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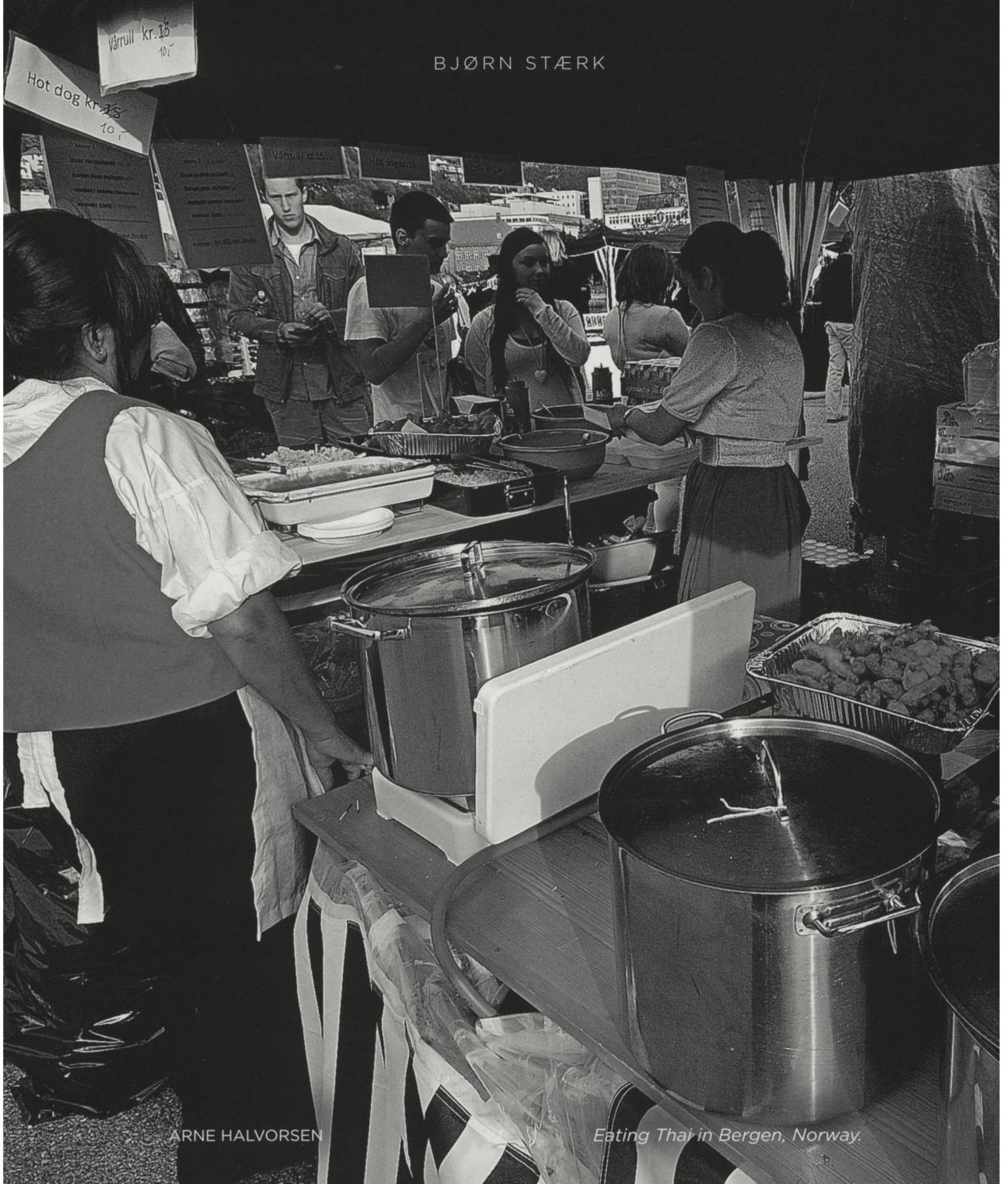


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# Norway's Choices

BJØRN STÆRK



ARNE HALVORSEN

*Eating Thai in Bergen, Norway.*

**O**SLO— On a summer day in 2011, a car filled with a 2,000-pound fertilizer bomb exploded outside a government building in Oslo. The bomb was well placed, but badly timed. Many employees were on vacation. Others had left for the day. Labor Party Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, whose office was in the building, was out. Only eight were killed—relatively few for a bomb of that size.

