



THE NORWAY PROJECT:

A DEEP LOOK AT ITS LESSONS TO HELP US TO IMPROVE OUR SOCIETY

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY:

David Sloan Wilson
Dag Olav Hessen
Jerry Lieberman
Bjørn Grinde
Lars Gule

Gin Kohl Lieberman
Kalle Moene
Nina Witoszek
John Gowdy
Lisi Krall



THE EVOLUTION INSTITUTE
UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING THE HUMAN CONDITION

CONTENTS:

The Norway Project: A This View of Life Special Edition	4
By The Evolution Institute	
Blueprint for the Global Village	6
by David Sloan Wilson and Dag Olav Hessen	
Fostering a Political Culture that Advances Human Development	12
by Jerry Lieberman	
How an Evolutionary Perspective Can Help the World	16
by Bjørn Grinde	
A Bird's Eye View of Norway's History	18
by Lars Gule	
Jerry Lieberman, Secretary/Treasurer & QoL Project Coordinator 2014 Report to the Evolution Institute Board	19
by Jerry Lieberman	
Interview with Jerry Lieberman	22
by Gin Kohl Lieberman	
Scandinavian Equality Evolving	24
by Kalle Moene	
Adaptability and Portability of Norway's Quality of Life (QoL) Practices and Policies: What We Can Learn from an Evolutionary Perspective	26
by Jerry Lieberman and Gin Kohl Lieberman	
Cultural Origins of the Norwegian Regime of Goodness: The role of "Memes"	40
by Nina Witoszek	
The Relevance of Ultrasociality to Understanding Norway's Economic Evolution	42
by John Gowdy and Lisi Krall	
The History and Future of Norway's Cultural Ethos and Political Practice.....	43
by Gin Kohl Lieberman	
The Norway Case: A story of group identity or national selfishness?	48
by Dag Olav Hessen	
Contributor Bios	49

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY:



DAVID SLOAN WILSON



DAG OLAV HESSEN



GIN KOHL LIEBERMAN



BJORN GRINDE



LISI KRALL



KALLE MOENE



JERRY LIEBERMAN



NINA WITOSZEK



JOHN GOWDY



LARS GULE



HUMANS possess a great capacity for behavioral change, and consequently, cultures do too. These behavioral and cultural changes dynamically interact, resulting in changes that are often random—not predictable or directed. Some are mutually beneficial, and others are inconsequential, while still others pose serious consequences to humans and their environment.

The Evolution Institute is a think tank that does more than think. We use our knowledge of evolutionary principles to consider how to improve people's quality of life. To that end, we have been working on understanding how Norway, a country that comes out on top in all the quality of life indices does it.

This book collects research from leading thinkers on the secrets of Norway's success and how import those lessons to help our society.

Our project studies Norway because this country is well known for a very high quality of life. During the last decade Norway has occupied the number 1 position in the United Nations list of countries ranked by their Human Development Index (HDI) during eight out of the last 10 years.

The HDI combines economic and biological measures of quality of life (GDP per capita and life expectancy) with educational attainment. While in the U.S. inequality has grown since the 1990s, in Norway inequality has increased very slightly and remains at a very low level, so the gains of economic growth have been distributed to essentially all Norwegians.

Norway provides a potential and valuable case study of cultural adaptation and fitness. What accounts for its profound transition from a monarchical state to the highest ranking country in the world based upon the UN Human Development Index? What has enabled this small country to serve as an international model for social justice, equality, and concern for the well being and quality of life for its entire population and the world?

A case study of Norway enables us an opportunity to acquire insights on what has worked so successfully to raise living standards for all members of the society, but not because it is necessarily unique in every respect. Norway is very similar in important aspects to its neighboring Scandinavian states, with the possible distinction of having a decided wealth advantage from the discovery of oil/gas and plentiful reserves. Nevertheless in the nineteenth century, Norway was a poor country that experienced considerable political and economic changes in the 1920s and 1930s. More significantly, the defeat of the Germans after WW II greatly accelerated the nation's progress from poor to parity with most other western European nations. And, this occurred prior to the discovery of oil and gas. Today it still only accounts for half the difference between what Norway has achieved as compared with other wealthy nations in the world, either lacking the oil or confining its benefits to a select few of the citizenry.

Considerable credit is given to the Norway Pension Trust, which holds the profits from the oil, for the country's good fortunes in becoming a wealthy nation. But, no explanation prevails as to why Norway decided to maintain 67% ownership in Statoil instead of leasing out its oil and gas fields exclusively to private companies. There is also the matter of why the profits of this majority ownership weren't used to reduce taxes for operating the government and comprehensive benefits programs; instead, profits were put into an investment fund for the decades ahead when oil

NORWAY PROVIDES A POTENTIAL AND VALUABLE CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND FITNESS.



and gas reserves would be depleted. What cultural traits can account for this? What conditions had to exist for this to happen and what processes led up to it? Importantly, can any of these processes be replicated, and if so how?

One of the most important reasons for engaging in this research project is a conviction that human development and national success is not motivated by economic means alone as shown in the different forms of Quality of Life Indicators. The creation of the Norway Pension Fund is but one unique action to be considered further for application to at least other nations faced with choices regarding how best to manage and benefit from natural resources for the general well being of the nation.

We will also examine the national system of innovation and wealth creation. Norwegian firms have been innovative, but have invested relatively little in R&D compared to other countries. By sharing information and relying on publicly funded research and a highly educated labour force, industry has grown largely by pursuing collaborative strategies.

We would like to avoid drawing conclusions prematurely. However, a recurrent theme in the topics we have sketched out for further examination is an ethos of collaboration. Whether in business, education, or the system of government, the emphasis on common interests and strategies is striking. Is there any conflict between such collaboration, and the standard principle of capitalism: growth by competition? Is the strategy viable and adaptive in new environments? Has cooperation increased within and between groups in Norway? These are questions of paramount interest to EI and of great relevance to our nation and the world.

LIFE consists of units within units. In the biological world, we have genes, individuals, groups, species, and ecosystems—all nested within the biosphere. In the human world, we have genes, individuals, families, villages and cities, provinces, and nations—all nested within the global village. In both worlds, a problem lurks at every rung of the ladder: a potential conflict between the interests of the lower-level units and the welfare of the higher-level units. What's good for me can be bad for my family. What's good for my family can be bad for my village. All the way up to what's good for my nation can be bad for the global village.

For most of human existence, until a scant 10 or 15 thousand years ago, the human ladder was truncated. All groups were small groups whose members knew each other as individuals. These groups were loosely organized into tribes of a few thousand people, but cities, provinces, and nations were unknown.

Today, over half the earth's population resides in cities and the most populous nations teem with billions of people, but groups the size of villages still deserve a special status. They are the social units that we are genetically adapted to live within and they can provide a blueprint for larger social units, including the largest of them all—the global village of nations.

Groups into Organisms

The conflict between lower-level selfishness and higher-level welfare pervades the biological world. Cancer cells selfishly spread at the expense of other cells within the body, without contributing to the common good, resulting ultimately in the death of the whole organism. In many animal societies, the dominant individuals act more like tyrants than wise leaders, taking as much as they can for themselves until deposed by the next tyrant. Single species can ravage entire ecosystems for nobody's benefit but their own.

But goodness has its own advantages, especially when those who behave for the good of their groups are able to band together and avoid the depredations of the selfish. Punishment is also a powerful weapon against selfishness, although it is often costly to wield. Every once in a great while, the good manages to decisively suppress selfishness within their ranks. Then something extraordinary happens. The group becomes a higher-level organism. Nucleated cells did not evolve by small mutational steps from bacterial cells but as groups of cooperating bacteria. Likewise, multi-cellular organisms are groups of highly cooperative cells, and the insects of social insect colonies, while physically separate, coordinate their activities so well that they qualify as super-organisms. Life itself might have originated as groups of cooperating molecular reactions.

Only recently have scientists begun to realize that human evolution represents a similar transition. In most primate species, members of groups cooperate to a degree but are also each other's main rivals. Our ancestors evolved to suppress self-serving behaviors that are destructive for the group, at least for the most part, so that the main way to succeed was as a group. Teamwork became the signature adaptation of our species.

Extant hunter-gatherer societies still reflect the kind of teamwork that existed among our ancestors for thousands of generations. Individuals cannot achieve high status by throwing their weight around but only by cultivating a good reputation among their peers. Most of human moral psychology—including its other-

MODERN NATIONS DIFFER GREATLY
IN HOW WELL THEY FUNCTION AT THE
NATIONAL SCALE.

oriented elements such as solidarity, love, trust, empathy, and sympathy, and its coercive elements such as social norms enforced by punishment—can be understood as products of genetic evolution operating among groups, favoring those that exhibited the greatest teamwork.

From Genes to Culture

Teamwork in our ancestors included physical activities such as childcare, hunting and gathering, and offense and defense against other groups. Human teamwork also acquired a mental dimension including an ability to transmit learned information across generations that surpasses any other species. This enabled our ancestors to adapt to their environments much more quickly than by the slow process of genetic evolution. They spread over the globe, occupying all climatic zones and hundreds of ecological niches. The diversity of human cultures is the cultural equivalent of the major genetic adaptive radiations in dinosaurs, birds, and mammals. The invention of agriculture initiated a positive feedback process between population size and the ability to produce food leading to the mega-societies of today.

Cultural evolution differs from genetic evolution in important respects but not in the problem that lurks at every rung of the social ladder. Just like genetic traits, cultural traits can spread by benefitting lower-level units at the expense of the higher-level good—or by contributing to the higher-level good. There can be cultural cancers, no less so than genetic cancers. And for teamwork to exist at any given rung of the social ladder, there must be mechanisms that hold the wolves of selfishness at bay. A nation or the global village is no different in this respect than a human village, a hunter-gatherer group, an ant colony, a multicellular organism, or a nucleated cell.

Modern nations differ greatly in how well they function at the national scale. Some manage their affairs efficiently for the benefit of all their citizens. They qualify at least as crude superorganisms. Other nations are as dysfunctional as a cancer-ridden patient or an ecosystem ravaged by a single species. Whatever teamwork exists is at a smaller scale, such as a group of elites exploiting the nation for its own benefit. The nations that work have safeguards that prevent exploitation from within, like scaled-up villages. The nations that don't work will probably *never* work unless similar safeguards are implemented.

Accomplishing teamwork at the level of a nation is hard enough, but it isn't good enough because there is one more rung in the social ladder. While many nations have a long way to go before they serve their own citizens well, a nation can be as good as gold to its own citizens and still be a selfish member of the global village. In fact there are many examples in the international arena, where nations protect their own perceived interests at expense of the common global future. We will address some of these issues for Norway, which serves its own citizens well by most metrics and also has ambitions to serve the global village well, but still sometimes succumbs to selfishness at the highest rung of the social ladder.

The Norway Case

Norway functions exceptionally well as a nation. Although it is small in comparison with the largest nations, it is still many orders of magnitude larger than the village-sized groups of our ancestral past. Seen through the lens of evolutionary theory, the dividing line between function and dysfunction has been notched upward so that the whole nation functions like a single organism. This is an exaggeration, of course. Self-serving activities that are bad for the group can be found in Norway, but they are modest in comparison with the more dysfunctional nations of the world.

Norway's success as a nation is already well known without requiring an evolutionary lens. Along with other Nordic countries, it scores high on any list of economic and life quality indicators. The success of the so-called "Nordic Model" is commonly attributed to factors such as income equality, a high level of trust, high willingness to pay tax, which is tightly coupled to strong social security (health, education), a blend of governmental regulations and capitalism, and cultural homogeneity. These and other factors are important, but we think that viewing them through an evolutionary lens is likely to shed light on *why* they are important. Our hypothesis is that Norway functions well as a nation because it has successfully managed to scale up the

social control mechanisms that operate spontaneously in village-sized groups. Income equality, trust, and the other factors attributed to Norway's success emanate from the social control mechanisms.

Our evolutionary lens also sheds light on Norway's behavior as a member of the global village. Not without reason, Norway prides itself as a "nation of goodness." Norwegian foreign policy no doubt plays a positive role in world affairs, also aiming for a "civilized capitalism," and Norway is the country that has pressed the UN to accept guidelines that make not only states, but also multinational companies, liable for violation of human rights. Also Norway is currently the world's most active advocate of corporate social responsibility on all international arenas. Hence in this context, Norway has done a great deal to behave as a solid citizen of the global village. On the other hand, for all its success and wisdom, the management of the state pension fund illustrates that even Norway is sometimes guilty of selfishly feathering its own nest at the expense of other nations, the planet, and therefore ultimately its own welfare over the long term.

The Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global is by far the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, currently exceeding 800 billion USD, and rapidly growing. The fund is owned by the state on explicit behalf of current and future generations. It is administrated by the Ministry of Finance, which gives guidelines to the investment branch of the Norwegian State Bank (Norwegian Bank Investment Management, NBIM). A separate Council of Ethics (appointed by the government) serves the role of advising the Ministry on which companies to divest from due to serious ethical misconduct. Details in the structure and mandates can be found [here](#).

The fund has two major ethical concerns: It should provide good returns to future generations, and it should not contribute to severe unethical acts. The major emphasis has been on the first goal. A core management issue is the rule of maximum spending ("handlingsregelen"), i.e. that no more than 4% of the annual income can enter the annual state budget for public spending. This insures that the fund will be used for the long-term welfare of Norway, not just short-term welfare.

This is admirable management of common goods and can serve as an example of how natural resources can be managed for the benefit of an entire nation. At the opposite extreme, consider Equatorial Guinea, which allocates almost the entire income from its oil to the benefit of a single family (the president and his close relatives). For the rest of the population, the life expectancy is 51 years, and 77% have an income of less than 2 US dollars per day. Most other oil-producing nations direct at least some of their revenues to collective goods, but much of it is diverted to political and corporate elites and/or short-term spending. In this context, the Norwegian Pension Fund is quite unique with its long-term investments.

However if we go further and ask whether the investments are to the benefit of the long-term welfare of the global village, the answer is very close to a "No." The main goal of the fund is maximum return, and while Norway has set up to 3 billion NOK aside for preservation of rainforests, it has also (at least up to now) invested heavily in logging companies replacing rainforest with palm oil. There are also heavy investments in mining industries, coal and oil companies, and other activities that do not contribute to a sustainable future. There is no overall "green," sustainable, or ethical profile for evaluating investments. There is only an Ethical Council that advises the Ministry of Finance, which decides (often after considerable delay) whether or not the bank (NBIM) should divest in certain companies that perform major, unethical practices. Such divestments are made public, so at least they are open to the gaze of Norwegians and the rest of the world—no doubt increasing their impact. The problem is, however, that the investments *per se* are guided almost solely by the principle of maximum returns, not by principles of long term, sustainable (environmental as well as morally) investments that would benefit the global village—as well as Norway. So, if even Norway fails to recognize the long-term benefits of a strategy beyond narrow national self-interest, what kind of mechanisms can be invoked to the benefit of the global village?

Organizing the Global Village

Norway's double standard at the highest rung of the social ladder is typical of most nations. Around the world, politicians talk unashamedly about pursuing the national interest as if it is their highest moral obligation. Double standards easily trigger a feeling of moral indignation. How could persons or nations be so hypocritical? But wagging fingers at nations is not going to solve the problem. A smarter approach is to



understand why moral indignation works at the scale of a village, why it doesn't work at the scale of the global village, and how it can be made to work with the implementation of the appropriate social controls.

Imagine living in a village and meeting someone who talks unabashedly about her own interests as if no one else matters. As far as she is concerned, the other villagers are merely tools for accomplishing her own ends. How would you react to such a person? Speaking for ourselves, we would be shocked to the point of questioning her sanity. We might entertain similar thoughts, but we wouldn't be so open about it. Moreover, our selfish impulses are tempered by a genuine concern for others. Empathy, sympathy, solidarity, and love are as much a part of the human repertoire as greed. We would probably experience the same feeling of moral indignation welling up in us that we feel toward Norway's questionable behavior. Even if we remained dispassionate, we would avoid her, warn others, and feel moved to punish her for her anti social ways. As would most of the other villagers, so despite her intentions, she would probably not fare very well.

