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Multiple Modernities

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Multiple Modernities
A TALE OF SCANDINAVIAN EXPERIENCES

GUNNAR SKIRBEKK



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Multiple Modernities: A Tale of Scandinavian Experiences

by Gunnar Skirbekk

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Bergen 2010

G.S.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

How Do We Conceptualize Modernization Processes?

What does it mean to be modern? Being modern, how should it be conceived and evaluated? These questions have fostered extensive discussions since the dawn of the modern age.¹ And recently a renewed concern has arisen for two primary reasons:

- (i) Tensions between “the West and the Rest” have caused a renewed concern for questions about “multiple modernities,”² situated along the dimension between universality and plurality: How universal or how “western” (or how peculiar in other ways) are the processes of modernization?
- (ii) Recent crises, such as the increasing number of environmental challenges, have intensified the critical debate on the core aspects of modernization processes: To what extent may these processes be seen as progressive and desirable, and to what extent as negative and unsustainable?

What should we think and what should we do? Facing the future, there is evidently a need for more adequate conceptions and approaches.

“Scandinavian Model”?

These questions affect us all. But as a starter, a personal remark: Over the years I have collaborated with colleagues, especially in France, Germany, and the United States, and more recently in China.³ The experience of crossing borders and being exposed to different cultural and intellectual traditions nourishes an awareness of the ways that cultures and societies can be seen as similar or dissimilar and, thereby, of the ways they may be seen as modern. In my case, experiences of this kind gave rise to self-reflective questions concerning modernization processes in my own corner of the world, that is, in the Scandinavian (Nordic) countries.⁴ What can be said about universal or unique processes of modernization in this northwestern corner of Europe, possibly in contrast to mainstream narratives of western modernization, be it the French, the British, or the German?

When such questions are raised, there is a trend among foreign observers to refer to the “Scandinavian model,” and often in positive terms:⁵ egalitarian democracies with social welfare and economic efficiency. Hence, the Scandinavian countries are of interest as cases of successful modernization processes. However, these references to a Scandinavian model tend to focus on the mid 20th century, often on the postwar period after World War II. But in my view, as a basic hypothesis, the uniqueness of modernization processes in Scandinavia, for instance in Norway, is better conceived of by focusing on the 19th century with a continuation into the 20th century.

The Main Approach

“Modernity” and “modernization” may be understood in various ways. In this essay the approach is an attempt to conceive *modernity and modernization processes* in terms of versions of *rationality*. Moreover, rationality is here conceived of as *action-based* and thus as *situated in historical agents and institutions*. By this approach the *development and usage* of various kinds of *scientific expertise* are seen

as primary issues.⁶ The same is true for *learning processes* inherent in *sociopolitical practices*.⁷

These are formative processes with a major impact on our self-understanding and social identity, on how we conceive of ourselves and the world.

In this essay the aim is not to describe historical facts. Our aim is something else: to conceptualize selected cases of modernization processes seen in an overall perspective on modernization in terms of forms of practice-related rationality.

This is our approach. And hence, there is a challenge: By this approach we apply a terminology that may appear as unusual and, thus, as an obstacle. This challenge could be met by explanations of unusual words and expressions. But in those cases, when not only the words but the underlying concepts are unusual and unknown, it is hardly enough to exchange one word for another. In such cases the explanation should include learning processes by which the reader acquires concepts one did not have before or did not have in that particular way. (Our praxis-based and socially situated notion of rationality is not commonplace.) Due to these methodological challenges some theoretical remarks are added at the end of this chapter.

Not “Ordinary Historiography”

This essay is not an “ordinary historiography,” and, thus, there is a challenge: Our presentation of selected cases of Norwegian modernization processes may erroneously be read as ordinary historical narratives and not as an attempt to conceptualize universal and specific modernization processes in a peculiar, overall perspective. Therefore, it is important to hold to the peculiar approach and specific aim underlying this essay. This is important also because such attempts to conceptualize are fallible and tentative—they are *attempts*, and thus the genre is that of an essay.⁸

This essay is written with broad strokes of the pen, on the assumption that most foreign readers have a limited interest in the

historical details of a small nation. But for those who are interested in further comments and useful references I have added numerous and extensive endnotes.

Seen in this overall perspective, the selected modernization processes in Norway of the 19th century appear as an amazing story, whereas the postwar period is more ambiguous in this respect. Hence, in this essay we look at two interrelated periods, first by focusing on selected modernization processes in the 19th century and then by focusing on similar processes after World War II—the former as a “trip up,” the latter as a “trip down.”⁹

Main Messages

This essay has a double message: (i) “*Western modernization*” is widely multiple.¹⁰ But still there are *universal* characteristics, common to all modernization processes, “western” as well as “nonwestern.” (ii) *Scandinavian processes of modernization are indeed interesting*. But then we should look at *the 19th century* rather than (and as a precondition for) the “Scandinavian model” of the mid 20th century and the post-war period.

Theoretical Remarks

At this point we focus on questions of a general nature as to how we go about conceptualizing the selected modernization processes. We take a look at the theoretical preconditions of our overall approach where practice-related rationality plays a major role.¹¹

Based on our philosophical approach, *modernity* and *processes of modernization* are conceived in terms of different kinds of practice-based rationality. On the one hand *rationality* is here conceived in terms of the activity in which we are involved, here and now, when we try to find good reasons for something being true or right. In this sense practice-based rationality presents itself as self-referring and binding. On the other hand, practice-based

rationality can be seen as a “situated” activity, for instance by the *development of scientific and scholarly activities* and the *use of different kinds of scientific and scholarly expertise*, but also through *cultural and sociopolitical learning processes*, embedded in agents and institutions. In this sense practice-based rationality presents itself as historical and pluralistic.

This notion of rationality is philosophically conceived and defended on two levels:

- (i) Most fundamentally, rationality is here *conceived self-referentially* as an *argumentative* and *reflective activity*.¹² Moreover, inherent in our speech-acts there are expectations and presuppositions as to what is the case and what is right and appropriate. Such “validity-claims” are decisive for interpersonal communication. And such implicit claims as to what is true and right may then be explicated and tested argumentatively; i.e., in free and serious argumentation, where we are open to better arguments and act respectfully toward other participants. These are normative preconditions required for a serious discussion to make sense.¹³ These are not empirical facts, but preconditions for such speech-acts and forms of communication.¹⁴

Hence the point is twofold: (a) There are self-reflective insights into the *preconditions* for argumentative rationality, preconditions that cannot be denied without pragmatic self-contradiction; and (b) there are argumentative processes *within* the frame set by these preconditions in terms of ongoing discussions in search of justified answers by means of better arguments. In other words, we have a reflective approach and an argumentative approach, both related to validity-claims, though not in the same way.¹⁵

As to the philosophical challenges involved, our approach is careful and cautious, skeptical toward dichotomies and the use of notions at a high level of abstraction, and open

to varieties and gradual transitions already within the realm of philosophical reflection.¹⁶ Consequently, as a defender of self-reflective and argumentative rationality, our approach is also self-critical and open for doubt.¹⁷

- (ii) At the same time, rationality is conceived by focusing on the development of the sciences and scholarly disciplines (“bottom up,” as it were); for instance, by focusing on the development of *causally explaining (instrumental) rationality* in the natural sciences,¹⁸ of *interpretive rationality* in the humanities, including theology and jurisprudence,¹⁹ and of *argumentative rationality* in all these fields (including philosophy), occasionally also in public debates (at least when processes of modernization are well entrenched), allowing for doubt and criticism. In this regard our approach is that of a philosophy and history of the sciences, seeking adequate conceptions in various cases, with an awareness of development and transitions.²⁰

A remark on terminology: Argumentation may occur as a monologic activity; and argumentation may occur as an intersubjective activity in defense of one’s own positions, while attacking the others. But argumentation may also occur as collaboration, as an intersubjective search for better insight and arguments, where the participants recognize that they are fallible, and thus, each one is open for doubt and criticism of one’s own position.²¹

In other words, in this essay we conceive *argumentative rationality* as procedural, including steps and transitions toward a self-critical and reflective use of reason in communication with other people, and not merely as conversation, nor merely as a reflection on basic precondition, but also including an awareness of being *fallible* and of being in need of listening to and learning from other persons—in short, including an essential element of *self-reflective doubt*.²²

With the development of a public sphere, and of critical debates within and between scientific and scholarly disciplines, there was a

strengthening of this type of *argumentative rationality*. In this sense our conception of argumentative rationality (with a related formation of personal identity) is a typically modern kind of rationality. Reflective and self-critical argumentative rationality can be seen as a *major characteristic of modernization processes*, since this kind of rationality allows for a critical and reflexive discussion of the basic challenges in these processes, such as the institutional and epistemic differentiations, the validity-questions brought about by these processes, and also the inherent pluralities in modern societies.

The search for conceptual adequacy for various forms of rationality may either be *paradigmatic* or *gradualist*: (i) When *paradigmatic*, we operate with clear-cut distinctions, as when we talk in terms of instrumental, interpretive, and argumentative rationality as distinct notions; (ii) When *gradualist*, we look for continuities and transitions,²³ that is, we look for conceptions that in various cases may be seen as more suitable to grasp variations and developments. A paradigmatic approach makes us see differences; a gradualist approach makes us see continuities. Both are required.

The *self-reflective approach* to argumentative rationality (and communication) indicates, by arguments from self-referential inconsistency, that there are basic act-inherent (“pragmatic”) preconditions that are *constitutive* (necessary) for this kind of reflective and argumentative rationality, at the same time as these preconditions are *normative*, asking for better arguments and mutual respect among participants.

This remark entails a criticism in two directions: against those convinced of possessing the Truth, either as scientific or religious fundamentalists or political totalitarians, and against those who reject the notion of universal (context-transcending) truth all together.²⁴ These self-reflective insights entail a defense of argumentative rationality as a perspectivist and fallible endeavor that reflectively and self-critically aims at improvements,²⁵ a joint activity that asks for a reflective and self-critical social identity.²⁶ But these insights also entail a defense for a strictly self-reflective rationality

that indicates unavoidable (pragmatic) preconditions; in short, this approach allows for notions of universal validity.²⁷

When *rationality* is conceived act-inherently (pragmatically), as embedded in practices and related to competences, this implies that we have to look at various *agents* and their *social settings* as historically located situations and institutions. In short, in such a pragmatic perspective there are conceptual interconnections among *rationality*, *situated agents*, and *historical situations and institutions*.

However, each of these terms (*agent*, *situation*, *institution*) may be conceived of in different ways. For instance, concerning the variety of *agents*: There are political agents and symbolic agents, there are individual agents and sociopolitical movements (more or less spontaneous, more or less organized), and there are professions and experts (that in various ways are related to special forms of rationality and to special social roles and institutions). Interrelated with these different agencies are historically given situations and institutions of various kinds: political, economic, legal, sociocultural, etc. Hence the question: What may count as (relatively) *adequate conceptualizations* in these cases?²⁸

Similarly we have a variety of *institutional* differentiations,²⁹ e.g., among state, market, and life-world, or among the *political* institution (with its internal differentiations, not least the division of power between legislative, executive, and judiciary institutions), the *economic* institution (dependent on laws and morality³⁰), and the *sociocultural* institution (allowing for communicative interaction and formative socialization).

In an institutional perspective a focus on the development and the use of the *sciences and scholarly disciplines* (with their various forms of rationality) can be seen as promising for this attempt to conceptualize modernization processes. However, in this essay we focus on selected modernization processes in *Norwegian* history, and the development of the sciences did to an overwhelming extent take place elsewhere. Generally, scientific innovations and inventions came to

Norway as imported knowledge and skills, brought in from abroad to be applied in different domains. Thus it is reasonable, in our case, to focus on the *political usage of kinds of expertise*, and to look at *learning processes* in sociopolitical movements and educational institutions. In short, Norway was in many ways reestablished by the political institution, from 1814 onward; hence the political realm was crucial. At the same time, enlightenment and education, and political use of scientific expertise, played a major role in these processes of modernization.

In this essay we therefore focus on (i) *political institutions and agents with their forms of rationality and their use of science-based expertise*,³¹ on (ii) the *public sphere*³² and *enlightenment ideas*, and on (iii) *educational and formative learning processes*.

Moreover, talking in terms of educational and formative processes, we have a distinction between formal education (in schools) and formation through sociopolitical activities. Likewise we have a distinction between the acquisition of *knowledge* and the development of *personal autonomy*. The latter point, that of personal formation, has to be taken into consideration when rationality is conceived as practice-based; thus, in this essay we shall also look at forms of *identity* and *self-understanding* (“*imaginaries*”³³).

Rationality in a self-reflective and participatory perspective is a *normative* notion: We raise implicit validity-claims in communication and speech-acts. Such claims may be thematized and discussed, not least in scientific and scholarly activities, but also in public space. When this is done we are (ideally) obliged to listen to the counterarguments of other participants and to seek good reasons and reject bad ones. These are normatively constituted and normatively regulated activities.³⁴

When modernization processes are conceived in terms of rationality it follows that the notion of modernization processes is also conceived as being normative. This allows for internal criticism of ongoing processes of modernization. Nevertheless, we may change

perspective and conceive of these phenomena merely as empirically observable events. Social and subjective phenomena can also be conceived as empirical and neutral facts. A possible switch back and forth between a participatory and an observational perspective is essential for an understanding of ourselves and the social world.³⁵

However, when the participatory and validity-oriented approach is completely neglected and overlooked, we run into problems on two levels: (i) There are *self-referential* problems when a person merely conceives of his or her own validity claims in an observational perspective;³⁶ (ii) There is a problem of *conceptual adequacy* when validity questions are neutralized in an observational perspective.³⁷ In short, in discussions on modernization processes it makes a difference when participatory notions of rationality and agency are either neglected or conceived of merely in empirical terms.³⁸

In the following chapters we conceptualize two selected periods in Norwegian history, with middle-range concepts for modernization processes. In addition to those conceptions that are seen as unavoidable and universal, and those that could be seen as incidental and of minor importance, there are some middle-range notions for *well-entrenched historical experiences* and *formative learning processes* that are important for understanding the present situation.

Structure

This book has the following structure: First we look at processes of modernization in 19th century Norway, focusing on the interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements. A mini-case is added to get somewhat closer to concrete events. For an idea of how these modernization processes continue into the 19th century we take a look at their aftermath in the 20th century up to World War II, and to gain an understanding of the background of the modernization processes in the 19th century we take a look at some previous constellations and events, first selectively from the mid 18th century and then from earlier times. Hence, our presentation

is not chronological. Next we look at selected processes of modernization after World War II, focusing on challenges due to special “ideologies” (imaginaries) and due to institutional imbalances and epistemic³⁹ overburdening (typical of late modernity). In the final chapter, looking outward and forward, we pay attention to major future challenges and to basic epistemic and structural problems of our time.

At the end, a few sketchy indications of what follows:

- (i) It is worth noticing that in Norway the state and the state officials played a crucial role compared with the role played by the market. Moreover, popular movements and their elites played a decisive role in the modernization processes in Scandinavia. For instance, the term *people’s enlightenment* (*folkeopplysning*)⁴⁰ is crucial for understanding the processes of modernization in Scandinavian countries. But this term is hard to translate into other languages. What does this signify?
- (ii) In Norway enlightenment ideas were promoted both by Lutheran clergymen (“from above”) and by peasants and popular movements (“from below”). Thus there was (in a double sense) a “pastoral enlightenment”⁴¹ and a relatively smooth interchange between tradition and innovation, without a revolutionary break-up (and Jacobinism⁴²), and also without a subsequent reaction against enlightenment ideas. Why?

Endnotes

1. Cf., e.g., the “quarrel of the ancient and the modern” (*la querelle des anciens et des modernes*) in late 17th-century France.
2. Cf. the works of Shmuel Eisenstadt, e.g., *Multiple Modernities*, 2000, 1–29. Also *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Gaonkar, 2001 and *Reflections on Multiple Modernities. European, Chinese and Other Interpretations*, eds. Sachsenmaier and Riedel, 2002; *Axial Civilizations and World History*, eds. Arnason, Eisenstadt, and Wittrock, 2005; *Comparing Modernities: Pluralism versus Homogeneity*, eds. Ben-Rafael and Sternberg, 2005; and Knöbl, *Spielräume der Modernisierung*, 2001. See also, e.g., Tong, *The Dialectics of Modernization: Habermas and the Chinese Discourse of Modernization*, 2000.
3. Cf. the exchange program on cultural modernization in Europe and East Asia (between the University of Bergen and East China Normal University, Shanghai), called *Marco Polo*. (See home page SVT at University of Bergen, link: research: Marco Polo.)
4. Nordic states: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. Scandinavia: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.
5. Cf., e.g., Child, 1936; Esping-Andersen, 1985; and Stråth, 1993. More recently, e.g., Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, 2006 (p. 17), and Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet*, 2008 (p. 258).
6. This approach is not accidental. By education I am a philosopher, not a historian or social scientist, and as a philosopher I have been working with questions of modernity and modernization in the history of western thought (cf. Gilje/Skirbekk, 2001), in the philosophy of the sciences at the Center for the Studies of the Sciences and the Humanities at the University of Bergen and related to discussions of reflective and argumentative rationality (Skirbekk, 1993, 2007).
7. In this essay, notions of rationality are thus brought to bear on modernization processes from opposite directions: on the one hand, philosophically conceived self-reflective and argumentative rationality “from above,” and various conceptions of historically situated and changing forms of rationality that are embedded in various agents and institutions (related to formative learning processes and the development of various kinds of expertise)—“from below.”

8. In this essay we pay special attention to conceptions on various levels *in between* the highly abstract ones and those that are detail-related: We do not focus on basic philosophical issues (that is done elsewhere; see, e.g., Skirbekk, 1993, 2007), nor do we attempt to give comprehensive historical descriptions or social-scientific explanations. We focus on questions of conceptual adequacy on a *middle-range* level. Moreover, there is a wide range of potentially interesting processes and periods; whether or not the ones we have chosen are truly interesting can only be decided by subsequent interpretations and discussions.
9. Three delimiting points: (i) As already mentioned, in this essay we focus on two selected and conceptually conceived periods; we do *not* intend to present Norwegian history as a historiographical genre; we attempt to conceive of selected modernization processes by an overall approach where modernity and modernization are seen in terms of forms of praxis-based rationality; (ii) The overall conceptual perspective, an act-oriented version of argumentative and reflective rationality, is *not* elaborated from within these cases. It is “brought in” from philosophical pragmatics and from the philosophy of the sciences and of modernization, where “pragmatics” is conceived as a theory of action related to speech-acts and communication as in Apel and Habermas, not as pragmatism in Dewey and James. Again, cf. Skirbekk, 1993, 2007; (iii) The chosen cases from Norwegian history are embedded within western European history and western modernization processes; *not* everything is conceived of as if it emerges from within this nation. Any nation, and especially a small nation, is situated in an extensive geocultural setting; crossnational contacts are essential for scientific and technological development.
10. In nonwestern countries (like China) there is a tendency to think of “western modernization” in the singular, as if we have basically one and the same process in different western countries. A focus on Scandinavian experiences may strengthen the awareness of the plurality of western modernization processes by referring to processes of modernization that are different from those of the U.S. or UK and also from those of France or Germany.
11. This is especially important due to the many confused conceptions of “western” rationality. Cf. Skirbekk, ed., 2004, with contributions by Richard Rorty and some of his critics (Apel, Habermas, Wellmer).

12. Cf. Skirbekk, *Rationality and Modernity*, 1993 (revised and updated Norwegian version 2009); also in *Den filosofiske uroa*, 2005, and *Timely Thoughts*, 2007.
13. Cf. the use of “arguments from absurdity,” in Skirbekk, 1993, chapter 2.
14. Such speech-act inherent preconditions are “idealizations,” in the sense that they are necessary counterfactual conditions (“constitutive regulative ideas”) for communication and argumentation to make sense; cf. the difference between this notion of “idealization” and the notion of “idealization” used about clear-cut models in theoretical physics or in economic theory (for instance, *homo economicus* as a posited model and in that sense an “idealization”).
15. Briefly stated, the former is recognized by strict reflection; the latter is conceived by ongoing serious argumentation (and research).
16. Again, cf., e.g., Skirbekk, 1993/2009 and 2007. Relying on argumentative virtues from analytic philosophy (especially from the late Wittgenstein), I defend another blend of universality and plurality than Karl-Otto Apel, in short: *improvement* rather than perfection (cf. *meliorism* in terms of better arguments rather than the idea of a perfect consensus), and *varieties and overlapping* rather than only one kind of meaninglessness (*Sinnlosigkeit*) and only one kind of pragmatic precondition (i.e., *pluralism* and *gradualism* already at the core of these strictly reflective insights).
17. As to the defense of argumentative rationality (for fallible human beings), cf., e.g., John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter II, Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion: “There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.”
18. Knowledge of causal relations gives us a *means* (instrument) to intervene, either to prevent that something happens or to promote that it happens. Such *instrumental* rationality may be seen as the clue to the main characteristics of modernization processes, by natural science, technology, industrial production, and urbanization, but thereby also

“disenchantment” and “loss of meaning” (cf. Max Weber, *Entzauberung der Welt*).

19. In humanistic disciplines there is an interconnection between interpretation and formation in terms of self-understanding. Cf. “understanding” versus “explaining” disciplines; e.g., in “A Crisis in the Humanities?” Skirbekk, 2007. With a theology based on Holy Scriptures, and jurisprudence based on written laws, there was a focus of *interpretive* rationality. Interpretive rationality may thus be seen as a primary characteristic of modernization processes, by a strengthening of the rule of law and a critique of religion by a scholarly elaboration of religious doctrines.
20. This tentative tripartite conception of scientifically embedded forms of rationality has evident similarities with Habermas’s three cognitive interests and forms of rationality; however, in *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 1968a, Habermas operates within both a Kantian and a Darwinian approach (critical remarks, cf. Skirbekk, 1993, chapter 6).
21. In other contexts I have used the term *discursive* as equivalent to *argumentative* when argumentation is carried out self-critically between various persons, not monologically or strategically; similarly the term *discourse* is used as equivalent of *argumentation* conceived of as an intersubjective and self-critical activity. This is how the word *Diskurs* is used in Apel and Habermas. Thus, the term *discourse/discursive* is not used in the wider sense of *discours* in French.
22. Conceived melioristically, not skeptically (cf. note 16).
23. As an example, cf. my discussions on the borderline cases between the “hard cases” of *homo sapiens* and higher sentient nonhuman animals, e.g., in Skirbekk, 1993, chapter 7.
24. A disregard for the notion of truth, as in Richard Rorty, cf., e.g., in Skirbekk, ed., 2004; *Striden om sanningen*.
25. Say, as “organized skepticism”; cf. Robert Merton on scientific and scholarly work as organized skepticism (*Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1968).
26. As a “modernization of consciousness”; this term borrowed from Habermas, *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion*, 2005, p. 146. Cf. also Skirbekk, 2007, also in Brunvoll et al., eds., *Religion og kultur*, 2009, pp. 87–105.

27. Thus this approach represents a way of answering the normative nihilism (relativism) that may lead to an irreconcilable “fight between gods” (Max Weber), a fatal situation in a modern risk-society with deep tensions, institutional imbalances, and self-destructive potentials.
28. The question of *conceptual adequacy* is a special kind of validity-claim, though intertwined with propositional validity-claims. Cf. Skirbekk, *Über begriffliche Angemessenheit*, 2008. Moreover, a *case* is always conceptually constituted, but still it maintains a certain “autonomy” that yields some kind of resistance when we try to conceive of it with inadequate notions. This is a fallible procedure, whereby we try to *avoid* conceptions that for various reasons can be seen as *less adequate* than some other set of notions.
29. A reminder: Max Weber conceives of modernization as *rationalization and differentiation*, on the level of institutions and on the level of “value spheres”; the differentiation in “value spheres” among questions of truth, of rightness, and of beauty (cf. Kant’s three critiques) is connected respectively to a differentiation among sciences, morality (the legal institution), and arts, seen as societal *institutions*.
30. Cf. Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests; Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph*, 1977, on the moral impact of capitalism, cooling down of emotions, by supporting trade instead of robbery.
31. On democracy, argumentative rationality, and personal autonomy, cf. Skirbekk, “Notions of Democracy. Reflections on Normative Justifications and ‘Prepolitical’ Conditions,” in Slaattelid and Øyen, eds., 2009, and “The Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Constitutive, Regulatory Idea,” in Bargeliotes and Chronis, eds., 2009.
32. Cf. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 1962, English translation *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 1989.
33. For the term *imaginary*, cf., e.g., Charles Taylor, though we shall use this term on a sociopolitical level, closer to that of “ideology” in a sociological sense than the Heidegger-inspired use of the term in Taylor. Cf. Charles Taylor, e.g., *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 2004. In this debate I am closer to Habermas than to Heidegger (cf., e.g., Skirbekk, ed., 2004). In short, in this chapter I operate with a less fundamental notion of social imaginaries than the one favored by Charles Taylor.

34. Cf. Tranøy, “Norms of Inquiry: Methodologies as Normative Systems,” in Fjelland et al., eds., 1997, pp. 93–103.
35. On such change of perspectives, cf. Øfsti, *Abwandlungen*, 1994. As to the distinction between “reflection” and “theory,” cf., e.g., Dietrich Böhler, “Dialogreflexive Sinnkritik als Kernstück der Transzendentalpragmatik,” in Böhler, Kettner, Skirbekk, eds., *Reflexion und Verantwortung*, 2003, pp. 15–43; see also Apel and Habermas in the same anthology.
36. Cf. the problem of “self-appropriation” (*Selbsteinholung*), i.e., the self-referential problem of denying the possibility of one’s own validity claims. To be pragmatically consistent, a comprehensive description has to allow for its own validity claims. Cf., e.g., Apel, *Diskurs und Verantwortung*, 1988, e.g., pp. 55 ff., 151, and 313; and also pp. 470–472). Cf. Hellesnes, 2007 (“Das Selbsteinholungsprinzip und seine Feinde”).
37. This is what happens when social scientists and historians operate unreflectively and without philosophical formation, for instance, when they blur the distinction between *Überreden* (persuading without convincing reasons) and *Überzeugen* (persuading with convincing reasons), or blur the distinction between universal validity and empirically observed agreement. This is an issue in Apel and Habermas, and also in Skjervheim. On “persuading” and “convincing,” cf., e.g., Skirbekk, in Slaattelid, ed., *Regime under kritikk*, 1997, pp. 79–93.
38. Cf., e.g., Øfsti in Måseide and Skirbbek, eds., 2009, pp. 108–138. In these discussions of modernity and modernization there are “system theoreticians” (as Niklas Luhmann) on the one hand and those who do civilization studies (like Shmuel Eisenstadt) on the other. But none of them conceive rationality and agency as epistemically normative notions in a participatory perspective.
39. *Episteme*, Greek for knowledge. Here used for the praxis-related notion of various forms of knowledge and rationality.
40. “People’s enlightenment” or “people’s education” (translated literally: “Volksaufklärung”).
41. The term is borrowed from the Norwegian-Polish author Nina Witoszek, in Sørensen and Stråth, eds., 1997, p. 74.
42. The term *Jacobinism* is here used for political fanaticism, based on a fundamentalist conviction of being right and of having the right to

correct other persons and to abolish those aspects of the present society that they dislike—without self-critical doubt or discussion with those concerned. During the French Revolution Jacobinism represented political terror.

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CHAPTER 2

**Processes of Modernization in Norway
in the 19th Century: 1814–1884**

*Interplay between Lutheran State Officials
and Popular Movements*

We look at a selection of modernization processes in Norway in the 19th century, to be conceptualized on a middle range by focusing on the interplay between *Lutheran state officials* and *popular movements and elites*:¹ The Scandinavian countries were Lutheran states, with almost no other denominations;² and in the case of Norway in the early 19th century, to a large extent state officials ran the country politically. However, in these countries there were strong popular movements; in the case of Norway they repeatedly moved from spontaneity to organized activities and gradually reached the center of political power through the introduction of democratic parliamentarianism in 1884.

Norway in the Early 19th Century: a “Beamtenstaat” (*par excellence*)

As an introductory remark, a few facts about Norwegian history should be mentioned: In the late 18th century the Norwegian-Danish monarchy was basically a state under the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*), and to a large extent, governed by enlightened state officials.³ A common school system was founded in the 1730s, motivated by the need to promote literacy so that everybody could read the Bible. At the end of the 18th century a large percentage of Norwegian farmers (*bønder*) were landowners. Literacy was widespread.⁴ The writings of a cultural modernizer like Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754) had a broad audience, gradually also among the farmers. As a result of the Napoleonic Wars, Norway entered a union with Sweden in 1814, with a newly written and progressive Constitution and, hence, as a politically independent state (except for foreign affairs). At an early stage the national nobility had already been weakened, partly due to the Black Death (mid 14th century) and later due to the power-related politics of Danish rulers (during the Norwegian-Danish monarchy, 1387–1814).⁵ By 1814 there was practically no nobility in Norway. The nobility was formally abolished in 1821.

Broadly speaking, at that time (around 1814) there were three main classes, namely:

- (i) State officials⁶ (around 0.2 percent of the population)—mainly university educated lawyers and Lutheran theologians, plus higher military officers—who became particularly influential for two reasons: There was no nobility, and these state officials were allowed to perform the double role of state servants and active politicians.
- (ii) Citizens, whose living was related to fishery, forestry, mines, mills, shipping, and trade (and they were not dependent on a land-owning nobility).

- (iii) Farmers (including crofters and freeholder peasants), who represented the majority, constituted about 90 percent of the population around 1814. To a large extent they were literate, and many owned their own farms.⁷ To some extent they were politically recognized: A relatively high percentage of the members of the Constitutional Assembly of 1814 were farmers and representatives of rural communities.

In short, at the beginning of the 19th century Norway was predominantly run by state officials—a Weberian “*Beamtenstaat*,” par excellence; but with a progressive Constitution and with a strong farmers’ estate (*bondestand*). Gradually a democratic opposition gained force, in society as well as in the National Assembly (*Stortinget*). In 1884 parliamentarism was introduced by this opposition. This event represented a decisive weakening of the political role of the state officials and the coming to power of the Left, supported by popular movements and the radical intelligentsia. Political parties were founded: *Venstre* (the Left) early in 1884, *Høire* (the Right) later the same year, and *Det norske arbeiderparti* (the Norwegian Labor Party) in 1887, with representatives in the National Assembly from 1903. In short, the political system was changed into a multi-party parliamentarism, with extended franchise for men in 1898. In 1913 franchise was extended to women.

State Officials and Other Experts: What Kind of Challenges, What Kind of Expertise?

In 1814, Norway was in miserable shape as it again gained its independence in a union with Sweden. The nation was thoroughly exhausted after the Napoleonic Wars and the British blockade, and practically all institutions necessary for a state were lacking. For instance, the city of Christiania, today Oslo,⁸ which in 1814 became the capital with less than 10,000 inhabitants, had just founded a university,⁹ starting with seven teachers (coming up from Copenhagen)

and seventeen students, without a library and without appropriate buildings. In short, there was a tremendous need for institutions, for buildings, and for infrastructure. Consequently, for the same reason there was a need for appropriate laws and legal regulations (and deregulations):¹⁰ (i) on the one hand in favor of private activities in economic life, for instance against trade privileges given to urban merchants during the Norwegian-Danish monarchy.¹¹ These privileges were resisted by the rural population, as well as by progressive members among the state officials who supported a liberal market economy by active state interventions through law-making, top down; and (ii) on the other hand in favor of necessary public institutions and infrastructure, including those of the state administration. Thus there was a strengthening of the state and, consequently, of the state officials.

In short, in the interplay between institutional and material needs and the role of the state officials there was to a large extent a “modernization from above,” in the sense that the leading class, the state officials, promoted an efficient and liberal market economy. They did it through the state, with its institutions and experts, and thus the strengthening of the state became a major task. Consequently, the relationship between the state and market, in the processes of modernization, was quite different from the pro-market and anti-state ideas of the common Anglo-American views on modernization processes. In this sense the Norwegian modernization processes are definitely closer to those of France and Germany than to the United States.

In addition, we have the special role of the popular movements in the modernization processes of the Scandinavian countries, with a “modernization from below,” and which, therefore, distinguishes these processes of modernization from those of France and Germany. And as we have seen, in the case of Norway, in contrast to Sweden and Denmark, there was at that time practically no nobility, thus the state officials were in an exceptionally strong position.

The dominant state officials were university-educated jurists and theologians. They had been educated at the University of Copenhagen,

a large and lively city. Later they were educated at the University of Christiania, formally founded in 1811. And as already mentioned, these state officials were at the same time state servants and politicians, a special cadre.

Due to the need for new institutions and laws, it goes without saying that the *jurists* had a decisive position. They were lawmakers, judges, state servants, and politicians. In addition their most prominent leaders, such as Anton Martin Schweigaard (1808–1870), were enlightened and progressive intellectuals, and skilled and hard-working practitioners. As an influential politician and professor of jurisprudence Schweigaard actively and efficiently promoted law making and the rule of law, as well as a political and administrative use of empirical sciences; for instance, he furthered the institutional development and public use of statistics.¹² At the same time, as a young man, he furiously fought German philosophy, which he conceived of as obscure and useless. Moreover, he and his group of young intellectuals succeeded in weakening the role of Latin and strengthening “living languages” in the educational system.

If the jurists were the most powerful, the theologians were the most numerous. They were state officials in a state with a Lutheran state religion, according to the Constitution. Most of them were clergymen, spread out into all regions of the nation. Geographically as well as topographically Norway is “wide spread” (only Russia among the European countries is “longer”); turning the country “upside down,” from its southernmost point, we end up near Rome or Madrid, and communications were far better in this southern direction than inside Norway, with its fjords and mountains. Consequently, for topographical reasons the clergymen were to a large extent “spread around” in local communities, working as official spokespersons for the state church (and hence for the state) and as educators and teachers, for instance, as teachers and public examiners of the Lutheran confirmation, mandatory for all citizens, and they acted as supervisors of the common school system, also mandatory for everyone. Hence at the outset (from 1814 onward) their influence

was substantial. Moreover, the Lutheran clergy, as state servants, took part in administrative public work, for instance in registering information about births and deaths throughout the population, thus delivering useful statistical material to lawmakers and politicians. Furthermore, from the end of the 18th century the Lutheran clergy of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy was to a large degree influenced by Enlightenment ideals, supporting not only literacy and general education for all citizens, but also promoting research and practical improvements. For instance, they promoted the cultivation of potatoes, a useful, nutritious product for a poor population—hence these defenders of the Enlightenment received the nickname of potato priests.¹³

Add to this that there was practically no other religion or denomination in the country at that time, although there were Lutheran dissidents, such as the Haugians and a few Quakers, mainly inspired by former prisoners of war coming back from British imprisonment. However, in the otherwise progressive constitution of 1814, there was a paragraph forbidding access to the country for Jews and Jesuits—the so-called Jew paragraph (*jødeparagrafen*). After a public campaign, strongly supported by one of the leading young poets, Henrik Wergeland, this prohibition was lifted for Jews in 1851, after thirty-seven years; for Jesuits it was not abolished until 1956, after 105 years. For monks the prohibition was abolished in 1897. These facts may serve as a sobering reminder of the religious tolerance situation after 1814.¹⁴

So far we have mentioned the two main groups of state officials, namely university-educated jurists and theologians. In addition there were high officers, educated at institutions for military education. In times of peace, certain elements of military education could also be useful for engineering purposes. The state needed engineers for the planning and building of the material infrastructure, such as roads and bridges.

Nevertheless, despite the miserable situation after the Napoleonic

wars, the country had economic potentials in fishery and timber, in shipping and trade, and in agriculture. Norway also had potential in mining; iron and silver mines already had a long tradition. For instance, the silver mines at Kongsberg originated from the early 17th century,¹⁵ and this town even received a higher education in mining in 1757, the first of its kind in Europe and the first institution for higher education in Norway in modern times. In short, practitioners educated in contemporary sciences and technology were strongly needed, and steps were taken to meet that demand.

This being said about positive aspects of the regime of the state officials as a modernizing regime, there are reasons to recall that this was a class-divided society: firstly, with decisive economic and sociocultural tensions between the state officials and the people,¹⁶ but also with class differences both within the rural communities and in the cities.

Forms of Rationality

Early proponents of the Enlightenment in Europe, inspired by the rise of the new natural sciences and eager to fight superstition, focused on two kinds of rationality: *instrumental rationality* and *enlightened opinion formation*.¹⁷ Due to a strengthening of the nation states from the late Middle Ages onward and increased denominational turmoil during and after the Reformation, there was also a renewed concern for *interpretive rationality*, for example, in jurisprudence and theology.¹⁸

In the preceding paragraph we have mentioned that Norwegian state officials to a considerable degree promoted and implemented various kinds of *instrumental rationality*—from engineering to statistics and law enforcement, with a diversity of disciplines and skills, implemented by a diversity of experts and political agents.

In this paragraph we look at the role of *argumentative rationality* and *public opinion formation* in the early 19th century in Norway. At the outset we recall a few facts:

- (i) At the turn of the century (between the 18th and the 19th century) the first of the main popular movements, Haugianism, was under way. Through this movement ordinary people were trained in reading and writing, as well as in speaking in assemblies and meetings, at the same time as the writings of their charismatic leader, Hans Nielsen Hauge, were distributed in large numbers and read throughout the country.¹⁹
- (ii) Moreover, the popular Danish-Norwegian author, playwright, and scholar Ludvig Holberg had a considerable audience, little by little also among the rural population, thus promoting a cultural modernization.
- (iii) Finally, the Lutheran clergy contributed to education and formation in this period, for instance through their writings and Sunday sermons.²⁰

Furthermore, at the beginning of the 19th century various *arenas* for public opinion formation were founded (or were to be founded): newspapers, pamphlets, books, and meeting places for discussions and conversations and for formative encounters face-to-face. (The quarrel over the right to organize religious meetings, denied by the so-called *konventikkelplakaten*, was at the heart of the struggle between the Haugians and the state officials, until this right was finally granted the Haugians in 1842.²¹) The development of *public space* is a main characteristic of modernizing processes.²² This public sphere was already well established among the privileged classes, such as the state officials and a small number of authors and intellectuals. What is special and spectacular in our case is the founding of *alternative fora* for public opinion formation, to a large extent implemented by the popular movements. There were also alternative fora for public opinion formation outside the main popular movements, largely with the same political agenda and hence in support of the “farmers’ opposition”²³ (*bondeopposisjonen*) in the National Assembly.²⁴

Instrumental rationality and enlightened opinion formation both depend on an appropriate *educational system*. Hence the development of educational institutions, from elementary schools to university, became an urgent task for the newly founded state from the beginning. It is no surprise that the ruling class of university-educated state officials had these ambitions. What is peculiar for Norway and Scandinavia are the educational ambitions and implications of the *popular movements*: Already by their practices and institutions these movements promoted educational processes, in public and political skills; and simultaneously these movements supported general education for everybody (the public school system) as well as alternative education and identity formation by educational institutions created according to their own needs and aspirations (cf., e.g., the Nordic *folkehøgskule*).

