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Global Terrorism and the Civil Sphere in Norway: Renegotiating Civil Codes / Kari Steen-Johnsen, Marte Winsvold

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**]pn[Part IV**

**]pt[Nativism and Extremism in the Pro-Civil State**

]cn[9

]ct[Global Terrorism and the Civil Sphere in Norway

]cst[Renegotiating Civil Codes

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## **]ha[Introduction**

]p[On July 22, 2011, a right-wing extremist exploded a car bomb outside the government building in Oslo, and thereafter shot people at the youth summer camp of the Labor Party at Utøya. Seventy-seven people were killed and many more injured in the two attacks. After July 22, the terror attacks were interpreted, processed, and framed in ways that surprised Norwegians and the international public. Contrary to political reactions witnessed after terror attacks elsewhere, Norwegian political leaders stressed the importance of maintaining the openness, tolerance, and solidarity proclaimed to characterize Norwegian society. The public followed suit, organizing peaceful rose marches nationwide. The story of July 22 became a story about how Norway responded to terror with appeals for more democracy, inclusion, unity, and tolerance – a story, in other words, of how certain values and norms defining Norwegian society were confirmed and even strengthened because of the terror attacks.

]p1[In this chapter, we analyze how Norwegian citizens renegotiate core codes of the Norwegian civil sphere when asked to reflect upon terrorism in relation to the specific events of July 22 and to the threat of IslamistIslamist terror. We first ask how terrorism challenges core values of the civil sphere, such as freedom and tolerance. Second, we examine how the terrorism threat affects the boundaries of the civil sphere; more precisely, whether Muslims and non-Muslims experience different conditions for inclusion. In current national and global discussions about terrorism, the place of Islam and Muslims within Western societies is a core issue, and one might therefore expect that the terrorism threat might negatively affect Muslims' place within the Norwegian value community (Aarset 2017). The analysis is based on focus group interviews conducted in June 2016 with five groups of Norwegians, in which half the respondents were of Muslim background and half of non-Muslim background.

]p1[The civil sphere, understood as “a world of values and institutions that generates the capacity for social criticism and democratic integration at the same time” (Alexander 2006),

may be fundamentally challenged by acts of terrorism, but it may also, as the Norwegian July 22 case indicates, be strengthened and reconfirmed. Terrorism can be understood as a specific type of political action, aimed at creating political, social, and moral instability in target societies. Still, when terrorism strikes, there may be a mobilization and a counter-reading of events in the civil sphere, enabling strong narratives of resilience and solidarity to be formed (Alexander 2004). Such a process is not straightforward, and might involve reinterpreting civil codes and renegotiating the boundaries of the civil sphere. As Alexander (2006) emphasizes, civil spheres are neither inherently good nor stable, and should be seen as constantly re-created.

lp1[Norway provides an interesting case for reflecting upon how terrorism affects the civil sphere, since citizens may draw on both the concrete experience of having coped with a right-wing terrorist attack and the experience of a current Islamist terrorist threat. The analysis shows, first, that core values of the civil sphere, freedom and tolerance, are emphasized by all groups in the face of terrorism. Nevertheless, these values are weighted against other values, such as security, and are put into complex and contradictory internal relationships. Second, the analysis of Norway's case after the July 22 attacks underscores how the value of the "nation" might wrap around the civil sphere, and be used to support civil over non-civil values. Third, depending on whether terrorism is enacted from within or from outside, terrorist threats pose a problem of how to preserve the civil sphere's integrity and of where to draw the boundaries for inclusion. While July 22 instilled an encompassing solidarity, it also posed the problem of handling an uncivil act from within. The Islamist terrorist threat, on the other hand, raises a problem of inclusion for Muslims. This case study underscores the relevance of civil sphere theory (CST) as an analytical tool to describe the symbolic and discursive underpinnings of democracy in a social democratic state such as Norway, and how these underpinnings work in coping with terrorism.

The chapter has three parts. First, we give a theoretical background and present the Norwegian narratives of the July 22 attacks, based on existing literature. Second, we analyze in detail the values that are seen as put at stake by terrorism, and their relationships. Third, we scrutinize the civil sphere's boundaries, specifically in the cases of the July 22 attacks and the Islamist terrorist threat.

### **Terrorism and the Civil Sphere**

Alexander outlines a sociological understanding of the reaction to terrorist attacks as fundamentally dramaturgical (2004: 90). In all their concrete violence, terrorist acts are also performative actions that seek to produce a narrative that will affect the target population. For example, the terrorist behind the July 22 attacks, Anders Behring Breivik, carefully constructed a narrative about Norway being under a double attack from foreign Islamist forces and domestic multiculturalist forces represented by the Norwegian Labor Party. Within this particular narrative, the act of terror could be seen as a necessary defense of the good society, and of Norwegian culture. More generally, terrorist attacks could be seen as producing a narrative of war between the terrorist and the target society, a war in which terrorists are the strong, and the population and the state, the weak.

Narratives produced by terrorists, on the one hand, and by society in response to terrorist action, on the other, draw on available cultural codes. Alexander emphasizes the binary character of such codes. Meaning is relational and relative, and hence "the civility of the self always articulates itself in language of the incivility of the other" (2006: 50). Here, the binary codes underpinning democratic society are central to our analysis. Alexander defines these as binary structures delineating civil as opposed to uncivil *motives, relationships, and institutions* (2006: 57–9). These structures also serve to sort actions, actors, and institutions into social categories, based on their valuation as either good or evil. Hence, a boundary is created between

us and them, between those who belong within a given community and those who are defined as being on the outside.

[p1[In the context of disruptive events such as terrorism, narratives and counternarratives indeed draw on existing cultural codes, but may also redefine them, thus potentially moving the civil sphere's boundaries. Politicians are centrally placed to define the collective interpretation of a terrorist attack by creating narratives of the attack's character, and of the response. Strong examples of this are President Bush's formulations of the "War against Terrorism" after 9/11, Prime Minister Stoltenberg's message to respond to the July 22 terror with "more openness, more democracy," President Hollande's definition of the Charlie Hebdo attacks as an attack on free speech, and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's call for New Zealand to be the cure to the "viruses of hate and fear". For politicians' messages to be successful, however, they must be a "broad expression of the moods and meanings of the nation's democratic life"; in other words, they must connect with civil culture and discourse (Alexander 2010: 18). Politicians are able to create this resonance with the civil sphere to a varying degree, and fare differently after terrorist attacks, sometimes experiencing a rally effect, sometimes not (Bali 2007; Chanley 2013; Gassebner et al. 2008; Gross et al. 2009; Wollebæk et al. 2013).

