

*Svein Blom*

## 7. Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration

- Nine out of 10 think that immigrants should have the same job opportunities as Norwegians, and 7 out of 10 believe that immigrants make a valuable contribution to Norwegian working life.
- Two out of 3 think that immigrants enrich the cultural life in Norway.
- Nine out of 10 do not mind having contact with immigrants as neighbours or as home helps, but 1 out of 3 would feel uncomfortable having an immigrant married into the family.
- One out of 3 also suspect that immigrants abuse the social welfare system and believe that immigrants represent a source of insecurity in society.
- More than 4 out of 10 think that immigrants should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible.
- One out of 10 want a liberalisation of the current asylum policy, whereas 4 out of 10 think that the refugees' access to obtaining a residence permit should be made more difficult.
- The changing attitudes towards immigrants and immigration over time are probably affected by fluctuations in business cycles, the number of refugees seeking residence permits in the country, to what extent the official refugee policy appears humane and just in the eyes of the public, and the image created by the refugees themselves as a result of their own conduct (especially with regard to crime).
- The attitudes of the population vary according to demographic and social factors such as education, age, urbanisation, geographic area, degree of contact with immigrants, political opinions, and to some extent also by sex.
- Highly educated persons, aged less than 67 years, residing in Akershus/Oslo and who have contact with immigrants are generally among the most positive towards immigration and immigrants.
- Compared to attitudes in other European countries, Norwegian attitudes tend to be in the middle or at the liberal or tolerant end of the scale on most immigrant issues.

For a number of years, Statistics Norway has been mapping the attitudes of the Norwegian population towards immigrants and immigration through questions in its annual interview surveys on behalf of the former Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, now the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. The first interviews were conducted in 1993 and were repeated each year until 2000. After partially changing the questions, the practice was resumed in 2002. Originally hosted in Statistics Norway's omnibus survey, the questions were transferred to the travel and vacation survey in 2005.

### 7.1. Immigrants' labour efforts and cultural contributions are commended...

There is widespread agreement on the benefit of immigrants' labour efforts. Through the years 2005-2007, seven out of 10 of the population agreed strongly or on the whole that «*Most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life*». Less than two out of 10 disagreed, and about 1 in 10 were uncertain. This was an increase from two thirds agreeing in 2002-2004 (table 7.1). Two out of 3 also agree that «*Most immigrants enrich the cultural life of Norway*».

### 7.2. ... but some fear abuse of social benefits and increased insecurity

On the other hand, 3 out of 10 in 2007 fear that «*Most immigrants abuse the social welfare system*» (table 7.2). The belief that this is true is now nevertheless 10 percentage points lower than at the beginning of the 2000s, and there are far more people

who reject this notion in 2007 than who believe in it. Almost half the population disagreed with the statement.

The respondents were also asked to consider the statement «*Most immigrants represent a source of insecurity in society*». In 2005, more than 3 out of 10 agreed strongly or on the whole with this statement, whereas almost 5 out of 10 strongly or on the whole disagreed. According to the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002, Norway is one of the countries in Europe that most strongly fears immigrant crime. Only two countries, Greece and the Czech Republic, have a stronger belief than Norway that immigration leads to greater crime problems (Blom 2005). More about the ESS follows later in the chapter.

#### What are attitudes?

An attitude is a preconception to react upon a certain phenomena in a special way. Attitudes have both emotional and cognitive aspects and form foundations for actions to varying degrees.

Table 7.1. Attitudes towards two statements about immigrants' labour efforts and cultural contributions. 2002-2007. Per cent

«Most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	66	12	20	2	1 410
2003	100	66	9	24	1	1 385
2004	100	67	10	21	2	1 320
2005	100	70	10	17	2	1 289
2006	100	72	10	17	1	1 288
2007	100	72	16	11	1	1 269
«Most immigrants enrich the cultural life in Norway»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	63	12	22	2	1 409
2003	100	70	9	21	1	1 381
2004	100	66	10	22	1	1 318
2005	100	71	8	18	3	1 289
2006	100	68	11	20	1	1 289
2007	100	67	14	18	1	1 270

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

### 7.3. Nine out of 10 support equal job opportunities for immigrants

Nine out of 10 agreed strongly or on the whole in 2007 that «*All immigrants in Norway should have the same job opportunities as Norwegians*» (table 7.3). The acceptance of this statement is marginally higher now than in the early 2000s and is now at the same level as during the favourable business cycles at the end of the 1990s (cf. table 7.8). The temporal

decline in the proportion agreeing after the turn of the millennium may have had some connection to the concomitant economic recession. Similarly, the increasing support for the statement during the 1990s from 75 per cent in 1993 to 92 per cent in 1998 may have been connected to the continuously rising business cycle in Norway during this period. Compared to other countries, Norway is also one of the European countries whose population is most confident that immigration is

Table 7.2. Attitudes towards two statements about immigrants' abuse of social benefits and contribution to insecurity. 2002-2007. Per cent

«Most immigrants abuse the social welfare system»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	41	14	43	2	1 405
2003	100	40	10	48	2	1 384
2004	100	40	12	46	2	1 318
2005	100	36	10	50	4	1 289
2006	100	36	13	49	2	1 289
2007	100	31	21	46	3	1 269