Moreover, the educational and formative processes that went on within the popular movements were important for the creation, among the state officials, of a *basic trust* in the reasonableness of their opponents, a basic trust that was a precondition for the “abdication” of the state officials and for the introduction of parliamentary democracy in 1884. Furthermore, this basic recognition, across class borders, can also be seen as a move toward a weakening of the socio-cultural hierarchy, and thereby, as a step toward a more egalitarian society.

Thus the popular movements favored *Enlightenment ideals* in terms of education, useful practical skills and knowledge, as well as public identity formation. At first the movements themselves, later also their alternative educational institutions, represented an important supplement to the general educational system. However, by the end of the century and for quite some time into the next (say, from 1884 to 1940) there was a considerable influx into the public school system (*folkeskule*) of young teachers with a rural background and with a formation in accordance with the aspirations of the popular movements and their democratic-national ideals.

By alternative newspapers and pamphlets, by meetings and organizations, the popular movements contributed to a strengthening of *argumentative rationality* in public space, orally and in writing.²⁵ Moreover, by aspiration and inclination they “gravitated” toward the national center of political power and law making, namely the National Assembly (*Stortinget*); they did not remain within local settings. And they educated and organized themselves; they did not remain within spontaneous actions.

We look at some major aspects of these movements, but first a brief remark on some crucial events:

- (i) The first *Storting* (National Assembly) met in 1820.
- (ii) In 1833 the majority in the National Assembly were representatives for the farmers.
- (iii) In 1837 democracy was introduced at the community level (*kommune*).
- (iv) In 1842 religious meetings arranged by laypeople were allowed (the *konventikkelplakat* was abolished).
- (v) In 1845, freedom of religion (*dissenterlov*) for Christian communities outside the State Church was allowed.²⁶
- (vi) From 1869 the *Storting* met each year, which strengthened the power of the elected representatives in the National Assembly relative to the government, run by state officials and appointed by the (Swedish) king
- (vii) In 1884, parliamentary democracy was introduced, definitively changing the balance of power between the elected representatives of the National Assembly and the government, including the state officials. From now on the majority in the national assembly appointed the members of the government.

Before looking into the role of the popular movements we shall mention a few names of *persons* who were influential in promoting

aspects of the Enlightenment heritage. We choose to focus on three institutionally and socially situated individuals who had widely differing intellectual profiles and roles in politics and in public space, but who still (with reservations²⁷) could be said to promote a certain kind of rationality in particular:

Anton Martin Schweigaard (1808–1870) was a leading politician and professor of jurisprudence, who opposed what he conceived as useless learning, such as German philosophy²⁸ and Latin, and promoted practical knowledge and skills for the modernization of society, as he saw it. Roughly speaking, he skillfully and efficiently furthered *instrumental* rationality, with a pragmatic attitude.

His archetype opponent among the state officials was *Marcus Jacob Monrad* (1816–1897),²⁹ a theologian by education and a professor of philosophy, who in a Norwegian context,³⁰ promoted cultural formation from a conservative-Hegelian perspective.³¹ From this position he competently criticized aspects of the modern project, such as individualist disintegration and philosophical shortcomings in positivism and scientism.³² In Monrad's perspective there is thus a tension between an instrumental conception of rationality and an *interpretive* and *identity-formative* conception of rationality, and he, certainly, was in favor of the latter.

Then there were others, such as the two poets and authors Wergeland and Welhaven, who from different angles promoted an expressive version of cultural formation. But for our purposes, the third person to be mentioned is *Aasmund Olavsson Vinje* (1818–1870): With his sociocultural background from a rural community and with his writings in the new Norwegian language, he represents an interesting contrast to Schweigaard and Monrad, who were state officials writing in Danish. On the one hand Vinje, as a lawyer, was university educated in jurisprudence (like Schweigaard). On the other hand, he had some philosophical formation of Hegelian prominence (like Monrad, but rather from the left). Moreover, with this "twain" background he developed a reflective capacity, a *tvisyn*, taking different

perspectives on issues under discussion. Hence he promoted, in an interesting way, a kind of *argumentative rationality* characteristic of the Enlightenment and modernity. This *tvisyn* was appropriate for his work both as an essayist and as a solicitor. For one thing, his essayistic talent was cultivated in his own journal, *Dølen*, where he, at the death of Schweigaard in 1870, wrote a long essay (70 pages) that entails a well-taken criticism of the one-sidedness of Schweigaard's antiphilosophical practicality.³³ Hence, in Vinje we encounter a critical and discussing rationality (almost with a "post-modernist" flavor)—a self-critical awareness of diversity and plurality. At the same time as he wrote beautiful poems that went straight into the hearts and minds of ordinary people, he wrote ironical essays in the Enlightenment tradition from Ludvig Holberg. He had this "twain view," typical of persons who are well integrated in mainstream society, but who have another perspective in addition.³⁴ This being said, it should be added that Vinje had a short life (he died at the age of fifty-two) and in many ways his life remained unfinished; hence he is referred to with some reservation.

In a later chapter we return to the question of epistemic tensions in Norwegian culture, between proponents of (i) instrumental rationality, of (ii) traditional cultural formation (and criticism of positivism and of individualistic and objectivistic aspects of modernity), and proponents of (iii) self-critical argumentative rationality. At this stage we keep this triangular constellation in mind, in terms of a contrast among these three "ideal types"³⁵ (or archetypes): Schweigaard, Monrad, and Vinje.³⁶ We make use of these three person-related archetypes of instrumental, interpretive-formative, and argumentative rationality when we at a later stage comment on similar constellations after World War II.³⁷

Popular Movements and Their Elites

Focus now shifts to some major aspects of the popular movements and their elites in Norway in the 19th century.

Haugianism was the first of these popular movements, initiated by Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824), a young farmer who had a religious vision while working in the field (in 1796, at the age of 25). Haugianism was at once a religious movement (within Lutheranism, but against official Lutheranism) and a class movement (against Lutheran state officials).³⁸

Max Weber identified Puritan ethics (Calvinism) as a precondition for capitalism. The Haugians played a similar role in Norway. For religious reasons they favored hard work and modest consumption. The result was capital accumulation and reinvestment (in paper mills, saw mills, salt production, fishery, ship building, farming, and trade).

Haugianism combined charismatic leadership and a national network of solidarity (between “brethren and sisters,” not individualistically). The Haugians promoted modernizing activities and learning processes on a broad scale: economic activities, sociopolitical organization, training in public speech in assemblies (women were welcome both as speakers and leaders³⁹), promoting literacy and thereby creating an alternative public sphere—for instance, presumably as many as one in four Norwegian citizens, inclusive of new-born infants and the elderly,⁴⁰ bought a copy of Hauge’s writings at a time of hunger and hardship.

Haugianism soon became a breeding ground for political actors. They were members of the Constitution Assembly in 1814; they were elected to the National Assembly (*Stortinget*) and to political positions in local communities. By the early 1840s their main aims had been reached: wider religious and economic liberties.

Gradually Haugianism became integrated in Norwegian society (with some regional differences, recognizable even today). However, they remained within the Lutheran state-church; they did not

redefine themselves as an independent religious community (as a denomination outside the state church).

Hauge was treated harshly by the authorities—jailed in 1804 and finally released in 1811, physically weakened and with health problems.⁴¹ However, Haugianism as a movement prevailed and became influential. In many ways it changed Norwegian society permanently, from below, from the bottom up.

Little by little alternative public spheres were created, and through the influence of the Danish theologian Grundtvig⁴² an alternative educational system (*folkehøjskole*) was introduced, as an institutional grounding for the idea of “popular education” (*folkeopplysning*).⁴³

Gradually the typically Scandinavian phenomenon of “popular education” (*folkedanning* and *folkeopplysning*) became a decisive factor for the formation of a more egalitarian society—roughly speaking, education and cultural formation of the people, by the people, for the people, in opposition to the traditional educational system and ideology, but definitely with the aim of “raising the people,” that is, raising oneself culturally and educationally.

Hence, there was a struggle for recognition and tolerance, not between religious denominations, but between opposing sociocultural groups and their elites: a typically Scandinavian dialectics between Lutheran state officials and popular movements.

The Thrane movement, initiated by Marcus Thrane (1817–1890) in 1849 and inspired by the uprising in France in 1848, was at the outset a spontaneous protest against food shortages. The movement was supported by disadvantaged people in the cities, but even more so by those in the countryside. Industrialization was at an early stage.

Thrane was a utopian socialist (like Proudhon) and mildly Christian. He soon became a successful organizer. He and his followers organized workers’ associations (*Arbeiderforeninger*). After one year there were around 414 associations with 30,000 members (probably around 2 percent of the total population), organized both at local and national levels. They effectively established an alternative public sphere with their own newspaper (*Arbeiderforeningernes Blad*).

The political program was initially rather moderate: reduced custom tariffs (in pursuit of cheaper food), a campaign against alcohol abuse, for better schools for ordinary people, for universal military service (a popular requirement already in 1814), and for a general right to vote for all men.

The program was turned down by the ruling politicians, and the movement became more class-oriented, with the following demands: redistribution of land, support for peasants who wanted to cultivate new land, establishing a state bank for people with few resources, social security for the elderly and disabled.

In 1851 the authorities (the state officials) suppressed the Thrane movement by force. Thrane was jailed. When released he did not take part in political activities; after some time he left for the United States where he lived out the rest of his life. In a sense, the Thrane movement was but an episode; however, an important lesson was learned: popular movements need to organize and they need an alternative public sphere. And there was more to come.

The Farmers' Friends, or People's Friends (*bondevenn* or *folkevenn*), led by Søren Jaabæk (1814–1894) from around 1865, represents the third wave of popular movements, starting spontaneously and gradually gaining power by self-organization and self-education and by the use of an alternative public sphere.

The farmers' friends organized themselves at all levels: locally, at the county level, and nationally. They reached approximately 30,000 members in 300 associations. They published a newspaper, *Folketidende* (printing approximately fifteen thousand to twenty thousand copies per issue).

Jaabæk was elected mayor (*ordfører*) in his local community in 1841 and was elected to a seat in the National Assembly in 1845, where he became the leader of the opposition (*bondeopposisjonen*).

The Farmers' Friends acted *against* city privileges (for saw mills and trade) and *for* liberalism, and *against* high public spending, especially for the state officials. In short, they defended their class interests and used the National Assembly to fight against the dominant

political position of the state officials, especially in the government. Consequently, the political fight for parliamentarianism was an important one.

Briefly stated, their program included support of reading associations (*leseselskap*), opposition to alcohol abuse, support for social security, for savings banks, and for joint associations of producers and consumers (*samvirke*). Around 1870 the movement was radicalized—for the separation of state and church, *against* Lutheran confirmation,⁴⁴ *in favor of* civil marriage, and *against* monarchy. In short, Jaabæk's basic ideal was a society with egalitarian harmony.

In addition to these three waves of popular movements (Hauge, Thrane, Jaabæk), I would like to mention two other movements with a more specific agenda: the “language movement” (*målrørsla*) and the “women’s movement” (*kvinnerørsla*).

The Language Movement: When Norway received its political independence in 1814 the written language was Danish. It was understood by all Norwegians but spoken (more or less correctly) only by the upper classes, especially by the state officials who had been educated in Copenhagen. Ordinary people, especially the peasantry, spoke different dialects, originating from the old Norwegian language of the Viking period, the language of Norse literature.⁴⁵

Hence, the new nation of 1814 was confronted with a strategic question: Should one continue to write Danish, or try to develop a written Norwegian language?⁴⁶ As it turned out, Danish as a written language prevailed for approximately a century—Norwegian authors such as Ibsen⁴⁷ wrote in Danish and published their books in Denmark.⁴⁸ But for national and pedagogical reasons steps were taken to change the written language into a more Norwegian language. Two main strategies were available: Develop a modern Norwegian language from the Norwegian dialects, or change the traditional Danish language stepwise in accordance with spoken Norwegian in the upper classes. Both strategies were followed, and thus two official Norwegian languages gradually developed.⁴⁹

Simultaneously there was a conflict between these two strategies and these two languages, a conflict that still exists. This conflict has both national and social elements, and at the end of the 19th century it was intertwined with the general conflict between state officials (who traditionally wrote Danish) and popular movements (supported by the Left party, *Venstre*, founded in 1884).

This dual situation continues even today, resulting in what could be described as a blend of a *fight for cultural dominance* (in the sense of Gramsci and Bourdieu) and *recognition of the others* (as in Derrida), the latter being an unintended result of a learning process that led to some degree of cultural tolerance.⁵⁰

The Women's Movement: Comparatively speaking, women in Norway traditionally had a strong position, legally and socially. But with professionalization and urbanization new challenges emerged, and the role of women in modern societies became a political question for popular movements as well as a major concern for poets and artists (cf. *Nora* in Ibsen).⁵¹

The Norwegian Feminist Association (*Norsk Kvindesags-Forening*) was founded in 1884 (the year of the introduction of parliamentarism). One of its leaders, Gina Krog (1847–1916), belonged to the left wing of the Left party (*Venstre*). The following year (1885) the Association for the Franchise for Women was founded (*Kvindestemmeretsforeningen*), with Gina Krog as chairperson until 1897 (in 1898, renamed as *Landskvindestemmeretsforeningen*). They fought for universal rights: the right to vote, the right for higher education, and legal rights of married women.

Also, the women's movement represented a blend of spontaneous movement and organizational abilities. In 1887 they founded the journal *Nylænde* as an alternative public sphere;⁵² but above all, their organizational ability was clearly demonstrated in 1905 when Norway unilaterally broke the union with Sweden. Only male citizens were allowed to vote for or against the union (368,208 voted *no*, 184 *yes*). Women citizens were not allowed to vote, hence they

organized their own “private” vote for women, and in a two-week period 244,765 women had voted—two thirds of the male votes, an amazingly high number. This happened before e-mail and mobile phones, in a topographically difficult country, with a widely scattered population.

One of the leading persons was Betzy Kjelsberg, a supporter of the Left party (*Venstre*). She was also active in social politics; from 1910 to 1935 she was, as “factory inspector,” in charge of the practical supervision of working conditions in factories; from 1921 to 1934 she was the governmental representative for the ILO (International Labor Organization, founded in 1919).

We have selected five popular movements and their subsequent transitions from spontaneity to well-organized activities, but there were other movements related to Christian missions (at home and abroad, often run by women) and teetotalism. It is a common feature of all these movements that they promoted organizational skills and some basic civil virtues. All in all they contributed to an egalitarian and enlightened political culture, appropriate for their time, even when they did not live up to the high demand of a self-critical argumentative rationality.

Three of these five movements seem to be unique for our Norwegian case, namely the Haugian movement, the Farmers’ Friends, and the language movement. The Thrane movement and the women’s movements are more similar to other movements of their kind. But for all five it is worthwhile emphasizing their subsequent and interactive learning processes, in interplay with the state officials as state servants and active politicians.

Endnotes

1. Cf., e.g., Sørensen and Stråth, eds., *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, 1997. Also Hagtvet and Rudeng, “Scandinavia: Achievements, Dilemmas, Challenges,” in *Norden: The Passion for Equality*, Graubard, ed., 1986, pp. 288–308.
2. Also Estonia and Prussia, but these countries did not have strong popular movements of the kind found in the Nordic countries.
3. Quite a few of the most influential and progressive state officials at the end of the 18th century were German-speaking Germans (who hardly spoke Danish), like Johann Friedrich Struensee (1737–1772), Peter Bernstorff (1735–1797), and Christian Ditlev Reventlow (1748–1827).
4. Cf. Fet, *Lesande bønder*, 1995; also Byberg, *Brukte bøker til bymann og bonde; bokauksjonen i den norske litterære offentlighet 1750–1815*, 2007. Literacy (and interpretive rationality) was not only essential for the reading and understanding of religious texts, but also for the interpretation of legal texts, an ability that was crucial in defending traditional legal rights, which again indicates a concrete application of argumentative rationality (cf., e.g., the importance of *odelsretten* for Norwegian farmers, referred to in chapter 5, cf. also Gjerdåker, 2001).
5. Cf. Rian, *For Norge, kjempers fødeland*, 2007.
6. A translation for *embetsmenn*; an alternative term: civil servants.
7. Around 1814, approximately 57 percent.
8. The old Norwegian name was Oslo. In 1624 it was named Christiania (in honor of Christian IV who relocated the city after a fire). In 1924 it got its old name, Oslo.
9. Founded in 1811, started in 1813.
10. Though at the outset most laws from the Norwegian-Danish monarchy prevailed.
11. Such as the laws from 1688 restricting the legal use of saw mills for farmers.
12. Statistics is a science-based governmental instrument, and thereby an instrument for control; however, statistics represents a way of categorizing that may lead to increased expectations about normalization.

- (Cf., e.g., Hacking, 1990, *The Taming of Chance*.) Statistisk sentralbyrå (“Statistics Norway”) was founded in 1876.
13. In Norwegian: *potetprest*.
 14. As to the situation in the 19th century, it might be of interest to recall that a German Jew who had converted to Lutheranism (in 1838), Carl Paul Caspari (1814–1892), became a university teacher in Christian theology at the university in Christiania in 1847; he became a professor in theology in 1857. Moreover, his son Theodor Caspari (1853–1948) was a national poet who wrote romantic and militantly “environmentalist” poems in reverence of Norwegian nature, especially the Norwegian mountains.
 15. More precisely, in the years 1623 and 1624, under the Danish king, Christian IV.
 16. Again, the perspective is decisive: Compared with class differences at that time in some other countries, like China and Russia (or France) the class tensions in Norway from the early 19th century onward appear as less extreme. But still, these tensions were real enough in the Norwegian society (as an interesting documentation of popular dissatisfaction with state officials, cf. the presentation of letters from Norwegian emigrants, in Mørkhagen, 2009).
 17. Cf., e.g., Francis Bacon, supporting the new scientific methods (*novum organon*) and fighting mental shortcomings (*idolae mentis*).
 18. See chapter 5.
 19. But they had their predecessors, for instance: As a reaction to the extraordinary taxes of October 1, 1762 (*Ekstraskatten*), farmers on the west coast of Norway organized their protest, both around Bergen (the so-called *strilekrigen*) and around Stavanger; cf. Feldbæk, *Danmark–Norge 1380–1814*, 1998, pp. 100–103 (“Strilekrigen”), and Lindanger, “Den sjølvrådige bonden—myte eller realitet?” *Bondemotstand og sjølvkjensle på Sørvestlandet*, 2002, pp. 47–51). See chapter 5 in this book.
 20. Their possible contribution to argumentative formation is more ambiguous, but not negligible: Protestant theology has an emotional and fideistic side but also a reasoned and secularist side.
 21. In 1842 the proposal to abolish the law was presented for the third time by the National Assembly, thus overriding the governmental veto.

22. Cf. Habermas's famous work, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (from 1962).
23. Before industrialization the popular opposition was "farmers' opposition," not "workers' opposition."
24. This was, for instance, true of an influential political pamphlet called the *Ola book* (*Ola boka*, written by Jon Nergaard, 1795–1885, under the title *En Odelsmands Tanker om Norges nærværende Forfatning*) that was widely distributed and much discussed in this period. This was also true for the journal *Statsborgeren* (*The Citizen*), published in the years 1831–1835—a period that represents a *turning point* in the history of the National Assembly, changing *from* a majority of representatives by the state officials *to* a majority of representatives for the farmers. (In the National Assembly of 1830 there were forty-three state officials and twenty-one from rural communities; in 1833 there were forty-five from the rural communities and twenty state officials.) Moreover, there were also the writings of the poet, journalist, lawyer, and free intellectual Aasmund Olavsson Vinje, one of the first writers in the new Norwegian language and an important supporter of the cultural and national ambitions of the popular movements.
25. Argumentative rationality is appropriate for agents arguing "uphill," against those in power, especially when those in power are university-educated theologians and lawyers, who are sensitive to reasonable arguments and demands for justice. The overall constellation was thus more favorable for argumentative activities "from below," as an element in the sociopolitical struggle than in many other countries.
26. Until then (1845) the Haugians did not have the legal possibility of leaving the state church; nor did they leave the state church when it was legal to do so after 1845. But this law of 1845 was important for Quakers and Methodists. (The law was extended in 1891, legalizing alternative religious ceremonies, e.g., for marriage.) This indicates the development of religious tolerance in the 19th century.
27. For instance, Monrad as a Hegelian did not merely promote interpretive rationality, but also some critical and reflective rationality; he did not merely interpret texts and traditions. A person like Lars Oftedal (1838–1900) can be seen as a more purely interpretive intellectual: clergyman (affiliated to the pietist branch of the popular movements),

politician (of the Left, in *Stortinget* in 1883–1885 and 1889–1891), and founder of an important regional newspaper (*Stavanger Aftenblad*, 1893). But still we have (with reservation) chosen to focus on Monrad, an intellectual situated at the university. Furthermore, the choice of Vinje as an archetype representative of argumentative rationality is also questionable. Another choice could have been Arne Garborg (1851–1924), a writer and journalist with *tvisyn* and doubt, but then we are into the 20th century. In this context we want to focus on 19th century agents rather than those who were active at the end of that century and into the next.

28. Cf. my critical comments on Schweigaard's attempt to "do away with" German philosophy: "Schweigaard og den norske tankeløysa," in Skirbekk, *Undringa*, 2002. For a positive presentation of Schweigaard in this respect, cf. Seip, 1974, pp. 101–103.
29. Monrad was undoubtedly an important thinker. If he had been listened to more carefully, there might have been more resistance against positivism and technocracy and against anti-intellectualism (both among religious laypeople and cultural-radicals). However, this being said, it may also be added that there has been an idle and empty idolizing of Monrad. For instance, Hjalmar Hegge, who in the introduction to *Monrad Tankeretninger i den nyere tid* (1981 edition, Oslo, Tanum, p. iii, our translations) refers to Windelband, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, where Windelband, according to Hegge, puts Monrad "on the top of the list of recommended literature," thus expressing an "indisputable recognition" of this Norwegian philosopher and of the opus mentioned (referring to the German version, from 1899, of Monrad's *Denkrichtungen der neueren Zeit*). However, this "list of recommended literature" is actually a list of forty-two names/titles without any order, not even alphabetic; for instance, Harald Høffding is mentioned as number 6 (just before one of three references to Windelband himself) and then a second time, further down. Moreover, Høffding is also referred to in *Namenregister*, but not Monrad. At the end of the first section (page 540 in the 1957 edition) there is a lot of name dropping ("Aus der philosophischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts dürfen etwa folgende Hauptpunkte herausgehoben sein"). In the following seven compact pages there is a short paragraph (in parenthesis) on "deutsche Spekulation" "im skandinavischen Norden"; here Harald Høffding is mentioned, together

with Søren Kierkegaard, and from the Swedish side: Geijer, Gerloff, and Boström, but no Norwegian, not even Monrad. (Moreover, in the first paragraph Windelband proclaims that there was really nothing essentially new in the philosophy in the 19th century, *ibid.* p. 537.) In short, in checking the references, very little remains of the loudly announced “indisputable recognition” of Monrad’s philosophical work.

30. But in a German context he does not in the same way appear as a conservative.
31. For instance, Monrad was opposed to the “abdication” by the old regime of state officials in 1884. He opposed the introduction of parliamentary democracy, based on party politics, since that might weaken the state as an organic unity (and, we may add, that might weaken the Parliament as a forum for free discussion, independent of party loyalties).
32. For instance, in Georg Brandes, an influential Danish intellectual and spokesperson for a vision of modernity in terms of scientific enlightenment and liberal ideals.
33. Cf. Vinje, 1946, Vol. 3., pp. 319–389. Quotations and references, see also Skirbekk, 2002, p. 117.
34. Like many intellectual Jews in the first half of the 20th century, who thus became great philosophers and sociologists.
35. The term “ideal-type” (cf. Max Weber) does not mean that these notions are “ideal” in a normative sense, but that they point at some typical characteristics.
36. Roughly stated: situated in *politics* (Schweigaard as a powerful professor-politician), at the *university* (Monrad as an influential professor at the one and only university for almost half a century), and in *public space* (Vinje, as a journalist and writer).
37. Cf. similar distinctions in the (early) Habermasian theory of three “cognitive interests” (*erkenntnisleitende Interessen*) and three kinds of *science/rationality* (causally explaining, interpretive, and emancipating), or in his theory of three kinds of speech-act inherent (pragmatically universal) *validity-claims* (truth, rightness, and truthworthiness). All three kinds of rationality (and validity-claims) are inherent in every speaking and interacting agent. In modern differentiated societies all

- these kinds of rationality are required. However, here we simply use this tripartite distinction to indicate the *relative dominance* of each kind of rationality by referring to a significantly situated person in each case. At this point we do not enter the philosophical discussion on these distinctions, nor do we look into the various institutional and societal explanations for changing relationships (and dominance) between these basic forms of rationality.
38. Cf. Nils Gilje's paper on Haugianism in Fjelland et al., eds., *Philosophy Beyond Borders*, 1997.
 39. One of the famous spokeswomen was the poet Berte Kanutte Aarflot (1795–1859), cf., e.g., Elisabeth Aasen, *Fra Gamle Dage*, 1983, pp. 202–211.
 40. This estimate is somewhat uncertain, but in any case numerous copies that were sold and read.
 41. But during the Napoleonic Wars, in 1809, he was temporarily set free to help the state in promoting salt production, which was badly needed due to the British blockade and food shortages.
 42. However, Grundtvig (1783–1872) lived a large part of his life under the strict rule of Frederik VI (1768–1839), Danish king 1808–1839 (Denmark had a democratic constitution in 1849), whereas in Norway Grundtvig's ideas were adopted by members of a politically active opposition within a constitutional democracy.
 43. For a competent foreign perspective on the Nordic *folkehøjskole*, cf. Erica Simon, especially her extensive thesis from 1960 (766 pages).
 44. Lutheran confirmation promoted literacy. On the other hand, it included a public examination (in the church), which (in a Foucauldian perspective) may be seen as a system of class-based control and discipline.
 45. Before around 950 there was a common Nordic language, but from then on east-Scandinavian languages (Danish and Swedish) underwent changes (cf. Kisbye, 1982). That which is referred to as Norse literature was predominantly written in Iceland and to some extent in Norway in the 12th and 13th century; in Denmark and Sweden Latin was used more extensively than in Iceland and Norway.

46. There was also a concern among the Danish-oriented group that the Swedish language could gain strength in Norway, since Norwegian dialects to a large extent were closer to Swedish than to Danish. Cf. the Norwegian historian Øystein Rian, 2009 (my translation): “[T]he Danish-Norwegians had a particular dislike for the Swedish language. They observed that Norwegian dialects were much more similar to Swedish than to Danish, and they were afraid that this would lead to a Swedish–Norwegian language. In order to strengthen the legitimacy of the Danish written language in Norway they hurried in calling it alternatively Norwegian or Mother Tongue, and adopted a purist attitude to any norwegianization of this written language.” Further references, cf. Andresen, 1994, pp. 54–65.
47. Such as Bjørnson, Lie, Kjelland, and Skram. In 1899 (the same year as the name *riksmål* was invented) Bjørnson wrote the following (translation word-by-word): “I take it to be good that we share a written language with the Danes.” (“*Jeg holder det for et Gode, at vi deler Skriftsprog med Danskerne*”, cf. Sørensen, *Norsk idéhistorie*, vol. III, 2001, p. 389.) A remarkable statement, both because it explicitly states that the dominant written language in Norway at that time was Danish, and also because the word “Gode” is ambiguous, it could mean “blessing” as well as “benefit,” thus possibly alluding to the fact that for Norwegian authors it was economically beneficial to write in Danish and to publish their books in Denmark, thereby reaching a larger market and obtaining a better income.
48. According to the Danish historian Ole Feldbæk, as many as ninety Norwegian authors published in Danish publishing houses in the period from 1850 to 1890. Cf. Feldbæk, 1998, p. 398. Similar numbers in Seip, 1981, pp. 21–22, quoting Nils Collett Vogt, saying (my translation): “A book printed in the author’s homeland [Norway] in those years [1880–1890s] was a miscarriage/monster, doomed to be unsold and unread.” Seip adds: “The liberation from Denmark (as it might be called) was completed only in the interwar period” [in the 1920–30s].
49. The political decision of officially recognizing the language built on Norwegian languages (*nynorsk*, at first called *landsmål*), was taken by the National Assembly (*Stortinget*) in 1885, by an initiative from the political Left.

50. But the tension still prevails, and not only between *nynorsk* and *bokmål*. There is also a tension concerning the balance between a more Danish and a more Norwegian profile within *bokmål*. For instance, in some of the major newspapers (like *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet*) the orthography of articles written in *bokmål* are systematically “corrected” (without asking the authors) into more Danish-like forms (e.g., *fram* to *frem*, *sju* to *syv*, *boka* to *boken*). In other words, nearly two hundred years after 1814, some Norwegians still think that Danish-like forms are more *comme il faut* than Norwegian ones.
51. Women’s associations with by far the largest number of participants were associations stemming from the Christian lay movements such as the Haugians. These associations were among the forerunners for the “voluntary organizations” (*frivillige organisasjoner*) that have played an important role in Norwegian (Scandinavian) society.
52. In the aftermath of the early popular movements (notably the Haugians) there was not only a transition into party politics but also a development of “voluntary organizations” (cf. previous note), for instance, Christian women’s organizations with pietist faiths and charitable aims (e.g., for Christian missions). These organizations, with their alternative papers and books, were numerous, widely spread, and influential. (E.g., cf. Inger Furseth, *A Comparative Study of Social and Religious Movements in Norway, 1780s–1905*, 2002.)

CHAPTER 3

The Interplay of Persons and Institutions: 1880–1920
A Local Case

We investigate a local case for a closer view of what went on in one community toward the end of the 19th and into the early 20th century. Certainly, one case does not allow for empirical generalizations, but it may serve to situate some of the middle-range notions used in the previous chapter. Moreover, the period around the turn of the century has special characteristics, for instance, that the political forces—including the popular movements—to a large degree are transferred into political parties and institutions (such as workers' associations). The popular movements took part in these changes.

Our local case (referring to a “conversation association”) illustrates a learning process, *from* public discussion *to* an active involvement in party politics and institution building of various kinds. In conceptualizing modernization processes in this community we focus on the interplay among a few selected *persons* and their efforts in favor of and within some main *institutions*. Hence we shall see how different forms of *rationality* are situated in various practices and institutions: We conceive of (i) *argumentative rationality* in the initial

“conversation association” and later in a local newspaper, (ii) thereby also *interpretive and formative rationality*, which was furthermore strengthened by new schools and a new museum, and we conceive of (iii) *instrumental rationality* related to technological developments, for instance, in agriculture, forestry, and infrastructure. At the end of this chapter we present some general reflections on the popular movements and their elites.

A Local Case

To get a sense of what was going on at a local level in the lead-up to the introduction of parliamentarianism and into the early 20th century, we refer to a local community, focusing on the interplay of persons and institutions, roughly in the period between 1880 and 1920. It is a rural community (*kommune*) in Eastern Norway, not far from the Swedish border, in the middle of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Its economy is based on agriculture, forestry, and related industries. Forestry was the source of wealth. Farms were often middle sized, based on paid laborers. The previous remarks on popular movements and their elites provide a general background for our comments on this community, where we focus on the interplay between some influential persons and some special institutions.¹

The noteworthy institutions in this community include: (i) political institutions in a broad sense, beginning with spontaneous discussion groups, then trade unions and newly established political parties; (ii) the establishment of a newspaper as a local public sphere; (iii) the establishment of a local *folkemuseum* to promote historical awareness of the local and national heritage rooted in the traditional agrarian community; and (iv) the establishment of a people’s high school (*folkehøgskule*) and a teachers’ college to promote education and cultural self-esteem for future generations (inspired by the educational ideals of the popular movements).

The influential persons under consideration include: (i) The forest owner (1836–1917), a rich idealist who supported cultural and

educational initiatives; (ii) the politician (1859–1934), a leftist farmer who supported workers and the disadvantaged, promoted an argumentative political culture, and took part in party politics; (iii) the scholar (1873–1932), a teacher, ethnologist, and director of the regional school system, a supporter of the democratic-national movement; and (iv) the editor (1877–1951), a son of Swedish immigrants, who supported the social and democratic-national movement via his pen and his position as a newspaper editor.

Political Institutions in a Broad Sense

(i) In 1881, a local “conversation association” (*samtaleforening*) was founded by three young farmers (among them our politician, 22 years of age at the time), who had been together in a local school for youth, established in 1873.² The purpose of this association was described (by the founders) in these words: “By coming together in order to discuss topics of common interest and to have lectures, the aim of this association is to be enlightening and educating (*opplysende og dannende*).”³

There is an important point to be mentioned concerning the procedure: Normally each meeting began by having two persons presenting two opposing positions on a chosen topic, on the understanding that serious discussion requires *pro-et-con*, arguments and counter-arguments.

The topics discussed (according to written reports) include:

- “Should women have greater juridical autonomy and should one open access for her to most positions?” (The status of women in contemporary societies was thus the first question raised by these young farmers in 1881.)
- “Is the present way of paying clergymen satisfactory?” (In short, questioning the economic conditions for state officials. After a lively discussion of aspects of the remuneration system, there was a general agreement on a resolution

recommending the abolition of special payments for each service rendered by a clergyman.)

- “Will the associations for the armament of the people function conveniently and should one join them actively or passively?” (This kind of armament was meant to support the army, but it became a leftist case, not favored by the authorities, since in reality it was an armament of the people. In the lead-up to the Norwegian withdrawal from the union with Sweden in 1905, questions of defense were of great importance. There was a lively discussion, overwhelmingly in favor of people’s armament.)
- “Does the constitution allow for a royal veto in constitutional matters and, if so, of what kind?” (This was a crucial question in the conflict between Swedish and Norwegian politicians and in the fight for parliamentary democracy.)
- “Are there major deficiencies in social life in our community, and what could be done to improve the situation?” (During the discussion our politician and another person made the proposal that one should establish workers’ associations [*arbeidersamfunn*].)
- “What is the relationship of the literary and political Left to Christianity?” (The question of the role of religion in a democratic society was an issue of concern.)
- “Is a republic to be preferred to monarchy?” (Our politician, a radical farmer, presented pro-republic arguments.)
- “How could agriculture most conveniently be made useful?” (Scandinavian Enlightenment had a genuine concern for practical and economic issues.)
- “Is our welfare system for poor people on the right track?” (Arguments in favor of improvements were presented by our politician, who (i) made an appeal to altruism, (ii) spoke out against alcohol abuse, and (iii) expressed belief in the

sciences [*Wissenschaften*] to improve the standard of living; he also made the proposal that one should (iv) transfer the farms of state officials into institutions for work and education for young people.)

- “Who should have the right to vote in our country?” (The crucial political question of franchise in democratic societies.)
- “How should school and home most conveniently collaborate?” (The classical question of the relationship between the educational system on one side and family and community on the other.)
- “Advantages and deficiencies of private schools compared with public schools.” (An intriguing question, not least in the transition *from* a situation when the popular movements were opposed to the cultural hegemony of the ruling classes and to some extent tried to establish their own schools [e.g., “*folkehøgskular*”] *into* a situation when these movements, through recruitment and training of new teachers, to some extent had the upper hand in the public school system.)
- “About property rights for men and women in marriage.” (The question of women’s rights, conceived of in legal terms.)
- “What are the special causes for the deep gap between workers and the well-to-do, and how could this relationship be improved?” (The classical question of economic inequality, with a concern for possible improvements, thus anticipating a social-democratic awareness.)
- “Should the jury system be introduced in our country?” (This was an important question concerning the status of the law-courts [and thus the role of state officials]. Jury and parliamentarianism were twin questions in the struggle of power between state officials and the Left.)

- “Is war a crime and could it possibly be abandoned?” (A question of major concern, even in a local community at that time.)
- “What are appropriate means against alcoholism (*drukken-skap*)?” (A political concern for social problems—again, anticipating a social-democratic approach.)
- “Popular enlightenment” (*folkets opplysning*). (A political concern for education and enlightenment. In the discussion one of the speakers criticized liberalist capitalism for making living conditions worse for the workers and for creating contempt for the workers, and defended a decent Christian life [*sunt kristenliv*], better schools, and extended juridical rights.)

The transition to parliamentarianism in 1884 represented a decisive weakening of the political role of the state officials and the coming-to-power of the Left, largely supported by popular forces and movements and by the radical urban intelligentsia.

An important and recurring topic in this “discussion association” at that time was the question of how the working class could *be organized* and how it could *organize itself*: A political empowering of the working class demands organizational solidarity among progressive groups, but in the end it should be achieved by the workers themselves. According to the association’s reports, “The purpose (of workers’ organizations) is to promote the well-being of the workers. This task must be promoted by those who gain (and seek) their living by the use of their hands.”

Other topics discussed around 1884 include *rules for the police* and questions of *school reform*. At the final meeting in 1885, the year when the Parliament decided that New Norwegian⁴ should have equal legal status as Norwegian-Danish,⁵ there was a heated discussion on the *language question*. At that meeting our politician, the farmer, asked all the members to join the local workers’ association (*arbeidersam-lag*), and as we shall see, he thereafter went into organizational and

administrative work and also into party politics, to the left.

This story from a local conversation association in the 1880s is interesting as an example of important learning processes: First, one took part in enlightened discussions (*pro-et-con*); then one organized a trade union to improve working conditions and to promote public education; and then one joined political parties to take part in party politics. Hence, this local story conforms to a democratic-participatory ideal, with a focus on the importance of a public sphere and of political learning processes, bottom up. Looking at the issues discussed, and the way of discussing them, it is fair to say that this conversation association promoted enlightenment, that is, a practical and socially responsible enlightenment, far from exalted Jacobinism or heroic romanticism.

(ii) *Newspaper*. A local newspaper was established early in 1901 as an alternative public space. It was a newspaper for the Left, with the aim of raising social questions and reporting on the workers' movement at home and abroad. It advocated an association of "farmers of the left and workers of the left" (*venstrebønder og venstrearbeidere*); that is, this newspaper was to the left of the Left (i.e., of the political party *Venstre*).⁶ It was initially an organ of *De forenede norske arbeider-samfunn* (the united Norwegian workers' association), which in 1911 adopted the name *Arbeiderdemokratene* (workers' democrats). Our editor was appointed to this newspaper already in 1901 (at the age of 24), and remained there until 1921 when the newspaper was taken over by the *Bondepartiet* (Farmers' Party). As the party newspaper for *Bondepartiet*, it maintained its leftist and radical profile.⁷ This is the heartland of the "red county" (*det raude fylket*) in Norway.

