

**Christhard Hoffmann** and **Vibeke Moe** (Eds.)

# THE SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF PREJUDICE

Antisemitism and Islamophobia  
in Contemporary Norway



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Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Norway

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# Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	7
<i>Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe</i>	
1.	
A FADING CONSENSUS .....	26
<i>Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983</i>	
<i>Christhard Hoffmann</i>	
2.	
THE GAARDER DEBATE REVISITED .....	51
<i>Drawing the Demarcation Line between Legitimate and Illegitimate</i>	
<i>Criticism of Israel</i>	
<i>Claudia Lenz and Theodor Vestavik Geelmuyden</i>	
3.	
A GROWING CONSENSUS? .....	76
<i>A History of Public Debates on Islamophobia in Norway</i>	
<i>Cora Alexa Døving</i>	
4.	
ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NORWAY .....	108
<i>A Survey Analysis of Prevalence, Trends and Possible Causes of Negative</i>	
<i>Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims</i>	
<i>Ottar Hellevik</i>	
5.	
COUNTING ANTISEMITES VERSUS MEASURING ANTISEMITISM .....	155
<i>An "Elastic View" of Antisemitism</i>	
<i>Werner Bergmann</i>	
6.	
CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ABOUT JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORWAY .....	187
<i>Asbjørn Dyrendal</i>	

7.  
HOW DO JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORWAY PERCEIVE EACH OTHER? ... 211  
*Between Prejudice and the Willingness to Cooperate*  
*Werner Bergmann*

8.  
"MUSLIMS ARE..." ..... 254  
*Contextualising Survey Answers*  
*Cora Alexa Døving*

9.  
HOW PEOPLE EXPLAIN ANTISEMITISM ..... 274  
*Interpretation of Survey Answers*  
*Vibeke Moe*

10.  
NEGOTIATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN GROUP  
CONVERSATIONS AMONG JEWS AND MUSLIMS ..... 297  
*Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... 324

ABOUT THE AUTHORS ..... 325



# Introduction

CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN AND VIBEKE MOE

In present-day Europe, antisemitism has again become an issue of public concern. According to a recent survey, 28 per cent of European Jews experienced anti-Jewish harassment over the last year and close to 40 per cent have considered emigration during the last five years because of rising anti-Jewish hostilities.<sup>1</sup> The new threat for Jews in Europe is often attributed to antisemitic attitudes among Muslim immigrants. At the same time, Islamophobic ideas have gained ground in Europe as a political tool and have become an integral part of an ideological worldview, particularly on the far right of the political spectrum. Intensified by deeply divided opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this constellation has framed a view of antisemitism and Islamophobia as essentially different.<sup>2</sup>

The present volume challenges this view. Based on varied and comprehensive survey data about attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway, it provides a more differentiated picture. While the empirical evidence shows that Muslims in Norway support stereotypical ideas about Jews to a greater extent than the general population, and that opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are connected to attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in opposite directions, it also indicates that antisemitism and Islamophobia are closely related phenomena, and are linked to xenophobic ideas in the general population. The minorities' experiences of discrimination show that Jews and Muslims share a number of the same problems associated with being minorities in Norway, and therefore see a possibility to cooperate on combating prejudice and discrimination.

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1. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018), 12.
  2. As James Renton and Ben Gidley have observed, this view is often influenced by the present political situation, "in which the figures of the persecuted Jew and the political Muslim are on opposite sides of a war waged by the West." James Renton and Ben Gidley, eds., *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe. A Shared Story?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 4. On the problems of comparing Islamophobia and antisemitism, see Brian Klug, "The limits of analogy: Comparing Islamophobia and antisemitism", *Patterns of Prejudice* 48:5 (2014): 442–459; Gideon Botsch, Olaf Glöckner, Christoph Kopke, Michael Spieker, eds., *Islamophobie und Antisemitismus – ein umstrittener Vergleich* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

Part of the public debate on both antisemitism and Islamophobia has been concerned with the definition of the terms themselves. The term “antisemitism” was coined in 1879 in Germany as the brand name of a socio-political movement that attributed negative traits of modern society to “Jewish influence”, combining social criticism with ideas of race and unifying under the slogan “Fight against Jewish domination!” Although the term was a misnomer (since there is no such thing as “Semitism” and the movement was not directed against “Semites” in general), it gained currency and is today used as a generic term to denote all forms of Jew-hatred throughout history. While there is a general consensus that “antisemitism” means hostility towards and discrimination against Jews as “Jews” (as defined in the anti-semitic worldview), it has been controversial whether hostility toward Zionism (anti-Zionism) and the State of Israel (anti-Israelism) is principally to be classified as a form of Jew-hatred (“new antisemitism”) or not.<sup>3</sup> In the present volume and the surveys it is based on, attitudes towards Jews have been researched separately from attitudes towards the state of Israel. This is done for methodological reasons – in order to explore correlations and differences between the two phenomena.

The term “Islamophobia” goes back to the early twentieth century, and was used more frequently in the 1980s and 1990s. It gained prominence in 1997 with the publication of the report *Islamophobia – A Challenge for Us All* by the Runnymede Trust, which described the word as “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and therefore, to fear and dislike of all or most Muslims.”<sup>4</sup> While the term took root in Western societies after that, its definition and public use have been the object of controversial debate both within politics and in academia. Critics found the concept imprecise because it blends together divergent phenomena, such as criticism of Islam as a faith, and negative stereotypes about Muslims. In the academic study of Islamophobia, more precise definitions have been developed in recent years.<sup>5</sup> The present volume perceives of Islamophobia as an ideology that attributes inherently negative traits to Muslims solely by virtue of being Muslim. Islamophobia is thus perceived as a form of racism.<sup>6</sup>

3. On the question of defining antisemitism, see Kenneth Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). On debates in the Norwegian public about the definition of antisemitism, see chapters 1 and 2 in the present volume.

4. *Islamophobia – A Challenge for Us All* (London: The Runnymede Trust, 1997), 1.

5. See, for example, Erich Bleich, “What is Islamophobia and How Much Is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept”, *American Behavioral Scientist* 55:12 (2011): 1581–1600.

6. This understanding corresponds with the most recent definition by the Runnymede Trust: “Islamophobia is a form of racism.” Farah Elahi and Omar Khan, *Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All* (London: Runnymede Trust, 2017), 1.

Furthermore, Islamophobia is understood as widespread prejudice, acts and practices that attack, exclude or discriminate against people on the ground that they are – or are assumed to be – Muslim.<sup>7</sup>

The research presented in this volume is based on a rich and unique set of quantitative and qualitative data: two population surveys about Norwegian attitudes towards Jews (2011) and towards Jews and Muslims (2017), and, in addition, separate surveys among Norwegian Jews and Muslims about their experiences as minorities in Norway and about attitudes towards the respective other minority (2017).<sup>8</sup> By applying the same questionnaire over time (2011 and 2017) and to different samples of respondents at the same time (2017), the quantitative data allow for the study of trends in attitudes and for direct comparisons between different samples. In presenting a comprehensive survey analysis, the volume aims at providing innovative perspectives for the study of attitudes towards minorities in general.

