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12 The Colonial and the Post-Colonial: A View from Scandinavia on Italian Minority Issues

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There has been a tendency in the academic literature on nationhood to emphasize anything that nations might have in common – print-capitalism, the standardizing of mass education, citizenship as a basis for rights, industrialism and so on (Grillo 1980, Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983). This perspective has much to recommend it, and the uniformities between modern nation-states are indeed striking, not least when seen through the lens of comparative social anthropology. The socio-cultural grammars of different nation-states do display important structural and syntactical parallels. On the other hand, this should not divert attention from differences, which are not mere surface phenomena, but which pertain to structural features such as forms of national discourse, principles of integration and mechanisms of exclusion. Historical and assumed contrasts between Germany and France thus inform some of the literature on nationhood (for example Kohn 1946, Dumont 1991); contrasts between “new world” and “old world” nationalism are also occasionally invoked; and some (such as Smith 1983) even deny that the multi-ethnic, future-oriented state ideologies of newly emancipated African countries should be regarded as nationalism at all. In the introduction to this volume, Grillo (see also Grillo 1998) emphasizes the differences not just between the semantics of nationhood, but also in ways of reconciling cultural variation with social and political integration in a state.

As a contribution to the comparative study of nationalisms and minority politics, this chapter offers a comparison between some features of ethnic and cultural complexity in Italy and Norway. The coupling seems unlikely; if anything, in the popular European imagination, Italy and Norway represent opposites in almost every respect. As European stereotypes would have it, one is warm, swarthy, sensuous and Southern,

while the other is cold, blond, frigid and Northern; one is Catholic, the other is Lutheran; one is socially fragmented, the other is socially homogeneous; one is dominated by family networks and an informal sector economy; the other is rule-abiding and run on principles of formal justice; one favours aesthetics over ethics, the other favours ethics over aesthetics and utility over everything; one cultivates pleasure and a certain *dolce far niente*, the other owes its frightful efficiency to a joyless Protestant work ethic – and so on. Not to mention demographics: although the two countries located at either extreme of Europe are of roughly the same size and shape, with a distinct North–South axis, Italy’s population of 57 million is more than twelve times that of Norway (4.5 million). These contrasts make the similarities, to be explored later, all the more intriguing.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I present a brief comparison between the three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden and Norway), indicating important differences in the dominant modes of exclusion. This is followed by a comparison of the histories of nation-building and of migration in Italy and Norway. The comparison is deepened by way of some key issues in domestic discourse over the integrity and “essence” of the nation, followed by a comparison of discourses and practices relating to minorities.

The main point of this exercise, apart from shedding light on variations between processes of exclusion and inclusion in different European countries, is to show that the study of multiethnic societies requires a sensitivity to local particularities of both social and symbolic kinds. The statistical and questionnaire-based methods often used as a basis for generalization and comparison of European policies of migration and integration, conceal differences in the local handling of cultural difference that may be the result of deep structural differences, concerning personhood, ethos, kinship, local organization and so on. While this contribution cannot cover everything relevant, it addresses a few issues and thereby suggests what kind of material we shall need in order to develop a truly comparative anthropology of migration in Western Europe.

Discourses of Exclusion in the Scandinavian Countries

John Rex’s distinction, mentioned by Grillo in the introduction to this book, between control agendas, social agendas and difference agendas in minority politics, can be a useful starting-point for a brief comparison between the Scandinavian countries. In spite of their similarities, it can be argued that for each Scandinavian country one of these agendas predominates.

Naturally, the Scandinavian countries have a lot in common. Following the usual form of social classification, they all look the same when viewed from a distance: cold, rich, well organized. There is also a general feeling in all countries of belonging to an extended family. Although books are translated between the languages, they are to a great extent mutually intelligible. A Swedish woman is in charge of my son in his kindergarten, and no parent would even dream of complaining about her undiluted Swedish language. However, there are important differences too, which are naturally magnified in local identity politics; the shaping of national identity in Sweden and Denmark has in no small degree come about through mutual contrasting, and Norwegian nationhood was developed, in the nineteenth century, through a double contrast to Sweden (the politically dominant neighbour) and Denmark (the culturally dominant neighbour). Swedes are perceived as efficient, bureaucratic and formal; Norwegians as rural, uncultured and (lately) vulgarly rich; while Danes are seen as the Italians of Scandinavia – laidback, informal, enjoying a Continental *joie de vivre* unknown in melancholic, forested Northern Scandinavia. Their capital cities can be seen as an index to their differences – from stately, Baltic, watery, serious Stockholm; via smallish, aspiring Oslo, whimsically searching for an urban identity in a country basing its national ethos on the rural life; to sprawling, cosmopolitan, liberal Copenhagen. Swedes and Norwegians take the ferry to Copenhagen at the weekends to party; no Dane is known to have gone in the other direction for the same reason.

