When *The Past* is slipping. Value tensions and responses by heritage management to demographic changes: A case study from Oslo, Norway

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Despite vibrant paradigmatic shifts in archaeological thought, Norwegian heritage legislation remains unchanged since the 1970s and is anchored in a traditional identity ideology assuming continuous links between contemporary populations and ancient societies. In the context of current and expected major demographic changes as a result of global migration, policy-makers and developers of alternative frameworks face the challenge of epistemic standstill and recycling of ideas. This article examines and seeks insights into causes for the current status, focusing on tensions between paradigms of value and between various levels of heritage management in and around Oslo, one of the fastest growing urban areas in Europe. Combining the discourse theoretical concept of nodal points with the method of qualitative coding analysis, we study responses by heritage management to perceived challenges of globalisation and demographic changes in all available official white papers produced after the year 2000. By reflecting on present narratives, our discussion relates to struggles over defining ‘Norwegianness’ and criticism of such notions. The identification of four levels of tension allows us to centre attention on key issues of importance to the societal aim of including and engaging an increasingly heterogeneous population, and to argue for a bottom-up and recursive approach.

Keywords: heritage discourse, politics of belonging, diversity, immigrant heritage, Norway

Introduction

In a sharp comment on restrictive official policy and public mindset in the wake of recent mass migrations into and across Europe, anthropologist Inge Tvedten (2015) claims that all previous talk about any greater We within the current nation-state has lost substance. Tvedten's expression of concern about a majority coldness in a time of crisis, in a leading Norwegian newspaper published just before New Year's Eve 2015, resonates with Zygmunt Bauman's (2007, 2) note that to speak of a nation-state as one single community sounds increasingly hollow.¹ The migrant crisis and the recent surge of conservative right-wing populism only heighten and accentuate tensions that run temporally deeper and geographically wider than the individual European nation-state. Furthermore, while Tvedten addresses conservatism and standstill in the public immigration debate, his remarks are also pertinent to a parallel issue, namely the question of the lingering, substantial We within academic heritage debates. Despite vibrant paradigmatic shifts in archaeological thought caused by processual, postmodern and postcolonial critique, Norwegian heritage legislation, like in most comparable nation-states world-wide, is still dictated by a traditional identity ideology anchored in the idea of continuous links between contemporary populations and ancient societies (Prescott 2018). Consequently, the legislation is of limited help for heritage practitioners facing the current and critical question of how many We there can be before the sense of common reference to the past – some form of shared history – is simply not there. In other words, as the concept of The Past seems to be slipping, how do we go about in engaging with multiple pasts? If not questioned and confronted, the particular standstill will only contribute to widen the gap between past narratives on the one hand and present challenges, tensions and policy-making for the future on the other.

We have two primary aims in this article. The first is to clarify and understand long-term tensions between narratives of identity and culture, and their multi-layered

manifestations, within the heritage field of the Greater Oslo region in Norway.

Secondly, as our case analysis accentuates certain tensions that are comparable with other nation-states in Europe and beyond, we seek to present a critical approach that has comparative methodological and theoretical value. Accordingly, by relating to ideas of discursive construction, the following analysis will unpack key traits of the theoretical standstill, and thereby also identify reasons for the ensuing recycling of such deeper, epistemic insights. We argue that the standstill is rooted in a set of tensions between different stakeholders who operate on and relate to different scales: local, regional, national and transnational. Significantly, the situation is not unique to Norway. Comparisons can therefore be made, and not only on methodological and theoretical grounds but also empirically.

In recent years, several scholars have pointed out the necessity of a wider, transnational outlook, as modern globalisation and migration challenge established narratives and practices in the heritage sector of northern European nation-states (see for example, Holtorf 2009; Högberg 2015). For the case of Norway an outcome of the failure to provide alternatives to traditional ethnic identity narratives is, as recently pointed out by Christopher Prescott and Håkon Glørstad (2016, 25), that archaeology and other heritage disciplines have not been able to engage the entire spectrum of society. Consequently, heritage disciplines have thus far not succeeded in recruiting students in ways that mirror the contemporary population. Our own department at the University of Oslo is a case in point. The MA program in archaeology is the only of its kind in the Greater Oslo Region, and the largest in the country. A brief survey of the topics of MA theses completed in the period 2013-16 shows a rather conservative pattern. Well-established and well-studied periods of the tri-period system within traditional Scandinavian archaeology, and their associated material categories, receive

by far the most attention.² Clearly, the majority of students aiming at a career in archaeology and the heritage sector look to topics seen as useful for their future. However, it is somewhat discouraging that students' strategic scope to a very limited extent includes critical reflection on heritage ideology and the development of alternative heritage frameworks. The combination of a rather conservative thematic scope and an ensuing epistemic standstill demonstrates that there is an *illusory motion* when it comes to understanding and integrating Otherness. Recruitment is relatively stable and a variety of themes are vibrantly explored, but confined to a narrow spectrum of narratives. Consequently, when critical heritage topics remain largely outside the scope and expertise of those recruited into professional heritage engagement, it becomes vital to ask how we may provide fertile grounds for exploring multiple pasts and integrative possibilities.