Our approach is specifically informed by the assumption that attitudes are formed within certain communicative contexts and that quantitative studies therefore need to be supplemented with qualitative research, exploring the historical and societal framework conditions of attitudes towards and among minorities. In particular, the discursively constructed boundaries of “what can be said or not be said” about Jews and Muslims need to be analysed. This is conceptualised in our volume as “communication latency”, a concept that was first introduced into the study of contemporary antisemitism by sociologists Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb in 1986 and has since been influential.<sup>9</sup> Applied to the history of antisemitism in West Germany, the

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7. John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, eds., *Islamophobia: The challenge of pluralism in the 21st century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2. For a further discussion of Islamophobia and the relation to racism, see chapter 8 in the present volume.
  8. Christhard Hoffmann, Øivind Kopperud and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and other Minorities* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2012); Christhard Hoffmann and 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). The center has changed its name since the publication of the reports, to “Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies”.
  9. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 38 (1986): 223–246. On the significance of the concept of communication latency for the research on antisemitism, see Jan Weyand, “Das Konzept der Kommunikationslatenz und der Fortschritt in der soziologischen Antisemitismusforschung”, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 26 (2017): 36–58. On its relevance for empirical research of antisemitic attitudes, see Heiko Beyer and Ivar Krumpal, “The Communication Latency of Antisemitic Attitudes: An Experimental Study”, in *Global antisemitism. A Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Charles Asher Small (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 83–96.

concept explained why antisemitic attitudes, which were still widespread in the German population after 1945, could not be communicated publicly under the new political conditions. They were not acceptable in a democratic state that was eager to integrate into the Western alliance. Increasingly ostracised by the public, antisemitic prejudices could only be expressed in the private sphere or in marginal extremist groups. Drawing a clear dividing line between psychological latency (*Bewusstseinslatenz*) and communication latency, Bergmann and Erb turned scholarly attention away from the psyche of the antisemites and towards the study of public communication and its norms.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, language, semantics, political culture and public conflicts became major focuses for the growing field of antisemitism studies (*Antisemitismusforschung*). It reconstructed the mechanisms by which the boundaries of prejudice were established, transformed and contested.<sup>11</sup>

Our study has been influenced by these developments within the field of research on antisemitism. Through discourse analysis of public debates in the period from 1960 to present-day Norway and in-depth analysis of three sets of qualitative data from the survey in 2017, the book explores how these boundaries are established and negotiated in different social contexts. Are they equally effective towards expressions of Islamophobia as towards expressions of antisemitism? What is the connection between attitudes towards Israel and attitudes towards Jews? How are attitudes towards Jews and Muslims expressed, distributed and regulated? Is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict relevant for the attitudes and the relationship between the minorities? By investigating these questions, the book aims at providing new knowledge about the prevalence and social acceptance of antisemitic and Islamophobic attitudes in contemporary Norway.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia have been subject to comprehensive previous research. While numerous surveys have been conducted on antisemitism after the Holocaust, particularly in the European context, there also has been an increase in research and monitoring of Islamophobia in recent years.<sup>12</sup> The surveys include

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10. On the differences between social psychology and cultural science approaches in the study of antisemitism, see Jan Weyand, *Historische Wissenssoziologie des modernen Antisemitismus. Genese und Typologie einer Wissensformation am Beispiel des deutschsprachigen Diskurses* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 24–44.

11. For a good example of this approach, see Werner Bergmann, *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten. Kollektives Lernen in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik, 1949–1989* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1997).

12. Some recent studies on antisemitism include: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013); the follow-up survey five years later: *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism* (Luxembourg:

comparative studies of attitudes and experiences. However, in combining different sets of data and different (quantitative and qualitative) approaches, the current volume represents something new. Few prior studies focus specifically on antisemitism among Muslims or include Jewish views of Muslims.<sup>13</sup> A relevant previous study on the subject of Muslim antisemitism was conducted by Günther Jikeli.<sup>14</sup> By focusing on negative attitudes, however, his analysis does not include the broader context of Muslim-Jewish relations.

A relevant context for the present volume is also provided by the body of research that includes historical perspectives on antisemitism and Islamophobia.<sup>15</sup> This research has pointed to some characteristics of contemporary antisemitism that are part of the discussion in the present volume. More specifically, the book is a contribution to present-day scholarly and public debates about the “new antisemitism” in Europe, which is mostly expressed as hostility towards Israel and often attributed to left-wing anti-Zionists and Muslim immigrants.<sup>16</sup> For the first

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Publications Office of the European Union, 2018); the yearly overviews of the situation in the EU, also from the FRA, *Antisemitism. Overview of data available in the European Union 2004–2014/2005–2015/2006–2016/2007–2017* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015/2016/2017/2018); FRA, *Young Jewish Europeans: Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019); Daniel L. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain: A Study of Attitudes Towards Jews and Israel* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2017); *Antisemitism Worldwide. General Analysis* (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2009–2018); *ADL Global 100* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2014/2015). Some recent studies on Islamophobia include: FRA, *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey – Muslims Selected Findings* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017), and Eines Bayrakli and Farid Hafez, eds., *European Islamophobia Report 2015/2016/2017*, Istanbul: SETA, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, 2016/2017/2018. See also the database accessible from the FRA that provides an overview of hate crime, hate speech and discrimination against Muslims in the EU from 2012 to 2017: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/databases/anti-muslim-hatred/>.

13. A survey review has been conducted by Günther Jikeli, see, *Antisemitic Attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review* (ISGAP Occasional Paper Series, 2015).
14. Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism. Why Young Urban Males Say They Don't Like the Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).
15. See, for example, Renton and Gidley, eds., *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe*; Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds old and new in Europe* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007). The former is primarily a historical analysis while the latter is an interpretation of ideological similarities and differences between the two prejudices. See also Mikael Shainkman, ed., *Antisemitism Today and Tomorrow: Global Perspectives on the Many Faces of Contemporary Antisemitism* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018).
16. On the scholarly debate on the “new antisemitism”, see most recently Christian Heilbronn, Doron Rabinovici and Nathan Szaider, eds., *Neuer Antisemitismus. Fortsetzung einer globalen Debatte* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2019).

time, our book provides a comprehensive analysis of Norwegian Muslims' attitudes towards Jews and compares these with the attitudes of the general Norwegian population. In addition, the book is a contribution to the study of Islamophobia. It presents a comprehensive analysis of the population's (and Norwegian Jews') attitudes towards Muslims. Moreover, it includes information about the experiences of Jews and Muslims as minorities in Norway. This approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data from different perspectives, has not been applied in previous research (where antisemitism and Islamophobia are typically studied separately) and will, we believe, be of general methodological interest to national and international scholars in the field.