[p1[Indeed, performances and messages emitted by different actors may fare differently than expected because they are received and interpreted by different audiences. Adding to the problem of the complexity of audiences is the problem of fragmentation. To paraphrase Alexander (2004: 95), cultural antagonisms and/or social cleavages can create polarized and conflicting interpretive communities. Polarization and conflict are certainly imminent dangers after terrorist attacks. Research from Western countries has shown tendencies by members of the targeted populations to withdraw to their ingroups after Islamist terrorist attacks (Greenberg et al. 2003; Traugott et al. 2002), and a tendency of skepticism toward outgroups that reaches beyond groups possibly related to perpetrators (Echebarria-Echabe and Fernández-Guede



2006). In studying the immediate experience of July 22 amongst second-generation Norwegian Muslims, Aarset (2017), referring to Alba's (2005) distinction, showed that this was a moment where social boundaries between Muslim and non-Muslim Norwegians became "bright," and where this group experienced itself as excluded from "Norwegianness." A racialization of Muslims also occurred within public discourse after the Boston Marathon bombings (Watson et al. 2018).

lp1[To summarize, contingent events such as terrorism put the values of the civil sphere at stake, and may lead to a change in the weighting of values and in the relationship between values. Such events may also serve to adjust and restrain the boundaries of the civil sphere itself, excluding groups normally included. Regarding the Norwegian reaction to July 22, our analysis indicates a reinforcement of an idea of a "vital center": that is, an idea of encompassing solidarity (Alexander 2018; Luengo and Ihlebæk 2019). This ideal is maintained but becomes more complex in the context of the Islamist terrorist threat. On one hand, the analysis of Norwegians' reactions to two subsequent terror situations shows how cultural scripts forged during one crisis may live on and affect the interpretation of new situations. On the other, it shows how ideals are renegotiated in the face of new challenges, changing how certain groups may participate.

lp1[In what follows, we first describe the Norwegian narratives of the July 22 attacks based on academic and literary sources, before analyzing the reconfiguration of values and of the boundaries of the civil sphere based on focus group interviews.

### lhb[*Norwegian Narratives of the July 22 Attacks*

lp[The immediate aftermath of the July 22 attacks was characterized by strong expressions of shock and grief, and of a coming together of the population. A speech by Prime Minister Stoltenberg on July 23 set the tone for public reactions. He stated that Norway would face the

attacks with “more openness, more democracy, but never naïvety.” Through this speech, the attacks were framed as an attack on Norwegian *values*, and it was these values that were to be defended. This core message was to be repeated in the following days, by other politicians, by the King and Crown Prince, and in and through the rose marches. As King Harald V said in his speech at the memorial concert: “It is when our nation is tested that our strength, our solidarity, and our courage become clear. Now is the time where we stand by our values” (*Mitt lille land* 2011). The community’s role was emphasized, as was the importance of standing together to support the victims. A statement by a young female member of the Labor Party’s Youth Fraction, uttered to CNN right after the attacks, became a core quote: “When one man can show so much hate, imagine how much more love we can show together.”

]p1[Prominent reactions in this first phase drew on core Norwegian values and on Norwegian self-identity, as a peaceful, open, and democratic society (Aagedal et al. 2013; Rafoss 2014). In this first phase, the community was explicitly all-embracing across ethnic, religious, political, and social groups. Studies that examined the experiences of ethnic and religious minorities right after the events have found that these groups experienced a strong sense of inclusion in this phase (Aarset 2015; Midtbøen and Steen-Johnsen 2014). As has also been shown in various studies from other contexts (e.g. Schudson 2002), Norwegian-edited media took a consensual, unifying, and non-critical approach to the coverage of the events and the reactions (Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2016).

]p1[Still, there is also another story to be told about the very first reactions to the attacks. During the few hours the attacker’s identity was unknown, many assumed the attack was a case of Islamist terror. During this brief period, some immigrants experienced hostile comments and even assaults (Aarset 2015; Midtbøen and Steen-Johnsen 2014). Also, while few divergent voices were heard publicly in the first phase, there are still indications that several groups felt that the climate of opinion was rather uniform and somewhat oppressive (Grønstad 2013).

Answering as to how the attacks had affected Norwegian society, three weeks after they occurred respondents in a population survey tended toward saying that it had become more difficult to express one's opinion (Wollebæk et al. 2011). Voters of the right-wing Progress Party, a party to which the terrorist Breivik had had some links, felt this to a significantly higher degree than did others.<sup>1</sup>

That the terrorist was an ethnic Norwegian male, born and bred in the affluent part of Oslo, obviously presented a problem of interpretation and processing in and through the civil sphere. Since the perpetrator was “one of us,” to cite the title of Åsne Seierstad's bestselling 2013 book about the attacks, evil was in principle to be found *within* the community of Norwegians. A host of documentary books and academic texts published in the years after 2011 sought to explore the question of how and why such terrorist acts could have occurred on Norwegian soil, and possible explanations for them were thoroughly treated in the judicial process against Breivik in the spring of 2012. The core question of the case against Breivik was whether he should be regarded as mentally ill or as criminally responsible, and this question was heavily treated in Norwegian public discourse. Moreover, the most influential documentary works on the Breivik case strongly emphasized problems connected with his childhood and youth, depicting him as a deviant, an outcast (Borchgrevink 2012; Seierstad 2013).

Looking at the treatment of the terrorist act in Norwegian public discourse, it seems clear that the problem was reduced to a question of understanding Breivik. This may have been more visible for outside observers, as in the *Guardian's* review of Seierstad's book: “This book throws a great deal of light on the life and times of a miserable killer. That he had a sick imagination is clear. More is to be said about the ideas that fed it” (Buruma 2015). Insofar as society was brought in as a factor, it was mainly in the shape of welfare and childcare institutions that did not intervene in Breivik's upbringing, or in the shape of the more diffuse

community of people surrounding him (Vetlesen 2014). These factors were described as “holes” in the fabric of society (Borchgrevink 2012). Only very few treated the deeper questions of how Breivik’s acts could be linked to or even draw on mainstream values or political ideologies within Norwegian society (cf. Enerstvedt 2012 for a notable exception).