This article proceeds in three main analytical steps. Firstly, by firmly grounding the study of responses by heritage management to perceived challenges of globalisation and demographic changes, as they are found in official white papers in the period 2000-13, we establish a departure point from which to examine future prospects for the heritage field of one of the fastest growing urban areas in Europe.³ Secondly, in the main analysis we elucidate the indicated illusory motion; a politically motivated recycling of arguments over an extended time period that contributes to the illusion of fast movement. In the third and final part, we dissect the theoretical underpinnings of the standstill and outline an alternative approach. Arguing for critical problematisation of heritage at earlier, pre-university stages of the education system, we wish to contribute to the development of integrative strategies that open for both inclusiveness and otherness, epistemologically as well as ontologically.

Approach and departure point

The material analysed is official white papers on heritage policy by five governmental agencies. A criterion for selection was the representation of all levels of management that, directly or indirectly, instruct the heritage field of the Greater Oslo Region (table 1). The Ministry of Climate and Environment functions as the political secretariat within the field and is centrally connected with the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the advisory organ and agency for executive practice within state borders. Akershus County Council acts as an independent organ that safeguards functions of management regionally. On a local level, internal delegation is given to the Cultural Heritage Management Office in Oslo. Included in our analysis is also material from the Cultural Heritage Committee, appointed by Parliament in the year 2000 to propose ways in which heritage policy and management should respond to current and upcoming challenges.

By aiming to identify and clarify long-term tensions within narratives of identity and culture, including their potential social consequences, our analytical approach draws on elements of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory. Rooted in a Foucauldian discourse critique, a key feature is that social phenomena are never finished or total. Meaning can never be unequivocally fixed, and there are constant definition struggles. Discourse is an attempt to stabilise meaning within a particular domain; an 'attempt to dominate the field of discursivity' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 112). In an established discourse, arguments are crystallised around *nodal points*, the privileged signifiers through which meanings are fixed by their relations to other signs. Specific relations entail the exclusion of other possible meanings, that is, other ways in which signs could have been related to each other. In this manner, discursive formations are instrumental to the production and reproduction of power, by creating

Table 1: Texts divided into groups based on emphasis and uses of key codes/sings discursively related to the nodal points *heritage*, *identity* and *culture*

Institution	Title in Norwegian	English translation	Codes/signs in Norwegian	English translation
The Ministry of Environment	<i>St. meld. nr. 16 (2004-2006) Leve med kulturminner</i>	Report No. 16 to the Storting (2004-2006) Living with cultural heritage	Mangfold Inkludering Endring Utvexling Globalisering Menneskeheten Tilhørighet Multikulturell Etnisitet Minoritet Grupper Selvforståelse	Diversity Inclusion Change Exchange Globalisation Humanity Belonging Multicultural Ethnicity Minority Groups Self-understanding
	<i>St. meld. nr. 35 (2012-2013) Framtid med foefeste – Kulturminnepolitikken</i>	Report No. 35 to the Storting (2012-2013) Future with foothold – The cultural heritage policy		
	<i>NOU 2002:1 – Fortid former fremtid: utfordringer i en ny kulturminnepolitikk.</i>	NOU 2001:1 – Past shapes future: Challenges in a new cultural heritage policy		
The Cultural Heritage Committee				
The Directorate for Cultural Heritage	<i>Strategisk plan for forvaltningen av arkeologiske kulturminner og kulturmiljøer 2010-2020</i>	Strategic plan for the management of archaeological sites and cultural environments 2010-2020	Kunnskap Profesjonell Prioritering Kriterier Evaluering Spesialist Dialog Formidling Verdivurdering	Knowledge Professional Prioritising Criteria Assessment Specialist Dialogue Dissemination Value-judgement
	<i>Rapport fra Riksantikvarens arbeid med minoriteters kulturminner 2003-2006.</i>	Report on the Directorate for Cultural Heritage's work with minority heritage 2003-2006.		
Akershus County Council	<i>Spor for framtiden: Fylkesdelplan for kulturminner og kulturmiljøer i Akershus 2007-2018.</i>	Traces for the future: County council plan for monuments, sites and cultural environments in Akershus 2007-2018	Stolthet Kjærlighet Tilhørighet Sted Samfunn Enhet	Pride Love Belonging Place Community Unity
	<i>Bystyremelding 4/2003 – Kulturminnevern i Oslo.</i>	Report to the City Council 4/2003 – Cultural heritage management in Oslo.		
The Cultural Heritage Management Office of Oslo				

social worlds in particular ways that preclude alternative possibilities (Foucault 1980, 52; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 37).