Notwithstanding their mutual differences, all three countries have social democratic welfare states which are still trying to ensure the formal equality of all citizens (but not necessarily those of aliens); they all have their small extreme-right fringe groups which militantly and occasionally violently oppose current threats to pure Germanic appearance and language in the population, as well as larger population segments which oppose the new poly-ethnic situation in more moderate ways. In Denmark and Norway, right-wing populist parties that place resistance to immigration high on the agenda can occasionally get more than 20 per cent of the votes in elections. In Sweden, no similar party exists.

Regarding immigration policy, Sweden has received many more immigrants and refugees in recent decades than Denmark and Norway, both in absolute and relative numbers. Foreign-born residents in 2001 make up about ten per cent of the total Swedish population, while the percentage in both Denmark and Norway is between four and five; however, these figures include West European and North American immigrants as well – groups which, in all three countries, comprise about half of the actual immigrant population, but which are not included in the popular conceptions of immigrants. The term “immigrant” (*innvandrere*) in Scandinavia suggests a

physically distinct (dark-skinned) member of the working class, legitimately or illegitimately in the country, employed or unemployed. In popular discourse, it is not common to distinguish between labour migrants, who typically arrived during the 1960s and 1970s, and refugees, who arrived under very different conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. In Sweden, Yugoslavs and Syrians form large communities, while Turks make up the largest single group in Denmark, and Pakistanis occupy a similar place in Norway. In all three countries, moreover, the tendency is for immigrants to be most numerous in the metropolitan areas – in greater Copenhagen, greater Stockholm, Malmö, and the Oslo region. Finally, the public debates about immigration have followed similar lines in all three countries, where issues regarding linguistic pluralism, religious rights, exclusion from the labour market and crime rates have figured prominently.

A main problem has been perceived by the political authorities in the three countries as the problem of integration, a term widely used by politicians and bureaucrats, who speak of minority issues as a synonym for “assimilation”. How should the immigrant populations be integrated in such a way as to enable them to enjoy equal rights and equal opportunities to the majority population? There is a characteristic Scandinavian way of framing this issue – integration is seen in terms of similarity-cum-equality – but it is dealt with differently in Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

The idea of social engineering is still deep-seated in Scandinavian political culture. The good and just society is, according to this vision, achieved by giving all inhabitants the same formal rights and opportunities through the institutions of the nation-state. Large-scale, standardized solutions to specific problems are believed to apply universally. The state is responsible for implementing and monitoring the processes of integration of immigrants. Unlike in Italy, no systematic distinction is made between society and the state. When Riccio reports (this volume) that Italians try to protect their piece of urban space and the integrity of their families against immigrants, this is in clear contrast to the typically Scandinavian way of handling immigration, which would consist exclusively in appeals to politicians and local authorities.

In one of the most penetrating recent studies of the political predicament of immigrants in Sweden, Thomas Gür (*staten och nykomlingarna*, “The state and the newcomers”, 1996) argues that the strong involvement of the state prevents the use and development of informal networks, and thereby tends to turn immigrants into clients dependent on state support. Comparing the situation of immigrants in Sweden with that prevailing in countries such as Canada and Australia, he shows how different immigrant groups, drawing on specific social resources, rapidly become autonomous and self-sufficient in countries

where the state encourages independent initiatives and does not seek to standardize the behaviour of immigrants by subjecting them to a rigid bureaucratic regime. Another general point in relation to the ideology of social engineering is that “immigrants” is a term indiscriminately lumping together individuals, families and larger groups in extremely different situations, and that any policy based on standardized solutions (for example, relating to language training, employment strategies and education) is bound to fail, since the requirements of different groups and individuals vary significantly. Importantly, the cause of failed integration is located in the state bureaucracy in Sweden, in other words a *control agenda*.

There is no terminological distinction between *similarity* and *equality* in the Scandinavian languages (see Gullestad 1992). Since *likhet/lighed*, which has politically important, positive connotations, translates both as similarity and as equality, an automatic equivalence is established between the two. When the international youth campaign “Equal but different” was launched in Norway in the mid-1990s, thus, it was difficult to translate the slogan. *Lik, men forskjellig* (“Similar/equal, but different”) evidently did not make sense. As a consequence, similarity is believed to be a necessary condition for equality. The general conflation between the two meanings of *likhet* leaves the impression that cultural difference (from “us”) is tantamount to lacking something as the other is still not “equal” (i.e. similar); and also contributes to creating a rather confusing framework for debates about cultural rights. One cannot, within this conceptual framework, be culturally different and politically equal. Many immigrants feel that they have been offered the worst of both worlds in this respect: they are offered similarity (especially in the Norwegian case) in the realms of language and religion, where many of them demand the right to be different; while they are not offered equality in the realms of education and work, where equal treatment is essential for integration proper to come about.

There is moreover an awkward doublebind in official communication about culture in all three countries, due to a widespread essentialist understanding of culture. This closely parallels the situation in Italy. Immigrants have generally faced an impossible choice: either become culturally Scandinavian, or retain your own culture. Of course, neither option is feasible in practice. A migrant can never shed his or her cultural background entirely, even in a totally new cultural environment, but he or she cannot retain it unmodified in a new environment either.