Moral indignation works at the scale of villages because it is backed up by an arsenal of social control mechanisms so spontaneous that we hardly know it is there. The most strongly regulated groups in the world are small groups, thanks to countless generations of genetic and cultural evolution that make us the trusting and cooperative species that we are.

The idea that trust requires social control is paradoxical because social control is not trusting. Nevertheless, social control creates an environment in which trust can flourish. When we know that others cannot harm us, thanks to a strong system of social controls, then we can express our positive emotions and actions toward others to their full extent: helping because we want to, not because we are forced to. When we feel threatened by those around us, due to a lack of social control, we withhold our positive emotions and actions like a snail withdrawing into its shell.

This is why people refrain from unethical acts—to the extent that they do—in village-sized groups and why cooperation is accompanied by positive emotions such as solidarity, empathy, and trust. The reason that nations and other large social entities such as corporations openly engage in unethical acts is because social controls are weaker and are not sufficient to hold the wolves of selfishness at bay. This is why politicians can talk openly about national self-interest as if nothing else matters—even though a villager who talked in a comparable fashion would be regarded as insane.

Understanding the nature of the problem enables us to sympathize with the plight of Norway when it chooses how to invest in the global market. Like a snail, it might want to emerge from its shell and support the most ethical enterprises. But to do so might be too costly in a market environment that rewards naked selfishness. Norway might be required to shrink into its shell and make selfish investments to survive. After all, snails have shells for a reason.

A third option is available to Norway and all other nations, which is to create the same kinds of social controls at a large scale that curtail selfishness in smaller groups. This is also costly, like investing in ethical enterprises that don't yield the highest profits, but it has a more lasting benefit because once a social control infrastructure is in place, it is the ethical enterprises that yield the highest returns. Norway has come a long way to employ this principle in its official foreign policy, but it is clearly lagging behind on the global business scene when it comes to own investments.

There is evidence that village-like social controls are starting to form at larger scales without the help of governments. In the United States, a nonprofit organization called B-lab (B stands for benefit) provides a certification service for corporations. Those that apply for certification receive a score on the basis of a detailed examination. If the score exceeds a certain value, then the company is permitted to advertise itself as a B-Corporation. Xiujian Chen and Thomas F. Kelly at Binghamton University's School of Management recently analyzed a sample of 130 B-corporations and compared them to a number of matched samples of other corporations. The samples were matched with respect to geographical location, business sector, corporation size, and other variables. In all cases, the B-corporations were either as profitable or more profitable (on average) than the corporations in the matched samples. Engaging in ethical practices did not hurt, and might even have helped, their bottom lines.

More analysis will be required to pinpoint why B-corporations do well by doing good. One possibility is that they have become like villages in their internal organization so there is less selfishness from within. Another possibility, which is not mutually exclusive, is that consumers are increasingly adopting a norm that causes them to prefer to do business with ethical companies and to shun unethical companies, exactly as they would prefer and avoid people in a village setting. Certification as a B-Corporation makes it easier for consumers to evaluate a company's ethical reputation. Knowing someone's reputation comes naturally in a village setting, but work is required to provide the same information at a larger scale. Adherence to other codes performs a similar function, such as the UK Stewardship Code (FRC 2012), the International Corporate Governance



Network's Code (ICGN) or the Singapore Code of Corporate Governance Statement on the Role of Shareholders (SCGC) to mention a few.

There are even indications that the corporate world is becoming more village-like without requiring formal certifications. As an example, Apple chief executive Tim Cook was recently criticized by the National Center for Public Policy Research (NCPFR) for failing to maximize profit for its shareholders by investing for the benefit of the climate and the environment. Cook became strikingly upset and advised those with such narrow self-centered goals to sell their stocks. He was behaving precisely as a good villager would behave – and if his reaction became the norm among large corporate entities, the global village would become more like a real village without the need for formal certifications.

It might seem too good to be true that consumers and the corporate world are spontaneously starting to hold the wolves of selfishness at bay by implementing the same kinds of social control that we take for granted at a village scale. If this did come to pass, then Norway would no longer be faced with difficult choices in how to invest its vast wealth in the global market, because the most ethical companies would also be the most profitable. But if this is happening at all, it is still in its initial stages. At present, it is still the case that some of the most profitable investments are of the cancerous variety.

Therefore, Norway is still faced with a difficult moral choice similar to that of most investors. It can remain in its shell and make the most profitable investments to maximize short-term returns for its shareholders (in this case the Norwegian population) without regard to worldwide ethical concerns, or it can emerge from its shell, live up to its ideal standards in domestic as well as foreign policy, and join with other right-minded individuals, corporations, and nations to help create the social control system that can make ethical practices most profitable. The crucial point is that this is a win-win situation in the long term since ultimately we are all in the same boat, and what is good for the world, in a long-term sustainability perspective, will also be good for Norwegians.

A New Narrative

In this essay, we have sketched a surprisingly simple solution to the apparent conflict between self-interest and mutual benefits at all hierarchical levels. We are suggesting that the social dynamics that take place naturally and spontaneously in villages can be scaled up to prevent the ethical transgressions that routinely take place at a large scale. Why is such a simple solution not more widely known and discussed? While we immediately realize this when it comes to cell-organism relationships or individuals within villages, we do not realize that the same principles also hold for companies or nations. One reason is because of an alternative narrative that pretends that the only social responsibility of a company is to maximize its bottom line. Free markets will insure that society benefits as a result. This narrative makes it seem reasonable to eliminate social controls—precisely the opposite of what needs to be done. Governments have been under the spell of this narrative for nearly 50 years despite a flimsy scientific foundation and ample evidence for its harmful effects. We can break the spell of the old narrative by noting something that will appear utterly obvious in retrospect: The unregulated pursuit of self-interest is cancerous at all scales. To create a global village, we must look to real villages.



FOSTERING A POLITICAL CULTURE THAT ADVANCES HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

BY JERRY LIEBERMAN

MANY of us no longer wait until we become ill to live a healthier life because there is now sufficient knowledge to either prevent or treat disease early. Humans are very complex organisms, and our numerous organs and cells work in harmony when we are healthy. Consequently, significant emphasis is placed on staying healthy and preventing illness. Why not the same approach for our society? Shouldn't we try to create a healthy society before it becomes ill?

A society's health is created through laws that are fair and institutions that allow people to flourish and pursue their goals. Doesn't our government exist to nurture social and political interests? Shouldn't we participate in determining what that should be? Can we be held accountable for what results when we determine there is prevalence of a disease in our society? Certainly we can heal ourselves because there are an infinite number of choices as to how we can organize ourselves and valid ways for us to determine if we are falling short of meeting expectations. But then, this requires understanding the "big picture" and addressing the question of who benefits from certain choices.

One way we start getting our thoughts in line with the big picture is to consider the U.S.'s increasing economic inequality. There is growing consensus that this has become a problem, and it had begun to emerge again in the 1970s—especially in the United States—and it is having a broad effect following the deep recession, starting in 2008. During the last presidential race, the Patriotic Millionaires emerged to promote higher taxes for the rich and reduce income inequality.

There is growing consensus that inequality is a big problem, and a solution is needed.

Much, then, has been elucidated in recent years about growing inequality jeopardizing the middle class – often considered as essential for the creation and maintenance of a democratic system. In 2013, the New York Times quoted President Obama as saying that the income gap is fraying the U.S. social fabric, and fueling the decline of the middle class.

Growing inequality is a fact; its effects are contentious. We need to consider how Americans form opinions and make decisions, but first we need to elaborate further on income inequality and the middle class.

Let's assume here that the working class is included in the middle class, or at least is perceived to be by elected officials. This class is quite a large one. Why is the lower class being left out of the discussion? Haven't they been affected, too, if not more severely, by the great recession, slow recovery, and increasing inequality? Of course they have, but they evidently lack the power, influence, numbers, resources, and organization to have their policy needs and interests included. They are grossly underrepresented. However, it wasn't always this way.

The 1960s was the decade of the War on Poverty. It was unabashedly intended to address poverty in the richest nation on earth, and it did succeed in reducing it measurably. However, the trend had started earlier and was an outgrowth of the New Deal that began in the 1930s and saw significant strides in reducing poverty and income inequality after WWII. Therefore, it is not necessarily characteristic of the United States to have always been indifferent to the poor and income inequality. Whether such circumstances can or will occur again is not the point here. Rather, it is a matter of whether the big picture must include all Americans and how to reduce income inequality. In today's world to ignore tens of millions of Americans and stand by idly while inequality grows is not only unhealthy, it is suicidal.

The Republican and Democratic parties have identified two broad streams of political and economic consciousness in the U.S. These streams have been in vogue for over eight decades, with various nuances. Yet they differ when contrasted with the range of perspectives on the role of government in well-developed democracies.

This much broader spectrum constitutes the really big picture: one that takes into consideration the great variety of democratic states in the world today and the extent to which what is really a democratic society has evolved to be in the 21st century. Although it may be very obvious to others, Americans are inclined to see the world through their own cultural lens, and this can pose great risks for them and the rest of the world in understanding the big picture.

It is challenging for Americans even when they employ a science-based approach when undertaking research, analysis, and drawing conclusions. They are then at considerable risk of being myopic, constrained, and reliant on one nation-state's history and their own cultural evolution to guide even scholarly pursuits, which require utmost objectivity and self awareness of cultural conditioning and societal acceptance.

At the time of the founding of the United States, political thought prioritized complete freedom from authority. This is how the Founding Fathers believed they would achieve individual and societal well-being. To the colonists, "government" represented a monarchical authority, and it was authoritarian. The relationship between these authorities had to be completely severed, and any future government severely constrained. Placing limits on what the government could do was the best way to achieve independence, freedom, and pursue happiness.

Hence the less government, the better except to ensure domestic tranquility, defend against foreign threats, and ensure the rule of law in commerce. All of this could be best achieved through a republic that adhered to placing strict, constitutionally enshrined limits on either changing the originally approved fundamental document to restrict passing national legislation or by erecting separation of powers and checks and balances in perpetuity. Basic tenets of democratic governing like majority rule, one person, one vote that are considered inviolate characteristic of a democratically functioning nation were not integral to the establishment of the United States in 1787. So, an emphasis on limiting government authority needs to be understood in the context of U.S. gaining independence from Britain in the 18th century.

Further, what constitutes democracy has evolved considerably since the birth of the United States. The evolution of democratic theory and practices results from the experiences of people with government over time to make it accountable to environmental changes and developments domestically and abroad. Great Britain may have been an authoritarian government or monarchical mother country at the time of the American Revolution, and somewhat interestingly remains a monarchy even today; however, in several respects Great Britain comes closer to providing a fuller embodiment of what qualifies as a democratic nation .

Canada, which never claimed its independence from Great Britain by means of revolutionary action—and was spared civil war—is also considered an advanced democratic system. It has institutions and policies that evolved in ways that were less tumultuous than that of United States.

Because the U.S. enshrined its essential values in the Constitution, it has ironically become harder to revise our institutions as a society's needs evolve. The present role of governmental debate in the United States carries on as if it were still the 18th century.

Democracy has emerged as a worldwide phenomenon—having gained broad international acceptance. This profound change does not mean it is practiced universally. Laying claim to being a democracy, or acting in



accordance with democratic principles, is often iterated but when measured against agreed-upon criteria and standards, governments often fall short of meeting some if not all that are required to qualify. There is also the matter of degree to which the requirements are met and the ability to compare and contrast one nation with another by means of a host of international organizations, public and private, that rate the nations of the world on human development and participation in government.

The United States did not have to concern itself in 1787, when it ratified the Constitution, of how well it fared in establishing and preserving a democratic state or if it compared favorably with the rest of the world. There were no well-established models or cases to be studied and considered for adoption. Now there are tangible bases to do this—with inequality considered an obstacle to maintaining and achieving democracy, and with the United States having the greatest degree of any economically developed nation.

Large scale democratic governance is new by evolutionary standards. The emergence of science and a scientific understanding of human nature was a necessary precondition. The lack of such knowledge explains aspects of the American governmental system that should be regarded as antiquated: How could a scientifically based form of government emerge in an 18th century when the former was in a nascent state? My contention is that it could not, and this helps to explain why our constitution places great hedges and blockades against consent by the governed, if one means by this universal franchise majority rule; providing for the general welfare of the people; universal high quality free public education; rule of law versus privilege; one person, one vote; no lifetime appointments; a highly informed electorate with access to public information—untarnished nor fettered by moneyed interests; and special access, for starters.

The question of how to create an informed electorate was not given enough thought by the framers of the U.S. Constitution. When and where is the theory and practice of democratic governance going to be practiced? Most social institutions that one encounters are authoritarian and do not exemplify democratic principles. Whatever assumptions were being made at the time about being highly informed and competent in civic engagement were largely ignored, and few in fact had the privilege of either running for office or voting. The subsequent emergence of free and universal public education did not occur until much later. Its purpose was basically to transmit cultural values and traditions and prepare children for a future means to become self sufficient.

But evolving a democratic state is complex. It is predicated on the assumption that our species—not a king, nobility, aristocratic elite, or plutocrats, but everyone—has the capacity to govern. However, absent preparation for such a great responsibility, how can citizens be expected to handle it? When and where is the theory and practice of democracy going to start and be demonstrated and practiced? Will this be in the home, church, school, or place of employment, and available to all regardless of personal circumstances? This is highly unlikely because most institutions in the United States are not democratically operated, but authoritarian or top-down with few exceptions. Consequently, when people reach the age of 18, they are eligible to vote, but whether they are even well prepared, motivated, or have any experience to draw on is another matter. There is no smooth transition except for the few who come from exceptional backgrounds and are generally from highly affluent families. This is one aspect of the impact of inequality that was neither considered nor anticipated as an issue when the United States was being forged. It remains an issue today that is not being addressed by the mainstream political parties that have in effect no present or foreseeable viable competition.

As part of the really big picture, we have to consider whether democracy is even a possibility without greater equality. We have all heard Patrick Henry's rallying cry "Give me liberty or death." Liberty and freedom are touted as preeminent, while equality is viewed with apprehension by most Americans.

Yet liberty/freedom is actually a means to an end, whereas equality is an end in itself, and in my judgment, fundamental for creating and maintaining a democratic state. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly are essential in a democratic system to ensure that there is always an opportunity to change policy—based either on new information or maturation. But when some have more power than others, the degree of inequality becomes greater and democracy suffers.

Freedom does not have to be sacrificed at the altar of democracy. In most instances, it is highly compatible with it, but under some circumstances with growing inequality in the successful pursuit of wealth, both are compromised. But if democratic countries provide considerable freedom, are less likely to go to war with one another, have higher quality of life, and are healthier when inequality is limited, why jeopardize the entire planet?

The case of Norway exemplifies how a nation can evolve a democracy that is synchronized with scientific and technological evolution and human nature.

Americans are accustomed to comparing their nation to its mythological history rather than other nations in an objective manner. The narrative goes something like this: “The United States is the greatest democracy in the world. It is the leader of the free world. God is on our side. The best way to educate children starts in the home, and then there is a sharing of some responsibilities with local schools.” It is within this context and framework that learning of science, social sciences, ethics, humanities and the arts is introduced and tailored to local tastes in the 21st century.

