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How People Explain Antisemitism

Interpretation of Survey Answers

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ABSTRACT This chapter explores antisemitism in contemporary Norway through an analysis of data from open-ended questions in the population survey *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017*.¹ The chapter investigates the part of the survey that dealt with views on the reasons for negative attitudes towards Jews. By examining the respondents' broad range of explanations, the chapter explores different contexts for antisemitic views in contemporary Norway and possible new forms of expressing such attitudes beyond the limits of fixed-response questions. The chapter thus contributes to the discussion of the current development of antisemitism and the seeming paradox that while surveys show that antisemitic attitudes are decreasing in the general population, Jews around Europe see antisemitism as a serious and increasing problem. The analysis thus simultaneously explores the Norwegian population's understanding of antisemitism and indicates where the boundaries of what can be said about Jews are drawn. It shows that answers often described antisemitism as something spatially, "ethnically" or historically *distant*. While few answers expressed classic stereotypes of Jews, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes a communicative arena where negative views of Jews are more easily tolerated.

KEYWORDS antisemitism | anti-Zionism | population survey | prejudice | Muslim-Jewish relations | Norway

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1. Christhard Hoffmann & Vibeke Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017: Population Survey and Minority Study* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Results from the two population surveys conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM) show that stereotypical views of Jews were less widespread in Norwegian society in 2017 than in 2011.² Overall, the proportion of the general population with marked prejudice against Jews has decreased from 12.1 per cent to 8.3 per cent. At the same time, the percentage that does not support any negative statements about Jews has increased significantly, from 55 per cent to 69 per cent. The development was observed by measuring the percentage that supported a list of statements about Jews that reflected classic antisemitic notions. While almost one in five respondents in 2011 supported the statement “World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests”, the support in 2017 was 13 per cent. In 2011, 26 per cent supported the statement “Jews consider themselves to be better than others”, whereas in 2017 the corresponding figure was 18 per cent. The same trend emerges regarding negative emotions and social distance from Jews, the two other dimensions of attitudes that were assessed in the surveys.

As shown in the report and in the chapter by Ottar Hellevik in the current volume, the observed decrease in the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes in Norway between 2011 and 2017 cannot be explained by changes in variables such as levels of education, opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or level of xenophobia.³ A possible explanation may lie in a shift in public opinion resulting from an increased attention to antisemitism as a societal problem in the media and in Norwegian politics. When Jewish respondents report a different trend and see antisemitism as a serious and increasing problem, this may be due to reports on antisemitic incidents in other European countries.⁴ Particularly violent incidents in countries such as France or Sweden have received much attention. Similar tendencies as in Norway have been observed in other European countries, where findings of decreasing antisemitism seem to contradict the perceptions of the Jewish population.⁵ The dis-

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2. Christhard Hoffmann, Øivind Kopperud and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and other Minorities*, Oslo: 2012; Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 2017.
 3. Hoffmann and Moe, *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 7, 95; see also in the current volume, Ottar Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway – A survey analysis of prevalence, trends and possible causes of negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims”.
 4. Almost 70 per cent of Jewish respondents answered that antisemitism had become more prevalent in Norway during the last five years. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 63.
 5. See, for example, the latest survey from FRA, conducted among 16,000 Jews in Europe. In this survey, which was released in December 2018, almost 90 per cent of respondents across all countries surveyed say they feel that levels of antisemitism have increased in their country over the past five years.

crepancy between survey results and Jewish perceptions has also been explained by the emergence of (new) forms and arenas of antisemitism.⁶ Most notably, researchers often point to new media and internet-based expressions of antisemitism. Representing an efficient and far-reaching method for spreading ideas, the internet may explain the perceived increase in negative attitudes.

However, further analysis and new methods may also contribute to explaining the findings. As Werner Bergmann suggests in the present volume, the relation between perceptions and prevalence of antisemitism may be measured in more flexible ways to show, essentially, that experiences of antisemitism do not necessarily reflect marked prejudices in the persons expressing antisemitic notions.⁷ Rather, support of certain antisemitic statements is more widespread and not limited to respondents categorised as prejudiced against Jews in the surveys. Consequently, antisemitism may be perceived as more prevalent. This is a valuable insight that nuances the way prevalence is understood. For the purpose of the present chapter, it is also relevant to consider how the research design may influence the understanding of antisemitism as a phenomenon. More precisely, the chapter explores how antisemitism is reflected and interpreted in answers to the open-ended questions compared to the quantitative results. While the observed decrease is tied to the specific questions that were posed in the questionnaire, antisemitism as a phenomenon may have undergone changes that are beyond the scope of the survey and remain undetected. In other words, changes may be related to the contents of antisemitic ideas and their expressions, which are not covered by surveys focusing on traditional anti-Jewish notions.

In post-Holocaust Western societies, antisemitism was increasingly banned from public expression following the emergence of the societal norm of anti-antisemitism. While the phenomenon itself obviously did not disappear, expressions of antisemitism were excluded from the public arena. One effect of the ostracism

6. Lars Dencik and Karl Marosi, "Different Antisemitisms: On Three Distinct Forms of Antisemitism in Contemporary Europe – With a Special Focus on Sweden", Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, Tel Aviv University, (June 2016), <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/object-eur129>.