(iii) *Folkemuseum*. This local community was basically progressive and forward-looking, but it was also proud of its local and national heritage that had been transmitted through a long tradition. Political identity building had therefore a historical component: In 1911 a local *folkemuseum* was established, a museum for and by the people.⁸ It soon became the third largest people's museum in Norway⁹ (after *Folkemuseum* in Oslo and *Sandvikske samlinger* in Lillehammer),

despite the fact that it was located only 30 kilometers (on flat land) from the county capital, which had a similar museum. To understand how this came about we may consider the interplay between persons and institutions: The four persons we have mentioned were all involved in the establishment of the museum. They collaborated and supplemented each other, the editor with media and public space, the scholar with historical expertise, the politician with political capital, and the forest owner with economic resources. They were all animated by a social and cultural pride for *folkekulturen*, the culture of the people. Together they represented a powerful agency, in collaboration with other people in the community.

(iv) *Schools* were established to promote education, with an underlying idealist agenda. With the economic support from the forest owner, a local people's high school (*folkehøgskule*) was established in 1928, influenced by the ideals of the Danish theologian and writer Nikolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig, which means that it was "open minded," *frilyndt*, not pietist and orthodox in religious and cultural matters. A teachers' college (*lærarskule*) was also established—again, only 30 kilometers from the county capital, which was home to another teachers' college. These schools were important for the kind of alternative education and identity formation supported by *Venstre* and the popular movements in Norway. A significant proportion of the young people who were educated in these kinds of schools became major agents for the *Venstre* regime and for the promotion of attitudes favoring the democratic-national ideas of the popular movements.

So far we have looked at some special institutions established in this community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Other institutions were also important, such as the new political parties, public institutions, such as schools and health insurance, as well as institutional and technological developments in agriculture and forestry, in infrastructure and communication. A brief look at the four persons we have selected may indirectly help to elucidate the important role of these other institutions by highlighting the interplay among persons and institutions.

Some Influential Persons

(i) *The politician*. His family background might be of interest: His father (1817–1870) was a farmer and a Haugian, but a moderate one, favoring education and a Protestant work ethic.¹⁰ Before he died he urged his son, at eleven years of age, to seek education and knowledge that rust and rot cannot destroy.¹¹

(ii) *The editor* was first-generation Norwegian. Both his parents had moved to Norway from Sweden. He was sincerely influenced by the sociocultural ideals and attitudes of popular movements in Norway (without religious pietism), and he was an influential cultural personality with an excellent pen and a social consciousness.¹² He became director of the museum in 1941. In addition to his many activities in the local community, as an editor and a cultural personality, he was also a member of the board of the national association of the press (*Norsk presseforbund*).

(iii) *The scholar* was a teacher and an ethnologist¹³ and became the school director (*skuledirektør*) for the county (*fylket*).

(iv) *The forest owner* was a genuine idealist with strong beliefs in the democratic-national ideals and aims of the popular movements.¹⁴ He was wealthy and had useful social connections. He supported the new museum, provided funding for the local *folkehøgskule*, and donated around 46,000 books to the public library.

Special Modernization Processes: Some General Points

We began by asking how we should conceptualize processes of modernization on a middle-range level. We looked at special learning processes and institutional differentiations in Scandinavia, characterized by an interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements in Norway in the 19th century. Finally we looked at a local case in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Looking back at what has been said about *popular movements and their elites*, nationally and locally, I would like to emphasize a few points of general interest concerning these movements:¹⁵

- They had an ability to *organize themselves*, to *transfer* spontaneous popular activities into economic, political, and educational institutions.
- The main movements came in three waves, each time as a process in which spontaneous activities became organized and institutionalized.¹⁶ A combination of spontaneity and organization, that cannot easily be realized simultaneously, could thus be obtained *by repeating processes* from spontaneity to organization.¹⁷
- These popular movements operated on a *broad scale*: in the economic field, on the political level, and in matters of education and formation.
- Deliberation (argumentative rationality) and organizational work *were combined*.
- They discussed and organized *on all geopolitical levels*, locally, regionally, and nationally.¹⁸
- They used the media of their time as an *alternative public sphere*.
- Education was conceived as *self-education*, an educational project that included practical and theoretical training as well as *consciousness raising* on behalf of one's identity and cultural background.¹⁹
- The leaders of the popular movements behaved as civilized and reasonable persons. Thus the interaction between politically active state officials and the leaders of the popular movements resulted in some *mutual trust*. Consequently, when the state officials "abdicated" in 1884, they knew that nothing drastic would happen to them or to the country. This kind of basic trust represents a cultural precondition for a well-functioning democracy with a peaceful change of power.

- This was not merely a mutual trust on a personal level (across sociocultural class differences), but at the same time a *trust in institutions* and *in legal procedures*,²⁰ for daily dealings as well as for coping with interest conflict and power struggle. In short, a basic consensus on how to do things, also in cases where there are different visions and group interests.²¹
- All agents operated within the same constitution and the same confession. The learning processes of tolerance for “the others” did *not* result from the experience of *confessional plurality*—practically everybody was a Lutheran—but from special experiences of *sociocultural and linguistic differences*.²²

The latter point deserves a special comment. Whereas many of the points referred to here have equivalents in the other Nordic countries, there are some peculiar factors in the case of Norway due to the absence of national nobility and the “foreign-ness” of many state officials: The Norwegian farmer was seen as the representative of national heritage.²³ Hence the popular fight for democracy merged with a fight for recognition of the national heritage. Norway’s *democratic nationalism from below* was most likely a unique constellation. Whereas Norway developed a *homogeneous political culture* (as to how to do things), the country remained somewhat *heterogeneous* in terms of *cultural codes and identity formation*.

Furthermore, the popular movements were largely *pro-modern*.²⁴ That is, they were *pro-enlightenment* in the sense that they favored science and new technology as well as education and a progressive public sphere, and they were to a large degree *progressive in social politics*, in favor of improved working conditions and social security.

In presenting a reflective approach to middle-range conceptions of modernization processes in the first chapter we referred especially to a set of interrelated notions (and their subdistinctions), starting with an act-oriented (pragmatic) perspective of the notions of rationality,

agency, and institution. It is now time to recall some general points concerning the notion of rationality, with its paradigmatic division into *instrumental*, *interpretive*, and *argumentative rationality*, related to what has been said about popular movements and their elites:

- (i) The Haugians promoted a capitalist economy and practical skills in various professions. Similarly, the agents of our local case supported new technology and science-based solutions in the economic sphere related to agriculture, forestry, and infrastructure. Hence, in practical matters these movements and their elites favored modernized versions of *instrumental* rationality.
- (ii) Opposing the legal restrictions and the theological interpretations handed down by the upper class of state officials the Haugians developed *interpretive* skills in relation to religious, as well as to legal texts.
- (iii) By opposing those in power, and by defending their own theological and legal interpretations “bottom up,” members of the popular movements acquired argumentative skills. (Those on the top were university-educated theologians and jurists who in principle were sensible to reasonable arguments, even though they had another sociopolitical position.) In our local case the participants of the “conversation association” favored *argumentative* rationality in discussing urgent questions *pro-et-con*. Moreover, we have the founding and usage of alternative public spheres and educational activities in an overall setting of “arguing uphill” and thus acquiring a reflective attitude; such an attitude is more easily acquired by those coming from below than by the ones on top who are not used to seeing themselves from the outside. The next step, and the more complex one, is the acquisition of a self-critical awareness of an unavoidable variety of world views, or at least a self-critical awareness of mutual fallibility and, thus, of a need for corrections and

improvements. But this kind of reflective and self-critical awareness is usually a fruit of later stages in the processes of modernization.

All in all, it seems fair to say that in their practices, these movements and their elites did promote basic modernization processes in a blend of instrumental, interpretive, and argumentative rationality.

One of the questions, then, is the following: To what extent do these processes, roughly similar across the Nordic countries, help to understand how these countries, in the mid 20th century, before late-capitalist affluence, were able to combine a universal welfare system and economic redistribution with a fair degree of political inclusion and a certain amount of tolerance in religious matters?²⁵ We may at least say this much: There are deep-rooted processes in the modernization of the Nordic countries that are peculiar, for instance to the extent that Scandinavian words such as *folkelighed*, *folkhem*, and *folkedanning* remain almost untranslatable.²⁶ But they are crucial, and they do allude to what could be seen as “the gentle charm of the Nordic countries” (*le charme discret des pays nordiques*).

Endnotes

1. Cf. Håvard Skirbekk, ed., *Årbok for Glåmdalen*, Elverum, Austmannalaget, 1941–1992, and Per Overrein, “Hvor ånden bærer bud”–*Østlendingen fra Arbeiderdemokratene til Orkla*, Elverum, Østlendingen, 2001.
2. By Eivind Torp (1844–1890).
3. Cf. “Elverum Samtaleforening 1881–1885,” *Årbok for Glåmdalen, 1946–47*, pp. 107–111. My translation word-by-word, here and later.
4. At first called “*landsmål*,” later “*nynorsk*.”
5. Our politician started using New Norwegian soon after that decision. From his collection of books we know that he read Old Norwegian (Norse language).
6. Cf. Overrein, 2001.
7. The editor from 1968 to 1994 had voted for the Norwegian Communist Party (NKP) in his early youth and was later active in the social-democrat youth movement (*AUF*).
8. A *folkemuseum*: primarily a collection of old farm houses, moved in from different districts of the region and rebuilt as authentically as possible, with furniture, tools, and other everyday objects used on the farm in those days, and located in a natural (outdoor) setting.
9. Nearly one hundred houses of various kinds, in addition to special collections (in special buildings).
10. His list of books and publications (from 1860, at the age of 43) contains 148 titles, including writings by Hans Nielsen Hauge and Ludvig Holberg, as well as religious literature and practical and useful books. His handwritten diary from 1841–1848 bears witness to a conscious self-discipline and a rational use of time.
11. Four of his children went to America. (A general point: The percentage of the Norwegian population that emigrated to the U.S. from the early 19th into the 20th century was exceptionally high; only Ireland had a higher percentage; cf., e.g., Mørkhagen, 2009.) The main public activities of our politician, who was also a farmer, can be summarized by these points: 1881–1885, cofounder and active member of the local “conversation association” (*samtaleforening*); 1887–1919, member of the community government (*heradstyret*); i.e., for 32 years,

beginning at the age of 28; 1893–1895, mayor (*ordfører*); 1893–1903, member of the national board of *De forenede norske arbeidersamfunn* (the united Norwegian workers' association); 1893–1929, director (*forretningsfører*) of local *trygdekasse* (public health insurance service); 1901–1907, vice mayor (*visesordfører*); 1901, first candidate on the election list for *Arbeiderdemokratene* (Workers' Democrats), the party that won the election; 1918–1930, director of the local branch of the public Bank of Norway; first chairman of local branch of *Venstre*; member of the board of local workers' association (*arbeidersamfunn*, for approximately 15 years). In addition to his day-to-day efforts to achieve improvements in farming, forestry, and infrastructure, etc., he is also noteworthy for several specific political issues: 1893, efforts to reduce the working hours for farm workers and to give them an extra meal a day; 1894, May Day demonstration (the first in Norway outside of the cities); 1895, organizing trade unions and building a trade union house (*folkets hus*). Efforts for public social security in cases of disease or accident, and for the elderly and retired people. Efforts for better education for everyone: free school material and free education after compulsory public school. Campaign for the republic against monarchy. Campaign for the armament of the people (before 1905). Campaign for the New Norwegian language. Campaign against alcohol abuse.

12. Already in 1894 (at age 17) he took part in the founding of a periodical for youth, *Breidablik*, where many young authors had their first texts published (cf. Andreas Hagen on Magnus Hamlander, in *Norsk bibliografisk leksikon*, and in *Alfarheim, årbok for Elverum*, 1999).
13. See Reimund Kvideland on Sigurd Nergaard, in *Norsk biografisk leksikon* (Oslo, 2003).
14. See Aud M. Tretvik on Helge Væringsaasen, in *Norsk biografisk leksikon*.
15. Cf., e.g., Furseth, 2002.
16. Spontaneity and organization are both required for a successful political movement, but it is difficult to achieve both at the same time.
17. Such learning processes might lead to a consciousness that is open for future mobilization, as shown in the women's vote in 1905. Cf. also the Norwegian votes against EEC/EU membership in 1972 and 1994.
18. In moving from spontaneity to politically organized activities they aimed at the *national* level and at the *legal* system; thereby they

- distinguished themselves from many other popular movements. This indicates a decisive difference between these Nordic movements and many spontaneous local revolts in earlier times.
19. Cast in the untranslatable terms of *folkedanning* and *folkelighed*.
 20. See chapter 5 on the legal orientation among Norwegian farmers at an early stage.
 21. Moreover, this basic trust—on the level of agents as well as on the institutional level—goes together with openness for compromise and also for a basic concern for the rights and needs of other people.
 22. Compared with a politically centralized and culturally and linguistically homogenized country like France, Norway may look like an early “postmodernist” society with an inherent cultural pluralism, in short, a country with cultural heterogeneity and political homogeneity.
 23. In the 19th century there was a frequent use of the terms “culture” and “nation,” the former referring to the upper classes and the latter to the unbroken heritage of the people.
 24. Surely, in this respect there were considerable differences over time. The Haugians in the early days of the 19th century had for instance a more patriarchal view of family life than what we find among members of farmers’ and workers’ movements toward the end of the century. Likewise there were regional differences (for instance between the coast area at the South-West and the inland), both as to the strength of religious pietism and as to the relationship to early labor movements. The latter point is also related to differences in class structure: Paid labor in farming and forestry was more common in the inland than along the coast. In short, our case from an inland community is less pietistic and more labor-oriented than what would be found in some other communities at that time. For a West-Norwegian perspective, cf. Høydal, 1995 and Nærbøvik, 2004.
 25. Here we do not intend to deliver empirical explanations of this kind, our approach is primarily conceptual. Cf., e.g., Skirbekk, “The Idea of a Welfare State in a Future Scenario of Great Scarcity,” in Eriksen and Loftager, eds., *The Rationality of the Welfare State*, 1996.
 26. Cf. Stråth, 2004, pp. 7–9.

CHAPTER 4

**Modernization Processes under Democratic
Parliamentarism until WWII: 1884–1940**

Technological and economic development accompanied changes in class structure and political agencies. In this chapter we look at middle-range conceptions for political parties and for the interplay between class conflicts and national cohesion. We look at three kinds of agency, expertise, and related institutions: (i) engineers and scientists involved in the industrial development, (ii) teachers engaged in sociocultural activities, (iii) lawyers and experts on jurisprudence engaged in social law making.

In the period before World War II the legal and institutional foundations for a Nordic welfare state were established. At the same time, the First World War and its aftermath challenged the optimistic and harmonious conception of “the modern project.”

Background

By introducing parliamentary rule in 1884, the previous democratic opposition could form a new government in the name of *Venstre* (i.e., the newly founded political party “the Left”); generally speaking the period from 1884 to World War II could be called “the regime of the Left” (*Venstrestaten*¹), that is, a regime largely dominated by *Venstre*.² That does not mean that the *Venstre* was in government all the time. It was not. After the introduction of parliamentary rule, there were continuous changes of governments among parties and coalitions. The term merely indicates that during this period Norway had a regime (a state and a political culture) largely dominated by the same ideas of the democratic opposition that founded the *Venstre*.

This was a modernizing regime, *in between* the previous regime dominated by state officials and the subsequent regime dominated by social-democrats³—an interregnum influenced by modernization processes related to the democratic-national ideas of the popular movements and to the progressive ideas of the radical urban intelligentsia. Its effect was a Norway that, as a nation, gradually, often through hard political struggle, became more egalitarian and pro-modern, “popular” (*folkeleg*) and progressive, at the same time—a blend of tradition and innovation that amazed foreign observers.⁴

Next we look at three characteristics: (i) the role of the teachers and the educational system, (ii) the role of scientifically based technology in the promotion of new industries, and (iii) new social laws and the regulation of market forces. But first a few general remarks:

At the outset the *Venstre* was supported both by the popular movements and the radical urban intelligentsia; thus it contained internal tensions. Moreover, with the socioeconomic development and the differentiation of new crafts and trades, not least by industrialization and the rise of an industrial workforce, there were decisive changes in the class structure that led to chasms within the *Venstre* and to a strengthening of the Labor Party, outside the *Venstre*.

Focusing on processes of modernization in this period we assess these issues:

- (i) the role of political parties,
- (ii) the tension between nation and class,
- (iii) two basic agreements: between workers and farmers, and between organized employers and centralized trade unions,
- (iv) changes in the development and relative strength of different forms of expertise,
- (v) interplay between science-based technology and accessible energy,
- (vi) a successful fight for progressive social laws and legal regulations of the market, and thereby
- (vii) the legal foundation for a Nordic welfare state.

When we look at these topics, the following facts should be kept in mind: In 1905 Norway severed the union with Sweden (both nations refrained from use of violence), and a Danish prince was elected as the Norwegian king.⁵ During World War I, Norway (like the other Scandinavian countries) remained neutral. After the Russian Revolution the Norwegian Labor Party joined the Soviet-dominated Komintern for a few years from 1919 to 1923. When the party left Komintern a struggle broke out within the labor movement. As a result the Norwegian Communist Party was founded in 1923 and the Norwegian Labor Party changed from being revolutionary to being reform oriented.⁶ The struggle prevailed within the trade unions, but in party politics the Labor Party had the upper hand. In 1928 the Labor Party was asked by the constitutional monarch to form a government⁷ that turned out to be short-lived—18 days. But by the end of the interwar period (in 1935) Norway a more permanent government was formed by the Labor Party,⁸ after an agreement (*kriseforliket*) with the Agrarians (*Bondepartiet*), a government that ruled until the end of the war.

Politics and Political Parties

For our perspective, we may emphasize three characteristics of the political situation in Norway after the introduction of democratic parliamentarianism. These three characteristics in various ways endured during this period and to some extent even after 1945:

(i) The *pragmatic spirit* of the “pastoral enlightenment”—far from dogmatic Jacobinism and political romanticism—prevailed in Norwegian politics after the introduction of democratic parliamentarianism and the coming-to-power of the popular movements and the radical urban intelligentsia. True, in the political process leading up to the abolition of the union with Sweden in 1905, the political rhetoric became heated. But the political handling of the crisis was, at the end of the day, pragmatic and reasonable on both sides of the border and without bloodshed. The same is true of the heated class conflicts that emerged after World War I, conflicts related to the economic crises and the rise of an industrial workforce. With few exceptions⁹ these tensions were handled pragmatically and peacefully, even though the political rhetoric (to some degree influenced by the Russian Revolution) could be aggressive and conflict oriented. Nor did Fascism gain broad support in the 1930s; the dogmatic and romantic rhetoric of Fascism did not mesh with the pragmatic spirit of the “pastoral enlightenment,” neither with that of the enlightened state officials nor with that of the popular movements.¹⁰ The Fascist leader, Vidkun Quisling, was widely considered a political phony. Add to this that cultural nationalism was an issue of political combat “from below,” promoted by the popular movements with their egalitarian and democratic-national ideas. It was mainly a democratic and “pastoral” nationalism, in contrast to romantic and antidemocratic ideas of a martial *Master Race*. At the end of this period, from 1935 to the German occupation in 1940, Norway was governed by the Norwegian Labor Party. In short, the pragmatic spirit prevailed. This point has a bearing on the next point, that of trust.

(ii) Up to 1884, the two opponents—politically dominant state officials in government and major positions on the one side, and a democratic opposition in the national assembly on the other—had developed a basic *mutual trust* (as mentioned earlier). These state officials, mainly university-educated theologians and jurists, were largely pragmatic persons with moral integrity, competent in their field, and loyal to the constitution and to the conception of justice and the “common good.” Likewise, the spokespersons of the democratic opposition and the popular movements were largely reasonable and pragmatic persons, equally loyal to the constitution and the common good (though seen from another sociocultural angle). They had promoted educational and formative processes, thus complying with basic ideals among the state officials. Consequently, through mutual learning processes, both groups reached a basic mutual trust in political adversaries as persons and also in the legal institutions. This was important as that kind of basic trust is a precondition for a democratic political culture where parties and persons in power may confidently leave their government position when, in a free election, they lose the majority support of the people. They leave without any anxiety or fear either for themselves or for the well-being of the country. Such a basic mutual trust cannot be imported or created by a decision or a theoretical argument. It has to be experienced by those concerned.

In terms of learning processes leading up to mutual trust, we do not deny the persistent struggle for power involved in all this. But at this historical stage there was a certain degree of political balancing of power between the two fractions, and the socioeconomic differences were less extreme than in many other countries.¹¹ Taken together these factors contributed to the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power, where a certain degree of mutual trust played a role.

In short, at the same time as there was a basic mutual trust, there were also differences in terms of opposing class interests and different sociocultural experiences and imaginaries. Thus there were also elements of distrust and distance. Nevertheless, a basic trust and

recognition of “the other” prevailed, and this represented a “pre-political” resource for a relatively reasonable and compromise-oriented politics throughout this period and later.

However, when class conflicts achieved a momentum by the rise of the industrial workforce, the previous sociocultural differences were transformed and weakened, but still they prevailed, more or less openly. And thereby we introduce the next point:

(iii) The third aspect is that of prevailing *sociocultural tensions*. First a few commonplaces: In party politics there is usually an element of class conflict, depending on the then-present class structure. Intertwined with these conflicts there are normally different opinions on political issues such as that of the preferred relationships among state, market, and civil society, or that of the preferred relationship between individual freedom and collective security. The founding of the two opposing political parties in 1884—the Left and the Right—could in this perspective have been a starting point for a two-party system (with a re-adjustment as the Labor Party expanded). But instead, during this period, Norway had new political parties that still exist; in 1921 the Farmers’ Party (*Bondepartiet*¹²) and in 1933 the Christian People’s Party (*Kristeleg folkeparti*). Surely, there were at the outset tensions within the *Venstre*, for instance between secularists and believers. Those who founded the Christian People’s Party had largely left *Venstre* for that reason. The interesting question is: Why did they found a new party? Why didn’t they join the Right (*Høire*), an existing party that programmatically defended Christian values? Presumably, they had their reasons, doubtless rooted in the *sociocultural tensions* between state officials and popular movements. One assumption goes as follows: The sociocultural tensions between Lutheran state officials and the popular movements did not wither away with the founding of democratic parliamentarism and the first political parties; these tensions prevailed during the period of the *Venstrestaten* (possibly even further, see later). Therefore, the value-conservative forces¹³ within the *Høire* never succeeded in gaining the confidence and support of the value-conservative forces in the

popular layers of society, largely shaped by the democratic-national or religio-egalitarian ideas of the popular movements.

The consequences were twofold: (1) Since the question of socio-cultural identity remained a matter of concern among value-conservative citizens, this sociocultural plurality became institutionalized in a similar political plurality, in different value-conservative parties. (2) Høire was unable to become a broad value-conservative party with a wide popular support. Consequently, Norway experienced a kind of “inherent multiculturalism.” This sociocultural pluralism contributed to a certain degree of “decentered” reflexivity.¹⁴

Nation and Class: The Interchange between National Unity and Class Tension

The term *nationhood* is ambiguous and its meaning may change with changing situations. In 1814 the notion of nationhood was to a large extent a political one: a willingness to build the new state, promote the common good, and profess loyalty to the new constitution. Due to such political activities a feeling of national identity could evolve. In addition, cultural achievements were decisive for the formation of a common identity and of belonging to a specific nation.¹⁵ Literary and historical narratives¹⁶ are usually involved in such processes. The same is true of the arts, such as music and painting.¹⁷ All these nation-building activities went on throughout the 19th century, and in many cases were carried out by persons affiliated with the state officials (*Embetsstanden*) and the upper-class citizenry; i.e., by persons who somehow were “immigrants,” in the sense that they did not have a long lineage in the country (their ancestors were often Danish or German) and their language was Danish (with a Norwegian pronunciation). This was an embarrassment: The new state was supposed to be a nation, and a nation was supposed to have a national language. But the national language was spoken in the rural areas and by the popular layers, not by the state officials and the higher citizenry. In terms of language and lineage, those who represented

the national heritage were the farmers. In the new nation, without national nobility, without national institutions and magnificent monuments, there were basically three interrelated elements of national pride: Old Norwegian history, Norwegian nature, and Norwegian farmers (*bønder*). Or so it seemed. However, little by little, and especially in the early 20th century, the written Danish language trended toward Norwegian.¹⁸ Moreover, the notion of nationhood also changed; during World War II it was largely redefined as a political notion rather than a cultural one (i.e., being a “good Norwegian” meant resistance to the German occupation and its Norwegian collaborators, the questions of cultural identity and loyalty were less important in that connection).¹⁹

Just like the notion of nationhood, the notion of *class* is ambiguous and prone to change with changing social and economic conditions. In the early 19th century there were three main classes (as mentioned earlier): state officials, citizenry, and farmers—though with inherent and regional differences. It goes without saying that the class structure became more differentiated with the development of new institutions and professions. Already in 1884 this development had reached a point where the hegemonic position of the ruling state officials (predominantly theologians and jurists) was seriously challenged.²⁰ There was also a differentiation in the class structure within the rural society, with the development of a class of land workers. Simultaneously there was an urbanization followed by changes in the urban class structure. In the first decades of the 20th century industrialization gave rise to a strong labor movement.²¹

On this background we may allow ourselves to make some brief and general remarks on the interplay between *national cohesion* and *class conflict* during the period from 1814 to 1940. Immediately after 1814, defending the Constitution against the Swedish king and faced with all the practical challenges within the country, there was a national unity across class differences. Then, toward the middle of the 19th century, the conflicts of interest between the state officials and the democratic opposition gained importance, and the state officials

tended toward a pro-union attitude (culminating around 1884). But toward 1905 the common national interest set the agenda once again; there was a joint front across group interests against the union. Later on, and especially in between the two world wars, class conflicts (now related to the labor movement) became important—until Hitler attacked Norway in 1940 and occupied the country for five years, which led to a strong national unity against the intruders. In short, this ongoing change between *class conflict* and *national unity* moved back and forth like a political accordion, expanding and contracting in slow motion. However, these processes predominantly led to the strengthening of a national cohesion, which adds to the experience of mutual trust, thus creating a feeling of national-political solidarity, from which a reasonable and generous welfare state of a Nordic type could emerge almost unanimously.

Two Basic Agreements: Between Workers and Farmers, and Between Organized Employers and Centralized Trade Unions

In 1935 there were two politically important agreements.

First, in the aftermath of the economic crisis, there was an agreement (*kriseforliket*) between the Labor Party and the Farmers' Party as to how the crisis should be handled. A collaboration was thereby established between the two largest classes in society, farmers and workers. This collaboration was one of the backbones of the hegemonic social-democratic rule over the next thirty to forty years (with the exception of the war and occupation 1940–1945), whereby the Norwegian Labor Party gradually emerged as the “party that carries the state” (*det statsberande parti*). Social democrats in central Europe²² never obtained a similar agreement between these two classes.²³

Second, in the same year, 1935, there was another important agreement, in terms of a compromise between organized employers and organized employees (*hovudavtale*),²⁴ to the effect that the

opposing parties in economic life (in Marxist terminology, capital and labor²⁵) mutually recognized their organizations and established rules and rights for handling conflicting interests (especially negotiations concerning salaries and the rules for legal strike and lock-out), in principle without intervention for the state and political parties.

Both of these agreements can be seen as an outcome of previous developments, back into the 19th century, with learning processes and institutional rearrangements (such as parliamentary democracy) that involved a basic mutual trust across class differences as well as a basic trust in political institutions and legal procedures.

Expertise and Different Forms of Rationality

Processes of modernization are related to different forms of rationality that again are situated in various kinds of expertise. At the outset we noted three ideal-types of rationality—*instrumental*, *interpretive-formative*, and *argumentative*.²⁶ We also indicated how these types of rationality were related to professions and forms of expertise (and even related to three situated ideal-type persons—Schweigaard, Monrad, and Vinje). As mentioned earlier, there was a differentiation of professions throughout the 19th century. This was a decisive point also for the events in 1884, and this differentiation process continued into the period of the *Venstrestaten* and thus into the 20th century. We now briefly recall four main cases of change in terms of expertise and rationality:

(i) The Lutheran theologians and clergymen played a crucial role as state officials, with administrative duties, including a supervision of the school system, and as educators of common people both by their Sunday sermons and by the institution of confirmation. All in all, during the early period they promoted enlightenment²⁷ and interpretive-formative rationality as elements in the ongoing modernization processes. Gradually the common school system was extended and improved and the number of teachers expanded. Hence the theologians, little by little, lost their dominant position as educators.

The period of the *Venstrestaten* may thus be characterized as a regime in which the teachers, and the idea of “popular education” (*folkedanning*) played a major role.²⁸ This was a follow-up to ideas promoted by the popular movements; professions favorable to these ideals gained societal importance, for instance through the school system: in short, a sociocultural process that in many ways supplemented and reinforced the political coming-to-power of the democratic opposition in 1884. The *teachers* became important agents in the *formative* processes of modernization in Norway in this period.²⁹

(ii) The jurists, experts on jurisprudence, were the other major group of state officials, which to a large extent dominated the political system and had the upper hand in designing the legal and institutional structures after 1814. Jurisprudence, an interpretive and normative discipline, was efficiently implemented in a balance between principles of justice and a pragmatic concern for utility (and in support of the latter, statistics and other suitable empirical sciences were used instrumentally). However, as mentioned earlier, little by little these state-related jurists—as professors of jurisprudence at the university, lawmakers in the National Assembly, judges, decision makers in government, and higher officials throughout society—were supplemented by solicitors and other jurists who earned their living by working with private persons, organizations, and enterprises as their clients. Hence, the political role of the profession gradually changed. Johan Sverdrup, head of the first Left government in 1884, was himself a lawyer. These *independent lawyers*³⁰ also took part in public discussions as free intellectuals, thus promoting *argumentative rationality* in public space.

(iii) The third kind of a formally educated expertise, mentioned at the outset, was that of *engineers*, required for the construction of the infrastructure and buildings necessary for the new nation. This need for technological expertise gradually increased, focusing on how science-based technology and economic interests came together, thereby initiating an extensive industrialization. However, during the period of the *Venstrestaten* not only the physical sciences

and their technological implications, but also the *life sciences* (biosciences) gained importance. In the case of Norway the biosciences were of major importance for fishery, agriculture, and forestry—major branches of the Norwegian economy. Add to this the importance of meteorology for all of these activities as well as for shipping.

(iv) At the outset, after 1814, *public space* was materialized either by printed information and messages in books and newspapers or by oral utterances in meetings and organizations. In the interwar period (1919 to 1940) public space was supplemented with the radio; in 1933 the Norwegian broadcasting corporation (*Norsk rikskringkasting*) was founded and run by the state (*riket*) with the ambition of promoting “people’s enlightenment” (*folkeopplysning*).³¹ Once again there was a transition to new institutions and professions: *reporters* and *journalists*. Add to this that many newspapers were affiliated with political parties, and because there were many parties,³² there was a similar plentitude of political and cultural perspectives represented by the newspapers.

Science-Based Technology and Accessible Energy: A Clue for Industrialization

Modern industry depends on science-based technology. Access to energy is also crucial. Norway had both. In the early years of the 20th century her waterfalls were transformed into electric power, and through the collaboration between scientists and engineers new industries were created. At the same time progressive social laws, as well as legal regulations of international capital were implemented, in the spirit of the democratic-national ideas of the Left. As an illustration we refer to a couple of industrial projects and take a look at new laws and legal regulations.

(i) A physicist with innovative experimental research on electromagnetism, Kristian Birkeland (1867–1917)³³ and an industrialist engineer, Sam Eyde (1866–1940)³⁴ joined forces and developed a technological solution for the industrial production of saltpeter

from nitrogen in the air. In 1905 the first factory for commercial production of synthetic nitrogen manure was instituted in Notodden. What later became Norway's largest industrial enterprise, *Norsk Hydro*, was founded the same year by an initiative of Sam Eyde, with Norwegian, Swedish, and French capital. Energy was supplied by waterfalls, such as Rjukan.³⁵ Hydro expanded its production into chemicals and aluminum, later also into offshore oil drilling and an oil refinery, with economic affiliations in numerous other countries.

(ii) Borregård, a royal estate from the 10th century,³⁶ located at a waterfall on the largest river in the country not far from the coast, had at an early stage become a center for sawmills. In 1831 it was under British ownership (in 1889 by The Kellner Partington Paper Pulp Co. Ltd). By 1909 it had the largest workforce in Norway, and in 1918 it was bought back by Norwegian agents. Norwegian forest-owners were active in bringing about this change. Its activities then expanded in various directions, from mining (*Folldal verk*) to food production (*Stabburet*), abroad (Brazil and Austria), and in 1986 in partnership with Orkla (a major Norwegian company).

Progressive Social Laws

During the same period, decisive laws were formulated, voted on, and instituted, often against ardent political opposition. There were laws regulating concessions to Norwegian waterfalls directed against foreign capital (*konsesjonslover*, of 1909), thus ensuring the national political control of important natural resources and thereby giving the government better tools for active and independent politics, for instance, to pursue the ideals of a Nordic welfare state. The main agent behind these laws was Johan Castberg (1863–1926), an influential lawyer and progressive politician (at the left of the Left Party³⁷), member of the National Assembly for a long period,³⁸ and member of Leftist governments.³⁹ Moreover, he successfully fought for progressive social laws: laws for the control of factories and for public disability insurance (1909), laws for public insurance of accidents for

fishers (1908), for sailors (1911), and for workers (1915). He also prepared and (after a hard fight) obtained support for the so-called children's laws, giving children born out of wedlock economic rights to paternal support and heritage and the right to use the father's family name (1915). Add to this that Castberg struggled to improve the living and working conditions of agricultural workers and supported an improvement of the economic situation for small farmers. Hence, in Johan Castberg we recognize the democratic-national ideas that were typical of the Left opposition from 1884.⁴⁰ In his case we may also observe how these ideas were transferred and implemented in a new industrial era, thus laying the foundations for a welfare state of a Nordic kind.

Toward a Nordic Welfare State

Consequently, the period from 1884 to 1940—from the introduction of democratic parliamentarianism to World War II and German occupation—could roughly be characterized by the relative strengthening of three professions: *teachers*, *industrialists*, and *progressive lawmakers*. Hence, we could emphasize three processes of modernization:

- (i) common education, in accordance with the ideal of “popular education” (*folkeopplysning*), emphasizing socially beneficial attitudes, as well as updated knowledge and useful skills,
- (ii) science- and energy-based industrialization, changing the class structure and triggering a strengthening of the trade unions, and
- (iii) the implementation of market-regulating and social laws, transferring some of the basic ideals of the popular movements and the urban intelligentsia into the early foundation of a welfare state of a Nordic kind.

All in all, this meant that essential aspects of the political tradition from the earlier period, from 1814 to 1884, dominated by the state officials of that time—science-based and with an active state—continued during the next period, from 1884 to 1940, now redefined and promoted by the successors of the democratic opposition, and diversified by the differentiation of new professions and disciplines: a continuation of doing politics through a relatively *strong state*, by an *active and enlightened use of experts*, under the *rule of law*. In other words, the idea of having a strong and active state obtain its support from new layers of the population, a development that increases in strength as the labor movement and the trade unions gradually came to power toward the end of this period. These trends were further strengthened by social-democratic rule and the rebuilding of the country after World War II. Throughout society, the state was now conceived as *our state*.

The political order that emerged in the late 1930s had two decisive aspects: (i) a “mixed economy” (*blandingsøkonomi*) in terms of a blend of market regulations and state ownership on the one hand and capitalist markets on the other, and (ii) a welfare state with universal social security and an extensive economic redistribution. The welfare system emerged gradually⁴¹ and without strong opposition as to the main principles, whereas the project of a “mixed economy” was a matter of political struggle.

In talking about Nordic welfare states we should not merely keep an eye on (i) *economically* related factors, such as *social security* for medical care for the elderly and the unemployed, and extensive and paid leave by birth, as well as *economic redistribution*, for instance through tax policy in order to counteract socioeconomic inequality. We should have a wider notion that also has an eye on (ii) *sociopolitical laws*, for instance laws regarding working conditions (e.g., factory supervision) and family life (e.g., for children, with equal rights for those born out of wedlock), and on (iii) common institutions for *education* and “people’s enlightenment” (*folkeopplysning*) (e.g., a com-

mon school system), and also on (iv) an *egalitarian political culture*, with basic trust and general solidarity.

This period, from 1884 to 1940, transfers and implements some of the basic ideas from the popular movements and the democratic opposition, at the same time as some of the ideas and traditions from the enlightened rule of state officials prevail: At the end of this period, before World War II, a common school system, an active industrialization, and the legal foundations for a welfare state of a Nordic kind are already well entrenched. In short, the preconditions were already in place for a transition into the social-democratic era that dominated the early postwar period.

However, before proceeding to what happened in Norway during and after World War II in terms of processes of modernization, in the next chapter we glimpse at that which went on *before 1814*: From where did they come, these early processes of modernization, referred to as a “pastoral enlightenment”?

Endnotes

1. A term used by Rune Slagstad in *De nasjonale strateger*, 1998.
2. The period from 1814 to 1884 could be conceived as *embetsmannsstaten* (the state dominated by the state officials).
3. Cf., Sejersted, *Sosialdemokratiets tidsalder*, 2005.
4. From Nina Witoszek to Hans Magnus Enzensberger (cf., e.g., his book *Norsk utakt*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1984).
5. In the vote for or against monarchy, the majority in favor of kingdom (and a Danish prince as a Norwegian king) was not as overwhelming as the majority against the union with Sweden.
6. By the 1924 elections (for the national assembly) the Labor Party was an “election-oriented party.”
7. By Christopher Hornsrud (a farmer, representing the Labor Party), from January 28 to February 15, 1928.
8. The Johan Nygaardsvold government.
9. Such as “the Menstad battle” in 1931, where the police and the military forces were ordered to take action against workers who demonstrated against a lock-out. There were wounded persons, but no casualties.
10. See chapter 6.
11. Norwegian state officials were at the outset politically powerful, but compared with the political upper-class in other European countries, the social distance between the political elite and the people was relatively small.
12. After 1956: *Senterpartiet*.
13. Here we talk in European terms, operating with a distinction between “value conservatism” (cf. Burke) and “market liberalism” (cf. Smith). We do not call “market liberalism” “conservatism” (often done in the U.S.).
14. Referring to Monrad and Vinje as ideal-types, it is tempting to say that the twain never met. For a similar constellation after WWII, see chapter 6.
15. The question whether there was a Norwegian identity at an earlier stage is debated. But there are several indications, for instance in *Heimskringla*, in Peder Clausøn Friis, and in Ludvig Holberg. See Rian, 2007.