Scandinavia is an oddly desirable target for Islamic terrorists. In 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad as an exercise in free speech. A Norwegian newspaper reprinted the drawings. Muslims felt hurt; some were outraged. Danish fire-brand imams traveled the Middle East, drumming up anger and hate. Scandinavian embassies were raided and burned. Soon, anyone associated with the caricatures lived in fear of their lives. One cartoonist was attacked in his home by a Somali man with an axe. Irish police uncovered an assassination plot against another artist, planned by Yemeni and Moroccan refugees. In 2010 alone, police prevented two separate terrorist attacks against *Jyllandsposten*. An Al Qaeda-trained Norwegian of Uyghur origin wanted to bomb its office. Another group planned a Mumbai-style massacre. Several

“cartoon” attacks came close to succeeding. Just seven months before the Oslo bomb, a Swedish citizen, the son of Iraqi refugees, blew himself up in central Stockholm. He was near a busy shopping street, but killed only himself. In an email sent shortly before the attack, he blamed the war in Afghanistan—and the cartoons.

Now, in the hours after the Oslo bomb, it seemed that an Islamist had finally carried out his first successful attack. Norwegians were visibly shaken. The mood among Muslims was equally bleak. They, too, thought the culprit must be Muslim, and were steeling themselves for the follow-up—suspicion, scrutiny, endless calls for condemnation, and the violence that would likely follow.

#### CRACKS IN THE FACADE

Shabana Rehman, a comedian and journalist, and the daughter of Pakistani immigrants, warned her dark-skinned nephew to stay indoors. He might be mistaken for a Muslim, she thought, and be lynched. There was little violence in Oslo that day, but many were harassed. People of African and Asian origin were stopped on the street and told to go back to their homelands. Passengers refused to board a bus because the driver was a bearded Arab. Groups of friends divided into natives and immigrants, each eyeing the other fearfully.

And so, cracks began to appear in Norway’s multiethnic facade. But the cracks had little time to spread. By this time, a man dressed in a police uniform had taken the ferry to *Utøya*, a tiny island near Oslo, where more than 500 teenagers and young adults were gathered for a Labor Party youth camp. He picked up a gun and be-

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gan shooting. It took the real police a full hour to respond, and he spent every minute of it hunting down victims. Sixty-nine people died, few older than 21. As reports came in from teens hiding on the island, a new picture emerged—a shooter with blonde hair who spoke fluent Norwegian. He was white.

Anders Behring Breivik, 32, was not a radical Islamist, but its mirror opposite. He hated Islam, which he saw as an evil ideology on a par with Nazism. He targeted the Labor Party because they had allowed Muslims to immigrate to Norway. This made them traitors. In a manifesto, distributed on the day of the attack, Breivik expressed hope that the attack would trigger a civil war against Muslims and their “cultural Marxist” allies. Shockingly anti-Islamic views were a regular part of Norway’s online forums. Earlier, I had dismissed those who called for violence as harmless keyboard warriors. Now I read Breivik’s writings with a horrible sense of recognition. He had been a fan of a Norwegian blogger, Fjordman. Almost unknown in Norway before the attack, Fjordman had for years been a central writer in the international counterjihad movement. Counterjihadists believe that Muslims and non-Muslims cannot coexist peacefully. They do not advocate violent attacks on Muslims, but believe that Muslim immigration will lead to violent conflict in the future. Breivik wanted to accelerate the process, using a terrorist ideology inspired by the German-based Rote Armee Fraktion—founded in the 1970s as the Baader-Meinhof Gang—and even Al Qaeda.

Suspicion of Islam is widespread in Norway. Many doubt that Muslims can adapt their religious values to the norms of a secular democracy. Some create conspiracy theories about treasonous politicians with pro-Muslim agendas. But as it happens, Breivik acted alone. There seems to be no

“radical counterjihad” community yet in Norway that would promote more attacks like it. Norway’s radical Islamists are better organized and have access to international networks of extremists. Many are law-abiding at home, but go abroad to fight jihad after being indoctrinated by Norway’s radical Islamist community. Perhaps 40 Norwegian Muslims are fighting in the civil war in Syria. Many have been killed. As of this writing, the police suspect that a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin took part in the Westgate Mall terrorist attack in Kenya. And Westgate involved perhaps even more cruelty than the attack on Utøya. If the suspicions are true, Norway will have produced a second monster that equals Breivik. And few will be surprised.