### *]*

]p[The analysis presented here draws on transcriptions from five focus group interviews conducted in May and June 2016. Each focus group consisted of people from the same age groups, 16–18 years, 20–35 years, and 45 years or older. Participants were recruited from the population pool of the polling institute TNS Gallup. When being recruited for the focus groups, all participants had to identify as either Muslim or non-Muslim. We use the terms “Muslim” and “of Muslim background” interchangeably. All Muslim participants had had a Muslim upbringing, and their or their parents’ country of origin had Islam as the dominant religion. Amongst those who identified as Muslim, the majority were practicing Muslims, but some claimed to be non-religious. We have chosen to call the other group “non-Muslim,” instead of, for example, “ethnic Norwegian,” because we have no information on their origin. All participants lived in Oslo or in the neighboring suburbs, but there was large variation amongst participants regarding occupational status and education. Religious background (Muslim or non-Muslim) was chosen as group criterion because we assumed it would influence the distinct experiences of both the July 22 terror and the current situation with the Islamist threat.

]p1[The focus group method is assumed to be suitable for exploring sensitive issues and to give an opportunity for marginalized groups to expose their perceptions, feelings, and ideas about a topic (Dilshad and Latif 2013; Morgan 1997). Except for the youngest group, Norwegians with Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds were therefore separated into different groups. We wanted interviewees to feel free to express concerns, opinions, and prejudices we assumed were more likely to be expressed with peers. Moreover, we wanted to create as safe

as possible an environment for the discussion of terror, thereby preventing interviewees from holding back for fear of exposing an undesirable image.

]p1 [For budgetary reasons, we chose to have a mix in the youngest group. In retrospect, we concluded that we should have endeavored to also separate the youngest group, as the discussion here turned out to be more polarized than the discussion in groups consisting only of Muslims or non-Muslims. In the mixed group, a dynamic occurred where the Muslim youth struggled to make their experiences with prejudices known to the non-Muslim youth. The conversation sometimes seemed like a debate between two opposing groups, precluding an open dialogue on civil values and experiences with the terror threat. The insistence of the Muslim youth that ethnic Norwegians acted contemptuously could be interpreted as a strategy to rid themselves of the uncivil values ascribed to Islamist terrorists by preemptively counterattacking the majority population for being equally uncivil. It could further be interpreted as a claim to be included in the civil sphere, and thereby be subject to the values of tolerance and inclusion.

]p1 [The interview guide was developed by the researchers and included questions about interviewees' immediate associations with the word "terror"; their experiences with and thoughts about July 22 and the current terror threat situation; and how these two situations impacted their daily lives, their media use, and their perception of and trust in other social groups and in the authorities. Interviews were conducted by a professional moderator from the polling institute, who had long experience with focus group interviews and was involved in developing the interview guide. As far as the researchers could judge, the moderator succeeded in creating a safe environment and ensured all participants had the opportunity to speak. The authors observed interviews behind a one-way mirror. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Analysis of transcribed data was performed as a hermeneutic, iterative process. Interviews were closely read by both authors and coded for content relevant to the CST

framework. Interpretations of the coded contents were discussed between the authors and reinterpreted. The analysis reported in this chapter is based on interpretations of the focus group discussions as they played out in their entirety. Quotes are included merely as illustrations of analytical points.

]p1[The ability to reveal shared understandings or common views in a group is one benefit of focus group interviews (Harding 2013). However, because of the nature of the group conversation, focus groups are prone to both social desirability bias and groupthink. A few opinionated participants may dominate the discussion, and some participants may be unwilling to express their disagreement, falsely creating the impression of a consensus. These inhibiting social mechanisms appeared to be at play in all focus groups but were especially visible in the group of elder non-Muslims. At the very beginning of the interview, one participant was promptly contradicted and then ridiculed by other participants when expressing some pejorative attitude. This exchange set the tone for the rest of the interview, preventing some participants from voicing intolerant or anti-immigrant attitudes and inciting others to show off their tolerant attitudes. Similar dynamics were observed in the other groups.

]p1[One limitation of the study is thus that there might be normative and political biases in the interviews: that is, a problem of freely expressing opinions critical of immigration. In our analysis, we emphasize shared values and potential differences between Muslim and non-Muslim groups throughout. However, regarding the values of tolerance, solidarity, freedom of speech, and security, some visible divides seem to be politically motivated. Whereas freedom of speech and security are associated with the political right, solidarity and tolerance tend to be identified as left-wing values. This is an aspect we have been unable to integrate into the analysis, but that should serve as a backdrop for it.

## **][ha[Civil Codes and the Terrorism Threat in Norway**

]p[When focus group interviewees were asked about which Norwegian values were challenged by the July 22 terror and the current Islamist terror threat, terrorism as a basic challenge to democracy and democratic values came to the fore. Respondents mentioned a wide range of values as being at stake, some evidently belonging to the set of civil values outlined by Alexander (2006: 55–7), others that could be considered non-civil. In different ways, these values were all seen as hallmarks of Norwegian democracy, and democracy itself was also put forward as a shared value that must be defended. These values were equally emphasized by Muslims and non-Muslims, and in all age groups, and seem to be the least common denominator of a shared civil sphere, at least at the headline level.

]p1[Table 9.1 outlines the set of democratic values mentioned as being threatened by terrorism (left column), along with their opposite, undemocratic poles (right column).

]INSERT TABLE 9.1 NEAR HERE[

]p1[During interviews, the content of the values, relations between them, and their relative positions were renegotiated in rather complex ways by participants when faced with terror and the terror threat. On one hand, the terror threat elucidated the tensions between opposite poles, such as the ones between security and insecurity and between solidarity and fragmentation. On the other, being presented with the problem of terrorism also led participants to reflect upon the content of positive codes, and on the problematic relationships between codes. For example, security might be unachievable without renouncing some degree of freedom and privacy.