16. Like P. A. Munch (historian) or Asbjørnsen and Moe (who wrote down fairy tales told by people in the rural areas).
17. Like the painter J. C. Dahl or the composer Edvard Grieg.
18. In between the two world wars, books were increasingly published in Norway, not in Denmark. (One of the main Danish publishing houses, Gyldendal, in 1925 was split into Danish and Norwegian branches.) The written Danish language had little by little become Norwegian-Danish, and now even Danish-Norwegian, to the extent that foreign books were translated into both languages. In short, Norway had two Norwegian languages, not merely Danish with Norwegian characteristics and New Norwegian. However, Danish Wikipedia still has the following statement ([http://da.wikipedia.org/Dansk_\(sprog\)](http://da.wikipedia.org/Dansk_(sprog))): “From a linguistic point of view the dominant form of Norwegian, *bokmål* (and to an even higher degree *rigsmål*) can be seen as a Danish dialect, at least as to the written language.”
19. After the war a well-arranged campaign against the introduction of Norwegian words and grammatical forms into written Danish-Norwegian language (*Foreldreaksjonen*) gained wide support, which indicates the force of the cultural and linguistic questions and the degree to which the Danish heritage still prevailed.
20. For instance by teachers (often called “seminarists”) and by “free” solicitors (defending their clients, not working for the state). Thus the leader of *Venstre* in 1884, Johan Sverdrup, was a solicitor (lawyer), and his group was called *sagførerpartiet* (the party of the solicitors).
21. See the paragraph on the science-based technology and economic interests as a clue to industrialization.
22. Nor did the former Soviet regimes, despite their rhetoric of a political union of “workers and farmers” (*Arbeiter und Bauer*).
23. Sweden had a similar agreement already in 1933 (*krisuppgörelsen*).
24. Sweden had a similar agreement in 1938 (*Saltsjöavtalet*).
25. *Kapital und Arbeit*.
26. We may recall the Habermasian distinctions among three types of “cognitive interests” and three related forms of knowledge (and sciences): the technical interest in control, related to causally explaining

sciences; the practical interest in understanding, related to the interpretive sciences (*Wissenschaften*); and the emancipatory interest in liberation (autonomy), related to critical social sciences and self-reflection. (Cf. *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 1968a, English translation, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, 1971.)

27. Certainly with exceptions. But we recall the terms “potato priests” and “pastoral enlightenment.”
28. Cf. Rune Slagstad on *Venstrestaten*, in Slagstad, 1998, p. 93 ff.
29. An interesting institution, founded in 1916 and existing until the 1960s, was the *landsgymnas*, a gymnasium (*lycée*) of high quality (inspired by the ideals from the democratic-national movements), primarily aiming at gifted young persons from the rural areas and often using New Norwegian as the administrative language—in short, an elite institution in an egalitarian society (politically meaningful: the popular movements had their elites). Cf. *Landsgymnas*, Forr and Vold, eds., 2007; introduction by Høydal.
30. For instance, cf. Vinje who publicly criticized his colleague Schweigaard.
31. One of its early directors (Kaare Fostervoll, a member of the Labor Party), who reorganized the institution after World War II (from 1946 until 1962), was influenced by the ideas from the democratic-national movements.
32. In that period we had these political parties: the Left, the Right, the Norwegian Labor Party, the Norwegian Communist Party, The Farmers’ Party, The Christian People’s Party, the “National Unification” party (*Nasjonal samling*, Quisling’s party), and some minor ones (like *Samfunnspartiet*).
33. Birkeland had studied in Paris (with Poincaré et al.) and Geneva, as well as in Bonn (with Hertz) and Leipzig. Professor in Christiania (Oslo) from 1898. Spent his last years working in Cairo.
34. Diploma from Technische Hochschule, Charlottenburg, 1891.
35. Later used for the production of heavy water (in Vemork at Rjukan).
36. Originally *Borgargerði*, at the time of Olav Haraldsson (approximately 930–945 CE).
37. Cf. *Arbeiderdemokratene* and the references to our politician in chapter 3.

38. From 1900 to his death, with two short intervals in 1910 to 1912 and 1922 to 1924.
39. Those of Gunnar Knudsen in 1908 and 1913.
40. Castberg was the main national agent for the *arbeidardemokratane* and the Left in the local community referred to in chapter 3.
41. For instance, dependent on available economic resources. With the economic growth after World War II, there were more economic resources for public welfare in various domains, from public health care and social security to public schools and payment for the elderly.

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CHAPTER 5

**An Overview of Early Phases of Modernization
in Norway**

We have looked at processes of modernization in Norway with a focus on the interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements after 1814. We now look at the background of these modernization processes in the 19th century. At first we look at the preceding period, from around 1750 to 1814, when Norway was part of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy. Then we go back to pre-Christian times and the transition into the Catholic period, from around 1000 until 1537, followed by some remarks on the introduction of Lutheran Protestantism and on the period up to the introduction of royal absolutism (1660). Finally, I will make a few remarks on the early years of absolutism, with its strengthening of the state system and of the role of state officials, up until the mid 18th century, when enlightenment ideas increasingly influenced these state servants and their activities.

Modernization Processes in the Norwegian-Danish Monarchy During the Half-Century Before 1814 (1750–1814)

At the outset, we want to make two general points: (i) There was continuity in the role played by the state officials in Norway before and after 1814.¹ The same is true of the popular movements; Hans Nielsen Hauge started his movement before 1814. (ii) Long before 1814 there were processes under way that contributed to shaping the society in ways that influenced later processes of modernization, such as the development of the rule of law and the extension of literacy, and changes in class structure and religious beliefs.

In 1660, as a result of a power struggle between the Danish nobility and the king (supported by the citizenry), the latter became an “absolute king” (*einevaldskonge*), a ruler who was formally endowed with all power, with no legal restrictions within his realm (except, humbly added, those given by God). However, nobody can rule a country all by oneself, and in this regime, with state officials as the king’s servants, the state officials became more important than before.² After 1660 the Danish monarchy established a more efficient state administration. And from around the mid 18th century there was among these state officials a general trend in favor of Enlightenment ideas.

To illustrate this trend toward Enlightenment ideals we look at three persons, all of them influential in the last period of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy, namely *Ludvig Holberg*, *Erik Pontoppidan*, and (briefly) *Hans Nielsen Hauge*.

We have already (in chapter 2) referred to Hauge, the charismatic leader of the Hauge movement, who had his religious vision in 1796 and initiated this movement under the Norwegian-Danish monarchy. Hence, Hauge represents continuity on the level of the popular movements, similar to the continuity on the level of state officials.

By his various activities, Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754) contributed significantly to a cultural modernization of the Norwegian-Danish

monarchy.³ After formative years in European countries in the wake of the 18th century, he settled in Copenhagen as a professor (he held chairs, one after the other, in metaphysics [which he disliked], Latin, and history). Above all, he was a prolific author, writing in several genres: a playwright of popular comedies⁴ (with an ironic twist, teaching people the liberating virtue of laughter directed toward vanity and stupidity), a scholarly writer of historiography,⁵ jurisprudence, and theology⁶ (inspired by Enlightenment ideas), and an enlightened writer of philosophical (moral) essays. He defended the importance of doubt and disagreement and of free investigation against the traditional beliefs and dominant opinions. He also defended the idea of becoming a human being, resistant to prejudices, before one is taught any specific theology.⁷ He explicitly defended equal rights for women. However, as a thinker in the early 18th century, he defended an enlightened absolute monarchy; democratic ideas were not on the agenda.⁸ Nevertheless, through the theater and through his various writings, Holberg had a large audience. Hence, he contributed to the formation of a *public sphere* (*Öffentlichkeit*). His influence extended into the urban citizenry, beyond the ruling class of state officials. Gradually his historical and philosophical writings reached out to literate farmers in the rural areas of Norway,⁹ who had fair access to books but not to the theater. By extending and intensifying the formative and discursive aspects of this public sphere, he promoted Enlightenment virtues in the Norwegian-Danish monarchy.¹⁰

As a theologian Erik Pontoppidan (1698–1764) favored pietism, i.e., a strengthening of internal religious life as an experience from within. But he did not want to separate religious life from the rest of society (as many pietists did). On the contrary, he wanted to extend the realm of religion in society at large and in the life of its citizens. Moreover, for him there was no basic conflict between religion and reason. According to Pontoppidan there is an internal relationship between forms of knowledge recognized by reason, with religion as the final source of insight. He defended science (*Wissenschaft*) and a general education for everybody. Pontoppidan became a productive

academic author, writing in various fields,¹¹ not only in theology. For instance, as a bishop in Bergen he wrote an extensive (and illustrated) work on the natural history of Norway, and in his later years he published a journal in economics.¹² However, his great importance comes from his role as a political counselor for the Danish king in religious matters. Two reforms were decisive in this connection: In 1736, a mandatory confirmation for all youth; in 1739, a common school for all children.¹³ Pontoppidan (professor in theology 1738) was assigned to write an explication of Luther's religious teachings (the Lutheran Catechism). This work, *Sandhed til Gudfryktighed* (*Truth for Humble Godliness*) from 1737, became extremely influential, with 35 reprints the first 50 years. It was the most-used textbook in Norwegian schools for nearly 150 years.

However, this pietism, implemented by the state, was somewhat paradoxical: The ideal goal was an inner religious experience and a personal conversion; but the official institutional system, with mandatory reading (of these texts) and with public examination (of each individual, by the clergyman in the church before the whole congregation¹⁴) primarily transmitted *knowledge about* Christianity and Christian life; this educational system did not ascertain a *personal religious conversion* of each individual, which it was meant to do. Consequently, the *state pietism* of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy became primarily an educational system from above and not a pietist revival from within. Certainly, Pontoppidan urged the clergymen to preach "out of their heart" to reach the hearts of their parishioners. But the institutional system of state pietism, together with the expansion of mild Enlightenment ideas among the clergy toward the end of the century, led to a pragmatically preaching clergy, as distant state officials or as practically oriented "potato priests."

As a sincere pietist "from below," the young Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824) reacted against what he conceived of as an inauthentic and external version of Christianity among the clergy. But, as we have seen, Hauge and his movement indirectly and unintentionally promoted similar practical effects. On one hand, for religious

reasons, he and his followers favored hard work and modest consumption, thus triggering capital accumulation and reinvestment; in short, a promotion of a capitalist economy from below (in a Weberian perspective: acting as sociological equivalents to the Calvinists); on the other hand, as a response to the pressure from the upper class of state officials, he and his followers organized a social movement on various levels, *from* socioeconomic activities *to* practical training in reading texts and talking in assemblies. In short, Haugianism emerged at the same time as a religious movement and a movement for class struggle, and also as a promotion of modernizing and mobilizing processes in Norwegian society. (As we have seen, despite persecution from juridical and ecclesiastical authorities, the Haugians did not leave the Lutheran state church, nor did they separate themselves from society at large. Throughout the 19th century people influenced by the Haugian movement were to be found in political and social positions in the Norwegian society, both locally and nationally.)

These brief remarks about these three persons—Holberg, Pontoppidan, and Hauge—serve as an illustration of the term “pastoral enlightenment” that we have used about modernizing processes in Norway from the late 18th into the 19th century. There was no sharp criticism of “the old regime,” a regime that by the end of the 18th century was largely run by university-educated and enlightened state officials (quite different from France, with its *ancien régime*) nor any anti-religious Jacobinism (as during the French Revolution) nor any repressive Restoration and exalted political Romanticism thereafter.

Those who promoted modernization and enlightenment (intentionally or unintentionally) were often Lutheran clergymen (from above) and religious laypersons (from below). And in between the majority of the population was farmers (for the most part literate and law oriented, and often owners of their own farms) who read and pondered the writings of Pontoppidan and Hauge and Holberg. Hence there was, all in all, a peaceful combination of tradition and innovation, a “pastoral Enlightenment”—pastoral in the double sense that it was largely promoted by clergymen as well as by farmers.

In short, the interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements set the agenda at an early stage, already before 1814, in a blend of sociopolitical struggle and mutual learning processes.

In retrospect, focusing on early processes of modernization, we may ask: How Lutheran were these Lutheran clergymen? Two points should be kept in mind. (i) For Luther, as a nominalist,¹⁵ there was an essential difference between the empirical world (accessible by human reason) and God (who is not).¹⁶ (ii) The clergymen as well as the lay people in the Danish-Norwegian monarchy lived within institutional frameworks that shaped their practices and ideas.

We may refer to three issues in this respect:

Reason and faith. Luther (as a nominalist) rejected “natural theology” (e.g., arguments in favor of God’s existence, as in Thomas Aquinas¹⁷) and differentiated between the realm of reason, restricted to practical and empirical questions in our earthly life, and the realm of faith, made possible by revelation and divine grace, which is our only road to God. In matters of faith, reason was seen as a whole to be avoided by the believers, but *not* in earthly matters. But for Pontoppidan and his followers among the Norwegian-Danish clergy at the end of the 18th century, the relationship between reason and faith, and between science and Christianity, was conceived of in a more harmonious perspective. Hence, in earthly affairs, in practical and empirical matters, both Luther and these clergymen favored the use of reason; we may observe that quite a few of the pioneers of scientific research in the final period of the double monarchy were theologians by education.¹⁸

Acts and salvation. Here again Luther differentiates. In relation to our fellow human beings good acts do count, but not in our relationship with God, not for salvation, which can only be obtained through faith given to us by divine grace (cf. his criticism of alms in this respect). But for Hauge and his people, worldly work has a religious dimension: It is our heavenly calling to be God’s stewards on earth,¹⁹ and this divine calling requires diligence, hard work, and an ascetic lifestyle so that we may become accountable for God’s earthly

creation.²⁰ With a somewhat similar effect the clergymen at that time, as state officials, emphasized the religious (and societal) importance of orderly and reasonable behavior. In short, by both clergy and laypeople alike, useful and decent acts were positively evaluated.

Two regimens. Luther intended to differentiate between the realm of politics and the realm of religion (e.g., critically against the earthly power of the Holy Chair); apparently this entails a distinction between “two regimens,” state and church.²¹ But for clergymen and theologians, as state officials in an absolute monarchy, there had to be an adaption to their institutional situation. Consequently, pietism becomes “state pietism,” an institutional arrangement with far-reaching implications, for instance in terms of state-run education and sociopolitical control.

In other words, useful and decent acts ought to be promoted in favor of a well-ordered and prosperous society, and Enlightenment ideas were welcome (when properly interpreted by loyal and enlightened theologians). But what about the laypeople in this respect, at the end of the 18th century and onward? They were not under the same institutional strain as the clergymen in their role as state officials. But as members of popular movements, acting from below, they were marked by their practical interests and situational conditions. For instance, they realized that *education*, in literacy as well as in various practical skills, was required to gain some degree of independence and organizational strength and to strengthen their own bargaining position against the upper classes and the state officials in particular. And they realized some laws were in their interest²² and other laws were not.²³ Hence, they aimed at political actions that could influence *legislation*.

In short, the emerging popular movements acted from their own sociopolitical position in ways that (by implication) turned out to be in accordance with basic Enlightenment ideas and alternative modernization processes. Hence the so-called pastoral enlightenment contained a decisive element of “popular enlightenment” (*folkeopplysning*), as educative and formative learning processes, bottom up.

In retrospect we may conceive this state pietism as paradoxical: In seeking control, even over the minds of its citizens (cf. the educational program, supported by Pontoppidan), the absolute monarchy of Norway-Denmark happened to promote Enlightenment ideas and practices. Lutheranism, with its assumed distinction between state and church, with its skepticism toward unbound reason in religious matters and its high esteem of the individual conscience, was skillfully interpreted to match the existing political realities. Moreover, the Lutheran ideas of individual equality and freedom did somehow prevail in many lay movements (at the same time as there was often inherent social control within the various groups). These ideas reemerged in secular form among artists and intellectuals at a later stage (as in some of Ibsen's plays).

A Few Remarks on the Pre-Christian and the Catholic Period (the Latter from Around the Year 1000 until 1537)

Ship, law, literature. These three catchwords may serve as an introduction for three characteristic features of Norwegian society at an early stage, three features that have also been formative for later processes of modernization. We could say: *ship/mobility, law/rights, literature/literacy*. The first point (*ship/mobility*) has its roots in pre-Christian times; whereas the next two points (*law/rights* and *literature/literacy*) basically belong to the Norse period when the regime based on local chieftains was overcome by king and church (in the period from around 1000 to 1300).²⁴

Pre-Christian Scandinavia (9th and 10th century) is often associated with Vikings, and Vikings are associated with ships. The Vikings were skilled shipbuilders and sailors,²⁵ which was how they could move around from the far north to the Mediterranean, from North America to Kiev and the Caspian Sea. Ships meant mobility, and mobility meant contact with other people, and contact with other people meant new impulses and learning processes. In this sense the ship entailed a dynamic force, contributing to developmental processes

that later became processes of modernization.

So whatever the Vikings were doing, with their ships and political skills, they founded stable societies in Kiev, Dublin, and Normandy—not overlooking Iceland, an early free state²⁶ (before the country was ruled by the Norwegian king at the end of the 13th century and later by the Danes).

The early Scandinavian societies were basically ruled by open air assemblies (in Norse²⁷ called *þing*), where chieftains and free farmers²⁸ met to approve (or disapprove) of the proposal for a new king,²⁹ to give new laws, and above all, to regulate conflicts and disputes according to the law. At first the laws were presented orally by a person who knew them by heart, to teach and remind the audience.³⁰ Later, from the early 12th century, after Christianization and the introduction of the Latin alphabet, the laws were written down—for Norway, at first the regional laws (such as *Gulatingslova* and *Frostatingslova*), and by the end of the 13th century (with the strengthening of royal power) a common law for the whole kingdom (*landslov*). Interestingly, these laws were written in the local language, Norse, not in Latin (which was well known among learned people at that time).

The following observation might be relevant in this connection. In an autocratic regime, ruled by undisputed imperatives from above, it does not really matter in which language the decisions are articulated in the first place, as long as the concrete messages are communicated by intermediary agents to common people. The situation is different when an assembly of free farmers is supposed to discuss the laws and how to implement them in concrete cases. Then the local language is the natural one for these persons. Furthermore, when these oral laws were to be written, there would have been a problem if they had been written in another language than the one used in the oral proceedings.³¹ In Iceland and Norway the language of the written laws was Norse, not Latin.³²

Evaluation and implementation according to the laws was a common task for free men at the *þing* (assembly), and therefore these laws had a strong legitimacy in the society. There is a famous

statement from the Norse period: *At logum skal land byggja* (by law the country/land shall be built).³³ In short, at that time people were already law-oriented,³⁴ and this legal orientation prevail among the people, as well as among the rulers. Farmers in later centuries often referred to the old laws as protection against unfavorable decisions by the rulers.³⁵

State officials of later centuries, as theologians and jurists, were surely also law-oriented.³⁶ Moreover (as we have seen), the focus on laws did play an important role in the processes of 19th century modernization, when the popular movements tried to change unfavorable laws (like the *konventikkelpakaten*, a hindrance for the Haugeians³⁷) and to obtain positions of power in the legislative National Assembly (*Stortinget*).

With Norse as a written language (in the Latin alphabet, after Christianization³⁸) an impressive literature, written by Icelanders,³⁹ saw the light of day. This is amazing for the fact that these texts were written by a small community in the periphery of Europe, in a local language different from Latin. It is also interesting because it, on the one hand, conveys the Old Norse mythology with its cosmology⁴⁰ and gods, with its conception of life and human virtues.⁴¹ On the other hand, it develops a new genre, the *saga*, which in many ways represents an early version of the novel, that is, a cultural innovation. Its style is sober and poetic and strikingly realistic. It is a literature written by great artists about a community that represents the readers of this literature.⁴² In other words, literacy was not merely to be found among the clergy.⁴³ This dawning literacy represents a potential resource for later processes of modernization.

Hence, we have three characteristic features in Norse society, leading into the early Christian period: (i) *mobility* by ships over sea and along the main rivers, (ii) explicit law making and a general *law orientation*, and (iii) a dawning *literacy* and a literature in the local language. The point is now that these three features prevailed throughout history as resources for later processes of modernization.

Scandinavia was formally Christianized around year 1000, more than half a millennium before the Reformation (for Norway in 1536/1537⁴⁴). In this period Christianity meant Catholicism (after the schism of 1054: Roman Catholicism⁴⁵). But the Christianization of the Scandinavian people was in reality a lengthy process that started earlier and ended later than the year 1000. Nevertheless, for reasons of classification we usually refer to the year 1000 (or somewhat earlier). From that time Christian masses were regularly held in Norway, and gradually the country became a regular part of Christian Western Europe. Consequently, that which may be said about early processes of modernization in Europe for more than five centuries, from around year 1000 to 1537, can in principle also be said about Norway (and the other Scandinavian countries).

Christianity as a monotheistic religion was at the outset supported by the Norwegian kings (in opposition to some of the regional rulers): one God, one king, one country. In the kingdom of Norway Christianity (Roman Catholicism) was to a large extent introduced by royal force (and brutality), whereas in the Icelandic free state it was introduced as a compromise at the *Allthing*, giving ample ground for the practitioners of the old beliefs, *ásatrúin*, to remain “pagan” in private life.

There are reasons to conceive of the 13th century as a prime time for Norse culture and society.⁴⁶ But problems were just ahead. From the middle of the 14th century the Hanseatic League obtained a dominant position in the fish trade of Northern Europe, not primarily for technological reasons (such as better ships), nor for cultural reasons (such as literacy), but apparently for organizational reasons. With their large and efficient organization they tended to win. In short, a market economy entered the scene. Bergen, one of the larger Nordic cities at that time, was deeply influenced by the Hansa for a long time.⁴⁷

In 1349 a ship arrived at the harbor of Bergen, bringing the Black Death to the country.⁴⁸ For Norwegian society this plague was

exceptionally devastating, with high death tolls in a country that was already thinly populated. According to one estimate, in two years from 1348 to 1350, the pest infestation killed almost half the population.

At the end of the 14th century, there was a marriage between a Norwegian prince and a Danish princess; thus the Norwegian-Danish monarchy was founded.⁴⁹ But Norway was severely weakened after the plague, and pretty soon (say, from 1387) this monarchy was in reality ruled from Denmark by Danish rulers. And this was how it remained until 1814, through various stages and changes (as we shall see later).

Some Remarks on the Period from the Introduction of Lutheran Protestantism (1537) to the Introduction of Absolute Monarchy (Around 1660)

We do know when Lutheran Protestantism was introduced in Norway, in 1537. That was the year when the last Norwegian Catholic archbishop was defeated and left the country. But when did Norwegians become Lutheran Protestants? That's another question. And the way it happened is different from how it should have transpired, according to a current view on the liberating force of the Reformation:

Lutheranism is often seen as a belief introduced with *popular support*, against Catholicism and the Pope in Rome. It is furthermore often seen as a belief that supported literacy by the reading of the Bible in the *national language*, against the dominance of Latin. But at the outset this is not what characterized the Norwegian Reformation in the conversion to Lutheran Protestantism.

In Norway, Lutheranism was not introduced with broad popular support. It was imposed on the Norwegian people by a royal decree in Copenhagen. Nor did Lutheranism support the national language in Norway. On the contrary, all of the religious texts were written in Danish, including the Bible.⁵⁰ Moreover, since the Catholic clergy either had to leave the country or convert to Lutheranism, the archbishop's chair at the cathedral in Trondheim was closed. At that

time this Catholic institution was in fact the last national institution of any importance.⁵¹ From this point on the church was controlled from Copenhagen.⁵²

We may ask: (i) in what sense did Norwegians become Lutheran? (ii) And what version of Lutheranism was introduced in the Danish-Norwegian monarchy?

(ii) As already mentioned, Lutheranism in the Danish-Norwegian monarchy was a state religion, ruled by the state. The assumed Lutheran doctrine of “two regimens”⁵³ was thus ideology rather than reality; Lutheranism in the Danish-Norwegian monarchy was marked by these political and institutional conditions. Moreover, the theologians at the University of Copenhagen⁵⁴ had a hard time, not only fighting the remaining Catholic ideas and practices, but also in fighting Reformed (non-Lutheran) Protestantism.⁵⁵

(i) The year 1537 is mentioned as the year for the introduction of Lutheranism in Norway. This was the year of the new religious legislation, not of the popular conversion. From what we have just said, it comes as no surprise that the introduction of Lutheranism fostered anger and resistance that only gradually was overcome by the rulers.

Open and outspoken resistance came primarily from Olav Engelbrektsson,⁵⁶ the last Catholic archbishop in Trondheim, who tried to organize a political and military counterforce, but failed; he then left for the Netherlands and never returned. Many priests converted to Protestantism, more or less wholeheartedly.⁵⁷ But there were a few who gave words to their discontent with the enforced Danish rule.⁵⁸ There may have been reasons for this passivity: (a) The Black Death severely weakened Norwegian society due to a high death toll and a reduction of the political elite (below a critical level, as it were),⁵⁹ or (b) Danish rulers took no interest in supporting the remaining Norwegian nobility nor in appointing new members. According to the first explanation, the new and subordinate position of Norway was caused by a natural catastrophe. According to the latter it was the result of Danish politics.⁶⁰ Whatever the explanation, for Norway as

a state and nation this new situation implied a loss of national institutions, a further weakening of its elite, and a lost opportunity for developing a modern national language.

A few remarks on the clergy and the rural population:

Clergy. In the period after the Reformation the common clergyman often had a meager education. On the other hand, the local community had some influence over whom they wanted as their clergy; the new clergyman could be the son of the former clergyman and thus a person well known in the community.⁶¹ Hence, even though many of these early Protestant clergymen were poorly educated, they did not live a strict social distance from the rest of the local community.⁶² Add to this that in the early period of this Lutheran state, the clergy and other state officials often combined their role as state servants with roles as private agents on the market. Thereby their professional ethics could be strained by their personal motives in trade and other business activities.⁶³ At a later stage, when absolute monarchy was introduced in 1660, the state administration and the state officials became more professional, but at the same time (and for the same reason) more remote from the common people. Hence, there were decisive changes in the social and political role of the Lutheran clergy down through history.

Rural population. After the Black Death the farmers who survived had a favorable position in the sense that there was plenty of land at affordable prices. Moreover, with the weakening of the national nobility, and the gradual influx of Danish-speaking clergy from the University of Copenhagen, the well-situated farmers imperceptibly acquired the role of true heirs of the national culture and the national (spoken) language—a unique constellation, which was alluded to earlier. Add to this that the farmers often defended their interests by appealing to old Norwegian laws (still valid), not least to their “allodial rights” (*odelsretten*). All in all, their legal situation was better than that of rural populations in most other European countries.⁶⁴ It has also been argued that the overall taxation of Norwegian farmers was relatively low most of the time. However, in addition to taxes

there were other burdens, such as transportation duties to state officials, also for their timber and other belongings and the duty to take part in the militia as soldiers. Moreover, burdens for the rural communities could take the form of unfavorable regulations on trade and other activities, such as legal restrictions of the use of sawmills, with prohibitions for the rural community and with corresponding privileges for rich citizens. Burdens could also take the form of special customs, e.g., on wheat. In short, there were many burdens, and hence, there were always class conflicts, latent or open. With the transition to an absolute monarchy and to a more professional and efficient bureaucracy, there were structural changes also in these class conflicts (as we shall see later).

As to the question of whether the first century after the Reformation constrained or promoted modernization processes, the answer should be nuanced and conceived of as many faceted. On the one hand, some significant features prevailed from earlier periods, such as legal orientation and dawning literacy; in addition, there is the openness to the sea. On the other hand, despite natural catastrophes (such as the Black Death) and institutional and cultural losses (due to Danish politics), there was much potential in the new regime and new beliefs that at a later stage would trigger the potential modernization processes previously referred to.

With this background we review some main points for the period from the introduction of absolute monarchy in 1660⁶⁵ to the time of new ideas around the middle of the 18th century.

Remarks on the Early Years of Absolutism with a Strengthening of the State and State Officials until Around 1750

By the time of the introduction of royal absolutism in 1660 there had been a strengthening of the state system and its bureaucracy, and thus a “modernization” (and “rationalization” in a Weberian sense). For instance, the state officials (clergymen and jurists) were

from now on better educated and more professionalized. This could be viewed as being advantageous for Norway's citizens. But at the same time, this development entailed a tighter control and supervision by the state authorities. Not only judges and military officers, but also Lutheran clergymen now were part of this state apparatus of enforced orderliness.

In Norway, where the national institutions had been abolished, this new regime of royal absolutism implied a reduction of the remaining margins of local independence in small communities. The clergyman and bailiff became more remote, and more foreign, often a Danish-speaking Dane. The defense system was reorganized. The previous system of a farmers' militia—a typically Norwegian system,⁶⁶ less expensive than a more professional army, but less easy to control (both in actions against one's own people and in warfare abroad⁶⁷)—was now transformed into an organized army with professional military officers, usually German-speaking (often coming from the German-speaking regions under the rule of the Danish king⁶⁸).

Changes in the educational system have already been mentioned. In the 1730s, a common elementary school and mandatory confirmation were established, administered by the clergy and theologians. The juridical system underwent similar changes; more professional, less local, but gradually with more enlightened thoughts and ideas (the burning of witches halted around the year 1600⁶⁹).

In some of the major state institutions—military, education, law—there were significant changes with the introduction of absolute monarchy, changes that represented a political weakening of the role of the Danish nobility and a strengthening of the role of the king (supported by the citizenry against the nobility). But since the king could not rule alone (and because the Danish kings at times were mentally unfit for their royal functions), state officials gained power, not least those at the top, who actually often ran the country. Hence, this absolute monarchy was not quite absolute, nor was it absolutely monarchical. To a large extent it was run by high state officials.

This weakening of the nobility and strengthening of the state officials represented major components of the background scenario for the events in Norway to come in 1814 and thereafter. Thus there is already an answer to our initial question: “From where did they come?” The processes of modernization in Norway in the early 19th century have some of their roots in the institutional and professional constellations of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy in the late 18th century.

This being said, it is crucial to now remark on two other classes, the farmers and the citizens.

We have mentioned three features characteristic of Norway already at an early stage: *ships, law, literature*, and we mentioned that the farmers often referred to laws and legal precedence in defense of their class interests, the allodial right being one of them, the resistance to irregular taxes was another. Thus not only organizational, but also interpretive and argumentative skills were important for these farmers, as in the case of the popular protests against new taxes in 1762.⁷⁰

We have also mentioned that the overall situation for the farmers had improved significantly for those who survived the Black Death; cheap land was available. Moreover, from the late 17th century into the 18th, the economic situation improved, including for the farmers.⁷¹ Add to this that Danish rulers had strategic reasons for treating Norwegian farmers relatively well. Due to Norwegian topography (with wilderness and long distances, and single farms spread out separately),⁷² it was strategically wise to treat them well to gain their support.⁷³ Moreover, there were different views among the high state officials concerning the allodial right of Norwegian free farmers. In anachronistic terms, there was a tension between “business liberalists” and “value conservatives,” the former being against the allodial rights, wanting to have farmland on the market, the latter being in favor of these rights, seeing them as a warrant for long-term investments in agriculture.⁷⁴

It is also vital to recall the second feature alluded to previously, namely dawning literacy, which was now strengthened by the school reform and mandatory confirmation. And finally a third feature, that of ships and the sea, but at this point a few related remarks:

Norway (literally, “the way toward the North”) has a long coast,⁷⁵ with numerous fjords and with islands nearly everywhere along the coast, thus creating a safe seaway between the islands and the coast. Hence the “way toward the North” is *the sea and fairway*, all along the coast. Add to this the many fjords and steep cliffs along stretches of deep water, and you have a favorable topography for loading and unloading timber or fish and other commodities, and for bringing these goods by ship to markets overseas.

In this period (say, from the late 16th century into the 18th century) the Netherlands were booming, with flourishing trade and shipping worldwide, and thus in need of timber for shipbuilding, as well as for construction on land. Along the Norwegian coast in the southwestern part of the country there were plenty of oak and other tree varieties close to the sea, and there were plenty of streams and small rivers that could deliver energy (by waterfalls) for the sawmills that came into use in the 16th century. Consequently, an intensive trade emerged among active farmers along this coast, selling and shipping timber and other commodities (such as fish and stone) to the Netherlands.

There was extensive trade and traveling in both directions, on the Norwegian side by farmers who had their own sawmills and who were also sailors. Many brought their cargo to the Netherlands on their own keel, and quite a few immigrated to the Netherlands.⁷⁶ The Danish rulers did not interfere with this form of private international trade. Norwegian citizens were allowed to leave their country, to come and go as they pleased.⁷⁷ In time of peace it was even regarded as advantageous that young Norwegians received their training as sailors on Dutch ships, since they thereby could serve the Danish fleet more efficiently in times of war. In short, in the period from around 1625 until 1725 there was an extensive exchange

between Norwegians (who were at the same time farmers, traders, and sailors) and the Dutch, who in many ways represented the most advanced, the most modern country in Europe at that time.⁷⁸ Thus, there were learning processes and processes of modernization at the class level of the common people.⁷⁹ The three features (ships, literacy, law) can be seen as beneficial for these entrepreneurial members of the coastal communities.

However, the true rising class of this period was the citizenry, even though the majority of the people lived in rural communities. The economy continued to improve, not least in shipping and the timber trade, and as timber gradually had to be sought further away from the coast (due to extensive exploitation), there was an increasing need for improved transportation and further investments, a change that favored the wealthy citizens. Furthermore, these citizens obtained royal privileges for the use of major sawmills, at the expense of the farmers.⁸⁰ All in all, the economy improved, most notably for the upper class of citizens, not least in the regions around Oslo, which for topographical reasons were favorably located for timber trade.

Due to this strengthening of the Norwegian citizenry, there were demands on their behalf for national institutions, such as a bank and a university. Only very reluctantly and in the wake of the Napoleonic wars did these demands finally lead to an approval by the Danish rulers—a decision in favor of a bank system came in 1807 and a university in 1811 (established in 1813). Then, during the British blockade, the need for independent Norwegian institutions became more urgent.

Looking back at the period of the mid 18th century there were two institutional initiatives by Norwegian citizens that reflected the spirit of Enlightenment. In 1760, the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters (*Det kongelige norske Videnskabers Selskab*) was founded in Trondheim, and in 1774, *Det nyttige Selskab* (literally: the useful society⁸¹), was founded in Bergen—institutions that still exist and are flourishing. All in all, by the mid 18th century there was a change in rhetoric and also in attitude: Enlightenment ideas were on their way.

Summing Up

We have referred to the importance of ships, and thus of mobility, in Norwegian society, from the time of the Vikings. Similarly we have seen how the law, and rights, as well as literature and dawning literacy, played an important role in this society, including for farmers and communities. This was the case from an early age and throughout the various stages, to the end of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy. We may conceive of these features as a background for what gradually became processes of modernization in Norway in the 19th century.

We have also looked at changes in the role of the different classes, focusing on the weakening of a Norwegian elite and the strengthening of the state officials, on the singular status of the farmers, and concerning the advancement of the citizenry toward the end of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy, when ships and mobility, law and rights, literature and literacy reappear in revived versions, marked by processes of modernization and Enlightenment ideas.

As to the latter point, that of literature and literacy, we referred at the outset to three influential persons, Ludvig Holberg, cultural modernizer and founder of a public sphere; Erik Pontoppidan, promoting Enlightenment from above in terms of state pietism; and Hans Nielsen Hauge, charismatic modernizer from below, initiating a popular movement concerned with social mobility and expanding literacy, and fighting successfully for legal rights. From then on emerges the characteristic interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements, which was the main focus in commenting on modernization processes in Norway in the 19th century.

Concluding Remarks

In this essay on how to conceptualize processes of modernization, the first focus was the interplay between Lutheran state officials and popular movements in Norway in the 19th century. This approach was supplemented by a local case from the turn of the century, and

also with reflections on the aftermath of World War II and with brief glimpses from previous periods before 1814. We now briefly indicate what can be seen as achievements, as well as remaining challenges, along with a few brief remarks on similarities and dissimilarities with other Nordic countries.

a. Primary characteristics

Seen from the outside and from a distance, the main characteristics of the modernization processes alluded to by our first focus could be rephrased with the following statements: Throughout the 19th century there was an interplay between the state officials and the people, for example, between enlightened Lutheran clergymen and literate and free farmers, an interplay that promoted modern skills and practices. Together they contributed to a relatively smooth transition between tradition and innovation, conceived of as a pastoral enlightenment.⁸²

There were tensions between the state officials and the opposition about the relationship between the rule of law and democratic governance, and these tensions intensified during the quarrel about parliamentarianism in 1884.⁸³ But, despite the power struggle and socio-cultural tension, the outcome was resolved in a basic reconciliation between the former political authorities and the people, in terms of a relatively extensive sociopolitical inclusiveness across classes. Simultaneously there was a peculiar interconnection between democracy and nationhood, promoted as democratic national ideals by the popular movements. Such an interconnection between democracy and nationhood, “bottom up” (in sociocultural terms), represented a peculiar characteristic of Norwegian processes of modernization.

This political culture was shaped by participatory learning processes that led to a trust in political adversaries as reasonable persons and in legal institutions and procedures as fair and efficient. These are prepolitical virtues for a democracy based on majority rule; they ensure a concern for those in a minority position and those who lose

the election. Such basic trust is intertwined with other democratic virtues, such as an ability for role taking and self-restraint, opening up for a political culture characterized by a willingness to compromise and by co-responsibility and solidarity, attitudes that are decisive for a well-organized and participatory society and for a generous and universal welfare system.

These are catchwords for some of the primary characteristics envisaged by our first focus, that of an interplay between state officials and popular movements in the 19th century, with its aftermath and its historical background. We leave these remarks with the additional statement that similar processes and characteristics can be seen in other Nordic countries, the only countries with this kind of interplay between Lutheran state officials and influential popular movements,⁸⁴ even though there are differences from one country to another.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there are significant similarities between these countries, not least in the sense that in all these cases they are relatively egalitarian and constitutional democratic societies with universal welfare systems.⁸⁶ Compared with other cases of western modernization—be it the United States or the United Kingdom, France or Germany—there are some important common characteristics for the modernization processes in the Nordic countries of this period, similarities that set them apart and support the idea of *multiple modernities*.⁸⁷

With reference to the notion of multiple modernities we add a few remarks:

(i) In terms of basic forms of rationality and basic institutional differentiations, Nordic modernization processes reveal *universal* characteristics, as one may expect when processes of this kind are conceived of in a self-reflective perspective focusing on practice-based rationality.

