

Migration between Norway and Sweden over the Last 150 Years

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How to cite this paper: Gustavsson, A. (2024). Migration between Norway and Sweden over the Last 150 Years. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 265-296. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.125018>

Received: March 25, 2024

Accepted: May 24, 2024

Published: May 27, 2024

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Abstract

In the two neighboring countries Norway and Sweden there are clear cultural, social, political and legal differences. By comparing human border crossings within a time period of 150 years, it is possible to see both recurring patterns and differences. Migration in this study of that has meant for the living conditions in the border areas. How was the integration process? The main objective has been to investigate how human cross-border contacts were viewed and handled by the authorities, travellers, and by the people living near the border, in changing political, economic, legal, and cultural circumstances. A national border can cut across local cultural, social, and ideological boundaries. Border closures have led to particular problems for border residents. Illegal border crossings have occurred and at some periods also smuggling of goods. This border study builds on several categories of sources. They are, first, the records in ethnological archives in Sweden and Norway. I have also performed interviews in the border region. In addition, there is plenty of newspaper material, especially from the local *Strömstads Tidning*. The lesson from this study is that cultural and other similarities significantly facilitate integration, while cultural and other differences have the opposite effect at border crossings. The integration problem does not have to do with national borders, but instead with cultural, religious, linguistic and social borders.

Keywords

Border Crossing, Border Closure, Covid-19 Closure, Migration, Mixed Marriages, Second World War closure, Tourist Migration

1. Introduction

Migration in this study refers to human crossings across national borders and the consequences of that for the living conditions in the border areas. How was

the integration process?

A Swedish-Norwegian research project, “Cultural Encounters at the Border”, led by me examined cross-border contacts in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century on the southernmost stretch of the long Swedish-Norwegian border, the counties of Bohuslän and Dalsland in Sweden and Østfold in Norway (Figure 1) (*Gränsmöten*, 1999). The national border between Bohuslän and Østfold was established in 1658 when Bohuslän became Swedish after it earlier had been a part of Denmark/Norway.

The main objective of the border project was to investigate how human cross-border contacts were viewed and handled by the authorities, travellers, and by the people living near the border, in changing political, economic, legal, and cultural circumstances. At the border, the “grand” national history meets the “small” regional and local history. A national border is created from above and it can cut across cultural, social, and ideological boundaries. Contacts between the local population on either side of the border may act as a uniting factor between the two countries.

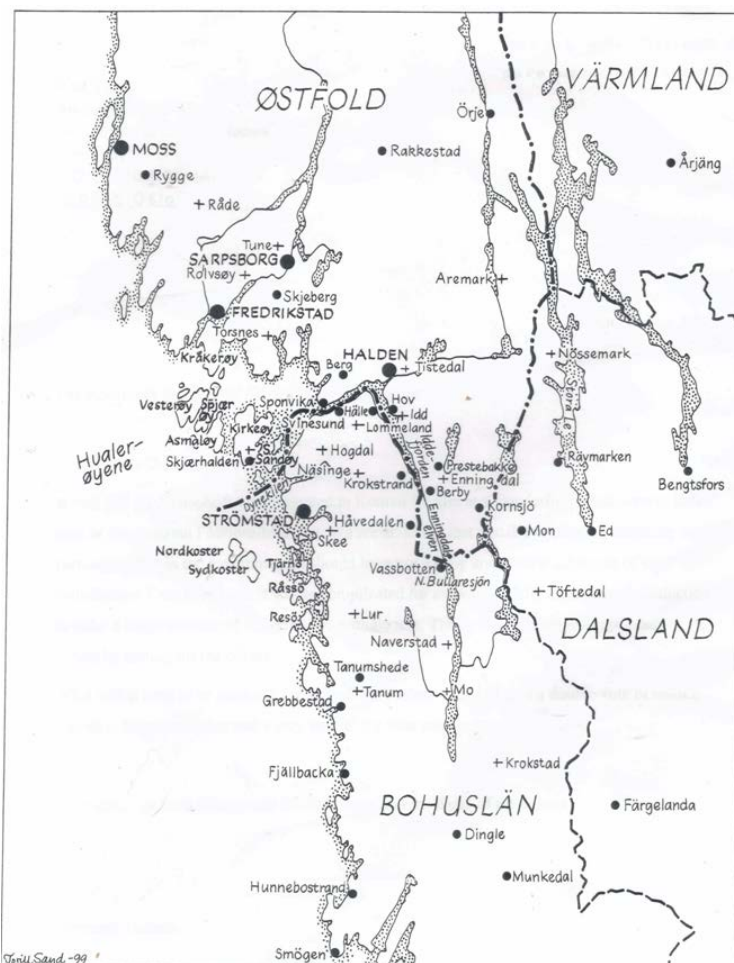


Figure 1. Map of southern Østfold with adjacent parts of Bohuslän and Dalsland. Drawing by Torill Sand, Oslo.

This study builds on several categories of sources. They are, first, the records in ethnological archives in Norway and Sweden. I have together with students also performed interviews in the border region. In addition, there is newspaper material, especially from the local *Strömstads Tidning*.

2. Border Crossings to Norway in the Late Nineteenth Century

2.1. Labor Migration

In the late nineteenth century there was heavy labor migration to the growing industrial areas and the fertile agricultural districts in Østfold. The migrants came from poor rural areas in Dalsland and northern Bohuslän, which had seen vigorous population growth (Svendsen, 2003). The Swedes felt welcome because of the shortage of labor in Norway in the brickworks, sawmills, quarries, and the textile industry. This labor migration was possible when the need for Swedes to carry passports was abolished in Norway in 1860 (Kolsrud, 1990). The migration culminated in the 1890s, before Norway in 1901 introduced a law requiring travellers and foreigners to register. This was aimed in large measure at Swedish guest workers. In addition, the Norwegian boom of the 1890s was replaced by a decline in the economy during the first years of the 20th century.

In the expanding Norwegian brick industry, the majority of the male workers were Swedes. Women found employment on farms and in the textile industry. The brickworks only operated during the summer time. The seasonal workers were called “grey geese” because they arrived in flocks in the spring and left in the fall (Figure 2). Work in the brickworks was not in demand among Norwegian workers. It even happened that Norwegians looked down on the Swedish guest workers and regarded them as dirty (Amundsen, 1995).

Many mixed marriages, meaning that a Norwegian and a Swedish partner married each other, arose in Østfold. Other seasonal workers saved money in Norway to be able to settle back in Sweden.

Wages were considered to be good in Norway in comparison with the poverty on the Swedish side. Alcohol, however, was a palpable danger for Swedish men. On the Norwegian side, it was possible to live a life with much less control than at home.



Figure 2. “Grey geese” guest workers at Norwegian brickworks around 1900. Digital museum.

As long as the young men were bachelors, they did not have the burden of supporting a family. This could make them tempted to consume more alcohol when most of the others also were young guest workers.

There are no records of young women losing their wages to drinking. When they worked on farms they were part of a family household and were thus not as anonymous as in the big industries that especially attracted men. When female guest workers came back to Sweden, thanks to the better wages in Norway, they would stand out by wearing better clothes. They could also consider themselves superior to the women at home.