]p1[The terror threat did not, however, seem to alter the negative poles of the value pairs. Indeed, as part of their reflections, respondents reconsidered what tolerance meant and how important it was vis-à-vis other civil sphere values, but they all agreed that the opposite

of tolerance – intolerance – should be avoided. Nor were they ready to embrace exclusion, irrationality, or cowardice. They thus shared the definition of the negative pole of the value pair and had a common notion of the values they wanted to avoid. What defined the shared boundaries of the civil sphere were therefore the values that respondents agreed on *not* including, rather than the ones they agreed on including. This shared notion of the negative poles of the value system seemed to provide a ground from which all respondents could discuss how the shared civil sphere should be devised.

lp1[The overall impulse of respondents, in both the Muslim and non-Muslim groups, to link the terrorist threat to opposition between democratic and undemocratic values, and to defend the set of values that they see as democratic, is indicative of the operation of a shared civil sphere, in Alexander's (2006) terms. In addition, the set of values listed indicate that the terrorism threat evokes changes in the values considered as part of the civil sphere, in relationships between values, and in their weighting. In what follows, we delve more deeply into some of the value tensions and negotiations that emerged during group discussions. Our analysis proceeds in two steps. First, we look at changes and tensions in the weighting of the core civil values of freedom and tolerance when confronted with the value of security. Second, we show how sets of other values, notably those of rationality, trust, and values related to "the Norwegian way of coping with terrorism," may serve to alleviate tensions between values, or underpin civil values.

#### lhb[*Terrorism as a Threat to Freedom, Tolerance, and Security*

lp[Freedom as a value was readily mentioned when interviewees were asked about what values were threatened by terror. Freedom as a value is multifaceted. It may refer to the freedom to move freely without being restricted or scared; to freedom from the authorities: that is, the right to privacy; and to freedom of speech. All these aspects of freedom were seen as threatened by terror, but differently: the freedom to move freely was perceived to be restricted mainly by the



terror threat itself because people avoid or consider avoiding certain places or activities out of fear of terror; freedom in the sense of privacy was seen as being threatened by governmental counterterror measures such as surveillance and the setting aside of legal principles; freedom of speech, meanwhile, was mainly perceived to be limited by the shift in the climate of opinion that follows a terror threat.

]p1[Muslim and non-Muslim interviewees differed in their perception of what kind of threat to freedom of speech terrorism posed. Amongst non-Muslim interviewees, freedom of speech was emphasized as an important principle mainly when talking about the right to express views contrary to the community's, and it was especially the freedom to express intolerant values that was perceived as threatened. Thus conceived, freedom of speech is at odds with the values of tolerance and solidarity/togetherness, which makes it stand in a complex relationship with other positive codes.

]p1[Muslim interviewees also felt that their freedom of expression was threatened by terror. To them, however, terror threatened the freedom to express their religiosity, as this example shows:

]ex/[If I'm in a client meeting and we're served food I just say, "Remember that I'm a vegetarian," because I cannot stand the other mess. "Ok, vegetarian!" Yes, then it's a bit simpler, right, it's simpler to swallow that I'm a vegetarian than to say, "No, he doesn't eat meat" or "He wants that halal thing." (Adult Muslim)

]p[Several respondents with Muslim backgrounds underscored the need to tone down the expressions of their religiosity in public settings, related to either eating or clothing practices. They described this as an increasingly strong tendency, and were inclined to link the change to the 9/11 attacks and the perceived escalating conflict between Islam and Western culture.

Discussions about the threat to freedom of speech were closely linked to discussions about *tolerance*, understood as the value to accept groups with different cultural practices. The content of this value was discussed in various ways when related to July 22 than when related to the Islamist terror threat, and the discussion was much more complex and problematic in the latter case. The value of tolerance seems to have been fortified by the July 22 attacks: showing tolerance was thus an act of resistance against the terrorist. For the Islamist terror threat, tolerance seemed to have a much more ambiguous position. In respondents' views, tolerance was not challenged primarily because the Islamist terrorists express intolerant attitudes; tolerance was challenged because being tolerant required the acceptance of values and cultural practices associated with Islamists, while simultaneously denouncing aggressive measures taken to impose those values.

Non-Muslim Norwegians thus struggled with confirming their adherence to the value of tolerance, all the while distancing themselves from certain Muslim values. An inherent paradox seemed to be that certain Muslim practices express intolerant values, thus activating the conundrum of whether tolerance entails the obligation also to tolerate the intolerant and their intolerant values. Not tolerating would be an act of intolerance, but by tolerating, one might risk transforming one of the very values that define the civil sphere. Simultaneously, lack of tolerance was put forward as an explanation of why terrorism occurs, as in the quote below:

Norway is not such an important goal [for terrorists] simply because people live good lives here. In Paris, they have the ban on hijabs and many stricter rules than what we have in Norway. So, to put it bluntly, when such terror threats occur, it's because people are in a somewhat terrible situation. (Young Muslim)]/ex[

]p[To avoid discarding the value of tolerance, participants with non-Muslim backgrounds explained intolerance as irrational behavior for which the solution was more knowledge, more information. For example, to avoid changing the idea about Norwegians being tolerant, some interviewees explained the intolerance of, say, elderly or rural people as resulting from ignorance. In doing so, they excused such intolerant attitudes and thereby relieved these intolerant persons of responsibility. In other words, we do not need to change our values; we need only inform the uninformed to make them see there is no need to be scared and hostile. The whole intolerance problem, therefore, could be redefined as a question of a lack of information, as one young Muslim contended:

]ex/[I think there's a connection between [a lack of tolerance] and the fact that the older generation is not used to a multicultural society like the one we've grown up with today. Then I think that people become more skeptical of things that they don't know anything about. And that of course creates fear. I feel that more information makes things less insecure. At least I feel that way. Insecurity makes people hostile.]/ex[

]p[For the Muslim group, the problem of tolerance was less theoretical. They had experienced real limits to their freedom of expression and provided a number of examples of things that trigger skepticism or anger amongst Norwegians, and that imposed a need to maneuver strategically in Norwegian society so as to avoid awakening such anger, as this adult Muslim expresses:

]ex/[When I was in the army [20 years ago], it was ok for me to say that I didn't cut my nails on Fridays before going to dinner because it's a holy day. It was like, "Ok, no

problem.” People cannot say things like that now ... with the terror and all that ... they must hold back more than before.]/ex[

]p[Nevertheless, Muslims were aware that they were protected by the norm of tolerance, and they appealed explicitly to civil values when denouncing the intolerant behavior they experienced.

