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Blog Posts from the Peace Scholars Program
Summer 2014
At the International Summer School at the University of Oslo, Norway

Peace Scholar Post: The World Walks Past a Cafe in Grønland

Posted on July 8, 2014 by [Rachel Peterson](#)

This is part of a series of blog posts written by the 2014 [Peace Scholars](#) as they experience their summer program in Norway. This post was written by Amy Delo from Pacific Lutheran University.

People around the world come together over coffee. Trust me, as a Seattleite I know the importance of a good cup of coffee on a rainy Monday. However, going to a Starbucks is just not the same as experiencing European café culture. Today after class I decided to pack up my homework and head out to a coffee shop where I could sit, work and chat all afternoon.

I got on the T-bane with a few friends and headed out to Grønland, a neighborhood in East Oslo. We found a café and claimed a spot outside with our drinks. We had been told in class and by past Peace Scholars that East Oslo is the more diverse part of the city, where more immigrants and non-ethnic Norwegians live. This was readily apparent. Upon sitting down we heard two men at the table next to ours having a conversation in Serbian. Looking down the street there was a store selling fabric to make saris, a fruit and spice market, many women wearing the hijab, and many men wearing thawbs. In a homogenous society, like Norway, it was startling and refreshing to observe passersby from every different ethnic, linguistic, and national background imaginable while enjoying my latte. The people-watching from the café terrace was so fascinating that my homework never left my backpack.

Immigration and the changing makeup of Norwegian society have been a prominent topics of discussion in the class I am taking in Scandinavian Politics and Government at the International Summer School in Oslo. It has only been in the last 30 years that immigration to Norway has become significant and the large influx of people (relative to the overall population size) has created a more diverse population, especially in Oslo. This change in demographics has caused negative sentiment towards 'others' and an increase in Norwegian nationalism. This fact is unfortunately supported by the 22 July terrorist attack by Anders Behring Breivik, thought to have been undertaken as a response to the Labour government's pro-immigration position destroying the Norwegian nation (among other reasons).

While some scholars, like Samuel Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations*, would insist this xenophobic action was carried out because different cultures are destined to fight for the rest

of time due to their irreconcilable differences, as a Peace Scholar that idea is utterly ridiculous. Bridging the gap between different cultures while respecting the integrity of each is a challenge, however, creating an understanding and appreciation for those who are different than yourself- the 'other'- is a possible and worthwhile endeavor. So if you have the chance, grab a cup of coffee in Grønland. You will observe a community of people from all over the world rushing down the street, chatting with friends over coffee, and going about their everyday lives. When you take the time to look around, Grønland doesn't seem as different from the rest of Oslo as it did by first glance.

<http://nobelpeaceprizeforum.org/peace-scholar-post-the-world-walks-past-a-cafe-in-gronland/>

Peace Scholar Post: Building Bridges: Learning Outside of the Classroom

Posted on July 25, 2014 by [Rachel Peterson](#)

This is part of a series of blog posts written by the 2014 [Peace Scholars](#) as they experience their summer program in Norway. This post was written by Amy Delo from Pacific Lutheran University.

With exams just around the corner, we Peace Scholars are buckling down and spending our afternoons in the library. As our studies here are coming to a close we have been doing a lot of reflecting on our experiences in Norway. This exercise was formally led by Steinar Bryn when he visited us earlier this week. He came to hear the thoughts of the Peace Scholars and Young Friends (the students from the Balkans who were with us at the Nansen School in Lillehammer earlier this summer) regarding our experiences at the International Summer School in Oslo (ISS). In this meeting, there seemed to be a consensus among our group: our biggest takeaway will be the relationships we have built with each other over the summer.

While the International Summer School is well respected for its academics, what I have valued the most about this summer is the opportunity to meet fellow students and learn from them through our interactions. ISS is unique because there are students here from around all over the world, of different nationalities, religions, and ages. This provides an incredible opportunity to gain knowledge about the world and the realities of these individuals over

breakfast, hanging out in the lounge, or playing soccer – all this *in addition* to the learning done in the classroom.



In response to our reflections on relationships, Steinar told us a story, as is his style. His story was about a man who has a dream of creating a museum showcasing famous bridges from around the world. Steinar is convinced it is just a matter of time until this man succeeds in his quest for a bridge museum because of the imposing beauty of literal bridges and the metaphorical significance of building figurative bridges. And building bridges really is what we've been doing here in Norway. We are creating links with others who care about the world, care about building peace, fuel each other to be more optimistic, work harder, and experience more.

Building bridges is a crucial part of sustaining peace. In 1910 the International Peace Bureau was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for “acting as a link between the peace societies of the various countries”. The International Peace Bureau was founded in 1891 as an organization to coordinate and direct campaigns related to building peace through disarmament, mediation, and arbitration. Through their work IPB builds bridges between other peace organizations and individuals to make peace building efforts more successful. This organization's entire purpose is to build bridges between those who promote peace! Perhaps that is why the IPB and 13 of its members have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize over the years.



At the end of the summer, I'm convinced it goes right back to where we started in Lillehammer. Dialogue is building bridges. It's meeting people, getting to know them, seeing them for who they are instead of what they are, and feeling connected to them. So next time you think a bridge is just a structure designed to cross over – take a second look.

<http://nobelpeaceprizeforum.org/peace-scholar-post-building-bridges-learning-outside-of-the-classroom/>