Another mobile category of workers were the *stone-cutters* who came to northern Bohuslän in large numbers from Blekinge in southern Sweden in the 1880s and 1890s (Danielsson & Norheim, 2003). A significant number of quarries opened, and exports flourished up to the First World War. Several of the stone-cutters moved on after a time to quarries in Østfold. Of the stone-cutters in Rolvsøy near the town of Fredrikstad in 1900, 33 per cent were born in Sweden. Mobility in this group was high until the men started a family on one or the other side of the border. A stone-cutter usually found a wife who had grown up in a stone-cutter's family. This led to the development of a distinctive stone-cutter culture with mixed marriages over the border (Axelsson, 1999). During the crisis in the union of Sweden and Norway in 1905, the stone-cutters on both sides of the border were very worried about the potential risk of having to go to war against each other (NM EU 47 353: 84).

Even customs officials who had built up a contact network with colleagues on the other side of the border, experienced anxiety and discomfort in the face of the threat of war when many military personnel were stationed on both sides of the border in 1905 (Figure 3). In order to carry out their control work, customs officials on both sides of the border needed to be in regular contact with each other. A Swedish customs official told after 1905 that customs officials stood looking at each other wondering when the order would come to shoot at each other. It was like being ordered to commit fratricide.



Figure 3. Norwegian soldiers near the Swedish border in 1905. Photo Halden Historical Collections.

2.2. Free-Church Movements as a Uniting Factor

The free churches gained a position in the southern parts of Østfold county, and in the western parts of Dalsland at the end of the nineteenth century. The field lay open for the new free-church revival movements to gain ground, since the older, intra-church revival movements were not established in the border districts.

Preachers from Norway visited parishes in Dalsland. A mixed choir with both Swedes and Norwegians was formed in 1885 in the Swedish border parish of Nössemark and the Norwegian parish of Aremark (Holm, 1981: p. 27). The interactions on both sides of the border continued during the tensions on the national level in 1905. The border people had constructed a local network which contradicted political antagonisms. A Swedish preacher who had been active in Aremark, told about a huge meeting in Nössemark in July 1905. There was a strong spirit of prayer for the preserving of peace between the sister nations. Six immigrated Swedes became members of the Methodist congregation in Fredrikstad in June 1905, when the union between Norway and Sweden was dissolved.

Norwegians and Swedes participated in free-church meetings on both sides of the border also after 1905 (Figure 4). The Pentecostal movement also achieved a religious network across the border. The contact with fellow-believers in Norway continued to be important for the Swedish congregations up until the German occupation in 1940.

3. Border Closure during the Second World War

A crisis in the relations between Norway and Sweden arose when Germany invaded Norway on 9 April 1940. The Norwegian Quisling-government, that obeyed the German Nazi occupying power in 1940-1945, prohibited contacts across the border. The borderers on both sides had to present individually issued "border resident certificates" to the military power in order to move within the border region at all (Figure 5).



Figure 4. Members of the free-church congregation in Nössemark in 1918. They had many contacts with similar congregations on the other side of the border. Photo privately owned.



Figure 5. “Border dweller certificate” issued in 1940 to Dagmar Holmen, born in 1899. The certificate entitled her to travel within the police districts of Sarpsborg, Fredrikstad, Halden and Moss. Photo in private ownership.

It carried the death sentence for a Norwegian to leave the country illegally. The national prohibition meant a very difficult setback for the borderers. The connections over the border had been strengthened as a consequence of the many mixed marriages. It was however possible for the borderers to fool the Germans, for example under the cover of darkness and at the stretches with mostly inaccessible terrain between the carefully controlled border crossings. It developed into something of a sport to avoid and trick the border police and the military (Wigström, 1996). A Norwegian woman born in 1926 close to the border told that they weren’t so scared of the Germans, because they would not be out walking in the dark. They would come in cars.

The legal food parcels from the Swedish side of the border were a significant resource during the extensive food shortage in Norway. Raw material for groceries was also illegally transported across the border, particularly to relatives in Norway. A Swedish woman born in 1924 informed that her family secretly provided the Norwegian relatives with flour. Another woman from Nössemark repeatedly brought food parcels covertly to her relatives in Norway. The parcels had to be opened by the Norwegian State censorship to be checked for anti-Nazi propaganda. The Norwegians often delivered liquor as a thank you, since that was the only goods with which they could contribute.

A Swedish woman born in 1931 in the border parish Naverstad recounted: “The Germans were standing three metres away with machine guns, checking that we didn’t give them anything else as well”. The same kind of control was common concerning letters passing the border. They were opened and got a stamp with the German eagle.

Exchanging information was very important for the Norwegians. This concerned radio stations, which were prohibited. Swedish newspapers could be transported across the border illegally. The Swedish borderers knew how to help

the Norwegians and the activists in the resistance movement, the “Home front” in particular, to receive information (Figure 6). The people on both sides of the border soon realized that the military and Gestapo only checked the official border crossing points and not the country land between them. Norwegian borderers explained how they used to cross the border secretly to listen to Swedish radio broadcasts. There were couriers within the resistance movement who risked their lives by transferring contacts and information (cf. Johansson, 1985). On boats with Norwegian crews that were running secretly from the island of Koster to Norway, posing as fishing boats, it was common to wrap Swedish newspapers around the thermos flasks. Lack of information was a way for the State to repress the resistance.

Young Swedish men met young Norwegian women secretly on the Norwegian side of the border. This was a direct continuation of the network of contacts that had existed before the war and this led to mixed marriages (Figure 7). Men who took part in these contacts brought oral snuff, tobacco, and salt, commodities which were hard to get in Norway. These were swapped for Norwegian spirits. This way the Swedish men could obtain more alcohol than they could buy for their ration from the monopoly in Sweden. To leave Norway could be done legally if a woman had been engaged to a Swedish man before the war. After being closely questioned by the Gestapo she was permitted to emigrate to Sweden in order to marry.

A way of establishing connections across the border before the Second World War was that house owners in northern Bohuslän rented out rooms or apartments to summer guests from south eastern Norwegian towns. Norwegian holiday visitors from the upper social classes became known for their cheerful temperaments in the new localities (Figure 8). These connections between families also had concrete positive effects during the war. A Swedish woman born in 1904, who had rented out to Norwegian summer guests for a long time, told how she took care of Norwegian refugees.



Figure 6. Two men from the Norwegian “Home Front” on a secret boat trip near the Swedish border in 1944. Photo Strömstad Museum.



Figure 7. Wedding in Naverstad on the Swedish side of the border river 20 June 1940. The bride came from the neighboring Norwegian Enningdalen. Her two marriage witnesses were obliged to stay on the Norwegian side. To the right two Swedish policemen. On the Norwegian side there were Nazi policemen in the bushes controlling the wedding ceremony. Photo privately owned.



Figure 8. Norwegian summer holiday visitors on their way to Strömstad in 1935. Photo Bohuslän Museum.

In total, around 60,000 Norwegian refugees are estimated to have arrived to Sweden during the war. About 60 per cent of them came to Bohuslän, Dalsland and Värmland (Johansson, 1985; Hansson, 2018). About 15,000 refugees left the Halden area and crossed over to Sweden in the Idefjorden region. It was an advantage that part of the border consisted of waters that the Norwegians could cross, especially at night.

A feeling of solidarity also existed among the national customs officers on both sides of the border. One option for them was to pretend not to see and not to arrest refugees who came across the border. The Swedish customs officers could fail to undertake inspection trips along the border. A saying arose among them: “what I have not seen I have not seen and what I have not heard I have not heard”. In this way there was nothing to report to the authorities and no need to

intervene. This liberal view among the border controllers was compatible with the views of the borderers.