### THE NORWEGIAN SURVEYS (CHM 2011 AND CHM 2017)

The two quantitative surveys at the core of the present volume were conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2011 and 2017. The surveys were commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and funded by five ministries of the Norwegian government. The surveys were conducted among representative samples of the population (N=1,522 in 2011 and 1,575 in 2017). The two minority samples in the survey from 2017 consisted of self-identified Muslims with an immigrant background (N=586) and members of the Jewish communities in Oslo and Trondheim (N=162). The survey of the Muslim respondents was limited to immigrants with a minimum of five years' residence in Norway and Norwegian-born citizens with immigrant parents. The respondents' country backgrounds represented the key countries of origin for Muslims in Norway. While the Muslim sample is representative for the immigrant population in terms of geographical distribution, gender and age, the question of representability is difficult to assess for the Jewish sample as there exists no comparable data on the Jewish population in Norway.<sup>17</sup> Another variable known to impact the prevalence of negative attitudes is level of education. The education level among the respondents in the population samples in 2011 and 2017 was representative for the general population. There is a lack of reliable data on the level of education in the immigrant population in Norway. However, in 2017, the level was equal in the Muslim sample as in the population sample, with one third of the respondents having a high level (up to four years of university/university college education or higher). It was significantly higher in the Jewish sample, with three

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17. For a discussion of the representativity of the two minority samples, see chapter 7 in the present volume.

quarters of the respondents having a high level of education. This difference has to be kept in mind when interpreting some of the results.<sup>18</sup>

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RELEVANCE OF THE NORWEGIAN EXAMPLE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The first mentions of individual Jews in Norway can be traced to the 1600s and the so-called Portuguese Jews (Sephardim).<sup>19</sup> Jews had limited access to Norway at the time. Further limitation was introduced in 1687 in the law by Christian V, which banned Jews from entering the country without special permission. The inclusion of the prohibition against Jews, Jesuits and monastic orders seemed an anomaly in the Norwegian constitution of 1814, which was considered one of the most liberal constitutions of its time. The fact that the exclusion was explicitly written into the constitution represented a significant tightening-up compared to the traditional practice that had allowed for exceptions by issuing temporary travel and residence permits (letters of safe conduct) for Jews.<sup>20</sup> The clause against Jews was lifted in 1851, but immigration after that was slow and limited. It took forty years before the first Jewish community was established in Oslo, in 1892. Pogroms in Russia in the early twentieth century increased the number of Jewish immigrants. By the outbreak of World War II, approximately 2,100 Jews lived in Norway.

Antisemitism was evident in Norwegian pre-war society, both on the level of popular attitudes, cultural expressions and among the authorities, but there was no organised antisemitism comparable to that found in other European countries at the time.<sup>21</sup>

18. For more details on the methodology in the survey from 2017, see Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 20–27. The methodology of the survey from 2011 is described in Hoffmann, Kopperud and Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway?* 17–19.

19. The history of the Jewish minority in Norway is described in Oskar Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år*. 2 vols. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969 and 1986). New Edition (Oslo: Press forlag, 2019). For a study of the first Jewish immigrants' geographical and socio-economical position in Norwegian society between 1851 and 1945, see Martha Gjernes, *Jøder i Kristiania: dei fyrste innvandrarane si geografiske og sosioøkonomiske plassering i samfunnet frå 1851 til 1942* (Master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2002).

20. Christhard Hoffmann, ed., *The Exclusion of Jews in the Norwegian Constitution of 1814. Origins, Contexts, Consequences* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2016), 14; Håkon Harket, *Paragrafen: Eidsvoll 1814* (Oslo: Dreyer Forlag, 2014); Frode Ulvund, *Fridomens grenser 1814–1851. Handhevinga av den norske "jødeparagrafen."* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2014).

21. For the status of historical research on antisemitism in Norway, see Christhard Hoffmann, "A Marginal Phenomenon? Historical Research on Antisemitism in Norway, 1814–1945", in *Antisemitism in the North: History and State of Research*, ed. Jonathan Adams and Cordelia Hess (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 155–171; Kjetil B. Simonsen, "Norwegian Antisemitism After 1945: Current Knowledge", in *Antisemitism in the North*, 173–190. For an analysis of cultural

Significant historical incidents such as World War I, the Russian Revolution and the economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s contributed to an increase in expressions of antisemitism and to the establishment of exclusionist antisemitic practices in Norway that proved effective in the prohibition of kosher slaughter in 1929, the rejection of Jewish refugees in the 1930s, and the collaboration in the arrests and expropriation of Norwegian Jews under German occupation. Antisemitism was also part of the political platform of the Nazi party, Nasjonal Samling, founded in 1933; however, the party had marginal support.

The German occupation of Norway on 9 April 1940 had immediate consequences for the Jewish population.<sup>22</sup> The two Jewish communities in Oslo and Trondheim were ordered to produce lists of members, and radios were confiscated. There were also sporadic antisemitic campaigns against Jewish shops, though they were soon stopped by the Nazi authorities to avoid public concern. Systematic registration of all Jews started in January 1942. In March, Vidkun Quisling, the appointed Minister President in the pro-Nazi puppet government, reintroduced the “Jewish clause” from the 1814 constitution. On 26 October 1942, all Jewish men were arrested and Jewish assets were liquidated. One month later followed the arrest of women and children. Approximately 1,000 Jews fled to Sweden during the war to escape the persecution. A total of 773 Jews – one third of the population – were deported from Norway during the Holocaust, almost all to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Only 38 of those deported survived the genocide; 230 families were eliminated entirely. Today, the Jewish community in Norway is still small in a European context, consisting of an estimated 1,500 people.<sup>23</sup>

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expressions of antisemitism in the Norwegian interwar period, see Lars Lien, “‘...pressen kan kun skrive ondt om jødene.’ Jøden som kulturell konstruksjon i norsk dags- og vittighetspresse 1905–1925”, (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2016); Kjetil B. Simonsen, “‘Den store jødebevægelse.’ Antisemittiske bilder av jøden i bondeavisene *Nationen* og *Namdalen*, 1920–25”, (Master’s thesis, University of Oslo, 2009); Vibeke Moe and Øivind Kopperud, eds., *Forestillinger om jøder – aspekter ved konstruksjonen av en minoritet 1814–1940* (Oslo: Unipub, 2011).

22. The most comprehensive study of the history of the Holocaust in Norway is Bjarte Bruland, *Holocaust i Norge. Registrering, Deportasjon, Tilintetgjørelse* (Oslo: Dreyer, 2017). On the history of antisemitism and the Holocaust in Norway, see also Per Ole Johansen, *Oss selv nærmest. Norge og jødene 1914–1943* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1984); Terje Emberland, “Antisemittismen i Norge 1900–1940”, in Trond Berg Eriksen, Håkon Harket and Einhart Lorenz, *Jødehat. Antisemittismens historie fra antikken til i dag* (Oslo: Damm, 2005), 401–420; Andreas Snildal, “An Anti-Semitic Slaughter Law? The Origins of the Norwegian Prohibition of Jewish Religious Slaughter c. 1890–1930” (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2014).