Americans first struggled for their independence from the British as they pushed the natives almost to extinction in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Norwegians became independent from Sweden in the early part of the 20th century, and their conflict involved the workers and farmers versus the ruling class. What emerged from this struggle was a government that represented the workers and farmers that had the power to govern based on its desire to create a social democracy. Why limit government, as the Americans did? Why confine public education to the local level—especially given variations in access and income? Knowledge, transportation, and technology had advanced since the 18th century in all aspects of human endeavor and understanding. A modern nation seeking to maximize human potential, quality of life, and equality needed a form of democratic government that people could trust and believe in for the long-term.

There was no lack of cases of governments laying claim to be democracies in the 20th century. The Norwegians had real options to consider, including creating something unique, but consistent with a faith in humans to govern themselves democratically. Therefore there had to be a unitary form of government, with a Storting or parliament, with people elected based on elections with equanimity throughout the nation. The majority could not be impeded from passing laws by a body within it that represented states or localities, court or presidential vetoes, parliamentary procedures, gerrymandering by a political party in control of state redistricting and electoral laws, private financing of public elections, the electoral college, and uneven at best preparation for civic participation and democratic engagement.

Norwegians then have devised a democracy that is largely consistent with our scientific knowledge of human nature. There is considerable evidence that the pessimistic view about human nature and government in the 18th century has been demonstrated to be at best overly so. We know much more about the conditions that result in failed states versus those that rank high in quality of life. We have the understanding and tools to address social, economic, health, and environmental problems that did not exist in the 18th century. When these are applied properly and fairly, we see a Norway. When these are applied inconsistently and unevenly, we have greater disparity. However, trends can be observed and goals set and measured objectively to alter and reduce failure and disparity. Democracy offers a process to achieve this, but it also requires an updated view of what stronger and stronger democratic practices and institutions entail.

If we are to adapt in a globalizing world with what science can add, we need to share best practices as equitably as possible. Like democracy, science is deemed of paramount global importance. All UN member states seek to achieve scientific and technological progress, which is often incorporated into the Millennium Goals and the United Nations Human Development Index. These goals and the UNHDI actually follow basic international tenets that were agreed to by most UN member states in 1948, when the UN Declaration of Human Rights was signed. This is an inspirational, unprecedented international document that was designed to reduce the prospects of any further world wars by extending rights to humans without regard to national origin, but simply because they were human and had a right to it.

HOW AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE CAN HELP THE WORLD

BY BJORN GRINDE

HUMANS are a relatively homogenous species. In no other species is the brain so open for modulation by environmental factors; we adapt to and we adopt cultural traits. In order to understand why some societies have a higher standard of living, we need to look at cultural traits. In order to improve a society, we need to exploit the inherent flexibility of the human brain. Can a biologically based evolutionary perspective help us?

By understanding our nature, we will be better equipped to predict the impact of various directed efforts and environmental factors. I believe a pendulum offers a useful analogy to human plasticity. There are vague limits as to how far away from the “default setting” of the human genotype a whole population can deviate. We might expand our capacity for empathy and subdue the tendency for aggression; this, however, requires a concerted effort. We need to pull the “pendulum” against gravity in order to reach a state of elevated gregariousness. An understanding of human nature offers a handle that helps us do so.

First, we should agree on what values we want people to express. For this purpose I prefer measures that emphasize quality of life, primarily in terms of health and happiness, rather than economic success. On the other hand, if a country fails in regard to ensuring a stable economy for its citizens, it is difficult to retain happiness. Fortunately, it seems as if happiness is economically sustainable; because happy people, although perhaps less ambitious, have better mental and physical health and are more willing to work for the common good.

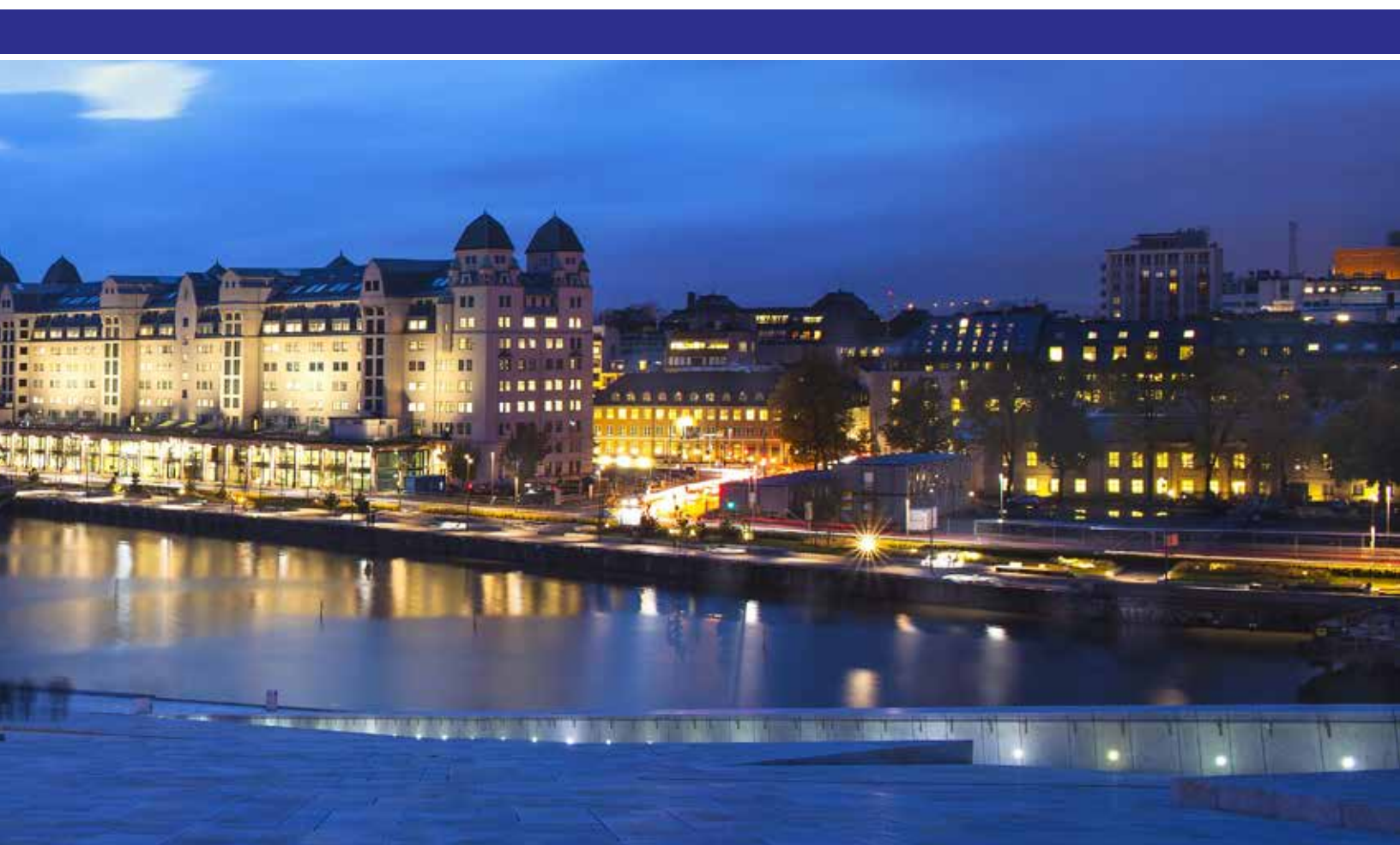


Evolution designed humans to live in a certain type of environment. Although this environment can only be vaguely outlined, and a broad range of settings will do fine, some of the changes introduced by industrialized societies cause problems. The diseases of civilization, including common mental disorders, are presumably a consequence of unwholesome changes. The term mismatch has been used for any modification when comparing the archaic human environment and the present conditions; I use the term *discords* for the mismatches that can have detrimental effects. When instigating changes, one ought to be careful not to introduce factors contribute to undesirable effects even if they're beneficial for one purpose. Understanding human nature, and the environment that shaped it, help us avoid this trap.

In short, I believe the biological perspective is paramount when it comes to facilitating intentional change.

Norway has introduced certain cultural features of positive value; such as equality, respect for others and freedom of thought. Moreover, the country has found ways to install the relevant attitudes through, for example, kindergartens, schools, and mass media. However, the biological perspective has not been exploited; and based on the prevalence of mental problems, the country has a considerable potential for improvement.

I BELIEVE THE BIOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE IS PARAMOUNT
WHEN IT COMES TO FACILITATING
INTENTIONAL CHANGE.



THERE are social, cultural, and political events beginning from 200 years ago that provide an important background to understanding Norway's history. In 1814, following Norway's independence from Denmark, her constitution was crafted, which provided a political framework for the development of a national identity. This identity, focused on "good" nationalism, also provided a framework for cultural development that limited inequality and ushered in economic development grounded in personal piety and the Hans Nielsen Hauge movement, which nurtured the democratic folk movement of the time and stimulated rural populations to enter politics. Both resulted in competent bureaucrats and civil society organizations that continued democratic policies through Parliamentarianism in 1884.

A growing industrialization was responded to by a growing labour movement, which began with the Thrane movement in 1849, continued through the formation of the Labour Party in 1887 and the Trade Union Federation from the 1870s to 1899—ultimately resulting in social policies and legislation that fueled an important and sustained class struggle from the end of the 19th century into the beginning of the 20th century.

That growing industrialization included shipping and shipbuilding, railroad construction of the Bergen line, and harnessing natural resources such as hydroelectric power. Local industrialization resulted in a "fierce but not violent" class struggle that continued into the 1930s, though somewhat ameliorated in the "Class Compromise" of 1928, which drew on—and reinforced—Norway's democratic roots. The General Agreement (*Hovedavtalen*) in 1935 initiated cooperative discussions between employers and employees to lay the foundation for an economic model. The Crisis Agreement (*Kriseforliket*) followed later that year and established government's role in the dynamic between employers and employees during the depressed global economy.

The German occupation in 1940 to 1945 created the sense of a common *internal* and *external* enemy that resulted in continued social cooperation and what is known as *three party cooperation*—an alliance between employees, employers, and the state that was initiated after 1945. The employees, primarily through the Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), and the employers, mainly through the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) and the state created an economic system that is best described in Kalle Moene's research, which limits wage differentials and fosters a competitive, dynamic, and efficient economic system in Norway as well as a vibrant democracy. While the three party cooperation arrangement pre-empts strikes and lockouts, it makes it possible for people to improve their salaries and situations while maintaining efficiency and production, allows for controlled capitalism with regulated markets, and has ensured the economic basis for the development of the unique Norwegian welfare state.

New resources such as the discovery and refinement of oil during the 60s and after have helped Norway maintain her welfare policies through processes of democratization and human rights. However, foreseen threats to the Norwegian model include:

1. Capitalism's internal dynamics and demands (e.g., the conflict between concern about climate change and the concern for 100,000 Norwegians working in the oil industry)
2. The continued growth of the capitalist mode of production, which is not unmanageable
3. The subsuming of the non-capitalist part of society under the capitalist imperative and dynamics
4. The undermining commodification and monetization of all human relations via privatization and for-profit public management.

JERRY LIEBERMAN, SECRETARY/ TREASURER & QOL PROJECT COORDINATOR 2014 REPORT TO THE EVOLUTION INSTITUTE BOARD

BY JERRY LIEBERMAN

I have taken four trips to Norway in the past four years. The last three trips have been in my capacity as the project coordinator for the Evolution Institute. The reasons EI has identified the Norway Initiative as one of its three Strategic Core Priorities (SCP) has been reported upon in some detail earlier. However, it is also because of Norway's high quality of life and why this is so. This SCP also seeks to determine whether Norway's achievements can be sustained and adopted elsewhere and under what conditions. The knowledge that can be gained from this initiative and the policy implications can be profound and are highly consistent with EI's mission and goals.

It has been customary for EI to identify a topic that can demonstrate the value of evolutionary science to demonstrate how it can contribute to improving the human condition. However, some topics are seen as first steps in moving into a broader context where the opportunity for advancing beyond the theoretical framework to real-world implications occurs. This has been the case with the Norway SPC, which was preceded by workshops on what constitutes quality of life and nation-building versus failed states. There is then a strong scientific basis for determining what constitutes high quality of life and characterizes why some nations achieve it while others do not, offering keen insights on why this is the case and what might be done about it.

The Norway SPC is now at a stage that it has become a precedent for including all aspects of EI's reasons for being, making full use of the evolutionary science discipline with rigorous academic engagement, and in an on-going manner, while expanding to connect with people and organizations that have much to say about policy and practices in Norway and future direction.

One of its objectives is to foster internationalization of Norwegian research by deepening institutional and scholarly links between the University of Oslo and centers/institutes of excellence around the world. The position, is both an acknowledgement of David's achievements and Evolution Institute as a center of excellence. It provides us with the benefit of having David in Norway next fall, for two months, being in an excellent position to build on the foundation we have already started within the Norwegian academy and assist my efforts with the constituencies I am most engaged.

Other objectives of the Arne Ness Chair are (a) strengthening the synergy between the studies of the environment, development, peace and human rights' studies and (b) stimulating interdisciplinary public debates on the environment and social crises of our time.

Another significant outcome from the September, 2014 trip were meetings with several think tanks. They are funded by a diverse group of organizations and, depending upon which parties comprised the ruling government at the time, each one has considerable influence on policy. Some advise only business, labor unions and political parties, are in varying degrees well connected to the media, while one in the case of Civita, is funded by corporations and closely identified with the Conservative Party. It presently heads the majority government.

The Evolution Institute's now well established relationship with University of Oslo, including some of its most distinguished scholars and members too of

**THIS SCP ALSO SEEKS
TO DETERMINE WHETHER
NORWAY'S ACHIEVEMENTS CAN
BE SUSTAINED AND ADOPTED
ELSEWHERE AND UNDER
WHAT CONDITIONS.**

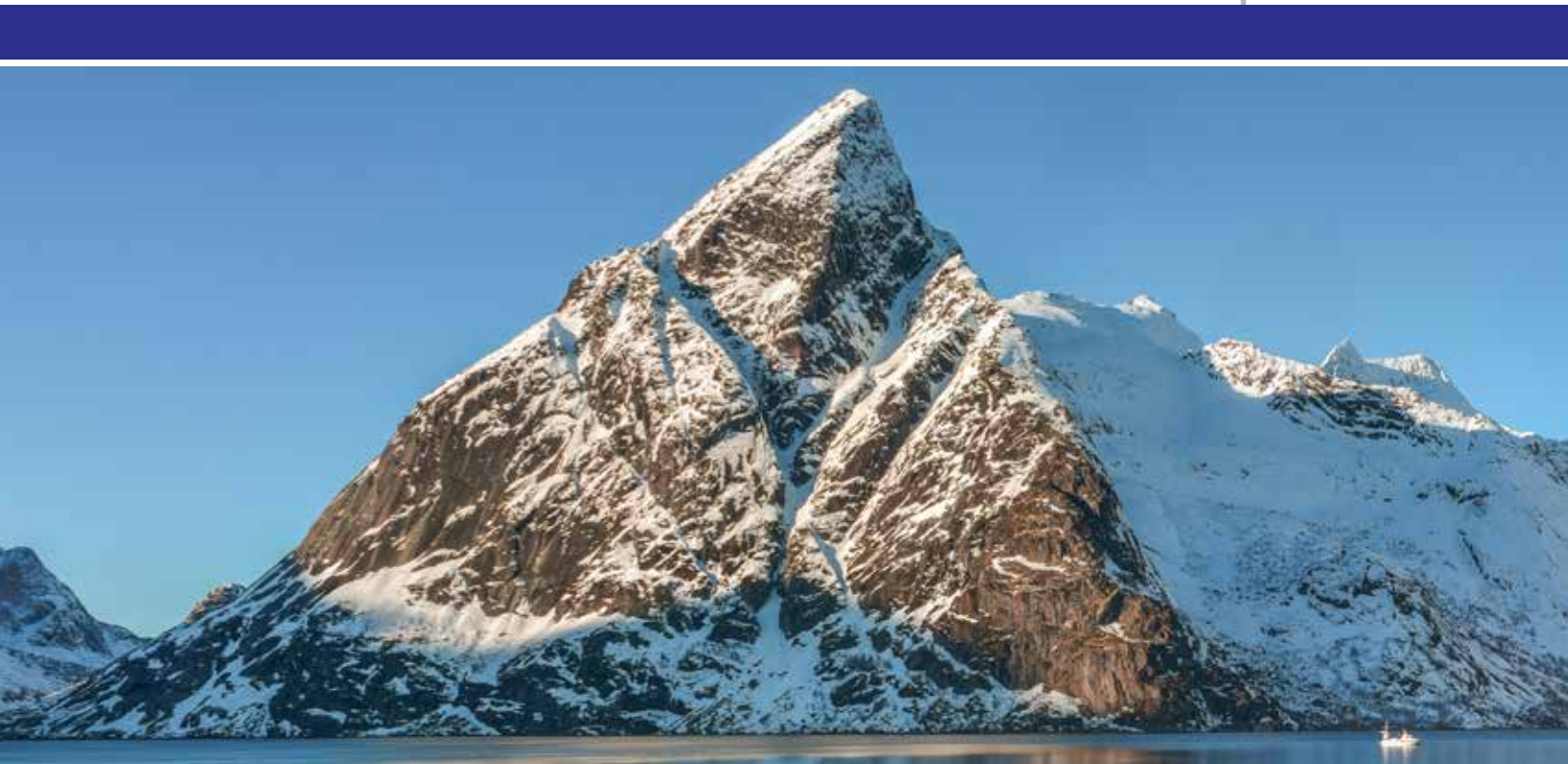
the prestigious Norwegian Academy of Sciences provided EI with an image of respectability that diverse Norwegian think tanks were interested in learning more about and meet with. The last visit enabled EI access to all the think tanks and open and meaningful discussions transpired designed to find ways to share research and consider avenues for cooperation. Civita agreed to co-host a workshop with the other think tanks, in order to identify Norway's values and plan how best to preserve them. Civita and Agenda are viewed as competitors, each seeking to draw Norwegians from the center to either the political left or political right. The other think tanks are to the left of Agenda and have little interest in spending any time with the others except to debate.