]p1[Problems of maintaining freedom and tolerance were made increasingly difficult by the emphasis on security in the context of terrorism. In the face of the unpredictability and arbitrariness of terror, security was defined as something that could make surroundings more predictable. The value of security stood in a complex relationship to the value of freedom. On one hand, security and freedom of movement were seen as mutually reinforcing. People felt freer to move when they felt secure, restricted when they felt insecure. On the other, freedom, understood as privacy, was perceived as being at odds with the value of security and interviewees pitted these two values against each other. The freedom versus security discussion represented a complex and ambiguous weighting of values when considering the terror threat. Amongst most interviewees, however, freedom in the sense of the right to privacy appeared to rank above the value of security in the hierarchy of values. Although security obviously was a highly held value, many interviewees seemed reluctant to mention it as such, precisely because it could be used as an argument to dispense with freedom, which is considered a core democratic right. An adult non-Muslim, for example, holds that:

]ex/[I must say I have no inclination to give up the freedom that we have to [enjoy] privacy in Norway for preventing a possible terrorist attack.]/ex[

The discussion about the relative weighting of freedom (privacy) and security largely revolved around the concept of “surveillance.” In sum, surveillance seemed to hold two conflicting positions in the civil sphere: it was both an ally of security and the negative pole of the value pair consisting of freedom (understood as privacy) and surveillance. The arguments *against* surveillance were both principled (it compromised freedom) and consequential (it would not prevent terror attacks). The arguments *for* surveillance, however, were only consequential (it would prevent terror attacks). The lack of principled arguments in favor of surveillance indicates that surveillance was not deemed a civil value in itself. It was, at best, looked upon as a necessary evil. So, even for those who accepted surveillance, it was considered to be something negative.

Faced with terror, values of freedom, tolerance, and security stood out as core concerns for respondents. They were all renegotiated and their complex relationship was revealed: freedom of speech being at odds both with tolerance and with the freedom to express cultural or religious practices; tolerance being questioned for its requirement to tolerate disruptive values; and the relationship between security and freedom being an uneasy one because security required surveillance whereas freedom was perceived to be threatened by it. As indicated in the methods section, some of these values follow a left–right cleavage in Norwegian politics. Tolerance, for example, is seen as a left-wing value, whereas freedom is seen as a right-wing value. Owing to the climate of discussion established in the focus groups, and the ambition conveyed by the moderator that there should be no political bantering, this cleavage was not explicitly brought up by participants.

However, interviews also revealed that support for core civil values was enhanced by their relationship to other values, notably the values of trust and rationality, and the values emanating from the Norwegian way of coping with the July 22 attacks. Below we treat these relationships in turn.

### *Reconciling Values: Trust and Rationality*

Some values seemed to function as bridges: that is, they were used to reconcile values perceived to be in conflict in a terror situation. Two such bridging values were trust and rationality.

The value of *trust* was important in solving the conflict between the value of security and the value of freedom described above. The argument went that although we give authorities extended powers, our freedom is still not threatened because authorities can be trusted. One typical expression of this viewpoint follows:

But when I think about the fact that the police must take personality tests before becoming police, etc., they are so well educated that it doesn't mean anything to me [that they are able to surveil one's actions]. Well, now, I also don't know what I should have done that would be considered wrong, so in my case it just creates a sense of security, that point, that they know what others are doing. (Young Muslim)

Such statements tended to be backed by references to the education of police in particular, and their high morals, but were also put forward without further explication:

I thought that I just wanted to say that we just must trust the authorities, because whom else can we trust if something happens? Who else should be able to prevent terror? (Young Muslim)

Previous studies on Norwegian reactions after July 22 showed that both institutional and social trust played a role as a prophylactic against fear of new attacks (Wollebæk et al. 2013). Moreover, there was a relationship between institutional trust, a belief that the government

would reform itself to meet new attacks more efficiently than it confronted the July 22 attacks, and a willingness to give authorities a wide mandate for ensuring public safety (Wollebæk et al. 2012). These studies thus resonate well with what we found in the present study: that is, that trust creates a bridge between freedom and security.

First, *Rationality* as a value, on the other hand, seems to serve a different set of functions. First, it solves a contradiction of values: for example, in the conflict between freedom of speech and tolerance. The logic: only irrational people are afraid of truth, and therefore speaking bluntly does not challenge tolerance or inclusion. People do not become more intolerant because the situation is described correctly, they only become better informed. People strongly believe that intolerance, prejudice, and fear can be countered by reason.

Second, rationality served as an argument against the negative poles of other value pairs, since these were referred to as irrational. Thereby, rationality was indirectly emphasized as a civil value (Alexander 2006: 57). For example, fear was deemed irrational (the likelihood of one or one's acquaintances being attacked is very small); it was irrational to be intolerant (intolerance is due to a lack of knowledge ; and it was irrational to censor people, to prevent them from expressing their ideas.

If the values of trust and rationality seemed to assume central roles in resolving tensions between values in this study, they were also seen as fundamentally challenged by the terrorist threat. On one hand, the rationality of continued trust was questioned, as too much trust is a sign of naïvety, which might compromise safety. On the other, the irrationality and brutality of terrorism were seen as challenging rational thought and response, at both individual and societal levels.

The value of rationality, or rational responses, was also linked to a specific Norwegian way of responding to terror. When confronted with a threatening situation, fight and flight were considered as alternative, automatic responses, but both were associated with irrational

behavior. As we shall see, peacefulness (not fight) and courage (not flight) were considered by our focus groups as the adequate ways to react based on rational assessment of the situation.

*]hb[How to React to Terror the Norwegian Way: The Interaction between Civil and National Values*

]p[Norwegians do not frighten easily. Interviewees considered courage or calmness as virtuous, (showing) cowardice as shameful: that is to be scared is ok, but not to show fear or to act on it. Consequently, many interviewees struggled with how to relate to fear. A much-used argument for why one should remain calm was that being scared is irrational, since it is very unlikely that anything bad will happen. Therefore, by not being scared, people comply with two important values: courage and rationality.

