

## CHAPTER 5

# Democracy in Norway in a Historical Perspective

*By Eivind Indresøvd*

When looking at changes taking place in societies we will find different types of development. Two of the most characteristic ones are *trends* and *turning points*. Gradual and rather slow changes are always taking place in societies. This type of change may be called a *trend* and is not always easy to see, partly because it develops over a long period of time. Then we have changes that happen more rapidly. These are called *turning points* and in such cases much new will appear in a rather short time period. Many will also say that society has changed more profoundly. Both types of changes will be discussed in this chapter as we look at the development of democracy in Norway. But in an overview like this the turning points get special attention, mainly because they are more visible than the trends.

*Trends and turning points important in history*

### Norway in the 1800s

200 years ago Norway had about 900 000 inhabitants and the country was reckoned to be among the poorest in Europe. In the following century the population increased to 2.2 million. In the same time period, from 1860 to 1920, more than 700 000 Norwegians emigrated to North America, many of them driven out by poverty. What caused the increase in population? More food was being produced in agriculture and in the fisheries, so nutrition had improved and many could afford to build better houses. The first vaccination (smallpox) was introduced in 1810 and hygiene also improved. The country was in the midst of a process of rapid

*Increasing population and rapid modernisation*

*Seven years of compulsory school*

modernisation. Both an agricultural and an industrial revolution were in fact taking place. In a country where communication between different regions had been made difficult by tall mountains and long distances, a communications revolution evolved. People were 'knit' together in new ways by steamboats, railway lines, roads, telephone lines and so on. Culturally the modernisation showed through the establishment of a school system that was compulsory for all and had a common curriculum. From 1889 everyone had to go to school for at least seven years.

This process was enhanced by the founding of a large number of interest associations. In this way people joined organisations they sided with. To many, these organisations came to be a good training ground for performing on the public stage and many also learnt that the aims these organisations wanted to pursue, must in the end be realised through political participation.

### **1814: Background**

*Union with Denmark*

The development of democratic institutions in Norway started more than two hundred years ago. The year 1814 may be characterised as a major turning point in Norwegian history. Until this year Norway had been in union with Denmark for more than 400 years. It was called a union, but Denmark was no doubt the stronger part. The two countries were for many years governed by absolutist monarchs and their common aim was to weld the countries together politically, economically and culturally. In short, the kings wanted to create a united nation with the Danish capital, Copenhagen, as its centre. The position of Norway in this union can to some extent be characterized as that of a colony. Vital political decisions were made in far away Copenhagen, often by people who did not know Norway very well. The important political institutions were also located in Copenhagen and a disproportionately large part of the money paid by the people of Norway as taxes, ended in Copenhagen and was spent in Denmark. But it should also be added that historians still discuss the financial relations between Norway and Denmark. The government in Copenhagen did quite a lot to help encourage trade and industry in Norway, especially in the 1700s, and goods produced in Norway enjoyed advantages in the Danish market. Compared to the way other peripheral countries (like Ireland) were treated at this time in Europe, it may be

argued that Norway was lucky to have Denmark as its 'mother country.'

Economic activity increased sharply in Norway during the 1700s and an urban bourgeoisie began to develop. The population was also increasing rapidly. Local government had to expand and a number of new public servants, *embetsmenn*<sup>11</sup>, as they were called, were employed. Many of the persons employed in government and the leaders of trade and industry in Norway had a Danish background. But after a generation or two in Norway, many of them gradually began thinking more like Norwegians. Questions like the following began to appear: Why should all the important decisions be made in Copenhagen? Why do we not have a Norwegian bank in Norway? Why should we send our sons all the way to Copenhagen to get a university education? This 'independence' thinking can be seen as an early emerging Norwegian patriotism. There was, however, no question about leaving the union, but rather a wish that the union should adjust some more to Norwegian demands.

*Emerging  
Norwegian  
patriotism*

At the end of the 1700s there were clear signs of an emerging Norwegian patriotism in the upper classes in Norway. This could, under the right circumstances, develop into a national movement aimed at establishing Norway once more as an independent nation. The question was whether the Norwegian society was strong enough, rich enough and self-conscious enough to be able to leave the association with Denmark and step into the ranks of independent states.