#### SUBLTLER PROBLEMS

The attacks that succeeded, and the ones that easily might have, reflect the tensions of a rapidly changing Norway that has gone from a homogenous society to Europe’s fastest growing immigration center in the space of a generation. Much of Europe is going through similar changes, producing tensions that sometimes erupt in violence.

But violence is only a small part of the picture. Terrorism is shocking but rare. It shocks because it is rare. Focusing only on extremists trivializes the challenges of immigration. It implies that if only we can keep the potentially violent extremists in check, the rest will take care of itself. But the larger challenges are subtler than bombs and hatred and cannot be solved with solid police work. Members of both the anti-Islamic and Islamist movements in Europe are often in their 20s and early 30s. These are not old racists or uneducated traditionalists fresh off the boat. They’re the new generation, raised and educated in Europe, and they’re reject-

ing the multiethnic, multi-religious, tolerant society where they've grown up.

There's something about a crisis that brings out who we really are, and what we really believe in. Many claim to believe in lofty ideals like European unity or the multi-ethnic society. But when the Euro crisis struck, it turned out that there were no Europeans in Europe, only Germans and Greeks, Frenchmen and Italians. And in those first hours after the Oslo bomb, not only was there harassment of immigrants, but everyone expected there to be. It was as if people suspected, deep down, that Norway's multi-ethnic harmony rests on nothing but a great will to believe.

Big life decisions can also strip away pretense. Consider the white, native Norwegian families who quietly vote with their feet by abandoning neighborhoods in east Oslo they perceive as dominated by African and Asian immigrants. Norwegians have fewer excuses for "white flight" than most. These neighborhoods are not run-down and crime-infested. Nor are they isolated housing projects, like many such areas in Sweden and France. All that's "wrong" with many of these neighborhoods is the people who live there.

Søndre Nordstrand in southeast Oslo is a pleasant green, suburban district, 15 minutes from downtown. Half of the population is foreign-born or have immigrant parents. Immigrants move there when they become well off. And the natives move out. The pattern plays out all over Oslo, creating a patchwork of native and immigrant neighborhoods. In much of east Oslo, people of immigrant backgrounds are fast approaching a majority, but the distribution is uneven, ranging from 15 percent to 50 percent. The contrast is clearest in schools, where up to 97 percent of students are from foreign language-speaking homes. The white families who leave don't want their children to

be the last in their class who come from a Norwegian-language background. And if they're honest with themselves, they may admit that they feel more at home when they're surrounded by people more like themselves. Diversity is fine as an abstract ideal, but harder to accept as a neighborhood reality. From such small preferences, segregation is born and maintained.

#### IMMIGRATION WAVES

Norway did not expect or intend to become a major immigrant destination. It would not have been anyone's top candidate for a

multiethnic melting pot. It is cold, sparse, and inward-looking, with a language that comes easily only to other Scandinavians.

Visitors find Norwegians hard to approach. The preferred personal space of a Norwegian is roughly the size of a mountain top, where he or she can be alone with the

rocks, wind, and snow. Norwegian myth is full of individuals who struggled against the elements. In its most popular World War II movie, *Nine Lives*, the hero, a resistance fighter, spends more time fighting nature than German soldiers. Urban culture has been weak. Norwegians were historically farmers, spread out across valleys, fjords, and mountains, eyeing the few urban centers with suspicion. Even today, when a quarter of Norwegians live in the Oslo metropolitan region, the ideal winter vacation is to escape the crowds and trek up into the mountains, to huddle around a cozy cabin fire with a small group of family or friends.

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### NORWAY'S THIRD GREAT WAVE OF IMMIGRATION BEGAN IN THE MID-2000S, WHEN EASTERN EUROPE JOINED THE EUROPEAN UNION.