23. According to Statistic Norway, there were 789 members of the Jewish congregations in 2018 and 166 861 members in Islamic congregations. However, not all those identifying as Jews or Muslims are members of congregations, and the exact size of these populations in Norway is unknown. See, <https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/statistikker/trosamf>. Accessed on May 15 2019.



There are few registered incidents of antisemitic hate crime in present-day Norway.<sup>24</sup> Similar to the situation in other countries, antisemitic expressions in the Norwegian public are primarily found on the internet. Cases of public antisemitic expressions have been more visible in connection to anti-Israel demonstrations.<sup>25</sup> In 2006, shots were fired at the synagogue in Oslo; the Norwegian Islamist Arfan Bhatti was later convicted of the shooting.

The international relevance of Norway with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is primarily linked to the Oslo Accords, the set of agreements signed in 1993 and 1995 between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Norwegian attitudes towards Israel have undergone a significant change since the first decades after 1948, when the relationship to Israel was very positive and close.<sup>26</sup> Particularly in the years following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, a predominantly negative view towards Israel emerged. At the time of the first population survey in 2011, Norway was accused by some critics of being a country with relatively widespread negative attitudes towards Jews based on anti-Israel views.<sup>27</sup> The two population surveys showed a link between anti-Israel attitudes and antisemitism, though the majority of respondents were critical of Israel without harbouring negative attitudes towards Jews. The index of antisemitism from the survey in 2017 showed marked prejudice among eight per cent of the population, comparable to other countries in northern Europe.

Muslim immigration to Norway started in the late 1960s and consisted of labour migrants from Pakistan, Turkey and Morocco. A ban against labour immigration was introduced in the mid 1970s; however, family reunification and later refugees

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24. However, the national registration of antisemitic incidents as a separate category in police records has only recently begun. In Oslo police district, three per cent of the registered hate crime was categorised as antisemitic in 2018; a total of eight incidents were registered (two incidents were registered in 2017 and 2016, four incidents in 2015). Oslo politidistrikt, *Hatkriminalitet. Anmeldt hatkriminalitet 2018* (Oslo: March 2019), 12.

25. See Eirik Eiglad, *The Anti-Jewish Riots in Oslo* (Porsgrunn: Communalism Press, 2010).

26. See Hilde Henriksen Waage, *Norge – Israels beste venn. Norsk Midtøsten-politikk 1949–1956* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1995); Åsmund Borgen Gjerde, “The Meaning of Israel. Anti-Zionism and Philo-Zionism in the Norwegian Left, 1933–1968” (PhD. diss., University of Bergen, 2019).

27. The main proponent of this view is the Israeli political analyst Manfred Gerstenfeld. Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Behind the humanitarian mask: the Nordic countries, Israel, and the Jews*. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2008. See also, Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Something rotten in Norway”, *YNet*, March 27, 2011. <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4048299,00.html> Accessed May 16, 2019 and “Norway: The Most Anti-Semitic Country in the West”, blog posted on July 22 2015. <http://www.manfredgerstenfeld.com/norway-the-most-anti-semitic-country-in-the-west/> Accessed May 16, 2019.

contributed to the growth of the Muslim population. Today, Norwegian Muslims form a heterogeneous group in terms of country background, religious tradition and degree of religiosity. The national backgrounds of the Norwegian Muslim population are predominantly Somali, Pakistani, Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan, Bosnia-Herzegovinian, Iranian and Turkish.<sup>28</sup> Norwegian Muslim communities comprise different religious orientations and interpretative traditions, though the majority can be placed within the broad category of Sunni Islam. Since the 1990s there has been an increase in organisations that are independent of national background, doctrinal or linguistic lines.<sup>29</sup> Muslim congregations can be found in all Norwegian counties, though the largest population is to be found in the Oslo area. According to estimations based on the number of immigrants from “Muslim countries” and members in Islamic congregations in Norway, the Muslim population amounts to approximately four per cent of the total population.

Attitudes towards immigration have steadily become more positive in recent years, and there is also a positive trend concerning attitudes towards Muslim congregations.<sup>30</sup> Results from the population survey in 2017 show, on the other hand, that Islamophobia, defined as anti-Muslim racism, is widespread: one third of the population (34 per cent) have high scores on the prejudice index.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Norwegian society has experienced attacks motivated by anti-Muslim ideology. The terrorist attack on 22 July 2011 by Anders Behring Breivik, in which 77 people were killed, was aimed at government offices in Oslo and the annual summer camp of the Labour Party’s youth movement (AUF) on the island of Utøya outside Oslo. Marking a lasting point of reference for the understanding of right-wing extremism in Norway as well as internationally, the attack was motivated by Islamophobic ideology, white supremacist ideas and hatred against the Norwegian Labour Party.<sup>32</sup> A new awareness emerged in the aftermath of the attack concerning the violent potential of the far-right anti-Muslim discourse.<sup>33</sup>

28. Statistics Norway, <https://www.ssb.no/innvandring-og-innvandrere/faktaside/innvandring> (accessed August 30 2019).

29. Cathrine Jacobsen, *Islamic traditions and Muslim Youth in Norway* (Leiden: Brill 2011); Oddbjørn Leirvik, “Muslims in Norway: Value Discourses and Interreligious Dialogue”, *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning* 8, no. 1 (2014): 140; Kari Vogt, *Islam på norsk. Moskeer og islamske organisasjoner i Norge* (Oslo: Cappelen, 2000), 165–181.

30. Ottar Hellevik and Tale Hellevik, “Changing attitudes towards immigrants and immigration in Norway”, *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning* 58, no. 3 (2017): 250–283.

31. Hoffmann and Moe, *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*.

32. Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and The Rise of Islamophobia* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2014).

33. For a discussion of the impact that the attack had on the public debate on Islamophobia, see chapter 3 in this volume.

While Norway has a strong tradition of interfaith dialogue, the state church, The Church of Norway, has contributed to a close association between the Norwegian state and Lutheran Protestantism. The state church was abolished in 2017, largely based on considerations related to secularisation and increased heterogeneity in terms of religion. An increasingly multicultural society has contributed to a focus on minority rights and religious practices in the public debate. Particularly relevant for the Jewish and Muslim communities have been extensive debates on male circumcision, kosher slaughter (forbidden since 1929) and halal slaughter.<sup>34</sup>

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The book has three sections. The **first section** explores the ways in which antisemitism and Islamophobia have been defined and treated as issues in the Norwegian public in recent decades. Based on an analysis of newspaper articles, the three chapters reconstruct how discursive boundaries of what can be said about Jews and Muslims were formed and negotiated in the Norwegian public.