7. Werner Bergmann's contribution in the current volume suggests a different way of measuring antisemitism, by means of an "elastic" view". See Werner Bergmann, "Counting Antisemitism versus Measuring Antisemitism – An "Elastic View" of Antisemitism". The chapter makes use of a method provided in a study by Daniel Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain. A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel*, JPR/report (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, September 2017), 3.

and communication latency⁸ of contemporary antisemitism is that anti-Jewish attitudes appear “coded”, perhaps most typically in the form of anti-Zionism. Furthermore, antisemitism is regarded a sensitive issue and therefore possibly creates particular difficulties in terms of measuring because respondents answer what they believe is socially acceptable and not what they “really” think. In an experimental study from 2013, Heiko Beyer and Ivar Krumpal remark that although the public sanctioning of antisemitism has influenced theoretical developments in terms of concepts and explanations, there has been a lack of methodological considerations concerning how to obtain valid measures of antisemitism.⁹

The inclusion of an open-ended question on the reason for antisemitism (“What do you think is the reason for negative attitudes towards Jews?”) in the Norwegian surveys enabled new variations of antisemitism to be addressed and expressed. This part of the questionnaire was thus used both as a way to explore the respondents’ understanding of antisemitism as a contemporary prejudice in Norway and as a means of analysing the respondents’ respective views of Jews. Asking respondents directly about sensitive issues may yield socially desirable responses.¹⁰ The indirect formulation of the question, which focuses not on the respondents’ own views of Jews but on the background for antisemitic attitudes in general, reduced the problems related to sensitive issues.

This chapter explores how respondents in the Norwegian general population explain negative attitudes towards Jews by analysing the variety of interpretations of antisemitism expressed in the material. A particular emphasis is placed on how the answers relate to traditional stereotypes, such as those referred to in the survey, compared to possible new understandings of the contexts for antisemitism, especially the role of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹¹ The chapter thus explores current understandings of where boundaries are drawn when it comes to expressions about Jews. The analysis traces recurrent topics in the answers, exploring typical

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8. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie u. Sozialpsychologie*, 38 no. 2 (1986): 223–246, and Werner Bergmann and Wilhelm Heitmeyer, “Communicating Anti-Semitism. Are the Boundaries of the Speakable Shifting?” *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 33 (2005): 70–89.
 9. Heiko Beyer and Ivar Krumpal, “The Communication Latency of Antisemitic Attitudes: An Experimental Study”, *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity* (2013): 83.
 10. See, for example, Roger Tourangeau and Ting Yan, “Sensitive Questions in Surveys”, *Psychological Bulletin* 133, no. 5 (2007): 859–883. doi: [10.1037/0033-2909.133.5.859](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.133.5.859).
 11. The answers to open-ended questions about the reasons for antisemitism and Islamophobia in the survey from 2011 are analysed in Vibeke Moe, Cora Alexa Døving, Irene Levin and Claudia Lenz, “‘Hvis de hadde oppført seg som vanlige nordmenn, hadde alt vært greit, tror jeg’ Nordmenns syn på årsaken til negative holdninger til jøder og muslimer”, *Flex* 3, no. 1 (2016).

explanations and interpretative patterns as well as how tendencies in this qualitative material relate to the quantitative results. In addition to this content-driven analysis, some examples are analysed in-depth, interpreting meaning in specific formulations.

The material consists of answers that were typically short, sometimes consisting only of a single word (“Israel”). However, the length did vary, and some of the answers had long and detailed explanations. The question was only posed to respondents who considered negative attitudes to be widespread, resulting in 247 answers from a total of 1,575 respondents in the general population sample.¹² While this response may express a certain concern about the Jewish minority and the prevalence of antisemitism in contemporary Norwegian society, the results from the quantitative analysis showed a tendency that respondents who found such attitudes to be widespread also scored higher on antisemitism. The connection between these two elements may have influenced the current material in the direction of more negative views. However, the aim of the analysis is not to generalise by assessing prevalence of views, but rather to explore interpretative patterns.

2. ANALYSIS

Similar to the findings in 2012, answers could be categorised according to where the responsibility for antisemitism was placed, either “inside” or “outside” the Jewish minority itself. The former category of answers had an affinity to essentialist or even antisemitic attitudes, by blaming Jews for antisemitism. The latter category, which placed responsibility on external factors, comprised a variety of explanations, most commonly pointing to culturally transmitted ideas in the majority population or to the impact from the media. Despite the scarce information provided in some of the cases, even short answers were often clear in terms of where they placed responsibility. It was, however, not always possible to categorise the answers in accordance with this classification. In particular, some of the answers briefly mentioning Israel or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were difficult to interpret. Other answers were also ambiguous in terms of where the responsibility was placed.

12. A similar question was posed concerning reasons for Islamophobia. Because a far larger proportion of respondents believed negative attitudes towards Muslims to be widespread, a far larger proportion (around four times as many) also answered the question about Islamophobia (n = 1026) than answered the question concerning antisemitism. See also chapter 8 in the current volume, “Muslims are...” Contextualising Survey Answers” by Cora Alexa Døving, which analyses the answers to the open-ended question on reasons for Islamophobia.

The following analysis identifies three recurring, though not exclusive, interpretative patterns in the material: one pointing to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including media representations of the conflict; another referring to the Muslim immigrant population, and a third category explaining antisemitism by pointing to old, latent prejudices in Norwegian society, i.e. answers referring to classic stereotypes of Jews. Among the answers pointing to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or to antisemitism as an old prejudice, there were some that placed responsibility both “inside” and “outside” the minority. The context for antisemitism among Muslims was rarely elaborated on and the responsibility thus remained comparatively unclear. However, the three categories of explanations share a tendency of placing the origins of antisemitism far away from Norwegian mainstream society, either spatially (geographically), “ethnically”/religiously or historically.

THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Similar to the results of the 2011 survey, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the most-cited topic when respondents explained what they saw as the background for negative views of Jews.¹³ The proportion of answers that pointed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or Israel equated to almost half of the total number of answers.

The material included a variety of explanations expressing different positions in the conflict. Many included negative characteristics of Israel, focusing on Israeli aggression or the bare existence of the state, such as: “The establishment of Israel”, “War against the Palestinians” and “Israel’s occupation of the West Bank”. However, the material also included answers that defended the Israeli side, particularly with reference to the media’s coverage, claiming a key source of antisemitism was wrongful and negative depictions of the conflict. “Israeli policies, the coverage by NRK¹⁴ can be one-sided;” “The media’s wrongful and deceptive

13. Also in the sample of Jewish respondents, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was commonly cited as the reason for negative attitudes. However, the number of respondents was very low due to a problem during data collection. The significance of Israel for explanations of antisemitism among Jews has been shown in two quantitative surveys conducted by the Mosaic Faith Community (DMT) among its members. The surveys revealed that Norwegian Jews both considered the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be central to the prevalence of antisemitism, and for negative experiences associated with being Jewish. Furthermore, 83 per cent of the respondents in the 2011 survey considered media coverage of the Middle East conflict to be very important in the development of antisemitism in Norway in recent decades, while 62 per cent considered 'The prolonged conflict in the Middle East' to be very important (Levin, 2004), Rolf Golombek, Irene Levin and J. Kramer, “Jødisk liv i Norge”, *Hatikva*, no. 5 (2012).