4. Norwegians' Trade Journeys to Sweden in the Late 1940s

After the Second World War there was a serious shortage of many commodities in Norway. It was essential to go to Sweden to get hold of the necessary staple goods. There was considerable smuggling over the border in the late 1940s. Many women put on several layers of clothes and fabric when they passed the customs on bicycle. After a while, shopping trips were organized with buses from Norway to Sweden (Figure 9). There were duties on all goods. Swedish customs officers turned a blind eye to help Norwegians who needed bare necessities. On these shopping trips the Norwegians were allowed to bring only a limited amount of money. On the way home they had to give a detailed account of how the money was used.

The spirits could be used as an illegal payment or in exchange. A Norwegian customs officer born in 1914 said that "they tried to sneak in a bottle of spirits that they had to trade with". The Swedes, who had coffee rationing up until 1951, were also interested in Norwegian coffee. Both spirits and coffee thus made their way to Sweden thanks to the shortage of all other goods.

When Swedish men went to Norway right after the war, they continued the earlier tradition to do so. There was a shortage of women on the Swedish side, since many younger women had found work in cities in Sweden. Thus there was a migration within Sweden. The Swedish men were popular among the Norwegian women when they came in their cars. A Norwegian woman born in 1920, who married a Swedish man in the late 1940s, remembered that the Swedish youths came with their big nice cars and picked up the Norwegian girls.

The cultural contacts over the border were strengthened through the new mixed marriages. The markedly improved economic standards, the Norwegian-born women, contributed to the positive adjustment among the Norwegian-born women to the new Swedish environment. Conditions for adaptation increased thanks common experiences among people living near the border.



Figure 9. Norwegian buses on a shopping trip in Strömstad in 1952. Photo Evert Dahlgren. Strömstad museum.

During the Second World War, some Norwegian men, who stayed in Sweden as refugees, married Swedish women. The women accompanied their husbands back to Norway after the war. It was a shock for them to come from Sweden to the totally impoverished Norway. They felt that despite rationing of basic goods in Sweden, living conditions were much more favorable in Sweden. Interviews with these women have been conducted in Norway during the 21st century.

5. Norwegian Women migrating to West Coast Sweden in the 1940s and 1950s

5.1. The First Contacts in Norway

The Swedish fisheries outside the Norwegian southern and western coast were extensive during the 1930s (Rogan, 2023). On the way to and from the fisheries, the fishermen called at south- and west-Norwegian ports from Kristiansand and farther west (Figure 10). They bought herring to bait with and salt to salt the fish with. They also entered Norwegian ports to seek shelter from storms. Then they could be waiting there for many days (Figure 11).

The Swedish fishermen participated in, a wide range of religious activities during their stays in Norwegian ports, particularly by the Salvation Army. These men were impressed by the singing at the Salvation Army, but also by the fellowship and care for outsiders. The religious activities were an important part of the fishermen's leisure-time activities.

With these Salvation Army meetings, the Swedish men got in touch with several Norwegian women, something that contributed to attracting them to the meetings. Some started courting women whom they had met at the Salvation Army meetings.



Figure 10. Map of the Kattegat-Skagerrack region.



Figure 11. Fishing boats from Bohuslän in the Norwegian harbor of Farsund in 1933. Photo privately owned.

After being engaged in Norway before the Second World War, several Norwegian women from working-class homes in the Norwegian coastal towns came to marry in Bohuslän. The wedding ceremonies took place there since the men were not allowed to come to Norway (**Figure 12**). The women had to submit applications and undergo strict interrogations and examinations as to whether they were of Jewish origin, before they were allowed to leave Norway. The women also had to sign a certificate not to speak ill of Germany abroad. Otherwise, the relatives in Norway would be imprisoned.

The contact that the immigrant women had with the coastal population was mainly with the women in Bohuslän, since the men were away on long fishing expeditions during the summer season. The native women had actually learnt to assume a strong position in the fishing villages when the men were away.

I would like to shed light on the adaptation process, which took place when these women came to Sweden. What kind of difficulties did they experience? What kind of conflicts could arise? I base my presentation mainly upon interviews with the immigrant women and their husbands.

5.2. Religious Differences a Hindrance for Integration

I want to exemplify by using partly an inner church Schartauan village Grundsund and partly free-church fishing villages on the island of Tjörn. Six Norwegian women moved to Grundsund in 1941-1943 and three in 1946-1948. There they encountered Schartauanism, a revival movement within the Swedish State church. This movement emphasized the priest's authority and deprecated layman preaching. Schartauan movement was especially supported by women (**Lewis, 1997**). They impressed their views and norms on the new generations.

Several immigrant women noticed a great religious difference compared to what they were used to in Norway. One woman, born in 1911 in Egersund, had during her years in Norway attended the meetings in the Salvation Army where she also met her husband in 1936. His female relatives knew about her commitment to the Salvation Army when she came to Grundsund in 1938, and assumed



Figure 12. A wedding in Grundsund on 21 July 1942. To the right of the groom, his two sisters, his mother and a neighboring girl. The bride's Norwegian relatives and friends were not allowed to come to the wedding. Photo privately owned.

a very cold attitude towards her. When the immigrant woman had invited a couple of Salvationists for a cup of coffee in her house, “my husband’s aunt came afterwards and scolded me in an unparalleled way. She didn’t talk to me for six months after that”. Religious ideology was so basic that it marked everyday life. This woman was both surprised and upset about the deprecatory behavior that she experienced: “Here the only thing that had any value was the church. Anything else was false doctrines and wrong teachings. At home in Norway it was much more free”.

The husband, who was born in 1905 in Grundsund, decidedly took her side towards his female relatives. He ended up in a loyalty conflict between his wife and his close relatives. In this case he allowed the Salvationists to spend the night in the house and his motivation was that he had had so many positive experiences at Salvation Army meetings in Norwegian ports. The local women feared that people from outside might threaten traditional norms and views. Therefore it was important for them to show a strong resistance from the beginning. Compromises and adjustment felt like something dangerous. The immigrant women formed the threatening “others” against whom one should be on one’s guard. The men, on the other hand, had gained a wider frame of reference through

their contacts with the world outside. One can talk about a majority culture represented by the native women and a deviating minority culture represented by immigrant women.

Immigrant Norwegian women from Norwegian free-church environments have found it easier to get understanding with their religious practices in fishing villages characterized by free churches, like on the island of Tjörn. The religious ideology was similar in these cases (Figure 13).

Those Norwegian women who have not been active in any free-church congregation in Norway have, however, in the fishing villages where the free churches were strong, met pressure from the local women. One woman, born in 1917 in Mandal, came to Klädesholmen on Tjörn in 1941, where there was a manifest element of the Baptist faith. During the 1940s and 50s, this woman was repeatedly urged to attend the religious meetings. She was not interested, however. But she let her children participate in certain children's meetings during the 1950s. The children otherwise ran the risk of being socially isolated. To marry someone unknown immediately meant a threat. That could lead to an ideological change. The dominating ideology was carefully guarded, be it Schartauan or free-church.

5.3. Folk Belief an Obstacle

The women born in Norway have also been surprised by the strong traditional folk beliefs which governed the daily life of the local women in Bohuslän. A woman born in 1919 in Egersund came to Grundsund in 1942 and found it difficult to learn all the rules and restrictions, for example when the women had to prepare the food which the men were to bring with them when fishing. "And all this superstition. We women from Norway often got in trouble". Women were



Figure 13. Six Norwegian-born women who married Grundsund. Photo Kristina Gustavsson, 1989.

not allowed to step over the fishing nets. If they did, the men wouldn't catch any fish. The point of these rules being that the men would return with a good catch. The same ideas have been found in Norwegian fishing villages (*Aust-Agder Arv 1973-1974*). The Norwegian women in Bohuslän, however, stemmed mainly from working families where such ideas did not exist. The immigrants, however, had to learn the new rules and obey them. In other respects, the domestic world view had been put in danger.