**Chapter 1:** *A fading consensus: Public debates on antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983.*

Comparing and contrasting two central debates about antisemitism that took place in 1960 and 1983 respectively, Christhard Hoffmann traces a fading consensus and growing confusion about the definition of antisemitism among the Norwegian

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34. See Cora Alexa Døving, “Jews in the News – Representations of Judaism and the Jewish Minority in the Norwegian Contemporary Press”, *Journal of Media and Religion* 15, no. 1 (2016): 1–14.

public. In 1960, the concept of antisemitism was shaped by the experience of the Holocaust and, consequently, any flare-ups of Nazi ideology, racism and antisemitism were unanimously condemned and ostracised. In 1983, there was still a consensus that antisemitism was an evil that needed to be combated, but a bitter dispute emerged about the boundaries of the concept, concretely about the question of whether the radical condemnation of Israel (“Zionism is racism”) that had developed in the Norwegian radical Left after 1967 should be seen as illegitimate antisemitism or as legitimate criticism protected by the freedom of speech. Hoffmann concludes that only Nazi-style antisemitism was ostracised from public expression in Norway during these years, whereas there were no restrictions on anti-Zionist and anti-Israel polemics.

**Chapter 2:** *The Gaarder debate revisited: Drawing the demarcation line between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel.*

Following up this topic to the present, Claudia Lenz and Theodor Vestavik Geelmuyden provide a new interpretation of the “Gaarder debate” in Norway, which was triggered by the polemical article “God’s Chosen People” published by the internationally renowned Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder during the war between Israel and the Hezbollah in July 2006. Written in the style of a biblical judgement-day prophecy that anticipated (and seemingly justified) the end of the Jewish state as a punishment for its inhumanity, Gaarder’s article was immediately regarded as antisemitic by several voices in the emerging debate. While Gaarder protested against the accusation of antisemitism and affirmed that he was only motivated by a humanitarian concern about the civilian victims of Israel’s brutal warfare, his portrayal of Judaism as an archaic, revengeful and inhumane religion was heavily criticised as tainted with traditional anti-Jewish tropes. Lenz and Geelmuyden argue that the Gaarder debate signified a turning point in the understanding of antisemitism in the Norwegian public. In later debates, it served as a kind of “narrative abbreviation” indicating the demarcation line between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel.

**Chapter 3:** *A growing consensus? A history of public debates on Islamophobia in Norway.*

Whereas antisemitism has been regarded as an issue of concern in the Norwegian public ever since the Holocaust, the awareness of Islamophobia as a societal problem that needs to be addressed developed rather slowly and was never undisputed. The emergence of a specific anti-Muslim discourse in the right-wing populist Norwegian Progress Party in the late 1980s was, as Cora Alexa Døving shows in her

historical overview, originally understood as a form of xenophobia. Only later, the phenomenon was specified as Islamophobia, although the term itself was not frequently used in Norway. Public concern about the possible rise of anti-Muslim attitudes in Norway was regularly expressed in the aftermath of major events, such as the Rushdie affair, the terror attacks on 9/11 or the cartoon affairs, but it was typically limited to the left-wing spectrum of Norwegian politics. It was only after the terror attacks of 22 July 2011 in Oslo and Utøya, when Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people in the name of self-defence against the “Islamisation” of Europe, that the right/left polarisation on this topic became less prominent and a consensus gradually emerged according to which Islamophobia existed in the midst of Norwegian society and constituted a problem that called for public awareness.

The **second section** contains in-depth analyses of the comprehensive data material: the two Norwegian population surveys and the surveys among Muslims and Jews in Norway.

**Chapter 4:** *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway – a survey analysis of prevalence, trends and possible causes of negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims.*

In a comprehensive survey analysis, Ottar Hellevik presents the main findings of the two representative population surveys about attitudes towards Jews (2011 and 2017) and Muslims (2017) in Norway, conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies. Attitudes towards the two minority groups were measured by indices of prejudice, dislike, social distance and a summary index of antisemitism and Islamophobia, respectively. The results show that the level of negative attitudes towards Jews is low and declining, whereas negative attitudes towards Muslims are more widespread. The incidence of both antisemitic and Islamophobic attitudes is higher among men than among women, among older people, and among people with lower levels of education. Hellevik further discusses possible explanatory variables and finds that opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects antisemitism and Islamophobia in opposite directions, while both are strongly influenced by xenophobia. Negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims tend to coexist in individuals.

**Chapter 5:** *Counting antisemites versus measuring antisemitism – an “elastic” view of antisemitism.*

Applying Daniel Staetzky’s concept of an “elastic view” of antisemitism to the Norwegian survey data, Werner Bergmann attempts to explain why Jews often

regard antisemitism as a severe and growing problem, while at the same time survey results indicate a low level or even a decline in negative attitudes towards Jews in the population. This gap may partly be explained by the ways antisemitism is measured in surveys, typically focusing on the small number of convinced antisemites. Including also those who agree only sporadically to negative stereotypes without expressing a general dislike towards Jews might give a better picture about the spread of attitudes that Jews consider to be antisemitic. Bergmann explores this approach by analysing the association between the emotional (sympathy/antipathy) and cognitive dimensions (prejudices) of attitudes towards Jews, by researching the overlap of antisemitism and anti-Israelism, and by investigating a possible correlation between negative attitudes and the justification of violence against Jews and Muslims. Comparing the Norwegian results tentatively with those of Staetzky's survey on Britain, he concludes that Staetzky's "elastic view" approach, which differentiates between convinced antisemites and the wider diffusion of stereotypical ideas, is a helpful tool in understanding Jewish perceptions on the dissemination of antisemitism.

**Chapter 6:** *Conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims in Norway.*

Making use of data from four different Norwegian surveys, Asbjørn Dyrendal puts international research findings on conspiracy beliefs to the test. Although the surveys were only partly designed to specifically record conspiracy mentality, the available data allow for an analysis of conspiracy stereotypes of outgroups, i.e., the presentation of Jews and/or Muslims as obsessively striving for domination, engaging in deceptive conspiratorial action and being characterised by a high degree of group egoism. In applying this concept, Dyrendal finds out that conspiracy stereotypes of Jews and Muslims in Norway are closely linked to general xenophobia and measures of social distance. In general, belief in conspiracy theories was more often found among the adherents of the political far right than those of mainstream or left-wing parties. In contrast to international findings, anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs in Norway were more closely tied to a conspiracy mentality than antisemitic ones.

