

The Nordic Paradox- how the equality drives inequality.



The link between the above standard deviation graph and society is that, in general, the Nordics are relatively monocultural. It has very little variation between people, for example, in terms of people's access to education, income equality, gender inequality, etc. unlike the US (the famous 1%).

Why does the above matter? The challenge with Nordic equality is that when you see that everybody is equal, and you happen to be the person that stands out a lot, then emotionally you tend to be much more negatively impacted.

When it comes to employment and educational achievement, foreigners in the Nordics underperform compared to their Nordic counterparts. The Nordics have several challenges:

1. **Everybody is treated as an individual.**  
For a lot of the foreigners in the Nordics, this individualism does not consider their wider social group, which is more likely to involve more social obligations to a wider family than their Nordic counterparts.
2. **The assumption that all foreigners should be treated similarly** (equality thinking).  
A standardised approach creates more inequality as, unlike for example a Russian, the Nordic perception of Syrian and Somalian immigrants has to deal with the "whiteness dilemma in the Nordics". The less white a person is, the more social barriers immigrants will need to climb.
3. **Excessive automated CV screening** adds to the inequality as it standardises a lot of HR work, which is programmed on keywords deemed important from the Nordic perspectives but globally are irrelevant.
4. **Recruitment interviews by globally inexperienced recruiters.** Everybody goes through the same recruitment process, yet the reality is that different cultures have different ways of presenting themselves; an inexperienced recruiter will misinterpret key signs with negative recruitment decisions.

The speech at the Nordic HR summit will provide further context to the above problem statements and highlight which practices could be developed to create an approach with more equal outcomes.

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