### **1814: a new constitution and democratic institutions**

During the year 1814 'the right circumstances' did appear. On the European continent war had been raging for many years (the Napoleonic wars). Denmark-Norway managed for some years to keep itself neutral. But it became steadily more difficult to balance between the principal antagonists, France and Britain. In 1801 and later in 1807 British forces attacked Copenhagen and captured the Danish-Norwegian fleet and after the last attack a choice had to be made. The king in Copenhagen decided to ally with Napoleon. This might have been the best decision for Denmark, but it resulted in

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<sup>11</sup> Singular: *embetsmann*, plural *embetsmenn*

serious problems for Norway. Britain put up a sea blockade and Norway was completely isolated by the British navy. In this way the export by ship of Norwegian goods like timber, fish and iron was prevented. At the same time the vital import of grain from Denmark was stopped. This meant difficult times and lack of food for many and starvation for the poor. To many it also illustrated the problems of staying in a union with Denmark. Norway had to find her own way!

*A Norwegian rebellion*

The events on the continent, with Napoleon's defeat to Russia in 1812, marked the beginning of the end of the emperor. Sweden decided to join Britain and her allies and demanded Norway as the 'reward' for her support. This led to what may be called a Norwegian rebellion. In an attempt to prevent the transfer of Norway to Sweden, the Danish crown prince was sent to Norway on a secret mission to start an uprising. He probably had a hope that if Norway could stand up as a kingdom of her own, it would be very difficult for Sweden to force Norway into a Swedish-Norwegian union. And perhaps Norway would want to renew her union with Denmark after the war?

*A national awakening*

At once the crown prince of Denmark took a leading role in the Norwegian rebellion. It was decided that a national assembly had to be elected. A constitution had to be agreed upon by the assembly and then a king could be elected. Norway would then be a kingdom in her own right. At the beginning of April in 1814, 112 elected representatives met and started working on the new constitution. By the 17th of May the work on the constitution was finished and the crown prince was elected king. Norway had been restored as an independent state. And the representatives could do what they did knowing that behind them was a strong national movement. A national awakening had taken place.

*The new constitution*

What kind of a constitution had the representatives drafted for Norway? We clearly see the inspiration from the American Constitution of 1787 and the new constitution in France from 1791. The Norwegian constitution was written in five weeks and it is the most important legacy of 1814. Ever since it has been the basis on which political life and the country's civil rights have rested. The sovereignty of the people was to be the backbone of the constitution combined with the division of power. Power was divided between *Stortinget* (the national assembly), the *king* and his government and the *courts*. *Stortinget* was to make laws and decide on

the national budget, the king was to have the executive power while the independent courts had the judicial power. Stortinget was to be elected on the basis of a wide franchise. The rules of suffrage were liberal for the time and all men over 25 years of age who were public officials, farmed taxed land or had a property of a certain value, got the right to vote. This meant as many as 30-40 per cent of all men. In this way many of the small farmers were given political influence, not only as voters, but they could also be elected members of Stortinget. No other country in Europe had such a wide franchise at that time.

*Division of  
power*

### **1814: the Swedish-Norwegian union**

The year 1814 also meant that the political drama on the European continent left its mark on the development in Norway. Early in 1814 Norway left the union with Denmark and the year ended with Norway having to enter a new union, this time with Sweden. The nations that defeated Napoleon had promised the Swedish king Norway as a prize and a small and poor country like Norway had no chance to stand up against this. But in the autumn the situation in many ways had changed to the advantage of Norway. A democratic constitution, her own political institutions, with the national assembly at the centre and a strong national movement were vital elements. So, when Norway was to enter the forced union with Sweden, it became much more a union between equal partners than had been the case in the Danish-Norwegian union. True enough, the Norwegians had to accept the Swedish king and he was given much power. Norway was not allowed to have her own foreign policy and the king also had a suspensive veto on legislation. But the rest of what had been won in the spring of 1814 was saved. The first paragraph of the constitution stated: 'The Kingdom of Norway is a free, self-governing, indivisible and inalienable realm unified with Sweden under one king.'

*A new union,  
now with  
Sweden*

Comparing the two countries, Sweden was definitely the strongest. The country had also been dominated for a long time by an aristocracy ruling in an alliance with the king. This meant that Sweden was strongly influenced by powerful groups with rather conservative attitudes. Could a more democratic Norway safeguard her constitution and political institutions in the union in the coming years?

*Difficult years after the war*

As expected, the first years after the war proved to be difficult years for the new state. Many private companies went bankrupt and the state lost money as well. Financial problems were made worse by an enormous rate of inflation. A special tax, called 'the silver tax,' had to be paid in silver by all who were well off. But what was even more threatening was the king's plan to weaken democracy and to put Norway into a closer union with Sweden. Again and again the king's proposals were rejected by Stortinget and the independent position of Norway was gradually secured.