Informed by this critical perspective, our incremental workflow was to move back and forth between the various documents, in order to pinpoint key events in the process of stabilising meaning and to establish categories for further analysis. This recursive method led to the extraction of relevant text examples for further examination. At this stage, qualitative coding analysis was employed as the method of patterning, classifying, and reorganising (Saldaña 2014, 584). This enabled the identification of relevant meanings, relationships and frictions that arise in the interplay between privileged codes, or signs. The nodal points *heritage*, *identity* and *culture* were an integral part of the initial stage of analysis, by which we sought to clarify how these signs are imbued with relational meaning. The analysis revealed patterns of connections and contrasts between signifiers (table 1). Subsequently, these patterns have been related to discrepancies between different scalar levels of management, and thereby to tensions between different value ideologies. Importantly, our methodology is in line with critical heritage frameworks stressing that the epitomising of heritage to recognise the ‘diversity’ of society does not in itself challenge power relations. Recognition alone does not offer control over the processes by which heritage is classified and given meaning (see for example, Pendlebury, Townshend, and Gilroy 2004, 23; Smith 2006, 37-8; Waterton 2010, 11-4).

Finally, our approach draws on notions of space and scale. We argue for the significance of a recursive scalar approach when developing alternative integrative strategies. This means to have perspectives from below as departure point, and to move recursively between top-down and bottom-up perspectives. With this methodological reversal, policy-making is anchored in actual heritage-making that takes place in

people's everyday lives. Heritage-making unfolds in the mundane and continuously emergent spaces in which people navigate and constitute their social world, and where plural voices constantly intersect and collide (Atkinson 2008, 381-2).

This recursive approach resonates with Doreen Massey's (1999, 32-3) notion of space as a relational product that is multiple in nature and in the constant state of becoming, thus running against the modern territorial-container conception (Harvey 2014, 583; see also Massey 2005, 9). The spatial generates interaction by bringing into contact various temporalities and narratives. In this manner, the specificity of places becomes the particularity of the mixture of influences found there, including both connections within the place and the many which stretch way beyond it (Massey 1999, 41). This re-imagining of heritage, as continuously produced within spaces of plurality, hybridity, difference and transition, means to re-think the very constitution of the ideology of stability and sameness within the space of the 'home ground', and thereby expanding the spectrum of belonging (Mahmoud 2013b, 150-4).

In the following, our results are presented stepwise, moving from the national via the regional to the local scale of heritage management and discursive formation. In this way, scale is demonstrated to be different institutional levels connected to drawn geographical boundaries, while at the same time being related to specific spaces that are constituted by dynamic relationships and power (Harvey 2014, 580; see also Jones, Jones, and Hughes 2015). We identify and discuss four manifestations of tension between values of unity and diversity: (1) between the diversity paradigm and the identity paradigm, (2) between universal standards of heritage value and the inclusion of alternative perspectives, (3) between expressed aims of multivocality and the representation of immigrant minorities as cultural or ethnical 'add-ons' to a Norwegian core, and (4) between the construction of 'the nation' as open and inclusive and 'the

local' as a bounded and stable entity, where a singular history, *our* history, is fundamentally situated or *placed*.

However, before proceeding to the main stage of our analysis, we provide a few vital points for understanding the historical and ideological background.

National unity, national diversity

In Norway, as elsewhere in post-Enlightenment Europe, the discipline of archaeology emerged as a science in the context of tumultuous political events in the early 1800s (Baudou 2004, 112). The idea of generating knowledge about the past was integral to the romantic project of nation-building. At the end of the Napoleonic war in 1814, Norway was awarded to Sweden, a union that was dissolved in 1905. In the quest for supporting national autonomy, the concept of linking remains of the past to national or ethnic identity effectively provided legitimation. This ideology generally presumes the implicit modernist view of the world as a mosaic of separate cultures, the 'assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, 34; Massey 1999, 41).

In processual and early post-modern Scandinavian archaeology, nationalism and essentialist conceptions of ethnicity were criticised and ostensibly abandoned. Today, ethnicity is predominantly acknowledged to be a process of internal or external identification and boundary making, while notions of 'culture groups' continue to be applied as descriptive or classifying analytical concepts. Meanwhile, in heritage politics, practices and dissemination, traditional identity narratives connecting past and present populations have continued to be constructed and re-constructed (Holtorf 2009; Högberg 2013; Prescott 2016, 2018).

The traditional notion of identity, as a justification for heritage management, saturates the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act, enacted in 1978 and still in force today:

§ 1 The purpose of this Act is to protect archaeological and architectural monuments and sites, and cultural environments in all their variety and detail, both as part of our cultural heritage and identity and as an element in the overall environment and resource management.

It is a national responsibility to safeguard these resources as scientific source material and as an enduring basis for the experience of present and future generations and for their self-awareness, enjoyment and activities (Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act 1978).

This particular appeal to identity contains some of the same fundamental ideas that were inherent in the nation-building project, founded on perceptions of a co-evolution of landscape, people and culture. Most Scandinavian scholars today probably feel uneasy with the identity premise (see for example, Østigård 2001; Eikrem 2005; Holtorf 2009; Högberg 2015, 2016; Prescott 2018). Yet, when aims and strategies have been seen as positive, there has been a tendency to turn a blind eye to scientific shortcomings. When confronted with the need to incorporate new groups, the traditional approach has been to add new identifying narratives to the repertoire of histories, or incorporate them into those already established (Prescott 2018). Thus, the construction of belonging, resonating with Bauman's (1991) *other* and *norm*, has to some extent been facilitated. However, as Bauman (2011, 425) more recently asserted, insofar as fluidity of membership allied to perpetual population shifts is becoming the norm, global migration casts a question mark upon traditional notions of identity. Christopher Prescott (2018) observes how a dynamic constitution of citizenry generates the need for new interpretative approaches and narratives, and thus to embed academic and heritage institutions in new practices.