14. NRK is the Norwegian national broadcasting corporation (Norges rikskringkasting).

representation of the situation between Israel and Palestine” and “The conflict about land in Israel and Palestine, the coverage in the media, images and the way things that happen are described” are typical examples of such answers. Not all answers referring to the media included explicit mentioning of the conflict, although it may be implied: “The one-sided coverage by TV and press – perhaps they should try to live with terror every day” is one example suggesting this interpretation.

Part of the background for these answers may lie in public debates about the coverage by the national broadcaster NRK, which has been accused of being biased and pro-Palestine.¹⁵ Though sometimes rather obscure, the mentioning of “political correctness” in some of the answers suggests that not only is Israel-critical coverage perceived as the dominant perspective in the media, but also that it is difficult to express other views in public. One respondent saw this as a politically motivated trend: “Politically controlled media writing things that are politically correct.” References to the Norwegian national broadcaster NRK sometimes indicated that it was understood as a proponent of “left-wing” political views, which can be perceived as implying a critical attitude towards Israel, an attribution that was sometimes made explicit. Some answers merely referred to “media”, not indicating any details on how the respondents perceived the content. A few of the answers also mention leftist extremists as a source of antisemitic attitudes, which may be interpreted as implying a connection to political activists engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Some of the answers pointing to the media imply a consensus in Norway on how Jews should be viewed (negatively), a claim that stands in contrast to the anti-antisemitism norm mentioned earlier.¹⁶ One respondent noted, “It is not politically correct to have positive views of Jews. This is what the media tells us. The ways things are presented in much of the media make Jews look bad.”

15. The public debate about the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been extensive. For an analysis of the coverage by NRK in the period 2008–2011 conducted on behalf of the board of the national broadcaster (NRK), *Kringkastingsrådet*, see Cecilie Hellestveit, “Nrks dekning av Midtøstenkonflikten, med særlig vekt på fremstillingen av Israel” (*Kringkastingsrådet*: April 28, 2011). http://fido.nrk.no/4143d7a4c31038a1341fc5d22f8e4816ac97307d84b514728b51f7265317410f/Cecilie_Hellestveits_gjennomgang.pdf. The background for the decision to conduct the analysis was numerous complaints about the coverage, particularly one complaint from the Israeli embassy.

16. However, as shown by Christhard Hoffmann in chapter 1 in the present volume, a similar consensus does not apply to anti-Israeli expressions. See Christhard Hoffmann, “A Fading Consensus: Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983”. For a discussion of the concept of communication latency in relation to Israel-related antisemitism, see also Jan Weyand, “Das Konzept der Kommunikationslatenz und der Fortschritt in der soziologischen Antisemitismusforschung”, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 26 (2017): 36–58.

As shown in these examples, the answers pointing to the media often explicitly placed responsibility “outside” the Jewish minority by stating that the representations were wrong. Although the answers defined the reason for antisemitism lying “outside” the group, they also indirectly demonstrated the association between “Jew” and “Israeli” or “Israel”, which is necessary for the media’s reports from the conflict to have an impact on attitudes towards Jews. Only one respondent explained negative attitudes as something directly conveyed through the media, pointing to “Anti-Jewish/anti-Israel attitudes in the media.” It is not clear whether the reference in this case is to social media, unedited parts of the internet, or mainstream media. Nevertheless, the close association between Jews and Israel is evident.

When the answers also commented on the tendency to conflate “Jews” and “Israelis”, “Israel” and “Israeli politics”, this was generally seen as a problem “others” have, but some respondents also mentioned how the conflict influenced their own views of Jews. One noted, “Now I associate Jews with Israel, and I’m strongly opposed to the policies that are being pursued in that country!” The use of the word “now” in the citation is interesting, as it gives the impression that this is something that has developed over time, “now” there is a close association between “Jew” and “Israel”, in contrast to “before”.

Some of the answers were themselves examples of such confluations, explaining negative attitudes towards Jews with the way “they” behave in Israel. Typical examples of such answers are, “Do not accept Palestine as a sovereign state”; “The relationship between Jews and Palestinians. The Jews use violence against the Palestinians’ terrorists”, and “The way they act in the conflict and the way they carry on and build settlements.” Another example shows how a generalised perception of “Jews” that lacks a clear distinction between Israelis and Israeli authorities may still include a nuanced perspective in terms of responsibility, “I disagree with the politics that the Jews lead against the Palestinians in Israel, but that is not the fault of the Jews in Norway!” Though the counterpart of the Palestinians in the conflict is perceived as “the Jews”, the citation explicitly rejects blaming Norwegian Jews for the actions of the state of Israel.

