly entered the general common sense. On the basis of the analysis presented here, one might ask, first, if the reinforced ethnification of majority nationalism is not the main foundation of contemporary forms of racism in Europe, and, secondly, if it is not just wishful thinking to limit these ideological elements to the political right.

With very few exceptions, European anthropologists have not been at the forefront of theoretical developments about racism in Europe, but rather sociologists, philosophers, and political scientists. In her recent work Unni Wikan is one of the few anthropologists who has addressed these issues.¹⁸ In my examination of her texts as native texts, I have focused on the fact that Wikan draws not only on her knowledge as an anthropologist, but also on her common sense as a Norwegian national. The lack of analytical distance in this (and many other) cases is only possible because of the resistance in North European and North American universities to the anthropological study of majority life worlds 'at home'. This resistance implies that, when it is done, it is often without the same depth of knowledge and scholarly rigour as elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the problem is in my view not most interestingly put as a slippage between acting as a specialist and acting as a native informant. Rather, I would argue, it is a question of talking from a position which, like all positions, simultaneously enables and makes blind. Every anthropological text, even the most theoretical, may be read the way I have read Wikan's recent work in this article. For example, I have argued elsewhere (Gullestad 1997a: 35) that Fredrik Barth's position as a Norwegian native is an interesting context for understanding why he was able to advance the study of ethnicity by focusing on boundaries. The emphasis on imagined sameness, and the passion for boundaries it implies, may have made him more able than others to see that ethnic boundaries are maintained because of, not in spite of, intensive social interactions between ethnically diverse individuals and groups. It can also be argued that the cultural climate in Norway, with its emphasis on sameness and consensus, might have influenced his lack of interest in the 'cultural stuff' and the power differentials and conflicts of ethnic identity. On the basis of the analyses presented in this article, I want to suggest a more dialectical model of ethnicity. In this model, first, organizational boundaries and 'cultural stuff' inflect each other, rather than being the bases of different or even opposed approaches. Secondly, the effects of power differentials and the categorization by others are acknowledged.

To be reflective about one's location is not only a question of personal will-power, but of the status of these areas of knowledge in the discipline. Because anthropologists have traditionally carved out their research objects as the romantic study of the exotic and the different, few anthropologists have studied the current upsurge of xenophobia and racism in Europe. The study of discrimination and racism necessitates asking new kinds of questions, and framing studies in ways that differ from the conventional study of this or that minority group. It is high time for anthropologists to turn their analytical gaze to the majority populations 'at home', including the anthropologist at work.

NOTES

This article draws on work in progress on Norwegian debates on immigration, funded by the IMER programme in The Research Council of Norway. I have presented previous versions to the Anthropology of Europe Workshop, University of Chicago, 9 November 2000; the Ethnicity and Nationalism Symposium, Santiago de Compostela, 17-19 April 1999; as a guest-lecture in the Department of Anthropology, University of Bergen, 6 April 2000; and at a course for doctoral students at the University of Tromsø, 12 April 2000. I thank Nina Dessau, Jan Terje Faarlund, Jim Fernandez, Peter Hervik, Helge Høibraaten, Hilde Lidén, Anne Krogstad, and Unni Wikan for valuable comments on the first drafts. The article is dedicated to the memory of Sharon Stephens, a dear friend and an outstanding anthropologist.

¹In Gullestad (1984; 1992), I have also shown how since the 1970s egalitarian ideals have come increasingly to be used between spouses inside the household.

²These ideas have also been useful elsewhere, including Denmark (Hervik 199: 248). It would seem that Danish debates on immigration are based on ideas similar to those underlying debates in Norway, though the ethnic nationalism is more explicit.

³See also Gullestad (1992: 93-112; 1996: 178-80).

⁴One can become a Norwegian citizen on the basis of having lived continuously in Norway for a period of seven years.

⁵The source for the figures in this paragraph is Bjertnæs 2000. Since 1994, the official statistical analyses in Norway use the following definition of 'immigrants': 'The population of immigrants comprises persons with two parents born abroad. The population of immigrants includes *first-generation immigrants* who have themselves immigrated, and *second-generation immigrants*, who are born in Norway from two parents born abroad' (Bjertnæs 2000: 10, translated from the Norwegian). The statistics also distinguish between immigrants from 'Western' (Western Europe, US, Canada, and Oceania) and 'non-Western' countries (Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Central and South America). Turkey is classified among the 'non-Western' countries. The statistical categorizations demonstrate the privileged status of kinship over citizenship in Norway (and Denmark). In contrast, Sweden, classifies inhabitants according to citizenship.