(ii) In this essay we try to conceive of processes of modernization by historically situated notions, not by stipulated “models” that can easily be extracted from their historical setting. Hence, there is no

easy way to *apply* the insight in these Nordic modernization processes to *other* historical and societal situations. But still, these processes are of interest as alternative processes of modernization within the West, showing that western modernization was more varied than one might otherwise think of when focusing on simplified models formulated on the basis of Anglo-American or French experiences.

(iii) The Nordic countries are small. Norway had a population of only about 800,000 at the time of the Napoleonic wars (1814) and a little more than 3 million at the time of World War II. Denmark and Finland each had a somewhat larger population. Sweden's population was nearly double Norway's and Iceland's population was much smaller. These demographic facts add to the point that the achievements of modernization processes in the Nordic countries are not easily transferable to other countries: *size* is itself a significant factor,⁸⁸ for instance, when it comes to popular movements and their ability to organize themselves on a national level, and also when it comes to democratic governance and sociopolitical integration.

b. Some deficiencies

In focusing on middle-range conceptions, one can envisage some general and inherent shortcomings (in addition to practical and concrete challenges that call for attention and action on a day-to-day basis, politically as well as in civil society and in economic life):⁸⁹

(i) At the outset we referred to three interrelated conceptual clusters: practice-based rationality, situated agents, and institutions. We also alluded to the possibility that in this case, in terms of rationality, there is a certain bias in favor of instrumental rationality and less-developed versions of interpretative and argumentative rationality. These are intricate questions; simplifying generalizations should be avoided. But with this reservation, it is fair to say that self-critical and reflective versions of argumentative rationality were less well developed at the top level in Norway than in the more established European countries, such as France or Germany. Bluntly stated, in Norway

the prominent symbolic agents were primarily practical politicians and prestigious poets, not critical philosophers and capable thinkers.

To the extent that this holds true one may add that this deficiency in terms of critical argumentative rationality was probably not perceived as an urgent shortcoming in the 19th century when, on the whole, most day-to-day problems were of a practical and pedestrian nature. But in retrospect, in the perspective of global modernization processes, it is fair to say that there was an inherent deficiency as to a decisive form of rationality, of a self-critical and reflective version of argumentative rationality. We may add that in times of crisis this kind of rationality becomes urgently required as an epistemic resource for a competent handling of challenges of a deeper, more complex nature. We return to this point when commenting on the second focus, that of World War II and its aftermath.

(ii) There was another challenge, less dramatic, but striking and related to dominant *social imaginaries*:⁹⁰ When Norway was re-founded as an independent state in 1814, there were numerous practical challenges. In addition, there was a need now to act as Norwegians, not least for the political leaders among the state officials. So they did, politically. But in terms of culture and language things looked different. The written language was Danish, and hence there was an attempt at redefining it as “Norwegian” or as a “mother tongue,” which led to a curious tendency of presenting it as Norwegian and preserving it as Danish.

There is a general point to be made in this connection: In all three Nordic countries at the geographical periphery—Norway, Finland, Iceland—the struggle for a national language was a political issue. But not in the geographical center, not in Denmark and Sweden.⁹¹ In Finland, there was a struggle for the Finnish language, in competition with Swedish. In Iceland there was an urge to secure the Icelandic language for a modern age. In Norway there was an unstable situation, with Danish as the written language and a variety of Norwegian dialects.

But above all, there were internal and external challenges related to the ongoing processes of modernization, and these challenges emerged with urgency when turning to the World War and the time thereafter, and when faced with major challenges in the present situation and for a common future.

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Endnotes

1. A continuity in style and function, for certain, but also largely in terms of personnel. According to the Danish historian Ole Feldbæk (*Danmark-Norge, 1720–1814*, 1998, p. 390), out of approximately 150 Danish-born civil servants in Norway in 1814 only 26 returned to Denmark, and out of 208 Norwegian-born civil servants in Denmark, only 22 returned to Norway after 1814.
2. This was especially the case for some of the subsequent Danish kings who were mentally unfit.
3. Cf. Skirbekk, *Ludvig Holberg. Dobbeltmonarkiets kulturelle modernisator*, Bergen, Det nyttige Selskab, 2006.
4. He was inspired by contemporary French theater; today he is still popular and frequently played.
5. His historical writings are reality-oriented, avoiding references to miracles and supernatural events. He is also conceived as a forerunner for Scandinavian sociology, cf. Kalleberg, “Den første norske sosiologen og det skandinaviske opplysningsprosjektet,” in Akselberg et al., eds., *Holberg og essayet*, 2006, pp. 109–134.
6. Concerning Holberg’s contributions to theology and jurisprudence (crucial disciplines for the state officials), cf., e.g., Gilje, “Ludvig Holbergs origenisme: En analyse av Holbergs syn på helvetesstraffene,” *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift*, vol. 107(3), 2006, pp. 144–162, and “Ludvig Holbergs politiske tenkning—suverenitet og enevelde,” in the anthology *Den mangfoldige Holberg*, Tjønneland, ed., 2005.
7. Some quotes (my translation, for references cf. note 3): “I take it to be the philosopher’s duty to examine given opinions, whether they are well founded or not” (*ibid.*, p. 23). Holberg detested the idea “of living in a brutal unanimity like dumb beasts,” adding that it is “by disagreement that the truth may see the light of day” (*ibid.*). “As I understood that it is primarily the free faculty to think that separates us from the animals, I came to the conclusion that it is the duty of a human being to investigate the beliefs inherited from our ancestors, to read the forbidden books, and to doubt everything” (*ibid.*, p. 24). “If one is taught theology before one has become a human being, one shall never become a human being” (*ibid.*).

8. In retrospect we could add that a professor at the University of Copenhagen in the early years of the 18th century would indeed have had a hard time if he had criticized the absolute monarchy.
9. According to Professor Francis Bull, a Norwegian nestor in literary studies, several of the most-read books in Norway by the turn of that century were written by Holberg, more often his works in history and moral philosophy than his comedies. Holberg's books were frequently found among the books that Norwegian farmers had acquired in the early 19th century.
10. Add to this that Holberg was influential as an intellectual essayist, also for later essayists, e.g., Aa. O. Vinje.
11. He even wrote a novel in three volumes, *Menoza* (1742–1743).
12. *Danmarks og Norges oekonomiske Magazin*.
13. At the outset, Christianity was the major subject in these schools. Since the reading of the Holy Scripture is decisive in Lutheranism, education for literacy was an urgent task.
14. Mandatory confirmation with mandatory education in reading and mandatory public examination may be seen both as a liberating project (extending literacy) and as a repressive project (state control over the individual souls, cf. Foucault).
15. On nominalism, cf. Gilje and Skirbekk, 2001, pp. 121–124, 139–142.
16. Insofar as he reminds us of similar differentiations in Kant, though Kant differentiates within a transcendental philosophy, not a nominalist one.
17. On Thomas Aquinas, cf. Gilje and Skirbekk, 2001, pp. 134–137.
18. Such as Johan Ernst Gunnerus, 1718–1773, bishop in Trondheim, who did extensive research in zoology and botany.
19. Cf. Gilje, "Hans Nielsen Hauge and the Spirit of Capitalism," in Fjelland et al., eds., 1997, p. 259.
20. Two distinctions are important in this connection: (i) caring acts for "thy neighbours" vs. decent work for self-preservation (both are in accordance with mainstream Christian thinking), and (ii) decent work for self-preservation vs. activities leading to enrichment and capital accumulation. The Haugians (like the Calvinists, but for different

- theological reasons) promoted de facto the latter activities, that of enrichment and capital accumulation, as well as acts of care and of self-preservation.
21. Whether or not Luther had a two-regimen doctrine, and if so, at which stage in his life, these are debatable questions. But the “Church Ordinance,” initiated by the Danish king at the time of the Reformation, presents some version of the “two regimens,” cf. *Kirkeordinansen 1537/39*, edited and introduction by Martin Schwarz Lausten, København, Akademisk forlag, 1989, pp. 150–157. See also Gilje and Rasmussen, *Norsk idehistorie*, vol. 2, *Tankeliv i den lutherske stat, 1537–1814*, 2002, p. 40 ff. For a general discussion of the “two regimens,” cf. Ulrich Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung. Traditionsgeschichte und systematische Struktur der Zweireichlehre*, 1970.
 22. This was a well-entrenched insight in the rural societies, defending their old legal rights, such as the *odelsretten*, the allodial right to their own land. Cf. Gjerdåker, *Til odel og eige*, 2001 (English summary, pp. 5–7.)
 23. As shown in chapter 2, the fight against *konventikkelplataken* (with its prohibition of religious meetings) was a primary issue.
 24. Cf. Sigurðsson, *Norsk historie 800–1300. Frå høvdingmakt til konge-og kyrkjemakt*, 1999.
 25. This required not only skills in shipbuilding, but also organizational skills to equip a ship properly, for instance, in bringing family and livestock from Scandinavia to Iceland. Interestingly, the French word *équiper* (and *équipage*) comes from the Norse word *skip*.
 26. Cf. Arnason, 2004.
 27. “Norse” is a term used for Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic (the same language at that time, which was true also for Old Danish until around 950 CE).
 28. As to the class structure in Norway in the 12th century, cf. a quotation from Knut Helle, *Bergen bys historie*, vol. 1, 1982, p. 447 (translation G.S.): “In opposition to his homologues elsewhere in Europe the Norwegian tenant farmer was a legally free person, who on his own behalf cultivated land by a contract he had agreed upon, with the land owner, as a juridically equal person. The land owner had no private jurisdiction on the tenant farmer, who had no work obligation on the

land that the land owner cultivated on his own behalf, and the tenant farmer was not legally bound to the land. Unfree persons in Norway at the 12th century were just a few thralls who still existed at the very last stage of thralldom.” (Cf. also Sigurðsson, 2008.)

29. The right heritage was not enough to be a king, an approval was also required.
30. At the Icelandic *Allthing* it took three yearly gatherings to quote all the laws, and then the process of orally presenting the laws could start over.
31. Then there would have been two versions of the law.
32. In this connection, it has also been pointed out that Iceland and Norway were to a large degree Christianized from the west, from Britain, where the mother tongue was used in writing, whereas Denmark and Sweden were mainly Christianized from the south, from the German realm where Latin was used to a larger degree.
33. Taken from *Frostatingslova* (final version around 1260, under Håkon Håkonsson); this quote is also the motto for Shetland (Hjaltland). For a historical comment on this statement, cf. Bagge, 2001, p. 359 ff.
34. The English word *law* comes from the Norse word *log* (Swedish *lag*; *lov* in Danish and Norwegian).
35. Especially important was the Norwegian *odelsrett* (allodial right), which gave the eldest son the right to the farm and its land, thus protecting against a division of the land (to be distributed among all the children in the family) and against a free sale on the market.
36. The difference with the Confucian tradition in China is striking. The period under discussion corresponds to the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties in China, with a revitalization of virtue-based Confucianism as a basis for the education of its state officials. This is to some extent similar to what Plato says in the dialogue *The Republic*, but which he modifies in the dialogue *The Laws*, changing from virtue orientation to legal orientation. (China was at that time a culturally well-established nation and a populous and extended state. The contrast with the small Scandinavian countries is thus overwhelming.) Confucius lived probably from 551 to 479 BCE; Plato from around 427 to 347 BCE.
37. Because it prohibited meetings.

38. The runic alphabet, which remained in use for some time, was suitable for short texts, either for ritual use on stones or for practical messages on wood or similar materials, since all its letters consisted of straight lines, easy to carve with a knife on a piece of wood on a rainy day in a boat, thus sending brief messages together with the cargo; but it is not equally suitable for a text of any length. In short, practical for SMS, but not for writing a saga!
39. We could have said “predominantly” by Icelanders (cf., e.g., Bagge, 2001). Moreover, the state borders (of our time) and the cultural-linguistic borders (in those ages) are not the same (cf. Sigurðsson, 2008). Before around 950 CE the language was probably the same for the whole Scandinavian-Icelandic region (cf., e.g., Kisbye, 1982), and in still a couple of hundred years Iceland and Norway had the same written language, Norse, by which important texts (like *Heimskringla*, the sagas of Norwegian kings, written by Snorri Sturluson) focused on Norwegian events. In Denmark and Sweden, Latin had a stronger position, and at this stage these countries did not have an extensive literature in their own language, such as Iceland-Norway.
40. Interestingly, from an environmental perspective, these gods are vulnerable and mortal, thus indicating that there is a notion of *sacredness* that is not related to eternity (immortality and invulnerability). On the contrary, vulnerability and mortality is what should fill us with holy awe; not Plato’s unchangeable ideas, but vulnerable and mortal life. (Stretching this point we might add: Christ on the cross, rather than eternal principles.)
41. This old mythology, or religion, is called *ásatrúin* (the belief in *æsir*, in gods, like Óðin and Thor and Freya); cf. the famous texts of *Voluspá* and *Hávamál*.
42. This is primarily true for Iceland, but there is also some truth to it for Norway.
43. But a transition between clerical education and the status as a chieftain was not unusual. Cf., Sigurðsson, 2008, pp. 184–186.
44. The royal decision was made in 1536, but the struggle between the Danish king and the Norwegian Catholic archbishop went on until the spring of 1537 when the archbishop was defeated and left the country. The new religious legislation (*Kirkeordinansen*) came in 1537, see note 21.

45. For quite some time the Nordic people kept in contact with Constantinople (called Miklegard, “the great city”) and thus with eastern Christianity. For instance, the Norwegian king Sigurd Jorsalfar, who went to the Holy Land around 1107–1110, stayed for some time with the emperor in Constantinople, but did not visit Rome (according to the saga written by Snorri around the middle of the 13th century). In the early 1150s a Roman Catholic cardinal, later pope Adrian IV, was sent to Norway to improve the connections with Rome; e.g., by inaugurating an archbishop in Trondheim/Nidaros.
46. That is, at the time when the Mongolian Yuan dynasty with Kublai Kahn (the grandson of Gengis Kahn) took power in China (the Yuan dynasty, 1271–1368).
47. Its main influence was from around 1350 to around 1550. By the end of the 16th century Norwegian shipping was poised to take over, and during the next two centuries Norwegian shipping was greatly strengthened.
48. The pest most likely came to the country somewhat earlier.
49. In 1380 (under Danish rule 1387). Thus, at the beginning of the Ming dynasty in China (from 1368 to 1644).
50. Iceland, however, was able to manage a translation of the Bible in Icelandic; and the Icelandic language has survived, with minor changes (for the most part, phonetic ones).
51. Cf. Poland, where the Catholic Church was an institutional (and cultural) safeguard for the Polish nation.
52. There are also reasons to believe that the iconoclastic actions after the Reformation—actions that were unpopular in Norway (and hardly Lutheran), but imposed from Copenhagen—were among the political steps taken by the Danish king to neutralize the deeply entrenched reverence for Saint Olav, the national saint and a symbol of Norwegian independence. Cf. “Reformasjonen i Noreg—sammenheng og brot”, by Hermund Slaattelid, in *Norsk Årbok* (Høgnorskringen), 2006. If so, this shows two things: that Norwegian identity had roots in Catholic times, and that the Danish king acted intentionally to eradicate even the symbolic representation of Norwegian independence.
53. See reservations concerning the two-regimen doctrine, cf. note 21.

54. Where little by little all future clergymen had to study. The international contacts with other universities were gradually suppressed for future clergymen.
55. The Danish theologian Niels Hemmingsen is an interesting person in this connection. Cf. Gilje and Rasmussen, *Norsk idehistorie*, vol. 2, *Tankelev i den lutherske stat, 1537–1814*, 2002.
56. Ca. 1480–1538, cf. Rian, *For Norge, kjempers fødeland*, 2007.
57. Such as Gjeble Pedersson (1490–1557), who was expected to become Catholic bishop in Bergen (in 1535), but after the introduction of Lutheranism he converted and was then appointed as “superintendent” in Bergen. His “resistance from within” was in a sense taken over by his protégé, Absalon Pederssøn Beyer (1528–1575), known as the prime representative of the *Bergen humanists* of the 16th century.
58. Cf. this quote from Peder Claussøn Friis (1545–1614): “Moreover, there has earlier always been an innate hatred and evil feelings between Danes and Norwegians, which until this day has been in the hearts and nature of the Norwegian people. For the Norwegians do love Germans, Swedes, and Scots and other nations and countries’ people, who come here to this country to stay, better than they are able to love Danes, and in particular they have a secret and innate hatred for people from Jutland” (my translation). The text to which this passage belongs was printed posthumously in Denmark (in 1632), but without the passage just quoted. For the quotation, cf., Rian, 2007, p. 88.
59. Another point: In the 13th and early 14th century the Norwegian monarchy was strong and strongly centralized; the take-over of this monarchy by Danish rulers had therefore particularly great consequences.
60. For a discussion of the latter hypothesis, cf. Rian, 2007.
61. In some cases, even a person who spoke their local Norwegian language.
62. In the countryside the clergymen were also farmers (and family fathers); in this sense they lived closer to members of the rural communities than, for instance, Catholic priests in France or Italy.
63. Even a religious poet like Petter Dass (1646–1707) acted as a socially insensitive agent when his private economic interests were at stake; cf. Rian 2007, p. 156 ff.

64. To some extent even better than in Denmark, where serfdom was introduced, which never happened in Norway.
65. In China this is close to the beginning of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1912).
66. Denmark had another system, inclusive of an army of mercenaries.
67. The Norwegian militia turned out to be reluctant to fight Swedish troops, both in Bohuslen and in Trøndelag.
68. Slesvig (Schleswig) and Holsten (Holstein). Approximately one-third of the population under the Danish king was German speaking. In the mid 18th century, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the royal family and some of the most influential and progressive state officials (like Struensee, Bernstorff, and Reventlow), were German speaking. (In 1773 a law was passed, defending the use of the Danish language in the military academy.)
69. One of my foremothers was burned as a witch in 1625, cf. Skirbekk, 1987, pp. 25–27.
70. The so-called extra tax (*Ekstraskatten*) of October 1, 1762 (referred to in chapter 2, note 19); cf. Birger Lindanger, “Den sjølvrådige bonden—myte eller realitet?”, *Bondemotstand og sjølvkjensle på Sørvestlandet*, 2002, pp. 47–51). On that occasion farmers in the southwest of Norway organized and argued by referring to laws and regulations, thus combining interpretive and argumentative rationality. Especially in the Stavanger region they did so successfully, by a combination of peaceful but efficient organization and “the force of better arguments”; the state official, Amtmann Lachmann, wrote in his report to Copenhagen that “I ensure that most of the peasants have insight and discretion” (op. cit., p. 50). At the end the king in Copenhagen gave in, and Amtmann Lachmann was removed. (Interestingly, the Haugians had at a later stage some of their strongholds in these regions.)
71. An indication: from 1658 to 1723 the number of freeholders had roughly increased five times and the number of tenants was reduced to one-third. In one case (in one area) there were roughly 200 freeholders and 1,000 tenants in 1658, whereas in 1723 there were 1,000 freeholders and 300 tenants (ref. Oscar Albert Johnsen, *Norges bønder*, 1936).
72. Cf. the long border with Sweden, the traditional rival for Danish rulers.

73. These were ideas expressed for instance by a major state official (Gyldenløve, 1675–1679).
74. For instance, supported by the Danish state official Henrik Stampe (1713–1789). At this point we may observe not only a conflict between short-term and long-term economic interests, but also environmental and ecological arguments, as well as sociological arguments (about social stability).
75. Nowhere in Norway is the distance to the sea more than 200 kilometers.
76. Apparently there were no linguistic problems. There is no mention of interpreters in the documents from legal procedures involving Norwegians in the Netherlands at that time (cf. the historian Sølvi Sogner).
77. There was an exception of this freedom to move, namely for *løse Companer*, i.e., persons with no permanent residence.
78. This goes for technology in shipbuilding and navigation, as well as in hygiene and nutrition.
79. Cf. Sølvi Sogner, *Ung i Europa. Norsk ungdom over Nordsjøen til Nederland i tidlig nytid*, 1994. I quote from her conclusion (my translation): “Parts of Norway were in direct contact with the most advanced country of Europe, in a continuous period of a couple hundred years. This contact took place on the premises of common people, not by an initiative from the top, by the ministry of commerce or other agents.” (Quoted from p. 139.) “It is commonly accepted—and so it was at that time—that there was much to learn in the Netherlands concerning technology for navigation. Eilert Sundt [a Norwegian sociologist in the 19th century] describes the ‘Dutch cleanliness’ in the homes of common people on the southern coast of Norway.” (Quoted from p. 140.)
80. Farmers in the early 19th century favored economic liberalization as part of their struggle against these privileges of wealthy citizens.
81. At the beginning, it was conceived of as a society promoting *useful initiatives* for the common good, for instance in agriculture. In short, it was a society promoting an important aspect of the enlightenment project. Its motto is *Lyser og nytter* (Be enlightened and useful!).
82. Here we encounter the Scandinavian notions of people’s enlightenment (*folkeopplysning* and *folkedanning*), and terms like *folkelighed* (being folk-like) and *folkhem* (people’s home).

83. In the Norwegian case, parliamentarianism was introduced as a democratic demand. The leader of the Left, Johan Sverdrup, fought for parliamentarianism with the words “All power in this hall,” that is, in the National Assembly as elected representatives of the people, in opposition to the government appointed by the king and run by state officials. However, parliamentarianism means multiparty democracy; and those who are nominated by the parties, voted for by the electorate, and finally seated in the Parliament tend to act as loyal party members and not as intellectually free and independent discussants. Hence the Parliament tends to be “governance by party-based voting” rather than “governance by open discussion.”
84. Cf., e.g., Sørensen and Stråth, eds., *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, 1997, and Kayser Nielsen, *Bonde, stat og hjem. Nordisk demokrati og nationalisme—fra pietismen til 2. verdenskrig*, 2009.
85. For instance, in class structure (Denmark and Sweden had national nobility), or in the nature of the popular movements (mildly Christian Grundtvigianism in Denmark vs. labor movements and evangelical sects in Sweden). Furthermore, the military may have played a more important role in Denmark (for instance, due to the wars with Prussia) than in Norway; the political sphere may have been especially important in Norway (where not only basic institutions but also a common life-world had to be politically negotiated and re-established). As to dissimilarities between the Nordic countries, more will be said in chapter 7.
86. In recent times there is also an extensive tolerance in religious and cultural matters.
87. Cf. *Thesis Eleven*, 2004:77, with papers on modernization processes in the five Nordic countries, by Risto Alapuro (Finland), Johann Arnason (Iceland), Rune Slagstad (Norway), Björn Wittrock (Sweden), Uffe Østergård (Denmark), and an overview by Bo Stråth.
88. Cf., Dahl and Tufte, 1973, *Size and Democracy*.
89. Here we focus on similarities among the Nordic countries in the early processes of modernization, not so much on dissimilarities. But surely there are also dissimilarities, as just mentioned.
90. For the term “imaginary,” cf. note 33, chapter 1.
91. Denmark had its special borderline challenges with the German-speaking duchies in the south (Schleswig and Holstein).

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CHAPTER 6

**Processes of Modernization in Norway Since WWII:
*Social Imaginaries and Forms of Rationality***

Our first focus was the interplay of state officials and popular movements in Norway in the 19th century. We recall the following points: In the period until World War II there was in Norway a strengthening of education (the role of teachers), of social and market-regulating laws (the role of progressive jurists), and of industrialization (the role of engineers in collaboration with scientists). Gradually a Nordic welfare state was founded. Before these events there were learning processes that led to a basic mutual trust between political adversaries. At the same time sociocultural tensions prevailed, tensions that merged with new kinds of class struggle as industrialization intensified.

Then came the war and German occupation, followed by numerous challenges over the subsequent decades. In this chapter, we focus on social imaginaries and forms of rationality at the time of World War II and its aftermath, until the late 1970s and early 1980s.

War, Occupation, and Its Aftermath

On the morning of April 9, 1940, Norway was attacked and occupied by Nazi Germany. Norwegian politicians were unprepared and the Norwegian army was poorly equipped. German messengers asked the Norwegian authorities to surrender, but the Norwegian government, with the support of the Norwegian king, refused—probably for three reasons: (i) they believed that the British and the French would intervene with the intention of defending Norway; (ii) under this assumption they furthermore assumed that the Norwegian topography would be advantageous for the defense and disadvantageous for the invading German forces; and, on top of this, (iii) when they learned that Quisling had proclaimed himself to be the leader of a new government, they were firmly determined not to yield. The battle of Norway went on for about two months before the Norwegian forces finally had to give in.¹ The Norwegian government and the king fled to London, where they stayed during the war, bringing with them most of the Norwegian mercantile marine.²

At an early stage, the allied forces did intervene, at one point even victoriously (in Narvik). But then they withdrew. Their real intention was to counteract a German offensive against Britain, not to defend Norway. From then on and over the next five years, Norway was occupied by German forces and ruled as a *Reichskommissariat*,³ headed by *Reichskommissar* Terboven, in collaboration with Quisling and his party, *Nasjonal samling* (NS).⁴

During the occupation Nazi Germany kept an amazingly high number of soldiers in Norway, up to four hundred thousand.⁵ Thus the number of German soldiers amounted to more than one-tenth of the Norwegian population.⁶ In addition there were numerous prisoners of war in labor camps,⁷ especially from the Soviet Union⁸ and Serbia.

At the outset the situation was ambiguous.⁹ The military activities in Norway came to an end after a couple of months; in mid June the government and the king left for England, and Norway was now

occupied by German forces, militarily under von Falkenhorst, politically under Terboven, with Quisling as a self-proclaimed political leader on the Norwegian side. The occupiers found Quisling unreliable. An administrative council (*Administrasjonsrådet*) was established to keep things going. By German initiative, negotiations began between the German occupiers and Norwegian representatives; i.e., members of the College of Presidents of the National Assembly (*Stortingets presidentskap*), the so-called *riksrådsforhandlingane*, based on a formal withdrawal of Quisling and three demands raised by the German occupiers: suspend the king, suspend the government in exile, and establish a national council (a *riksråd*, in reality a government) willing to collaborate with the occupiers. The negotiations went on for about three and a half months, from mid June until late September. The Norwegian negotiators were to a large degree willing to accept these demands, but not a *riksråd* (government) run by NS members. However, on September 25, 1940, Terboven broke the negotiations by appointing a *kommisjarisk riksråd* with NS members (and three nonmembers) and declaring all other political parties to be illegal. From now on resistance gained force.¹⁰

Gradually the resistance strengthened, as a widespread negative attitude developed toward the occupiers and collaborators. There were various forms of resistance, for instance, *Milorg* operated secretly in Norway in cooperation with the Norwegian exile government in London,¹¹ and civil opposition and disobedience were displayed by numerous persons and organizations. In addition, there were military action groups under British command (by *Special Operation Executive*, *SOE*, established by Churchill in July 1940) and communist action groups.¹²

Milorg is an abbreviation for military organization. But there were no military battles in Norway between the summer of 1940 and the end of the war when Soviet troops chased the German forces out of Finnmark. Moreover, in agreement with the Norwegian London government *Milorg* did not attack Germans in uniform or engage in

sabotage until the last period of the war. During the war, *Milorg* primarily did intelligence work in conjunction with the London government and in support of civil resistance against the occupiers and NS.

From the end of 1940 the resistance forces gradually organized. Various organizations, profession-related as well as interest-based, were activated, entwined with civil society. (At that time there were around 650 organizations operating nationwide.¹³) Here are a few remarks on the reactions from Norwegian organizations:

(i) When the newly appointed *kommissariske riksråd* tried to reorganize the sport organizations according to Nazi principles (as in Nazi Germany), the national sport organizations declared (December 3, 1940) that any participation in Nazi-organized sports activities was treason. This became a victorious resistance throughout the war. (Just before the war broke out, the split between sports organizations affiliated with the labor movement and “bourgeois” sports organizations had been reconciled.¹⁴)

(ii) The next institution to protest was the Supreme Court. Arguments were not raised directly against Nazi ideology, as a protest based on universal normative principles, but based on “positive law”: Occupiers have their rights and duties, and the same goes for those who are occupied. According to positive law (in Norway) there is a division of power, to the extent that the judicial power (i.e., the courts) is separated from the legislative and the executive powers. So, when Terboven wanted to install politically appointed lay judges to the courts, the Supreme Court protested; collectively the members of the Supreme Court resigned their posts.¹⁵

(iii) In the winter of 1941 the bishops of the Lutheran state church protested publically, as part of a well-planned action from *kristen-følket*, i.e., from the majority of clergymen in collaboration with laypeople (theologically conservative, as well as liberal). The occupiers reacted by arresting protesting bishops and many clergymen (some were deported), to the effect that a huge number among the remaining clergy resigned from their “worldly” position (referring to the doctrine of “two regimens”). Thereafter, they were paid by

underground networks. The “church front” prevailed;¹⁶ together with the “sports front,” bringing a considerable number of people in contact with organized resistance.

(iv) In the spring of 1941, similar reactions were brought forward as the occupiers attempted to reorganize civil as well as profession-related organizations. Many of these activities went underground.

(v) In early spring of 1942, actions were taken to Nazify Norwegian schools, as had been done in Germany. Around 85 percent of the teachers protested, appealing to their employment contract and to their conscience. Clergymen and laypeople supported this protest, and so did many parents. The “school front” prevailed.¹⁷

Quisling dreamed of national unity, across class borders. Ironically, the war did lead to a strengthened national unity across class borders, namely against Quisling and his party. During the war, the resistance to and reactions against Quisling and his followers were no less harsh than the resistance to and reactions against the German occupiers.

At the outset, the German authorities presented the occupation of Norway as a necessary step against a possible British intervention,¹⁸ and not as a step against the Norwegian people. The Norwegian people were seen as Aryans, despite their general hostility toward Hitler and Nazi ideology. For most Norwegians the war and the German occupation, under *Reichskommissar* Terboven in collaboration with Quisling, was a traumatic experience, even though Norwegians, with the exception of Norwegian Jews,¹⁹ were treated far less brutally than most other occupied people (such as Poles and Serbs).²⁰

So we may ask: Why did not more Norwegians succumb to the rosy version of Nazi ideology that was presented to them, especially at an early stage when the German *Wehrmacht* seemed invincible and a positive attitude to Hitler Germany could have been personally advantageous?

At this point we may recall some of the primary aspects of Norwegian modernization. For instance, how these processes were characterized by a “pastoral enlightenment,” with a smooth interplay

between tradition and innovation and with a certain sense of reasonableness and compromise, without revolutionary Jacobinism and heroic-emotional political romanticism. Also mentioned was how the rule of law²¹ was well entrenched in these processes (though differently at different stages), from the side of the state as well as from the popular side; dictatorial rule, beyond the law, was seen as detrimental.²² We have also mentioned how the national ideas of the popular movements were basically democratic-national, conceived of in terms of egalitarian ideas of people's enlightenment (*folkeopplysning*),²³ quite different from the authoritarian and aggressive conception of national (and ethnic) superiority that characterized Nazi ideology.²⁴ Therefore, the main ideas and practices inherent in Norwegian processes of modernization opposed the essential ideas and practices of German Nazism, and this may contribute²⁵ to an explanation of why the Nazi propaganda, even at the early stages, failed in gaining any significant support in the Norwegian population.

In retrospect a few sobering reflections might do: The civil resistance in Norway was by and large a success story. But in economic matters, there was to a large degree an extensive and efficient collaboration between Norwegian employers and employees on the one side and German occupation forces on the other. (After all, economic life had to go on for the civilian population to survive.) There was not much fighting going on in Norway after June of 1940, until the Soviet invasion at the end of the war; in military terms *Milorg* was for the most part a dormant organization, a kind of "stay behind," to be there once the German occupiers surrendered to the Allied forces. The main resistance was therefore a matter of attitudes and behavior, of network building and civilian courage on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, the explicit arguments used against the intruders were often those of "positive law" rather than those of general normative principles. (In arguing in terms of positive law, referring to rights and duties of the occupiers as well as of those who are occupied, one was at the point of giving a legal justification to a "Danish solution."²⁶) All in all, the sources of resistance seem to have been

emotional and visceral²⁷ rather than theoretical and reflectively intellectual: the simple fact of being occupied, the bombing of cities and towns in the spring of 1940, spectacularly brutal actions,²⁸ and various provocative actions against political and organizational culture in Norway. This means Norwegians by and large were well prepared to resist the temptation and the pressure presented by Nazi ideology, but not so much on the theoretical and intellectual level (in terms of reflective and argumentative rationality), but in terms of entrenched attitudes and organizational culture, acting as “good Norwegians.”²⁹

During the occupation, German police in Norway (*Sicherheitspolizei* and *Sicherheitsdienst*) regularly sent messages to Berlin. These messages, recently published,³⁰ provide a unique insight into the official German conception of the situation in Norway. The following four points are worth mentioning:

- (i) German intelligence was well informed. It had access to illegal (underground) papers and radio information from London,³¹ and it had secret informers. It referred with accuracy to persons, organizations, and events, and it frequently gave reports about Norwegian hostility toward the occupiers.
- (ii) The Germans seemed more concerned with the communist resistance than with *Milorg*. The reason might be ideological, but it might also be due to the fact that the Germans discovered many of *Milorg*'s arsenals of hidden weaponry, in addition to the fact that *Milorg*, to avoid reprisals, did not target Germans in uniform.³²
- (iii) The Germans were especially concerned with teachers and clergymen. The attempts to Nazify the schools and the church failed.³³ The resistance by teachers and clergymen represents an alternative form of resistance, other than sabotage and military actions. It was a day-to-day ideological resistance that fueled a general unwillingness to acquiesce

to the occupiers and their agenda.

- (iv) These reports reveal a generally condescending attitude from the German authorities in Norway toward Norwegian collaborators, not only toward Quisling, whose relationship with Terboven was known to be strained, but toward Norwegian Nazis and collaborators generally. In these reports, Quisling and his followers were blamed for the massive resistance in the Norwegian society, even in cases when the initiative came from Berlin (such as the attempt to Nazify schools and church).

The documentation of this negative attitude from the German side toward Norwegian collaborators indicates that the Norwegian collaborators had a more problematic relationship with the German occupiers than what has been assumed by other Norwegians; hence this information gives some support to the description of the situation that was presented by accused Norwegian collaborators in the courts after the war.

In retrospect, the occupation and its aftermath could be commented on this way: According to the dominant view, the majority of the Norwegian people acted as good Norwegians. Members of the resistance movement acted heroically.³⁴ Throughout this struggle against evil, the nation stood firm, as morally and politically united across class borders. In short, the nation had passed the test as a civilized and moral community. Hence, after the war the material rebuilding of the country could commence, in an egalitarian spirit (“Bread to everyone before anybody gets a cake”) and by strict public regulations (due to scarce resources).

There is some truth in this self-congratulatory conception, but only some. There is a need for some modifying remarks:³⁵

Not everybody was equally “resistant”; some professions, such as clergymen and teachers, were in this respect more firm in their resistance than many others (such as policemen or agents in the economic sphere, from industrialists to manual workers). This point is

interesting in various ways: (i) The professions that really “passed the test” were among those that had been in the forefront in shaping the nation: theologians and teachers; (ii) their day-to-day resistance in an occupied nation represents another kind of resistance than the more spectacular actions of raids and sabotage, but, in the end, probably a more important one. (iii) And, last but not least, we had the unspectacular and anonymous deeds of numerous ordinary people who courageously assisted persons who had to hide and be guided across the border to Sweden.³⁶

The extensive legal trials after the war (*landssvikoppgjeret*³⁷) were marked by the political and psychological situation of that time. For example, membership in *Nasjonal samling* (NS, the political party that supported the Quisling government) was seen as a crime in itself (independent of any other act), even though *Nasjonal samling* had been a legal party before the war.³⁸ These trials focused on political collaboration (starting with formal membership in NS), not on economic collaboration.³⁹

There were mainly three legal complaints: (i) criminal acts (such as denunciatory acts, torture, and killing of innocent people); (ii) acts supporting the enemy, according to §86 in the criminal law code, but the use of this paragraph was contested by the argument that the Norwegian army had surrendered and consequently that there was no military enemy in a legal sense; and (iii) acts aimed at an unconstitutional change in the political system, according to §98 of the criminal law code, and this was evidently what Quisling and NS had tried to do. However, in these trials the prosecuting authority focused on §86 rather than §98, which in retrospect seems to have been an infelicitous choice.⁴⁰

These trials operated with retroactive “instructions”⁴¹ (*anordninger*, given by the exiled government in London⁴²). Furthermore, Norwegian women who had had a relationship with German soldiers were treated harshly, seen as despicable and possibly retarded creatures;⁴³ the same holds true for their children; neither the

women nor their children received a legal defense worthy of a civilized society.⁴⁴

After the war, in 1945, there were tensions and a power struggle between the exiled government (coming back from London) and leading members of *Milorg*. The latter favored a political renewal, in opposition to the aged men of the exiled government. Within the Labor Party there were similar tensions and power struggles between the prime minister of the exiled government, *Nygaardsvold*, and the coming star, Einar Gerhardsen (back from German imprisonment).⁴⁵ The latter had the upper hand; the next twenty years were marked by Gerhardsen and his vision of a social-democratic regime. The point is the following: After the war there were more problems and tensions and less harmony than envisioned by the dominant perception.⁴⁶

The general story of “the good we fighting the bad they” became to a large extent a collective imaginary.⁴⁷ There was a clear dichotomy between good and bad; “we” were the good ones⁴⁸ and hence the problem of evil was externalized, as it were.

Tentatively the situation may be conceived in these terms: A subconscious imaginary of *good we* versus *bad others* was widely adopted and thus there was an *externalization of evil*. And this subconscious imaginary seems to have prevailed throughout the post-war period, often with curious implications. For instance, as the anticolonial movements emerged and the third world became an important agenda, this dualist imaginary was transformed into a *triangular* one: the “good we,” the “bad others,” and the “good others” who are suppressed and exploited by the “bad others,” and who deserve our support.⁴⁹ In this triangular scheme of thought, the “good other” tends to be conceived of as a miserable victim. Hence, there is a tendency toward a paternalistic “clientization” of the “good other.” We return to this triangular imaginary in commenting on problems in professionalized welfare and immigration politics.

In retrospect we may observe a curious forgetfulness of all previous and positive connections and interactions with Germans and German culture: Nearly one-third of the subjects under the

Danish kings during the time of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy were German speaking; Copenhagen was widely bilingual, the royal court and higher officials were German speaking and so were many craftsmen and traders. Lutheran theology was certainly German, and so were major figures in the labor movement, from Marx to Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg. German was the dominant foreign language throughout the 19th century, not least in science and technology; and quite frequently Norwegian authors and artists entered the international scene through Germany. Finally, for Scandinavians, the German language is relatively easy to learn and especially easy to understand, if not to speak. And a language is more than sounds and signs; it is also a carrier of cultural values and experiences.