Regarding the conceptualization of culture, there has – as noted by several contributors to this volume – been a general shift in recent years, at least among activists and researchers, a shift which has scarcely been

followed up by policy-makers and politicians, a notable exception being the recent Parekh Report in Britain (Runnymede Trust 2000). Rather than conceiving of the world as consisting of neatly bounded, clearly delineated “cultures”, theorists now see culture as a dynamic field, marked by flows and variation, rather than as a fixed entity with definite boundaries. Yet, ideas reifying and contrasting “their culture” and “our culture” proliferate and underlie a lot of policies. This way of thinking implies a strong cultural determinism, and indeed the problems experienced by immigrants are frequently accounted for through cultural explanations. Usually, this cultural determinism goes together with an idea of the “white man’s burden”, but it is also sometimes activated in a relativist context where “the other culture” is seen as equivalent to “our culture”. Both stances imply impossible options, strengthen boundaries between “us and them”, and freeze culture in the same fashion as Romantic nationalism does.

In her book *Mot En Ny Norsk Underklasse* (“Towards a new underclass”), and in several newspaper articles published in the latter half of the 1990s, social anthropologist Unni Wikan (1995) questions the ability of immigrants (chiefly, it seems, Pakistani, although this is implicit in the book) to adapt to the cultural values and practices of Norway. Her main concern is the predicament of second-generation girls who are seen as the victims of an authoritarian patriarchy. Following recent American theory of culture, Wikan rejects essentialism, but seems to reintroduce it through the back door when she posits a Norwegian set of values as a common denominator of the various groups that make up Norwegian society today. Her controversial book highlights the importance of gender equality and, between the lines, cultural homogeneity, for social cohesion. This work expresses a *discourse of difference*: what is at stake amounts to cultural values.

Cultural variation is difficult to reconcile with nationhood and the integration of minorities in all three countries, and immigrants remain a category apart. However, the causes of exclusion differ. In Sweden, the state is seen as an obstacle; in Norway, the threshold – insurmountable for many immigrants – is culture; in Denmark, the third discourse, that relating to social integration, is prevalent. There, it has been pointed out, it may be said that *den danske hygge* (“Danish cosiness”) functions as an efficient mechanism of exclusion at the level of informal social interaction. Informal Danish cosiness, which is proverbially enacted around a table with plenty of food and drink, is a pleasant form of interaction for all who take part, but not for those who do not, who are by default excluded. A heated debate in that country was initiated in the mid-1990s by sociologist Mehmet Ümit Necef’s notion of “the white woman’s burden”. In a newspaper interview (with *Politiken*) Necef argued, slightly tongue-in-cheek, that for immigrants

to become properly integrated into Danish society, they had to be allowed into the beds of Danish women. In other words, the problem of integration was located in informal social life. It was not enough to work, go to school and vote with ethnic Danes. Necef thus highlights the *social agenda* of discourse about minority issues in Denmark.

In other words, it could be said that the feeling of exclusion among immigrants can be traced to Enlightenment causes in Sweden, to Romantic causes in Norway, and to processes of informal social life in Denmark. What about Italy? One would by default expect Italy to be most similar to Denmark, that emphatically Southern, fun-loving, emotional, warm and charmingly disorganized country – as the Swedish–Norwegian stereotype would have it. However, it may yet be the case that the most fruitful comparisons are to be made between Italy and Norway.

Histories of Nation-building and Migration

In addition to everything else, Scandinavia consists of two of Europe’s oldest states and one of the youngest. Denmark and Sweden have never been colonized, and can trace the history of their statehood (albeit not their nationhood) back to medieval times. Norway, portrayed in domestic school curricula and official propaganda as the true descendant of the kingdom located roughly in the same location until the mid-fourteenth century, came into existence as an independent state only in 1905. It had been a Danish province for centuries until 1814, and the junior partner of an enforced union with Sweden since then. Occupied by Germany during the Second World War, the country seems a more precarious construction than its two neighbours, and it is renowned for the strength of its collective sense of nationhood. It was during the union with Sweden that modern Norway was slowly shaped, largely through the fashioning of a distinct national culture drawing on rural tradition often mixed with European high culture, typically in the music of Edvard Grieg. Unlike Italy, Norway had no traditional high culture to draw on in its incipient nation-building. At the same time, both countries were slow in the making compared to other Western European countries – Italy because of internal fragmentation, Norway because of foreign domination – and the Risorgimento was followed eagerly and enthusiastically by Norwegian intellectuals (ironically, Mazzini himself regarded Scandinavia as one nation, united by language, history and “race”).