Most of the answers did not include very strong negative statements, but referred to injustice against the Palestinians, occupation of Palestinian territories or just the “situation” in the Middle East as contributing to antisemitism without giving further explanations. The material did, however, also contain some answers that expressed strong anti-Israel attitudes. “The occupation of Palestine, child killings and bombing of settlements” is one example. Another answer was more detailed in the negative descriptions of Israeli politics:

Have a government in Israel that kills and steals from the neighbouring countries. Build houses on the neighbour's land. Ruthless behaviour on another man's land. The state of Israel is one of the world's largest terror organisations. Kill small children because they do not like anyone going against them. Israel got its land, but it steals from the neighbours. If they succeed in cultivating the land, Israel takes this land. Thus, the Israeli people must suffer, because the government in Israel does not want peace. It is not the Jews that people do not like.¹⁷

After the relatively long and detailed negative descriptions of the state of affairs in Israel, the last sentence importantly defines where the respondent places the focus of the antisemitic sentiments, namely not with "the Jews", but in Israel and its politics. The insistence on the description of Israel's counterparty as "neighbours" contributes to an image of an imbalanced situation and underlines the injustice in Israel's behaviour. The answer also clearly states that the Israeli population suffers from the government's behaviour. The citation thus emphasises a distinction between "Israel" understood as the authorities, "Israeli", and "Jew". However, the concepts seem tightly connected in the central argument, which can be summarised as "negative attitudes towards Jews are due to the actions of Israel". Furthermore, there is a peculiar lack of acting subject in several of the sentences, which almost inevitably raises the question precisely about this distinction: Who has a government that kills and steals? Who builds houses on their neighbour's land? Being an explanation of negative attitudes towards Jews, it seems the answer could also, in contrast to what is claimed in the last sentence, be interpreted as "the Jews". Thus an ambiguity emerges based on the answer's combination of a distinction between "Jews" and "Israel" and a generalised image of Jews based on the actions of Israel. The movement from what then appears to be an initial conflation of the concepts to the final clarification may be seen as an expression of the respondent's own process of thought, the need for precision emerging as the issue is given further consideration.

Another example from the material shows similar anti-Israel views and a certain ambiguity:

17. "Har et styresett i Israel som dreper og stjeler fra nabolandene. Bygger hus på naboens land. Tar seg til rette på annens man land. Staten Israel er en av verdens største terrororganisasjoner. Dreper små barn for de liker ikke at noen sier dem imot. Israel fikk sitt land, men stjeler fra naboene. Hvis de lykkes i å få dyrke land, så tar Israel dette landet. Derfor må det israelske folk lide for at styret i Israel ikke ønsker fred. Det er ikke jødene som folk ikke liker".

Wrong question. It is not the Jews, but the Zionists who are the problem. Israel is a Zionist state and a terror state. Does not follow international law. Harasses its own citizens and Palestinians. Those who support Israel are like those who support ISIS.¹⁸

The citation demonstrates particularly strong anti-Israeli views, calling it a terror state and comparing those who support it with the supporters of ISIS. Contemporary debate on antisemitism often includes the question of definition, not least in relation to criticism of Israel.¹⁹ Though it is not explicit in the citation, it has connotations to a debate where a common trait is the “coding” of antisemitism by replacement of the word “Jew” with the word “Zionist”. Furthermore, the answer seems to be rejecting the question of antisemitism altogether, “the problem” being not the Jews, but “the Zionists”. Once again, the question arises of where the line is supposed to be drawn: who are the “Zionists”, and who are those who support Israel? The answer could obviously be the Jews. However, the reference may be more general, suggesting anyone supporting the Jewish state. In a Norwegian context, the reference is also likely to be conservative Christians, who are among Israel’s most dedicated supporters.

The association between Israel and attitudes towards Jews may be perceived as a result of Jewish attitudes towards Israel or even Israeli policies underlining Israel as a Jewish state, the “conflation” in this sense understood as an effect of actual identification. The issue has been part of the Norwegian public debate, most recently when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared in 2015 that Europe’s Jews should immigrate to Israel to escape the threat of contemporary antisemitism. The statement was criticised among others by the head of the Jewish community in Oslo, who declared that Jews in Norway were “Jewish Norwegians” though he also emphasised Israel’s importance to Jews.²⁰ Debate about the relationship between Jews in Norway and Israel was also caused by the solidarity event that took place around the synagogue in Oslo in February 2015. The so-called “ring of peace” was organised by Muslim youth and gathered 1300 people.

18. “Feil spørsmål. Det er ikke jøder som er problemet men sionister. Israel er en sionistisk stat og en terrorstat. Følger ikke internasjonale lover. Trakasserer sine egne innbyggere og palestinerne. De som støtter Israel er på linje med de som støtter ISIS”.

19. Kenneth L. Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

20. See, for example, “Netanyahu ber Europas jøder flytte til Israel” (“Netanyahu asks Europe’s Jews to move to Israel”), *Fedrelandsvennen*, February 15, 2015. <https://www.fvn.no/nyheter/norgeogverden/i/v1W4p/Netanyahu-ber-Europas-jøder-flytte-til-Israel>, consulted April 30, 2019.

The event was a response to the terrorist attack against the synagogue in Copenhagen. It received widespread and positive attention, but the organisers also met criticism from individuals within the Muslim community due to the “Zionist affiliation” of the synagogue.²¹ The discussion demonstrated how strong, negative attitudes towards Israel may represent an obstacle between the two minorities and prevent a consensus of anti-antisemitism.²² In the present material, answers rarely thematised Jewish attitudes. The following is one of the few to describe Jewish views as central, briefly referring to “Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories and the Jew’s attitudes towards it.” The relatively short answer offers no clear interpretation, and the implication may be either that the two elements are equally responsible for antisemitism, or perhaps that the key to explaining antisemitism is Jewish support of Israel.

The significance ascribed in the material to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as context for contemporary antisemitism is interesting. It can be seen to reflect an international tendency where anti-Israel expressions are sometimes combined with anti-Jewish stereotypes and where developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been found to correlate with manifestations of antisemitism, as violence and harassment of Jews have been registered more often in periods when the conflict has intensified. The respondents may be aware of these tendencies or have noted similar cases in Norway. In a 2016 meta-study on antisemitism in contemporary Europe, Lars Dencik and Karl Merosi investigated developments in the manifestations of anti-Jewish attitudes. They identify three kinds of empirically different “antisemitisms”, namely classic antisemitism, Enlightenment-based antisemitism (based on religious criticism), and Israel-derived antisemitism. While strong anti-Israel attitudes have been found to predict antisemitism in some studies, including the analysis of the two Norwegian population surveys, which found a small, but notable correlation between anti-Israel views and antisemitic attitudes, the two phenomena obviously are not the same.²³ Claims that accusations about antisemitism are being used politically as a way to silence criticism of Israel are a frequent element of the discussion.