Immigration came late. Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands became multiethnic in the post-World War II decades, when migrants arrived from their colonies. Norway's first real wave of immigrants came in the 1970s, in the form of mostly Pakistani guest workers. Like the Turkish guest workers who came to Germany in the 1960s, they chose to stay for good. Only 5,000 Pakistanis arrived in the 1970s, but most settled in a small area of Oslo, creating its first distinctly foreign quarter. Norwegians were scared and quickly closed the door on more guest workers. Gill Doyle, a young American who lived in Norway at that time, found it to be an insular country, suspicious of foreigners like himself. People would casually voice their negative opinion of Jews, Catholics, Samis, and Pakistanis. He found some of his few friends among guest workers, who shared his loneliness. One day, one of them took him aside and confided, "They're crushing me. It's like they've got hold of my heart and are squeezing." Today there are 30,000 Norwegians of Pakistani background, still mostly in Oslo. They're one of Norway's most visible, but also successful minorities. Their parents were poorly educated, and yet their children have become doctors, journalists, politicians, and business owners.

The next great wave of immigration began in the 1980s, in the form of asylum seekers and their families from the developing world. This wave has continued to the present day. Norway is conscientious about its humanitarian obligations. Larger European countries receive more refugees in absolute numbers, but measured per capita, Norway is one of the most popular and open refugee destinations in Europe, second only to Sweden. This has caused far more concern than the early wave of guest workers. The volume is higher, and there

is a growing gap between the humanitarian aspiration of the asylum system and the often absurd reality of it.

The 1951 Refugee Convention, which led to creation of the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), grants victims of persecution the right to make their way to a safe country and apply for asylum. It was intended to resettle Eastern Europeans who faced persecution from Communist authorities. But it has come to fill a function for which it was never designed—enabling those who suffer from poverty or war to migrate to a rich country of their choice. The road to asylum is not open to those who need it the most. Most refugees can do little more than make their way to a refugee camp, where they may, with luck, be chosen for resettlement by the UNHCR. If refugees are to seek asylum, they must make their own way to the destination country. This is only possible for those who are relatively well off, have good connections, are willing to go into debt, and would potentially risk their lives. And even then the odds aren't particularly good. It's the world's cruelest lottery.

Lying is common. An Iraqi Kurd, whose asylum application was rejected, later told researchers, "most [Kurds] who come to Norway don't tell the true story, and that includes myself." Other Kurds agreed. The only difference between those who were accepted and those who were not, they said, was luck. Zulmay Afzali, an Afghan official who was granted asylum in Sweden, recounts in his book, *A Refugee Crosses Your Path*, how shocked he was to find fellow asylum seekers openly helping each other invent stories. Kahled Ahmed Taleb, who arrived in Norway in 2002, claimed to have fled persecution in Somalia. He became a Labor politician and was on Utøya with his brother, who

notably didn't survive. In 2013, he was arrested and charged with making a false statement. He was actually from Djibouti and had invented his entire life story. Now he will be expelled.

If asylum seekers play their cards right, they can remain in the system for years and use their children as bargaining chips, forcing their hosts to choose between fairness and compassion. Asfaw Eshete and his wife Zinash arrived from Ethiopia, claiming persecution because they were connected to the Oromo Liberation Front. Immigration authorities did not believe them and denied the application. But the couple refused to return, and Ethiopia does not accept forced returns. They remained in Norway, living in an asylum center. There they had a son, Nathan. He grew up and attended Norwegian school. By the time a return agreement could be made with Ethiopia, Nathan was seven and had lived his entire life in Norway. He became a symbol for hundreds of other children like him, victims of the gap between their parents' ambitions and the demands of the asylum system. His family was eventually allowed to stay.

Norway's third great wave of immigration began in the mid-2000s, when Eastern Europe joined the European Union. Norway is not an EU member, but takes part in the European Economic Area (EEA), an "EU light" agreement that carries many of the same obligations. Most EU legislation related to the internal market also applies to EEA countries. Any EU citizen who can find work in Norway can settle there. And find jobs they have. The labor migrants, mostly construction workers from Poland and Lithuania, arrive by the tens of thousands every year. While refugees tend to end up in a few urban areas like Oslo, labor migrants spread out more evenly, wherever

there is construction work. They are also among the most vulnerable and poorly integrated immigrants in Norway. Few speak Norwegian or even English. They work in segregated work teams, with other Poles or Lithuanians. When they lose their jobs, they have few alternatives. Outside of construction, it is all but impossible to get a job without speaking fluent Norwegian.