There are also relevant parallels between the two countries’ histories of migration. From the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, both countries were net exporters of people. As much as a third of the

Norwegian population migrated, largely to North America, between 1850 and the First World War. Both Norway and Italy (at least south of Rome) were considered underdeveloped and impoverished parts of Europe until well into the twentieth century, which naturally explains the high rates of emigration. Since the late 1960s, both countries have been on the receiving end, attracting migrants from a great variety of origins. Unlike in France or Britain, where the bulk of immigrants come from dismantled colonial empires, the historical link between receiving and sending country has either been tenuous or non-existent. In spite of Italy's colonial adventures in Africa, there seemed to be no pre-existing colonial, hierarchical slot into which one could classify immigrants (however, see Sòrgoni, this volume). Below, I shall explore how Norway and Italy have, in different ways, drawn upon existing forms of social classification in order to place the threatening foreigners into familiar categories. Their prior histories of mass emigration are, incidentally, strangely absent from contemporary discourses of immigration.

In proportion to the total population, Italy and Norway have roughly the same numbers of non-Western immigrants, that is about 2.5 per cent, or one in forty. These parallels – belated statehood, histories of migration, recent prosperity, and pattern and intensity of recent immigration – may serve as a starting-point for a discussion of more complex issues. Let us begin with the domestic discourses of nationhood and its challenges, before moving on to issues relating directly to immigrants.

Centre and Periphery

Many countries are simultaneously culturally integrated and socially divided through a shared master discourse about a central conflict or tension in society. This is interesting in the context of immigration and new cultural complexities, since such master discourses, being both centripetal and centrifugal in their functioning, create templates for thinking and acting in relation to differences within the nation. In Britain, the key division is arguably class; in the USA, it is race; in Trinidad and Mauritius, it would definitely be ethnicity, and so on. In Italy, the North/South divide is fundamental to the maintenance of national identity (see Pratt, this volume), and in Norway, the constitutive tension of society is the historical opposition between the urban and the rural (see Eriksen 1993b). This tension is unparalleled in the other Scandinavian countries. Denmark is a small, flat, densely populated country with short distances and no real geographic periphery; Sweden is a centralized state where all roads lead to Stockholm and where economically marginal areas have been

unceremoniously and efficiently depopulated during the past century. In Norway, by contrast, decentralization is a key term in domestic political discourse. For one thing, the sources of Norway's wealth – oil, fish, hydro-electricity, wood – are in outlying areas; but generous subsidies also emanate from the centre to regions which would otherwise not have been economically viable. For centuries, the only city worthy of the name was Hanseatic Bergen in the West. National imagery, moreover, is associated with nature and the rural life – hardly any tourist agency markets Oslo as an interesting destination in its own right, and even picturesque Bergen is chiefly depicted as the most convenient point of departure for fjord tours.

The dominant nineteenth-century form of European nationalism drew its inspiration in part from Herderian romanticism, in part from French political ideas. A widely shared assumption in the urban élites was the "organic" link between language and nationhood (race was less important then, and reached its zenith only in the years before the Second World War). The case for an Italian nation seemed strong – it was, after all, the country of Dante. Nevertheless, dialect variation in Italy is such that a traveller who has learnt standard Italian will experience great difficulties understanding the vernacular of a great many Italians, especially in the South. In this, Italy is more typical than one might assume; hardly anywhere in Europe does the posited one-to-one relationship between language and nationhood exist.

Unlike in Italy, dialect variation formed the focus of an important current in Norwegian nationalism. The written language, which was Danish in the nineteenth century (no attempts were made by the Swedes to assimilate the Norwegians), was subjected to various reforms well into the post-war years. The most radical proposal nevertheless came in the 1950s, and led to the development of an entirely new written language, "New Norwegian" (*nynorsk*), created single-handedly by the self-taught scholar and political activist Ivar Aasen (1813–96) and based on those dialects he approved of for their assumed authenticity (Aasen, eagerly excavating any trace of Old Norse, disliked the hybrid speech of townsmen and the "impure" dialects of the south-east). To this day, the tension between the assumed "Dano-German" culture of urban Norway and the assumed "Norse" culture of rural areas forms the backbone of Norwegian politics and social classification. The periodically very bitter relationship between New Norwegian (used by ten to twenty per cent of the population) and Danish-influenced standard Norwegian effectively epitomizes this tension. All schoolchildren have to learn both varieties, and state media are obliged to broadcast 25 per cent of their programmes in New Norwegian.

Contrary to expectations that arise from national stereotypes, then, the differences in the politics of language reveal a hierarchical, centralist

tendency in Italy, while Norwegian language policy is the ever provisional result of compromise, decentralization, bitter conflicts and shifting standards. The Herderian notion of equivalence between language and *Volk* works only in theory here as elsewhere: Italian dialects vary significantly (and there is no definite fit between linguistic and national boundaries, as witnessed in Corsica and parts of south-eastern France); and Norway is split – notwithstanding the presence of an indigenous population, the Sami, in the North – between standards influenced by Danish and rural dialects, respectively.

Linguistic differences offer templates for handling diversity. In the Italian case, they are ordered hierarchically; in Norway, the result is symmetrical conflict and competition. In the latter case, pluralism has come about not as a result of pluralist convictions, but due to compromise.