«Most immigrants represent a source of insecurity in society»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	45	13	41	1	1 410
2003	100	45	10	44	1	1 385
2004	100	41	10	48	1	1 317
2005	100	41	10	48	2	1 286
2006	100	40	13	46	1	1 288
2007	100	35	19	46	1	1 272

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

Table 7.3. Attitudes towards a statement about immigrants and equal job opportunities. 2002-2007. Per cent

«All immigrants in Norway should have the same job opportunities as Norwegians»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	85	4	10	1	1 410
2003	100	83	3	13	1	1 384
2004	100	87	3	10	0	1 319
2005	100	89	3	7	1	1 287
2006	100	86	4	9	1	1 288
2007	100	90	5	5	1	1 272

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

-beneficial for the economy of the country, as demonstrated later (figure 7.4). ).

#### 7.4. The majority prefer that immigrants assimilate to Norwegians

One of the questions in Statistics Norway's survey on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration shows that between 4 and 5 out of 10 in 2007 think that «*Immigrants in Norway should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible*» (table 7.4). A slightly smaller proportion, a little less than 4 out of 10, disagree with this statement, whereas 2 out of 10 answer «neither agree nor disagree». The tendency over time is that the support for the statement has dwindled somewhat.

A complete eradication of all differences between the minority and the majority

population, known as «assimilation», is not on a par with the aim of the official integration policy. The concept of integration implies that the minorities should be able to preserve the cultural and religious characteristics they want, provided they do not infringe Norwegian law. With regard to working life and society, the aim for integration is however full equality and participation for all citizens.

Furthermore, it is apparent from the data that those who believe that immigrants should try to become as similar to Norwegians as possible are also more critical towards immigrants in other respects.

#### 7.5. Few want increased immigration of refugees

On a question concerning refugees' access to the country, 4 out of 10 in 2007

Table 7.4. Attitudes towards the statement that immigrants in Norway should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible. 2003-2007. Per cent

«Immigrants in Norway should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible»						
Year	All	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2003	100	54	7	39	1	1 381
2004	100	53	8	39	0	1 318
2005	100	54	7	38	1	1 286
2006	100	49	10	40	1	1 288
2007	100	45	18	36	0	1 273

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

Table 7.5. Attitudes towards a statement regarding refugees' access to residence permits in Norway. 2002-2007. Per cent

«Compared to today, should it be easier for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit, should it be more difficult, or should access to permits remain the same as today?»						
Year	All	Easier	As today	More difficult	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	5	39	53	2	1 408
2003	100	5	37	56	3	1 381
2004	100	6	44	47	2	1 317
2005	100	9	49	39	4	1 287
2006	100	7	46	45	2	1 288
2007	100	8	50	39	3	1 270

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

believed that it ought to be more difficult than today to obtain a residence permit, whereas 5 out of 10 thought that the present admission policy ought to be continued (table 7.5). One out of 10 think it ought to be easier for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain access to the country. On this issue, the proportion wanting a *status quo* in the admission to the country has increased approximately 10 percentage points since 2002, whereas the proportion wanting less accessibility to the country has been correspondingly reduced.

There is reason to believe that the development in the number of asylum seekers to

Norway affects the way this question is answered. The number of asylum seekers tends to be thoroughly presented in the media. In the peak year 2002, nearly 18 000 applied for asylum in Norway. Thereafter the number descended year by year until 2006 when the number of applicants was around 5 300 persons – which probably led to a reduction in the proportion who thought it should become more difficult for asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit in Norway. With a new increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2007 and 2008 (UDI 2008), this trend in opinion is once again expected to turn.

Table 7.6. Attitudes towards three statements on relations to immigrants. 2002-2007. Per cent

<b>«Would you feel uncomfortable if .....you or someone in your closest family had an immigrant as a domestic help?»</b>					
Year	All	Yes	No	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	11	88	1	1 410
2003	100	10	89	1	1 385
2004	100	10	90	1	1 319
2005	100	6	93	1	1 288
2006	100	8	91	1	1 286
2007	100	10	89	1	1 274
<b>«...your new neighbour was an immigrant?»</b>					
Year	All	Yes	No	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	8	90	2	1 410
2003	100	9	89	2	1 384
2004	100	9	90	1	1 316
2005	100	6	92	1	1 288
2006	100	7	91	2	1 287
<b>«...you had a son or daughter that wanted to marry an immigrant?»</b>					
Year	All	Yes	No	Don't know	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	40	53	7	1 409
2003	100	37	58	6	1 380
2004	100	35	60	5	1 317
2005	100	33	61	7	1 288
2006	100	32	62	6	1 286
2007	100	32	64	4	1 269

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

### **7.6. Nine out of 10 are positive to immigrants as neighbours and domestic helps...**

Nine out of ten have no objection to having an immigrant as a *new neighbour*. Furthermore, 9 out of 10 have no objection to having an immigrant as a *domestic help* for themselves or in the close family. In the introduction to these questions a precondition is included that the immigrant speaks Norwegian. Having an immigrant as a son-in-law or daughter-in-law, however, arouses negative feelings in 1 out of 3 (table 7.6). The adverse feeling against immigrants in the family has diminished slightly since the question was asked for the first time in 2002, when 4 out of 10 were negative.