When Germany invited Turkish guest workers in the 1960s, it assumed they would return home later. Instead, they stayed and brought their families with them. Fifty years later, Norway still ascribes to the fiction of the temporary guest worker. Few attempts are made to teach them Norwegian. But they're not leaving. Instead, they do as the Turks did—bring their families over and settle for good. "I have nothing in Poland," said one woman, in a recent report on labor migrants. "I want my child to live here and build a life here." Poles and Lithuanians have a foothold in Norway because they arrive with job offers. Others are less fortunate. "I'd never slept on the street until I came to Oslo," a Romanian carpenter told the newspaper *Aftenposten*. Hundreds of people now queue up outside shelters and soup kitchens in Oslo every day, hoping for food and a place to sleep. They're migrants from Southern Europe, fleeing the crisis in the euro zone. But they don't speak Norwegian, can't find jobs, have few welfare rights, and are depleting their meager savings in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

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THE WAVES  
OF ASYLUM  
SEEKERS AND  
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BEATRICE N. KABUTAKAPUA

#### WORLD'S RICHEST COUNTRY

These “Euro refugees” are unlikely to make up a fourth wave of immigration. They’ll try their luck, give up, and leave for better opportunities elsewhere. But the waves of asylum seekers and Eastern European labor migrants show no sign of abating. Together, they have turned Norway into Europe’s fastest growing immigrant nation. Norway now receives more immigrants per capita than any other major European country. Its net immigration rate is higher than that of the United States during its

great immigration period in the late 1800s. Two-thirds of Norway’s population increase comes from migration, only a third from births. Yet a generation ago, Norway had no immigrants to speak of at all.

Norway is rich. Ever since it struck oil in 1969, it has been living in an economic universe of its own. It has only 5 million inhabitants, but is one of the world’s major oil and gas producers. Its per capita GDP is \$99,000, twice that of the United States. Prices are higher—a beer easily costs \$15—but imports are cheap. Most





oil revenue is invested for later use, but providing services to the oil sector is such a big part of the economy that it pushes up wages for everyone. Inflation is low, but wages have been rising 4 percent to 5 percent a year for more than a decade. Other European economies are stagnating and must cut costs. Norway's public sector is 60 percent larger today than in 2005.

Oil seeps into the economy and into people's minds. Norwegians are conscious of living in "the world's richest country." And while there is an abundance of wealth,

productivity is not keeping pace. The IMF warns that Norway may suffer from "Dutch disease," named after the harmful effects oil income had on Dutch competitiveness in the 1960s and 1970s. Oil and gas is so profitable that it crowds out the industries Norway will depend on when the oil runs out. Meanwhile, everyone feels rich, and the government spends accordingly. This fuels Norway's generous welfare state, which covers a Norwegian's needs from first breath to last. When Norwegians fall sick, they receive paid sick leave from day one. It will remain

at 100 percent of their income for a year, then slowly start falling. Some 9 percent of the total population lives on permanent disability benefits, 19 percent of all 55-59 year olds, and many from self-reported complaints of pain or depression. The system is open to all. Immigrants earn their right to it by working. Refugees receive additional help. Poverty exists mostly as a statistical artifact.

Norway already knows this model is unsustainable, with or without immigration. Over the coming decades oil revenue will erode, causing a difficult economic transition. The population will grow older, and there will be a steadily widening gap of unfunded welfare obligations. In Norway's "pay-as-you-go" pension system there will be fewer workers to pay for each pensioner. So taxes must rise, or expenses will have to fall. But taxes are already high, and Norway's generous welfare state is at the core of its identity. The adjustment will be painful, whichever way it goes. Norwegians dread the choice and postpone making it.