21. See, for example, “Fredsringen er en alvorlig feil” (“The ring of peace is a serious mistake”), *VG*, February 21, 2015. <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/5xE91/muslimske-linstad-fredsringen-er-en-alvorlig-feil>, consulted April 30, 2019.

22. For a further discussion on perceptions of this event among Muslims and Jews in Norway, see the chapter by Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe in this volume, “Negotiations of Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Group Conversations among Jews and Muslims”. For a further analysis of attitudes between Muslims and Jews in Norway, see also Werner Bergmann, “How Do Jews and Muslims in Norway Perceive Each Other? Between Prejudice and Willingness to Cooperate”, in the present volume.

The question of the relationship between antisemitism and attitudes to Israel was a central topic in both quantitative surveys in Norway. In contrast to the clear decrease found with regard to negative attitudes towards Jews, the results from the questions on Israel and the Middle East conflict are similar to the findings from 2011, albeit with a small increase in the proportion with high scores on anti-Israel attitudes. Though they are not pronounced, some of the results are interesting to look into as a backdrop for the qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions.

One statement from the survey explicitly relates to the association often found in contemporary anti-Zionism and antisemitism to compare Israeli policies with the actions of the Nazis during the Holocaust. The statement was, “Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly as the Jews were treated during World War 2.” Results showed a high level of support, with 32 per cent supporting the statement. However, there was a slight decrease both in the rejection (from 33 to 31 per cent) and the support of the statement (from 38 per cent to 32 per cent) from 2011 to 2017, resulting in a substantial increase in the proportion that answered “impossible to answer” (29 to 37 per cent). The results indicate an increased awareness of the problems related to the analogy in the statement, though not an increase in the rejection of such a parallel. At the same time, results from a statement regarding violence against Jews displayed the existence of relatively widespread and strong sentiments against Israel with impact on attitudes towards Jews. The statement “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable” was supported by 12 per cent of the population. The findings

23. In Norway, Hoffmann, Kopperud and Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway*, 69–71, and Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 90–98. See also Werner Bergmann, “Counting Antisemites versus Measuring Antisemitism – An “Elastic View” of Antisemitism” in the current volume, and Edward E. Kaplan and Charles A. Small, “Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 548–561. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002706289184>. An early discussion of this subject can be found in Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Antizionism and Antisemitism” in *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 182–191. See also Wolfgang Frindte, Susan Wetting and Dorit Wammetsberger, “Old and New anti-Semitic Attitudes in the Context of Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation – Two Studies in Germany”, *Peace and Conflict. Journal of Peace Psychology* 11, no. 3 (2005): 239–266; Anti-Defamation League, *Attitudes toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Ten European Countries* (New York 2004); Aribert Heyder, Julia Iser and Peter Schmidt, “Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Meinungsbildung zwischen Öffentlichkeit, Medien und Tabus”, in *Deutsche Zustände*, Wilhelm Heitmeyer ed., Folge 3, (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005), 144–165; Daniel L. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2017) and Wilhelm Kempf, *Israelkritik zwischen Antisemitismus und Menschenrechtsidee. Eine Spurensuche* (Berlin: Regener, 2015).

are consistent both with the tendency in the qualitative material of pointing to Israel as a central factor in contemporary antisemitism, and with the decrease in prevalence of classic antisemitic stereotypes. Few respondents combine anti-Israeli statements with high scores on antisemitism as it was defined in the survey, and less than five per cent of the respondents combine high scores on antisemitism and strong support for the Palestinian side in the conflict. The small correlations indicate that classic antisemitic attitudes are rarely connected to anti-Israel attitudes, though they may have been replaced by Israel-related antisemitism defined as negative attitudes towards Jews that are based on a negative image of Israel and a correspondingly negative and essentialised image of Jews.²⁴

ANTISEMITISM UNDERSTOOD AS AN “IMPORTED PROBLEM”

Closely related to the answers referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were those explaining negative attitudes towards Jews as a problem among Muslims. More than one in ten answers explained antisemitism by reference to attitudes among Muslims.²⁵ This marks a development since 2011, at which point the topic of “Muslim antisemitism” was only marginally present in the material. Some answers expressed anti-Muslim attitudes. The following are two typical examples: “Too many Muslims in this country!” and “Muslims are spreading lies and hatred.” The answers may be seen to reflect a tendency in the Norwegian public in which antisemitic attitudes among Muslims have received much attention, primarily related to anti-Jewish incidents in other European countries, but also in connection to expressions by individual Norwegian Muslims.

While the question in the survey asked about the reasons for negative attitudes, it remains unclear in some of the answers referring to “Muslims” whether they are seen as the origin of the attitudes, or if they rather are seen as the bearers of neg-

24. For an analysis of correlations between antisemitic attitudes and legitimisation of violence against Jews, see chapter 7 in the current volume, Werner Bergmann, “How do Jews and Muslims in Norway perceive each other? Between Prejudice and the Willingness to Cooperate”, 25–26.

25. Contemporary antisemitism among Muslims has been studied increasingly in recent decades. For an overview on attitudes among Muslims in Europe, see Günther Jikeli, *Antisemitic Attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review* (New York: ISGAP Occasional Papers, 2015); Günther Jikeli, *Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungswahrnehmungen junger Muslime in Europa. Ergebnisse einer Studie unter jungen muslimischen Männern* (Essen: Klartext, 2012), 270. See also Juliane Wetzel, *Moderner Antisemitismus unter Muslimen in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-94220-9_17 and Ruud Koopmans, *Religious fundamentalism and out-group hostility among Muslims and Christians in Western Europe* (WZB Discussion Paper, 2014).

ative ideas that may have other sources. Overall, this category of answers included a variety of explanations, some pointing to immigration, others to influence from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In public discourse, the question of Muslim attitudes toward Jews is often closely connected to the debate about the situation in the Middle East conflict. Manichean representations of the conflict contribute to the impression that it concerns not Palestinians or Arabs and Israelis, but rather Muslims and Jews. One answer reflected this view very clearly, pointing to “Polarisation, Muslims versus Jews, in addition to Jews being held responsible for everything that the state of Israel does.” Other examples that combine references to Muslims and the conflict indicate a strong identification with the Palestinian cause among Muslims: “Muslim colleagues from Palestine say the Jews have taken their country and the cities that are holy to them” and “That we have Muslim immigrants who take with them negative attitudes from the conflict between Palestine and Israel.” The citations show how a central premise behind these answers is the existence of an overarching “Muslim” identity that, based on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is constructed in opposition to a “Jewish” identity associated with Israel. Furthermore, the focus on Muslims as bearers of the negative attitudes constructs antisemitism as a new phenomenon in Norway.