### **7.7. ... and 7 out of 10 have contact with immigrants**

Seven out of 10 of the adult population have contact with immigrants (table 7.7), and the proportion has increased slightly in the last few years. The workplace is the most common arena for such contact. Four out of 10 have some kind of contact with immigrants at work. Three out of 10 have contact with immigrants through friends and acquaintances, and 2 out of 10 have such contact in the neighbourhood. Only 1 in 10 have contact with immigrants among close relatives.

Of those having contact with immigrants, it is rather unusual that the contact encompasses only one person. Only 6 per cent are in this situation. It is more common that the contact involves two to four persons. As many as 4 out of 10 of those with immigrant contact have contact with two to four immigrants, whereas 1 out of 3 report having contact with five to ten persons.

In 2003 and 2007, we also asked about the frequency of contact with immigrants and

how the contact was perceived. Of those having contact, daily or weekly contact is the most common among 8 out of 10. The rest had monthly or less frequent contact. Of those having contact with immigrants, 7 out of 10 experienced the contact as basically positive. Three out of 10 had had both positive and negative experiences, whereas only 1 per cent found the contact basically negative.

### **7.8. Various social conditions affect the attitudes**

We have already mentioned some of the factors that appear to affect the attitudes towards refugees and immigrants over time. *Improvements in the business cycle* probably encourage a liberalisation of attitudes. During times of economic growth, it becomes easier to find work and housing for newcomers, and the need for labour increases. Other European studies also show similar results (Semyonov and Rajzman 2006). *Large numbers of asylum seekers* probably have the opposite effect on attitudes. The more asylum seekers there are, the greater the demands will be on the authorities to regulate and reduce the influx of refugees. The majority of the population seems to harbour a deep-rooted fear of large-scale and uncontrolled immigration.

*The official refugee policy* also has repercussions for the public opinion. At the same time that immigration should not appear too overwhelming, neither should the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers appear unreasonably harsh and inhumane. Otherwise, it could trigger demands for a more liberal practising of immigration legislation. Something similar probably happened in the middle of the 1990s when the media regularly presented reports of a «heartless» asylum policy, innocent asylum children living in churches, unfathomable decisions on applications, and brutal im-

Table 7.7 **Contact with immigrants: arenas, numbers, frequency and experience. 2002-2007. Per cent**

<b>«Do you have contact with immigrants who live in Norway for instance at work, in the neighbourhood, among friends, family etc?»</b>									
Year	All	Yes		No		Number of persons that answered			
2002	100	67		33		1 408			
2003	100	64		36		1 384			
2004	100	67		33		1 318			
2005	100	66		34		1 286			
2006	100	68		32		1 288			
2007	100	70		30		1 274			
<b>«In what connections do you have contact with immigrants who live in Norway?»</b>									
Year	All	At work		Among friends/ acquaintances		In the neighbourhood		Among close relatives	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2002	100	41	59	27	73	22	78	9	91
2003	100	40	60	29	71	23	77	9	91
2004	100	39	61	29	71	24	76	9	91
2005	100	42	58	28	72	20	80	9	91
2006	100	41	59	31	69	24	76	10	90
2007	100	45	55	32	68	24	76	11	89
<b>«How many immigrants have you contact with?»</b>									
Year	All	Number of persons					Don't know	Number of persons that answer	
		0	1	2-4	5-10	More than 10			
2003	100	36	6	26	19	14	0	1 382	
2003 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	9	41	29	22	0	890	
2004	100	33	6	27	19	15	0	1 317	
2004 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	9	40	29	22	0	886	
2005	100	34	6	24	20	15	0	1 286	
2005 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	10	37	30	23	0	844	
2006	100	32	4	28	21	15	0	1 287	
2006 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	5	41	31	22	0	886	
2007	100	30	4	27	23	15	0	1 271	
2007 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	6	38	33	22	0	894	
<b>«How frequent is your contact with immigrants generally?»</b>									
Year	All	Never	Seldom	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Number of persons that answered		
2003	100	36	3	9	23	29	1 382		
2003 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	5	14	36	45	890		
2007	100	30	4	11	28	28	1 271		
2007 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	5	15	40	39	894		
<b>«What is your personal experience of this contact?»</b>									
Year	All	No contact	Basically positive	Positive/negative	Basically negative	Number of persons that answered			
2003	100	36	44	20	0	1 381			
2003 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	69	31	1	889			
2007	100	30	51	19	1	1 271			
2007 <sup>1</sup>	100	.	72	27	1	894			

<sup>1</sup> Only persons with contact with immigrants.

Source: Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Blom 2007).

plementation of deportation orders. This may have contributed to the change of attitudes in a liberal direction from 1995 to 1996 (Blom 1996b).

Conversely, all *crime* committed by immigrants will serve to undermine liberal and tolerant attitudes (Blom 1999). This is especially the case for dramatic acts like gang fights, stabbings, «honour» killings, drug-related crimes and smuggling of persons into the country. Crimes of this nature conducted by individuals with immigrant backgrounds can very easily «colour» the public perception of the whole group. So far, there are few indications that acts of terror conducted by religiously-inspired fundamentalist groups outside the country directly influence the attitudes of the Norwegian population towards their own immigrants.