Our analysis clearly demonstrates how Norwegian heritage policies respond to a new demographic context by emphasising an agenda of diversity and social inclusion. Quoting UNESCO's declaration (2001), the Ministry of Environment (2005, 5) states that '...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognised and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations'. The paradigm of diversity conveys ideals of universal human rights, a humane ethics that concern both individual freedom and opportunities for expression and interpersonal ties. Thus, it constitutes normative guidelines anchored in the idea that certain characteristics of humankind transcend established boundaries between groups and countries (for critical discussion, see Thomas 2004, 236). However, the diversity paradigm also assumes a multicultural *national* sense of identity (Guttormsen 2013, 352).

In Norwegian heritage management discourse, the diversity paradigm can be recognised as a renewed program, a frame in which to place traditional narratives. The focus is still on generating identity and unity, but a new multivocal heritage representation should embrace all of the diverse cultural identities within the borders of the nation-state (table 1). The Ministry (2013, 10) asserts: 'It is important that all are included in the narrative. Then heritage and knowledge of the past can contribute to understanding, identity and stability in a fast-changing society'.⁴ Clearly, minorities are categorised and presented as 'add-ons' to a national core culture, their heritage as 'add-ons' to established narratives: 'In addition to the task of safeguarding Norwegian heritage, heritage management in multicultural Norway is about documenting, communicating and protecting heritage connected with the Sami, the national minorities and the new minority groups – the immigrants of the last 35 years' (Ministry of Environment 2005, 63). Globalisation is further highlighted as a process that

accentuates the value of cultural belonging that gives rise to recognition and tolerance in meeting with Others: ‘In a world where countries and cultures are brought closer together, heritage is becoming increasingly important for people’s cultural self-understanding and exchange ... This sense of belonging and confidence in one’s own culture is important, not least in order to meet with other people’s culture with respect’ (Ministry of Environment 2005, 5).

In constructing the scale of ‘the nation’, the discourse thus balances between the diversity paradigm on the one hand, evoking notions of universal values of heritage, and on the other hand a categorising identity paradigm that presents cultural heritage as uniquely tied to specific population groups. As this relationship forms the basis for management practice, tensions between the upholding of universal standards and tolerance of cultural difference seems inevitable. Being the authority for executive practice, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage (2006, 5) emphasises the aim of social inclusion when working with ‘minority heritage’: a good dialogue presupposes an exchange of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, where minorities’ understandings and definitions of heritage may diverge from that of the larger society. Seeking to integrate ‘the views of the minorities’, their responsibilities are outlined as something that goes beyond the specific groups in question: ‘... it is necessary to proceed with caution and humbleness. Meanwhile, the community task of highlighting minority heritage must be maintained’ (Directorate for Cultural Heritage 2006, 7).

Inclusion of the views and wishes of minorities in heritage work is important. However, the professional role of heritage management and the responsibility of safeguarding and communicating a representative and diverse selection of cultural expressions, for the universal greater good, take precedence (table 1). As observed by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006, 185-6), this underscores the paradoxical

contradiction between the celebration of diversity and the application of universal standards for determining which cultural expressions will be designated the heritage of humanity. Even as heritage enterprises attempt to make these standards more inclusive and representative, there is still a standard to be met. Consequently, and relating also to Laclau and Mouffe's (2001, 112) notion of power and exclusion of other possible meanings, 'minority heritage' has to be clearly defined as something that easily can be valued, managed and conveyed within existing practices and understandings.

We see a corresponding manifestation of this tension between paradigms of value within the museum landscape. Recent diversity initiatives relate to issues of low minority recruitment, emphasising public outreach and dissemination that highlight various minority groups.⁵ Strategic documents suggest re-programming to more relevant content, dialogue and cooperation. Politically, this has been a question of representation and integration. The underlying assumption is, however, that if programs are made relevant for Them, the minority audience will turn up. Existing surveys of practices and attitudes of 'diverse' museum audiences provide little support for this notion (Gran and Vaagen 2010, 7; Norsk Folkemuseum and Oslo Museum 2011). Instead, the surveys suggest that the ethnic perspective, whether traditional-national, Indigenous or immigrant, is not an adequate base for generating broader interest and participation. Especially the younger generation seems to reject what is seen as socio-ethnic stereotyping (for further discussion, see also Prescott 2018).