During one of our visits to Norway a deliberative process occurred to conceptualize how UiO and EI could jointly develop proposals to submit for the European Research Council and the Norwegian Research Council.

Related to grants, there is now an opportunity to engage others involved with EI in other opportunities. Other prospects that have been given consideration that grants can underwrite are:

- Transitioning Norway from fossil fuel production to meeting goals of the Centre for Development and the Environment at the University of Oslo, but is really a broad interest to Norway and the world. Such an endeavor will require an analysis of technological development that is based on human needs, high quality of life and deep social ecology.
- How Norway can strengthen the EU, by providing a model on how to reduce inequality, disparity between nations, and democratize institutions and policies. This is useful for us because it can have a positive influence on the United States.

There is general agreement among scholars that democratic societies are often characterized by strong and independent union. However, there is less agreement about why, for instance, they have declined in nations like the US. But, it is clear that Norway has strong and growing independent unions while in the United States unions have declined significantly. The one exception to this, of any consequence, has been the Service Employees Union International, now the largest in the U.S. at 2.5 million and growing rapidly. How else could I explain inviting someone from this union to accompany to Norway to meet with his counterparts



and expect them to be interested in what he had to say? Unquestionably a significant outcome of the last trip to Norway is the fact that bringing an SEIU representative to Norway was immensely successful in boosting EI's credibility with Norwegian unions and think tanks. What made the unions so interesting was the material that was provided to me by SEIU about the work they were doing in the US, specifically in Florida, to gain public support and respect for their work in the community and accomplishing strides to achieve cooperation across diverse socio-economic groups, build trust and increase overall participation in civic and political affairs.

The material we distributed generated considerable interest and invitations to appear before them while we were in Norway. Now EI could show it had something tangible to offer whereas before unions were struggling to fathom what evolution science had to do with dealing with complacency, how to work with immigrant groups, provide services that would not only benefit members, but people in the community. Courtesy, but reluctance to our previous overtures to cooperate now turned to exchange programs between members of unions in Norway and the US. The benefits of doing this were now clear as was the fact that EI was collaborating with this union.

Following conversations and observations from this trip, EI is positioned to contribute recommendations pertaining to human needs, vision, taxation, community economic development, and housing in Norway.

THE NORWAY SPC IS NOW AT A STAGE THAT IT HAS BECOME A PRECEDENT FOR INCLUDING ALL ASPECTS OF EI'S REASONS FOR BEING...



INTERVIEW WITH JERRY LIEBERMAN

The head of EI's Norway QoL Project talks about his vision and assessments.

BY GIN KOHL LIEBERMAN

How does your interest in politics, in general, and Norwegian politics, specifically, relate to the work of the Evolution Institute?

The EI is interested in theory and practice that deals with improving the human condition using an evolutionary perspective. As one moves more towards the application side, politics enters into the conversation because the United States is where we are headquartered, and this nation is very much headed in the direction of greater and greater inequality. A significant portion of the population rejects evolutionary theory and denies climate change is occurring. Absent science to demonstrate the hazards of climate change from a health—physical and mental—and ecological standpoint, the consequences can be quite dire. So politics is a means to influence policy, and policy needs to be well developed with good science, with evolution an integral part. Norway provides a good example of an advanced democracy where there still remains a great deal of trust in government and relatively less inequality than in most other economically and technologically developed nation. Politics, then, is my interest, and it serves a very important purpose in the application and policy development area.

Who are the most promising Norwegian partners?

Manifest Analyse, which is think tank like ours, is a good partner. In addition to it, the Campaign for the Welfare State and De Facto think tanks hold promise. Further, we met with the newest think tank being formed in Norway, Agenda, and have had the kinds of discussions that indicate an interest on its part to develop a relationship with us, too, once they are sufficiently organized and staffed. And, I believe we will also see submission of a proposal to Horizon 2020 and an invitation to participate in the Nordic model study that the University of Oslo is applying for.

What do you perceive as EI's role going forward (and why)?

I see EI as providing the scientific evidence for a cooperative society, such as Norway, to be perceived as part of the natural scheme of things and creating a greater support for the Nordic model as it is exemplified in Norway today: We can provide the theoretical as well as the empirical information to demonstrate this is not an aberration but something that has evolved as a result of cultural evolution and is very much consistent with what a healthy society looks like—based on a respect for the rights of others and the value of working and sharing within a group.

What this offers is our contribution as scientists to the labor unions and the general public to deepen and expand civic engagement on all levels, adding to their confidence and knowledge that they have the ability, as human beings, to sustain a healthy society. Additionally, they can also improve upon this society through a continuation of cultural evolution and an understanding of how the process relates to the impact they have on their environment: how they can affect the environment *and* improve their own community and—at the same time—find a way to be a benefactor for the entire world. The reason why is that the Evolution Institute is committed to improving the human condition, and this is not a parochial one limited to the United States or one nation state, but it's an international, global goal.

What do you hope can be accomplished through a continued partnership with particulars in Norway?

I believe that we will establish an unprecedented level of trust between ourselves, as an American-based organization, and Norwegian organizations of diversely populated individuals from academia, politics, labor, etc. In sharing ideas and learning from each other, we can look at ways to think about the future with less reliance on fossil fuels and more sensitivity to nature and with a greater appreciation of what humans can do when they cooperate with one another.

How will Norwegians and the EI benefit as a result?

I think I've indicated this, but I'll summarize. Norwegians can benefit from learning from us what happened in the United States, how it happened and what is it that could be done to make sure the same kind of thing doesn't happen in Norway to avoid much greater inequality, privatization, and increased selfishness and materialism.

At the same time, they can work with us to think about resolving this perceived conflict between how can you create an economic system that is protective of the environment and life without injuring people whose livelihood is perceived as depending upon damaging or abusing the environment to support themselves and their families. So that building on the economic and political success already in place, but at the same time, envisioning what needs to be done in the future—in the next generation and multi-generationally—to recreate the meaning of work, to reduce stress, and to expand the global partnership so that more can be aware of what options they have between various ways they have for structuring their political and economic systems and considering which are more conducive to their well-being.

EI has already benefited because, as a small organization, we have already gone from an unknown entity in Norway to an organization that is viewed as a partner in not only analyzing the culture of Norway and its system but also in looking at it from the standpoint of supporting our work. And we are on the cusp of receiving resources from Norway – rather than just contributing to the work we're doing in Norway beyond our ability to raise resources from within the United States. So we are moving towards not only greater recognition of our work from Norwegians, but we are developing our credibility as a think tank: as an organization that can be trusted and be a strategic partner, and as an organization that should be supported internationally, in this case by the Norwegians.

This is something that no other foreign think tank has ever accomplished in Norway. It is something that can launch the Evolution Institute internationally in terms of its ability to become engaged with a nation and gain recognition of its value and, at the same time, bring knowledge back to the homeland. The publicity that was generated is a reality, relationships that have been established are unprecedented, the bottom-up approach is likely to succeed, and it lends credence to the EI as not only a first-class, scientific, theoretical think tank—but one that can also get things accomplished.



THE evolutionary perspective on the Scandinavian model is not new. It is well established that the model is not the result of intelligent design, but of evolution—a long string of trial and errors. The evolutionary perspective is also inherent in the political strategy followed by the Social Democrats, and by their political challengers, implementing what was politically feasible step by step. No reform was revolutionary in itself, but the cumulative effects of the gradual changes in policies and economic institutions have altered society and transformed Norway and Sweden to the most egalitarian countries in the world.

Both countries have experienced higher economic growth than the US from 1930 to 2010. They have also outperformed the US in the share of occupations that intensively use information and communication technologies. In addition, relative to the US and most other countries, work participation in Norway and Sweden is higher, wage differentials are smaller, welfare states are bigger, and the exposition to foreign competition is stronger. To understand how and why, the interconnection between three sets of mechanisms should be emphasized (as more extensively summarized in Barth, Moene and Willumsen 2014, *The Scandinavian Model—an Interpretation*, forthcoming in the *Journal of Public Economics*):

1) The two layer wage setting, combining central and local wage negotiations, compresses the wage distribution and induces efficiency at the workplace. It resolves to some extent the conflict between pay and performance. The work autonomy that Scandinavia is famous for, means that workers can influence a broad set of issues in local bargaining, enabling union locals to enforce effort levels that maximize the value added minus workers' costs of effort, irrespective of the wage distribution. Central wage compression is enforced by the restrictions on local industrial actions laid down in the main agreement between employers and workers. The restrictions make it impossible to completely overturn the small differences in the centrally negotiated wages. The entire wage structure is thus compressed: the wage of a particular job is made up of the centrally negotiated tariff wage plus a constrained wage drift linked to the productivity of the firm.

2) The link from wage compression to investments is best understood within a process of creative destruction where more modern technologies gradually replaces the old and obsolete. The wage restraint in local bargaining imply a lower share of wage drift in each era of capital investments, ensuring higher expected profits and profit-induced investments. In turn, higher investments push up the demand for labor, and central wage negotiators can raise the lowest pay without causing unemployment.

As more jobs are created, workers become more concentrated in high productivity vintages (enterprises, firms, industries). Surprisingly perhaps, the average wage goes up with more wage restraint at the same time as the expected wage costs for each investment project decline. The explanation is simple: More creative destruction, induced by lower expected wage costs, moves a larger share of the workforce to more productive enterprises, thereby raising average wages. In short, wage compression fuels capitalist investments in the process of creative destruction, increasing the average productivity and the average wage for a constant employment level.

3) The comprehensive cradle-to-grave welfare state in Scandinavia is based more on universalistic spending than on means testing. It obtains higher political support when the income differences in the work force are small, and when the productivity in the private sector is high. The key thing to note is that the welfare state is not a machinery for pure redistribution from the rich to the poor, but rather a provider of goods and services such as social insurance, health care, and education. As these welfare provisions are normal goods, and wage compression increases the labor income to the majority of workers, the political popularity of higher welfare spending becomes particularly high.



So why has the Scandinavian model worked so well? The answer summarized in Barth, Moene and Willumsen (2014) is that there is a strong complementarity between the Scandinavian non-market institutions and capitalist dynamics. This complementarity also help explain why the main institutions and policies have survived over 80 years. The gains are spread widely across groups. There are many winners and few losers. Both low-paid groups and employers are clear winners as wage compression and rising profits are two sides of the same coin. High skilled workers are potential losers. But also high skilled workers may gain from wage moderation, as the average productivity goes up.

All in all the stability of the Scandinavian model can in part be explained by the good performance, and the good performance must have been helped by the stability of the model. The key is that both depends on the egalitarian aspects of the Scandinavian model that share the gains of good performance on almost all groups.

As more jobs are created, workers become more concentrated in high productivity vintages...the average wage goes up with more wage restraint at the same time...

ADAPTABILITY AND PORTABILITY OF NORWAY'S QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) PRACTICES AND POLICIES: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

BY JERRY LIEBERMAN
AND GIN KOHL LIEBERMAN

Introduction

According to evolutionary biologist and Evolution Institute (EI) cofounder David Sloan Wilson, “Genetic evolution has endowed us with a capacity for open-ended change that is an evolutionary process in its own right; cultural evolution enabled our ancestors to inhabit the entire planet and occupy hundreds of ecological niches”

He regards human history as a process of multilevel cultural evolution, resulting in the emergence of societies that function better than other societies as corporate units, with the same cultural evolutionary forces that led to our current social organization:

What we have learned from evolution is that modern nations vary in their social organization. These distinctions make a difference in how well they function as corporate units, and their differences are heavily influenced by historical contingencies and local circumstances. However, their differences can also be based on the presence or absence of fundamental design principles that are required for any social group to function well as a unit. These principles can be evaluated for any given nation, and deficiencies can be remedied.

Norway is exemplary in achieving an expansive ability to actualize group cooperation within and between groups. We are not sure if it will inform our species how to survive in a sustainable world, but clearly it may offer insights in how to thrive and improve quality of life. Norway is not a Hunter-Gatherer community. It is not a tribe. It is not a large family of kin. It is a nation—extended for great distances, with strong pluralistic patterns—that has evolved into a cultural innovation.

This paper examines the ways in which Norway is remarkable in its social organization. First, we outline the instances in which Norway is superior in meeting human needs and adhering closely to the principles in the landmark 1946 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Next, we consider its brief history and explore its cultural ethos, which greatly influences its other social innovations. These include the foundation of a social democracy as a response to the Great Depression, and creations of the Norway Pension Fund and a world-class public education system. Then, we look at public policy and Norway's approach to wealth, resources, and business. Finally, after acknowledging and questioning differing perspectives of Norway, we conclude with a discussion of what, if anything, Norway has to offer the rest of the world.

How is Norway's ranking justified?

Whether the practices and policies of Norway can be applied and adopted to other nations is subject to reasonable and legitimate debate. What is not in contention is Norway's track record in achieving universal recognition for its highest ranking in QoL by highly reputable sources such as the UN Human Development Index (HDI). Further, these exemplary results are not challenged on the basis of inflated, inaccurate, or biased data. They are accepted as valid and legitimate.

What should be taken into consideration is the fact that the UNHDI has undergone many revisions, and the UN continues to change its tools based on transparent critiques with broad participation and the involvement of internationally renowned scholars, including Nobel Laureates. Other respected and widely-used tools to measure QoL, using similar and different criteria, also highly rank Norway.

For instance, the Save the Children's 13th Annual State of the World's Mothers 2012 Report addresses prenatal nutrition for mothers in the first 100 days of pregnancy and is closely related to the UN's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which became international law in 1990. The 2012 report (p.47) ranked Norway first in the world (and the United States 25th) as the healthiest nation to become a mother



and have a child during the most critical stage of human development. The following year, Norway was ranked third. Most of the factors that are considered in the ranking of nations differ from those in the UNHDI; however, they are complementary to it.