This curious obliviousness to and subsequent suppression of the German language in Norwegian education and culture, together with the weakening of Germany as a dominant *Kulturnation*, represent deep changes for a country like Norway, both as to its self-understanding and general “imaginary” and as to its geocultural position in the world.

Being one-sidedly influenced by one dominant language (English in this case) is in cultural terms a problematic situation for a small country.

The Overall Situation, with General Remarks on Basic Forms of Rationality

Concerning the overall situation in Norway after World War II, a couple points should be emphasized: (i) The urgent rebuilding of the country was performed with general support and a high degree of legitimacy; and (ii) For nearly two decades the country was ruled by the Labor Party⁵⁰ (most of the time with Einar Gerhardsen as prime minister).

Politically there was to a large extent a continuation of the politics initiated by the Left earlier in the 20th century: a further development of a universal and egalitarian welfare state, in support of

a common school system and of industrialization, combined with laws regulating the market and workers' conditions, and supplemented with laws for social security and for equal rights for all children. Hence, the idea of a Nordic welfare state was not an invention of the Labor Party, initiated after World War II. This idea had its genesis in earlier stages of Norwegian history; but in the postwar era it was further developed and systematically implemented by the Labor Party and its governments, in close collaboration with strong and centralized trade unions. Due to economic growth the state gradually acquired more resources for extended welfare politics in terms of universal public services (such as extensive healthcare for everybody) and redistribution of economic resources (as an attempt to counteract socioeconomic inequalities). Hence, there is a change of emphasis toward economically oriented social politics.

There is also a striking continuation of the politics of modernization implemented by the regime of state officials in the 19th century: a politics of modernization based on an *active state*, using *scientific knowledge and expertise* in formulating and performing its policy, in founding and furthering institutions, and in developing the infrastructure, and in facilitating as well as regulating the market.

Modernization implies the differentiation of new specialties and disciplines, and thus, in the mid 20th century there were new kinds of scientific knowledge and expertise. Hence, new professions were to be involved by an active state. This is true for technological expertise and natural sciences, and also for social sciences. In short, whereas the jurists played a dominant role during the early period of the regime of state officials, gradually other professions became influential; after the War, in the mid 20th century, there was time for updated technologists⁵¹ and social scientists (such as politically oriented economists, often of a Keynesian type, but also political scientists and social workers).⁵²

At this point, talking about types of expertise and professions, we recall that processes of modernization are essentially related to the development and differentiation of *rationality* and that there is

a need in modern societies for forms of instrumental, interpretive-formative, and argumentative rationality (with further subdivisions). A decisive question is, therefore, how these forms of rationality, in the various cases, are developed and entrenched in societal life and how they interact. It is especially interesting to see if (and how) some form of rationality could be underdeveloped or marginalized, for instance, as a result of a one-dimensional and thus dysfunctional domination by some other kind of rationality (situated in a specialized expertise and profession). I will now make a few remarks on processes of modernization in Norway in the postwar period, related to forms of rationality.

We proceed by delineating a tentative and general scheme of how these three forms of rationality can be said to be “incarnated” in Norwegian society. This we do by referring to three persons conceived as situated *ideal-type indicators*. This approach is not unproblematic; every person necessarily relates to all three forms of rationality (in various versions), and the choice of persons is open for discussion. Nevertheless, with these explicit reservations we allow ourselves, for didactic reasons, to operate with this general scheme in order to highlight particular problems related to the status and development of these three kinds of rationality in the Norwegian society from the end of World War II onward.

First, a brief reminder: When commenting on the *various kinds of rationality* in Norway in the 19th century we were referring to three kinds of rationality—paradigmatically conceived as *instrumental*, *interpretive*, and *argumentative*—which were related to three main figures presented as situated ideal-types: Schweigaard, politician and professor of jurisprudence; Monrad, theologian and professor in philosophy; and Vinje, writer, poet, and essayist, lawyer by education. Schweigaard operated in the political sphere, Monrad within the university and public space, Vinje in the public sphere. I now assume that the overall constellation of Norway in the postwar period concerning these three forms of rationality and their embeddedness can be said to fit into a similar tripartite scheme.

Schweigaard was an influential politician whose agenda was modernizing Norwegian society through knowledge-based and enlightened politics (as he saw it). Politics and science were combined, whereby scientific knowledge was predominantly seen as instrumental for legal and political interventions performed by an active state (governed by university-educated state officials). *Schweigaard* had a special concern for the functioning of the market economy; in educational matters he preferred useful skills and knowledge (and disliked philosophy and classical languages). Bluntly stated, *Schweigaard*'s conception of rationality (relevant for processes of modernization) was predominantly instrumental.

If we allow ourselves to operate with this ideal-type of *Schweigaard* and his conception of modernization and rationality, we may point at some striking similarities with a 20th century politician, seen situated as an ideal-type, namely *Gro Harlem Brundtland* (b. 1939),⁵³ a university-educated medical doctor (internationally known for her concern for environmental problems) who became a prime minister of the Labor government in 1981 (later in 1986–89 and 1990–96). Both of them, *Schweigaard* and *Brundtland*, had the agenda of modernizing Norwegian society by the use of scientific knowledge, implemented by an active state, and in this respect they had both primarily an *instrumental* conception of scientific knowledge and rationality.⁵⁴

There are certainly major differences concerning their historical situation and personal outlook.⁵⁵ We do not claim that they are similar as persons.⁵⁶ But in an ideal-type perspective, their conceptions of rationality and modernization are strikingly similar; the same is true for their conception of the relationship between science and politics:⁵⁷ Science is predominantly conceived of in terms of instrumental rationality; politics is predominantly conceived of in terms of strategic, instrumentally enlightened interventions by an active state.⁵⁸

Once again, we are here referring to *Schweigaard* and *Brundtland* as situated ideal-types so as to highlight some features that can be

said to be characteristic of both of them and of the regime they promoted.⁵⁹ Hence, we see them as outstanding *symbolic agents*, in addition to being influential political agents.

Monrad was an outstanding defender of interpretive-formative rationality in terms of higher humanistic education in a Hegelian and theological perspective, criticizing individualist and positivist tendencies of his time.⁶⁰ He is a value-conservative defender of religion and cultural formation, with a critical view of what he saw as reductionist and leveling tendencies in modern societies. Conceiving of him in an ideal-type perspective we may thus point at a basic contrast between the instrumental focus of Schweigaard, professor of jurisprudence and practical politician, and the interpretive-formative focus of *Monrad*, theologian and university teacher.⁶¹ On the other hand, both belong to the upper class of state officials, in contrast to the popular movements and the political opposition before 1884. Surely, *Monrad* is not a political agent in the same sense as Schweigaard, but he had great political impact by virtue of his “power of definition” (*definisjonsmakt*); in this sense he is an important meta-agent, or symbolic agent.

Again, if we allow ourselves to operate with this ideal-type scheme of *Monrad* and his defense of religion and cultural values and his criticism of reductionist tendencies, we might also point to some similarities with another symbolic agent of the 20th century, seen as an ideal-type, namely *Lars Roar Langslet* (b. 1936),⁶² at the outset a leader of a group of value-conservative students affiliated with the Right (*Høgre*), founder of an influential intellectual (prepolitical) journal, *Minerva*, in 1957,⁶³ defending religious and humanistic values and criticizing positivist and instrumentalist reductionism as well as social reification and alienation. *Langslet*, who became a politician and a writer, explicitly recognizes his relationship to *Monrad* (as well as to *Burke* and the liberal-conservative tradition).⁶⁴

Hence, conceived as an ideal-type, *Langslet* and the value-conservative *Minerva* group not only represent a contrast to instrumentalist tendencies in the Labor Party; they also represent a contrast to the

(gradually dominant) business-liberal forces within the Right (*Høgre*, the political party to which they belonged). Moreover, since Langslet and the *Minerva* group represent one side of the traditional sociocultural divide, inherited from the struggle between state officials and popular movements in the 19th century⁶⁵ (institutionalized in the division between the value-conservative within the Right Party on the one hand and the value-conservative within the Christian People's Party and the Farmers' Party on the other), Langslet and his group were unable to establish a joint value-conservative force across this sociocultural divide.⁶⁶

Furthermore, even though Langslet and the *Minerva* group were intellectually updated in many respects (e.g., in the debate on reification and alienation⁶⁷), they did not succeed (with their prepolitical approach) in establishing value-conservative politics on the institutional level,⁶⁸ and faced with the new and tough discussions at the late 1960s, the *Minerva* group gradually withdrew from the public battlefield, at least as a major intellectual force.⁶⁹

Vinje (we recall) was a multifaceted person—poet, essayist, journalist, lawyer by education—a man with *tvisyn*, i.e., with a self-critical ability to see a case from different perspectives, and able to give words to “other voices,” for instance by writing in Norwegian (at a time when the official written language was Danish) and by using different genres (from lyric poems to critical and ironic essays). In retrospect we may call him a “postmodern” intellectual, practicing and elaborating an argumentative rationality in public space, i.e., representing a conception of rationality as fallibilistic and perspectivist, requiring a self-critical consciousness as well as a public exchange of ideas, hoping for improvement through mutual learning processes. At least, this is an ideal-type picture of argumentative rationality delineated in an early chapter and related to *Vinje* as an ideal-type (though restricted to some of his activities). Certainly *Vinje* was not a political agent like *Schweigaard*, but he may (like *Monrad*) be seen as a *symbolic agent*, furthering an argumentative conception of rationality in public space.

Once again, if we allow ourselves to operate with this ideal-type of Vinje and his self-reflective and critical activities, as a practitioner of argumentative rationality⁷⁰ in public space, we may also point to some similarities with another symbolic agent in the 20th century, conceived as an ideal-type, namely *Hans Skjervheim* (1926–1999), a university professor of philosophy and an active and influential discussant in many fora, both orally and in writing, and thus a dedicated practitioner and defender of argumentative rationality in the public space. He was “popular” (*folkeleg*), often enthusiastically engaged in serious conversations with other people or writing clear and concise philosophical essays (in New Norwegian), and at the same time academically updated and creative within a wide scope of contemporary philosophy, analytic as well as continental,⁷¹ and with an extensive insight into contemporary social and humanistic sciences. Two points should be mentioned in this connection, namely:

- (i) his concern for the paradigmatic distinction⁷² between (a) *überzeugen*, convincing others by the use of better arguments, and (b) *überreden*, persuading others by the use of manipulative techniques, and
- (ii) his concern for the distinction between (a) *recognizing* other persons as *responsible* (autonomous) persons,⁷³ and (b) *objectifying* them and thus reducing their status as responsible persons.

For both distinctions the former attitude (indicated by [a]) is essential for argumentative rationality (i.e., as a “regulative idea,” necessary for serious argumentation and communication, not as an empirical fact⁷⁴). In arguing we have to relate to better arguments, and in communicating we have to take other persons, with their utterances and actions, seriously as responsible participants and not merely observe them and explain them in a third-person perspective.

Certainly both approaches (indicated by [a] and [b]⁷⁵) are required, not least in modern societies where social sciences and critical

scholarly studies may help us realize how causal forces, often unrecognized by the agents themselves, are influential or even decisive for their thoughts and actions. Hence, there is a double challenge: on the one hand, to avoid objectifying responsible persons, on the other, to avoid moralizing in cases when those involved cannot be said to be responsible. In short, there is a need for a reflective and enlightened discretion to figure out which attitude would be most appropriate in each case.

However, by the development and expansion of causally explaining sciences (and related technologies) after World War II, and by their integration both in the exercise of political power on the level of government and ministries⁷⁶ and in the development of the welfare state by the use of a variety of welfare professions, there is an increasing danger of predominantly instrumental politics and objectifying social institutions, in both cases at the sacrifice of argumentative and normatively oriented interactions.⁷⁷

Moreover, in emphasizing the epistemic distinction between *überreden* and *überzeugen*, Skjervheim's critique is not merely directed against undue objectification of persons, but also against the tendency (e.g., in cultural and literary studies) toward undue objectification of validity claims, conceiving them as "cultural facts" that could be described and interpreted, without taking them seriously as arguments relevant to oneself.⁷⁸

In this perspective Skjervheim's defense of argumentative rationality and personal autonomy represents a critique directed against cases of lack of self-reflection and of inappropriate institutional domination by instrumental and objectifying disciplines and professions and also by interpretive disciplines that do not take validity claims seriously as claims relevant for the interpreters themselves. This "critique of sciences" (*Wissenschaftskritik*) and of science-based professions is equally a critique of a certain kind of regime (*in casu*: post-World War II Norwegian society), and ultimately it represents a critique of shortcomings and dangers inherent in basic processes of modernization.⁷⁹

At this stage we have delineated a general tripartite scheme of rationality (instrumental, interpretive, and argumentative), illustrated by an ideal-type presentation of three persons in Norwegian society in the post-World War II period. With this background, we next take a look at some of the main challenges for argumentative rationality related to changes in the domains of science and education, public space, and party politics.

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Endnotes

1. After this defeat there were no battles on Norwegian territory (until the Soviet offensive in Finnmark at the end of the war), but according to the Norwegian government in London (i.e., the official Norwegian view) Norway was still at war with Nazi Germany, even when Norwegian forces had surrendered in Norway. This view was disputed by NS members during the trials after the war. They claimed that when the Norwegian army had surrendered and no fighting was taking place on Norwegian territory, the state of war was over (and thus it was time for a peace agreement with Nazi Germany).
2. The Norwegian merchant marine did a decisive job in bringing vital supplies from the U.S. to Britain. Before the Americans entered the war (before Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941) up to one half of these supplies were brought to the UK on Norwegian keel. Numerous Norwegian seamen, taking part in these convoys, lost their lives and many more were severely wounded. (Concerning Norwegian foreign policy starting with the German occupation in 1940 up to 1949 when Norway entered NATO, see Sverdrup, *Inn i storpolitikken 1940–1949*, 1996.)
3. Not an occupied kingdom like Denmark.
4. In retrospect, it is documented that there were tensions and conflicts not only between Terboven and Quisling, but also between the German occupation forces and the leadership of the *Nasjonal samling*.
5. In December 1943, the number is said to have been 430,000 men, cf. Skodvin, 1969, pp. 268–269. For Hitler Festung Norwegen was an important military base for the German fight against Allied convoys bringing militarily important supplies to the Soviet Union in the North. Moreover, Hitler was deeply concerned with the possibility of an Allied invasion in Norway; an invasion in northern Norway could establish a direct connection and collaboration between Soviet and British armed forces.
6. A comparison: If NATO would have had an equally high percentage of troops in Afghanistan, the number of NATO troops should have been more than 4 million.
7. Also forced laborers from countries occupied by Nazi Germany.

8. Up to 100,000, cf. Neerland Soleim, 2004, p. 68; i.e., around one Soviet prisoner for every four German soldiers.
9. The percentage of the adult Norwegian population joining the *Nasjonal samling* (1933–1945) was 2.2%; cf. *Who were the Fascists?* Hagtvet, Larsen, & Myklebust, eds., 1980, pp. 612–613. During the parliamentary elections in 1933 and 1936 only 2.2% and 1.8%, respectively, voted for NS (ibid., p. 657). In this book there are tables on the relative support for NS related to professions and regions.
10. In *Meldungen aus Norwegen* (Larsen et al., eds., 1980, vol 2, p. 564; see fn. 30), we may read: *Die Beseitigung des parlamentarischen Systems und die Einsetzung der NS-Staatsräte am 25. September 1940 geschah gegen den Willen des norwegischen Volkes. Abgesehen von der höheren Berechtigung der beiden Maßnahmen war durch sie doch zweifellos das durchaus natürliche und gesunde Freiheits- und Selbstständigkeitsbewußtsein auch des norwegischen Volkes verletzt worden.* In short, the German intelligence service understood that Terboven's actions against the political parties (except NS) were an attack on the "natural and sound consciousness of freedom and sovereignty" of the Norwegian people.
11. But there were tensions between members of the Norwegian government in London and leaders of the *Milorg* (tensions that came to the surface after the war, see later), and also between the Norwegian government and British authorities (e.g., concerning military priorities).
12. Primarily after June 22, 1941, when the Molotov–Ribbentrop agreement was annihilated due to the German attack on the Soviet Union. But the political resistance among Norwegian communists began earlier (in the fall of 1940, cf., e.g., Halvorsen, 1996, 1999, but there were also "renegades," cf., e.g., Sørensen, 1983, pp. 80–106). The Molotov–Ribbentrop agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union was signed on August 24 (23), 1939, a week before Hitler invaded Poland; thereafter, Stalin annexed eastern Poland and liquidated many of the higher-ranking Polish officers (cf. the massacre at Katyn).
13. Cf. Lange, 1998, vol. 11, p. 93.
14. Cf. ibid., p. 91.
15. Ibid., p. 92.

16. Cf. German reports in *Meldungen aus Norwegen* (Larsen et al., eds., 1980, see fn. 30).
17. Ibid.
18. There were strategic and economic reasons for a German intervention: to keep the war going, the German forces needed Swedish ore that was sent by ship from Narvik along the Norwegian coast. Then there was (supposedly) a need to avoid an allied invasion from the north through Norway.
19. The number of Norwegian Jews was about 1,500; around half of them survived (mostly by escaping to Sweden). 762 were sent to German death camps, 26 returned alive.
20. Around 40,000 Norwegians were sent to jail (from a population of around 3 million). Nearly 10,000 were sent to Germany.
21. Cf. the old maxim: *At logum skal land byggja, en eigi at ulogum eyða*.
22. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Lutheran theology in Norway was influenced by the fact that the clergy were state officials under the Danish king. But during World War II the Lutheran (state) church in Norway was largely and significantly an agent of resistance. Simultaneously there was a tendency (e.g., by Bishop Eivind Berggrav) to revitalize the dormant doctrine of “two regimens,” in a defense against the Quisling government and the German occupiers.
23. Strangely enough, this point has been ignored by some writers, such as Hans Fredrik Dahl, cf. *Norsk idehistorie*, vol. V, 2001.
24. The idea of a wild and violent Norse culture does not match the idea of Norse culture that was appropriated by the democratic and Christian members of the popular movements throughout the 19th century. Nor was this idea of Norse culture historically correct: That which politically characterized Norse society around the turn of the first millennium was to a large degree a blend of negotiations and the rule of law through the participation of chieftains and free farmers gathered at a local *thing* (such as Gulathing and Frostathing in Norway and Allthing in Iceland); and that which characterized Norse society after Christianization and when a centralized kingdom gained power (until the mid 14th century) was a strengthening of the rule of law and of Christian ideas and ideals.

25. For such cases (as for most social events) we may expect several explanations and descriptions.
26. Surely it would have been dangerous to criticize Nazi ideology explicitly. However, in Norwegian theological journals in the interwar period (before 1940) there is no discussion of what was going on politically in Germany at that time, in a country with a Lutheran church, under pressure from the Nazis after 1933 (source: Nils Gilje). In short, there are few indications of a theoretical resistance against Fascism (Nazism) as an ideology. (There are some exceptions, such as Ronald Fangen, a Christian author, and some parts of the Labor movement, including the radical student movement *Mot Dag*.)
27. Related to the intestines.
28. Such as the shooting of trade union members, cf. the liquidation of Rolf Wickstrøm and Viggo Hansteen September 10, 1941.
29. The term used was “good Norwegians.” When later generations, in retrospect, tend to redescribe the story of a successful Norwegian resistance in terms of general normative principles, they are historically wrong (if they intend to describe this resistance as it was conceived of by the actors.)
30. *Meldungen aus Norwegen 1940–1945. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Befehlshabers der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in Norwegen*, 3 vol., Larsen, Sandberg, & Dahm, eds., 2008 (including *Tagesberichte*, daily reports, and *Tätigkeitsberichte*, reports of special events).
31. Norwegian citizens were not allowed to have radio receivers (and thus to listen to information from London and the Allied forces). In September 1941 radio receivers had to be conveyed to the NS state administration (around 540,000 receivers were delivered).
32. As mentioned, *Milorg*, despite its name, was not a fighting unit and it was not meant to be. During the war it was mainly a “dormant unit,” ready for action once the Germans surrendered. Military raids along the coast and sabotage against German installations were carried out by units under British command (often with Norwegian personnel, as in Company Linge; cf. *Special Operation Executive*).
33. As mentioned, in February 1942 by German demand, the Quisling regime tried to force all teachers to join a pro-Nazi teachers’

- organization. Most teachers refused, many were arrested. At an earlier stage, clergymen and church leaders had acted against the occupiers; 797 clergymen out of 858 resigned from their “earthly” office.
34. Some did act heroically, either in doing illegal work (*illegalt arbeid*) or in opposing the attempts to Nazify society (in judicial institutions, organizational life, church, schools). As an individual case of impressive personal resistance, cf., e.g., Hans Cappelen, *Vi ga oss ikke* (*We did not give in*), 1945.
 35. For further references, cf. Dahl, *Quisling, a study in treachery*, 1999; Pryser, *Hitlers hemmelige agenter: tysk etterretning i Norge 1939–1945*, 2001; Andenæs, *Det vanskelige oppgjøret*, 1979 (2nd ed., 1998, postscript by Øystein Sørensen).
 36. It is estimated that around 50,000 persons fled over the border to Sweden during the German occupation (cf. Grimnes, *Et flyktningsamfunn vokser fram—nordmenn i Sverige 1940–1945*, 1969), and they were assisted by numerous ordinary citizens.
 37. Cf. e.g., Andenæs, *Omkring rettsoppgjøret*, 1945; also *Det vanskelige oppgjøret: rettsoppgjøret etter okkupasjonen*, 1979; Dahl and Sørensen, eds., *Et rettferdig oppgjør? Rettsoppgjøret i Norge etter 1945*, 2004.
 38. As mentioned, after September 1940 all other political parties were forbidden by Terboven, and NS became the “state carrying party.” Hence, membership in NS got a new and politically contested significance.
 39. As mentioned, economic collaboration was legally a tricky point since even in time of war economic life must go on. Moreover, the German occupiers did not only build military installations; for military reasons they also improved roads and harbors, built airports, and established new industries, for instance, aluminium and fish conservation.
 40. Cf. Andenæs, 1979, giving voice to this criticism of the trials, pp. 105–114, especially p. 114.
 41. In the trials after the war, around 96,000 persons were summoned before the court (approximately 3% of the population), 46,000 (approximately 1.5% of the population) were sentenced. Thirty Norwegians were sentenced to death, 25 were executed. But there was relatively little “wild justice” (of the kind that took place, for instance, in France). The emotions were somewhat tempered by the legal system

(which then got somewhat tainted by these emotions; this is to some extent true for procedures and sentences in court, but also for irregular treatments of those in jail cf., e.g., Hagen, 2009, *Oppgjørets time*). The Norwegian exile government in London had made the following decisions for future trials when the war came to an end: (i) October 3, 1941, capital punishment was reintroduced for civilians found guilty of treason (recall Quisling's intervention of April 1940); (ii) January 22, 1941, membership in NS entailed loss of general trust (as a legal sentence), in addition to jail and fines, possibly also a loss of civil rights (right to vote) and the right to public positions (jobs); (iii) December 15, 1944, party membership implied a collective responsibility for what was done by NS. (Before the war NS was a legal political party. Membership in the fall of 1940 was around 22,000; the highest number, in the fall of 1943, 43,400 members.)

42. In so doing the London government operated as a legislative institution, with reference to the so-called Elverum Warrant (*Elverumsfullmakta*), from April 9, 1940.
43. Recall that the number of German soldiers in Norway was very high. As to the number of men between the ages of 20 and 35, there were approximately as many German soldiers as there were Norwegians. Moreover, as just mentioned, after the early summer of 1940 and until the end of the war there were no regular military battles in the country.
44. Cf., e.g., Olsen, *Krigens barn: de norske krigsbarna og deres mødre*, 1998. (Olsen, *Schicksal Lebensborn: die Kinder der Schande und ihre Mütter*, Ebba D. Drolshagen, trans., 2004. Recently Drolshagen wrote a book on the relationship between German soldiers and Norwegian women; she had a hard time finding a Norwegian editor willing to publish a Norwegian version of the book.)
45. Cf., e.g., Berntsen, *I malstrømmen. Johan Nygaardsvold 1879–1952*, 1991.
46. Here we refer to the general “imaginary,” which, for instance, was conveyed in schoolbooks.
47. Surely not without exceptions, but as a widespread and subconscious way of thinking. Cf., e.g., Grimnes, 1990 on “the national consensus syndrome” (*det nasjonale konsens-syndromet*).

48. Roughly stated, the “bad others” were Nazis during the war, Soviet communists during the Cold War, and then American capitalists according to the Marxist-Leninists, phallographic males according to militant feminists; defenders of western values and traditions according to multiculturalists. For quite some time the “bad others” were called Fascists, or racists, or both.
49. That is, as long as they stay at home; once they come here, they tend to be seen either as miserable but good victims or as the bad others.
50. Cf., e.g., Sejersted, *Sosialdemokratiets tidsalder*, 2005.
51. Not only for engineers and architects rebuilding the country after the war, but also in advanced fields of research like nuclear technology (cf. the production of heavy water and the nuclear reactor at Kjeller); hence Norway naively and shamefully contributed to the proliferation of nuclear technology to Israel (and India?).
52. The influential Norwegian economist Ragnar Frisch (1895–1973) received the Nobel Prize in 1969.
53. This instrumentalist tendency begins earlier among the top leaders in the Labor Party, already with Einar Gerhardsen, right after World War II, when the country had to be rebuilt (requiring political planning and instrumental rationality, in an atmosphere of moral self-satisfaction, far from any critical self-reflection). But former leaders, before Brundtland, had more of a proletarian style. Cf. Oscar Torp, Einar Gerhardsen, Trygve Bratteli, Guttorm Hansen, and Odvar Nordli.
54. As a prime minister and a dominant person in the Labor Party, she was supportive of a campaign (in the mid 1980s) for a political “modernization,” largely conceived of in terms of individual choice (“freedom”) and institutional deregulation (rather than personal autonomy and argumentative rationality and formative communication).
55. There are differences both in terms of class structure and the stage of modernization, including the kind of expertise and technology available for political interventions: At the time of Brundtland the differentiation of different scientific and scholarly disciplines had come much further than what it had at the time of Schweigaard. Hence the need for a reflective awareness of the increasing plurality of scientific and scholarly perspectives had now become even more urgent (for political reasons, to avoid biased and one-dimensional decisions), but also

epistemically more difficult. However, already from the late 1950s there were extensive discussions on these challenges (for instance from Hans Skjervheim, with a pertinent criticism of the emerging social sciences and of related professions, and thereby a critique of the political regime, cf., e.g., his criticism of “the instrumentalist fallacy,” printed in Skjervheim, 2002, pp. 130–137; English version in Skjervheim, 1996, pp. 7–114). But in referring to Brundtland as an ideal type for instrumental rationality we should once again recall that this is a simplification; for instance, in Brundtland, 1988, pp. 55 and 62–63, she underlines the importance of intersubjective learning processes.

56. For instance, she is a medical doctor. He was a professor of jurisprudence. She is a woman (at a time of women’s liberation and environmental challenges). He is a man (in a patriarchal society, ignorant of these challenges of our time).
57. Moreover, the social and educational background of Gro Harlem Brundtland is similar to that of previous state officials, in contrast to the working-class background of the earlier leaders of the Norwegian Labor Party (such as Gerhardsen, Torp, and Bratteli). As a comment on the possible impact of her social background, cf. Østerberg and Nilsen, *Statskvinnen. Gro Harlem Brundtland og nyliberalismen*, 1998.
58. The strength of this conception (and its limitations) can, for example, be observed in her persistent defense of Norwegian whale hunting, relying on natural scientific arguments (and disregarding the sociological and symbolic aspects of the issue). Moreover, the important UN–Brundtland report of sustainable development is basically anthropocentric and utilitarian, without a discussion of these ethical positions. (On the other hand, what can we expect of a political document, such as this UN report?) Cf. comments in Skirbekk, “Ethical Gradualism, Beyond Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism?,” in Skirbekk, ed., *The Notion of Sustainability and Its Normative Implications*, 1994, pp. 79–126. Furthermore, Brundtland did a great job in focusing on environmental issues internationally, not least by launching the catchword *sustainability*. At the same time she behaved ambiguously by emphasizing that economic growth and environmental protection must go hand in hand (with an underlying hope for future technological and scientific solutions).

59. In this perspective there are interesting similarities between the ideas of modernization held by influential persons of the regime of state officials in the early 19th century and those held by influential persons of the Labor Party and its regime in the 20th century.
60. That is, positivism in terms of scientific naturalism and cultural radicalism (*kulturradikalisme*, as in Georg Brandes). Positivism in terms of logical positivism came later, between the two world wars.
61. Furthermore, there is a contrast between the British orientation of Schweigaard and the German orientation of Monrad, a geocultural difference deeply entrenched in Norwegian society.
62. Other names could have been chosen, for instance, Francis Bull (1887–1974), professor in the history of literature, or Andreas Hofgaard Winsnes (1889–1972), professor in the history of ideas. They were value-conservative, promoting interpretive rather than critical and argumentative activities. But they were intellectually socialized in an earlier period, not in the postwar period. Andreas Aarflot (b. 1928), former bishop in Oslo (1978–1998, and *preses* among Norwegian bishops), might have been another choice. But all in all we stay with Langslet.
63. Concerning the term prepolitical in this context, cf. Løvhaug, *Politikk som idékamp. Et intellektuelt gruppeportrett av Minerva-kretsen 1957–1972*, 2007, p. 110.
64. E.g., *Minerva*, 2, 1962, on “Norwegian Conservatism in the 19th Century.” Cf. also Løvhaug, 2007, p. 168 ff.
65. For instance, in the symbolically important “language question” Langslet (like Monrad in the 19th century) has all along been an ardent defender of the Danish-Norwegian tradition (from the turn of the 19th century called *riksmålsbevegelsen*), both in political organizations and in public debate. Curiously, as an author of the history of *riksmålsbevegelsen* (a book called *I kamp for norsk kultur: riksmålsbevegelsens historie gjennom hundre år*, Oslo, 1999), Langslet commits a fatal mistake concerning a politically sensitive decision in this movement at an early stage of the German occupation, presenting what was actually a decision in favor of a collaboration with the Nazis in language politics as if it were a decision against such a collaboration, cf. documentation in Fløgstad, *Brennbart*, 2004, p. 59 ff. This *pénible* mistake and the discussion it provoked indicate the persistent emotional force of the language issue.

66. Thus, in addition to their opposition to the instrumentalists (and technocrats) in the Labor Party and the business-liberalists in their own party, there was also a contrast to the value-conservative within other parties due to this sociocultural divide. Interestingly, Langslet explicitly comments on the need for a reconciliation between the value-conservative forces in the tradition from the state official (*embetsmannskulturen*) and the value-conservative forces in the popular movements (*det folkelige*). In so doing he refers to Monrad, who made the same point. But still Langslet, like Monrad before him, remains deeply and one-sidedly embedded in the political and linguistic tradition from *embetsmannskulturen*.
67. These issues were much discussed, for example, in existentialism and Neo-Marxism. Langslet wrote his thesis on the history of ideas on young Marx and human alienation; cf. Langslet, 1963.
68. For instance, as a minister of culture (1981–1986) Langslet actively supported the deregulation of radio and television (hoping for cultural pluralism), with the result that these media, due to market forces, gradually deteriorated; the formative and argumentative aspects were weakened and the agenda was largely set by commercial considerations, focusing on entertainment and tabloid journalism.
69. The publication of the journal *Minerva* ended in 1972. Cf. comments on its “withering away,” in Løvhaug, 2007, p. 280 f.
70. Cf. Skjervheim’s statement that Norwegians have been eager in correcting each other, but reluctant to question one’s own position (e.g., *Syn og Segn*, 1959).
71. Cf. his thesis, *Objectivism and the Study of Man* (from 1957, published 1959, reprinted in Skjervheim, 1996), a work characterized by argumentative virtues from analytic philosophy and reflective thinking from continental philosophy.
72. In practice this distinction is often blurred, but this empirical fact does not undermine the importance of the conceptual distinction as a paradigmatic one. (The empirical fact that most of the time we are “somewhat ill” and “somewhat healthy” does not do away with the conceptual distinction between disease and health.)
73. In the Kantian sense of *Mündigkeit*.

74. These are counterfactual, act-related preconditions for communication in a participatory perspective, not facts; cf. Skirbekk, "The Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Constitutive Regulative Idea," in Bargliotes and Chronis, eds., 2009.
75. Recognizing *versus* objectifying; taking arguments seriously versus looking for underlying motives (for the latter, cf. the discussion on the "hermeneutic of suspicion").
76. Such as in economics and political science, both disciplines conceive questions of *normalcy* as questions of *factualness*, for instance: *use value* is redescribed as *exchange value*; explicit *arguments and values* (validity-claims in speech and action) are reinterpreted as underlying *interests and power* in disguise.
77. We might say that there is in our time a trend away from a *moralistic society* (influenced by normative professions, such as traditional teachers, clergymen, and judges) toward a *therapeutic society* (influenced by causally and contextually explaining professions, e.g., among psychiatrists in court and social workers in welfare institutions).
78. Skjervheim distinguished between *intentio obliqua* and *intentio recta*, referring to the former as characteristic of "spiritual positivism" (*åndspositivisme*). Cf. the essay "Sløret og skiljeveggen" in Skjervheim, 2002, p. 210 ff.
79. Cf. the differentiation (as in M. Weber) of value spheres (disciplines) and institutions (professions).

CHAPTER 7

Epistemic Challenges and Argumentative Rationality:
Science and Education, the Public Sphere, and Politics

There are challenges to the processes of modernization, *internal* ones related to institutional and epistemic differentiations and their implications, and *external* ones related to environmental limitations and scarce resources. In this chapter on modernization processes as epistemic overburdening, we give a few glimpses of epistemic challenges concerning argumentative rationality related to science and education, to the public sphere, and to politics in postwar Norway.

Philosophical Strengthening and Politicized Weakening of Argumentative Rationality

As World War II came to an end in Europe in the spring of 1945, Norway apparently emerged as unified and morally strengthened and ready for material rebuilding and further modernization without a need for self-examination or critical reflection on what had happened. The collective imaginary was largely dominated by a dichotomy between *good guys* and *bad guys*, and thus the problem of evil was externalized as a problem concerning the others.

When faced with this kind of tension between winners and losers, we may retrospectively envisage three paradigmatic strategies: (i) try to neutralize the tensions by de-precision and harmonizing speech, (ii) try to marginalize those conceived as evil (the “evil other”), or (iii) try to address the tension head-on by reflecting openly and self-critically on conflicting conceptions and experiences.

At the outset, after the liberation and for many ensuing years, the two former strategies dominated Norwegian society, i.e., a strange blend of harmonizing de-precision and stigmatizing demonization. This implied that a decisive form of rationality in modern societies, that of argumentative rationality in terms of self-critical and public reasoning,¹ was severely restrained. But not entirely. There were other voices, for instance, in a group of young scholars around Arne Næss, who seriously promoted argumentative rationality in terms of a critical and public use of reason, also in relation to these sensitive matters.² This was a time when the University of Oslo was still a small institution, where an active group of philosophers and philosophically oriented social scientists intervened innovatively. New people with new paradigms. Those who belonged to the “Oslo school of philosophy” did not come from the university-based state officials. They came from the sidelines, with Næss in the forefront and with Skjervheim and his followers just behind.

There are several reasons to mention the role of these groups in the processes of modernization in the postwar period (say, until the

early 1970s). In this period Norwegian philosophers contributed to processes of cultural modernization by (i) rethinking and reworking the traditional divide between so-called continental and analytic philosophy (in short, between German and English culture), an important reconciliation task in postwar Europe;³ (ii) promoting a collaboration with other disciplines, not least with the expanding social sciences;⁴ (iii) promoting political philosophy, motivated by experiences of war and occupation;⁵ and (iv) promoting argumentative rationality in public space, for instance, on matters of peace and nuclear rearmament.⁶

Before the postwar period, philosophy had been a marginal discipline in Norway, with one or two positions at the University of Oslo and with no great impact on public life, which mainly focused on practical day-to-day challenges, relying on a comprehensive background consensus on major principles and procedures. However, by the time of the war and its aftermath basic questions began to arise, also questions nourished by inherent challenges of the modernization processes, both as to normative principles and as to the strength and limits of various forms of scientific knowledge. Philosophical reflection, updated on such questions, represented an objectively urgent need. The professional and institutional strengthening of philosophy—by its broader embeddedness in society⁷ and by its strength as a reflective and argumentative activity—represented a significant contribution to an updated epistemic modernization in the mid 20th century.

This stretch, up to the early 1970s, was a key period for two of our ideal-type “symbolic agents” and their intellectual environments, namely Hans Skjervheim and Lars Roar Langslet (referred to in the previous chapter). This was in many ways an intellectually exciting period. It was exciting also in a sociocultural sense, since a considerable number of gifted students and young scholars with a modern version of some of the ideals from the popular movements were now entering the universities, the former stronghold of the state officials. This renewal of university life could thus be seen as an

accomplishment of the political events of 1884,⁸ a kind of national reconciliation, even though some of the traditional tensions prevailed and new tensions and challenges were approaching.

In the years leading up to 1968 there were, at and around the universities, collective and constructive learning processes of critical and self-critical thinking, including a criticism of central aspects of modern Western societies (of foreign policy and of technocracy and power in disguise, and of reification and alienation), in short, a strengthening of discursive and formative rationality.

Whereas the years leading up to 1968 were characterized by a strengthening of discursive-argumentative rationality, the situation changed dramatically around 1970 when the Marxist-Leninists⁹ (AKP-ml) and their sympathizers gained power among student activists and cultural workers.¹⁰ This Maoist youth movement—probably unique for Norway, among Western countries—was well organized; it demanded total loyalty and full-time activism from its members. In public debates they ruthlessly aimed at influencing the others, taking their own doctrine to be the only truth¹¹ and renouncing serious argumentation, in short, promoting *überreden* and rejecting *überzeugen* as if it were a bourgeois illusion.¹² In a relatively short time they had ruined some core institutions for argumentative activities (such as the main forum for discussions among students, the *studentsamfunn*) and seriously weakened the argumentative culture for years to come.

Interestingly, when these militant Maoists gradually lost power (toward the end of the 1970s) and they had to seek a living, many of its prominent members got central positions in Norwegian newspapers (which at that time were commercialized). Apparently, when the faith in their own doctrines withered away, what prevailed were subtle (and not so subtle) practices of influencing other people—again, *überreden* rather than *überzeugen*, i.e., strategic rather than discursive-argumentative rationality.