Consequently, a paradox emerges clearly from our analysis. Despite the various initiatives to better include Other perspectives into the heritage field, the identity paradigm with its underlying modernist assumption seems to remain the guiding principle. On the basis of our results for the period after the year 2000, it may be argued that there has been little, if any, broadening of public interest resulting from theoretical

top-down policy-making. We see this paradox as a result of a problematic asymmetry and dissonance between heritage practitioners and the wider, heterogenic community, between those with the power to define heritage and its spaces and those without this power. This leads us to question the appropriateness of top-down approaches: to ask to what extent policy-making is sufficiently anchored in the actual heritage-making that takes place within the mundane spaces of people's everyday lives.

This observation of the outcomes of well-intended top-down policy making reverberates recent critique of certain versions of cosmopolitanism (see for example, Appiah 2007) for having an elite-centred and self-satisfied streak (see González-Ruibal 2009). The challenge of anchoring policies also draws attention to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1988) question whether it is at all possible to 'speak for the subaltern'. As an alternative, a 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' (Bhabha 1996) makes it necessary to *occupy the space of the unsatisfied* more or less permanently. For the heritage practitioner, this means to change perspective so as to strive towards epistemic symmetry and an inclusive ethics of recognition, rather than to merely be in a dialogic relation with the localised, interested public: It is to locate ourselves on the border between the relevant categories, and to remain always and continually in-between. This border thinking, conceived in terms of interfaces or hybrid spaces where incoherencies and contradictions can be tolerated or held in tension, enables the view that scientific and local knowledges alike are truly hybrids; situated, localised or place-based knowledges. Thus, seeing from below instead of a top-down approach is a better position from which to view worlds as in a constant state of becoming, and where hybrids are constantly formed (Jopela and Fredriksen 2015, 264-5). This is a vision that allows for difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (Bhabha 1996, 7). By using the Greater Oslo Region as a case in point, the third and final part of this article is

an effort to outline the current main obstacles and the key practical components for such an approach.

Local patriotism and commercial identity

When moving down a scalar level of management, from the national to the local, a significant pattern emerges. There is a shift in heritage rhetoric from values of diversity to those of unity. Boundaries are drawn as *our* cultural history is fundamentally situated or *placed*, by re-establishing the assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture (table 1). Changes in population demographics are presented as a process that accentuates the relationship between heritage and belonging to a localised community: Material remains of the past signify ‘something lasting, and connected to place, in a society that is constantly changing and becoming increasingly globalised’ (Cultural Heritage Committee 2000, 21). Also, ‘with a constant inflow of new residents, heritage may provide a sense of belonging and provide local communities a clearer place identity’ (Akershus County Council 2007, 13).

The texts by regional and local levels of management reflect a particularly strong accentuation of the unifying potential of The Past. Akershus County Council (2007, 1) asserts that heritage sites ‘first and foremost are essential resources for creating valuable experiences, as they convey history and provide a sense of belonging and pride’. Historical knowledge and preservation ‘strengthen the spirit of unity between people’ and, as ‘the cultural landscape is an important part of our collective identity’, such knowledge ‘may help newcomers to better understand their new home and the people living there’ (Akershus County Council 2007, 23-4). The Cultural Heritage Management Office of Oslo (2003, 9) similarly stresses the responsibility of heritage management to ensure that tangible heritage is ‘safeguarded for the enrichment

and identity of the city, the country and our shared history'. Furthermore, it is asserted that 'orientation in the social, cultural and physical cityscape depends on tangible characteristics and landmarks recognised by generation after generation, on the basis of collective memory' (Cultural Heritage Management Office of Oslo 2003, 16-7).

These discursive events of meaning-making underscore questions of ownership; about who is constructed as the proprietors of this past, *The Past*. Advocating a localised *We*, the discourse can be seen as an attempt to motivate engagements with heritage that are not based on the idea of cultural 'roots', but rather on a curiosity towards the plurality of pasts and presents that can be explored within a shared localised space (Burström 1999, 25; see also Mannheim 1953, 112; Lundmark 1989, 129-30). However, the data analysed here indicates the promotion of identity and belonging related to *our* collective history, evoking the ideology of sameness within the 'home ground' and thus redrawing a boundary between *Us*, being the definers and informers, and *Them*, being the ones that should be educated and assimilated.

In response to the perceived disruptions of globalisation, the scale of 'the local' is marked as distinctive and, rather than as a meeting place, constructed as a bounded location of distinct cohesion, its specificity and identity stemming from a singular rooted history. In this manner, not only are alternative pasts excluded, but so are also alternative social worlds, meanings and identities in the present. One of the driving forces for this construction is demonstrated in the explicit encouragement to find commercial use, in which 'cultivation and profiling of a distinctive character may be instrumental in the competition over new commercial enterprises' (Akershus County Council 2007, 25), and 'local communities', or 'the locals', are urged to utilise their unique and characteristic heritage as resources for financial gain (for further discussion on the commodification of local patriotism, see also Guttormsen 2014). Such versions

of heritage may easily become singular and selective versions of The Past which are ‘sellable’ in the present, and the danger of this process continues to be its potential for exclusion (Atkinson 2008, 384).