5.4. The Language Differences

The Norwegian language also caused problems in the meeting between cultures. The immigrant women felt pressured by the local women to abandon their Norwegian language, and to learn to speak Swedish instead. When a woman born in 1909 in Egersund came to Grundsund in 1945, she was told that "now that you are in Sweden, you should speak Swedish". This made this woman attempt to abandon both her Norwegian accent and her use of Norwegian words

The women born in Bohuslän claimed that they had difficulties understanding the Norwegian language, while the men found it easier to understand due to their visits to Norwegian ports. This contributed to the immigrant women establishing better contacts with the men during the winter, than with the women.

When the Norwegian-born women tried to adapt to the Swedish language, this caused difficulties in retaining contact with their relatives and friends in Norway. The latter did not like that they spoke Swedish when visiting. A woman born in 1909 in Egersund received comments from relatives such as "don't be foolish speaking Swedish". Speaking Swedish was considered arrogant, something that was ill-regarded in the Norwegian context. Another woman born in 1927 in Egersund felt that she was considered proud if she spoke Swedish in her hometown in Norway. Behind this may lie an aspiration among Norwegian people to assert themselves socially higher status compared with those who had moved out.

The immigrated women had thus to try to use two languages in order on the one hand to make contacts with local women and on the other hand to maintain contacts with former relatives and acquaintances in Norway. Such bilingualism has been perceived as problematic. The women experienced difficulties in using two languages which are close to each other but have different pronunciations and also many different words.

5.5. Food Differences

In Bohuslän immigrant women missed the Norwegian regional food that they were accustomed to. They were not free to cook these Norwegian dishes since their Swedish husbands were not used to them and chose not to eat them. In some cases, they lived in joint households with their mother-in-law, who did not permit new dishes. The Norwegian women did not like having to cook the Swedish food that their men were bringing with them when going fishing. These

dishes considered too fatty by the immigrant women. Swedish bread was also seen as too soft, sweet and spiced.

Among the Norwegian regional dishes that the immigrant women missed, were “raspeboller” (made from potatoes and meal), fish cakes, sheep meat, certain kinds of sausages, and “potato cookies” (made from boiled potatoes and meal). The immigrant women could cook Norwegian food only when meeting each other. This illustrates that food is a matter not only of taste, but to a great extent of cultural traditions.

Food is the segment in the cultural contacts where the immigrant women’s husbands preferred the local traditions. This was in contrast to, religion which was influenced by the many contacts in Norwegian ports. On the contrary the fishermen were not exposed to the Norwegian dishes as they brought their own food with them.

5.6. Different Living Conditions

One area where the immigrant women considered things to be in worse conditions was the housing standard in the fishing villages. It was seen as primitive and archaic compared to what they were used to in Norwegian coastal towns. The work was very demanding physically as the Bohuslän women had to go out to get and carry back all the water needed in the house. The lack of drains and indoor toilets was also very uncomfortable, as was the need to use a wood stove fire instead of the electric heating which was common in the Norwegian coastal towns. A woman born in 1919 in Egersund moved to Grundsund in 1942, where she found it strange that she had to be careful about using water. “It was so difficult to go get water. In Egersund, we revelled in water and electricity. It was so difficult when I came here and had to carry these buckets”. This illustrates the difficulties arising from the changes of culture when women moved from towns to fishing villages. The women who acclimatized most easily to the material standard, came from coastal villages in Norway. They met Swedish fishers because they worked for or were daughters to fish buyers.

It is worth noting that the immigrant women have complained about their harsh working conditions. They could compare with other experiences. The local women, on the other hand, have not complained about this. They had not experienced any other reality.

5.7. Social Differences as an Integration Problem

The poorer material standard of living did not prevent native women from looking down on the immigrant women. These were told that they came from lower social affiliations. Therefore, they were not considered suitable marriage partners for the men from Bohuslän.

The women’s parents from working-class families in Norway, for their part, regarded Swedish fishermen who came to the coastal towns as socially lower than themselves. This was so because of the fact that the Swedes were catego-

rized as sailors who were mobile. Many parents warned their daughters against having contact with the Swedes. Instead it happened secretly without the parents knowing about it. The fishermen's clothing also contributed to the condescending view of them. They deviated by walking in clogs, thick woolen sweaters, and they smelled of oil from the boat engines.

One could also imagine that the Norwegian women were perceived as a threat to young resident women by competing for marriage with the men from their own coastal town. But instead the Norwegian women's mothers-in-law and sisters were among the most critical. Besides there was a surplus of men in the coastal towns due to women moving from the fishing villages to cities during the strong economic downturn in the 1930s (Olsson, 1973).

5.8. Social Contacts and Alternative Community

Several immigrant women have found it much more difficult to establish social contacts in their new surroundings than in Norway. They ended up outside the social life that the resident women had established. A woman born in 1909, who came to Grundsund in 1945, had not been invited to a neighboring family to whom she had lived next door for forty years. She talked about the contrast with her hometown: "At home in Norway, we got together in the houses. That was done with the coffee kettle, but that's not the case here". A woman born in 1920 in Egersund came to Grundsund in 1942 and stated: "We from Norway were not accepted like the others. The Grundsund women only socialized with each other".

When the immigrant women experienced such difficulties in being socially accepted, they found a way to characterize themselves as a cultural unity through gathering and finding an alternative community at each other's homes.

It was an advantage that several women who migrated from Norway at nearly the same time, were about the same age and came from similar backgrounds religiously and socially, even if they did not know each other before. Courage and unity were necessary to stand up against the pressure in the new environment.

When the Norwegian women met, they talked about memories from Norway, contacts with Norwegian relatives and friends, sang Norwegian songs and cooked Norwegian dishes that they missed in their daily life. They had the kind of anti-cultural activities which they appreciated. Their contact with their Norwegian roots was also maintained through joint subscriptions to Norwegian local newspapers.

Celebrations of the Norwegian National Day on 17 May were of special importance to the immigrated women. They often got together in somebody's house for a joint celebration of 17 May. Norwegian flags waving in the hands of these women and their children were important elements in the celebrations. They also sang the Norwegian national song which they taught their children. They decorated tables and cakes with little Norwegian flags.

However, the reactions from the surroundings could be condescending to-

wards this May 17 celebration. On the islands of Dyrön and Åstol, the women would bring their children along to some mountain to sing Norwegian songs in the 40's and 50's (Figure 14). Preferably, nobody else would notice that. A local inhabitant of Dyrön gave the following comment on the Norwegian women's singing during the 50's: "There are some crazy singing women up there".

Through their anti-cultural activities the immigrant women preserved their Norwegian inheritance. At the same time, the integration process was slowed down in this way. For these women, it was more important to stay together than to give up what they valued in their original culture. Assimilation with the new culture was experienced as threatening.

The children of the women, have not found reasons for keeping up the alternative community that their mothers established. The most important means to convey the Norwegian traditions to their children have been the summer visits to the mother's home town. Starting in the 1960s, some families acquired a summer cottage in the place where the woman came from.

The study of these immigrant women shows the problematic consequences that migration can have even when the places from which they move and to which they arrive are situated in nearby regions or countries outwardly appear to be similar. The difficulties in the integration process were not due to national contradictions but to deviant social, ideological and cultural factors and the fact that the women were careful to maintain their previous traditions.