An important and added value of the UNHDI is that it can be disaggregated on the sub-national level to compare these and identify disparities among subgroups of different populations within the country. This has provided the basis for constructive policy debates within a country, and can help determine where disparities exist between regions, states, and municipalities—where resources are most needed.

Norway's emergence as a nation

Norway became an independent country in 1905. Previously it had been merged into a union with Denmark for more than four centuries. The change was made possible when Sweden permitted the Norwegians to decide through a referendum to become an independent state. Norway's economy began to boom from 1905 to 1920 because it managed its agricultural, fishing, timber, and manufacturing industries—connected to hydroelectric power—exceptionally well and innovatively. This prudent use of its natural resources, according to Ola Grytten (2010), makes the country especially resilient and stable, and this was the case well before the discovery of oil.

People frequently reference the discovery of oil and Norway's homogeneity as sources of its success. Most assuredly, homogeneity cannot account for all the differences that exist between Norway and other countries. If this were the case, all we would need to do is select nations that were homogeneous and compare and contrast them to Norway. Then all these nations would be closely clustered near the top of the ranking on the UNHDI, but this is not the case. A strong case can be made that it is trust in government that has much to do with why Norway ranks so consistently high. According to a study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), cited by Sejersted (2011), Swedes have more trust in the Norwegian government than in their own government.

We acknowledge that Norway is often viewed as part of the Nordic Model for social policy along with Finland, Sweden, and Iceland. Having the good fortune of oil and a humble beginning—not having a history of a long or well-established aristocracy as in Sweden, which contributed to more social equality at the outset—sets it apart.

We also contend that what characterizes a very high UNHDI ranking is directly related to the ability of citizens to hold their government fully accountable to their wishes. This, in the case of Norway, includes overruling the wishes and actions of its elected officials on two separate occasions, and rejecting membership in the European Union by public referendum.

We consider pluralism and secularism more crucial than homogeneity or the ethnicity of the population in Norway's cultural evolution. Citizens are offered a greater variety of ideological choices—nurtured by a national educational system that stresses the importance of respect for diversity, differing opinions, and critical inquiry. Pluralism may be seen as a natural outgrowth of educational freedom—reinforced systemically—and not something that is fostered on occasion. Norway's historical emergence is better viewed because of an acquired cultural ethos of equality. Secularism contributes significantly in providing a nurturing of intellectual development and exploration.

Cultural Ethos

Evelin Linder (2008) uncovers an underlying basis for how people, who reside in similar ecological environments, with many common characteristics in language, ethnicity, and historical conditioning, develop important differences in their societies. She attributes Likeverd (equality in dignity) as an integral part of Norwegian culture and heritage, and identifies its influence as foundational in Norway's rise to the pinnacle of QoL achievement. Linder states that the concept of Likeverd, embedded in language, profoundly promotes human rights and provides the environmental conditions that reduce the tendencies in many

cultures to foster hierarchy and status. Although not eliminated, limits are placed on plutocracy, inequality, and on formation of elites. It has also succeeded in furthering a strong belief that there are opportunities for all citizens to benefit, and at the same time, provided high QoL standards through the distribution and allocation of resources required to do so.

According to Linder, Norwegians may display a disposition somewhere between “fickle pride” and “subservient obedience,” expressing the beneficial side of both. Worthiness is not to be ranked, and a certain degree of joint subservience is needed when the common good requires it: the concept of *dugnad*. The term specifically refers to people voluntarily working together for the good of the community. Thus, a climate of trust is fostered between people of different groups in Norway and with the government, which acts consistently within the democratic ethos and notion of equality in dignity.

Millions of unrelated people are able to come together with dignity and a deep commitment to cooperation and sharing that is unprecedented among most OECD developed nations. Following Linder, the cultural binding—beyond kin selection and reciprocity, into a connectedness of 5 million people spread over a large and often varied terrain—seems neither whimsical nor based on “good” neighborly behavior during the best of times, but may instead be representative of the notion of *Likeverd*. Additionally, individuals and organization—not deeply rooted in cooperation—exist within the larger culture but do not disrupt the unification. A crisis—whether it is invasion by the Germans, a recession, or senseless murders of many innocent people as in the 2011 summer massacre—seems to strengthen the resolve that has been built up over time.

Because Sweden, Norway’s Scandinavian neighbor, is presumed highly comparable as a culture, we’ll insert some UNHDI findings before turning to Francis Sejersted (2011), who in *The Age of Social Democracy*, compares and contrasts Norway and Sweden in the 20th century.

The latest UNHDI report is for 2013 and is based on data from 2012. Norway is ranked first for the fourth consecutive year, and Sweden is ranked seventh. (The United States is ranked third, following Australia; however, when the UNHDI for inequality rankings is listed, it drops to 16, whereas Sweden and Norway are ranked third and first.) The ranking on the UNHDI for female gender equality places Sweden and Norway second and fifth respectively.

Sejersted (2011) attributes Norway’s significant differences from Sweden to its elevated emphasis on the principles of human equality, individual responsibility, industriousness, and social respect for state power that Scandinavian nations share. He refers to it as “cultural radicalism,” resulting from the state and church being conjoined after the Reformation, which implies not only that spiritual and temporal authority reached a high degree of unity, but also that the state took over the social welfare function. But, this was done on an individualistic and anti-totalitarian basis. According to Sejersted, this served to vaccinate against totalitarian tendencies and constrained the state by emphasizing a liberal, rights-based protection of the individual. Thus, “Norway was essentially democratized before it was industrialized” (p. 11). This helps to explain why Norwegian business became subordinated to the political leadership of the state much more so than in Sweden.

Norway created the foundation for a social democracy as a long-term and more permanent solution to the problems associated with a different cultural ethos: that there must be more sharing and cooperation to avoid the machination of a market driven by personal rather than the people’s best interest. Everyone should benefit from the natural resources of the nation because we are “all in this together.” It is a cultural ethos of social survival and advancement of the peoples’ human rights that is highly inclusive and must be guaranteed. This sets the bar for a high QoL rating once interest in it becomes of greater importance, and tools are devised that can accurately compare one nation with another in terms of treatment of its people and agreed upon metrics.



Social Innovations

We suggest that the foundation of social democracy as a response to the Great Depression, and creations of the Sovereign Trust Fund and a world-class public education system provide Norway's social infrastructure and reinforce its attained cultural ethos.

George Lakey (2012), an American scholar and activist familiar with Norway, has also written about its unique accomplishments. A significant one was its ability to unite farmers with workers—along with some members of the middle class—into a nonviolent movement during the period of the great 20th century world depression. This movement persisted long enough to reach an unprecedented agreement in continental Europe with the then-ruling class. This agreement, sometimes referred to as the Great Compromise, was achieved through civil, direct action and essentially democratized the nation: giving the majority the right and power to govern, and the owners the right to maintain and control their businesses and property. However, the implementation of the former, when exercised to affect policy pertaining to taxes and who benefits, resulted in the government's growing ownership of Norwegian businesses and national resources.

The Sovereign Trust Fund

One of Norway's greatest social innovations, and the basis of its domestic and foreign policy, is to place the profits accruing from sales of oil into a trust for its present and future citizens: the Sovereign Trust Fund. There is nothing comparable, in scale, to this in the world. However, there are countries like Venezuela that use some of their oil profits to subsidize government services on an annual basis, directed to the population most in need. Similarly, Alaska maintains the option to return some of the income it receives from private companies leasing state land to residents on an annual basis, but neither approach Norway's scope.

The profits accrued from the sale of gas and oil are placed in the Sovereign Trust Fund for the people and invested in companies and businesses that are screened by a ethics panel appointed by the government. The fund is designed to create a huge reserve that can maintain the quality of life for all Norwegians for many years. This enables the nation to plan for a future transformation once oil and gas are depleted, buying sufficient time and money to properly invest in further infrastructure needed to support modernization and innovation in an increasingly globalized world.

Public Education

Perhaps most central to Norway's social innovativeness is its continued development of an education system, which highly values teachers and challenges the perceived boundaries of a public education system. A 2002 report shows expenditures per pupil in Norwegian primary schools as 43 % above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (measured according to spending power), 42 % above average in lower secondary schools, and 32% above average in upper secondary schools in 1999 (OECD, 2002). The principal reason cited for the high costs is that there are a considerably greater number of teachers in Norway than in other OECD countries: there are on average between 40 and 50 % more pupils per teacher than in Norway. "No single factor is more decisive for the quality of kindergarten and schools than the teacher" (Norwegian teacher education Leadership in education: Country Background Report Norway, 2009). Consequently expectations for teachers are high, and the government subsidizes teacher competence and training.

However, public education isn't limited to its kindergartens and schools. Norway was listed first in 2011 and third in 2012 as the best place to be a mother (Save the Children's State of the World's Mothers Report), which means gender issues are addressed and women are afforded workplace options and quality prenatal care that insures healthy development of the next generation of students.

Additionally, public education is extended to inmates such that Norway has one of the lowest recidivism rate in the world at 20%. "Prison is considered part of the community, not an isolated institution," explains Gehrard Ploeg ("Norway is doing something right," New York Times December 18, 2012). Health care, employment, and education are provided by organizations outside the penal institution, thus importing community life into the prison. Inmates maintain their rights other than a limitation on freedom of

movement. Prison officers are trained in social sciences law, ethics, and human rights, and Norway has a reintegration guarantee for internationally recognized QoL standards of housing, employment, income, education, health care, and addiction treatment.

Many of the most recent reforms in Norwegian education are extensions of the Education for All component of the National EFA Plan of 2003: Education for All is of great importance for the personal development of individual citizens and for society as a whole. The Ministry of Education and Research is working actively to reach every individual who is failed by or remains outside the scope of the educational system. Special attention has been paid to approaches to problems associated with, amongst others, disabled pupils, minority groups, and people with reduced literacy levels. The Competence Reform gives all adults over the age of 25 the right to primary and secondary education. The reform also gives individuals the right to have their non-formal and informal learning evaluated and documented as a means of qualifying for further education.

Six objectives of Dakar Declaration, reflective of education for all, are laid out in the National EFA Plan of 2003:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality
- Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs
- Achieve a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills

The Education Department has created two systems to ensure these goals are met. The View of Knowledge and the New National Curriculum (2008) address means to these ends and specify that to meet the first and last objectives, two primary systems be in place: routine language testing at child health clinics at two and four-year check-ups, and the use of special education at an early stage of the learning process.

With regard to several of these Dakar objectives, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training was given responsibility in January 2012 for important tasks in the day-care centre area—to further the work on quality improvement and to strengthen the correlation between the day-care sector and primary and secondary education and training by defining the goal of day-care centres:

According to the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, the day-care centre shall offer children below compulsory school age a care and learning environment that is for the children's best interests (The Ministry of Education and Research 2006a). The daycare centre shall be both an educational activity and a welfare programme for the parents of small children. The content in the day-care centre shall be based on a comprehensive view of learning, where care, play, learning and education play key roles. It is important to note that the framework plan has both a here-and-now perspective and a future perspective. The children shall benefit from their stay in the day-care centre both while they attend the daycare centre and later in their lives.

Research shows that daycare centre attendance helps many children to complete upper secondary education and training and to take education and training at higher level and that they are more closely tied to the labour market when they become adults (Havnes and Mogstad 2009). The day-care centre gives families with small children support and relief in the daily care and is an important prerequisite for giving women an opportunity to get an education and employment and thereby ensure real equal status.

Ensuring the couple of objectives for gender equality was first addressed in the “Plan of Action for equality in kindergartens 2004–2007,” which wrote, “The good kindergarten is a gender equal kindergarten. In the future, kindergartens will need to meet the same requirements as other institutions in society, namely that 40 % of the staff shall be the underrepresented sex” (p. 1). The following plan (An Action Plan for Gender Equality in Kindergarten and Basic Education 2008–2010) states:

[. . .Kindergartens and basic education shall contribute to an equal society where everybody has the opportunity to use their abilities and interests irrespective of gender, and that equality and equity between the sexes must form the foundation for all learning and pedagogical activities in kindergartens and basic education.

Meeting the third objective of the Dakar Declaration, which began with the Competence Reform in 1999, focused on lifelong learning, continues to be challenging as Norway seeks to engage adults, potential secondary school drop-outs, and immigrants. Central is the implementation of measures that can document and evaluate non-formal learning, as a basis for professional recognition and entry into further formal education. In accordance with the Education Act, adults have a right to education provision adapted to their needs and level. They are not required to undertake education in areas where they already have knowledge and skills which can be credited. Since 2001, adults have been able to enter higher education on the basis of evaluation of non-formal learning. Additionally:

- the Government has proposed making statutory provisions for newly arrived immigrants, whereby an introductory program would be combined with introductory financial support
- specially adapted training courses in Norwegian and social skills targeted at immigrant women with children have been piloted in Oslo. The results of these initiatives will serve as models for other municipalities (pp. 10–11).

The recent OECD report on education (2/2012) provides a report card as to how well Norway is performing in its mission to attend to the educational needs of all its citizens:

- In Norway, 81% of adults aged 25–64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school degree, higher than the OECD average of 74%
- Across the OECD, slightly more men aged 25–64 have the equivalent of a high-school degree compared with women from the same age group. In Norway, the educational attainment rates of men and women are similar at 81% for men and 80% for women
- Among younger people—a better indicator of Norway’s future—83% of 25-34 year-olds have earned the equivalent of a high-school degree, slightly more than the OECD average of 82%
- The best-performing school systems manage to provide high-quality education to all students. In Norway, the average difference in results, between the 20% with the highest socio-economic background and the 20% with the lowest socio-economic background is 77 points, lower than the OECD average of 99 points and one of the smallest gaps amongst OECD countries. This suggests the school system in Norway provides relatively equal access to high-quality education

Approach to resources, wealth, and business

Because of the 1969 discovery of large areas of gas and oil in the North Sea, Norway, already affluent, became a very wealthy country. Some observers contend that wealth accounts for the government’s ability to be so generous to its people and developing nations. Although GDP does not determine how well Norway fares in terms of QoL, wealth is a factor that can greatly contribute to it, especially under the right conditions, such as a will to do so.

HISTORY AND
EVOLUTION ARE
CONTINUOUS.
IT IS A VERY
COMPLEX
SYSTEM, THE
MOST COMPLEX

Factually, however, Norway had greatly improved its national wealth prior to the discovery of gas and oil and its recovery, refining, and selling to buyers. Grytten (2010) points out that the years from 1950 to 1973—before oil revenues were an important contribution to Norway’s economy—were often referred to as the Golden Era. The period from 1945 (end of WW II) to 1973 averaged the highest GDP and per capita GDP in the nation’s history. The figures are 4.73% and 3.81% respectively. Following the recovery, refining, and minimal sales of oil, the GDP averages dropped to 2.83% and 2.79% between 1973 and 2003. By 1980, oil production rose to 427,000 barrels/day. Therefore, it is evident that Norway’s economic growth was improving significantly before oil revenue became a factor, and there must be other considerations that account for this that need to be better understood. One that Grytten (2010) points to is the ascendance of social democracy and the strong involvement of government in the economy. However, money from oil placed in the Sovereign Trust Fund was neither used to create the social democracy nor sustain it.

Also before oil, Norway’s economic standing greatly improved after the Great Depression, as the Labor Party in office from 1935–1981 “grabbed the opportunity to establish a strict social democratic rule, with a growing public sector and widespread economic planning” (Grytten 2010 p. 6). The revenue from gas and oil that followed in the 1970s and beyond accelerated the economic growth and moved Norway beyond its wealthy neighbors in terms of QoL indices. However, it does not account for, nor explain, the basis for Norway’s move from a poor country, lagging behind many other European countries, and its commitment and practice to fairness, freedom, and equality for all its citizens.