The so-called new antisemitism concerns a form of antisemitism emerging particularly in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and anti-Zionism, and focusing on contributions from the political left and parts of the Muslim (immigrant) population in Europe. Theoretical considerations attempt to distinguish this “new” form of antisemitism from the earlier expressions of Jew hatred that largely drew on religious or racial biases.²⁶ However, whether it is really a question of a “new” form of antisemitism is debatable, and scholars often point to how the anti-semitic notions, despite referring to (relatively) new political situations and incorporating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, draw on long historical continuities.²⁷ The “novelty” may instead be connected to the immigrant background of the perceived bearers of antisemitic attitudes.

The present material may also be seen as a reflection of a public debate preoccupied with immigration and where “immigrants” have been understood as

26. Pierre-André Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe* (Ivan R. Dee, 2002); Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed., *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (Indiana University Press, 2013).

27. See, for example, Jonathan Judaken, “So what's new? Rethinking the ‘New Antisemitism’ in a Global Age”, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 42, no. 4–5 (Taylor and Francis 2008): 531–560 and Brian Klug, “Interrogating ‘new anti-Semitism’”, *Ethnic and racial Studies*, 36, no. 3 (2013): 468–482.

“Muslims”.²⁸ Respondents may have interpreted the question as referring to an *increase* of negative attitudes instead of antisemitism as such. A question about recent developments or increase of negative attitudes may have contributed to a focus on Muslims, understood as relatively recent immigrants to Norway (and as bearers of antisemitic attitudes, in distinction from the majority population). Some examples that may be interpreted in this direction are “Increased immigration by Muslims”; “Increased Muslim population. Most people do not care whether someone is a Jew, Christian or whatever” and “Immigration from Muslims countries with negative views of Jews following.” In this sense, answers that ascribed antisemitism to Muslims differ from answers that describe negative attitudes towards Jews as part of a long (Norwegian) history. On the contrary, these answers generally seemed to regard antisemitism as unconnected with the historical and cultural heritage of Europe and Norway.²⁹

Though there was a clear association between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and negative attitudes among Muslims in the material, many answers also referred to antisemitism among Muslims without including any details about the background for these perceived attitudes. One answer stated this lack of context explicitly, though suggesting religious beliefs may be one explanation: “Many Muslims hate Jews. Have no idea why. Maybe the imams preach about them being hated and killed, like Muhammed did.” Another answer suggested a difference between “Muslims” and “Norwegians” on this subject: “Among Muslims: indoctrination and propaganda against Jews in the Muslim world. Among Norwegians: Israel’s politics, particularly in relation to the conflict with Palestine.” Both answers suggest Muslims are subject to ideological pressure, the first in an Islamic context, the other even more vaguely, from what is perceived as “the Muslim world”. Interestingly, the second answer connects antisemitism among “Norwegians”, and not Muslims, to the political situation in the Middle East. It also indicates that

28. The shift in the public conception from “immigrant” to “Muslim” has been described as a general pattern in Europe, see for example Stefano Allievi, “How the Immigrant has Become Muslim”, *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 21(2) (2005). For the Norwegian context, see for example Christine Jacobsen, *Islamic traditions and Muslim youth in Norway* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Christian Stokke, *A Multicultural society in the making. How Norwegian Muslims challenge a white nation* (PhD diss., Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Social Anthropology, 2012); Cora Alexa Døving and Siv Ellen Kraft, *Religion i pressen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 2013).

29. The question of whether the immigration to Europe of recent years – particularly refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – has contributed to an increase of antisemitism has been discussed in David Feldman and Ben Gidley, *Antisemitism and Immigration in Western Europe Today. Is there a connection? The case of the United Kingdom* (Stiftung EVZ, 2018).

“Muslims” are different from “Norwegians”; a view that was found in several answers and resonates with a perception of Muslims as immigrants to Norway and as having a different cultural background. The following is another example of an answer that describes antisemitism among Muslims as something unrelated to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, suggesting that “Some is a heritage from Muslim milieus; some is [due to] the conflict between Israel and Palestine.” Perhaps the implication here is that Muslims, as adherents of Islam, are negatively inclined towards Jews, as was also suggested in some of the other answers cited above.

THE TRADITION OF ANTISEMITISM: CLASSIC STEREOTYPES OF JEWS

A third category of answers included references to classic stereotypes of Jews and the long tradition of antisemitic prejudice. The category contrasts explanations pointing to Muslims by underlining that antisemitism is a phenomenon with a long history in Norway. Many respondents seemed to regard the existence of historical prejudice as an explanation in itself, and negative attitudes towards Jews as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, referring to “old prejudices” and “history” in their answers as something eternal.³⁰ By referring to antisemitic prejudice as something that “always” has existed, the answers imply both a distance to the notions and doubt as to whether this prejudice will ever disappear.

Similar to answers referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this category included both answers that placed responsibility for the negative attitudes “inside” and “outside” the Jewish minority. The latter included examples that, rather than pointing to historical prejudice, relied on stereotypes in the explanations, effectively demonstrating the continued presence of the antisemitic tradition. “Old prejudice” was also seen in relation to developments in contemporary society with answers accordingly including complex interpretations of processes. The following example combined reference to several categories of the highlighted explanations, stating, “A latent antisemitism has been stimulated by Islamic immigration, resulting in racist attitudes towards Jews in general and Israel in particular.” The mentioning of a “latent antisemitism” clearly attributes prejudice to a longer history in Norway, though Islamic immigration stands out as the decisive force in the spread of contemporary negative attitudes.