6. Swedish Guest Workers New Migrants to Norway from the 1990s

With a heavy rise in unemployment in Sweden and plenty of jobs in many sectors in Norway, there was a great increase in labor immigration and weekly commuting from Sweden to Norway beginning in the 1990s. This is particularly true of jobs in the building sector, restaurants, and health care. Unemployed workers in Swedish border counties were absorbed. An expansion in Norway's economy led to a shortage of workers. So there was no job competitions with Norwegians.



Figure 14. Immigrant women and their children celebrating 17 May on Dyrön during the 1950s. Photo privately owned.

In the building sector there were major projects such as the expansion of Gardemoen airport, the big hospital Rikshospitalet, and the University Library in Oslo. Swedish male guest workers were well received at Norwegian workplaces and got higher wages and were therefore happy to stay.

Swedish nurses also appreciated that they were well received in Norwegian hospitals. The work pace is slower, the wages higher and the staff density greater than in Sweden. The opening in 2015 of Kalnes hospital, a regional hospital for Østfold, had a great impact on work commuting. A Swedish nurse stated in 1997 that you spend more time on each patient in Norway and thus put the person at the center in a completely different way compared with Sweden where efficiency has taken over (**Figure 15**).

Thanks to new communications by car and express buses, it was possible to commute weekly, unlike the situation for guest workers in Norway during the late 1800s. The guest workers' time in Norway has consisted of long working days in order to compress the weekly working hours. They have had no real leisure time and often lived in barracks near the workplace. Employers in the construction industry usually paid the housing costs. A Swedish carpenter told in 1996 about his work team, that "we probably haven't been in downtown Oslo more than ten times in 11 months".

Weekends were spent in Sweden. This did not create any opportunities for intermarriage. Both commuting men and women, largely nurses, had family or partners in Sweden to whom they returned over the weekends. This is a clear difference compared to the unmarried commuters at the end of the 19th century.

Since the 1990s, some Norwegians have settled in the two northernmost municipalities in Bohuslän in order to commute from there to work, mainly to cities in Østfold (cf. [Tolgensbakk, 2015](#)). This work commuting by Norwegians back to Norway was clearly profitable through higher wages in Norway and cheaper accommodation and food costs as well as property tax in Sweden. In addition, the tax rates are lower in Norway where the commuters pay tax.



Figure 15. Swedish nurses at the hospital in Sandefjord in 1998. Photo Per Landén, Bohuslänningen.

These commuters have emphasized how well they were received in the local Swedish environment. They constituted a social resource for the surrounding area when they stay all year round. A couple who moved from Oslo to a sparsely populated area in northern Bohuslän in 2003 stated: “We received a warm welcome and acceptance from everyone, and we were invited to parties and other events. It is fantastic”.

Another category of year-round resident Norwegians since the 1990s is pensioners. They have been attracted by cheaper accommodation in the inner parts of Bohuslän and lower food prices in Sweden. They receive a pension from Norway but pay tax in Sweden. Proximity to children and grandchildren in Norway is important when choosing a place of residence outside Norway. Then northern Bohuslän becomes attractive for the entire Oslo and Østfold region. Some of these Norwegian pensioners have bought condominiums in the same location. There, a community has been created between Norwegians who did not know each other before. At the same time, this has discouraged the integration process meaning closer contacts with Swedes, which some Norwegians have regretted. It is easier to keep in touch with people belonging to the own culture when you are living in a new country.

7. Norwegian Tourists as New Migrants in Bohuslän from the 1990s

There was a new and very substantial Norwegian expansion of Norwegian tourists in coastal regions in Bohuslän from the 1990s and on. Many years passed after the Second World War before conditions in Norway again became favorable in the 1990s, to allow for Norwegian tourism abroad.

7.1. Mobile Tourists

In 2003, the Strömstad port manager estimated that about 70% of the guest boats came from Norway (ST, 12 July 2003). From the 1990s, numbers of Norwegian tourists' boats spread ever farther south in Bohuslän.

There are several reasons for the increase in the number of Norwegian boats to these areas starting in the 1990s. Boats have become larger and more seaworthy in correlation to the improvement in the Norwegian economy. The natural scenery in Bohuslän is valued by Norwegians. They love watching the sunset in the west, something that is impossible in southern Norway. Nor are the coastal areas of Bohuslän as privatized as in Norway. Access to the coast is something that Norwegians appreciate. This has been possible due to the Swedish coastal law passed in 1952 (*Fritidsfisket*, 1968). This law forbids private buildings and barriers being erected closer than 100 metres from the low water mark.

The boat tourists have also mentioned the lower food prices in Sweden. Norwegians consider Swedish guest harbors to be better organized and more comfortable than the Norwegian ones.

A stay in the coastal areas of Bohuslän also allows Norwegians to prolong the

boating season in both spring and fall. The season usually opens around Easter, when one can observe Norwegian tourist boats, but no Swedish boats, in the Strömstad's harbor. A Norwegian boat tourist stated in 2004: "I appreciate the untouched nature and, during Easter Week, the fantastic sight of a virtual ocean of blue anemones".

Tourism by automobile has also increased from the 1990s. Many Norwegians rent a space for their caravans (Figure 16). Many tourists experience the campground as being a second home. Social contacts then arise among the neighbors, all of whom are, for the most part, Norwegian. Such areas have become a sort of Norwegian colonies. That means that tourists at campgrounds never encounter other local residents than the personnel of the camping site. Norwegians appreciate that caravan sites in Bohuslän are well-kept and hold a high standard of cleanliness.

7.2. Norwegians as New Owners of Holiday Cottages

Norwegians' purchases of holiday cottages increased very markedly during the 1990s, in the two northernmost municipalities of Strömstad and Tanum there were only 23 Norwegian property purchases in 1993. Since the increase arose successively from 46 in 1994 to 78 in 1995, 99 in 1996, 156 in 1997, 159 in 1998 and 169 in 1999 (Figure 17). Prices of holiday cottages in Bohuslän were about 20-30% under comparable Norwegian prices in the mid-1990s, according to real estate agents. One can see a connection to the value of the Swedish *krona*, which was devaluated by 16% in 1992 (Figure 18).

When Norwegians have found an attractive property, they have been prepared to pay a high price. Proximity to the sea along the coast is important to them.

Starting in the 2000s, cottages also began to be sold to Norwegians in the two municipalities of Sotenäs and Lysekil, located south of Tanum. In 2001 previous restrictions for permission to purchase property by foreigners were discontinued in attractive regions of Sweden. Strömstad is the Swedish municipality with the greatest number of foreign-owned holiday cottages. In 2012 these totalled 1279,



Figure 16. A Norwegian man and wife outside their caravan at a Swedish Camping in 2003. Photo Anders Gustavsson.

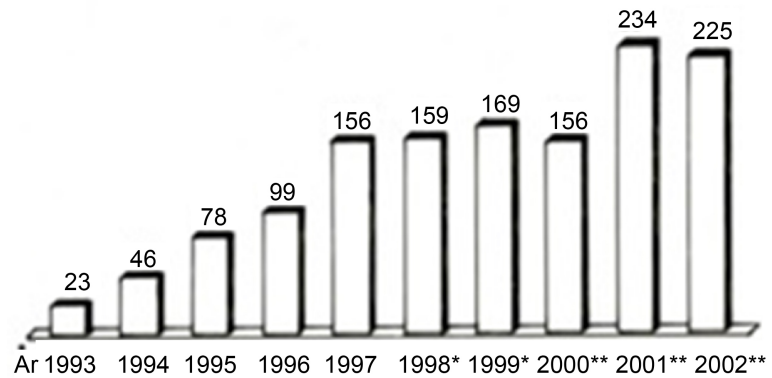


Figure 17. Norwegians' purchases of property in Bohuslän starting in 1993. The diagram was drawn by Anette Olsson, Uddevalla. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 2003.