*The group of embetsmenn was pivotal*

The leaders of the resistance against the king's attempts to strengthen his power and to weaken the democratic institutions of Norway were the embetsmenn, a small but very important group of officials, or public servants. They were few, only about 2 000, but thanks to their background and their position in society more generally, they came to constitute what we could call a national class along with the business elite and some of the largest farmers. Since Norway lacked an aristocracy, the farmers and the middle classes were ready to accept the embetsmann group as their political leaders, at least for the time being.

### **1837: local self government**

*More power to the people*

Another important step in the development of democracy in Norway was taken in 1837 with the introduction of local self government. A local board elected by the people was given the power to decide how they would govern their municipality in certain areas such as the building of schoolhouses, the salary of the teachers, building and maintenance of local roads and the care of the poor. This reform was introduced in Stortinget by a group of farmers, but was also supported by the embetsmann group. So far the local communities had been governed by public servants. This group came to lose some of their power and it may seem strange that the embetsmann group in Stortinget would support the reform. But this tells something about the way they looked upon their role as a national class. They were, quite naturally, interested in safeguarding many of their privileges, but they were also progressive. More power to the people and more of local self government meant to the embetsmann group that the administration of local communities was improved. The idea was that as the leading class in Norwegian society, they also had to take responsibility for the modernising process

of the nation. Material progress would also come easier with good governance and this would enhance development for everyone.

The local board that was to be elected was called the *Formannskap* and the law that established local self government was called *Formannskapsloven*. In the first years rather few took part in the local elections, but gradually interest increased. And these local boards came to be very important for the development of Norwegian democracy. An increasing number of persons became involved in politics and the running of their local communities and they had to learn the basics of political participation. They also came to learn that some of the problems they met in local government were strongly influenced by decisions made in Stortinget. So really to change things in their own communities they also had to get involved in politics at the national level.

*Local board:  
an important  
step for the  
development  
of democracy*

Seen from a more general point of view the task of local government is to make decisions in local matters and to be a link between citizens and central government. To most citizens central government is something distant and the most important link is the vote every fourth year. In the long periods between elections, local government should give citizens a feeling that they are included in the system of governance. In other words: a feeling of ownership. Interest associations may often have the same function.

After the introduction of local government the king gradually became less involved in Norwegian politics. He was not the young and energetic man any longer. He had not succeeded in his attempts to direct Stortinget and the cabinet. The political institutions of Norway would not accept the power of a strong monarch. With the king more in the background, the officials of Norway came to dominate the cabinet. The cabinet itself ended as a self recruiting body of politicians with a background as embetsmenn. For several years the embetsmenn also came to play a dominating role in Stortinget, much because the majority of farmers and others with a middle class background looked upon them as representatives of the leading national class and accepted their leadership.

*Government  
closer to the  
people*

## **Parliamentary government**

Early in the 1860s a growing tension between groups of representatives appeared in Stortinget. The majority belonged to the farmers'

group. They were only loosely organised and had so far accepted the leadership of the embetsmann group. But now things had started to change, both inside the national assembly and outside. In Norway, as in most of Europe, there was a rapid economic development and this implied that changes were taking place in the balance between different social groups.

*Opposition to  
the  
embetsmann  
group*

The position of the embetsmenn as the leading national group had been marked by their control of the cabinet and their leadership in Stortinget. But a fast growing middle class was now less inclined to accept this leadership. The values of the middle class and their ideas of how society should develop did not always correspond with the ideas of the embetsmenn. Attempts had been made as early as 1859 to organise an alliance in Stortinget between the farmers' group and the growing number of representatives with a middle class background, but with little success. Ten years later, however, an alliance was formed between the two groups. It was called the Liberal alliance. From now on they could control what was taking place in Stortinget, but still they had no control over decisions made in the cabinet.

The conflict between the old national class of embetsmenn and the fast growing middle class gradually came to be linked to the question of the introduction of parliamentarism in the Norwegian political system. The constitutional principle that a cabinet must have the support of a majority in the national assembly was not mentioned in the constitution. On the other hand, the national assembly was the elected and therefore the democratic body which expressed the will of the people.