**Chapter 7:** *How do Jews and Muslims in Norway perceive each other? Between prejudice and the willingness to cooperate.*

In this chapter Werner Bergmann presents and analyses the results of the survey about attitudes and experiences of the two minority groups. Using the results of the population survey as *tertium comparationis*, he is able to examine to what extent Jews and Muslims share the views of the general population. While Jews

show less emotional rejection and stereotypical views of Muslims than the general population, Muslims are more likely to show an emotional rejection of Jews and endorse antisemitic stereotypes more frequently than the general population. On the other hand, Jewish respondents are more likely to show an emotional and social rejection of Muslims than they themselves experience from the side of the Muslims. Bergmann explores further to what extent these mutual prejudices are correlated to other phenomena, such as taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the justification of violence, and whether they have an effect on the willingness of the two minorities to cooperate in combating prejudice and discrimination in Norway.

The **third section** explores the discursive and societal contexts of antisemitism and Islamophobia by analysing qualitative data (open questions, group interviews) based on the surveys.

**Chapter 8:** *“Muslims are...” – Contextualising survey answers.*

Taking the finding that 34 per cent of the Norwegian population display marked prejudices against Muslims as a point of departure, Cora Alexa Døving examines the answers to the open-ended question about the possible reasons for existing negative attitudes towards Muslims. About a third of the respondents explain anti-Muslim sentiments solely by pointing to the alleged characteristics of Muslim culture and behaviour, such as their religion, their lack of integration, oppression of women and exploitation of the welfare system. Exploring the question why negative stereotypes about Muslims are widespread in one of the world’s most wealthy and stable countries, Døving refers to politicised and ideological Islamophobic discourses and argues that they have moved from the margins to the mainstream of society and have affected attitudes in the general population. While expressions of racism and antisemitism are socially sanctioned in Norway, the boundaries of what can be said about Muslims are less restricted. In order to avoid accusations of racism, the rhetoric of a “battle of values” has developed in which Muslims are presented as a threat to democratic and liberal ideals. Døving argues that Islamophobia probably would be met with stricter sanctions in the Norwegian public sphere if it were understood as a variety of racism.

**Chapter 9:** *How People Explain Antisemitism. Interpretation of Survey Answers.*

In a parallel study of the open-ended question about the reasons for existing negative attitudes towards Jews, Vibeke Moe detects three different contexts that the respondents mainly use for the explanation of antisemitism: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,

the “import” of Muslim antisemitism, and the age-old tradition of anti-Jewish prejudice. These contextualisations share a tendency to place the source of antisemitism into the remote distance, either spatially (Middle East), “ethnically” (Muslim immigrants) or chronologically (bygone past). While referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is clearly the most widespread explanation of anti-Jewish attitudes, the applied arguments might be different, and either pointing to Israel’s violent and expansionist politics or to biased presentations of Israel in Norwegian media as the main cause. As Moe’s in-depth study shows, many answers include very strong statements against Israel, indicating that the communication boundaries of anti-Israelism are less restricted than those of antisemitism, and that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes a subject where negative views of Jews may escape what are otherwise perceived as boundaries of expression. That (some) respondents are aware of the differences is demonstrated by the ways they try to avoid a conflation between anti-Israel and anti-Jewish attitudes. The observed tendency also to understand the origins and manifestations of antisemitism as something distant, which is projected onto others (for example onto Muslim immigrants), may, as Moe argues, be related to the ostracism of antisemitism in Norwegian society after the Holocaust.

**Chapter 10:** *Negotiations of antisemitism and Islamophobia in group conversations among Jews and Muslims.*

Based on six group interviews with either Jewish or Muslim participants carried out in 2016 and 2017, Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe explore Muslim-Jewish relations and inter-group attitudes between Muslims and Jews in Norway. The use of visual stimuli (photographs) related to the dual face of the topic – prejudice, hate crime and conflict on the one hand, and inclusion, recognition and participation on the other – allows for detailed insights into the processes of how attitudes towards the other minority are formed and negotiated in specific social settings. The qualitative method thus reveals nuances and ambivalences in the formation of attitudes that quantitative surveys with fixed response alternatives cannot register. The results show that the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Norway is characterised by ambivalent sentiments: feelings of togetherness and solidarity on the one hand, and of mistrust and competitive victimhood on the other. Proceeding from the observation that latent negative attitudes towards the other group may be linked to a feeling of bitterness about the stigmatisation and lack of acknowledgement experienced by their own group, Lenz and Moe argue that the study of attitudes among minorities needs to account for the impact of public discourse and broader social contexts on inter-group relations.



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## 1.

## A Fading Consensus

*Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983<sup>1</sup>*

CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN

**ABSTRACT** The chapter explores how the concept of antisemitism was used in the Norwegian public sphere in the post-Holocaust period. Was antisemitism regarded as a problem for Norwegian society and accordingly scandalised? How were the boundaries of expression (of what can be said about Jews) defined and negotiated: by consensus or conflict? Analysing two central debates that took place in 1960 and 1983 respectively, the chapter traces a fading consensus about the definition of antisemitism. In 1960, the Norwegian public unanimously condemned any flare-up of Nazi ideology, race hatred and antisemitism, and did not allow any space for expressions of neo-Nazism and Holocaust denial. In 1983, by contrast, there was no consensus in the Norwegian public about the question of whether the radical condemnation of Israel (“Zionism is racism”) that had developed in the Norwegian radical Left after 1967 should be seen as illegitimate antisemitism, or as legitimate criticism protected by the freedom of speech.

**KEYWORDS** antisemitism | anti-Zionism | public discourse | Norway | Oslo  
International Hearing on Antisemitism 1983

## 1. INTRODUCTION

After the destruction of six million European Jews during the Holocaust, antisemitism in Western societies has largely lost its legitimacy and been gradually banned from public discourse. Instead, the social norm of anti-antisemitism was established in the public sphere after 1945. As Henrik Bachner observed: “The

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1. I am grateful to Åsmund B. Gjerde, Kjetil B. Simonsen, Helge Årsheim and Jan Jacob Hoffmann for comments and advice.

culture of prejudice, which was earlier tolerated to a certain degree, was no longer socially acceptable. Anti-Jewish and antisemitic attitudes and ideas were made taboo.”<sup>2</sup> This development did not mean that the phenomenon of antisemitism disappeared altogether, but that it changed its forms of expression. In a pioneering article, sociologists Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb have described the specific mode of antisemitic expressions after the Holocaust using the concept of “communication latency”.<sup>3</sup> It explained the latency of antisemitism in West Germany after 1945 not by psychological factors, but by changes in political culture. The new self-image of Germany as a Western democracy did not allow for public expressions of antisemitism anymore. In a long learning process, which resulted from public conflicts and scandals, the norm of anti-antisemitism was firmly established among the West German public.<sup>4</sup>

Taking this approach as a point of departure, this chapter explores how the concept of antisemitism was defined and used in the Norwegian public sphere in the period of the Cold War. Was antisemitism (both in Norway and internationally) regarded an urgent issue after 1945 and accordingly scandalised and opposed? How were the boundaries of expression (of what can and cannot be said about Jews) negotiated: by consensus or by conflict?