In our opinion, this tendency illustrates the challenges of a top-down approach. In the efforts to produce guiding documents at the level of national governance, the well-intended core epistemic ideas are not sufficiently filtered down to more localised levels. The result is a lack of influence and impact. In our opinion, as a first step towards an alternative approach, it should be acknowledged that the expressed aims of inclusion and plurality are undermined when regional and local heritage is set within a somewhat patriotic identity-building framework, resting on the same foundations as traditional national narratives.⁶ Importantly, as our analysis shows, the prevailing detachment between levels is not only that between national versus more local interests and policy-making, but also that between the heritage practitioner and an increasing percentage of the population with whom the practitioner wishes to engage. We see these two dimensions of detachment as the key reasons for the theoretical standstill and ensuing lack of influence that professional, critical problematisation of heritage has had on public opinion.

The essential Norwegian or the greater We?

Our analysis has identified an epistemic standstill and a political recycling of meanings and definitions. At face value, it seems to be a move towards more multivocal narratives, through the integration of various new perspectives. However, under this ostensibly fast-moving layer, the heritage field continues to be dominated by the classifying nature of the traditional identity paradigm. This illusory motion resonates with David C. Harvey’s (2014, 584) observation that ‘rather than being an essential

setting, the scalar organisational framework of nation state and local place acts as a lens through which heritage dissonance emerges'. On the one hand, the construction of the scale of 'the nation' provokes tensions between ideas of universal values and the notion of heritage as uniquely tied to specific cultural groups within its borders. On the other hand, the scale of 'the local' is more evidentially a product of assumptions about bounded stable structures of place, as a location of distinct cohesion derived from internal historical roots.

Several authors have in recent years recognised movements towards increasing plurality of voices that complicate, expand upon, dispute and undermine official narratives of past, and the managerial responses to such pluralisation (see for example, Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge 2007; Atkinson 2008, 383; Högberg 2015). However, one should not ignore the continuity of heritage as a powerful resource on the political arena. In other words, an authorised heritage discourse is still present (Smith 2006; Harvey 2014, 578-9). Our main concern here is the potential social consequences of authorised narratives of The Past, thus confirming and re-asserting the boundaries between Us and Them, and the negotiability of Their belonging.

The massacre on 22 July 2011 is a tragic reminder of how such ideas can serve extreme ends. In the bombing of the Government Quarter in Oslo and the second attack, at a summer camp for Workers' Youth League at the Island of Utøya in Tyrifjorden, 77 people lost their lives. While the aftermath of the attacks illustrates the traditional identity narrative as an operating principle, it also directs our attention to the kernels for fruitful public debate in the future. In court, the perpetrator Anders Behring Breivik referred to Norwegians as an indigenous population that migrated into the country after deglaciation, maintaining that he was defending this indigenous population in the face of colonization. As Prescott (2018) asserts, today's population is the outcome of

dynamic processes on scales that do not match national borders, nor are there any convincing evidence for links between early post-glacial migrants and the contemporary population. Somewhat paradoxically, the appeal to inherited rights is not that different from other narratives that continue to exist as normative, and are even encouraged, because their ideological fundament is politically mainstream and acceptable.

In the hours following the 22 July attacks, anger towards Norwegian Muslims was evident in social media and online forums. Later came accounts of harassment and aggressive behaviour, yet no such incidences were reported to the police. The reliability of publicised episodes is therefore questioned (Murtne 2011; Østli 2011; 22 July Commission 2012, 22). When the identity of the perpetrator was made public, this anger seemingly disappeared, making way for expressed feelings of togetherness and love. Spontaneous as well as planned memorials took place in the days and weeks that followed. A debate about national identity and core societal values was sparked, in which political and cultural elites argued for a broader and more multivocal Norwegian identity and called for the inclusion of immigrant populations into the greater We (Christensen, Lægreid, and Rykkja 2013, 171; Figenschou and Beyer 2014, 446).

Seen against the broader theoretical, social and temporal backdrop provided in this study, the aftermath of the 22 July tragedy is a case of heritage in the making. The official story of standing together in the fight against hateful ideology has been established as master narrative. Admittedly, population surveys do show a possible unifying effect, demonstrated by an increase in levels of interpersonal and societal trust (Wollebæk et al. 2011). This increase could be related to the national mobilisation for strengthening of democracy (Hansen 2011). Furthermore, a surge of political involvement amongst the younger generation may be a lasting consequence (Spilde 2015). Conversely, however, on the political stage, dissonant voices proclaiming the

threat of Others soon reappeared. In the context of the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2013, the right-wing Progress Party strongly emphasised the importance of a ‘cultural sustainable immigration’, assuming a positive relationship between functional integration and cultural assimilation. Their internally appointed Committee of Sustainability (2013, 4) asserts how ‘Norway has the right to maintain its cultural uniqueness’, whereby ‘multiculturalism does not mean that Norway should abandon their inherited traditions, in order to adapt to immigrant values and customs’.