Sciences and Universities Challenged

Modern societies are deeply science-based, and the sciences (*Wissenschaften*) are differentiated into a variety of disciplines, each with their specific methods and models (conceptual clusters). Consequently there is an inherent need for reflective and competent discussions of scientific and scholarly perspectives and presuppositions. The practical importance of these kinds of reflective and discursive activities is urgent since there is a persistent danger that some specific scientific or scholarly perspective (discipline) becomes dominant at the expense of other perspectives (disciplines) that could have shown other aspects of and given access to other solutions for a given practical problem.

In short, there is a danger that experts brought up in a specific discipline tend to conceive their models for being the reality *tout court*, and that the politicians and other decision makers unreflectively accept this epistemic bias and thus overlook the vital distinction between a model and reality, between specific models and complex practical problems—cf., for instance, the common assumption that highly abstract mathematical models in economics give the appropriate answer to complex, concrete problems. In other words, there is an inherent need for a self-critical and reflective argumentative rationality.

Basic scientific and scholarly research is still largely fostered and carried out at universities.¹³ The same is basically true for higher, research-based education. But recently university institutions have worldwide undergone deep changes, primarily to respond to (assumed or real) needs for institutional reforms, especially in terms of stronger economic control on the basis of measurable results in research and education, and especially by external goals for economic growth and improved competitiveness, or improved political governance,¹⁴ or improved medical treatments and a more healthy population.¹⁵ Three implications are worth mentioning, here:

(i) When *utility* in this *instrumental* sense is seen as the common aim of all university research, then many disciplines will be

marginalized since they do not and cannot deliver instrumentally useful results. This is notably the case for interpretive-formative disciplines,¹⁶ but it is also true for some kinds of basic research, especially when evaluated in a short-term perspective. But the argument for usefulness is problematic also for technologically oriented disciplines. At our stage in the process of modernization, the previous optimistic vision of scientific and technological research promoting beneficial usefulness has lost its credibility due to the detrimental potential of such research, from nuclear, biological, and chemical weaponry to unintended environmental implications of narrow-minded acts to obtain short-term economic profit or local benefits. Hence, there is a need for critical argumentative rationality, questioning these naive, optimistic ideas of utility and progress.

Moreover, that which is common to all university research is not instrumental usefulness but argumentative rationality. In the scientific and scholarly disciplines there are different concepts and models, and there are differences among laboratory experiments, fieldwork, and textual studies. But at the same time, researchers in all disciplines have to defend their theses in doctoral dissertations, i.e., by the use of argumentative rationality.

In neglecting these inherent differences and challenges, and due to a shortsighted focus on instrumental usefulness, recent university reforms tend to downplay and even undermine the role of argumentative and interpretive rationality.

(ii) Recent European university reforms (also in Norway) entail an overall *shortening* of the time for academic degrees and a *fragmentation* of the *curricula* into smaller units. These trends are clearly problematic for interpretive-formative disciplines, but in reality problematic for all disciplines with the academic ambition of reflecting on current paradigms, on one's own as well as on those of neighboring disciplines. We need time for serious presentations of paradigms and presuppositions, as well as for serious appropriation and intellectual formation. In a broader perspective, these trends toward a shorter time and fragmentation are problematic for an academic culture.¹⁷

(iii) Recent reforms are based on a financial system that itself is based on quantitative goals and measurements for research and education, for example, by giving economic support for publications in international disciplinary journals. By implication this leads to a *withdrawal* from participating in discussions in the *public sphere*. But in a modern society with a confusing plurality of scientific and scholarly perspectives (and a similar plurality of religions and other “comprehensive doctrines”), at the same time as scientific and scholarly research is fallible and uncertain, there is definitely a need for an argumentative participation in public debates by scholars and scientists who are current and articulate, as well as reflective and self-critical. Recent university reforms tend to weaken such participation in public space, leaving these arenas to a few especially interested university and college teachers, and to journalistic commentators without an adequate foundation in these problems.

These trends mentioned are seen worldwide. In the case of Norway they are especially problematic since it is a small country with strong egalitarian attitudes. It is, therefore, difficult to promote academic quality by a differentiation among institutions and also within institutions, even at the university level.

Moreover, an active political usage of science-based expertise has a long and strong tradition in Norway. Consequently, this is a regime with an urgent need for serious and self-critical discussions of the strength and weakness of different scientific and scholarly models and methods and of possible bias when special perspectives (a special group of experts) become unreasonably dominant at the expense of other perspectives (and experts). For a science-based regime it is particularly important to have reflective and self-critical discussions on the strength and limits of scientific and scholarly disciplines. This is true for politicians making decisions as well as for citizens as democratic voters and participants in public debates at different levels and in various fora. But at this point there is definitely a deficiency as to the role that argumentative rationality ought to play in these types of science-based societies.¹⁸

Public Sphere Challenged

The public sphere in a modern society is surely a multifarious phenomenon, from meetings and seminars to communication and information on the Internet, from newspapers, journals, and books in paper to other media via radio and television. Moreover, there are structural and ideological changes,¹⁹ in Norway as elsewhere in the West, not only due to technological innovations, but also due to commercialization. There is a transition from educational and discursive ideals toward entertainment and people-oriented journalism.

We restrict ourselves here to a few brief remarks on the Norwegian situation, focusing especially on newspapers and electronic media.

At the outset Norwegian newspapers were party newspapers, and these newspapers mirrored the varied political perspectives. Gradually the institutional anchor was changed from party politics to the market. Newspapers became a commodity on the market—though a small market—in a society with egalitarian attitudes opposed to the idea of a differentiation between newspapers for an elite and the kind of “boulevard press” seen in many other European countries. Despite the ideological intention of combining public discourse and entertainment²⁰ the result has mainly been restraints along three interrelated dimensions:

- (i) The mainstream newspapers, like the television channels, have become “tabloid” in the sense that they focus on persons and personal affairs and on scandals and conflicts, expand the use of colored photos, and shorten written texts.
- (ii) In editorial matters, the mainstream newspapers are largely run by employed journalists who constitute a social in-group that frequently comments on each other and whose members often have similar sociopolitical “imaginaries” and “gut” reactions.
- (iii) It is an essential element in their self-understanding that they do not merely act on the market selling a commodity,

nor merely act on behalf of a profession, but that they act according to an unwritten and social contract asking them to uncover power in disguise²¹—a noble ambition that often leads to a collective witch-hunt directed against single persons in politics and public life. At the same time their own power to influence events and to decide an agenda is often discretely overlooked.²² Still worse, most politicians depend on these media, to the effect that there is hardly any comparable counterpoint to the power of the media.²³

Again, modern media are multifarious and this is true in the case of Norway, although there are some positive exceptions to this somewhat gloomy picture. For instance, it could perhaps be said that in recent years the public debate has improved to a certain degree, not primarily because of the journalists but because of contributions from able citizens. But seen in relief of the inherent demands of modern societies for a multiple and enlightened public sphere, fostering self-critical and reflective argumentative rationality, it is fair to say that, all in all, there is a discrepancy between the actual institutions and agents on the one hand, and the inherent demands for argumentative rationality on the other.²⁴ As to the need for interpretive-formative and argumentative contributions that require time and space to be properly presented and conceived, there are thus serious institutional challenges.

Party Politics Challenged

In many ways, Norwegian politicians used to be honest and serious persons²⁵ (which does not mean they were sufficiently competent and current), and the political culture was fairly decent (which does not mean there was no fraud and irregularities). But changes are under way,²⁶ and there are several structural problems. For instance, because the political realm, in terms of party politics,²⁷ has to interact both with *scientific and scholarly expertise*,²⁸ often delivered by the universities, and with *mass media*, not least the mainstream

newspapers as well as radio and television, and since there are structural problems within these two realms, there is a spillover to the realm of party politics.

As previously mentioned, each scientific and scholarly discipline sees the world through its own conceptual and methodological *perspective* and hence there is a danger that politicians predominantly stick to a specialized kind of expertise and disregard other kinds of expertise that might have been practically important for an optimal handling of the problems they face. There is a danger that they may become intellectually biased when coping with complex problems—the financial crisis and environmental challenges illustrate this point. In addition we have the problem of *uncertainty* in scientific research and in science-based expertise.²⁹ This implies that the relationship between expertise and politics cannot be conceived of as a relationship between unquestionable knowledge and political choices, but that there is often a need for *discretion under uncertainty* by the experts involved and also for an *open and enlightened deliberation* among politicians and citizens in general.

Due to the tabloid nature of many mass media, combined with the ambition of many journalists to have the upper hand in defining the political agenda and in uncovering power in disguise (often on a personal level), there is sometimes an infelicitous relationship between politics and mass media. Furthermore, there are tendencies toward bureaucratization and centralization in political life, roughly speaking with the double negative effect that high ranking politicians become more remote from ordinary people and how they think and react,³⁰ and at the same time, these politicians tend to think and operate within their own restricted and inadequate imaginaries and conceptual clusters.³¹

At the same time as argumentative rationality is strained, and as special and conceptually poor imaginaries are dominant, there has been a weakening of “popular education” (*folkeopplysning*) and of the “popular-national” ideas (*det folkeleg nasjonale*) that used to give strength to the Left party and later to the Labor Party;³² politics has

to a large degree become an effort to harmonize the administration of individual rights and material group interests.

In short, in Norway the political sphere used to function reasonably well in coping with day-to-day problems as long as these problems were well known and primarily demanded the response “business as usual.” But there is a problem as to inherent challenges in ongoing processes of modernization, be they institutional or epistemic, and also concerning external challenges related to these processes, requesting sustainable long-term solutions.

These are not merely challenges for the political sphere, but for the interplay among the spheres of science and education, the public sphere, and the political sphere, each with their inherent shortcomings (as already indicated). Bluntly stated, there is a bias in favor of short-term practicality and instrumental rationality at the expense of long-term and argumentative public reasoning that is deeply needed in modern societies with their internal and external challenges.³³

An Excursion: Epistemic Shortcomings When Faced with Neoliberalism

The foundations of a universal welfare state were already in place before World War II.³⁴ After the war the further development of the welfare state continued, from the late 1970s supported by revenues from an expanding oil economy. With the neoliberalist turn in the late 1980s and after the fall of the Soviet system, the welfare system was reshaped, but not abandoned.³⁵ We make a few remarks on epistemic challenges in this regard.

American liberalists used to criticize the welfare state for being rigid and inefficient and doomed to failure in a globalized, competitive world. This criticism is conceptually biased and empirically incorrect. It overlooks not only the political and cultural differences between Europe and the United States,³⁶ but also differences within Europe, e.g., between the Nordic countries and central Europe.³⁷

Nordic welfare is universal, i.e., for all citizens, not merely for

special, potentially stigmatized groups. Moreover, it is embedded in a relatively egalitarian culture of basic trust and with a general sense of solidarity.³⁸ Far from being rigid, Nordic countries have comparatively high efficiency and social mobility. Nor are taxes particularly high,³⁹ especially when compared with the public services that citizens get in return.

Any social system is in need of ongoing correction and adjustment. This is true of the welfare state, as well; but there was no deep crisis in the functioning of the Nordic welfare state in the late 1980s, nor in the general support in the population.⁴⁰ Still there were serious challenges ahead.

(i) One serious challenge is related to demography: Birth rates are low and people live longer (often in need of extensive care). Even so, birth rates in Norway are higher than in most European countries,⁴¹ and the average age for retirement is among the highest in Europe.⁴²

(ii) Another challenge relates to the mass immigration from countries where there are unclear conceptions of what it takes to live in a welfare state (in terms of civic virtues, such as solidarity beyond one's own family). Hence there might be a danger of a weakening of the basic trust and the self-restrictive solidarity required for a generous and universal welfare state.⁴³

(iii) Finally, there is a danger of persistent crises in the international economy whereby the Nordic welfare system will be strained. This is a possibility in the Norwegian case, despite the oil economy and the national "oil fund" (*oljefondet*).

In the early 1970s oil was found offshore in Norwegian territorial waters. Gradually an oil economy developed that in many ways has changed the economic structure of the country and created unexpected wealth. At the outset oil production was run under state supervision and largely by state ownership (cf. Statoil); thereby, this new wealth became economically beneficial for all citizens (since a basic economic redistribution has always been a part of the welfare program). Hence, as the oil venture did not undermine the general

welfare system, it literally fueled the system. However, with Thatcherism, and later with the fall of the Soviet Union, neoliberal ideas dominated. From the mid 1980s these ideas penetrated Norwegian politics, not only from the Right, but also within the Labor Party, for instance by Gro Harlem Brundtland and her supporters (who ran the government for three periods, in 1981, from 1986 to 1989, and from 1990 to 1996).

In launching a debate on “modernization,” the main actors in the Party promoted the deregulation of public institutions, *from* the state *to* the market, in accordance with a neoliberalist ideology and its economic models for personal motivation and institutional control.⁴⁴ This was a key moment for *New Public Management*,⁴⁵ with the idea of citizens as market consumers with legal rights, rather than conceiving of citizens as political agents who are participating in democratic procedures through public reasoning, elections, and party politics.

In short, the public sector underwent changes, and these changes impacted the overall setting of the welfare system. But the inner core of the welfare state, related to healthcare and social security for disease and unemployment, was not severely influenced by these changes.

As an aspect of this “modernization,” central political actors launched a debate in favor of “freedom,” conceived according to the *liberalist dichotomy* between individual freedom (conceived of as free choice by a consumer on the market) and collective coercion (conceived of as restrictions enforced by the state). In short, they did not operate with the concept of *personal autonomy* as a constitutive “regulative idea”⁴⁶ and, thus, as a personal task, as well as a public co-responsibility.⁴⁷ During this debate on “freedom” the participants, including the political left, were caught by the simplistic distinction between freedom conceived of as individual choice and coercion conceived of as state intervention.

The Inherent Need for Argumentative Rationality and Prepolitical Virtues

Bluntly stated, Norway is a satisfactory “day-to-day democracy,” not by ideal standards, but when compared with most other existing democracies.⁴⁸ But a functioning democracy takes more than formal rules for voting and the separation of powers. Certain prepolitical conditions are required.⁴⁹ We have already referred to basic trust, obtained through special historical experiences, as such a prepolitical condition for the development of a parliamentary democracy and for the development of a Nordic welfare state.

In the previous paragraphs we pointed at various challenges due to a relative deficiency of argumentative rationality related to sciences and education, the public space, and party politics, and we indicated why reflective and argumentative rationality is needed in modern science-based and pluralistic societies:

(i) There is a need for a reflective handling of scientific and scholarly disciplines so as to avoid detrimental biases in practical politics caused by an unreasonable dominance of a specific scientific or scholarly discipline at the expense of other, relevant disciplines. We may conceive of the financial crisis of 2008 as an example of unrealistic confidence in economic models, while disregarding the essential difference between model and reality: Reflective shortcomings and conceptual poverty easily give rise to severe problems in modern science-based societies.⁵⁰

(ii) Faced with the inherent pluralism of modern societies, at the level of values and lifestyle, at the level of different “comprehensive doctrines” and religions, and at the level of cultural and ethnic pluralism due to immigration, it is vital to have serious and enlightened discussions on the distinction and the inherent interplay between universality and particularity, i.e., between that which is universally valid and socially necessary on the one hand and the realms of reasonable disagreement and legitimate pluralism on the other.⁵¹

At this point we face the question of universal validity,⁵² of universally valid norms that are confession transcending and thus neutral with regard to the different comprehensive doctrines and religions, and which thereby allow for value pluralism, thus avoiding the “fight between gods” (as Max Weber saw it).

Moreover, there is the question of the normative foundation of a constitutional democracy (*demokratischer Rechtsstaat*), with its rights and duties. Thereby, there is also the question of the prepolitical pre-suppositions for a functioning modern democracy. In our case we have seen how these preconditions include a basic mutual trust and egalitarian dignity stemming from specific historical experiences and learning processes.⁵³

There are normative requirements on three interrelated levels: (i) universal norms as preconditions for argumentative rationality, (ii) normative preconditions for a constitutional democracy, and (iii) pre-political conditions for a functioning egalitarian democracy with an extended welfare system. These three normative questions will have to be considered in any serious discussion on the interrelationship between universality and particularity, between what is required and what may vary. This applies to the Norwegian case, a modern democracy under the rule of law and with a universal welfare state.

In this chapter we referred to institutional challenges facing argumentative rationality with regard to the sciences and education, public space and party politics, and institutional challenges that influence the intellectual socialization and thereby the capabilities of the agents involved. But the situation seems to be even more challenging when we also include the underlying *imaginaries* referred to in the previous chapter. We then assumed that there is, in our case, a particular background understanding, thinking in terms of “good guys” and “bad guys” and thus externalizing evil and thereby preventing self-critical reflection. It was further assumed that this dual scheme was transformed into a triangular scheme, including the “good other,” mainly as a victim, not as an autonomous and responsible person—

an attitude that entails an asymmetric paternalism. In short, by conceiving of the other basically as a victim and not as a responsible person, an attitude is applied that unintentionally entails an attack on the other's human dignity. This was exactly the reason why the great Norwegian poet and fascist, Knut Hamsun, reacted furiously when he, after the War, was diagnosed as having "permanently weakened mental capabilities," thus, being unfit for a legal trial.

Since then it has become fashionable in criminal courts to claim this kind of irresponsibility to avoid legal punishment. There has been a tendency to conceive of social problems in these categories, without really considering the intricate question concerning the balance between causal factors and personal responsibility in the various cases (cf. the discussions on "moralistic" versus "therapeutic" societies⁵⁴). Moreover, similar attitudes, whereby the others are unintentionally victimized,⁵⁵ became common toward immigrants.⁵⁶ It is ironic that this attitude, which is supposed to be one of mutual recognition, in reality represents a reduction of the human dignity of the other person as a responsible human being.

There is still another conceptual shortcoming that precludes a reasonable discussion on matters of integration. In a modern democracy with a decent welfare system there are conceptual distinctions to be made between social rights, liberty rights, and participatory rights.⁵⁷ (i) Strictly speaking, all that is needed to obtain social rights is a biological body and a personal identification number. (ii) To obtain liberty rights one has to be able to act intentionally, not merely react by instinct. (iii) But to fulfill participatory rights in a modern democracy one has to master the public language in a reasonable way and to comprehend basic facts about the functioning of such a society, both the general institutional differentiations (as the one between the legal system and religion) and the attitudes and virtues that are needed for its functioning, including the specific institutional arrangements and the related attitudes and patterns of behavior required in the society in which one has settled.⁵⁸ In short, social rights can be given by a political decision to anyone with a biobody; liberty

rights can also be given, but only to agents able to act intentionally; but participatory rights cannot, for conceptual reasons, be meaningfully given to anyone who does not master the public language and the basic cultural codes and who lacks a fair knowledge of the society where one is living.

Referring to the need for self-critical and reflective argumentative rationality in modern societies, we may recall a general notion of a “modernization of consciousness”:⁵⁹

- (1) We have to be open to recognizing scientific and scholarly knowledge, conceived of critically in accordance with the self-critical conception of the sciences as organized skepticism,⁶⁰ and thereby we have to acquire a discursive and reflective attitude, to the effect that we are open to seeking and accepting the better arguments and for recognizing the others as equal participants.⁶¹
- (2) Everyone must realize that one’s own faith is one among several and that one cannot know in a scientific or scholarly sense that one has the right faith (cf. the previous point). In this sense everyone has to acquire a reflective identity.
- (3) We must realize that valid reasons, in legislation and in the court, in principle must be understandable for all citizens, independent of faith and worldview. Decisive political reasons must in this sense be neutral in relation to any specific religion or worldview. We must accept an institutional distinction between religion and the judicial system.

The third point implies that all kinds of views can be presented for public debate, but finally they have to be “sluiced” into the political system, to end up in legal decisions that are binding for all citizens. It is required that all decisive reasons in principle are understandable for everybody.⁶²

The first point refers to an interconnection between a critique of the sciences (*Wissenschaftskritik*) and a critique of religion. In this

connection it is important to recognize there is an inherent demand for a self-critical critique of scientific rationality, in contrast to scientist dogmatism, as well as postmodernist relativism.

When applied in concrete contexts these three demands (points 1 to 3) will have to be adjusted to each individual in a reasonable and flexible way. But it is decisive that the various leaders take these challenges seriously and that they have gone through the corresponding learning processes, to the effect that the general culture is sufficiently influenced by such a modernization of consciousness.

These are inherent demands and structural needs in modern pluralistic societies. Hence, these requirements, when they are not satisfactorily redeemed, may serve as an indicator of reflective shortcomings and conceptual inadequacies in modern societies, including the Scandinavian ones.

Concluding Remarks: Scandinavian Similarities and Dissimilarities

The theme of the second focus was on social imaginaries and forms of rationality related to sciences, public space, and politics in the period after World War II. In our concluding remarks to the first focus we alluded to some similarities among the Nordic countries. But when we look at war experiences with subsequent self-interpretations and social imaginaries, these countries seem to be more dissimilar. As concluding remarks, we now look at some similarities and dissimilarities among the Nordic countries from World War II onward. But at first we recall some main points.

a. Unredeemed imaginaries and deficient self-examination?

In the Norwegian case we referred to the relatively strong position of instrumental rationality at the expense of reflective and self-critical argumentative rationality. In that connection we looked at sciences and education, the public sphere, and party politics. We also

pondered basic imaginaries in Norway after World War II. Whether there was a tendency to think in black and white—the good “we” against the “bad guys”—whereby the evil became externalized. If that is so, it would be fair to say that there was an infelicitous situation characterized by weakly developed argumentative rationality and by biased imaginaries, which together may have hampered a self-critical and sober reflection.

b. Deficiencies in coping with modern challenges

From the overall perspective in this essay, modernization processes are conceived of in terms of forms of rationality. The question as to how these forms of rationality are differentiated and interrelated is, therefore, an important one. The same is true as to the institutions and agents involved. The role played by disciplines and by experts and institutions is, thus, decisive for the critical question as to whether certain modernization processes can be seen as felicitous. A negative criterion is that of fatal imbalances, for instance by a detrimental marginalization of some forms of rationality and expertise, or by institutional bias or one-sidedness (such as in the Soviet Union, where the state and the party dominated, or in Russia after the fall of the Berlin Wall, where the market was dominant, or in Iran where the religious leaders are dominant).

Another focus was on the danger of a deficiency with regard to argumentative rationality, not least with regard to self-critical versions. Such deficiencies are detrimental for a reasonable handling of urgent challenges in modern societies, for instance:

- (i) for coping with the relationship between universality and plurality; this is a major challenge in a modern pluralistic society, not least in a modern constitutional democracy;⁶³
- (ii) for a reasonable handling of the relationship between different scientific and scholarly disciplines and forms of expertise in various concrete cases;

- (iii) for coping with the relationship between religion and public arguments, with relevance for the legislation of common coercive laws;⁶⁴
- (iv) for coping with cultural and religious differences in integration politics;
- (v) and for coping with long-term environmental problems for the sake of a sustainable and decent future.

For all of these challenges there is a need for free and enlightened public discussion and opinion formation, in addition to other requirements concerning appropriate forms of rationality and institutional arrangements. In our case we focused on what we conceive of as important imaginaries and forms of rationality in Norway from World War II and thereafter, looking especially at sciences and universities, public space, and party politics. From this perspective the deficiencies in terms of reflective and argumentative rationality were conspicuous, not least in contrast to the development of other forms of rationality. By focusing on forms of rationality, and thereby on sciences and their interrelationships, we realize there are challenges with regard to the danger of an inadequate selection of expert groups and, thus, of unintended and unforeseen negative consequences. To recognize and describe such challenges we need reflective and argumentative rationality.

c. Nordic similarities in political culture

The first decades of the postwar period are often seen as the key period for what has been called the “Scandinavian model.” Broadly speaking, that is a constitutional democracy with a political culture characterized by an active state using selected expert groups, a mixed economy with strong organizations, a general willingness to make reasonable compromises, and a universal welfare system with a basic redistribution of wealth. There are certainly differences among the Nordic states, and there were changes throughout this

period,⁶⁵ but this general characteristic calls attention to some typical aspects concerning the political culture and the institutions in these states. Despite neoliberalist trends through the 1980s and the following decades, these countries have preserved a relatively generous and universal welfare system and a relatively uncorrupted and efficient political culture. That in itself makes these countries attractive to many people.

d. War and its aftermath; dissimilarities in foreign policy and imaginaries

The Nordic processes of modernization should not be conceived of as deterministic, as unambiguous lines of development up to the egalitarian, efficient, and law-governed welfare society that was finally obtained in the postwar era. It is reasonable to imagine that things could have gone differently. Simultaneously, topography is destiny, not least in the sense that topography can make a difference geopolitically in matters of peace and war; and during World War II people in the five Nordic countries, with different geographical localization, underwent different experiences—in brief:⁶⁶

Denmark was occupied by the *Wehrmacht* in the spring of 1940, but remained a Danish kingdom, with its political and administrative institutions in relatively peaceful coexistence until the last period of the war. Norway was occupied at the same time; after a short military resistance Norway became a *Reichskommissariat* under *Reichskommissar* Terboven, whereas Quisling at first announced himself as the national leader and later became the *ministerpresident* of a collaborationist government. Sweden remained neutral during the war, at first by acting prudently and cautiously toward Hitler Germany,⁶⁷ and later by moving carefully toward the Allied Forces. Finland was tragically engaged in a war against the Red Army, the Winter War 1939–1940, and was soon after at war against the Soviet Union for a second time, now on the same side as Hitler Germany. Iceland was peacefully occupied by Allied Forces.

After the war, these experiences were interpreted and internalized in various ways. I have already alluded to some changes in Norwegian postwar imaginaries. The Finnish experiences were more dramatic, but apparently the Finns have coped successfully with their war experiences, as well as with their delicate postwar relationship as an independent state located adjacent to the Soviet Union. The Danes had far less dramatic experiences from the war, and thus it might have been tempting to adopt postwar imaginaries that tended to downplay the day-to-day practical collaboration with the occupiers. The Swedes adapted a prowestern neutrality, while at the same time presenting themselves as a progressive leftist country that supported third-world liberation movements.⁶⁸ Toward the end of the war the Icelanders could luckily establish an independent state, since the ties with Denmark had de facto been cut. All in all, during World War II each of the five Nordic countries were confronted with special challenges and each had its own reaction; and later, in the postwar period, each nation established a suitable self-understanding, more or less based on reality.

A related point can be added: At an earlier stage the first foreign language⁶⁹ to be used was German, from theology and university life to technology and the labor movements. Moreover, Germany was predominantly the cultural realm by which Nordic writers and artists entered the international scene. Consequently, World War II and the subsequent rupture with Germany and German culture represented a major geocultural change for the Nordic people and their social imaginaries. Foreign impulses became predominantly Anglo-American.

“The war (*polemos*) is the father of all things,” according to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus.⁷⁰ At least we could say that different war experiences and subsequent forms of self-interpretation did add to the dissimilarities along the Nordic rim.⁷¹

e. New uncertainty

In retrospect the Nordic processes of modernization do not appear as an unambiguous and necessary development toward an egalitarian, enlightened, and orderly welfare society and a democracy governed by law. It is imaginable that history could have taken other directions. This is especially the case in times of war and crisis, such as in Norwegian history in 1814, 1884, and 1905, or under the Great Depression and the economic crisis between the two world wars, or during and after World War II. Briefly, the result of the negotiations with Swedish authorities in the fall of 1814 was not evident in advance, nor was the outcome of the conflict between state officials and the opposition in 1884, nor between Norwegian and Swedish negotiators in 1905. Nor was it a given beforehand that in the 1930s there should be a red–green cooperation between a reform-oriented labor movement and a pragmatic peasants’ movement (in contrast to the development elsewhere in Europe⁷²), or that there should not be a “Danish solution” in 1940, that would have resulted in another public opinion and other imaginaries after the war.⁷³

Recently the Nordic societies have been under pressure of various kinds. For example: By the fall of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of neoliberalism and economic globalization, it has become more difficult to perform political governance and control on the national level. By the time of the attack on New York City’s World Trade Center and the emergence of “stateless” terrorism, it has become more difficult to ensure peace and security by military means. By time of the financial crisis and increasing regional and ecological challenges it has become more difficult to believe in the models and institutional guidelines inherent in current economic theories and practices.

The Nordic versions of modernity are put under pressure, like other modern and premodern societies in our time. It is, for instance, not merely a question of “risk society,” if risk is understood in terms of challenges and dangers we can measure, quantify, and calculate. For epistemic and institutional reasons, it is also a question

of basic uncertainties. Processes of modernization conceived of as differentiation and further development of institutions and forms of rationality and related to technological and economic exploitation of resources, have apparently resulted in a double impasse: externally by ecological challenges, internally by epistemic and institutional challenges.

If modernity is conceived normatively by inherent demands for rationality, self-critical reason in the sciences and practice included, there is no reasonable return to a premodern stage. The task is then to seek improvements as best we can, in given situations and on different levels. And even though Nordic societies today are not sustainable and cannot serve as a model, we may still ask if there can be something in earlier modernization processes in the Nordic countries that could give us a hint as to how to live politically and culturally worthy lives in modern societies, but under more modest material conditions and with a more moderate consumption than what we have today. That is already something.

Endnotes

1. Once again, cf. the relationship between fallibility and argumentative rationality, e.g., in John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, quoted in note 17, chapter 1); and cf. Robert Merton's conception of scientific research as organized skepticism and Popper's claim that an awareness of one's own fallibility is decisive for the growth of knowledge.
2. Næss's textbook in empirical semantics, teaching students to argue precisely and reasonably, was part of this project. Cf. Næss, 1975.
3. Cf. Skirbekk, introductory remarks on Norwegian philosophy, in Fjelland, ed., 1997, pp. 9–17.
4. Thereby promoting a philosophy of scientific and scholarly research, at the same time critical and with a genuine interest in what these researchers were doing. In addition to Arne Næss, we could mention Hans Skjervheim and Knut Erik Tranøy and their intellectual followers.
5. Already by World War II, years before the Vietnam War and the students' revolt in the late 1960s, Norwegian philosophers were politically engaged as philosophers (not merely as private persons). Cf., e.g., Næss and Galtung, 1995, *Gandhis politiske etikk*, and Næss et al., 1956, *Democracy, Ideology, and Objectivity*.
6. Again, from Næss and Galtung to Skjervheim and Tranøy.
7. Largely due to the compulsory introductory courses in the history of western philosophy and in semantics and argumentation (*examen philosophicum*), the number of university-appointed philosophers grew steadily as a consequence of the steadily increasing number of students from the late 1970s onward.
8. Cf. Skirbekk, "Forsoning og splid," in Nilsen, ed., 2008, pp. 111–131.
9. AKPml (The Workers' Communist Party, Marxist-Leninists) were pro-Mao (and pro-Stalin), but critical toward the contemporary Soviet Union (and hence in opposition to the pro-Moscow NKP, the Norwegian Communist Party).
10. Among writers and artists, and also in some trade unions.
11. Conceived of as the "objective interests" of the working class (despite opposing "subjective opinions" among individual workers).
12. This movement (unique for Norway by its strength and importance)

- could briefly be characterized by three catchwords: Its members were (i) efficient organizers, (ii) moralistic (on their own premises), and (iii) anti-intellectual (i.e., anti-argumentative). One attempt to understand this phenomenon consists in seeing it as imported from abroad, especially from China (Mao's cultural revolution). Another attempt consists in seeing it as an extreme version of sectarian aspects of the lay movements. In both cases AKPml may be seen as a spectacular example of anti-intellectualism and a lack of self-critical argumentative rationality.
13. The distinction between universities and university colleges has recently become less clear.
 14. There are several changes, for instance by emphasizing (i) *applied research* at the expense of basic research, and (ii) *strategic research* at the expense of research initiated by individual researchers, and (iii) "academic freedom" in terms of *juridical property rights* for one's own research results, with the exception of research by commission where the employers have this property right (in both cases in conflict with the norms of universality and communalism in Robert Merton). To the ongoing debate, cf., e.g., Enebakk, 2008; also *NOU Number 19 2006, Akademisk frihet. Individuelle rettigheter og institusjonelle styringsbehov*.
 15. In Europe, and hence in Norway, these reforms are implemented by the Bologna process aiming to standardize the educational system of European universities.
 16. Cf. Skirbekk, "A Crisis in the Humanities?" in Skirbekk, 2007, pp. 23–35.
 17. Cf. Skirbekk, "Ex.phil.—eit reformforslag," homepage.
 18. Cf. the extensive debate on the relationship between democracy and the role of the sciences in modern societies, both within the Frankfurt school (e.g., Habermas) and within *Sciences Studies*, a comment on the latter, see, e.g., Weingarten, 2008.
 19. Cf., e.g., Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 1962.
 20. Norwegian newspapers are substantially subsidized by direct economic support as well as by an exemption from the VAT (the latter is also true for books in Norwegian).
 21. Cf. Martin Eide, "Det journalistiske mistaket," in Møen and Slaattelid, eds., 1999, pp. 125–152.

22. Some of those who hold leading positions in the Norwegian mass media were originally influenced by Maoist and Leninist ideals of how to influence their audience rather than taking part in self-critical discursive activities and critically questioning one's own position.
23. Cf. Ørbeck Sørheim, "Mediemakt uten motmakt, medieofre uten vern," in Åmås, ed., 2008, pp. 235–260.
24. The more the media becomes "tabloid" the less exciting it is to use time and energy in participating. On the relationship between academics as intellectuals and the public sphere, cf., e.g., Myhre, 2008, pp. 183–208.
25. There have been changes recently, for instance, due to a tendency among top politicians (not least in the Labor Party) to move between political positions and well-paid jobs in the markets (often in public relations). This trend blurs the institutional differentiation between politics and market; hence, it is detrimental for the role and status of a politician.
26. See the previous note.
27. (i) There is a challenge due to the need for an interplay between party politics and the various kinds of opinion formation in civil society (the life-world), cf., e.g., Charles Taylor, 1995, "Liberal Politics and the Public Sphere" (especially p. 286); (ii) There is another challenge in the relationship between party politics and the National Assembly as an arena for real discussion and not only as an arena for presenting given views that are already settled within the political parties; (iii) There is a challenge to the effect that important political negotiations take place between politicians in governmental positions and centralized interest organizations, and not within the political parties nor in the National Assembly; cf., e.g., R. A. Dahl, 1982, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy*, and Stein Rokkan "Norway: numerical democracy and corporative pluralism," in R. A. Dahl, ed., 1966, pp. 70–115.
28. On the relationship between professions and politics in the welfare state, cf., e.g., Eriksen, 2001, *Demokratiets sorte hull—om spenningen mellom fag og politikk i velferdsstaten*.
29. In addition to the question about perspectives, as to how a problem should be conceived of and which initiatives should be undertaken, there is the question of *uncertainty* in scientific research, already within

- one discipline (perspective/type of expertise). For instance, politicians tend to expect that experts should deliver quantified data, e.g., numbers for probabilities (to be used in cost-benefit analyses, cf., e.g., Hacking, 1990); but available data are often *uncertain*, and not only in the sense that we thereby may operate with quantified margins of uncertainty ($x \pm 0,y \%$), but in the sense that we *do not know*. (As to attempts to predict human actions there are in principle reasons why we cannot know, cf., e.g., Popper, 1957, preface.) Thus we may refer to a transition *from* quantifiable and calculated risk *to* undetermined uncertainty.
30. One example: The red–green government was (early in 2009) badly prepared to face the overwhelming popular resistance against their proposal to reintroduce a legal protection of blasphemy. Another case: The government was badly prepared for similar reactions against the proposal for a change of the police uniform, by introducing religious and political signs (cf. the hijab debate in February–March same year).
 31. For instance, in the cases referred to in the previous note: The politicians evidently had problems in thinking in general principles and in terms of precedence. The intellectual deficiency among Norwegian politicians may furthermore be related to the trend of disclaiming political responsibility by establishing directorates to make unpleasant decisions, e.g., in immigration politics and various *ombud* that operate as ideological agents, relatively independent of elected political bodies. By such institutional acts, party politics tend to be drained of exciting discussions. In addition there is a trend toward a strengthening of the legal system by the courts and legally binding international conventions at the expense of democratically elected bodies.
 32. Cf. Rian, “Partiene, Frp og nasjonalstaten,” in Nilsen and Smedshaug, eds., 2007, pp. 73–90.
 33. Cf. Skirbekk, “Mot-ekspertise i komplekse vitskapsbaserte samfunn,” in Aarsæter, Oltedal, and Heen, eds., 2009, pp. 158–168.
 34. In the Norwegian case this constellation was nourished by learning processes that resulted in basic trust, not merely as a “value” that we may freely choose or reject, but as an entrenched historical experience.
 35. In Norway no political party is opposed to the welfare state. All parties favor the welfare state. But there are different views of how to finance

it (should we use more oil money?), and there are different views on priorities (e.g., the elderly vs. the unemployed).