]p1[Not being scared means not letting oneself be affected, not altering one's behavior, and is also a way of showing resistance:

]ex/[I try as much as I can not to think much about it really. I somehow think it's what the terrorists really want. They want people to think about it. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[Conversely, if people let themselves be affected, they betray the value of courage and this must therefore be explained and excused, or at least trivialized:

]ex/[I must say that personally I have unconsciously adopted a couple of habits! I have business units that are located next door to the Secret Services, the Ministry of Justice, and those kinds of buildings, and without really knowing when I started this, it seems like I now always park as far away as possible, and that sort of thing [laughs, the others respond by laughing]. It has happened purely unconsciously, but I have begun noticing



that: “Why do I always park there?” Then I think: ““Right!” [laughs] “That’s where the main entrance to the Ministry of Justice is.” (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[It should be noted that adult Muslims expressed a much stronger fear of terror than adult non-Muslims did – and they were much readier to admit it. Muslims in our study also tended to regard terror itself as a bigger threat, a threat to integration and their way of life. Their opinions will be described in detail below.

]p1[Courage was not equated with belligerence in the interviews. Elsewhere, one might encounter the argument that it is cowardly not to retaliate against the enemy, and a hawkish attitude has been a common reaction to terror, for example, in the United States and France (Chanley 2013; Gross et al. 2009; Hellmuth 2015). Rather, peacefulness appears from interviews to be a prominent Norwegian value, and reacting peacefully was considered brave rather than cowardly. Interviews contain many stories pointing out that Norwegians reacted peacefully to the July 22 terror. This narrative seemed to have a protective effect, and to make Norwegians, as a group, invincible; they just bounce back, turn the other cheek, and show love. Reacting peacefully is also a way of resisting the logic of violence promoted by terrorists:

]ex/[For example, the July 22 attack occurred in Oslo. I think that one often would try to show muscles in response, but we somehow tried to show love, and that we can conquer terrorism with love. (Young Muslim)]/ex[

]ex/[And then, the shock somehow evolved into love, because we somehow understood that if we’re to rise above this, and to move on, we can’t react with power and violence. The power we will show is love, and we will show that we can’t, we won’t, debase ourselves to that level. (Young Muslim)]/ex[

]p[Belligerence was posited as the negative pole of peacefulness. Being angry was considered a sign of belligerence and hence bad, perhaps because it breaks with the main post-July 22 narrative about dealing with terror: that is, show love, not hate. Additionally, belligerence was considered irrational and therefore refuted:

]ex/[But we're sitting here in the rocky hills in the far north, listening to Bush and the French President Hollande, who say war against ISIS. What? ... Should that console us? Or does that make us ... I become more concerned really, because that is to pour gasoline onto the fire. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[Peacefulness was hence described as characteristic of Norwegians, as opposed to others, such as the Americans or the French.

]p1[There may be some ambiguity to the norm of acting peacefully, which may give some leeway for strong responses, if not for belligerence. Being too peaceful may be considered as a too passive, idealistic response to the very real current threats.

]p1[Despite this ambiguity, calmness, courage, and peacefulness seemed to provide strong shared narratives about the distinct Norwegian reaction to terrorism amongst participants in the study. Narratives drew on the concrete experience with reactions to the July 22 attacks and referred to the distinctiveness of Norway as a small, open, and peaceful society. While the symbolism related to the nation may sometimes be at odds with civil values, and lead toward a retrenchment of solidarity, the present case indicates that such symbolism may nevertheless serve to underpin and strengthen civil values.

## **]ha[Terrorism, Solidarity, and the Boundaries of the Norwegian Civil Sphere**

]p[So far, we have examined how the threat of terror and the concrete experience with terrorism have served to make certain values, such as freedom, tolerance, and security, salient, and how they create tensions and dilemmas in balancing different types of good and harm. Now we delve more deeply into the question of solidarity, and into differences in experience between the Muslim and the non-Muslim groups, as we examine how the July 22 attacks and the current Islamist terrorist threat influence the limits of solidarity and the boundaries of the civil sphere in their different ways.

### *]hb[Terrorism and Solidarity: A Conditional Relationship*

]p[Appeals for solidarity, togetherness, and unity often occurred when interviewees talked about how to bolster Norwegian society against terrorism. The narrative of July 22 seems to have fundamentally shaped the understanding of these values. Interviewees in all groups described the situation after July 22 as one of solidarity, unity, and togetherness. People comforted each other; they were attentive, and inclusive, as can be seen in this description from the days following the attacks:

]ex/[Usually, whenever people take the ferry to Nesodden, it's like, they're in their own zone, and they're going there, they're by themselves, nobody else means anything. At that moment, somehow, people sensed that everybody became one. Everybody was asking, "What happened?" "How are you and your family?" "Why?" "What is going on?" (Young non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[Informants also underscored the importance of public events right after the attacks, as something that pulled people together.:

]ex/[I remember feeling very proud on behalf of Norwegians because of how they reacted, because it was somehow like we shall all stand together. And we won't let hatred prevail. (Adult Muslim)]/ex[

]p[The feeling of solidarity was awakened by a sense of the shared "we" being threatened. People abroad or in other Norwegian cities wanted to return home and the terror made people feel very "Norwegian":

]ex/[People have a very strong sense of community and want to protest, to say, "Fuck it! We don't accept this." And they must support each other in such a situation. I felt that most strongly. And I wanted to come home. Because there's something, somehow, about being Norwegian. So, a kind of a nationalist sentiment rose in my body. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[The experience of "standing together" that characterized the aftermath of July 22 became central in the narrative of how Norway as a nation reacted to terror. Respondents inferred from the reaction that "standing together" must be a value defining the Norwegian people, thereby translating this experience into a value: this was how we acted, and must therefore be an indication of who we are, what we represent. The importance of the experience of "togetherness" and the inferred value of solidarity seemed to have grown in the collective narrative of July 22 in later years.

]p1[Solidarity, or "to stand together," is a value that provides a solution to a situation: it tells people how to act, thereby providing a method for dealing with terror, a mode of

incorporating the terror situation (or the terror threat situation) into people's everyday lives. Solidarity as a coping value did not, however, seem readily transferable to the current situation of Islamist terror threat: that is, it did not seem to provide a solution to the situation in the same way. One could imagine focus group participants saying that Norwegians must unite against Islamist terror, or that we must safeguard solidarity, unity, and cohesion, but they did not. Instead, they expressed concern about how solidarity would stand the test of an Islamist terror attack and confusion about what role solidarity had in the current terror threat situation.

When talking about solidarity's role in the current situation, interviewees referred to the hypothetical scenario of a Muslim perpetrator on July 22. The "What if the terrorist had been a Muslim?" scenario has a central place in the narrative of Norwegian solidarity and its limits. Focus group interviewees in all age and ethnic groups agreed that "solidarity" and "unity" would not have prevailed had that been the case.