We also have the impression that attitudes towards the asylum policy are affected by the knowledge and sympathy held by the population towards groups fleeing from a country. In 1994, there was considerable goodwill to accepting refugees from Bosnia, and this was also the case in 1999 with refugees from Kosovo. Both events, which could be said to happen in our neighbouring region, were thoroughly covered by the media in a way that left no doubt that refugees from these *areas were real refugees of war*. Both in 1994 and 1999, we also registered a statistically significant increase from the year before in the proportion who agreed that «Norway should give residence permits to refugees and asylum seekers to at least the same extent as today» (Blom 1994, 1999). The same goodwill was not extended to busloads of Bulgarian «refugees» arriving in the summer of 2001. Instead of meeting sympathy, they added to the creation of concepts such as «asylum tourists» and «supposedly unfounded asylum seekers».

### **7.9. Less educated are most sceptical**

The attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are different in different segments of the population. Factors found to have bearings on attitudes are education, age, place of residence, contact with immigrants and political opinion.

*Educational level* is the single factor with the greatest impact. The highly educated are systematically more positive towards immigrants and immigration than intermediate and lower educated individuals. Whereas for instance 49 per cent of the population with a lower secondary education as highest educational level believe that most immigrants abuse the social welfare system, only 7 per cent of the population with a long higher education or a university college education (tertiary education, graduate level) were of the same opinion in 2007.

Moreover, 50 per cent of the population in 2007 with education at lower secondary level also believed that immigrants are a source of insecurity in society, compared with only 15 per cent of those with a long higher education or a university college education. Finally, 20 per cent of the least educated found it uncomfortable to have an immigrant as a domestic help, compared with 2 per cent of the highly educated.

### **7.10. Young and intermediate aged are more positive than elders**

*Age* also has a definite connection with attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. The most significant trend is that the oldest age group (67-79 years) has less goodwill to offer. In some issues, the proportion taking a sceptical stance is at least twice as large among the eldest as among any of the other age groups. For instance, 54 per cent of the youngest in 2007 rejected the notion that most immigrants are a

source of insecurity, compared with only 25 per cent of the oldest.

On several questions, the age group next to the youngest (25-44 years) nevertheless holds more liberal attitudes than the youngest group (16-24 years). This is probably linked to the fact that the younger group has not had time to take as much education as those somewhat older. For example, 31 per cent of the 16-24 year olds agree that «most immigrants abuse the social welfare system», compared with 25 per cent of the 25-44 year olds. A similar tendency can be seen regarding immigrants as domestic helps. Thirteen per cent of the youngest oppose having an immigrant as domestic help, compared with 9 per cent of the adjacent age group and 7 per cent of the 45-66 year olds.

However, with regard to questions containing a paternalistic attitude, the youngest tend to be the most liberal. As is the case, for example, regarding the expectation that immigrants should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible, and the question whether they would feel uncomfortable having an immigrant as a son-in-law or daughter-in-law. A total of 48 per cent of the youngest rejected the notion that it is an aim to become as similar to Norwegians as possible, compared with 40 per cent in the adjacent age group. The proportion finding it uncomfortable to have an immigrant (Norwegian-speaking) in the near family, is similarly 6 percentage points lower among the youngest than among the young adults (22 per cent compared with 28 per cent).

### **7.11. Less scepticism in the cities**

Residents in *urban areas* with more than 100 000 inhabitants, i.e. the largest cities with surroundings, generally have somewhat more liberal attitudes to immigrants and immigration than persons in

less urban residential areas. As for age, the trend according to place of residence is, however, not linear in the sense that tolerance is largest in the most densely populated areas. In the survey from 2007 it is a recurring trend that persons living in urban areas with less than 2 000 inhabitants have the least positive feelings towards immigrants and immigration. On the other side it is in urban areas with 100 000 inhabitants or more that the most liberal attitudes are located. In 2007, 12 per cent in the most densely populated areas believed that it should be easier for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit in Norway, whereas the proportion is only half as large in less populated areas. For some attitude indicators, the effect of urban/rural residential area is weakened or eliminated when differences in educational level or amount of contact with immigrants is included.

The goodwill towards immigrants and immigration according to *geographic region* is generally largest in Akershus and Oslo. It is also this region that has the largest proportion of immigrants, more than double the proportion of the remaining Østlandet, which has the next highest proportion. For instance, nearly 8 out of 10 in Akershus/Oslo held the view that immigrants make an important contribution to working life, compared with 7 out of 10 on a national level. This type of result is found in several consecutive years. As for residential area, the effect is not always robust when controlling for education and contact with immigrants.

Moreover, it may vary somewhat from question to question which geographic region appears least tolerant towards immigrants and immigration. Relevant «candidates» might be Hedmark/Oppland and Agder/Rogaland. The tendency is not regarded as very distinct and can vary from year to year.