*The king  
sided with  
the  
embetsmenn*

The conflict was intensified by the role of the king. He came to side with and support the embetsmenn. In this way the conflict also brought into the open the old antagonism felt by most Norwegians towards the Swedish king. The embetsmenn came to stand out as a group which would fight against democratisation, in an alliance with the king. Things had really been turned upside down. In 1814 and for many years on, the embetsmenn had been the strongest defenders of the constitution against the king's attempts to curtail the democratic institutions. Now they had ended up in an alliance with the king, against the majority in Stortinget. To many Norwegians the embetsmenn came to be looked upon as representatives of an old and outgoing regime. The social foundations of this regime were also under pressure. The old alliance between embets-

menn, businessmen and large farmers was crumbling. New groups of businessmen tended to side with the Liberals.

Parallel to the political and social processes, new ways of expressing and exerting political influence developed. An impressive number of voluntary organisations were part of this, together with a number of new newspapers. The political rally, as a way of meeting and discussing political questions, also appeared for the first time in the 1870s.

*New ways of exerting political influence*

In Stortinget the Liberals passed amendments to the constitution giving ministers in the cabinet access to the sessions in Stortinget. In this way ministers would have to come to the national assembly to defend the policies they were implementing. But the king claimed he had an absolute veto in constitutional matters, even though nothing was said of this in the constitution. The ministers of the cabinet advised the king to refuse to give his consent. They feared they would come under pressure if they were to appear in Stortinget to explain and defend their decisions. In the end the cabinet would lose its independence and this was not in accordance with the idea of the division of power as it was expressed in the constitution. Finally, the Liberals were to use the weapon of last resort. They decided to make the members of the cabinet appear before the Court of Impeachment.

A requirement for impeachment was a clear majority for the Liberals in Stortinget. The election campaign of 1882 marked a turning point with regard to political involvement. The dividing lines between the opposing forces were now more clearly drawn than earlier and this campaign was the first in Norway where strong efforts were made to mobilize the voters. The arguments were more polarized than before; you were for or against government by the people, for or against popular control of the constitution. The involvement and turnout of voters were also much higher than in earlier elections. The campaign was fought in a fair way and basic rights of a democratic society like the right of assembly, the right of expression and the right of publication were now recognized.

*The impeachment process*

In 1884 the prime minister and several of the cabinet ministers were sentenced to lose their positions for having advised the king not to sanction the constitutional amendments. The king had to ask the leader of the Liberals to become the new prime minister and parliamentarism had won its way. A coup d'état was planned by the king and those who supported the cabinet ministers, but in the end

*Parliamentarism: Stortinget to be the source of the Cabinet's power*

no one dared to start what could have ended in a civil war. For the first time in Norway a government had been formed by a prime minister because he had the support of a majority of the representatives in the national assembly. Stortinget was from now on the source of the cabinet's power. To the Liberals this was an important step in the democratisation of Norway.

## **Breakthrough of the party system**

*Party system from 1884*

The struggles for parliamentarism also led to the establishment of political parties. The majority group in Stortinget, the Liberals, had worked more and more like a political party in the years before 1884; first as a parliamentary party and gradually as a national party with a widespread network of local party organisations. In 1884 groups supporting the cabinet ministers organised their own party, the Conservatives. A few years later, in 1887, the Labour Party was started. Their first representatives to Stortinget were not elected until 1903. In the years after 1884, the Liberals used their parliamentary majority to decide on questions of special importance to them: a widening of the franchise, a new law on primary education, new military arrangements and the introduction of the jury system. All these issues went well along with the Liberals' idea of a more open and democratic society and has been, along with the introduction of parliamentarism, characterized by historians as a democratic revolt.

## **Universal suffrage**

*Universal suffrage; men from 1898 and women from 1913*

The rules of suffrage, which had been liberal in 1814, remained almost unchanged up to 1884. Large groups of people were dissatisfied and demanded the right to vote. To expand democracy, the Liberal Party had pledged to introduce universal suffrage. In 1898 this right was given to all grown men and in 1913 the same right was given to all women.

## **The end of the union**

During the 1890s conflicts relating to the union with Sweden were intensified. Since the difficult years immediately after 1814, many Norwegians had defended the union because it secured political

stability and gave economic advantages. But from the 1880s it was obvious that a more self-conscious Norwegian nationalism came in conflict with the old system. The country enjoyed a period of strong growth, both economically and culturally. Many felt that this did not correspond with Norway's position as a 'junior partner' in the union. The foreign minister was still Swedish and the countries shared consulates abroad. It was more and more obvious ever since 1884 that Stortinget had an ambition to control political life including the foreign service. The union prevented in this way the free development of Norwegian parliamentary democracy.