The establishment in 1972 of the state-owned oil company, Statoil of Norway, had as its goal to integrate the oil and gas industry into Norwegian society for the well being of the entire country. State ownership meant getting the oil from beneath the sea, keeping the essential part of the rental ground in Norwegian hands, and putting away a large part of the oil income into a future pension fund. This is a striking example of how a new industry can be built with innovative deliberation and positive action (Ryggvik, 2011).

Presently, Norway is well positioned to transition from oil, not only because of its social innovation, the Sovereign Trust Fund, but preparations to take advantage of its huge natural gas reserves. Grytten (2010) cites its educated workforce, the adoption of advanced technology, stable and reliable institutions, and democratic rule as components of Norway’s preparedness.

In addition to its natural resources, Norway values its human resources within the scope of equality for all. Former Prime Minister Jens Stotenberg said, “One Norwegian lesson is that if you can raise female participation, it helps the economy, birth rates, and the budget (Working women are the key to Norway’s



prosperity, 2011). Women's participation has contributed to the GDP per capita data from 2011 that lists Norway as number 1 (Leonhardt New York Times January 26 2011).

According to Jon Erik Doluick and Andrew Martin (Sejersted 2011 p. 381), what has occurred in Norway results from the prevalence of labor power over ownership power—in spite of the growing challenge from globalization and increasing subordination of national politics to it, Norway manages to persist in achieving national-level cooperation that supports strong state intervention. This contrasts with Sweden, where national-level cooperation has eroded according to Sejersted (2011 p.437). Buttressing Norway's ability to maintain national-level cooperation is its deep involvement as a stockholder, about 40% of the total assets value on the stock exchange. This has enabled Norway and its social democratic arrangement to cope better with the open, international finance campaign and institutional ownership. It is somewhat ironic that under the new international finance capitalism, state capitalism is growing again—partly through direct ownership and partly through direct ownership by large public pension funds.

Somewhat like Norway, Japan's reputation for innovation in manufacturing (until recently) has been associated with its cultural approach to work, being built on a strong sense of community in the workplace. Cooperation is an integral aspect of Japanese and Norwegian culture and affects how technology is used and who participates in that decision, which is important because technological development and invention are at the heart of entrepreneurship.

Having one of the highest corporate taxes in the world at 8% of GDP according to the OECD, one might assume that Norway is not a conducive environment for business development and entrepreneurship. However, in contrast to the United States, which has a considerably lower corporate tax, Norway has a greater percentage of successful business start-ups per capita population than the United States. Unemployment in 2012 was 3% in Norway versus over 7.5% for the United States. When asked why people start a business in the United States, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 25% indicate because of necessity, whereas only 9% give this as a reason in Norway. Perhaps the fact that Norwegians do not have to worry about paying for education, health care, or retirement accounts for the greater success of Norwegians than that of Americans when taxes are considered at the core of problematic business development in the United States.

Additionally, the public schools prepare students to be entrepreneurs. In 2007, Norway added a cultural component to its national curriculum, the Quality Framework, for the two-fold purpose of exposing its students to a multicultural perspective while developing the creative side of students and preparing students for entrepreneurial pursuits (Creative Learning, Strategy for Art and Culture in Education 2007–2010, June 2007):

Regarding entrepreneurship:

The education and training system is vital for the development of a culture for entrepreneurship and a creative society in which people's search for knowledge and their creative urge are appreciated. Training in entrepreneurship provides pupils and students with an opportunity for using their knowledge and their abilities in untraditional ways. Entrepreneurship can promote practical learning methods in educational situations and so help the individual achieve increased learning outcomes. This is important for providing the country with the knowledgeable and competent workforce that is crucial for innovation and wealth creation. In other words, society depends on creative people who turn ideas into new enterprises or make improvements within existing enterprises. Considering the current financial recession, it is essential to facilitate wealth creation and innovation (Entrepreneurship in Education and Training—from compulsory school to higher education 2009–2014).

In 2009 Innovation Norway and the Research Council of Norway carried out a survey among students about their knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and barriers when it comes to entrepreneurship. The survey

ONCE WE UNDERSTAND
HOW THE SYSTEM IS
STABILIZED, UNDERSTAND
THE FEEDBACK
INTERACTIONS, THEN WE
CAN ALSO UNDERSTAND
HOW ONE CAN CHANGE IT.

shows that the students are eager to start new enterprises and have concrete ideas that they wish to realize. About one half of the respondents wish to start their own company. In the opinion of the students, running one's own enterprise confers status and freedom. Their main motivation for starting their own enterprise is to be able to work with something they are committed to. For them the opportunity of making a lot of money is not considered an especially motivating factor (Entrepreneurship in Education and Training—from compulsory school to higher education 2009–2014).

For students with the potential to establish their own enterprises, resources show there are a number of opportunities for help from public and other organizations: JAYE Norway, START Norway, local centres for entrepreneurs, SIVA, Innovation Norway's regional offices, municipalities and county authorities (Entrepreneurship in Education and Training—from compulsory school to higher education 2009–2014).

Certainly most significant in Norway's approach to resources, wealth, and business is its energy independence. It has devised excellent technological, innovative means to harness its natural resources, designing and building the most advanced hydroelectric complexes in the world to meet internal energy consumption. At the same time, its state-of-the-art technology for extracting gas and oil from the North Sea and elsewhere enables autonomy. Having public policy that ensures energy independence from multinational energy companies serves a citizenry well.

Public Policy

Social democracy began to take root in Norway once state political leadership was established after the Reformation, in concert with the church, and evolved into one of the most comprehensive approaches to assist citizens in the world. However, as Sejersted (2011) points out, the principle of universality and what Linder refers to as "equality in dignity" were crucial in de-stigmatizing the acceptance of public assistance: it was attached to a new concept of rights, in which everyone had an equal right to social benefits. Assistance was an integrative function, elevating the recipient to full citizenship. Consequently, both democratization and social insurance policies have socially integrative functions.

The Norwegian culture takes the position that the government can enable the construction of a "conscientious worker" by contributing, maintaining, and enhancing his or her quality of life, and thereby ensuring the market production system works satisfactorily. The economy depends on the fact that the labor force is being taken care of. And, this is fortified by the strong self-governing, very democratic voter regulations, and high rate of individual ownership through housing cooperatives.

Because Norwegians do not have to worry about paying for health care, there are no bankruptcies resulting from medical bills that cannot be paid—often cited as the greatest reason for bankruptcies in the United States. Repaying student loans and saving enough money for retirement are not problems in Norway because childcare, kindergarten, and primary and secondary education is free and studies are subsidized through graduate school. These policies benefit individual citizens, companies, and the nation.

Acknowledging and questioning differing perspectives of Norway

In December 2012, on a Sunday CNN news of the world broadcast Fareed Zakaria acknowledged Norway's premier standing in the world based on analyses of QoL data in an article that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Economics published as part of its working paper series. Economists Daron Acemoglu, James Robinson, and Thierry Verdier (2012) rejected the value of attempting to apply Norwegian policies and practices to other nations. Their article, "Can't we all be more like Scandinavians? Asymmetric growth and institutions in an interdependent world," included research and findings, laden with highly sophisticated mathematical formulas and computations that concluded Norway was not an innovative country, but benefited from a nation like the United States that was. Instead of attributing Norway's accomplishments to the good fortune of finding huge deposits of oil and gas, and having a homogeneous, small Caucasian population, success could be attributed to having a country like the United States around to tap into for innovation and technological development. Making the case for the superiority of the United States included citing, for example, the ratio of patents and Nobel Prizes the nation receives in science, medicine, etc., as compared to Norway.

An earlier paper presented in Norway (Fagerberg, Mowery, & Verspagen, 2008) concedes that Norway's economic performance has been paradoxical:

Productivity and income are among the highest in the world, even without the extra contribution of the nation's successful oil and gas sector. But Norwegian R&D investment accounts for a small share of GDP by comparison with other industrial economies, and other measures of Norwegian activity, although imprecise, are also not very impressive. How can this be explained? (p. 12).

The authors conclude that innovation is an endogenous phenomenon—rather than an exogenous one that leads to predictable economic results—that is shaped through interaction between firms and their environments. They describe “a particular type of innovation, innovation in resource-based activities that differs in many respects from the more commonly studied ‘high-tech’ case” (p. 1) and suggest this has relevance for many present-day developing nations because “the development of new industries that are less closely linked to natural resources, in spite of considerable support from public policy, has been much less successful in Norway” (p. 12).

The MIT paper contends that today's highly interdependent world requires that there be “cutthroat” capitalist nations like the United States that provide great monetary incentives for entrepreneurs to be innovative, while simultaneously creating greater inequality and poverty. Only in this way could Norway and its Scandinavian neighbors, afford to become “cuddly” capitalist nations by means of free-riding on the accomplishments of the “cutthroats.” The authors' case was predicated on the assumption that innovation is associated with high-powered incentives, but provided no empirical or scholarly case for this assertion.

These presentations are reminiscent of the characterization of Japan in the past century as a culture that replicated our technologies and innovations to achieve manufacturing export success. Japanese received little credit for what they accomplished in producing high quality cars, electronic equipment, and cameras: the view was they were taking advantage of American research and talents, and couldn't have become a world leader without us. According to the lore of the time, they were dependent on us then as Norway had been in the past and remains so today.

Others cite a 2003 Norwegian government report, the Power and Democracy Project (Osterup & Selle, 2006), which introduced questions about its falling democratic participation. A majority of the research team preparing the report raised some serious concerns that could warrant caution in selecting Norway as



a beneficial case study for the world. A major conclusion in the report was that the democratic process as a form of governance is in a state of disintegration rather than conversion. The report indicated a reduction of participation in government, and the risk it posed to maintaining communication and trust. Also addressed were the shifting of power to the judiciary, and the erosion of influence of associations like unions and political parties in the media and press.

However, we think the majority opinion in the report is premature because the decade since it was published has not evidenced a decline of trust on the part of the Norwegian people in their government and institutions. The Social Democratic party is still the largest in the country in spite of the reported weakening of the corporate element. The trade unions have preserved much of their strength, and large parts of the social contracts are still in place.

Additionally, during the past decade, Norway has had a long and unprecedented string of top ratings on the most commonly used and respected QoL international metrics. The trends and warnings in the 2003 report and the then-described conditions either changed or the analysis was faulty. There was a minority report, and criticism of the publication followed.

There may have been too much concern for judicialization and neglect of strong communication in the 2003 report. Popular representation as a form of government is in a process of conversion rather than disintegration. There remains a very high degree of confidence in the way the political system works. Democracy has not weakened. Yet, there is unquestionably a greater emphasis on freedom of choice and much reflection on what it should constitute. We do see this as a shift from emphasis on greatest possible equality to a greatest emphasis on freedom of choice, more characteristic of the United States.

Considerations

Norway as a Case Study

Conversations at the 2013 EI workshop at the University of Oslo included whether Norway is the appropriate case study for adoption and portability of its culture and practices to other nations seeking to replicate its accomplishments. The team assembled brought together representatives from the Evolution Institute with Norwegian scholars and practitioners with considerable knowledge of culture and practices. The group was highly diverse in training, disciplines, and experience and consequently, the workshop provided an opportunity to exchange research, ideas, and opinions regarding what Norway had achieved, how, and future prospects. As a result of the workshop, a more solid basis exists for considering Norway as a case study.



Promoting Norway's Cultural Ethos

However, if what Norway has achieved is sustainable and can be adapted successfully elsewhere, there still will be resistance regardless of the benefits to another culture or the merit of the case. A belief prevails that what works in one setting may not in another—especially when strong cultural beliefs and practices are accepted on the basis of faith and tradition, deeply rooted, and passed on from one generation to another. What works for one group not working for another group can also be understood in the context of group selection. It is understandable then that even encouraging, not coercing, one group to consider value in adapting what another is doing requires a different approach, one that is more mindful of evolutionary science and the human capacity for cultural change, something that can occur quite rapidly through various means like war, conquest, assimilation, environmental, cultural transmission, sharing of knowledge, and intellectual development.

In fact, many changes that have started through a local initiative have been adopted over time on a regional, and eventually a national, basis. If we can learn something from our neighbors in the next town or across the state boundary, perhaps we can also learn from our neighbors across “the pond” in Norway.

Norway created the foundation for a social democracy as a long-term and more permanent solution to the problems associated with the machination of a market driven by corporate rather than the people's best interests. Its cultural ethos mandates more sharing and cooperation: Shouldn't everyone benefit from the natural resources of the nation because we are “all in this together”? Norway's is a cultural ethos of highly inclusive social survival and advancement of the peoples' human rights. This sets the bar for a high QoL rating once interest is generated and elevated, and tools are devised that can accurately compare one nation with another in terms of treatment of its people and agreed upon outcomes.

Concluding Thoughts

Difference in UNHDI ratings of countries that fall in the top five may not necessarily be of any quantitative significance. One key question is whether Norway's good performance reflects group selection at the national level or that many local happy communities appear collectively as a nation.

There is also the issue of whether a lower ranking nation desires to make changes that could have an adverse impact on traditions and cultural values deeply cherished by the inhabitants of the society. Further, before concluding that Norway should be considered as a case study, rather than a country like Sweden or Australia, for instance, there will be opportunities to acquire greater insights and substance, specifically on how Norway differs from other Scandinavian countries also known for their cultural radicalism.

It is customary to conclude scholarly papers by pointing out that further study on the subject at-hand is required. We'll offer some parting thoughts for further research and discussion:

- The great success of the Social Democratic state in Norway has been to see and make as a precondition for freedom—as part of the great liberating project of modernity—freedom from need. FDR, during the Great Depression coined the term “freedom from want.” This term and freedom from need were not embraced by the U.S. Founding Fathers or written about in the Federalist Papers to make the case for U.S. independence or provide a rationale for substantive versus procedural rights. The emphasis then, which remained into the 19th century, was on creating opportunity for individuals to pursue happiness on the basis of merit and removing any restraints imposed by authority to prevent this from occurring.
- Norwegians have a much more positive notion of what freedom means, and it is imbued in the philosophy and policy underlying social democracy. It identifies freedom with the collective self-government. It is not apprehensive about majority rule, a basic tenet of democratic doctrine. There is little fear that minority rights will be stamped upon by majority intent on getting its way without taking into consideration the effect on the minorities' rights. Consensus is preferred when possible and there is considerable respect for civil liberties.

- Culture that best serves to continue our healthy propagation as a species is deserving of our undivided attention. There is much before us right now and a far greater number that are either extinct or have been assimilated into another still in existence today. However, we need not be content with just what has become before and exists today. We have an opportunity to build on what is there now to observe, but we must be selective
- What we learned from the presentations and discussions at the workshop makes clear that it would be shortsighted to be complacent about Norway remaining an exemplary case for QoL adaptation elsewhere. It is evidently being affected by globalization, immigration, and the free transfer of capital across borders and the trend toward greater attention to individuality and privatization. This is well described in Asbjorn Wahl's book, "The Rise and fall of the Welfare State". It is also being addressed by organizations like The Campaign for the Welfare State a think tank that represents almost 30% of the adult Norwegian population which is organizing to stop these trends and strengthen the social democratic state. We will be returning to Norway to meet with individuals and organizations engaged and become more familiar with what is being done and how this is likely to affect the sustainability of the Norway model.
- We are also returning to Norway to collaborate with the University of Oslo on examining the Nordic Model. Often Norway is viewed as part of a multi-nation model, but not as a nation to be singled out significantly different than the others, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland. We then will be engaged in an institution-wide/Evolution Institute collaborative to "unpack the Nordic Model. This will provide an opportunity to work with scholars from the other Nordic states too in determining more precisely what are the distinctions and adjust our views of Norway accordingly.
- Absent what we provide as evolutionary scientists the case for considering Norway as a viable culture for sustainability and adaptation would have theoretical limitations. We are in a position to provide a coherent theoretical perspective as to how groups become organized and can expand and cooperate to accommodate multi-level groups. We know that cultural evolution enables us to expand beyond small to much larger groups and operate like a super organism. We also know that symbolic thought is a big factor in our species development and this can take the form of a narrative or even a meme which can be transmitted culturally to each generation.
- We envision considerable follow-up research occurring as a result of this paper and the workshop in October 2013. Further study will provide a better basis for determining whether the views represented here are valid, not only taking into consideration the peer review before submitting this paper, but a continuing review that includes our colleagues in Norway and other Nordic states.