36. A quote from the sociologist Richard Sennett (*The Culture of the New Capitalism*, p. 17): “[T]he northern European rim managed to combine relative stability with growth and has preserved a more equitable distribution of wealth and a generally higher standard of quality of life than America and Britain.”
37. A quote from the American economist Jeffrey Sachs (*Common Wealth. Economics for a Crowded Planet*, 2008, p. 258): “It is possible to combine a high level of income, growth, and innovation with a high degree of social protection. The Nordic societies of northern Europe have done it.”
38. Cf. the Swedish term *folkhemmet*, “the people’s home.”
39. For instance, many rich (business) people are often “zero taxpayers” due to tax laws.
40. Cf., e.g., *Survival of the European welfare state*, Kuhnle, ed., 2000.
41. The same is true of the other Nordic countries. In Norway, around 1.9 children per woman.
42. Formally at age 67, but with the possibility of staying until age 70 or of retiring from age 62. Then there is a possibility of special arrangements.
43. For example, in Oslo, a city with many foreign taxi drivers, it was discovered that a substantial number of these drivers illegally received public support as unemployed at the same time as they earned money as taxi drivers, and they did not pay their taxes. Cf. Haakaas and Sæter, 2010. Such incidents may contribute to a weakening of the general solidarity required for a universal welfare system.
44. Cf., e.g., Blomqvist and Rothstein, 2008.
45. Cf., e.g., Christensen and Læg Reid, 2002, “New Public Management: Puzzles of Democracy and the Influence of Citizens.”
46. Cf., Ringen, 2008, with a criticism of the common liberal view of freedom, and with a defense of knowledge and education. Cf. similar points in Skirbekk, “The Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Constitutive Regulative Idea,” in Bargeliotes and Chronis, eds., 2009.
47. Why did social-democratic leaders tend to accept neoliberalist ideology? There are three possible answers: (i) There were strong

- neoliberalist trends internationally, supported by corporative pressure groups and business-related lobbies. (ii) Many of the leaders were intellectually seduced by the models used by the economic experts they had recruited as their advisers. (iii) Many of the leaders had a social background, and professional training that may have made them susceptible to this way of thinking.
48. Cf. Skirbekk, "Notions of Democracy," in Slaattelid and Øyen, eds., 2009, pp. 39–54.
 49. We recall that the term "prepolitical" is borrowed from Habermas (who talks about *vorpolitische* conditions referring to religious virtues) in *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion*, 2005, p. 106 ff.
 50. Cf. Skirbekk, "Mot-ekspertise i komplekse vitkapsbaserte samfunn," in Aarsæter et al., eds., 2009, pp. 158–168; "The World Reconsidered: A Brief Aggiornamento for Leftist Intellectuals," in Beilharz et al., eds., 1992, pp. 121–136; and "Technological Expertise and Global Ethics," in Skirbekk, 2007, pp. 37–51.
 51. For this point, see, e.g., Apel, *Diskurs und Verantwortung*, 1988, p. 157, and Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken*, 1988, p. 180.
 52. For the justification of such norms, cf, e.g., Skirbekk, 2007, pp. 77–100.
 53. We have looked at the formative dynamics of some of the key popular movements in the 19th century. In the postwar period, in connection with two campaigns for Norwegian membership in the European Union, dormant aspects of these popular movements apparently re-emerged (at least for the referendum of 1972, not so clearly for the one in 1994).
 54. Cf. note 77, chapter 6.
 55. As to the unpleasant experience in being defined as a victim, cf. Walid al Kubaisi, "Søken etter skriket," in Bodil Stenseth, ed., *På tampen av det 20. århundre*, 1999, pp. 130–150.
 56. As mentioned, this attitude, whereby the others are defined as victims, started as a politically correct conception toward people in the Third World as a political reaction against a repressive colonialism.
 57. Cf. the distinction in Habermas between *Teilhaberechte*, *Freiheitsrechte*, and *Teilnahmerechte*, in *Faktizität und Geltung*, 1992, e.g., p. 157; English translation, *Behind Facts and Norms*.

58. In the Norwegian case this means that all citizens should have some insight into the background of the society that we have today: a political culture and a welfare state that are largely based on trust and reasonableness, at the outset brought about by an interplay between state officials and popular movements, the former were secular jurists and Christian theologians, the latter were law-oriented and literate laypeople with a Puritan work ethic. Together they brought a pastoral enlightenment to its fulfillment in a multiparty parliamentary democracy under the rule of law and with social solidarity. This is ideally what one ought to recognize to participate successfully and constructively in this society. These are necessary presuppositions for meaningful participation.
59. Cf. Habermas, 2005, p. 143 ff. (especially p. 146), and Skirbekk, 2006b and in Brunvoll et al., eds., 2009, pp. 87–105.
60. Cf. Merton, 1968.
61. Cf. the constitutive (counterfactual) presupposition that participants are sufficiently serious and autonomous (reasonable as well as fallible); cf. chapter 8.
62. Cf., e.g., Habermas, 1992 and 2005.
63. Again, cf. Apel and Habermas on the positive interrelationship between universality and plurality. Cf. Apel, 1988, p. 157 (referring critically to Michel Foucault) and Habermas, 1988, p. 180.
64. On this issue, cf., e.g., the volume on religion in the public sphere, of *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, No 5, Vol 35, 2009 (<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/Permissions.nav>).
65. Cf. Sørensen and Stråth, eds., 1997, *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, and papers in *Thesis Eleven*, No 77, 2004, by Alapuro, Arnason, Slagstad, Stråth, Østergård, and Wittrock.
66. Surely, with various subdivisions (according to class, age, sex, region, etc.).
67. Sweden denied the Norwegian king access to their country as he fled from the German invaders, they de facto recognized the Quisling government by keeping their diplomatic delegation in Oslo, and they let German troops pass on Swedish ground. But as the war went on (not least after the battle of Stalingrad, late 1942 and early 1943),

Swedish foreign policy gradually changed. However, for Norway a neutral Sweden was evidently advantageous, not least as a goal for Norwegian refugees.

68. Cf. the international image of Sweden promoted by Oluf Palme.
69. For Finnish speakers Swedish was the second language; for the Icelanders it was Danish.
70. Cf. Gilje and Skirbekk, 2001, pp. 12–15. On war and modernity, cf. Wittrock, 2001, “History, War and the Transcendence of Modernity.”
71. Also in Nordic history there were moments of sudden changes and new ways of thinking, not least related to social events and war experiences, as in Norway around 1814 (the Napoleonic Wars) and 1940–1945 (the Second World War). Cf. new imaginaries in Norway after 1814 and 1945. (Cf. also the term *crystallization* in Wittrock, 2004, p. 49, and Arnason i Arnason et al., eds., 2006, p. 95 ff. Similarly, cf. paradigm shifts in Kuhn, 1996, and discontinuous crystallizations in Hacking, 2009.
72. Cf., e.g., Stråth, 2004, p. 7.
73. Cf. Sørensen, 2005 on contrafactual history, e.g., about a military accident in the Oslo Fjord in the morning of April 9, 1940, that delayed the German occupation of Oslo, a delay that made it possible for the king and the government to get out of Oslo in time (the Blücher case).

CHAPTER 8

**Processes of Modernization in a Globalized World:
*Universality, Plurality, and Sustainability?***

In this chapter we present some concluding remarks on the general challenges of processes of modernization in a globalized world, by focusing first on (i) the interplay between universality and multiplicity; and (ii) entrenched historical experiences and prepolitical conditions for modern democracies, followed by a few remarks on (iii) internal and external challenges of modern societies, and by a reminder of (iv) the tricky question of how to conceive of “those concerned”, i.e., those for whom we in some way or other have a moral concern, including future generations and other sentient beings. At the end, we shall turn to (v) the question of internal tensions and external demands for a sustainable future. In short, in this final chapter we look forward, toward the future and toward general challenges in modern societies.

Universality and Multiplicity Inherent in Modern Rationality and Thereby in Agents and Institutions

A reflective approach to modernization processes at the outset, and for self-referential reasons, focuses on forms of rationality. When focusing on rationality in this perspective we recognize that we already operate within a *reflective-argumentative rationality*.¹ (i) Moreover, by *reflectively* realizing that we are *fallible* beings—that we ourselves may be mistaken—we also recognize, as modern persons, that we need to listen to each other and look for better arguments, in short, we need to discuss. There is, thus, an interplay between doubt and argumentative processes, pointing toward scholarly and scientific research conceived of as ongoing learning processes in the search of improved insights. (ii) In reflecting on such *argumentative* processes we furthermore realize that, for self-referential reasons, there are unavoidable preconditions,² preconditions we cannot deny without contradicting ourselves—such as the openness for better arguments and the respect for other discussants. These preconditions³ include, for example, freedom of expression as well as an obligation to try to be a relevant discussant.⁴ Hence, there are normative preconditions that *stand firm*, that can be self-reflectively recognized as universally valid.

Within such discussions there are also the various attempts to *interpret* ambiguous oral utterances or written texts, as well as acts and events. Such interpretive tasks are already inherent in everyday life, and they can be further elaborated in disciplines such as jurisprudence (interpreting laws and legal cases), theology (interpreting Holy Scriptures), and in the humanities (interpreting culture, arts, and artefacts). During processes of modernization these interpretive procedures gradually become more argumentative and self-critical, questioning previous premises and judgments (cf. the difference between dogmatic and critical interpretations of religious texts). When these processes are allowed to go on freely they may thus contribute to a modernization of consciousness.

Modern rationality is often conceived of in terms of *instrumental* rationality, differentiated into a variety of scientific disciplines with causally explaining natural sciences as its core, implemented in society in interplay with the development of technology, and institutionalized by a variety of scientifically and technologically educated professionals and expert groups. In a modern world, instrumental rationality certainly has its place, together with other forms of rationality.

Thus, it makes sense to conceive modern rationality in terms of a dynamic interplay of *argumentative*, *interpretive*, and *instrumental* rationality, with ongoing differentiations and transdisciplinary transitions. A few points should be added: (i) There are a *multitude* of versions within and between these three kinds of rationality, both in terms of disciplinary differentiations and in terms of self-reflective and self-critical activities; (ii) but despite the multitude in conceptual perspectives and methodological procedures, they are *all* inherently related to argumentative rationality;⁵ that is, *common* to all of them;⁶ (iii) moreover, the ongoing specializations (differentiations) are often followed up by attempts at transdisciplinary reflection and communication. Hence, already in terms of rationality, processes of modernization are characterized by a dynamic blend of *universality* and *multiplicity*.

Rationality exists as human activities, capabilities, and virtues. Rationality is thus inherently related to *agency*.⁷ Hence, in modern, science-based societies, *agents* are marked by this dynamic blend of universality and multiplicity: In situations requiring rational responses of a well-founded nature, we are in various ways thrown back on argumentative procedures demanding a search for better insights in each given case.

Moreover, scholarly and scientific disciplines are societal *institutions* that influence and are influenced by other institutions in modern societies, from politics and administration to production and distribution. Hence, to the extent that various scientific and scholarly

disciplines are involved in the functioning of such institutions, there are, for these institutions, a similar interplay and tension between particularity and universality, between special models and methods on the one hand, and on the other, universal demands in terms of self-critical reflection and argumentation.

Since argumentative reasoning is inherently present in scientific and scholarly activities and since these activities are deeply and broadly embedded in modern societies, there are reasons for the claim that the unavoidable and universally binding preconditions for argumentative reasoning have a *wider range of relevance* in these societies. To the extent that public reasoning is essential for an enlightened democracy, we may furthermore claim that these preconditions are particularly relevant for modern democratic societies.⁸

Finally a reminder: when rationality is conceived of pragmatically, i.e., as inherently related to situated agents, it is worthwhile recalling that *not all insight is propositional*, but that there are also *act-inherent insights*, so-called “tacit” knowledge⁹ that is presupposed in our doing and thereby also in the scholarly and scientific disciplines.

Preconditions for Modern Democratic Societies: Basic Trust, Personal Autonomy, and Co-Responsibility

Through a reflective approach, we focus on how to *conceptualize* processes of modernization as situated formative processes, by moving away from less adequate ways to conceptualize a phenomenon and thus by seeking more adequate ways.¹⁰ For instance, we should not primarily conceive Norwegian democracy in terms of general and ahistorical principles on the one hand and some free-flowing “Norwegian values” on the other. There is, in this case, a need for “thin” narratives (at a middle-range level) by which these principles and values can be historically situated and interpreted more specifically. By such an approach we may, for instance, look for special experiences¹¹ and learning processes that can be conceived of as prepolitical conditions for a given society.

(i) As mentioned earlier, some of these preconditions are of a nature that cannot be provided “from the outside,” neither by economic means nor by political decisions; they must be acquired by one’s own experiences and learning processes. This is, for instance, the case for the acquisition of *mutual trust*, as a prepolitical condition for a functioning democracy where people and parties peacefully and confidently may move in and out of government positions and where those in the minority position after an election do not need to fear unjust treatment by those in the majority position. This kind of trust is intertwined with a mutual recognition of basic equality and personal responsibility.¹²

(ii) Democracy as an institution presupposes a notion of agents who are *sufficiently autonomous* to make up their mind on questions of public concern,¹³ though fallible and vulnerable and in that sense basically equal, even if there are major differences concerning the extent to which a person can be said to be autonomous.¹⁴ Precisely for fallible persons there is a need for argumentative reasoning and for role taking and mutual learning processes, in short, for a modern argumentative notion of rationality and co-agency. The core notion of democracy in a modern society presupposes an ideal of argumentative rationality and of a sufficient degree of personal autonomy, in addition to appropriate institutional arrangements for free elections and governance by the rule of law.

The notion of personal autonomy is surely ambiguous. For instance, seen from the causally explaining sciences (from brain research to genetics), the idea of freedom and personal autonomy, conceived of as empirical facts, may seem to be implausible; but a total rejection of personal freedom and autonomy is self-refuting; such a rejection entails a pragmatic (speech-act-related) self-contradiction.¹⁵ On the other hand, neither is it helpful to proclaim personal freedom and autonomy as self-evident metaphysical truths, disregarding empirical counterarguments. Nor is it helpful to operate with a notion of personal freedom and autonomy as a mere model (either in

political theory or in economics or jurisprudence); for in that case the decisive question remains open as to how such a posited model relates to real persons.

In short, science-based arguments that in various ways may undermine or weaken the idea of personal freedom and autonomy should be taken seriously,¹⁶ but at the same time we have to avoid pragmatic (act-inherent) self-contradictions and thus we are to accept some (counterfactual) act-inherent preconditions for argumentative rationality. In discussing we have to presuppose that the participants are autonomous persons, or rather, that they are sufficiently autonomous for the discussion to make sense. A sufficient degree of personal autonomy should be conceived as a constitutive condition for argumentative interaction. A similar argument can be given for communicative interaction. If a sufficient degree of personal autonomy is not presupposed, communication would not make sense.¹⁷

In other words, personal autonomy is not to be conceived of as an empirical fact; it should be conceived of as a *constitutive* presupposition for argumentative and communicative interactions, and at the same time as a *regulative idea*, as a task for improvement, with a focus on sufficiency, not on perfection. As such a constitutive regulative idea, personal autonomy is conceived of as a task on two levels: a *personal task* for each individual in communication with other persons in favor of formative and educative improvements, and a *public task* for society at large, trying to improve the institutional and material setting.¹⁸

This is the point, roughly stated. To make sense, democratic elections presuppose a notion of argumentative rationality¹⁹ and of personal autonomy as a regulative idea, and hence there are inherent moral demands for citizens in democratic societies.²⁰

(iii) But in addition there is a consequentialist argument for a special *co-responsibility* for citizens in such societies; briefly it goes like this: It is fair, generally speaking, to affirm that an actor is responsible for the outcome of his or her acts. In democratic societies the citizens have a certain possibility of influencing political decisions and

deeds, for instance, by participation in party politics and elections or by participating in public debates or political actions. Thus citizens in such societies have some co-responsibility for political events, from military actions to economic politics (though certainly dependent on individual resources and the complexity of the situation). Consequently, there is a certain obligation to keep oneself reasonably updated and to act accordingly (all dependent on one's position and the overall situation²¹).

Those living in autocratic societies, with fewer possibilities for influencing political decisions and actions, are less co-responsible in this sense. Ironically, the private freedom to-do-as-you-like (within legal restrictions) is rather a freedom for subjects in autocratic (constitutional) states than for citizens of democratic societies. (Cf. the *libertinage* of Marquis de Sade during the old autocratic regime in France compared with the stern social commitment of democratic citizens such as John Adams in the early North American society.)

We may conceive of (and justify) a democratic regime in different ways and along different dimensions; thus, it makes sense to talk about *multiple democracies*.²² But simultaneously there are in modern societies some basic normative demands for argumentative rationality and personal autonomy formation, and these demands are particularly relevant for democratic societies.²³ Moreover, there is a basic common core for modern constitutional democracies concerning the rule of law and the fairness of the election system (e.g., that these arrangements are inclusive, free, and incorrupt) and, thereby, also a common core concerning prepolitical conditions, not merely as formal liberties, but as realistic conditions (material as well as cultural) for political participation by all citizens.²⁴

Looking back, focusing on the interplay between *universality* and *plurality*, we may sum up the following points. In modern democratic societies under the rule of law, presupposing argumentative rationality and personal autonomy (as a regulative idea), there are three levels of preconditions:

- (i) *undeniable preconditions* for argumentative rationality, including norms for mutual recognition (basic equality) and for the search for better arguments (and thus, freedom of expression),
- (ii) *procedural rules* for constitutional democracy (such as fair voting procedures and a fair institutional differentiation of powers and functions), and
- (iii) *prepolitical conditions* for a functioning democratic society, based on entrenched experiences (such as basic trust and a sufficient degree of personal autonomy).

These are general conditions and a common ground for all citizens in such societies. But within these general conditions, and based on them, there is ample space for plurality—for personal preferences and projects, for comprehensive doctrines and religious beliefs, for political parties and organizations, and for scholarly and scientific perspectives and hypotheses. These general conditions are not a hindrance for these forms of plurality.²⁵ On the contrary, it is due to universal preconditions that pluralism may emerge and flourish.²⁶

The main point, on the interplay between *universality* and *plurality*, entails on the one hand that this kind of “situated” universality is always intertwined with pluralism and multiplicity, and on the other hand, that pure pluralism is unthinkable and that an attempt at an unlimited political pluralism, e.g., in terms of absolutized multiculturalism,²⁷ would be detrimental for everybody.

Inherent and External Challenges in Modern Societies

Processes of modernization have their *inherent* challenges that are not accidental or contingent, but structural, related to ongoing epistemic and institutional differentiations. To the extent that modernization processes are conceived of in terms of such differentiations, their inherent challenges can be conceived of as a *danger of imbalances* between epistemic or institutional differentiations,²⁸ and such imbal-

ances may be described as epistemic and institutional powerlessness due to lack of overview and related problems of governance.²⁹

In our approach we have focused on practice-based rationality, situated agents, and institutions, each with their interrelated differentiations and challenges. For instance, in our case, selected processes of modernization in Norway, we have noticed how instrumental rationality with related agents and institutions³⁰ had the upper hand at various decisive stages, at the sacrifice of self-critical and argumentative rationality.

For structural reasons this kind of institutional imbalance represents a general challenge for processes of modernization. For instance, there is (as mentioned) a trend in most modern societies that universities are increasingly reorganized according to market models, that newspapers are commercialized, that party politics are bureaucratized, and that politicians live their lives without sufficient contact with ordinary people. Thereby, the institutional space for independent agents promoting a self-critical and argumentative rationality is shrinking.

On the other hand, due to emerging technologies there are new arenas for communication, network building, and public action.³¹ Keywords are the Internet and e-mail. Nowadays it is also easier to produce texts (keywords: computers and printers), easier to travel and meet people (keyword: affordable flights), and easier to communicate orally almost from anywhere to everywhere (keyword: mobile phones). Hence there is an overload of voices and messages of mixed quality and importance,³² in short, an ambiguous situation as to the institutional basis for self-critical and argumentative rationality.

In our approach we began by focusing on rationality, with a critical eye on problems due to a *marginalization of self-critical and argumentative rationality*. When this kind of rationality is marginalized or undeveloped there will be a deficiency as to the formative learning processes that should lead to a *modernization of consciousness*: Self-critical critique of rationality³³ as well as of religion is then lacking. This is

detrimental for the epistemic modernization at the individual level (for the agents) and also for the overall setting (for social imaginaries and political culture). Such a deficiency is especially unfortunate for the interface between religion and politics, as for instance in the United States, in Israel, or in parts of the Islamic world, with lots of modern weaponry and premodern attitudes, intertwined with unsolved conflicts—evidently a fatal constellation, reminiscent of European history in the 1930s.³⁴

These are challenges primarily related to the interplay of *rationality and situated agents*, more precisely, related to insufficiently developed argumentative (and interpretive) rationality and premodern imaginaries and attitudes. However, what is commonly seen as a major political question in modern societies is that of the interrelationship between the *main institutions*, for instance between the state, market, and life-world. This is the domain of quarrels between the traditional political ideologies and parties. This is also the realm for discussions about kinds of modernization (“multiple modernities”), since the relative dominance of each of these major institutions (such as the relationship between the state and market) has developed differently in different modernization processes (as in the United States and in France, or in Scandinavia). Whereas the question as to the optimal balance between these institutions is controversial and politically open, there is increasing unanimity when moving toward extreme cases of *imbalance*:³⁵ fatal imbalances between the main institutions should be avoided!³⁶ On this point there is extensive agreement.

Then we have discussions of how to conceptualize the core modern institutions (and their various sub-institutions and interrelations) most adequately;³⁷ but in this essay we restrict ourselves to conceptualize some characteristics of the institutional development of the middle range, without entering into more empirically related discussions.

Finally, and related to these internal challenges,³⁸ there are severe *external* challenges, physical as well as ecological. A realistic hope for a sustainable future presupposes that these challenges are dealt

with reasonably and realistically in a long-term perspective. This requires a self-critical and profound reconsideration of major modern institutions and forms of rationality, and also a reconsideration of dominant preferences and expectations.³⁹ Moreover, in addition to environmental challenges under more or less normal and relatively peaceful conditions, there is a danger of extensive warfare and of unintended or fanatic usage of means of mass destruction.

Ethical Concern, for Whom?

So far we have operated with different notions of situated agents, individual and collective, practical and symbolic, related to different roles and institutions and to different forms of rationality, and to different social imaginaries. Individual agents are here conceived as fallible and reasonable persons with vulnerable biobodies.

All agents are human beings, in the world known to us (but not all humans are agents). And ethical evaluations are often anthropocentric; that is, directly or indirectly we refer to human concerns when we consider whether acts are good or just.⁴⁰ Now and then the relationship between *agents* and *those concerned* may even be conceived of in such a way that the agents are supposed to be those concerned by the action, and the other way around. But here there are decisive counterarguments, such as the reference to (a) the geopolitical incongruence between decisions within one political body (nation or organization) and their consequences *outside* that realm, to (b) long-term and often unintended consequences of various acts and decision making,⁴¹ *into the future*, and to (c) “hard cases” in biomedical ethics, i.e., human beings who *are not* (or *cannot be*) *responsible agents*.

In modern risk-societies, with powerful technologies and related organizations, the scale and number of *those concerned* who *cannot* take part in any deliberation or decision, are extensive:

- (i) There is the challenge regarding *future generations*, i.e., future human beings. Major modern institutions, such as a

profit-seeking market economy as well as democratic elections, operate normally within restricted time schedules (i.e., short-term profit and short election periods). Hence, there is in modern societies a normative challenge due to this incongruence between dominant institutions, agents, and forms of rationality on the one hand, and on the other, future generations of human beings who undeniably are to be conceived of as “concerned.”

- (ii) There are challenges regarding *other sentient beings*. The normative impact of this challenge may be elucidated by considering the question of how to justify a normative borderline between the hard cases of human beings in biomedical ethics and higher primates like chimpanzees. Apparently, whatever property or characteristic we may choose as morally significant, we would have either to exclude some human beings or include some nonhumans.⁴² Thus, it is problematic to establish such a clear-cut moral demarcation between *homo sapiens* and other mammals. This argument may therefore serve as a support for a gradualist and wider moral concern, *from* human beings *to* the various nonhuman sentient beings.
- (iii) For utilitarian reasons, in favor of present and future human beings as well as sentient nonhuman beings, we also have a moral challenge concerning *the natural environment*, *from* climate change and pollution *to* the destruction of the habitat for humans and nonhumans and *to* the exploitation of scarce resources, such as fish and fresh water, fertile soil and fossil energy.

As to the question “ethical concern, for whom?” the answer is thus definitely not restricted to human persons living in the here-and-now: The modern project has brought us into a situation where we recognize an ethical concern that is more extensive—a moral co-responsibility for future generations, for other sentient beings, and

for vulnerable life and nature in general. Hence, there are urgent demands for institutional reframing and change of lifestyle, not least related to consumption and reproduction; these demands represent a particularly critical challenge both to *premodern paternalism* and to a *liberalist freedom of choice*.

Faced with these challenges, all modern forms of rationality are required, conceived of reasonably and appropriated sincerely; there is also a request for institutional reforms and extensive solidarity and for environmentally sustainable forms of life.

The main points may be restated in this way: Identity between those who give the laws and those for whom the laws are given, this is a paradigm for the legitimacy of laws. There is a similar paradigm for the legitimacy of democratic decisions; it presupposes an identity between participants (voters and discussants) and those concerned. Here the paradigmatic case is an enclosed community of enlightened citizens who make decisions on public issues that they understand and that concern them and nobody else.

Even so there is a problem of minority rights, especially in cases when a minority constellation prevails, with no realistic hope for those in the minority of becoming a future majority. Thus, there is a need for a trustful and enlightened political culture with mutual recognition, a sense for compromise and solidarity beyond one's own family and group.

But in modern societies—with a global economy, advanced technology, and extended and fragmented scientific and scholarly insights—the presuppositions of this paradigm for legal and democratic justification have become less realistic. This is true both for the presumption of an *identity* between *decision makers and those concerned*, and for the presumption that voters and decision makers really *understand what they are doing*, in complex high-tech and fragmented societies where decisions made by those living in a given state may lead to global and long-term consequences, across national borders and into future generations and also for other sentient beings.

We have referred to the fact that modern societies are characterized by *uncertainty*, both for institutional and epistemic reasons.⁴³ In this paragraph we refer to various *discrepancies* between participants and those concerned. Some of these discrepancies are institutional and geographic; those related to future generations and nonhuman beings are in principle unavoidable, but there are more or less appropriate ways to respond to these challenges, institutionally as well as epistemically.⁴⁴

Hence, there is an urgent need for *renewed discussions* on the normative justification of legitimate legislation and democratic decisions, and of the various forms of life and the various initiatives we are undertaking. This holds true for all forms of governance in our time, including the democratic ones.⁴⁵ *Institutions* with enlightened and long-term responsibility are asked for.⁴⁶

At the outset, we may reject two *epistemic* positions: (i) those who despite the awareness of uncertainty still proclaim a fundamentalist belief in the absolute truth of their own convictions, whether it is in terms of religious, scientific, or political fundamentalism; and (ii) those who in a postmodernist style claim that everything is relative and equally valid and that the idea of universal rationality and better arguments is an illusion and power in disguise. Against both of these positions, it is pertinent to defend a self-critical and reflective conception of rationality, in accordance with the argumentation in this essay: Rationality is conceived by act-inherent validity claims, simultaneously situated and obliged for tentative and stepwise improvements,⁴⁷ *bottom up*, away from less good reasons toward the better ones.⁴⁸ In short, an ongoing task of tentative improvements without utopian promises.

Multiple and Sustainable? What Can Still Be Learned?

In a wider scope—temporarily, conceptually, and morally—the question of multiple modernities has to include the question of sustainability, of survival over the long run.

Which one of the multiple modernities that most appropriately can meet these challenges is an open question. Thus, there is a basis for a peaceful competition between different versions of modern societies that otherwise live up to the basic requirements of institutional and epistemic differentiation (and integration) as well as socio-cultural learning processes and a modernization of consciousness.⁴⁹

At present, none of the major alternatives seems to live up to these requirements (independently of how they are conceived), be it the United States or European Union, China or India. Nor is there a Scandinavian model readily at hand, both because there is no such free-flowing model, only historically situated experiences and arrangements, and also because these countries are part of a European (and Western) modernity that is far from sustainable, even though these countries in some respect are less extreme and hopeless than many others.

As a sobering reminder we may add that the modern project, revised by historical experiences and self-critical counterarguments, does not entail a utopian promise of harmony, happiness, and security. On the contrary, any realistic modernity is one of risk and uncertainty. Nor is there any realistic alternative: processes of modernization are like an ongoing journey without a return, but open for corrections and possible improvements.

Not everything called modern should be thus conceived.⁵⁰ Along the same lines: to obtain sustainable modernization there may well be a need for a revitalization of supposedly traditional virtues and life-forms, for instance as a form of life that is more restrained concerning consumption; but in order to obtain a sustainable future there may also be a need for radical changes, contrary to traditional behavior and private preferences, for instance as to demography and reproduction.

Finally there is a lesson to learn, from times of severe repression and hostile military occupation, concerning the relationship between survival and human dignity, between surviving and “standing right” in a moral sense—in short, we may survive physically, but

not stand right; we may heroically stand right and not survive; but our aim should be that of adapting a form of life that allows us to survive, and still stand right in moral terms. In other words, an environmentally responsible future, a future with a moral concern for human dignity and for the vulnerability of life.⁵¹

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Endnotes

1. We refer once again to self-reflective reasoning in the transcendental pragmatics in Apel and in the universal pragmatics in Habermas, but also to similar points, e.g., in John Stuart Mill, who insisted that we as fallible human beings need to discuss and seek better arguments in order to find out whether our views and ideas are reliable. (Cf. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ref. chapter 1, note 17.)
2. There are various opinions as to how these preconditions should be conceived of, cf. discussions between Apel, Habermas, and Wellmer, and also my contributions to these debates, arguing in favor of cautious analyses of nuances and in favor of multiplicity within the universal preconditions (Skirbekk, 1993, 2007).
3. Cf. Tranøy, "Norms of Inquiry: Methodologies as Normative Systems," in Fjelland et al., eds., 1997, pp. 93–103.
4. That is, an obligation (according to one's position and possibilities) to try to be creative and constructive, updated and enlightened. In short, rights and duties go hand in hand. (Cf. also Skirbekk, "On the Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Constitutive, Regulative Idea", in Bargelotes and Chronis, eds., 2009, pp. 259–269.)
5. Moreover, argumentative activities include interpretive activities.
6. Even when the argumentative virtues de facto are poorly developed in many cases, as they often are.
7. Again, pragmatically in the sense of pragmatics in Apel and Habermas, not pragmatism as in Dewey and James.
8. These are ideal (pragmatic) preconditions, not empirical facts; according to self-referential arguments they represent constitutive norms for argumentative rationality (they are unavoidable, as counterfactual assumptions).
9. Cf. the discussions on "tacit knowing," e.g., in Heidegger and Polanyi. Cf. Yu Zhenhua, 2006.
10. In such attempts at self-appropriation there is a delicate interplay between conceptual and empirical claims, also when the main concern is conceptual. (Cf. the discussion on gradual transitions between

- empirical and philosophical claims, in Skirbekk, 1993, chapter 3.) Nevertheless, there may be reasons to assume that among the conceptualization proposals at hand there are some that could be seen as *more adequate* than others.
11. Such as the French Revolution (for the French, and many more) or the Third Reich (for Germans, and for many more), or the Cultural Revolution in China, or the historical fact that North Americans never experienced war as occupation by a foreign power, in contrast to recent experiences of war (as occupation) in most European countries, a difference with decisive implications for international politics, from the conception of the occupation of Palestinian territory to the invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan.
 12. In the case of the welfare state there are further prepolitical conditions as well, such as self-restraint and work morality, moderation and reasonableness in matters of personal gain, and basic solidarity across sociocultural and economic differences. Moreover, socioeconomic inequalities should be moderate.
 13. Cf. the Kantian notion of *Mündigkeit*.
 14. Cf., e.g., Robert Dahl, 1989 on democracy and personal autonomy, chapter 7, pp. 97–105 (on *the presumption of personal autonomy*, pp. 100–101).
 15. Again, cf. the discussions on pragmatic (speech-act-related) self-contradiction, e.g., in Apel, 1988 and Skirbekk, 1993, 2007.
 16. Cf. Habermas, 2005.
 17. Communication as in Habermas, 1981.
 18. Cf. §100 (on freedom of expression) in the Norwegian Constitution: “It is the responsibility of the State to create conditions enabling an open and enlightened public debate” (NOU Number 27 1999, p. 255). Cf. also Skirbekk, “On the Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Constitutive, Regulative Idea,” in Bargeliotes and Chronis, eds., 2009, pp. 259–269.
 19. There are extensive discussions on deliberative democracy and on the relationship between public opinion formation and democracy, and hence, on the relationship between scholarly virtues and democracy;

cf., e.g., Habermas, 1992; Merton, 1968; and Kalleberg, 2010; or Chambers, 1996; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; R. Dahl, 1998; Elster, ed., 1998. But in democracy there are also voting and majority rule, procedures that ideally are alien to scholarly ideals (cf., e.g., R. Dahl, 1989, pp. 135–152). Moreover, there is a difference between deliberation as in early Rawls (Rawls, 1971) and discussion as intersubjective argumentation and formative role-taking, as in Habermas (cf., e.g., James D. Fearon, “Deliberation as Discussion,” in Elster, ed., 1998, pp. 44–68). In defense of deliberative institutions and critically against cost-benefit analyses for environmental valuation, cf. Jacobs, 1997.

20. This notion of personal autonomy differs from a liberalist notion of individual freedom conceived of in terms of freedom of choice on the market, by individuals who are already sufficiently knowledgeable and rational as to what they want (and why). In contrast to this liberalist notion of freedom of choice for rational individuals (as a stipulated model), our notion of personal autonomy is conceived as a constitutive regulative idea and thus as a formative task for the individuals as well as for public institutions and agents. The notion of freedom embedded in this notion of personal autonomy includes inherent moral demands for formative and educative improvements. In short, it includes “positive freedom,” not merely “negative freedom”; though the interesting point (why it includes a moral demand) could easily be overlooked when conceived of in a theoretical observational perspective and not in a reflective participatory perspective. (Cf., Øfsti, “Å begripe politisk frihet,” in Måseide and Skirbekk, eds., 2009.) Cf. the Confucian view on virtue and formation (*Bildung*) in this connection, comments in Skirbekk, “Notions of Democracy,” in Slaattelid and Øyen, eds., 2009, *Multiple Democracies in Theory and History*, p. 45, an anthology with contributions from Chinese and Norwegian scholars, originally presented at a conference organized by the University of Bergen and East China Normal University in Shanghai, within the Marco Polo exchange program for comparative studies in cultural modernization in East Asia and Europe.
21. In addition to the variety of institutional and material conditions there is also the question of size. Cf., e.g., Dahl and Tufte, 1973, *Size and Democracy*.

22. Cf., my paper "Notions of Democracy" in Slaattelid and Øye, eds., 2009.
23. Cf., e.g., Kalleberg. 2010, "The Ethos of Science and the Ethos of Democracy" (referring to Merton).
24. A basic prerequisite consists of appropriate education and socioeconomic conditions for all citizens.
25. A person has to acquire a certain modernization of consciousness to recognize this point. Those who still live within a premodern and particularistic horizon, relying precritically on the absolute truth of some special religion or ideology will have a problem. Moreover, to be a member of modern democratic society is also to be a co-actor in a historically situated society, based on special learning processes and entrenched experiences; thus it is problematic for a functioning democratic society if these prepolitical conditions are neglected or counteracted.
26. Once again, cf. Apel and Habermas on the positive interrelationship between universality and plurality. Cf. Apel, 1988, p. 157 and Habermas, 1988, p. 180.
27. Cf. homepage, articles "Korttenkt multikulturalisme."
28. For instance by an infelicitous predominance of (i) instrumental rationality (at the expense of argumentative rationality) or of (ii) market institutions (at the expense of political institutions and of the life-world).
29. Cf., Habermas, 1973, 1985, on problems of governance and problems of legitimacy.
30. Such as a strong state, with efficient political leaders, using instrumental expertise; e.g., Schweigaard during the nation building in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, and Gerhardsen and Brundtland during the aftermath of World War II and the time thereafter.
31. Cf. the successful use of the Internet during the presidential election campaign in favor of Barack Obama in 2008. Moreover, the shrinking of paper newspapers may lead to a reframing of the public sphere, possibly with more sincere and enlightened discussions in some of the remaining newspapers.

32. Cf. blog and anonymous debates on Internet. As to the neglect of epistemic questions (of truth and of importance), cf. the bestseller *On Bullshit* by Harry G. Frankfurt (originally published in 1986; as a book in 2005).
33. A deficiency in self-critical and argumentative rationality implies a deficiency in interpretive rationality, for instance, in scholarly and critical interpretations of religious texts. As to the insufficient understanding of natural sciences and religion, cf. Taner, *An Illusion of Harmony. Science and Religion in Islam*, 2007.
34. According to an optimistic view on modernization processes, such pre-modern attitudes should *automatically wither away* as a consequence of daily dealings with modern technology and daily encounters between persons of different creeds and convictions. (See Anne Sofie Roald in Brunvoll et al., eds., 2009.) But in this regard the U.S. seems to be a counterexample: on the one hand, there is modern technology and there is a mixed population; on the other hand, there are politically influential and largely premodern religious imaginaries and attitudes with detrimental consequences; e.g., for U.S. politics toward Israel and the Palestinians. Hence there is apparently an urgent need for promoting a reflective and argumentative rationality, i.e., for a modernization of consciousness through an *active and self-critical critique of religion* (cf. my comments in the same anthology).
35. As when the state dominates all activities, or the market does so, or the tradition. General point: “the primacy of the negative,” focusing on imbalances, looking for a gradual “overcoming” of “the negative” (i.e., a gradualist meliorism, cf., e.g., Skirbekk, 1993, 2007).
36. Recent neoliberalist attempts to expand the domain of the market by actively transferring public institutions into the market and by deregulating existing markets were initially presented as acts of modernization *tout court*. In retrospect these attempts appear predominantly as ideological and short-sighted strategies that violate the structural needs for a fair differentiation and balance between different institutions and their way of functioning.
37. Cf. Habermas’s distinctions for three kinds of social coordination, namely by money, power, and solidarity—for the political, the economic, and the sociocultural sphere; cf., e.g., Habermas, 1973, 1981.

38. For instance, climate problems caused by overconsumption and overpopulation.
39. Cf., e.g., Nylund, Selvik, Skirbekk, Steigen, and Tjønneland, *The Commercial Ark. A Book on Evolution, Ecology, and Ethics*, 1992, and Skirbekk, ed., *The Notion of Sustainability and Its Normative Implications*, 1994.
40. Cf. Skirbekk, "Ethical Gradualism, Beyond Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism?" in Skirbekk, ed., 1994, pp. 79–126.
41. Cf. the problem of "good intentions and unintended infelicitous consequences," well known in political science.
42. Cf. Skirbekk, 1993, chapter 7.
43. Cf. last section in chapter 7 of the previous note. On epistemic fallibilism and perspectivism, cf., e.g., Skirbekk, 2007.
44. Hence there is a need for strong spokespersons who can defend the interests of those concerned ("advocatory representation").
45. On the relation between democracy and environmental crisis, cf. the discussions (say) from Harich, 1975 to Wyller, 1999.
46. There is an institutional challenge, bluntly stated: Western democracies can be corrected by regular elections, but long-term responsibility for future generations is not institutionally ascertained. In China the political regime is not corrected by regular elections, but since the Chinese communist party as an institution presumes that it will be in charge for many years to come, there is a motivation for taking future challenges seriously, as an act of enlightened institutional self-interest, for instance in planning for alternative energy to avoid social upheavals in the future.
47. Cf. discussions on "meliorism" and "gradualism" in Skirbekk, 1993.
48. Cf. discussions on "the primacy of the negative" in Skirbekk, 1993.
49. Cf. Tong, 2009.
50. Cf. the tendency to call a dysfunctional expansion of market transactions a "modernization," even though it runs counter to the modern urge for institutional differentiations and against infelicitous imbalances between major institutions.
51. In the spirit of Hans Jonas.

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