⁶The writer sent a copy of this letter to me, asking me to make use of it in my research.

⁷Constitution Day is often called National Day in Norway. It is celebrated throughout the country with children's parades, speeches, and parties. But since the royal family reside in Oslo, the celebrations there are especially significant, and to chair the Oslo committee is a prestigious task.

⁸Some war veterans in Norway stress that they are now against immigration for the same reason that they once were against the German occupation.

⁹I thank Professor Dag Gundersen for permission to use his story and for his valuable comments.

¹⁰This political influence is emphasized by Wikan herself: 'I believe I have played some part in making the government change its course' (Wikan 1999: 59).

¹¹This and other quotations have been translated from the Norwegian by me.

¹²Nineteenth-century Norwegian nation-building constructed an imagined sameness which failed to take into account the many immigrants to Norway over the centuries. German merchants and mining engineers, Scottish craftsmen, Swedish construction workers, American, French, and British oil workers, as well as migrant workers and refugees from many countries, have actually contributed very concretely to 'building the country'. Yet this history of immigration has not become part of Norwegian popular imagination.

¹³One exception is Erlend Loe's novel *L* (Loe 1999) in which he plays with these ideas.

¹⁴Peter Hervik (2000) has made an interesting analysis of the host-guest metaphor as a 'figured world' for majority-minority relations in Denmark. Based on canonical texts, Jacques Derrida (in Derrida & Dufourmantelle 1997) has discussed the idea of hospitality as an ethical, and not as a political, notion. In 'pure hospitality' the guest arrives unexpectedly.

¹⁵Henrik Wergeland is the poet hailed as creator of this celebration honouring the constitution as a patriotic symbol.

¹⁶'Immigrant women' are at the centre of current popular constructions of difference in Norway, articulated, among other things, in heated debates about arranged marriages. What is most at stake for 'Norwegians', it seems, is the valued personal independence of Norwegian egalitarian individualism, including the degree to which Norwegian women have become

emancipated over the last thirty years, as well as the existence of a public sphere outside family life and kinship.

¹⁷The colonial ideas brought home by sailors and missionaries seem to be important for how immigrants from the Third World are perceived. In addition, habits of thought in relation to various internal others, such as the Sami, are still at work.

¹⁸In Gullestad 2000 I have discussed Unni Wikan's ideas about 'race and culture' in Norway (Wikan 1995a; 1999).

REFERENCES

- Balibar, E. 1991. Racism and nationalism. In *Race, nation, class: ambiguous identities* (eds) E. Balibar & I. Wallerstein, 37-68. London: Verso.
- Barker, M. 1981. *The new racism*. London: Junction Books.
- Barnes, J.A. 1954. Class and committees in a Norwegian island parish. *Human Relations* 7, 39-58.
- Barth, F. (ed.) 1969. *Ethnic groups and boundaries*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Bhabha, H.K. 1999. The other question: the stereotype and colonial discourse. In *Visual culture: the reader* (eds) J. Evans & S. Hall, 370-8. London: Sage.
- Bjertnæs, M.K. 2000. Innvandring og innvandrere 2000. *Statistical Analyses* 33. Oslo: Statistics of Norway.
- Bjorgo, T. 1997. Racist and right-wing violence in Scandinavia. D.Phil. dissertation, University of Leiden.
- 1998. Entry, bridge-burning and exit options: what happens to young people who join racist groups – and want to leave? In *Nation and race: developing Euro-American racist subculture* (eds) J. Kaplan & T. Bjorgo, 231-58. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Blehr, B. 2000. Et inkluderende rituale med barn i sentrum. *Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift* 11: 1, 4-19.
- Derrida, J. & A. Dufourmantelle 1997. *De l'hospitalité*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dumont, L. 1986. *Essays on individualism: modern ideology in anthropological perspective*. Chicago: University Press.
- 1987. On individualism and equality. *Current Anthropology* 28: 5, 669-77.
- Fangen, K. 1998. Living out ethnic instincts: ideological beliefs among right-wing activists in Norway. In *Nation and race: developing Euro-American racist subculture* (eds) J. Kaplan & T. Bjorgo, 202-30. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Goldberg, D.T. 1993. *Racist culture: philosophy and the politics of meaning*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Gullestad, M. 1984. *Kitchen-table society*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- 1992. *The art of social relations: essays on culture, social action and everyday life in modern Norway*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- 1996. *Everyday life philosophers: modernity, morality and autobiography in Norway*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- 1997a. A passion for boundaries: reflections on connections between the everyday lives of children and discourses on the nation in Norway. *Childhood* 4: 1, 19-42.
- 1997b. Home, local community and nation. *Focaal* 30: 1, 39-60.
- 2000. 'Culture' the new concept of 'race'? Paper presented at the Anthropological Perspectives on the New Racism in Europe Workshop, Sixth Biennial EASA Conference, Cracow 26-9 July.
- Hervik, P. (ed.) 1999. *Den generende forskjellighet: danske svar på den stigende multikulturalisme*. Copenhagen: Hans Reticules Foreleg.
- 2000. The Danish idea of unbridgeable differences. Paper presented at the Anthropological Perspectives on New Racism in Europe Workshop, Sixth Biennial EASA Conference, Cracow 26-9 July.
- Jenkins, R. 1997. *Rethinking ethnicity: arguments and explorations*. London: Sage.
- Jonassen, C.T. 1983. *Value systems and personality in a Western civilization: Norwegians in Europe and America*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