Immigration could, in theory, solve this problem by adding to the number of young workers. Many support immigration for that very reason. We are now learning that this is not the case. Norway's immigration makes its welfare state less, not more, sustainable. Xenophobes have always accused immigrants of "living off welfare," (while simultaneously "stealing our jobs"). It's not that simple, but there's a kernel of truth. The modern welfare state gives the most help to those in greatest need of assistance. Those who need it the most tend to be immigrants. And generous welfare schemes can trap people into lives of dependency.

Refugee immigrants find it particularly difficult to obtain employment in Norway. Only 28 percent of working age Somalis, 40 percent of Eritreans, and 42 percent of Iraqis have jobs. In the case of some highly educat-

ed immigrants, prejudiced employers may be to blame. Research shows that job applicants with foreign-sounding names have a harder time landing job interviews than similarly qualified natives, particularly men in the private sector. But the main problem is simply that they're not qualified. Norway is a post-industrial, highly educated economy. Refugees tend to have little or no relevant education. Many are illiterate.

In other immigration economies, low-educated immigrants begin on the lower rungs of the ladder and work their way up. Their children complete the journey upwards, becoming fully integrated members of society. But Norway removed the lowest rungs of the ladder when it built the welfare state. There is little income inequality, and few of the kind of low-paying jobs where you can just walk in off the street with nothing but a desire to work. Eastern European labor migrants have found a niche in construction. Refugees have not. Norway's economy simply doesn't know what to do with uneducated immigrants from politically troubled regions.

This is costly and also threatens to create a permanent underclass. The real class division in an egalitarian social democracy like Norway is not between high earners and low earners, but between those who have cracked the code of the labor market, and those who haven't. If you work, all doors are open to you. You build networks and gain experience. If you don't work, life is livable, even pleasant, in material terms. But opportunities are few. Finding your first job, or returning to the job market after a long pause is difficult. The risk is that they become permanent outsiders and transfer their sense of alienation to their children.

By treating Eastern European labor migrants as temporary guest workers, Norway ensures that they, too, may fall out of the labor market. Their jobs are uncertain, and

they don't speak the language. But they're bringing their families over, sending their children to school, and earning the right to draw unemployment benefits. Norway will soon discover what all immigrant countries have already discovered—labor migrants are not machine parts, but people.

#### NEW IDENTITY

Immigration is more than a purely economic issue. It's also an identity issue. The rapid transition from a monoethnic to a multiethnic society has been difficult, at times traumatic. Breivik was not the first to go to war for ethnic purity. Neo-Nazis planted a bomb in an Oslo Mosque in 1985, nearly killing dozens. Organizations sprang up to warn against the dark-skinned peril. Arne Myrdal, Norway's best known anti-immigration activist at the time, formed two such organizations. He believed immigration would lead to civil war and tried to bomb an asylum center. Such extremists had little support. When Myrdal spoke in Oslo in 1991, 10,000 people showed up only to turn their backs on him. But everyday racism plays a role in every immigrant's life. The educated elite has responded by promoting diversity and tolerance. In doing so, they've defeated the open racism, but replaced it with some prejudices of their own. All people, they suggest, are essentially Norwegian on the inside, or at least would like to be. In the words of a classic Norwegian children's song, some of the children of the world are brown, some are yellow, and some are white. Some live in straw huts, some on boats, and some in houses. But, it concludes at the end of each verse, "*meget er forskjellig, men det er utenpå.*" Much is different, but only on the outside. On the inside we are all the same. In reality, it is the other way around. The difference in looks and dress between

the peoples of the world are superficial. It's the cultural differences in our minds that matter. We almost live in different worlds.

To be a multiethnic society means dealing with these differences. It means dealing with people who see the world in fundamentally different ways, and who would like to keep it that way. Norway has only slowly come to terms with this.

In its brief time as a multiethnic immigrant society, Norway has become more sophisticated. It has learned to distinguish Muslims from Islamists. It is less prejudiced and also less naive. But it has failed to solve the identity puzzle. In many ways, it has not even begun to do so. In his farewell speech, after losing the 2013 election, Prime Minister Stoltenberg declared that integration has been a success in Norway. Integration is the magic word on immigration matters. Whatever the problem is, more integration is said to be the solution.