References

- Acemoglu, D, Robinson, J., & Verdier, T. (2012, August 20). *Can't we all be more like Scandinavians? Asymmetric growth and institutions in an interdependent world* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Economics Working Paper Series. Retrieved December 9, 2012, from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2132939>
- Bennhold, K (2011, June 28). Working women are the key to Norway's prosperity. Downloaded 3/23/2013 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/29/world/europe/29iht-letter29.html?pagewanted=all>
- Chafkin, M. (2011, January 20). In Norway, start-ups say *ja* to Socialism. Downloaded 6/12/2013 from <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20110201/in-norway-start-ups-say-ja-to-socialism.html>
- Fagerberg, J., Mowery, D.C., & Verspagen, B. (2008, June). *Innovation-systems, path-dependency, and policy: The co-evolution of science, technology and innovation policy, and industrial structure in a small, resource-based economy*. DIME working paper 2008.1 in the series on "Dynamics of Knowledge Accumulation, Competitiveness, Regional Cohesion, and Economic Policies." Download available at <http://www.tik.uio.no/InnoWP/prime%202008%20fagerberg%20et%20al.pdf>
- Grinde, B. (2004). Darwinian happiness: Can the evolutionary perspective on well-being help us improve society? *World Futures*, 60: 317–329.
- Grytten, O. H. (2010, February 5). The economic history of Norway. Downloaded from <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/grytten.norway> on June 17, 2013.
- Johnsen, R. (personal communication, November 25, 2012).
- Lakey, G. (2012, February 27). Waging nonviolence: How Swedes and Norwegians broke the power of the '1 Percent.' *The Nation*, 1-3.
- Leonhardt, D. (2011, January 26). Even more productive than Americans. Downloaded March 23, 2013 from <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/26/even-more-productive-than-americans>
- Linder, E. (2008, June 23 –July 1). *What the world's cultures can contribute to creating a sustainable future for humankind*. Paper presented at the 11th Annual Conference of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS), Oslo, Norway.
- Osterup, O. & Selle, P. (2006). Power and democracy in Norway: The transformation of Norwegian politics. *Scandinavian Politics*, 29(1), 25-46.
- Ploeg, G. (2012, December 18). Downloaded March 23, 2013 from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/12/18/prison-could-be-productive/norways-prisons-are-doing-something-right>
- Ryggvik, H. (2011). The Norwegian oil experience: A toolbox for technology, innovation, and culture. University of Oslo: Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture. Save the Children (2012, May). Downloaded March 20, 2013 from <http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/STATE-OF-THE-WORLDS-MOTHERS-REPORT-2012-FINAL.PDF>
- Sejersted, F. (2011). *The age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wahl, A. (2011). *The rise and fall of the welfare state*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Wilson, D.S. (2012). Norway: A case study of cultural evolution. Position paper prepared in advance of the University of Oslo workshop.

AMONG the numerous explanations of the roots of the multiple crises of our time, there is one that is striking: the lack of social cooperation (e.g. Turchin 2007 Sennett 2013; Wilson 2014; Soros 2016). Evolutionary biology has demonstrated how multi-cellular organisms have become groups of highly cooperative cells that coordinate their activities so well that they qualify as super-organisms. There is also evidence in the humanities and social sciences that cooperation within—and between—social groups, cities, regions and nations, has led to more resilient, better functioning, peaceful and stable societies. In the post World War II world, the European Union has exemplified this process; until the second decade of the 21st century, it has been a locus of unprecedented peace and stability and cooperation. Another intriguing example of the potency of the ‘cooperative modus’ is to be found in the Nordic countries. In spite of individual differences between them—and occasional socio-economic crises—they have all managed to forge productive welfare societies based on high level of social cooperation, while sustaining highly competitive economies.

In the acclaimed study *The Origins of Political Order* (2011), Francis Fukuyama describes the project of building an exemplary social democracy—with a generous welfare state, individual rights, and the rule of law—in terms of “getting to Denmark”. [1] For people living in genocidal or troubled parts of the world, Denmark has become a mythical place symbolizing democracy, peace, and stability. “Everyone would like to figure out how to transform Somalia, Haiti, Nigeria, Iraq, or Afghanistan into ‘Denmark’”, Fukuyama writes—and sets out to answer exactly that very question. His one conclusion is that there is not one route, but many ways of ‘getting to Denmark’. The other one is that studying these routes is a tricky business because it has to include historical accidents and contingent circumstances that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

Existing research shows a set of economic and institutional premises for the emergence of the Nordic model have included: 1) High tax and ongoing levelling of social difference; 2) Free education and health service; 3) Solid net of social welfare and social security; 4) Ongoing, centralized salary negotiations guaranteed by strong labor unions; 6) High percentage of privately owned housing; 7) Strong state 8) High level of decentralization; 9) Mixture of capitalist and socialist economy which injects regulation mechanisms into the free market economy.

In my research I attempt to supplement the studies of institutional and techno-economic foundations of the Norwegian paradigm with a closer look at the cultural forces and values that have created, not just the modern welfare state, but what can be called the “Norwegian Regime of Goodness.” How is it that the Viking Terminators have evolved into a modern society that illustrates the Christian principle “Blessed are the meek?” What have been the main architects of this cultural evolution? What representations, images, and means of persuasion have they used? And why and how have their stories and symbols chimed with the community?

In my studies of the semiotics of Norwegian culture I have borrowed Richard Dawkins’ concept of memes, i.e. aggregate forms of cultural expression such as myths, symbols, rites of message, models of cultural heroes, etc. But I disagree with Dawkins’ rather simplistic understanding of the term as “a replicator and a unit of



transmission which, by analogy with genes leaps from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation” (Dawkins, 192). While I agree that like genes, memes put constraints on human thinking, behavior, even health, I argue that they are not mechanically reproduced but constantly redesigned and creatively elaborated by diverse cultural agents. I also insist that memes become a fruitful concept when they are understood as units of social memory, i.e. durable creations of human imagination which, once conceived, do not atrophy but start influencing positive—or negative—selves of a culture and endow them with meaning. Memes are thus value-charged images, stories, rites, behavioral patterns, as well as visual and musical motifs which are transmitted from generation to generation and which define a culture’s ways of knowing, its beliefs and aspirations, the level of social trust and collaboration, the degree of compassionate behavior, communication patterns, etc.

To illustrate the different workings of nationally significant memes: The construction of modern American national identity drew, very much as in Norway, both on a liberal civic tradition and on the memes of a vast, unexplored wilderness. The attempt to root American national consciousness in nature can be seen in a multiplicity of texts, from presidential declarations (Jefferson, Jackson, Roosevelt) to the Wilderness Preservation Movement pioneered by John Muir and Turner.^[1] Literary luminaries such as Cooper, Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau identified the new republic with nature and watched with horror the systematic despoliation of virgin lands. The parallels, however compelling, break down as soon as they are invoked: the American “errand” in the wilderness was too bound up with the myth of the American Dream and the meme of conquest, frontierism, and industrial development to preserve the original connection.

Not in Norway. Here, nature memes have never become mummified into exhibits of past national history or used in their competitive “Darwinist” sense. On the contrary, with urbanization, their meaning has become reinforced and tied to the meme of “national goodness” (through outstanding thinkers, explorers and writers such as Wergeland, Nansen, Bjørnson or Naess). Today, a strong Norwegian “peace-and-nature” meme—signifying naturalness, equality, justice and cooperation—continues to nurture the ethical and political predispositions of Norwegian culture. It is a legacy with which people identify, which they personify and which personifies them. Its most prominent incarnation is to be found in the Norwegian fairy tale about Askeladden that generations of Norwegian children have had hammered into their heads. Askeladden—unlike the American Superman—is a humble peasant idler and a “village idiot” who wins half a kingdom and the princess through a unique ecological code of action: 1) He spares his energy and never strains; 2) He helps the weak and the needy; 3) He listens to nature and partners with its forces; 4) He believes in his good luck.

The fascination question is to what extent cultural memes—and the quest for meaning within culture—are the true causes of human action. What has been the battle of memes and genes in the evolution of the Nordic model?

[1] See especially Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1982); See also Benjamin T. Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1957) and Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956).

[2] The concept of «getting to Denmark» was originally coined by two social scientists at the World Bank, Lant Pritchett and Michael Woodcock in their report “Solutions When Solution is a Problem: Arraying the Disarray in Development” (Washington, D.C.: Center for Global development Paper, 10. 2002)

THE RELEVANCE OF ULTRASOCIALITY TO UNDERSTANDING NORWAY'S ECONOMIC EVOLUTION

BY JOHN GOWDY AND LISI KRALL

WHEN we look at the system of globalized capitalism we observe a highly interconnected, self-referential system with an underlying dynamic of expansion. This system is now beginning to falter especially in countries where social welfare institutions have been marginalized and prerogatives of private enterprise have not been contained. Economic growth is not fulfilling its promise as the path to prosperity for all. In the industrialized countries in the past decades, almost all income growth has accrued to the top 1%. In the developing countries of India and China, the poster children of free market liberalization, economic growth has favored the elite over the average citizen. In India over half of households lack toilets, 30% of the population live below the (extremely low) poverty level. The global economy is also running up against serious biophysical limits—climate change, degradation of the oceans, destruction of rainforests, disruption of the nitrogen cycle, ocean acidification, and mass extinction of other species. We do not appear to be able to change the direction of this massive system.

Humans are not the only species to dominate ecosystems nor are they the only species to be caught up in a large interdependent system that subordinates the individual to the needs of the expansionary system. Our observation is that there are disturbing similarities between the global economic system and social insects, particularly ant and termite populations that become superorganisms. Our research asks the question: are their similar evolutionary forces at work? By using the framework of evolution and, in particular, multi-level and group selection we argue that both insects and humans made the transition to ultrasociality when they began to practice agriculture. The argument we make is that with the transition to agriculture a fundamentally different social order was configured in these species and this reconfiguration is primarily explained as an economic matter. The key economic features are a complex division of labor, a rigid co-dependence in the colony in surplus production, an altered energy configuration which includes tapping into energy stocks and an imperative of expansion. The results are the same: explosive population growth, domination of ecosystems in which they occur, intensive and extensive mobilization of natural resources and hierarchical organization and the subjugation of individuals to promote the success of the group. For humans, globalized capitalism is simply an iteration of an altered evolutionary path that began with agriculture.

Our work on ultrasociality adds a unique and cautionary perspective with which to interpret Norway's success. We hold that while there may be culturally unique and specific factors that have determined the success of Norway, there is a broader economic context, itself forged through multi-level selection and the evolution of ultrasociality, that is equally important in understanding Norway's present historical moment. Our work adds to the discussion of Norway's cultural evolution by providing a more expansive framework in which to interpret what might be unique, and what may not be unique, about Norway.



THE primary mission of the Evolution Institute is “to utilize evolutionary theory as a scientific basis in conducting research for societal improvements and the benefit of human welfare.” Thus, our research naturally migrated toward Quality of Life considerations, and we decided to focus on Norway which has led the world in UN Human Development Index (HDI) matrices for five years in a row.

In an attempt to best understand what kind of cultural ethos and innovations led to this remarkable standing, Jerry and I read extensively—even spending time in the library of the University of Washington, which houses a significant Scandinavian library—before planning and organizing the workshop with Norwegian academics last October. Norway’s developing cultural ethos, following its emergence as a nation in 1905, crafted public policy and its approach to wealth, resources, and business—leading to the foundation of a social democracy (as a response to the Great Depression) and creations of the Norway Pension Fund that guarantees the well-being of its citizens for years to come, and a world-class public education system that aims for inclusiveness across all possible divides—including its prison population.

The purpose of several EI’s workshops devoted to understanding the Norway model has been to establish a dialogue: (a) identifying what we, from the United States, could share with concerned Norwegians about the pitfalls of hyper-capitalism and globalization, and (b) learning from Norwegians the ingredients of their success and contemplating whether such a “recipe” is transportable.

Background

Before further exploring Norway’s cultural ethos, let’s summarize what evolution and politics have to do with Norway’s success and EI’s interest in Norway’s success.

According to David Sloan Wilson, in materials prepared for the October workshop, “Genetic evolution has endowed us with a capacity for open-ended change that is an evolutionary process in its own right; cultural evolution enabled our ancestors to inhabit the entire planet and occupy hundreds of ecological niches.” He regards human history as a process of multilevel cultural evolution, resulting in the emergence of societies that function better than other societies as corporate units, with the same cultural evolutionary forces that led to our current social organizations operating today. What we have learned from evolution is that modern nations vary in their social organization. These distinctions make a difference in how well they function as corporate units, and their differences are heavily influenced by historical contingencies and local circumstances. However, their differences can also be based on the presence or absence of fundamental design principles that are required for any social group to function well as a unit. These principles can be evaluated for any given nation, and deficiencies can be remedied. Norway is exemplary in achieving an expansive ability to actualize group cooperation within and between groups.

Jerry Lieberman reiterated in an interview, that EI is interested in theory and practice that deals with improving the human condition using an evolutionary perspective and adds, “As one moves more towards the application side, politics enters into the conversation because the United States is where we are headquartered, and this nation is very much headed in the direction of greater and greater inequality.” Additionally, a significant portion of the population rejects evolutionary theory and denies climate change is occurring. Absent science to demonstrate the hazards of climate change from a health – physical and mental – and ecological standpoint, the consequences can be quite dire. So politics is a means to influence policy, and policy needs to be well developed with good science, with evolution an integral part. Norway provides a good example of an advanced democracy where there still remains a great deal of trust in government and relatively less inequality than in most other economically and technologically developed nations. “Politics, then, is my interest, and it serves a very important purpose in the application and policy development area.”

Norway's Cultural Ethos

Within this context, let's consider the concept of culture and Norway's cultural ethos. According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, "Culture is the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves." Cultural artifacts reveal our social reality, showing what we as a society believe and care about, and they shape our social reality, offering a view of life that colors our perceptions. Benjamin Whorf's scholarship was among the first to explore how words, as cultural artifacts, have this capacity. Three Norwegian words seem central in this regard: *dugnad*, *Likeverd*, and *Jante*.

In terms of the stories Norwegians tell themselves about themselves, one of EI's Norwegian colleagues, Nina Witoszek, researches memes.

Nina and Evelin Linder extensively explore the roles of deeply ingrained words such as "*dugnad*," "*Likeverd*," and "*Jante*" in Norwegian culture. For purposes here, I'll offer my understanding of the words in terms of their origin and present connotations.

Dugnad, a word whose etymology dates to the 13 and 14th centuries, signifies community volunteerism—akin to "barn-raisings" in colonial America but broader in scope. Present-day connotations range from organizational events such as "Adopt a Road" and fundraising such as through the United Way (popular in the United States) to a broader meaning of social cooperation—as in working for the common good.

Likeverd, loosely translated as human equality/dignity, has its roots in Christianity and the pietistic, Lutheran Hans Nielsen Hauge movement in 19th century Norway. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 reinforced the power of this trope.

Research on *Jantelov*, or the Law of *Jante*, may have always existed in Scandinavian countries; however, the governing principles of the *Jante* mindset were first verbalized by novelist Aksel Sandemose in his 1933 book, *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. *Jante* itself is a fictional town that Sandemose based on his hometown, where [...] the pattern of group behavior within Scandinavian communities eschews overt self-promotion and achievement as unworthy and inappropriate. Beyond that, it has engendered in Scandinavian society a sense of humility and a respect for moderation that has profoundly affected the way people operate financially, where it's better to limit risk and certainly not to focus openly on personal gain, both of which are, by contrast, mainstays of the American way of life.