### 7.12. Does little contact lead to little acceptance?

Persons who have *contact with immigrants* generally have more positive attitudes towards immigrants than persons without such contact. The more arenas for this contact, the stronger the goodwill is. For instance, the proportion that believes that most immigrants abuse the social welfare system falls from 41 to 17 per cent when going from persons totally devoid of contact with immigrants to persons with contact in three or more arenas. Similarly, the proportion agreeing that immigrants represent a source of insecurity varies from 47 to 25 per cent between the same two groups. There is also a large variance in the attitude to immigrants as domestic help, neighbour and son- or daughter-in-law according to the number of immigrants in the web of contacts. Whether contact with immigrants generates positive attitudes or positive attitudes generate more contacts has not been established. Both effects are probably present.

*Political opinion* is also important. Goodwill towards immigrants and immigration has generally appeared to be most abun-

dant among supporters of Rød Valgallianse (Red Electoral Campaign) and Sosialistisk Venstreparti (Socialist Left Party), and least among supporters of Fremskrittspartiet (The Progress Party). In some questions, the supporters of Venstre (The Liberal Party) and/or Kristelig Folkeparti (Christian Democrats) have expressed marginally greater sympathy for immigrants than voters on the left side. Unfortunately, political opinion has not been among the background variables collected in the last few years after the survey was transferred from the omnibus survey to the travel and vacation survey.

*Sex* is generally of secondary importance with regard to attitudes towards immigrants and immigration, but in some questions the attitudes can vary somewhat according to sex. In 2007, women were more inclined to value the cultural contribution of immigrants, at the same time being slightly more afraid of immigrants representing a source of insecurity in society. In some years, women have also been a little more reluctant than men to claim that immigrants should endeavour to become as similar to Norwegians as possible.

#### The European Social Survey

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an interview survey conducted every other year in about twenty European countries in order to map the population's attitudes with regard to political, social, moral and religious issues. Three rounds have been conducted so far and a fourth round is being prepared. The project is jointly financed by the European Commission, European Science Foundation and national research bureaus in the participating countries. The ESS focuses on standardised sample techniques, accurate translation from the same questionnaires and ensuring that field work and file construction are carried out similarly in all participating countries. In Norway, the field work is conducted by Statistics Norway. Data are available free of charge from the website of the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) in Bergen. See also Ringdal and Kleven 2004.

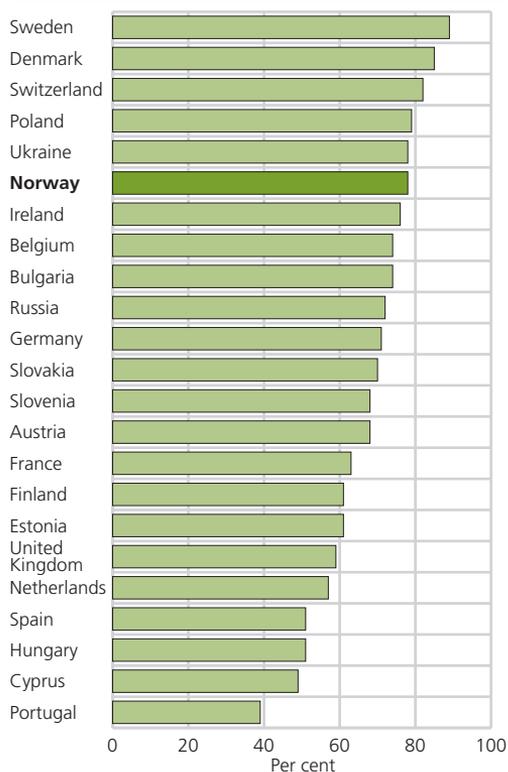
The first survey round in 2002-2003 encompassed the Nordic countries (except Iceland), United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia; 21 countries in total. Israel was also included the first interview round but as the only non-European country it is not included here. Italy withdrew from the second survey round (field work in 2004-2005), and Iceland, Estonia, Slovakia, and Ukraine entered; 24 countries in total. Bulgaria, Russia and Cyprus entered in the third round (field work 2006-2007), and Iceland, Luxembourg, Greece and the Czech Republic withdrew; 23 participants in total .

### 7.13. Norwegian attitudes in a European comparative perspective

Based on the European Social Survey (see frame), a picture can be created of the Norwegian attitudes towards immigrants and immigration compared to the attitudes in a number of other European countries. In the first round of interviews (2002) a whole section of the questionnaire was devoted to the topic of immigrants and asylum policy. The results for some of the questions for Norway were referred to in the 2006 edition of *Immigration and immigrants* (Blom 2006). Six of the questions from the first ESS round were