*A more self-conscious nationalism*

By the turn of the century, clashes between the two countries on the union problem were intensified and in 1905 Stortinget decided that Norway should leave the union with Sweden. A referendum was held to clarify whether the nation as a whole agreed with the decision. 368 392 men voted to end the union, 184 wanted the union to continue. Both countries had been preparing for war, but after difficult negotiations an agreement on a peaceful dissolution of the union was reached. When the Swedish king ceased to function as the Norwegian king, Norway had to decide on the question of the future form of government. A large majority of the population was in favour of a monarchy and Stortinget invited a Danish prince to become the new king of Norway. He took the name Haakon VII.

*Norway decides to leave the union*

## **The 1900s**

The Norwegian economy continued to grow after 1905 and there were periods with fast industrialization. Norway soon became an industrial society. In 1910 42% of the work force was employed in agriculture and forestry, today that figure has sunk to less than 5%. The world economic crisis reached Norway at the end of the 1920s and unemployment became a severe problem until the outbreak of the Second World War.

*An industrial society*

Norway's position as a neutral power meant nothing when Germany decided to attack and occupy the country in April 1940. After a few weeks of fighting the Norwegian forces had to surrender and the king and the cabinet fled to England to organize the resistance from abroad. The five year long occupation put heavy strains on the Norwegian economy. In a country with a population of about 3 million an additional 400 000 German soldiers had to be housed and fed mainly from Norwegian resources. The building of

*1940-1945: war and occupation*

a large number of different types of fortifications, roads, railway lines and the like made things even worse. The German exploitation of the Norwegian economy meant that almost everyone had to accept a sharply reduced standard of living. But the increasing economic activity during war time also meant that unemployment disappeared for the time being.

*Resistance  
against the  
Nazi dicta-  
torship*

The five years of occupation (1940-1945) was a very difficult period in many ways. The Nazi dictatorship based its control of the population on the use of terror. But the civil and military resistance against the Nazi regime also came to create a strong feeling of national solidarity among most Norwegians and as a consequence class differences became less important. A common enemy brought people closer together. A strong support for what had been lost, the values of democracy and free political institutions also developed.

*Rebuilding  
the country:  
political  
agreement*

After the war came the enormous task of rebuilding the country. Thanks to the national solidarity that developed during the war, the political parties managed to agree on a policy of reconstruction. It was expressed in a joint political programme. In cooperation with private industry the state should take a leading role and create a strong economic development. In the future this would make it possible for the country to give all inhabitants a higher standard of living.

*Oil and gas  
led to  
economic  
affluence*

The reconstruction period ended earlier than expected (after about five years) and most of the post-war period has been marked by steady economic growth. This has been the basis for progress in other areas of society as well and most notably the building up of a modern welfare state. The welfare state with its social safety net, gives everyone the right of support if they should find themselves in a situation of insecurity or poverty. The mass unemployment from the inter-war years has not reappeared. In 1969 oil, and later on natural gas, was found in the North Sea and this led to a considerable production and export of oil and gas. This strongly increased the national income of an already wealthy nation.

## **The deepening of democracy in the 1900s**

The development of democratic institutions is the basis for deepening democracy, but in society a feeling of ownership to these institutions must also be developed. During the first century with dem-

ocratic institutions, the upper and the middle classes had or were in the process of developing this ownership. So what about the working classes? When and how would they demand the same access to political power? A Norwegian sociologist, Stein Rokkan, has developed a model to illustrate the thresholds a rising political movement often has to pass to reach political power. (Flora 1999: 246)

- The first is the threshold of *legitimizing*: from which year or decade will historians judge that there was regular protection of the rights of assembly, expression and publication and within what limits?
- The second is the threshold of *incorporation*: how long did it take before the potential supporters of rising movements of opposition were given formal rights of participation in the choice of representatives?
- The third is the threshold of *representation*: how high were the original barriers against the representation of new movements and when and in what ways were the barriers lowered to make it easier to gain seats in the legislature?
- The fourth is the threshold of *executive power*: how long did it take before parliamentary strength could be translated into direct influence on executive decision making?

*Rokkan's model on political power*

The upper classes of Norway, led by the embetsmann group had passed all four thresholds from the start in 1814. The state of Norway was their state. The middle classes had also passed the first, the second and the third of the thresholds from 1814, but they were excluded from the executive power until 1884.