But integration is proving to be a slow, organic process that can't always be accelerated by throwing money at it. New ethnic and religious divisions are appearing all over Europe. It seems futile to aim for a multiethnic society that is not at least partly segregated. And this comes with a price. Segregation reduces contact between groups. It saves each from having to deal with the others as they really are. It allows immigrants to pretend that they can preserve their old way of life. It allows natives to deal with diversity as only an abstract ideal. For a partly segregated society to work, it needs a multiethnic identity that is strong enough to bind it all together. But segregation itself prevents that identity from forming.

Norway's old identity was built on sameness—the same skiing vacations, the same watered-down secular Protestantism, and the same national origin story. This must be adjusted if it is to fit the new reality, but



there is nothing to replace it with. Academics have tried to replace it with social theories, but people found them too anemic. Politicians have tried to replace it with Europe, but Norwegians are highly suspicious. So are other Europeans, for that matter. Across Europe, old national identities are becoming outdated, but there's no replacement that people will embrace. Even core EU countries fall back on national identities during crises.

Norway's short immigration history has gone reasonably well, by European standards. In 2013, socially isolated immigrant suburbs in Stockholm exploded in riots. Rioters burned hundreds of cars and fought with the police. This seems unlikely in Oslo. But there are ominous signs for the future. The new waves of immigrants have put the nation's unsustainable welfare system under extra stress and are turning Norway into a multiethnic state for which its current identity and social model is poorly prepared. In a sense, its identity is becoming unsustainable, a remnant of an earlier age that hangs on from inertia. If immigration continues to be Norway's main source of population growth, it will be transformed into a very different society from what it has been.

#### POLITICAL CONTROL

Norway now has two important choices to make. The first is whether immigration should be placed under political control, where it can be discussed and voted upon. This may sound strange to readers from non-European countries, who take for granted the right to decide how much and what type of immigration they wish to support. Canada, for instance, recently found that its traditional point system produces too many unemployed immigrants, and is now changing it. But European countries have largely given up the right to have an active immigration policy of their own. None of

Norway's major sources of immigration are under direct political control. But they should be. Large-scale immigration comes with the potential for radical change, for good or ill. It is irresponsible of politicians to abandon control over this force. Even if immigration has worked well until now, without political control, there is no way to change course should circumstances or priorities shift in the future.

There are two steps Norway should consider if it wants to establish that control. The first is to renegotiate or abandon the "EU light" EEA agreement, which connects Norway to the EU labor market. This would return labor immigration to political control. This does not mean that labor immigration must necessarily be made more difficult, only that it becomes possible to adjust it as needed to suit Norway's own circumstances.

The second step is to shift refugee immigration away from asylum seekers to resettlement through the UNHCR. Asylum seekers make their own way to the country of their choice. They travel through expensive and dangerous smuggling networks. The system is commonly abused, and the destination country has little control over who and how many it receives. And yet Norway, like the rest of Europe, strongly favors asylum seekers, thus encouraging more people to make the same journey. UN refugees are resettled directly from refugee camps, by quotas set by the destination country, which may choose to grow or shrink the quota. Norway can then choose which refugees from which conflicts to accept. Perhaps a new war breaks out and overwhelms its neighbors with hundreds of thousands of refugees. Norway could then give these refugees priority, instead of waiting for them to pay their own way through the black market smuggling networks.

To achieve this, Norway should place a higher burden of proof on asylum seekers.

They should be required to show identification papers and evidence that can be used to verify that they need protection from persecution. Norway should also make better use of “safe third countries”—the principle that asylum seekers should seek protection in the first safe country they arrive in. And Norway should cooperate with transit countries to prevent human smuggling.

Ideally, this should all be done at the European level. But failing that, Norway should explore these options alone. There is a place for traditional asylum seekers in today’s world, but the burden of proof must rest on the asylum seeker. A humanitarian refugee policy should primarily assist refugees in the modern sense of the word. This would be politically difficult. Many would perceive it as restrictive and cynical. The European Court of Human Rights would object. So would the ecosystem of NGOs that have grown up around the asylum system. But it would not necessarily mean that Norway must accept a smaller number of refugees. It could increase its UNHCR quotas to match the reduction in asylum seekers. There’s a case to be made that it is more effective to help a large number of refugees in the camp where they’re staying than to permanently resettle a handful of them, but this is a different issue. The priority must be to get refugee immigration under political control, where it can be discussed and affirmed like any other policy.