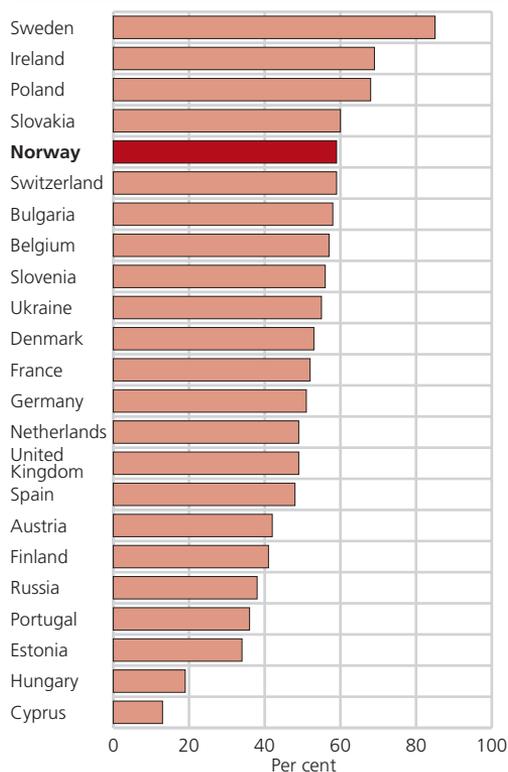
repeated in 2004 and 2006, and in the following we shall present these questions in a comparative perspective. In the figures that follow, we present Norway's position in relation to the other nations in 2006. Norway's place in the first two interview rounds (2002 and 2004) is referred to in the text. The higher Norway places itself in the bar diagrams that follow, the more liberal or tolerant the Norwegian attitudes are in comparison with the attitudes in other European countries. The complete distribution of responses for Norway in all three interview rounds is shown in the additional tables 7.1 and 7.2 at the end of the chapter.

Figure 7.1. **Proportion allowing many or some immigrants of the same race or ethnic group as most people in the country to come and live in the country. 2006. Per cent**



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

Figure 7.2. **Proportion allowing many or some immigrants of a different race or ethnic group from most people in the country to come and live in the country. 2006. Per cent**



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

### 7.14. Swedes are the most welcoming

More than 3 out of 4 in Norway's (adult) population will allow many or some people «of the same race or ethnic group as most people in Norway» to come and live here. The wording of the question is not chosen by Statistics Norway, but by planners in ESS. As stated in the introductory chapter (chapter 1), ethnic belonging is not a part of Statistics Norway's standard for immigrant categorisation. Norway takes a shared 5th place with Ukraine with regard to this question, behind Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Poland, when the nations are ranked according to their degree of hospitality (figure 7.1). In the survey rounds in 2002 and 2004, Norway obtained 6<sup>th</sup> place. Switzerland is accustomed to large numbers of immigrant guest workers, whereas Poland is primarily an emigration country. Ukraine has a major share of inhabitants with a Russian background. Of the Nordic countries, Finland has the lowest ranking (16<sup>th</sup> place). Finland is the Nordic country with the smallest proportion of foreign born; 3.8 per cent by the end of 2007 (Statistikcentralen 2008).

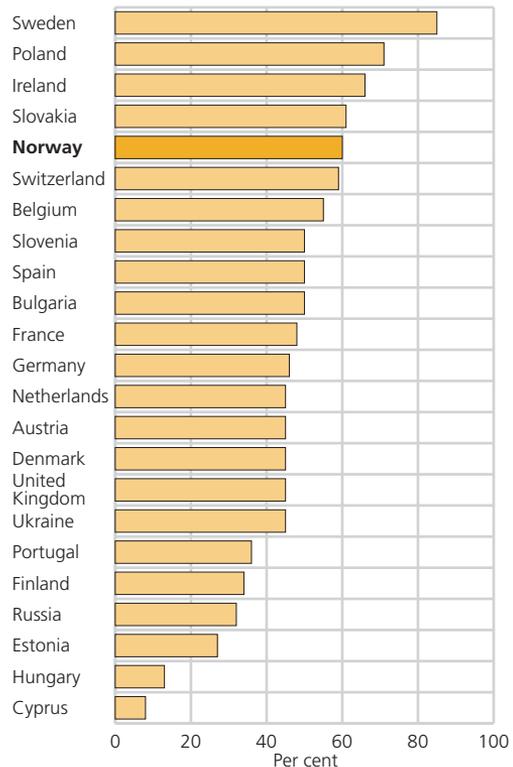
Norway retains 5th place on the ranking list regarding its willingness to receive many or some immigrants with a «different race or ethnic group from most people in Norway» (figure 7.2). The rank is retained even though the proportion in Norway wanting to receive immigrants falls by 19 percentage points (from 79 to 59 per cent). In the two previous rounds, Norway held 7th place in 2002 and 8th place in 2004 with regard to this question.

Sweden also retains 1st place on the list when it comes to giving residence to immigrants with an ethnicity other than the majority. The share of the Swedish population willing to receive many or some im-

migrants with such a background is only 5 percentage points lower than when the question related to persons with the same kind of ethnic background as the majority.

However Denmark, on the other hand, falls from 2nd place among the nations to 11th place when the question changes from relating to persons with the *same* ethnic background to persons with a *different* ethnic background from the majority. The proportion wanting to receive many or some immigrants at the same time falls by 32 percentage points (from 85 to 53 per cent) among the Danish. Similar changes in responses also appear in the Cypriote, Russian and Hungarian population when

Figure 7.3. Proportion allowing many or some immigrants from poor countries outside Europe to come and live in the country. 2006. Per cent



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

the question is altered from referring to persons with the same ethnicity to immigrants with an ethnic background other than the majority.

Norway also held 5th place among the countries in 2006 regarding the attitude towards receiving immigrants «from poor countries outside Europe» (figure 7.3). It is obvious that the population in most of the countries perceive the receipt of immigrants of a different ethnicity and immigrants from poor countries outside Europe as by and large the same thing. Hence, it is also the same four countries that in both instances rank above Norway: Sweden, Poland, Ireland and Slovakia, even if the ranking between Ireland and Poland can vary. Also further down the list there is a large degree of convergence in the ranking of the countries and in the size of the percentage displayed for each country.