In that case, there would have been no rose marches ... I [we] would perhaps have been stoned ... these were my thoughts: it would have been us against them. (Adult Muslim)

In interviews, Muslims and non-Muslims took somewhat different approaches to the value of solidarity in the current terror threat situation. Muslim interviewees felt that the solidarity of July 22 has withered away, and they perceived this as a loss. Still, they accepted, to some degree, that fear of Islamist terror made ethnic Norwegians skeptical of Muslims, and acknowledged it was easier to ask for solidarity and be part of the societal "we" whenever no association could be made between them and the perpetrator. Non-Muslim Norwegians seemed at a loss regarding the place of solidarity in the current terror threat situation. On one hand, they were concerned about the ebbing of the solidarity experienced in 2011:

]ex/[Understanding. Communication. Understanding amongst ethnic groups. I'm very much afraid that if there were a bomb attack or a terror attack in Norway by someone from ISIS or Al Qaida, friction would be very strong [other group members agree]. And then we could lose the understanding and the shared set of values we're beginning to have. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p1[On the other hand, nobody in this group expressed a need to stand together with fellow citizens who were Muslim. Rather, they seemed to wash their hands of the problem, attributing it to the polarizing media and to factors beyond their control.

]p1[In summary, solidarity as a value was fortified by July 22, but was perceived as threatened by the Islamist terror threat. This conditionality in the relationship between terrorism and solidarity gives us some indications that the integrity of the civil sphere is challenged differently by different types of terrorist threats. As we see below, the attacks perpetrated from within, by a Norwegian-born terrorist, challenged the whole idea of a sphere that could be called civil in Norway, while the threat of attacks from outside challenged the boundaries of the civil sphere in terms of solidarity and tolerance.

#### ]hb[*July 22: The Problem of Handling a Terrorist from Within*

]p[The terror on July 22 was performed by "one of us," by a Norwegian. This could potentially have challenged the idea of "the Norwegian," and the idea of a strong civil sphere in Norway, but focus group interviews showed that the terror confirmed a set of core values and strengthened the civil sphere. After the terror attacks, existent values such as freedom, tolerance, and solidarity were made explicit and prominent, and even celebrated. The Norwegian handling of the July 22 attacks was in many ways a cause for national pride and became a defining event in the narrative of who Norwegians are.

]p1[How could this be? Since the terrorist, Breivik, was “one of us,” Norwegians could not blame Muslims for the terror. The terrorist belonged to the ingroup, which gave Norwegians as a people some responsibility for his actions. This could have forced a reconsideration of their values and identity. However, the main narrative about Breivik and his actions consisted in identifying him as an individual with an individual responsibility for the attacks. Seeing him as an individual meant that Norwegians did not have to change the narrative of who they are:

]ex/[Of course, I think what happened on July 22 was a singular incident; we haven’t seen much of that in Norwegian history otherwise, right? (Young non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[In this individualized perspective, the only responsibility of Norwegian society is linked to the fact that Breivik’s mental and social problems had been ignored. Interviewees characterized him as a mentally ill young person insufficiently supported by the system, by “us.” Breivik was an individual astray; we should have looked out for him better. But this does not mean we must change our values; it means we must reinforce them. We have an inclusive system, providing for everyone. A glitch in the societal web produced Breivik, meaning we must tighten the net, not relent or discard our principles. In this logic, any link between the ideological foundation of the attacks and Norwegian values and culture can be avoided. This narrative offered by interviewees resonates strongly with the main public and literary accounts of the Breivik case, as explained earlier in this chapter.

]p1[Thinking about the terrorist in this way allowed for leaving the Norwegian self-image and values untouched.

]ex/[Yes, we were easily let off the hook, so we haven’t thought about it that much. It’s like the act of a maniac . . . , and there’s little one can do with a maniac. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[The relief that the perpetrator was non-Muslim was also an important part of the narrative of how Norway coped with Breivik. This relief seemingly contributed to reinforcing the values of tolerance, solidarity, and inclusion, and, possibly, to excluding a further examination of Norwegians' potential collective guilt. The quotes below summarize this relief. Non-Muslim Norwegians were relieved that they did not have to change their values of tolerance, freedom, and trust; they were relieved that Muslims were relieved; and they were relieved also, perhaps, that they were not caught being prejudiced:

]ex/[Yes, the stigmatizing that would have occurred had it been an Islamist group ... and, sort of, the feeling that I got after July 22, and this strong need for solidarity, the feeling that we now stand together and all that, and what would have happened if one group was to pay for this. ... So, it was a relief, really, that it was an ethnic Norwegian male. And that he was right-wing. It's terrible to say it, but it is ... yes. (Adult non-Muslim)]/ex[

]p[Muslim participants in the focus groups seemed to share this main narrative of the importance of what did *not* happen on July 22. They also shared the sense of relief, and had very concrete, personal stories of how they experienced it. In the words of one Muslim man, who worked in insurance:

]ex/[I must say that it was ... it was easier and simpler for me to meet insurance agents and other people and look at the extent of damages [to the government buildings], and to start pricing all of this, when I then knew it was one of our own who had done this. Had I known it was a Pakistani or a Muslim who had blown it all apart, and that I should stand there and list all damages, you know, one feels it's easier to handle this case when the blame is not on Muslims. (Adult Muslim)]/ex[



]p[For Muslims, the fear of being blamed felt more serious than the fear that someone they knew had been hurt. Calculating the risk, this seemed a rational ranking of the two fears:

]ex/[It was totally ok to go to work that Monday! Because – it wasn't us, to put it that way. ... The order of things was: (1) it wasn't us, (2) do I know anybody who was hurt? (Adult Muslim)]/ex[

]p[It thus seems like different forces diverted attention from the difficult debate of whether Breivik's actions were a product of Norwegian civil values and whether there would be a need thoroughly to revise these values. One was the individualization of Breivik, as a mentally ill and deviant person, a glitch in the system rather than a sign of more fundamental problems, which was underpinned by the focus in Breivik's trial and the main academic, documentary, and literary treatments of the attacks. Another was the strong drive toward confirming the values of community, solidarity, and tolerance, which largely excluded critical voices (Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2016). Against the backdrop of the hypothetical scenario of Islamist terrorism, and the relief experienced when the attacker's identity was revealed, Muslims in our sample seem to have felt neither the possibility nor the need to regard the attacks as a problem of Norwegian culture. Rather, they joined with the community offered to them right after the events, still conscious of its precariousness. Although these processes might have inhibited important criticisms of Norwegian society and Norwegian values, this "construction of deviance" could also be read as a cultural procedure that helped the civil sphere retain its integrity. By singling out Breivik as an anomaly, the idea of a strong, civil-value-based Norwegian society could be retained.