Political Awareness of Norway's Cultural Ethos

While in Norway, David Sloan Wilson, Jerry Lieberman, and I had opportunity to meet with politicians, think tank organizers, leaders of labor organizations, historians, and an author. Reflections of conversations with them can be organized around these concepts of *Dugnad*, *Likeverd*, and *Jante*.



Although we didn't witness a Dugnad in the traditional sense—but would have if we'd been there last month during the clean-up before Norwegian National Day—we found evidence of its significance as people reached out to one another to come together for the “common good.” Fortunately for Norwegian democracy, there are 24 political parties that can participate in determining the common good; presently only 8 parties fill 169 legislative seats. Because no one party can easily gain a majority of these seats, parties frequently cooperate to form coalition governments.

Such had been the case immediately prior to our October trip to Norway, when the Conservative Party coalition, including the Progress, Liberal, and Christian Democratic parties defeated the Labor Party coalition, which included the Socialist Left and Centre parties. Political issues regarding the common good included privatization, immigration, lowering taxes, and proper use of the Sovereign oil fund.

By the time of our March 2014 trip, Agenda was being created to organize as a moderate/central left and values based alternative. Targei Skirbekk, interim CEO, said: “Our initial focus will be on the economy, welfare, and climate/energy—we'll figure out which debates we wish to start and which to stay out of. We're going for 50.1% of the vote because labor alone can't obtain this anymore—we need farmers and centrists from the Labor Party who trust us and can get others to trust us.”

Additionally, three left-leaning think tanks—Campaign for the Welfare State, Manifest Analyse, and an unnamed religious labor group—had agreed to share office space and challenge what they regard as an assault to the Welfare State. Asbjørn Wahl, Director of Campaign for the Welfare State and renowned author of Rise and Fall of the Welfare State, told us: “All three groups will meet next week and figure how to cooperate. Small groups now are moving in and working together.”

Bernt Aardale and Knut Kjeldstadli provided representative anecdotes closely linked to Likeverd—the importance of equality, human rights, and dignity. Bernt, a political scientist at the University of Oslo and election researcher, told the story of how, when, and why welfare was extended to everyone. The egalitarian society Norway built through the Labor party during the 1920s began to break down in the 1950s, “and in 1952 a compromise was reached: What started as welfare for the needy was later open to everyone, so all had a stake.”

He also commented when considering the Labor coalition's loss in the last election, “Labor tried to centralize its campaign, but was unsuccessful as a party because the locals in remote areas felt excluded.”

Knut, a University of Oslo history professor, studied immigration between 1900 and 2000 looking at oil, geological wealth, and more importantly, relative balances between social classes since 18th century alliances and compromises. He concludes: “Things were/are better with an equal distribution of wealth—not rungs of varied wealth and experience.”

He asks, “How can we develop the kind of nation we need/want to be within the grips of a global capitalistic hegemony”? And he explains that Norway's economy has been based on (a) a compressed wage structure with ceilings kept low for most skilled workers and (b) a tradition of protection, where anxiety is decreased and workers are not subservient. Future challenges include addressing social issues based on cultural differences, and achieving solidarity and discipline in the labor movement; i.e. accepting diversity while insisting on unity.

Bernt also demonstrated the Jante mindset in Norway. He has seen a move to the right since the early 2000s: open to a free market and privatization. He said, “The test will be in the fabric of the Nordic system: Will there be a barrier to the right—counter forces swinging back?”

And he tells this story: During this conservative time, a billionaire in the North was given fishing rights—now some of these fish are processed in China. There'd been a strong social democracy through the 1970s and

CULTURAL ARTIFACTS
REVEAL OUR SOCIAL
REALITY, SHOWING WHAT
WE AS A SOCIETY BELIEVE
AND CARE ABOUT, AND
THEY SHAPE OUR SOCIAL
REALITY, OFFERING A VIEW
OF LIFE THAT COLORS OUR
PERCEPTIONS.



80s—before 90s oil money created billionaires. “At first there was admiration for the nouveau riche; however in the last 10 to 20 years, a negative attitude—representative of equality—emerged. Society has changed but values haven’t.”

Helge Ryggvik, a University of Oslo oil historian at the Technology, Innovation, and Culture Center, told us about the days-before demonstration at Parliament: Those in northern fishing-related industries were upset with the liberalization of fishing rights since the late 80s that created monopolies. The common refrain was, “I accepted this deal. I was taken.”

Hegemony’s Assault on Norway’s Cultural Ethos

Bård Vegar Solhjell, a member of Parliament representing the Socialist Left Party, and Jonas Gahr Støre, a member of Parliament who will later this month lead the Labor Party, expressed their concern to us regarding eroding trust in Norway. Their joint ambition is to create a proposal for Parliamentary attention to the importance of trust—I would add, particularly since words such as Dugnad, Likeverd, and Jante rely upon trust for the sense of community fostering the high quality of life that Norway takes pride in.

Helge, the oil historian, provides his explanation of Norway’s assault from what Knut termed “a global capitalistic hegemony”: He laments the country Liberals believe in—with social democracy as its core, as a result of ruralism, the best of Christianity, and the struggles and compromises of the 1930s that created local collectives. During WWII, Norway and the United States became allies and continued working together through the 60s with the UN, UNICEF, and U.S. Cold War military complex in Norway. However, the United States wanted to control the union when oil was processed in the 60s: Philips vs. the Seamen’s Union.

From 1978–1986, militant strike workers built on regulations and systems such as Health and Safety Act. However, Statoil adopted all of the United States’ managerial attitudes: (a) Private owners, not state owners, control development and direction; (b) state has a steering committee, but the CEO leads; (c) management and wage systems are becoming more and more anti-collective; (d) erosion continued during the early 2000s with the Compass Group, antiunion approach in the North Sea; (e) with regard to safety, unions had taken a “hierarchy of needs” approach, where technology adapts to workers and not vice versa (people have to develop as human

beings; (f) it's the responsibility of managers to have a safe workplace, but American steelworkers had a Skinnerian approach that people have to behave in such a way that they won't get hurt; and (g) American managers view workers as important but take a top-down, carrot and stick approach; Norwegian managers view safety differently with the right to represent the collective.

Bernt also talked of Norwegians' sympathy and interest in the United States, yet a wariness exists – they feel vulnerable to the language of “Americanizing” and “modernizing,” because of political campaigns led by conservative parties, influenced by the United Kingdom, in the late 1980s.

And of course, pressures are rising from the European Union, even though Norway is not a member. Reminiscent of turn-of-the 20th century imperialism, English-speaking Christian missionaries are descending upon Norway's secular and Lutheran population to accompany the capitalist, hegemonic assault. At our hotel, we saw them at a breakfast training session.

Conclusion

Jerry Lieberman and David Sloan Wilson, as officers of the Evolution Institute, continue conversations with academics and politicians we met in October and March. Concrete plans have been agreed upon to convene at the University of Oslo this September to finalize the direction we will take to preserve and strengthen the Norwegian Model, for everyone's benefit, to improve the human condition.

Nina, Research Director at the Centre for Development and the Environment and our workshop and research colleague, envisions:

Today a strong Norwegian “peace-and-nature” meme — signifying naturalness, equality, justice, and cooperation—continues to nurture the ethical and political predispositions of Norwegian culture. It is a legacy with which people identify, which they personify, and which personifies them. Its most prominent incarnation is to be found in the Norwegian fairy tale about Askeladden that generations of Norwegian children have had hammered into their heads. Askeladden—unlike the American Superman—is a humble peasant idler and a “village idiot” who wins half a kingdom and the princess through a unique ecological code of action: (a) He spares his energy and never strains, (b) he helps the weak and the needy, (c) he listens to nature and partners with its forces, and (d) he believes in his good luck (<http://evolution-institute.org/sites/default/files/Norway%20nina-norwegian%20model.pdf>).

Helge and the new Agenda CEO, Marte Gerhardsen, may very well concur. As Helge said, “Climate reform enables reformers to mobilize churches and unions: If we have to reduce dependence on oil, then situate jobs in climate to ensure work for Norwegians.”

Marte wrote on March 18, her first day, “Norway is changing. Population change, employment change, and our environment are different than before. Many of the schemes that have been established to ensure freedom and security for all are no longer as accurate. Norwegian policy needs fresh ideas to solve future challenges.”

Perhaps the United States will follow Norway's lead.

“NORWAY IS CHANGING. POPULATION CHANGE, EMPLOYMENT CHANGE, AND OUR ENVIRONMENT ARE DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE.”

THE NORWAY CASE: A STORY OF GROUP IDENTITY OR NATIONAL SELFISHNESS?

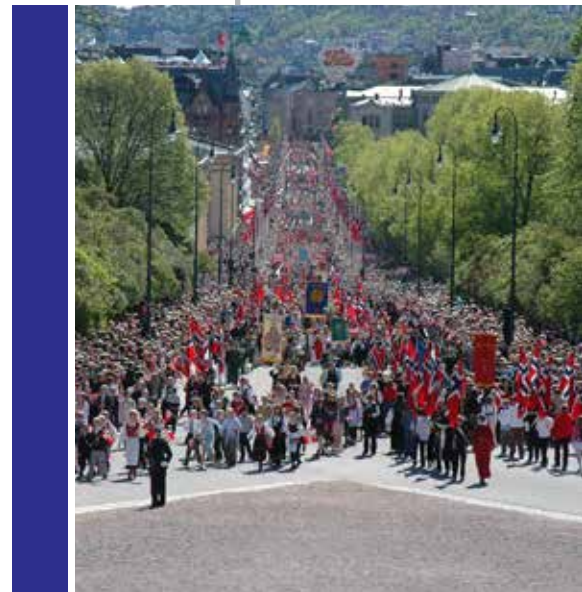
DAG OLAV HESSEN

NORWAY, and most of the other Nordic countries, scores high on any list of life quality indicators, and the question is whether there are something unique about the Norwegian or “Nordic model” that provides this success. Are there lessons to learn for other nations, and are there also lessons to learn for Norway itself on how to maintain the recipes of success and “the good life”? While the good life in Norway no doubt is furnished by its massive incomes from oil and gas, there are no doubt some key structural properties that have been maintained from the pre-oil history that is central both to social structures and good life—and also that have been instrumental in the use of the oil wealth for common goods.

Some of the keywords in this recipe are: income equality, high level of trust, high willingness to pay tax, strong social security (health, education), a blend of governmental regulations and capitalism and cultural homogeneity. Others could be added to the list, but these are perhaps core values, and they are no doubt interrelated. They seem to reflect good performance at the group level, and a core question is whether these national attitudes reflect that trust in the many small villages and local communities are carried on and still persist in the modern society, or whether Norway represent some kind of maximum size of a group that still maintains an internal group coherence, manifested as a (mostly positive) nationalism. No doubt the increasing equality, increasing population size and decreased cultural homogeneity may pose challenges to some of the core values, and also Norway is undergoing a transition from a “we-to-me” perspective. Still the willingness to pay tax remains surprisingly high, and is in fact increasing, suggesting that most people see the value of redistribution of good and are all a kind of social democrats.

As for all group levels with strong internal coherence, there is a risk of less inclusive attitudes towards other groups (the effect of group selfishness). In Norway, there is less of this internal group selfishness, but it could be argued that Norway has a kind of group selfishness at the national level, despite the strong political desire to be “a nation of goodness.” I.e. while Norway is involved in world-wide peace processes (and awards the Nobel Peace Prize), have high per capita spendings on human aid, and active on the international climate arena, the Norwegian State pension fund may serve as a good example also on a kind of national selfishness that is part of the tragedy of the commons at the international level (a main source of failure in the international climate negotiations). Revenues from Norway’s oil reserves are invested for the good of its citizens in the Pension fund, and probably no nations have been able to set aside a major share of its oil incomes for future generations. Maximizing profits is prosocial for Norway but this might require investing in contra social activities elsewhere in the world, and there are very few and weak initiatives to invest to the best for the global society and the global future.

Nevertheless, there is an open discussion on these issues in Norway, and as stated a high awareness of the perceived goods of Norway both in terms of equality, trust and social welfare. Hence the issues raised by The Evolution Institute is highly welcome, and I hope this marks the point of departure for continued cooperation on projects related to group performance and societal evolution.



CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

David Sloan Wilson is SUNY Distinguished Professor of Biology and Anthropology at Binghamton University. He is also the president of Evolution Institute, the director of EvoS, and the president of the Culture Evolution Society. His books include *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*; *Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives*; *The Neighborhood Project: Using Evolution to Improve My City, One Block at a Time* and *Does Altruism Exist? Culture, Genes, and the Welfare of Others*.

Dag Olav Hessen is a professor of ecology at the University of Oslo. He is a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. He was awarded the Riksmål Society Literature Prize in 2008, and the Fritt Ord Honorary Award in 2010.

Nina Witoszek is Research Director at the Centre for Development and the Environment at Oslo University. The recipient of the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt Ord) Award for "bringing Eastern European perspectives to the public debate in Scandinavia," she was chosen in 2006 by the Norwegian daily *Dagbladet* as "one of the 10 most important intellectuals in Norway." She's also won several awards for her fiction work.

Bjørn Grinde is a scientist at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. He has taught at various universities in Norway, the United States, and Japan. A primary focus of his research has been to understand the process of evolution, particularly how it has formed the human brain and our capacity to enjoy life. He is the author of *Darwinian Happiness*; *God—A Scientific Update*; *The Biology of Happiness*; and *Improving the Human Zoo*.

Jerry Lieberman is co-founder of the Evolution Institute and leader of the Quality of Life project. He is the former president of the Humanists of Florida Association, which is affiliated with the American

Humanist Association. He was a Professor of Political Science at Essex County College in Newark, New Jersey, and at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey.

Gin Kohl Lieberman assisted in the founding of the Evolution Institute and has since contributed as a volunteer in Quality of Life endeavors including participating in relevant workshops, the Norway Project, and Urban Initiatives.

Lisi Krall is a Professor of Economics at the State University of New York, Cortland. Her present research focuses on political economy, human ecology and the evolution of economic systems. Her numerous essays and articles appear in diverse journals from the *Cambridge Journal of Economics to Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. Her book *Proving Up: Domesticating Land in U.S. History*, explores the interconnections of economy, culture, and land in U.S. history and she is a Fulbright Scholar and SUNY Senior Scholar.

John Gowdy is Professor of Economics at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and current President of the International Society for Ecological Economics. He has published more than 150 academic articles and authored or co-authored 10 books. His most recent books are *Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature*, co-authored with Carl McDaniel and *Frontiers in Ecological Economic Theory and Application*, Edward co-edited with Jon Erickson.

Lars Gule is a Norwegian philosopher, social commentator and associate professor. From 2000 to 2005 he was secretary general of the Norwegian Humanist Association

Karl Ove (Kalle) Moene is professor of economics at the University of Oslo. He studies the relationship between labor and financial institutions in addition to researching the Nordic model.



THE EVOLUTION INSTITUTE
10627 MACHRIHANISH CIRCLE
SAN ANTONIO, FL 33576

EVOLUTION-INSTITUTE.ORG
EI@EVOLUTION-INSTITUTE.ORG

The Evolution Institute applies evolutionary science to pressing social issues, deploying a multi-disciplinary team of experts in biology, economics, sociology and Big Data. Projects of study include the Norway Initiative on quality of life, the Urban Initiative on sustainable community development, and Sheshat, a large, multidisciplinary database of past societies, used to test theories about political and economic development. A 501(c)(3) non-profit, the Evolution Institute is supported by individual donations and foundations such as the John Templeton Foundation.