#### UNIQUE OR POST-NATIONAL

Once political control over immigration has been established, it would be possible for Norway to formulate an active immigration policy. Norway would now have a second choice—to preserve the attributes that make its society unique, or become a more generic, post-national society. Until recently, Norway has had

a unique homogeneity, which comes from living in one of the less frequently invaded corners of Europe. It has had a clear identity, aloof but idealistic. It has built a distinctive welfare system, and it could do so because its people maintained a high level of trust in their neighbors and government.

If it wishes to preserve this, Norway should reduce its current level of immigration. Norway’s social model is built on trust and equality, and its high level of immigration threatens both. Ethnic diversity can reduce trust. This hasn’t happened yet, but would remove the basis for much that is characteristic about Norwegian society if it did. And although Norway must reform its welfare state in any case, its current immigration makes the system seem absurd.

Social scientists do not have a clear answer as to why some countries become more productive, more transparent, more democratic, more trustful, and less corrupt, but they do know that each such attribute interacts with the other in beneficial ways. Norway is near the top on all of these measures. If it wishes to remain there, it should study the foundation of its social model and avoid radical social changes that could undermine it. This would be difficult, but it would not be immoral. Even small countries have a right to be unique. But it is unlikely Norway will do this. There is no political basis for it—just a vague sense of frustration among voters. Even its new right-

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**THERE IS NOT A CHOICE BETWEEN XENOPHOBIA AND TOLERANCE, BUT BETWEEN THE NATION-STATE AND THE POST-NATIONAL STATE.**

leaning government, which includes an immigration-skeptical party, does not propose significant restrictions. Norway's model may be unsustainable in a deeper sense. It lacks the political and intellectual culture that is needed to understand how to sustain itself. It has survived this far only by accident.

This leaves the other option, which is to embrace the multiethnic, post-national state, but to do it properly, not accidentally. Adopt a more cosmopolitan identity and detach traditional Norwegian culture from the state. Reintroduce the lower rungs of the economic ladder, by cutting welfare benefits and promoting more low-income jobs. Give immigrants a place to begin their journey toward becoming fully integrated members of society, even if this causes a more unequal income distribution. Join the EU so Norway can have a say in the laws it already follows. Stop thinking of EU labor migrants as temporary guest workers. Give them the language classes they need in order to make it. But also encourage English as a secondary language in the labor market, so that labor migrants are made less vulnerable. Above all, accept that there will be less agreement on values. Accept that many—including ethnic Norwegians—will identify more strongly with their ethnic identity than with their state identity, and that some will see these identities as being in direct conflict. Accept a certain level of segregation and tension.

The first option would be less stressful for society and the economy, but would require a large shift in perspective among the elite. The second option would abandon the Norwegian dream that one could build a society where the state removes all big sources

of stress, and where all people are at more or less the same level.

This is not a choice between xenophobia and tolerance, but between the nation-state and the post-national state. I recommend the first because nobody knows how to disassemble the nation state quickly and safely. The flag of a post-national state stirs only the hearts of politicians and academics. I worry that Norway won't be able to make this transition without losing something valuable along the way. Tensions between ethnic and religious groups do not necessarily resolve themselves successfully. They could remain for generations. The dream of a post-national multiethnic society could then turn into a conflict between suspicious, intolerant, and, to some degree, violent identities. Norway's booming economy cushions all anxieties, but only temporarily. A crisis could bring a host of conflicts out in the open.

I'm not advocating a narrow ethnic identity that excludes Muslims, Jews, or Catholics, or anyone whose ancestors came from Somalia, Pakistan, Iraq, or Poland. Instead, I am advocating a national identity that overshadows such identities, instead of being overshadowed by them—something that passes the marriage test. It should not be scandalous to find a spouse outside your own group. In either case, Norway must choose. Establish political control over immigration, or not. Preserve a unique national identity, or become post-national. Many European countries face these choices at the moment and are giving different answers. Norway has yet to acknowledge that these choices must be made. But when we try to get the best of both worlds, we may end up with the worst of each. ●