By analysing two central debates on antisemitism that took place in 1960 and 1983, the chapter aims to uncover long-term patterns of argumentation and thus provide a historical background to the studies in this volume, which are primarily focused on the present.

## 2. POSTWAR NARRATIVES OF ANTISEMITISM IN NORWAY

After 1945, a patriotic memory culture developed in Norway that used the heroic resistance to Nazism during the German occupation as the ideological basis for national unity and community. While there were certainly also critical voices, the

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2. Henrik Bachner, *Återkomsten. Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999), 15. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by Christhard Hoffmann.
  3. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 38 (1986): 223–246. On the significance of the concept of communication latency for the research on antisemitism, see Jan Weyand, “Das Konzept der Kommunikationslatenz und der Fortschritt in der soziologischen Antisemitismusforschung”, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 26 (2017): 36–58. For a more detailed presentation of the concept of “communication latency”, see the introduction to this volume.
  4. See Werner Bergmann, *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten. Kollektives Lernen in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik, 1949–1989* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1997).

dominant view regarded Nazism and antisemitism as “un-Norwegian”, predominantly associated with the German occupiers and their Norwegian collaborators.<sup>5</sup> The history of the rescue of Norwegian Jews served as a case in point. While the deportation of 773 Norwegian Jews to Auschwitz appeared as the most horrific event in the history of the occupation, there was also a ray of hope, as the Norwegian paper *Arbeiderbladet* wrote in an editorial in September 1946:

[It could be seen] in the firm and cold stance that the Norwegian people took towards the antisemitic agitation of the Germans and in the natural readiness to help that was shown the Norwegian Jews when it really mattered to save the lives of fellow human beings. When people in Norway acted this way, they did so in accord with our entire national tradition. The people of Wergeland and Nansen could not act differently.<sup>6</sup>

Understanding the experiences of wartime resistance as paradigmatic, the post-war patriotic narrative constructed an unambiguous national tradition of anti-antisemitism, thereby effectively glossing over incidents of anti-Jewish discrimination in the country’s past. Taking the radical exterminatory Jew-hatred of Nazi Germany as the benchmark for defining antisemitism, less radical forms of exclusion and everyday prejudice fell out of this category.<sup>7</sup> When the trial against the German SS officer Wilhelm Wagner began in Oslo in October 1946, Public Prosecutor Harald Sund argued that antisemitism was largely unknown in Norway before the German occupiers arrived:

Apart from the clause in the Constitution that forbade Jews admission to the realm and that was repealed by the efforts of Henrik Wergeland, in this country we have not felt any animosity towards the Jews, with the exception of some sporadic instances of Nazi mentality before the war. Our little Jewish colony lived their lives unaffected by antisemitic biases. When the war came, howe-

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5. On patriotic memory culture in Norway, see Anne Eriksen, *Det var noe annet under krigen. 2. verdenskrig i norsk kollektivtradisjon* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 1995); Synne Corell, *Krigens ettertid – okkupasjonshistorien i norske historiebøker* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press/Spartacus Forlag, 2010); Arnd Bauerkämper, Odd-Bjørn Fure, Øystein Hetland and Robert Zimmermann, eds., *From Patriotic Memory to a Universalistic Narrative? Shifts in Norwegian Memory Culture After 1945 in Comparative Perspective* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2014).

6. Editorial, “Norge og jødene”, *Arbeiderbladet*, September 27, 1946, 4.

7. See Ingrid Veiden Brakstad, “Jødefølgelsene i Norge. Omtale i årene 1942–1948. Framstilling og erindring av jødefølgelsene i Norge under andre verdenskrig, i et utvalg aviser og illegal presse” (Master’s thesis, University of Oslo, 2006), 66; Bachner, *Aterkomsten*, 14.

ver, it eventually became clear that the Jews probably would not be allowed to live here in peace.<sup>8</sup>

The view that antisemitism was non-existent (or at least insignificant) in Norwegian history before the German occupation became part of a patriotic memory culture and formed post-war Norwegian identities. Consequently, antisemitism appeared mainly as a problem belonging to others, not as a problem of one's own.

There were, however, other views as well. In January 1947, the winter meeting of the Nordic branches of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Oslo took up the topic of antisemitism and discussed possible methods of combatting it.<sup>9</sup> Following the initiative of the Swedish branch of the League that had established a special committee and prepared informative material about antisemitism, attention was drawn to the possible sources of antisemitic attitudes in (religious) education. As Nora Salomon, one of the speakers at the Oslo meeting, argued, almost all people in "our civilised circles" were openly or latently infected by antisemitism. It was therefore necessary to stop the influence of anti-Jewish ideas inherent in the education system. The League's initiative ran by the watchword: "Away with the Jew-hatred of the Sunday School, the Church and the School!"<sup>10</sup> As was to be expected, these general accusations provoked a negative response in Christian quarters, above all the Christian newspaper *Vårt Land* (Our Country). It first asked Salomon to specify her claims, and in an editorial in reaction to the interview,<sup>11</sup> dismissed them as biased and unsubstantiated.<sup>12</sup> On a more general level, the issue of the religious roots of antisemitism and of the tradition of anti-Jewish persecution within the Churches figured occasionally in public debates after the League's initiative in 1947.<sup>13</sup>

Already during the war, Norwegian socialist writers of the paper *Håndslag* ("Handshake" or "Solidarity"), which was produced in Sweden and smuggled as an illegal newspaper into occupied Norway, regarded the fight against antisemitism as crucial for the rebuilding of civilisation after the defeat of Nazi Germany. In an article, published one month before the end of the war, author Sigurd Hoel

8. "Wagner nekter at han ga ordre til jødedeportasjonene", *Aftenposten*, October 2, 1946, 5.

9. "Kvinneligaens vintermøte i Oslo avsluttes i dag", *Aftenposten*, January 8, 1947, 3.

10. "Vekk med søndagskolens, kirkens og skolens jødehat!" *Dagbladet*, January 8, 1947, 3.

11. "Drastisk angrep på kirken, skolen og søndagsskolen", *Vårt Land*, January 15, 1947, 1 and 8.