- Kapferer, B. 1988. *Legends of people: myths of state: violence, intolerance, and political culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*. Washington, DC & London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Lidén, H. 1999. Barn – tid – rom – skiftende posisjoner: kulturelle læreprosesser i et pluralistisk Norge. D. Polit. dissertation. Trondheim: The Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Loe, E. 1999. *L*. Oslo: J.W. Cappelens forlag.
- Malkki, L. 1995. Refugees and exile: from 'refugee studies' to the national order of things. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, 495-523.
- Miles, R. 1993. *Racism after 'race relations'*. London: Routledge.
- Rex, J. 1986. *Race and ethnicity*. Stony Stratford: Open University Press.
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.
- Stolcke, V. 1995. Talking culture: new boundaries, new rhetorics of exclusion in Europe. *Current Anthropology* 36: 1, 1-24.
- Taguieff, P.-A. 1987. *La force du préjugé*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Tocqueville, A. de 1969 [1835-40]. *Om demokratiet i Amerika*. Oslo: Gyldendal.
- Van Dijk, T.A. 1993. *Elite discourse and racism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Vestel, V. 2000. Identitet og idealer blant ungdom. Paper presented at the conference, Utenfra, men hjemme – innvandrerungdom i storbyen, Oslo 30-1 March.
- Wieviorka, M. 1995. *The arena of racism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Wikan, U. 1995a. *Mot en ny norsk underklasse*. Oslo: Gyldendal.
- 1995b. Kulturfundamentalismen. *Samtiden* 5, 21-33.
- 1999. Culture: a new concept of race. *Social Anthropology* 7: 1, 57-64.
- Zaman, K. 1999. *Norge i svart, hvitt og brunt*. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Barrières invisibles: égalitarisme, nationalisme et racisme

Résumé

Avec sa combinaison spécifique d'un État providence bureaucratique et d'une économie globalisée et ouverte, la Norvège, ainsi que les autres pays nordiques, offre un contexte particulièrement intéressant pour examiner la relation entre l'égalitarisme, le nationalisme et le racisme en Europe. Une racialisation de la différence se produit, alors que l'immigration émerge comme un terrain propice à un discours racial et raciste, et comme lieu de conjoncture entre l'État providence et ses citoyens. En présentant une analyse du débat contemporain sur l'immigration en Norvège, cet article démontre comment l'égalité conçue comme similitude ('similitude imaginée'), sous-tend une ethnification croissante de l'identité nationale. Les différences sont marquées dans les proclamations et les points de vue se rapportant aux métaphores sur la maison et la vie domestique, à un lien étroit entre le territoire et la parenté en général, et à l'importance renouvelée du Christianisme luthérien en contraste avec l'Islam. En conséquence, un modèle de l'identité et des relations de groupes est avancé, selon lequel les limites organisationnelles et la substance culturelle sont conjuguées au lieu de servir de bases pour des approches différentes ou même opposées. Il est aussi avancé dans cet article que les anthropologues doivent s'intéresser plus sérieusement aux populations majoritaires d'Europe.