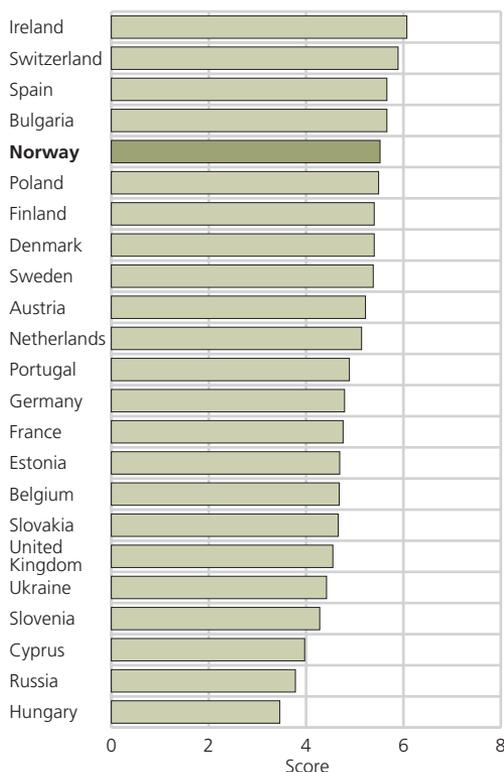
The questions above are not directly comparable to the question in our own attitude survey regarding access to residence permits for *refugees and asylum seekers*. The ESS questions are less precise in that they do not contain anything about reason for immigration, and referring to ethnicity in our context is also unprecedented. Furthermore, the questions do not refer to a defined level (e.g. «remain the same as today») as our own attitude question does. How many people that are regarded as covered in concepts such as «many», «some» and «a few» is also unclear.

### 7.15. Irish have strongest belief that immigration is good for the economy

In the next three questions, where the answers are framed like scores on an 11-point scale, the countries are ranked according to their mean scale values. The first question is about whether immigration is «bad or good» for the country's economy.

Norway takes 5th place among the countries regarding the belief that immigration is good for the country's economy (figure 7.4). In 2002 and 2004, the rankings were 5th and 6th place respectively. Finland, Denmark and Sweden all had a somewhat weaker belief in this than Norway in 2006. Sweden has a lower position than Norway here for the first time. We notice that Ireland rises the most among the countries that believe that immigration is beneficial for the economy. From originally being a poor emigration country, Ireland has recently experienced significant economic growth and also attracted many foreign

Figure 7.4. «Would you say it is generally bad or good for the country's economy that people come to live here from other countries?» (0: Bad for the economy, 10: Good for the economy). 2006. Mean score on 11-point scale



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

labour immigrants. The responses of the Irish seem to indicate that they regard immigration as an important factor behind the economic progression.

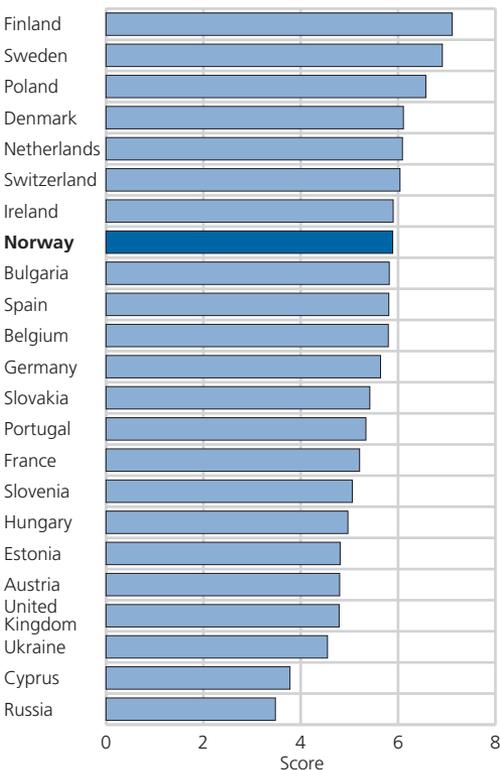
**7.16. Finland has few immigrants, but values its culture**

In Norway there are more people who think that the country’s culture is enriched by immigrants than who think that the country benefits economically from immigration (additional table 7.2). The same is also found in many other countries in Europe. Norway consequently enters 8<sup>th</sup> place when the countries are ranked according to the extent they value im-

migrants’ cultural contribution (figure 7.5), although the proportion thinking that the country is culturally enriched by immigrants is larger than the proportion believing that the country benefits economically from immigration. Norway’s place compared to the other countries in 2002 and 2004 was 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively.