The language situations reflect the town/countryside (Norway) and North/South (Italy) divides. Both offer templates for classifying people, but in relation to immigrants they work differently. The Norwegian ideal is equality mediated by the state; the Italian ideal is hierarchical diversity arising from civil society.

Regarding national cohesion, the two countries are very different. Norway, a very cohesive nation in the sense that ethnic Norwegians tend to emphasize their national identity, has had plenty of D'Azeglios (whose famous statement 'Now that we have made Italy, all that remains is to make Italians' is quoted by Pratt in this volume), that is to say zealous Norwegianizers determined to instil national pride in the population and cleanse its culture of questionable foreign influence. Norwegian resistance to EU membership (in two referenda, 1972 and 1994, it declined to join with narrow margins) can be seen as an instance of insular nationalism, but also reflects a hierarchical relationship to the outside world. Ideals of equality stop at the Swedish border. In that Northern country, moreover, it would be difficult to come across that proverbial North Italian who argues that Garibaldi's feat did not consist in uniting Italy, but in dividing Africa – adding, perhaps, for good measure, that D'Azeglio's goal (to create Italians) was never achieved; that the people living in Italy are even today primarily Lombardians, Romans, Sicilians and so on. Although it is not perceived as ethnic, the North/South divide in Italy is in important ways reminiscent of the North/South divide in Yugoslavia before the break-up; Slovenes complaining about Serbs who never paid their parking tickets, Kosovars who could only be used for the simplest manual work, and Macedonians whose folk music was beautiful, but who lacked higher civilization.

Several of the chapters in this book argue that Italy is divided by a colonial situation, North dominating and oppressing South – Grillo even

talks about an Orientalist discourse about the South. Similarly, it could be said that Norway is united in a post-colonial situation. Its national identity has for two hundred years been forged in direct opposition to the dominant external powers, chiefly Denmark and Sweden. While modern Swedish and Danish fiction deal with the human condition, modern Norwegian fiction tries to define the unique qualities of Norway. In spite of the internal tensions, therefore, the sense of national identity is deep and nearly universal, and the Norwegian nation is imagined as horizontal and homogeneous.

Pratt (this volume) distinguishes between political unity and cultural diversity in his assessment of the Italian condition. At the time of the Risorgimento, Italy already existed as a network of like-minded élites able to subordinate the sprawling, diverse masses. These networks were both geographic and class-based, concentrated in the North and the urban middle classes. In the Norwegian situation, the explicit ideal is that of equality-cum-similarity, and the considerable regional differences are undercommunicated in nationalist discourse. Although the "Northern ants, Southern grasshoppers" contrast certainly has its parallels (the proverbially extroverted and spontaneous North Norwegians are often cast as the Norwegian grasshoppers), unity through similarity is the cultural norm. Schoolchildren are taught that Norway is culturally homogeneous and socially egalitarian, largely because feudalism was weak and inefficient in that thinly populated, mountainous and poor country.

Both in Norway and in Italy, then, there were existing ways of handling domestic cultural variation before the influx of immigrants. The Norwegian way was missionary activity and assimilation – the road to equality was similarity. Nowhere was this more evident than in Norwegian policy towards the Sami. The Sami, the indigenous people of Northern Scandinavia, traditionally transhumant reindeer herders, have for two hundred years been offered similarity (their drums and other shamanistic paraphernalia were burnt at Kautokeino as early as the 1780s), but it was only when international media became interested in their cultural assets, from around 1980, that they were grudgingly offered linguistic rights by the state. The Italian way has been hierarchy and subordination; similarity was neither possible nor desirable, but social integration did not require it. A typical Norwegian discussion begins with the words, "Really, I think we agree, but...". Differences are undercommunicated. Men no longer wear bow ties except at weddings; the Crown Prince is about to marry a single mother from Kristiansand; the polite term of address (*De* – equiv. to Italian *lei*) is nearly extinct, and so on.

Templates of Classification

The Caribbeanist, Harmannus Hoetink (1973) once suggested that a major difference between slavery in the Catholic and Protestant colonies consisted in the modes of integration between planters and slaves. In the Catholic areas, he said, slaves were baptized and offered a subordinate place in the greater family, that is on the lower rungs of a caste-like system encompassed by the Faith. In the Protestant areas, by contrast, no institutionalized religious hierarchies were available since faith was a matter of a direct relationship between God and (wo)man. Thus equality was communicated internally, and a sharp boundary was drawn between the egalitarian in-group and the slaves, who were in every respect beyond the pale. The bloodiest slave uprisings took place in British Jamaica and the Dutch Guianas, and British Barbados was widely considered to be the cruellest of all the colonies, seen from a slave's point of view.

This contrast could be a starting-point for comparing the handling of immigrants in Protestant Norway and Catholic Italy. Culture looms large in Norwegian discourse of selfhood and otherness. Important debates about immigrants in recent years have concerned cultural practices such as arranged marriages (widely assumed to be enforced marriages), Islam (including the building of mosques), and female circumcision.