Commenting on such statements,⁷ academic writer Noor Mahmoud (2013a; see also 2013b) rejects the idea of a heterogeneous and static Norwegian culture, and that defining this culture once and for all could facilitate integration. Her comments resonate well with our observations about the ideology of sameness within the space of the ‘home ground’. People, even if obliged, will not feel at home when this ‘home’ is constructed in such a way that they can never truly belong. As seen in our opening remarks, the debate about the political and ethical content of the greater We was further stimulated by the onset of the migrant crisis in 2015 (Norman 2015; Øberg 2015; Strand and Granviken 2015; Tvedten 2015).

These post-2011 events and their reverberations illustrate our key points about value tensions, and a resulting illusory motion and epistemic standstill. The aftermath displays an ongoing struggle to define ‘Norwegianness’, thus accentuating the rupture between traditional narratives and a fast changing societal and demographic context. In this context, the heritage sector may make a contribution, by continuing the efforts to dismantle ‘ethnic’ barriers and fear of Others. Having long-term perspectives and insight into the dynamics of migration, meetings and transformation readily available, archaeology and other heritage disciplines can and should provide visions of multiple pasts that are relevant and challenging across drawn boundaries (Prescott 2018).

However, if continued to be premised on essentialist ideas of identity, the Norwegian heritage management discourse may in certain key respects risk to contribute to societal polarisation and the alienation of a substantial part of the population. Presenting a liberal model of multiculturalism, the rhetoric is cast in terms of a ‘celebration of diversity’. As Peter Jackson (2002, 316; see also Brah 1992) stresses, such a notion is problematic when wedded to a belief in the stability and homogeneity of the ‘core culture’, and of ‘minority cultures’ or ‘ethnic groups’. Differences between majority and minority are presented as some kind of essential property. Significantly, such ideas fail to address the continuing hierarchies of power and centres of legitimacy, as well as the ways in which difference is actively produced through social discourses and practices.

A general trend running parallel to the rhetoric of multiculturalism in the heritage strategies of the Nordic countries is the promotion of local ownership and decentralisation of responsibility and authority (Guttormsen and Swensen 2016, 299). This particular discourse emphasises that local rather than a strongly centralised heritage management will contribute to strengthening processes of democratisation. The Cultural Heritage Committee (2000, 32) asserts that ‘for people to enjoy and engage with heritage, they must find that it has personal significance, or that it provides a sense of belonging and identity. History must be conveyed and understood. By giving municipalities more governance over their own heritage sites, and greater authority in local measures, heritage policy can more effectively be locally anchored’.

The legitimacy of discourses and practices of ‘local heritage’ is based on the notion that local decision-making and local performance within a local sphere is always a good thing – more real, more authentic, and more democratic. Harvey (2014, 588-9) criticises such assumptions and argues that it is crucial to understand the power dynamics involved, rather than be blinded by the warming glow of ‘localness’.

Whenever boundaries are drawn this will always be a result and an expression of social power (Massey 1999, 42; 2005, 166). This underscores the importance of critical questioning of who we define as ‘the locals’, who we may end up constructing as the owners of localities and the inherited, singular history of The Past.

Stressing that the foundation for a harmonious society is ‘the recognition that everyone wants to belong’, Mahmoud (2013a) asserts her own sense of belonging: ‘I feel at home in Oslo because I have a past and a future here, because I speak Norwegian better than my mother tongue, and because I have family and friends here’, thus ‘not on the basis of some deeply rooted cultural heritage’. Representing the younger generation growing up in contemporary Oslo, for which the ethnic perspective seems not to resonate, Mahmoud experiences a dynamic and continuously emergent *meeting place* as her context and reference. The heritage sector possessing the power of definition, to a large extent representing the ‘native’ majority, her perceptions of past and belonging are excluded. Coupled with the programming to incorporate Them and their culture in Our cultural institutions, this elitist and top-down approach of integration may serve to further alienate people like her, feeling ‘somewhere in-between’ and unable to fully belong within the ascribed normative categories of identity, culture and place.

Meanwhile, as any university teacher of critical heritage studies in Norway can attest to, the epistemic tools for problematizing heritage and deconstructing identity narratives are only introduced when entering into the world of higher-level research institutions. In other words, returning to our introductory remarks about students’ traditional choices of topic, such tools are introduced too late in the education system to have a lasting impact in young people’s career options. A conclusion from this study is the existence of an unfruitful combination of epistemic standstill and the continuation of critical heritage thinking as predominantly the prerogative and occupation of an

academic intellectual elite.⁸ Accordingly, our analysis opens up for questions about how to best move forward to prevent this gap to increase.

Between unity and diversity: an epistemically grounded approach

By identifying and clarifying tensions between narratives of identity and culture, as they are found in official white papers of Norwegian heritage management, the aim of our analysis was to grasp core elements for understanding the ensuing recycling of epistemic insights within the heritage field of Oslo. Commenting on the reality for many city-dwellers today, Bauman (2007, 82-4) noted that the ever more conspicuous mark of our time is the intense production of meaning and belonging. While our perception of belonging continues to be grounded in the local, ‘the real power that shape the conditions under which we all act... flow in global space’. Thus, while urban dwellers and their political representatives are expected to mitigate the consequences of globalisation, their conventional means and resources are rendered inadequate by the same process.