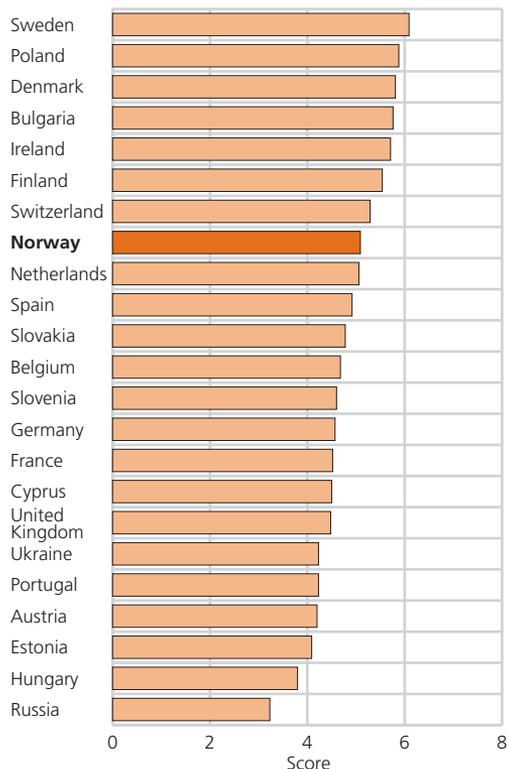
The other Nordic countries rank at the top together with Poland when it comes to perceptions of cultural enrichment. Finland, as the Nordic country with the least immigrants, rather surprisingly takes 1<sup>st</sup> place in relation to the valuation of immigrant culture. Both Ireland and Swit-

Figure 7.5. «Would you say that the country’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?» (0: Cultural life undermined, 10: Cultural life enriched). 2006. Mean score on 11-point scale



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

Figure 7.6. «Is the country made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?» (0: Worse place to live, 10: Better place to live). 2006. Mean score on 11-point scale



Source: European Social Survey 2006.

zerland, ranking ahead of Norway with regard to the perception of immigrants' economic significance, are also ahead of Norway regarding the value assigned to their cultural contribution. In addition, the Netherlands has also overtaken Norway in this respect.

### **7.17. Does immigration make the country a better place to live?**

On the question of whether the country is made a worse or a better place to live by immigration, between 5 and 6 out of 10 in Norway give a rather neutral response, whereas the rest of the population (more than 4 out of 10) are divided almost at the middle between those who think that immigration has been positive and those who think it has been negative for the country (additional table 7.2). This is nevertheless enough for Norway to take 8<sup>th</sup> place among the countries believing that immigration has made the country a better place to live (figure 7.6). This is higher on the list than in 2002 and 2004 when Norway was placed 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> respectively. The other Nordic countries in the survey in 2006 are all above Norway, with Sweden once again at the top.

It should furthermore be mentioned that the three largest and most important countries in Europe that participated in this survey, United Kingdom, Germany and France, all have lower scores than Norway on all six questions in the survey – i.e. both regarding willingness to receive new immigrants and regarding appreciation of immigrants' social efforts. We also note that countries like Cyprus, Hungary, Estonia, Russia and Ukraine represent the most restrictive countries. Several of them have their own minority problems, which can partly explain the positions they take.

The conclusion for the Norwegian part regarding attitudes to immigrants in a comparative perspective, is that the country ends up in the liberal or «immigrant accepting» third of the countries on all six questions in the third round of the European Social Survey. Sweden takes 1<sup>st</sup> place for a total of four questions and 2<sup>nd</sup> place for a fifth question. However, only a very limited number of topics are dealt with in the six questions about immigration in the second and third ESS round. For instance, topics such as crime, demands for integration, immigrants' civil rights and duties, and use of social welfare benefits etc. are not covered.

## Annex

Table 7.1. **Attitudes towards reception of various categories of immigrants. Norway. 2002, 2004 and 2006. Per cent**

<b>«To what extent do you think Norway should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most Norwegian people to come and live here?»</b>						
Year	All	Allow many to come and live here	Allow some	Allow a few	Allow none	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	20	52	26	2	2 019
2004	100	21	56	20	2	1 754
2006	100	25	53	20	2	1 739
<b>«What about people of a different race or ethnic group from most Norwegian people?»</b>						
Year	All	Allow many to come and live here	Allow some	Allow a few	Allow none	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	11	45	38	6	2 018
2004	100	12	46	35	7	1 753
2006	100	14	45	36	6	1 741
<b>«What about people from the poor countries outside Europe?»</b>						
Year	All	Allow many to come and live here	Allow some	Allow a few	Allow none	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	12	49	34	1	2 019
2004	100	12	47	35	1	1 753
2006	100	14	46	36	1	1 743

Source: The European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006.

Table 7.2. **Supposed social consequences of immigration. Norway. 2002, 2004 and 2006. Per cent**

<b>«Would you say it is generally bad or good for Norway's economy that people to come and live here from other countries?»</b>						
Year	All	Bad for the economy (0-3)	Neither good nor bad (4-6)	Good for the economy (7-10)	Mean score	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	17	52	31	5,41	1 994
2004	100	21	50	29	5,16	1 737
2006	100	17	47	36	5,52	1 727

**«Would you say that Norway's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?»**

Year	All	Allow many to come and live here	Allow some	Allow a few	Allow none	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	16	41	43	5,83	2 019
2004	100	16	40	44	5,84	1 747
2006	100	16	40	45	5,89	1 740

**«Is Norway made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?»**

Year	All	Worse place to live (0-3)	Neither worse nor better (4-6)	Better place to live (7-10)	Mean score	Number of persons that answered
2002	100	21	62	17	4,82	2 022
2004	100	24	56	20	4,84	1 745
2006	100	21	55	24	5,09	1 740

Source: The European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006.