]hb[*The Islamist Terrorist Threat and the Inclusion of Muslims in the Civil Sphere*

]p[Based on the interviews, the current Islamist terror threat had far larger repercussions for Muslims than for non-Muslims. Essentially, Muslim participants felt the terror threat as a triple burden: first, they feared terror as much as everyone did; second, they feared being attacked by Norwegians because Muslims were associated with terror; and, third, they were obliged to defend all Muslims and distance themselves from terrorists.

]p1[Central to the interviews was the problem of collective responsibility. Muslims sensed they had the burden of proof: they must prove they are not radical; it is not taken for granted.

]ex/[I'm often put into the box where people say I understand what *you people* think. ... I somewhat feel that I must put up, that I must have a sort of a barrier around me where I'm made responsible for everything I'm doing, and if I do something that creates a little suspicion, somehow I'm possibly marked as a terrorist or one of them, you see? That I always have to be moderate or present myself to others as a moderate Muslim. (Young Muslim)]/ex[

]p[From this and similar accounts by interviewees, it seemed clear that Muslim participants felt an imminent risk of being identified as a group and that the leap from this to being identified with radical Islam and terrorism was short. This would lead them to closely monitor their religious expression, given how it could be perceived.

]p1[For Muslim respondents, then, Islamist terrorism seemed to have fundamentally changed conditions for inclusion in the civil sphere. Put succinctly, inclusion in the age of terrorism demanded ongoing monitoring of one's own expression and presentation, especially in religious practices, but also in relation to general appearance. This limited individual freedom, as is expressed in the following:

]ex/[In the eighties, I was a child; I was with my father in the metro. ... Then there was an imam, a priest [driving]. He stopped the metro at Tøyen, went out of his driver's cabin and prepared for prayer, since it was prayer time. So he prayed. People laughed a bit, and it was like, "This is wrong, one can't do that." If someone had done that today, stopped the metro downtown, gone out and started to pray, everybody would have fled. Now something will blow up, right? (Adult Muslim)]/ex[

]p[One way to interpret how the Islamic terror threat changes conditions for inclusion in the civil sphere is that it has unleashed a process of "societalization," which describes a situation whereby practices move outside their own spheres, and appear to threaten society at large (Alexander 2018). In a societalization process, previously accepted practices are reinterpreted as unacceptable and uncivil and therefore to be combatted (Alexander 2018). As shown in the above excerpts, focus group interviews indicate that religious practices, formerly left with Muslims to practice as they saw fit, have become questions of public interest; such practices are reframed from belonging to the private sphere and being protected by the freedom of religion, to being about our shared civil rights, societal cohesion, and security. The terror threat seems to be the focal point for this change. Muslim religious practices are transformed into symbols not of religious piety, but of aggression, belligerence, and disregard for democratic values. Through the focal lens of terrorism, Islam becomes a threat to shared civil values.

]p1[Such societalization may end in a process of "civil repair," in which new and old values align (Alexander 2006: 208). For the Norwegian situation, this would mean that both original values and Muslim values must shift. Muslim practices must change so they become acceptable and can be incorporated into the dominant values of the Norwegian civil sphere,

and the values of the civil sphere must change to allow for Muslim practices and values. The history of, for example, the tramway driver who can no longer pray at the station indicated that the process has gone in the opposite direction, and that the boundaries of the civil sphere have tightened rather than loosened.

## **][ha[Conclusion**

]p[A terrorist attack is a brutal intrusion into a society, and such acts, or even the threat of them, may challenge the civil sphere: that is, the cultural values underpinning democracy. As we have shown, terrorism can make it difficult to uphold the core civil values of freedom and tolerance based on the need to ensure security, and the dilemma of “tolerating the intolerant.” However, our analysis of the Norwegian case strongly indicates the existence of a “vital center” (Alexander 2018), understood as the maintenance of a belief that there exists an encompassing solidarity that can enable peaceful coexistence. While maintaining such a vital center is often linked to elites and to communicative institutions (Luengo and Ihlebæk, 2019), one contribution of this chapter is to detail how the ideal of an encompassing civil sphere plays out in ordinary citizens’ narratives.

]p1[The analysis shows that contingent events such as terrorism may lead to changes in the weighting of values, and they may be either constrained or strengthened by relationships to other civil or non-civil values. In the face of terrorism, some new, particular, non-civil values, such as security, courage, and trust, enter into the core cultural lexicon of public life. These seem to become equated with core values of the civil sphere and both complement and conflict with them. For example, security stands in a conflictual relationship with freedom, as was highlighted in the analysis, and it might also be in conflict with honesty and criticism. Trust, while being a value that seems to reconcile contradictions between other values (e.g. between security and freedom), may simultaneously be in tension with autonomy and criticism. One finding that also stands out in the analysis is that values connected with what is conceived as

specifically Norwegian, such as courage and peacefulness, underpin core civil values in Norwegians' coping with terrorism. This is not a self-evident relationship, and is probably linked to the strong narratives formed after the July 22 terrorist attacks, and which linked civil values to Norwegian values.

[p1[This description of the interplay of values, both amongst civil values and in the relationship between civil and non-civil values, adds to CST by underscoring that cultural values are defined through complex and changing sets of relationships. Studying the case of terrorism also makes clear that challenges posed to the civil sphere are very differently formulated in cases where the threat is perceived as coming from within rather than from outside. While the integrity of the civil sphere was successfully reconstructed after July 22 by individualizing the terrorist acts, an encompassing solidarity is far more difficult to uphold in the face of Islamist terrorist threat. At least, as seen by Muslim interviewees, inclusion in the civil sphere comes at a cost: reduction of their freedom.

#### ]hx[**Note**

]nt[1 Breivik was briefly a member of a local Progress Party Youth group, but left, apparently because he found their stance on immigration too soft. After the attacks, the media and politicians were cautious not to make too much of this link.

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