Feminist issues are at the forefront of Norwegian (and other Scandinavian) discourse about immigration. The most regularly recurrent question in public debate during the past five years has been the predicament of Muslim girls of the second generation, wedged "between two cultures" and often obliged to marry relatives from their country of origin. Another way of emphasizing equality is through the argument that immigration should be limited because immigrants may not enjoy exactly the same standard of living as Norwegians. Personally, I have once or twice suggested publicly that it might in the long run be good for Norway to allow the development of relatively poor immigrant communities, in order to remind ourselves that all is not well outside our borders; this argument does not go down well in Norway, where equality ideals are absolute within national borders and irrelevant outside them. When social scientists study the conditions of life among immigrants, comparisons are made with ethnic Norwegians, not with conditions in their countries of origin.

The welfare state manages equality well but lacks tools for dealing with difference. Rich in infrastructure and poor in inhabitants, Norway is more of a panoptical society than Italy. The proportion of illegal immigrants is thus much lower. Italy is criticized for not following the dicta from Brussels; Norway complies with every EU rule without even being a member.

These features of Norwegian society seem to lack parallels in Italy. The historically hierarchical relationships that obtain within Italy, and also between Italians and foreigners such as Albanians and North Africans, make the Italian handling of difference in theory deeply different from the typical Norwegian way. The immigrants in Norway come from further afield, from countries with which Norway has no historical connection. The transnational networks of the Catholic Church, which facilitate the integration of Catholic immigrants, similarly lack parallels in Protestant Norway. Protestant immigrants are almost a contradiction in terms, and the Catholics, such as Filipinos and Latin Americans, are not thought of primarily in terms of religion. The notion that a shared urban space, which is regulated by local, largely kin-based networks, is threatened by the aliens, is also unknown in Norway, where the state and local authorities are seen as responsible for social cohesion.

In Norwegian immigration policy, a sharp distinction is made between labour migrants and refugees. The Senegalese selling goods on the streets in Rimini, studied by Riccio (this volume), would be very hard to find in legalistic, panoptical Norway – they may, at most, be encountered in one known location in downtown Oslo during the short Scandinavian summer. Without a permit, a vendor will normally be out of business within five minutes. Permits, of course, are impossible to get for non-white itinerant merchants.

Parallels

Few European countries are as different as Norway and Italy, and thus far this chapter has accentuated the differences. It is, therefore, appropriate to point out that in important regards, immigration issues are dealt with in remarkably similar ways in the two countries. These shared features are likely to be found in other European countries as well.

Stereotyping and Social Distance

'An Italian thief is a thief, a Moroccan thief is a Moroccan' Pratt writes (this volume). Classificatory grids become increasingly vague and diffuse as perceived social distance grows. In parts of Norway where there are few immigrants, all immigrants (and they come from all parts of the world) tend to be associated with a few cultural characteristics, while the grid is more detailed in multiethnic parts of Oslo. Somali are thus considered "bad" and Tamils "good" immigrants. Naturally, no similar sweeping generalizations exist for ethnic Norwegians, who are individualized. This mechanism is

probably one of the most universal features of social classification: familiarity leads to individualization, social distance to cultural essentialism and gross stereotyping. Mai notes (this volume) that Italian media associate immigrants with 'hygienic degradation and moral degeneration ... smuggling, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and theft'. While Norwegian media may be slightly more cautious, similar stereotypes are widespread in the population. 70 per cent of the Italian population, it is reported, feel that immigration has led to an increase in crime. In Norway, the neologism *innvandrerkriminalitet* ("immigrant criminality") was coined in the early 1990s to suggest a link between immigration and crime rates. Criminological research has revealed that this assumed connection is at best questionable.

Othring Terminology

A hierarchy of Norwegian others would place other Scandinavians as "not quite foreign", North Europeans and North Americans as "culturally close", and South Europeans as "different". Indeed, Scandinavian stereotypes of Italians traditionally lump them with other Mediterranean peoples, as swarthy, highly emotional Catholics living in societies that are "less developed" and certainly less ordered than their own. The quintessential Italian in the Scandinavian imagination, naturally, is more likely to come from Palermo than from Milan. However, in the 1990s, the neologism *fremmedkulturelle* ("culturally alien people") was coined for non-European immigrants – whether they were computer engineers from Bangalore, economists from Santiago, or camel nomads from Somalia.

The Italian terminology, described by Maritano in this volume, includes terms like the general *stranieri* (foreigners) and the more specific *extracomunitari* (non-EU) – in theory, Norwegians are actually *extracomunitari*. In addition, both languages have more detailed terminologies, including terms like *marocchini* (dark-skinned people, lit. Moroccans) and *pakkis* ("Paki"). Again, it must be pointed out that Italian usage to some extent grafts the new differences onto pre-existing templates; Mai thus notes that the *marocchini* of a North Italian's experience in fact used to be South Italians.