Accordingly, we argue that the traditional identity paradigm no longer works to unify, if it ever did. Yet, it continues to be sustained in the categorisation and dissemination of minorities as cultural ‘add-ons’ to a Norwegian core, for which deep historical roots promote essentialist narratives of location. In our view, this standstill is connected to top-down approaches; epistemic asymmetries accompanied by a hint of self-satisfaction from the policy-makers as the benefactors of the ‘marginalised’, entailing ‘a sense of superiority and an inability to see underlying structural problems’ (González-Ruibal 2009, 114). Furthermore, the ensuing detachment between layers entails that once a plan and strategy for ‘diversity’ is made, proclaiming the importance

of engagement with multiple pasts, it seems to be left conceptually behind before being thoroughly implemented on the ground.

Top-down management is not only practical; it is also an issue of scale and perspective. When epistemic ideas are repeatedly rehearsed, some even recycled for decades, without being sufficiently filtered down to the relevant managerial layers, it is important to look for reasons for the continued detachment. In our case, the question becomes to what extent policy-making is sufficiently anchored in actual, practical heritage-making taking place within the relational and continuously emergent spaces of people's everyday lives. In line with the notion that 'to change scale is to change perception of social life' (Fredriksen and Chirikure 2015, 597), we suggest shifting from a top-down integrative gaze to an approach that starts from the lived experiences and practices of contemporary populations. Such a recursive view requires tolerance for ambiguity, incoherencies and even contradiction within the spaces and scales in question, but will also open for constructive engagement with the multitude of ways in which heritage, meaning and belonging is established and negotiated.

Most importantly, by introducing key challenges and the sometimes-troublesome aspects of various pasts *before* entering a specialised university or college program and having to make career choices, one may pave the way for an inclusiveness that, in Mahmoud's (2013b, 154) words, 'gives place for the "in-betweens", so there would be no need to turn difference into deviance'. In developing learning arenas at earlier, pre-university stages in the education system, the younger generations still in school could provide particularly valuable insights into the lived experiences of being in the 'in-between' of multiple pasts and presents. Future research may generate a broader realisation of how this 'in-betweenness' relates to formations of translocational narratives of belonging, including the renegotiation and challenging of various social

categories. This will provide the necessary bottom-up knowledge needed to move beyond the standstill identified in this article.

Notes

- 1 Bauman pointed out the paradox that ‘it is precisely the cosseted and pampered “we” of all people who feel more threatened, insecure and frightened (...) than people of most other societies on record’ (Bauman 2007, 55; see also Castel 2003).
- 2 All these are publicly available in the digital DUO Research archive, www.duo.uio.no. Among the 51 theses, a total of 34 relate to specific time periods (the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages and the Medieval Period) and five studies concern Classical or Mediterranean archaeology. The remaining 17 works are thematically focused: one thesis is on digital archaeology, 7 concern research history or theory of knowledge and, finally, only four theses are directly concerned with issues of heritage management and/or discourse.
- 3 1 January 2017, according to Statistics Norway (2017), 16,8% of the Norwegian population consisted of immigrants and native born with two immigrant parents. By this definition, 33% of Oslo’s population have an ‘immigrant background’. Estimates has been made suggesting that by 2040 this population group will constitute 24% of the country’s and 40-56% of the capital’s inhabitants (Statistics Norway 2012).
- 4 The original statement is: ‘Det er viktig at alle inkluderes i fortellingen. Slik kan kulturminner og kunnskap om fortiden bidra til forståelse, identitet og stabilitet i et samfunn i endring’. All translations from Norwegian in this article are by the authors.
- 5 Such strategies have been initiated by the National Network for Minorities and Cultural Diversity (Nettverk for minoriteter og kulturelt mangfold). Initiatives also include Norwegian Parliament’s declaration of 2008 as the Year of Cultural Diversity (Kulturminneåret 2008).
- 6 It is important to note that actors within the heritage sector might have significantly different understandings and read different meanings into the same expressions and uses of signs. Some actors may have critical and nuanced conceptions, yet continuing to use the same phrases as those who present more ‘traditionally bounded’ narratives. Thus, we recognise the need for further research and insight into the production of meaning and value, not least to elucidate who produces statements and to what effect – i.e. the articulations of forms of power and the roles of heritage discourses in the production of social worlds.
- 7 In his contribution to the ensuing debate, in which suggested strategies of reducing immigration numbers received both support and criticism, Progress Party politician

Christian Tybring-Gjedde (2013) stated that 'a continuation of our cultural heritage depends on the absence of abrupt societal changes'.

8 This is not to say that all university professionals and lectures are critical and nuanced in their understandings and approaches, or that all practitioners of heritage policy-making and management are not. As confirmed in this article, recent discursive events display a move towards a rethinking of approaches to knowledge, involving a reengagement with questions of representation. We do argue, however, that the results of our analysis demonstrate a political recycling of ideas, meanings and definitions, and that there are certain problematic consequences of this deep-seated theoretical and epistemic standstill.

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