Among the answers that placed responsibility for antisemitism in culturally transmitted ideas were some that included very negative descriptions of Norwegians,

30. This was also found in the material from 2011; see Moe et al., “Hvis de hadde oppført seg som vanlige nordmenn, hadde alt vært greit, tror jeg”, 1–34.

pointing to widespread prejudice, xenophobia and even hatred in the population. Below is one of the more detailed examples:

Norwegians have a special ability to deny others becoming a part of us. Norwegian Jews have been criticised and excluded several times over many, many years. They have always been Norwegian, but in the eyes of many Norwegians, they have always been “Jewish”. #Embarrassing. Norwegians believe all Norwegians are just like themselves, eating the same and listening to Hans Rotmo every evening. They forget that there are rather few people in the world who are as hateful and excluding as they are.³¹

The main argument in this explanation is that Jews are seen as foreign in Norway and that xenophobic tendencies in the population are at the heart of anti-semitism. The description establishes a self-critical distance to “Norwegians” that suggests the respondent does not fully identify with this category, though the use of the hashtag “embarrassing” may be interpreted as a sign of identification, albeit ambivalent. The reference to evening listening habits is probably to the Norwegian songwriter and musician Hans Per Rotmo. Rotmo has caused debate following several controversial statements about Muslims and immigration.³² In the context of the citation, he seems to be representing a closed “Norwegian” part of a majority culture as opposed one that is open to new impulses. The citation’s strong accentuation of “Norwegian” characteristics disturbs the otherwise emphasised point that “Jews” are also “Norwegians”.

Some answers linked the negative attitudes to specific historical situations, such as World War II or the clause against Jews in the Norwegian constitution from 1814 or to anti-Judaism rooted in the Christian religious and cultural heritage.³³ However, there were few references to Judaism or religious beliefs as the reason

31. “Nordmenn har en egen evne til å nekte andre å bli en del av oss. Norske jøder har blitt kritisert og ekskludert flere ganger i mange, mange år. De har alltid vært norske, men for mange nordmenn har de alltid vært “jødiske”. #flaut Nordmenn tror at alle nordmenn er helt like dem selv og spiser det samme og hører på Hans Rotmohver kveld. De glemmer at det heller er få i verden som er så hatefulle og ekskluderende som de selv.”

32. See for example the article in *Dagbladet*, May 30, 2015, “Kaller muslimer ‘miljøforurensning’” [“Calls Muslims ‘environmental pollution’”], <https://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/kaller-muslimer-miljoforurensning/60691243>, consulted May 7, 2019.

33. *Antijudaism*, defined as religiously based opposition towards Judaism and Jews as adherents of Judaism. See for example Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a definition of antisemitism* (University of California Press, 1996) 383.

for negative attitudes.³⁴ Among the answers that did explain antisemitism by referring to religious notions, there were few that presented them as independent arguments. Rather, the answers typically combined the reference with other explanations, for example by relating the concept of Jews as God's chosen people to criticism of the actions of Israel. Rather than referring to the historical existence of prejudice, some answers thus demonstrated the continuity of stereotypes. The following example combined reference to classical stereotypes with strong antipathy towards Jews:

They think they are God's chosen people and hence better than others. What idiots. The ruthless behaviour in Israel does not help [them]. They are belligerent, hateful and have no respect for other people and religions.³⁵

On one level, the citation provides different explanations of negative attitudes; while the actions of Israel "do not help" the Jews, the actions appear separate from the explanation related to the religious belief that Jews are the chosen people. However, an essentialised image of Jews based on a number of classical stereotypes permeates the answer and is the underlying premise of the explanation. Other examples reflecting classical stereotypes as an integral part of the explanations described Israeli (or "Jewish") actions as self-righteous, particularly stubborn or revengeful, echoing central elements in anti-Judaistic notions.

Though including references to stereotypes, answers were sometimes difficult to define in terms of where the sympathy lay. One example pointed to Jews as a particular group in society: "I think many people believe Jews keep too much to themselves." The answer echoes classic representations of Jews as self-centred, indicating that the main reason for antisemitism is a notion of Jews as isolated from the rest of society. However, it remains unclear whether people are right to think that Jews keep to themselves, or if this is a prejudice.

The following example refers to historical prejudice and religious beliefs to explain negative attitudes towards Jews, though simultaneously suggesting identification with Jews:

34. This constitutes a significant difference between the material on antisemitism and the material on Islamophobia, both in 2011 and 2017. See Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 66-69.

35. "De tror de er guds utvalgte folk og dermed bedre enn andre. For noen idioter. Det hjelper dem ikke at de har tatt seg til rette i Israel. De er krigerske, hatske og har ingen respekt for andre folk og religioner."

A remainder of the past, among other things, deceptive information from parents/grandparents – The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and hatred against people like me, who look upon the Messiah as God. I love them. They gave me their bible and most of all: The Lord Jesus Christ! Soon they too shall meet Him, He, whom they pierced. What a day it will be!³⁶

In addition to the references to historical prejudices and the infamous “protocols”, the citation combines traditional anti-Judaist notions of Jews as Christ-killers with references to the concept of salvation from Christian eschatology.³⁷ The salvation of the Jews is central, and introduced in the answer as an explanation of the respondent’s own, positive views of Jews, which stand in contrast to the negative attitudes. The answer thus reflects the religious affiliation between Judaism and Christianity and expresses a corresponding identification with Jews. In addition to the religiously founded common ground, the answer also indicates mutual experiences of hatred among people who see “the Messiah as God”. The answer thus includes reference to a general form of religiously based negative attitudes, hatred aimed not exclusively towards Jews, but towards all who share this perception of the Messiah.