A recent (Autumn 2000) public debate in Norway concerned the use of the term *neger* ("negro"). Blacks living in the country felt it to be pejorative, while most of the Norwegians contributing to the discussion in the media defended it as a "neutral" descriptive term. What the latter did not realise was that an emphasis on skin colour, no matter how benign in intention, creates a classificatory grid based on appearance ("race") and not

on culture or place of origin. Lumping Kenyans together with Trinidadians is not even culturalist; it cannot be described as anything but racist.

Notwithstanding "negroes" in Norway and Sicilians in Italy, Islam forms the most important boundary in both countries. Muslims are, in general, emerging as Europe's defining other, particularly since the Gulf War (where the Antichrist himself, Saddam Hussain, was – ironically – a mainly secular tyrant). Islam is nevertheless pitted against Christianity as well as secularism (Eriksen 1995, Borchgrevink 2000 for Norwegian details).

Racism

Comparative work on ethnic discrimination in Europe has suggested that racism, strictly speaking, is less widespread in Italy than in Northern Europe (Wieviorka *et al.* 1994). Sòrgoni's chapter in this book confirms that the discourse on race was less confident and less unequivocal in Italy during the interwar years than in Northern Europe. Nevertheless, she shows that clear boundaries were eventually created in order to prevent Italians from mixing with colonial subjects in North-Eastern Africa, and she also interestingly argues that there was a great deal of continuity between the liberal phase and the fascist phase regarding discourse on race and eugenics. In the Scandinavian countries, where Nazi parties were never large, eugenics and race theory were nevertheless highly influential in the interwar years. A sterilization law with strong eugenic elements was passed in Norway in 1934 against the vote of a single member of parliament (Hviid Nielsen *et al.* 2001: 102). It was supported by all major political parties, including Labour, whose party line consisted of purifying the Aryan race in order to develop a rational, just, efficient and technocratic society. Short of physical extermination, their view was identical with the Nazi view, although the justification differed. The recent *neger* debate reveals that a large part of the Norwegian population still feels that physical appearance makes an important difference. As a guest on a prime-time talkshow in February 2001, the Norwegian foreign minister, Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland of the Labour Party, made a blatantly racist joke about an African politician he had recently met, describing him laughingly as "Bongo from Congo".

In sum, it seems as if racism proper is more deeply ingrained in Norwegian than in Italian representations. Two racist murders took place there in 2000; both victims were a hundred per cent Norwegian, culturally speaking (one was adopted from India as a small child, the other the son of an African man and a Norwegian woman), but physically distinct. Yet, culturalism as a rule tends to overrule racism in Norway as well. Zinn (this

volume) quotes a reference in *L'Espresso* to 'the likeable Brazilians, who have rhythm in their blood'; and in Copenhagen, Somali men are known to have taken Spanish classes in order to be able to pass as Cubans in the city's nightspots. In Oslo, similarly, where people are regularly exposed to various categories of immigrants, socially relevant distinctions are made between West Indians and Gambians, the latter being associated with drug-related crimes.

Multiculturalism on the Political Left

The experience of the *Forum* in Bologna, described by Però (this volume), is reminiscent of similar initiatives in Norway. The standard response to a collective sense of injustice in twentieth-century Scandinavia has consisted in forming an association or a trade union. In Norway, numerous such organizations, founded by immigrants since 1970, exist. Typically, they are sponsored by government bodies, and more often than not receive the blessings of Left-leaning political parties. Like the *Forum*, such organizations contribute to continuing segregation and wield little real political power. When immigrants run for office, they are presented as "immigrant candidates".

Views on Integration

Salih reports (this volume) that four criteria used to measure the degree of integration among immigrant women are (i) period of residence, (ii) whether or not they have a permit of residence, (iii) linguistic competence, and (iv) knowledge of the 'network of services available at the local level'. In the Norwegian case, the validity of the second criterion goes without saying – without a permit, immigrants are unceremoniously expelled – while the third criterion, that of language, is considered crucial by the authorities.

Several of the contributors to this book, notably Però and Zontini, deal with the double standards of a rhetoric of inclusion matched by a practice of exclusion. Although one might expect Scandinavia to be different, this is a common complaint there as well. Ethnic discrimination in the labour and housing markets is both widespread and well documented in all three Scandinavian countries.

To sum up: there are major differences regarding pre-existing templates for dealing with difference in Italy and Norway. In Italy, grids include the regional hierarchy and the tension between secular Leftist politics and the Catholic church; in Norway, the main contrast is that obtaining between Norwegians and foreigners. Nevertheless, there are

important similarities regarding notions and practices concerning immigrants: stereotypes are often negative and associated with perceived social distance (including social rank, naturally – nobody ever complained of the brownness or cultural alienness of the Sultan of Brunei); culturalism is often invoked as an explanatory variable, race less frequently; successful integration is associated with linguistic proficiency and ability to deal with the shared institutions of society; and Islam is considered the quintessence of Otherness. A final, interesting parallel concerns the emergence of self-irony among immigrants. Zinn (this volume) describes media appearances by immigrants making culturalist jokes at their own expense; in Norway, a moderately successful satirical show is called "Radio Yalla" and involves immigrants playing out the majority's stereotyping of themselves. This kind of self-deprecation has proven successful in the gay movement, and it may indicate that European societies are entering a new phase in their dealings with majority/minority relationships.