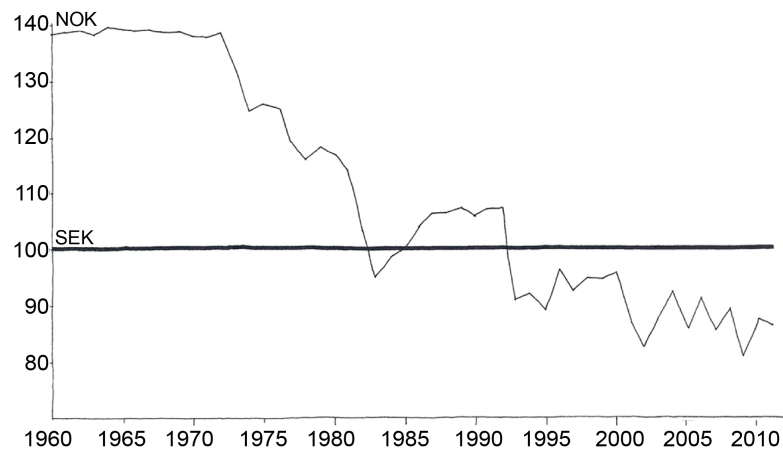


Figure 18. The Swedish-Norwegian rate of exchange 1960-2011. The diagram was drawn by Kirsten Berrum, Oslo. Source: <https://www.valutakurser.no>. Notice. Ever since Swedish devaluation of 16% in 1992, the Norwegian krone has been worth more than the Swedish krone.

1220 of which were owned by Norwegians. The trend that started in the 1990s has continued in the 2000s. Approximately 80% of the holiday cottages sold in the northern districts of Bohuslän in 2011 were purchased by Norwegians (*Bohusläningen*, 2012).

The great improvement in traffic communications has played a decisive role for Norwegian holiday cottage buyers. In 2005, the new bridge crossing the Swedish-Norwegian border at Svinesund was opened. Then it was possible to reach areas considerably farther south from Oslo by car in two or three hours.

7.3. Reactions against the Newcomers from the Native People of Bohuslän

What have the reactions been from the local residents and municipalities to this vast increase of Norwegian holiday cottages?

First, just as in the early 1900s, the Norwegians' cheerful temperament as tourists has been noticed by the coastal people of Bohuslän. This has worked as

an additional conflict hampering factor. Due to purchase of houses, it is more a matter of permanent tourism than the mobile tourism.

As house owners, Norwegians can gain more influence at the local level and compete for service in a new way. Possibilities for conflicts of interest increase. This is the background for several critical letters to *Strömstads Tidning* in the summer of 2002. This criticism was concerned with purchases of dwellings, but also with the boat tourism that resulted in overcrowding of the harbor.

In addition to the critical letters from Swedes, other letters to the newspaper pointed to the positive effect of the Norwegian visitors. They called for reconciliation, tolerance and hospitality. Such articles were signed by Swedes. One writer expressed in the summer of 2002 that one becomes sad and distressed after reading all these anti-Norwegian and almost hateful contributors. Strömstad city would be pretty empty without the Norwegians, and the guest harbor no more than half-filled.

For the local population and their access to services such as shops, schools, buses and boat service, it is important that houses are inhabited during a great part of the year. Visitors from the Oslo region, has had an advantage due to the shorter distance to holiday areas compared to owners of holiday cottages who live in eastern Sweden. "We drive down to Koster all year round, at least once a month, and from March to October, we are there every weekend", said a woman from the border town of Halden. The mayor of Strömstad in 2003 emphasized the positive effect that the many Norwegian visitors have had on both the business and service industry during the winter time (*Göteborgs-Posten, 2003*).

The Norwegian flag is the foremost symbol of Norwegian affiliation. It is important for Norwegian holiday cottage owners to manage the use of the Norwegian flag in a strategic fashion that will not offend their Swedish neighbors. One solution has been to fly both the Norwegian and the Swedish flags. On 17 May only the Norwegian flag flies from the flagpole (**Figure 19**). Mobile tourists on the contrary are more free as they are not property owners. All Norwegian tourists' boats fly the Norwegian flag from their stern. Norwegian caravan owners also use a Norwegian flag.

The situation becomes different if the Norwegians own a house on Swedish soil and fly the Norwegian flag. This could rouse negative feelings among the Swedish people.

Norwegians who live in holiday houses with Swedish neighbors have chosen to be more careful about their flag-flying. They do not want to risk offending the Swedes.

A family who purchased a holiday house in the village of Sannäs in 2003 told that one certainly hears one or another person grumble about Norwegians taking over northern Bohuslän. That is why they do not fly a Norwegian pennant from the flagpole (*Göteborgs-Posten, 2003*).

The farther south one comes in Bohuslän, the less problematic the sight of a Norwegian flag becomes among local residents. In northernmost Bohuslän,



Figure 19. A Norwegian couple with their national costumes outside their holiday cottage in Bohuslän on 17 May 2012. Photo Kristina Gustavsson.

however, Norwegians' caution about flying the Norwegian flag is considerably more motivated.

Examples can also be found of Norwegian holiday cottage owners placing smaller flags indoors. For Norwegians themselves, however, the custom of using flags is a symbolic expression of tradition and solidarity with their homeland. Flags are often hung on the Christmas trees by the Norwegian tourists who visit their holiday cottages (Figure 20).

With the arrival of so many Norwegian tourists in Bohuslän since the 1990s, the increasing use of the Norwegian flag has also been observed on public buildings in Bohuslän on 17 May. During the 2000s some Bohuslän municipalities began arranging official celebrations with the Norwegian flag on 17 May. This can be seen respect among the native people in Bohuslän for the Norwegians' great respect for their National flag and their National day on 17 May.

A factor that brings together the Norwegian and Swedish flags and thus contributes to a better understanding of the significance of the Norwegian flag among the people of Bohuslän is the *regional flag of Bohuslän* (Figure 21). It appeared in 1996 after the referendum concerning membership in the European Union when Sweden became a member while Norway did not. The flag may thus be considered an element of criticism of the EU. Designed by the fisher merchant Bertil Engdahl from Grebbestad, it has elements from the Norwegian and Swedish flags (*Bohusläningen*, 2023). The red cross in the middle and the dark-blue lower portions are associated with the Norwegian flag, while the light-blue upper sections are reminiscent of the Swedish flag. Two-thirds of the flag resemble the Norwegian flag and one-third the Swedish one. It is obvious



Figure 20. A number of Norwegian flags in the Christmas tree in Bohuslän in 2011. Photo Kristina Gustavsson.



Figure 21. A Bohuslän man with a Bohuslän flag fastened to his caravan in 2004. Photo Anders Gustavsson.

that the use of the Bohuslän flag tends to lessen the emotional tension to the Norwegian flag as it indicates Bohuslän's historical ties to Norway before 1658. The distance between what is Norwegian and what is Swedish lessens, and a feeling of solidarity with Norwegians can increase.

8. Maundy Thursday a Day for Norwegian Partying in Sweden from the 1990s

In the post-war years, young Norwegians have come in large numbers to Strömstad on Maundy Thursday, which is a holiday in Norway but a working day in Sweden. Many of the young people are coming from Østfold. Alcohol has been an important part of the purchases on this day. There have been long lines outside the alcohol monopoly, Systembolaget.