Among the answers that implicitly or explicitly referred to the long history of antisemitic prejudice, some gave the impression that antisemitism is almost automatically sustained as part of Norwegian culture. While primarily an expression of knowledge of the history of anti-Jewish attitudes, this tendency can also be linked to the traditional antisemitic accusation that Jews are themselves to blame for negative attitudes. Some answers gave a clear indication of such views: “There has been a centuries-long dislike of Jews throughout history, possibly because they are talented business people and because many of them became affluent. They’ve been blamed for all kinds of things throughout the ages.” Some answers expressed classic antisemitic notions in fewer words: “Greed”, “Business morals” and “Only interested in becoming rich”. However, similar expressions of classic antisemitic stereotypes were not typical for the material.

The association between the “old prejudice” and the minority itself can be compared to the results from the quantitative material, where eight per cent supported the statements “Jews largely have themselves to blame for being persecuted” and

36. “Henger igjen fra historien bl.a. misvisende opplysninger fra foreldre/besteforeldre – Sions Visers Protokoller og hat mot slike som meg, som ser på Messias som Gud. Jeg elsker dem. De gav meg sin Bibel og mest av alt: Herren Jesus Kristus! Snart skal de og møte Ham, Ham som de gjennomstunget. For en dag det vil bli!!”

37. The biblical reference is to Zechariah 12:10.

“Jews have always caused problems in the countries in which they live.”³⁸ However, parallel to the findings in 2011, the material included few references to Jews having caused concrete societal problems in contemporary Norway. Rather, answers that blamed Jews for antisemitism by referring to stereotypical characteristics of Jews typically did so without mentioning specific consequences of these characteristics. In both 2011 and 2017, this represents a significant difference between the two sets of open-ended questions concerning reasons for antisemitism and Islamophobia. In the material on Islamophobia, the attitudes were often explained with reference to specific societal problems in Norway. However, the numerous references to Israel may be interpreted as a new form of “societal context” in the case of antisemitism. Following the conflation between Jews and Israel found in many of the answers, this reference also suggests that “Jews” have themselves to blame for negative attitudes.

3. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the open-ended question on reasons for antisemitism from the 2017 survey has shown that antisemitism is often perceived as being related to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Violence and injustice in Israeli politics were typically mentioned as explanations for negative attitudes; many answers included very strong negative descriptions of Israel. Answers often included references to biased representations of the conflict in the media; suggesting political views of journalists affected the reporting. However, few answers suggested the media directly conveyed antisemitism. The underlying premise for the explanations was rather a tendency to confluations between “Jews” and “Israeli” or “Israel”. Many explanations pointed to this tendency, but the conflation was more commonly implied. Some answers were themselves examples of such confluations. The close association between antisemitism and Israel found in the material may be related to Israeli policies underlining Israel as a Jewish state, a topic that has been part of the public debate on contemporary antisemitism in many countries, including Norway.

The relation between antisemitism and attitudes towards Israel was also reflected in the statistical material from the survey in 2017. The findings are an indication of how Israel and Israeli policies in the post-war period gradually have become central elements in antisemitic discourse on an international level. This development may explain why Norwegian Jews experience antisemitism as an increasing problem, as do Jews in many other European countries, while surveys find that the prevalence of classic antisemitic prejudice is decreasing. However,

38. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017*, 33.

the tendency of pointing to Israel found in the analysis of the open-ended questions may also be interpreted as an expression of awareness of the debate that connects these phenomena – antisemitism and anti-Zionism or anti-Israelism. The material does not provide enough information to conclude with regard to which of these interpretations best explains the findings; rather it indicates that both explanations are relevant on some level. Interestingly, some answers suggested that it is difficult to express positive views of Jews due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and prevalent negative attitudes towards Israel in the Norwegian population. These answers provide a contrast to what is commonly described as the post-Holocaust norm of anti-antisemitism, suggesting antisemitism in relation to Israel is manifest and that the concept of communication latency is thus not generally applicable.³⁹

The material from 2017 showed a slight increase in answers explaining negative attitudes towards Jews as primarily a “Muslim” problem compared to the answers from 2011. These answers often described antisemitism as an “imported problem”, having come to Norway with Muslim immigration. The answers reflect a public discourse that perceives “immigrants” as “Muslims” and where the relation between Jews and Muslims is constructed in antagonistic terms. The antagonism in these cases is often related to and nourished by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This connection was also visible in the current material when explanations pointing to Muslims included references to the conflict. However, antisemitism among Muslims tended to remain uncontextualised in the material, as if the antagonism between Jews and Muslims were taken for granted.

The material contained relatively few examples of open expressions of classic antisemitism, but some answers explained antisemitism by pointing to support of such ideas among others or to the long history of antisemitism, often termed “old prejudice”. Some answers in this category included negative descriptions of “Norwegians” as generally prejudiced. More typically, this category of answers remained vague in the descriptions and indicated that stereotypical views of Jews were a phenomenon almost automatically sustained as part of a cultural heritage.

In summary, the analysis shows how the answers often defined antisemitism as something *distant*, either spatially (geographically), as connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, “ethnically”, as related to Muslim immigrants, or historically, as part of a cultural heritage. Few answers explained negative attitudes by pointing to “Jewish” characteristics, thus blaming Jews for antisemitism. One explanation for this tendency may be heightened awareness of antisemitism as a societal prob-

39. The analysis of the Norwegian public debate in the 1980s in chapter 1 in the present volume shows a similar lack of consensus regarding the understanding of the concept of antisemitism; see Hoffmann, “A Fading Consensus”.

lem, and respondents' own lack of support for negative views of Jews – they do not relate to such views themselves, and hence interpret them as something “others” have. However, it may also be interpreted as an example of how respondents, instead of confessing to attitudes that are not socially acceptable, project such attitudes onto others. As such, the finding can be related to the ostracism of antisemitism after the Holocaust and the concept of communication latency. The current material shows how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular constitutes a subject where negative views of Jews may escape what are otherwise perceived as boundaries of expression.

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