Equality or Nothing?

A normative view implicit in much scholarly work on minorities and migration in Western Europe, including this chapter, defends a pluralism which (i) is anti-essentialist in that it does not divide the population into mutually exclusive groups, (ii) recognizes hybrid cultural forms as equal to "pure" forms in terms of rights, and (iii) regards cultural variation in society as a continuum characterized by differences in degree, not by unambiguous boundaries. Moreover, the values of equality that are theoretically (and desirably) prevalent in politics and in the economy, ought not to be translated into demands for similarity in civil society and the domestic sphere. If cultural similarity is required for social integration to be successful, this position argues, the result will in all likelihood be fundamentalism and entrenchment on both sides; and the hybrids, who are the true-born children of the migration process, will become ever more marginal in relation to both public discourse and the state. However, although hybridity and fuzzy boundaries may appear as the best option for experts and for the many Salman Rushdies of the world, there is nothing in this volume to suggest that it will be the next major orthodoxy in society as such. This goes for Italy as well as for Scandinavia. Yet, in the end, Italy and Norway present contrasting alternatives, both of them founded in varieties of essentialist thought.

Let us phrase it like this: in concluding the capsule review of Scandinavian discourses of recent cultural complexity, I noted that similar outcomes might have different causes. In all three countries, immigrants

were both insiders and outsiders, both integrated and excluded, and moreover in similar ways. Yet, the underlying causes of their ambiguous status seemed to differ. In the more detailed comparison between Norway and Italy, if anything an unlikely pair, we seem to reach much the same conclusion. Allow me to recycle Grillo's categories from his introduction to this book: (i) There is a politics of multiculturalism in both countries. People are classified by nationality and treated accordingly, and there is an increased concern with cultural differences. (ii) Recognition is not always positive – it offers linguistic and religious rights, but freezes boundaries and prevents the flourishing of those hybrid adaptations that would serve both immigrants, (certainly) their children and (probably) the natives best. (iii) Racism emerges situationally; essentialism is deep-seated in national cosmology, although both Italy and Norway are actually more culturally complex than their citizens assume when confronted with foreigners. (iv) There are problems of difference in this regard. Templates for reconciling difference with equality are lacking. (v) Italy is divided along the secular/religious, Left/Right and North/South lines; in Norway, the centre/periphery divide functions in a similar way in creating “natural” social distinctions. Yet – and this is a main conclusion – the Italian North/South divide, being colonial and hierarchical, can accommodate immigrants as legitimate residents if not as equals, while the Norwegian obsession with equality-cum-similarity entails that integration must be symmetrical and egalitarian in order to fit the national imagery. Whether the Norwegian model (full equality or nothing) or the Italian model (immigrants can be accepted as subordinates) is to be preferred, is a matter of political persuasion.

13 Italy as a Comparative Case

ADRIAN FAVELL

Multiculturalism Italian Style offers us a panoramic snapshot of an ever fascinating national European society, facing up to a challenge that appears to be threatening many of its most distinctive and appealing features. While groping for evidence about positive cultural adaptation to racial and ethnic diversity, many of the contributors are gloomy and critical about the ways mainstream Italian society is reacting to new immigration and the challenge of multiculturalism. The negative politicization of immigration in recent years, moreover, has sharply reminded observers of undercurrents of authoritarianism and xenophobia still present in Italian life. My aim here is to probe the limitations of the critical view prevalent in this collection, by asking a question that has on the whole been absent from our discussions. To what extent does the evidence presented here suggest particularities about the Italian case which might make it exemplary or unusual when studied as one case among others; that is, as part of the developing comparative cross-national research programme on immigration and integration in Europe? Although this approach is not essential to a discussion of Italy as such, without some such thought about the comparative dimension, there is a danger that work of this kind slips into being a kind of specialist area-studies. There is also a danger in the fact that many of the contributions are written by Italians, writing with some feeling about Italian society and politics, and from the awkward vantage point of “exiles” commenting on their own home country. Sober comparisons are sometimes needed to dampen the anger and frustration that this situation can inspire.

It is, of course, an endearing feature of Italian intellectuals to be spectacularly critical about the failings of their own often complex and exasperating society. We might speak of this as the *criticone* syndrome. Intellectuals in Italy are used to articulating radical and disaffected viewpoints, often violently in contention with the ruling powers of the day. There is also a greater degree of activism among academics than in countries where academia has evolved as a more autonomous social institution, as well as a financial dependence on work and political involvement outside of university. Reading the chapters in this volume, we