During my field studies in 1997, Norwegian veteran cars cruised the main streets with young people, mostly boys, driving around and around in convoys playing raucous music. The youngsters held up beer cans and vodka bottles or Coca-Cola cans, with the windows down.

Norwegian flags have been frequent symbols on the veteran cars. They have come in the morning and gone back late in the afternoon, and the party has continued in the evening in Norway.

For young people the main thing was the festive atmosphere, enhanced by alcohol, the loud music and the shouting. The main intention has been pleasure for the moment with other young Norwegians.

The many police officers patrolling the public space have often turned a blind eye to what happens on this day (Figure 22). Their task has primarily been to prevent traffic jams and fights. The young Norwegians have not always observed the parking rules. They have been careful to ensure that the drivers are sober.

The majority of those arrested for drunkenness have been young Norwegian men. The arrested, in accordance with the Swedish law, had to sleep it off in a drunk cell, before they were allowed to return to Norway. Since drunkenness has not been a crime in Sweden since the 1980s, those taken into custody can be released without charge. Several youths stated that they had taken part in the festivities in Strömstad ever since their early teens. Maundy Thursday was a special occasion for enjoyment with others.

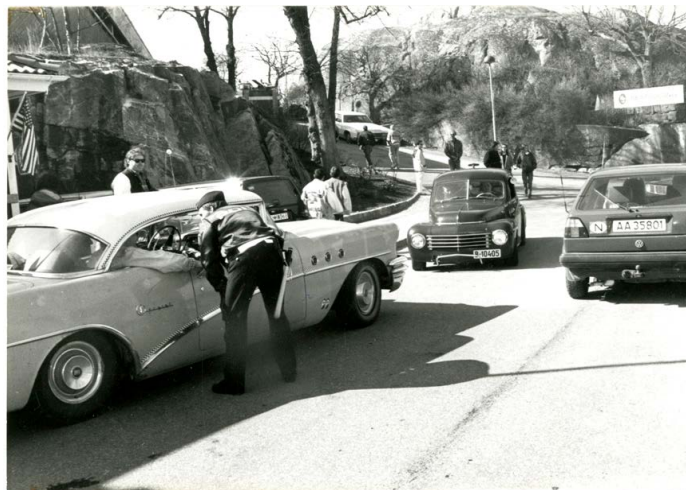


Figure 22. The police in Strömstad directing the rush of Norwegian cars on Maundy Thursday 1995. Photo Kerstin Carlsson, Strömstad.

Some inhabitants in Strömstad were disturbed by the rowdy behavior of the Norwegian youths in the early 2000s. Because of this in 2003 the council in Strömstad introduced barriers in central streets in Strömstad. This continued until 2018 when a trial with no barriers was implemented. The intention of the barriers was to prevent the convoys of Norwegian cars from blocking the central areas of the town and obstructing emergency vehicles.

Among the locals, attitudes to the street closures were divided. Shop owners were discontented because the street closures led to reduced sales. Other locals were irritated at the loud noise from the cars, the staggering youths, and the large amounts of broken glass and beer cans in the streets.

Other inhabitants instead appreciated the festive atmosphere once a year. In the interviews that the journalist Marita Adamsson from *Strömstads Tidning* and I conducted on Maundy Thursday 2018, we encountered only favorable comments from local people.

Ever since 2008, Systembolaget in Strömstad has kept its liquor stores closed on Maundy Thursday; in combination with the street closures this is intended to reduce disturbances caused by drunkenness and littering. The Norwegian youths had then to bring alcohol with them. The chief of the police in Strömstad stated in 2018 that open drunkenness had decreased since Systembolaget started closing its stores on Maundy Thursday.

A new trend during the 2010s is that some young people from Strömstad accompany the Norwegian veteran cars in their own veteran cars to Halden in the evening. This has been a way to establish positive contacts with the young Norwegians whom they have come to know through motor clubs. Earlier there were no contacts between Swedish youth and these young Norwegian visitors.

9. Border Closure during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The main focus in this section is on how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the lives of individuals living on both sides of the national border. Norway closed the border for entry on 17 March 2020. The goal with the tough restrictions was to prevent infectivity being brought into the country from abroad. Norwegians coming back from visiting places abroad had to be quarantined when coming back. Easing of the Norwegian border restrictions was done a couple of times over a two year period. The short time intervals of the Norwegian restrictions created uncertainty and anxiety among the border people. Unlike Norway, Sweden long opted not to close the border. On 25 January 2021, also Sweden closed the main border passages. A new Swedish border close-down was instated on 28 December 2021 staying in effect until 21 January 2022.

9.1. Swedish Work Commuters Tested

After 17 March 2020, Swedish nursing staff continued to commute to their workplaces in Norway. From 26 March and on, they had to present passport and employer certificate. In mid-September 2020, Norway imposed a rule that Swe-

dish border commuters had to do a nasal corona test every seventh day (**Figure 23**). In October 2020, Swedish nursing staff at the Kalnes hospital had to wear masks when waiting for their result after corona testing. A Swedish woman felt herself singled out as someone possibly spreading infection in Norway (ST 1 October 2020).

Swedish biomedical analyst Karin Stacke at the Kalnes hospital felt in November 2021 that she had enough of the Norwegian border restrictions. Therefore she quit her job at Kalnes, having worked there for nine years, and started working in Sweden.

9.2. Obstacles for Norwegian Holiday Home Owners

After 17 March 2020, it was not possible for Norwegians to go to their holiday houses in Sweden, since when they returned to Norway, they faced a quarantine. Norwegians were only allowed to visit and check on their holiday houses during the day but could not stay overnight.

In May 2020, a digital petition was initiated among these holiday house owners demanding that the Norwegian government would allow overnight stays in Sweden (ST 5 May 2020, cf. Fjell, 2021). “The group named, ‘for us who own holiday homes in Sweden’” on Facebook had about 8,000 members in 2020 (ST 8 October 2020). But the quarantine regulations were justified.

The consequences of the lack of Norwegian tourists were felt in several areas in the Strömstad area. The guest harbor staff in Strömstad experienced this clearly during the summer of 2020. There were about 70 per cent fewer overnight guests compared to the summer of 2019. The campsites had also a lower occupancy rate. Many of the golf clubs had to close down and staff had to be laid off. In June 2020, In Strömstad unemployment had increased more than in any other municipality in the Västra Götaland region. Summer sports competitions between Norwegians and Swedes were arranged virtually in July 2020. What was missed was the festival (ST 30 May 2020).

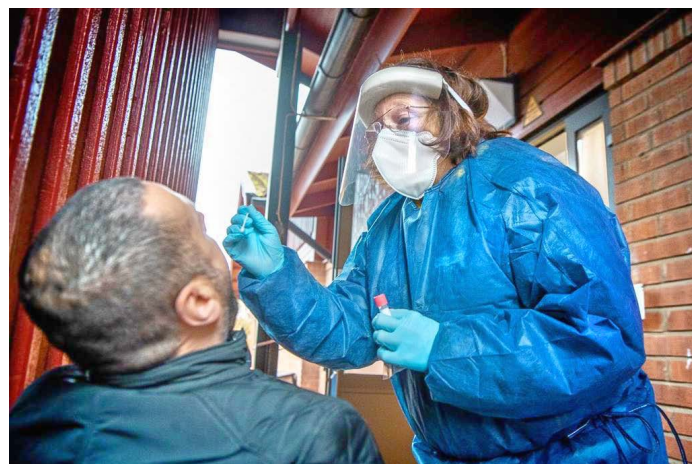


Figure 23. Corona testing in 2020 with a tassel stuck in the nose. Photo Stefan Bennhage.