The first working class movement was organised in Norway in the wake of the revolutions in many European countries in 1848. The movement spread rapidly and in 1851 there were about 400 workers' unions all over the country. The leaders of the movement demanded the right to vote for all men, equality before the law, better primary schools, universal military service and the abolition of the corn tax. The officials feared the movement and the leaders were imprisoned. The movement thereafter died out. This means that for the working classes the first threshold had not been passed by 1850. In the 1870s the embetsmenn did not fear a working class movement in the same way as before and the first trade unions were now being organised. In 1887 the trade unions started the Labour

*The first working class movement was subdued*

*20 years later trade unions were organised*

Party, but the party could not elect representatives to Stortinget until universal suffrage for men had been introduced. In 1903 the first representatives of the Labour Party could take their seats in Stortinget.

*Universal  
suffrage: the  
Labour Party  
becomes  
largest*

With the introduction of universal suffrage for both men and women the Labour party soon became the largest of the political parties, but they had to wait some years until parliamentary strength could be translated into direct influence. As they could not muster a majority on their own, support from another party in Stortinget was required to form their own government. This support came in 1935 from the Farmers Party and from then on the Labour party has been the dominating party in Norwegian politics. The last threshold had been passed. The strong position of the Labour Party has been accompanied by the development of a strong trade union movement. From the start in 1887 there has been a close cooperation between the two. This has also caused changes in the understanding of what democracy is and how democratic development shall continue in the future. To the Labour movement it has been very important to reduce differences between social groups and in this way create more equal opportunities for everyone. Likewise, the fight against poverty and the creation of a social safety net for everyone has been seen as part of a good democratic society. New groups reaching executive power will often put their own imprint on the concept of democracy.

*The labour  
movement  
works for  
more equal  
opportunities*

## **Democratic development in the post war period**

The Norwegian historian Berge Furre claims that probably the two most important features of development in the post war period in Norway has been the building up of the *welfare state* with its social safety net and the changes brought about by the *woman's liberation* movement. Both these developments can be seen in the light of democratic institutions meeting new challenges. The battle for equality has led to more women being involved in politics and the number of women in democratically elected bodies has also increased sharply. As an example, today it will be unthinkable in Norway to form a Government where less than 40% of the cabinet ministers are women. The development of the welfare state is a signal to every citizen that the state will try to help everyone, when in need.

The women's liberation movement was especially active in the 1970s and paved the way for a more equal relationship between men and women in many areas of society. One example of this is the development of the modern Norwegian family. This type of family is characterized by the Norwegian sociologist Ivar Frønes as the 'negotiating family'. The father's traditionally dominating position in family life has been replaced by a more democratic negotiating process, where all family members shall be heard. The family has in this way become a training ground for democratic behaviour. This implies the development of independence among children and the ability to reflect and to make personal judgements.

*The negotiating family*

In this way democracy has been made broader and deeper in the post war period. But democratic development has also met problems. A living democracy must be based on a society with people who want to develop personal opinions, who want to get involved, who want to do something, like getting involved in political work or in other voluntary organisations. Even so, you may chose to be just a spectator who watches the political process taking place like a struggle between elitist groups. More and more people are today choosing to be spectators and this is an increasing problem in Norway today.

Some find that the political process is important and that it is possible to change things in society by getting involved. But as a politician, at the local or at the national level, you will probably experience that today there is more scepticism than before concerning politicians and their motives. This scepticism is a democratic problem for politicians of course, but also for the political system itself. Luckily, research shows that even though there is an increasing scepticism of politicians, people's confidence in the political system is still very strong. In fact, more than 80% of the population says that they have confidence in our political system (Makt og demokratiutredningen 2003). From this we may conclude that our political system and our democratic institutions are still strongly supported by most people.

*Democratic institutions face problems*

*Still strong support of democracy*

## Questions

1. Are monarchical democracies more stable than republican democracies? Discuss.
2. What are, in your opinion, the most characteristic *turnings points* in the history of democracy in Norway?
3. Do you find distinctive *trends*?
4. Why was the introduction of local self government important for the development of democracy?
5. The *embetsmenn* were for a long period in the 1800s the leading class in Norwegian society. How did they look upon their role in society?
6. What do you understand by parliamentarism?
7. Why could the union with Sweden be said to slow down democratic development in Norway?
8. Rokkan `s model is of course only a 'model' that simplifies what is complicated. But can it still help us to understand the process of rising political movements? If so, why? Discuss.
9. Do you agree that the battle for equality between men and women is a natural part of the deepening of democracy? Discuss.

### *Compare and contrast Malawi and Norway*

After having read two or all of chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this book, discuss the following questions.

1. Make a list of similarities and differences between Malawi and Norway in the development of democratic government.
2. What similarities and differences can you draw from Norway's union with Denmark and Sweden and how does this compare with Malawi's experience as a British protectorate?

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