9.3. Losing Social Contacts between Borderers

The closed border meant that relatives and close friends on both sides of the border were not able to meet. The couple Aud, 83, and Milard Andresen, 87, live at a nursing home in Strömstad, while their two children and grandchildren live in Norway. In October 2020, Aud said: “They have visited us outdoors in the spring, but then they have to quarantine themselves when they get back home”. Aud and Milard also have digital contact on Skype with the children (ST 17 October 2020). During the covid-19 pandemic, border residents were able to take advantage of IT technology in a new way through digital meetings.

When the national border was closed, people on both sides could arrange meetings on the center line of the old Svinesund bridge. These meetings included weddings, music events, family meetings, local politicians’ meetings, journalist meetings, but also ordinary personal meetings. The middle-aged identical twins Pontus and Ola Berglund met every Saturday from April 2020 until the end of the pandemic restrictions.

The Strömstad choir Tontämjarna had difficulties when they could not meet their Norwegian choir leader Martin Rasten. The choir and its leader met in the middle of the old Svinesund bridge on 18 May 2020 (Figure 24). It was a symbolic act whereby togetherness across the border became concrete. Martin Rasten stated that the choir “wanted to manifest the ties between Sweden and Norway” (ST 23 May 2020).

9.4. Negative Rumors between Borderers

When the border for entry into Norway was closed for a long period, frictions arose between residents on both sides of the border. It took the form of rumor-mongering. Obviously, Swedish commuters suffered the worst consequences. Journalist Marita Adamsson wrote on 10 October 2020 about “a strange

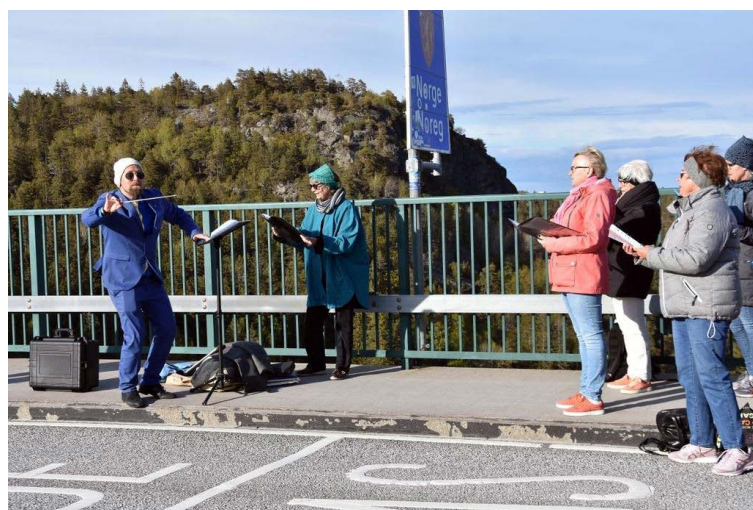


Figure 24. The Norwegian choir director Martin Rasten conducted the Strömstad Choir Tontämjarna on the old Svinesund Bridge on 18 May, 2020. Photo Marita Adamsson.

blaming tactic where it sometimes sounds as if only Norwegians spread infection, sometimes as if only Swedes do... It has become an 'us and them thinking'" (ST 10 October 2020).

A former municipal councillor in Halden stated in February 2021 that "the border closures have led to a lot of throwing shit at our neighbors in the east, and that makes me sad. I think it will take a lot of time to rebuild a good neighborly relationship after this" (ST 20 February 2021).

9.5. New Contact Possibilities after the Pandemic

When the Swedish and Norwegian border restrictions ended in 9 and 12 February 2022, respectively, border contacts gradually increased. Norwegian youngsters celebrated in Strömstad on Maundy Thursday 2022. A new feature was that the State liquor store Systembolaget ventured to stay open on this day after having been closed during the years before the pandemic (ST 16 April 2022). Some Strömstad residents were pleased that the Norwegian youngsters had returned. Nineteen-year-old Smilla Samuelsson emphasized that "this is a great tradition". Since she was three years old, she had been with her mother "watching the spectacle every Maundy Thursday" (ST 16 April 2022).

During the summer of 2022, the Norwegian tourist pressure became very strong. In the guest harbor in Strömstad, the Norwegian flags were flying again on the boats.

Campsites in Strömstad could rejoice, seeing Norwegians coming back. Among the Norwegian-Swedish sports events in the summer of 2022 was the Grenserittet bicycling competition on 20 August between Strömstad and Halden. It had 1,100 participants, (ST 20 and 22 August 2022).

Politicians in Norway and Sweden have recognized that lessons for the future must be taken from the special difficulties that arose in border areas during the two-year pandemic. My study can form the basis for further discussions on approaches and preparations to better cope with future crisis situations.

10. Comparing Migration during Different Periods of Time

By comparing border crossings within a time period of 150 years, I have been able to see both recurring patterns and differences. A comparison can be made between work migrations from Sweden to Norway partly at the end of the 19th century and partly at the end of the 20th century. In both cases, there were job opportunities in Norway and a labor shortage on the Swedish side of the border. Both Norway and Sweden benefited as nations from these labor migrations. At the end of the 19th century, it concerned seasonal labor migrations in the brick industry and agriculture, while at the end of the 20th century, it was about weekly commuting. This change had been possible by the changes in the area of traffic. The work migrants of the 1990s took car, buses or train across the border. A similarity between the late 19th century and the late 20th century was that the guest workers lived in isolation during the work shifts to a large extent and free

time was limited. No contacts occurred and therefore no mixed marriages. Exception to this were the stonemasons who married within their social category also over.

Quite different were the conditions for people who permanently lived near the border. The social life of young people stretched across the border. The free churches that emerged in the late 19th century, had a unifying function. These social and religious contacts as well as the fact that people had the same social affiliation on both sides of the border, created conditions for many mixed marriages. The border became invisible in everyday life when it was not closed from above by national decisions.

Another type of mixed marriage arose when Swedish fishermen had a social life in southern Norwegian ports. The women with different social and cultural backgrounds married the Swedish fishermen. In the new location, the cultural encounter became much more complicated than when intermarriage arose between contractors who lived near the border. There arose both contradictions with native women and a development of alternative cultural expressions among the immigrant women. The cultural and social differences were extensive between the fishing villages and the urban Norwegian environments from which the women came.

Tourists who cross the border can become an asset, not least financially, for the receiving country, especially if they extend the season as Norwegians have done in Bohuslän. Tourists can also have negative consequences if there are too many in one and the same place. It has proven sensitive for Norwegians to use the Norwegian flag if they own a summer house in another country.

Temporary border crossings in large quantities such as on Maundy Thursday can be regarded by the receiving country as curious when it has become an annual tradition, but there must also be limits to appropriate behavior at celebrations abroad.

What the nations can do is to allow open border crossings, as when passport freedom was introduced between Norway and Sweden in 1952. On the other hand, the borders can be closed by either or both nations. In this study, Norway has been the most restrictive with border crossings. This applied to labor migration at the beginning of the 20th century, a total ban on passengers during the Second World War and during the covid19 pandemic. Such border closures have led to particular problems for border residents. Illegal border crossings have occurred and also smuggling of goods.

In difficult times for a country, people in the neighboring country can help by sending supplies but also facilitate illegal border crossings, for example during and after the Second World War. Both the local Swedish population helped and customs officers and police turned a blind eye when it came to border crossing and smuggling.

The lesson from this study is that cultural and other similarities significantly facilitate integration at border crossings, while cultural and other differences

have the opposite effect. The integration problem does not have to do with national borders, but instead with cultural, religious, linguistic and social borders.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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