12. Editorial, "Smeden og bakeren", *Vårt Land*, January 17, 1947, 3.

13. See, for example, Adolf Drewsen Christensen, "Kirken og Jøderne", *Aftenposten*, March 29, 1947, 2 and 5; Christian Ihlen, "Kirken og jødene", *Aftenposten*, April 17, 1947, 3; Theo Fin-dahl, "Kirken og Jøderne", *Aftenposten*, April 29, 1947, 2.

warned that unconscious forms of Nazism, in particular antisemitism, could survive the defeat of the Nazis:

If Nazi-Germany is beaten on all fronts [...], *but* antisemitism wins, making it global, so that like a poison it seeps into the thinking of all countries, then Nazism will still have prevailed. Like a small seed, antisemitism contains all the chromosomes of Nazism. Hatred against strangers, chauvinism, racial thinking, the doctrine of the master race [...].<sup>14</sup>

After the war, in reaction to antisemitic remarks by a British general and other incidents in Europe in early 1946, another writer of the *Håndslag* circle, Torolf Elster, now a journalist in the foreign affairs section of the socialist newspaper *Arbeiderbladet*, argued that antisemitism was an internal threat to civilisation and incompatible with democracy. It needed to be fought in two ways, both as a struggle of the spirit (*åndskamp*) and politically:

It is a dangerous illusion to think that the Nazi peril is eradicated with the defeat of Germany, as long as its societal base is allowed to exist, as long as the victors – all of us – are not aware that the war must continue as a struggle of the spirit and as a political fight against all forms of Nazi poison, until it becomes impossible for any person in a democratic society to stand up as a spokesman of open or concealed Nazi ideas. The Nazi race hate – antisemitism – is not a random, peripheral element of Nazism. It is a central part of it and is closely connected to its innermost core. It is the starkest manifestation of the societal undercurrents that threaten civilisation, and if this race hatred were to be tolerated in the new world we will build after the war, it would only be a slight exaggeration to say that we have lost the war despite the ruins of Berlin and the corpse of Hitler.<sup>15</sup>

Åsmund Gjerde, in his dissertation on anti-Zionism and Philo-Zionism in the Norwegian Left, has recently shown that Elster's article, by advocating greater empathy with the Jewish struggle for self-preservation after the breakdown of civilisation in Europe, marked a turning point in socialist thinking about Zionism.<sup>16</sup> In the

14. "Den ubevisste nazisme", *Håndslag* no. 5, April 9, 1945, quoted in Brakstad, "Jødefølgelsen", 44. The translation is taken from Åsmund Borgen Gjerde, "The Meaning of Israel: Anti-Zionism and Philo-Zionism in the Norwegian Left" (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2019), 130. Gjerde argues that Sigurd Hoel was the author of this article.

15. Torolf Elster, "Den nye antisemittismen", *Arbeiderbladet*, January 8, 1946, 5.

16. Gjerde, "Meaning of Israel", 135–136.



context of this chapter, it is important to emphasise that Elster's article was also significant for the development of an anti-antisemitic consensus in post-war Norway. It defined the fight against antisemitism as a continuous task of high priority and it understood the Western democracies' attitudes towards Jews as a kind of litmus test for the status of civilisation after the Holocaust.

### 3. ANTISEMITISM AS A SOCIETAL PROBLEM: THE GRAFFITI WAVE 1959/60 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

One such test came in early 1960. On Christmas Eve 1959, the newly opened synagogue in Cologne was daubed with Nazi symbols and antisemitic graffiti ("Germans demand Jews out").<sup>17</sup> The incident sparked a wave of antisemitic actions in West Germany, Europe and all over the Western world. When the graffiti wave ebbed in March 1960, almost 2500 cases at 400 places had been registered globally.<sup>18</sup> The "swastika epidemic" of 1959/1960 caused concern among educators and politicians in the West and led to the first attempts to combat antisemitism and regulate hate, in particular in the UN Declaration (1965: Convention) on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1963.<sup>19</sup>

In Norway too, a few incidents occurred: the Roosevelt monument in front of Oslo's City Hall was covered with antisemitic graffiti; swastikas and antisemitic slogans appeared on several buildings in the capital and other towns, such as Stavanger. A Jewish businessperson received a letter threatening to "make soap" of him.<sup>20</sup>

As in other countries, several public voices initially downplayed the significance of these incidents in Norway. When the antisemitic actions were taken up in the Norwegian Parliament, the Minister of Justice assessed them as "infantile mischief".<sup>21</sup> In the same spirit, the largest Norwegian newspaper, *Verdens Gang*, maintained:

17. On the German reactions to the antisemitic graffiti wave, see Werner Bergmann, *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten*, 235–250.

18. See Karl Egil Johansen, 'Jødefolket inntar en særstilling': *Norske haldningar til jødane ot staten Israel* (Kristiansand: Portal, 2008), 89. On the debates about antisemitism in 1960, see also Oskar Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie i Norge gjennom 300 år*, vol. 2 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1986), 365–72. On the antisemitic wave in the United States, see Howard J. Ehrlich, "The Swastika Epidemic of 1959–1960: Anti-Semitism and Community Characteristics", *Social Problems* 9 (1962): 264–272.

19. See Natan Lerner, *The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, revised reprint (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

20. Johansen, *Jødefolket*, 89.

21. Stortingsforhandlingene 1959–60, 1356.

that this hardly can be called a deep-rooted neo-Nazi movement [...] We think it would be wrong to ascribe too much significance to these events: in most cases they appear to be pranks done by irresponsible and thoughtless youths.<sup>22</sup>

Other voices were more critical and argued that these new manifestations of antisemitism had to be taken seriously:

[W]orld opinion has all reason to take this wave of demonstrations as seriously as it does. Because it is no coincidence that a wave of demonstrations specifically against the Jews is catching on. The ancient antisemitism is festering in new generations. The cruelty that the Jews have experienced for two thousand years now shows its face again. The roots of antisemitism run so deep that it survived even the devilish extermination chambers of the Nazis [...] Let our answer to the thugs and the more-or-less conscious neo-Nazis be that we scrape away the last remains of antisemitism from our minds, and grab hold of it when we see it in others. Some remnants are stuck in the minds of many of us. They are especially dangerous because they, in certain circumstances, can infect the entire mind and expand to a blind and hysteric mass hatred.<sup>23</sup>

In the same tenor, *Arbeiderbladet* argued on 4 January 1960 that under no circumstances could renewed manifestations of antisemitism be tolerated. The struggle against antisemitism applied primarily to Germany with its legacy of Nazism, but was also relevant for all democratic countries affected by the antisemitic episodes:

The authorities of the Federal Republic [of Germany] must make it clear to the young what heinous crimes antisemitism is responsible for in Germany. Those who did not experience this time as adults must be given the full message of what they are getting involved in if antisemitism once again will be tolerated. Fifteen years have passed since the war was over. We must have learned that we have to react sharply and quickly to events such as what we experienced on New Year's weekend. This also includes episodes that took place outside of Germany. No one can be in any doubt about how a democratic state responds to actions that give new life to the most inhuman race hatred our world has ever known.<sup>24</sup>

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22. *Verdens Gang*, January 4, 1960, quoted in Johansen, *Jødefolket*, 89–90.

23. Editorial, "Vondskapen tyter fram", *Rogalands Avis*, January 5, 1960, 2.

24. Editorial, "Rydd opp straks", *Arbeiderbladet*, January 4, 1960, 4.

In a public appeal in January 1960, the Norwegian Church and 23 representatives of Christian organisations expressed their concern about the antisemitic incidents. Against the background of the anti-Jewish persecutions during World War II, the new wave of antisemitism appeared as very serious and dangerous. Everything possible should be done to “stop these demonstrations and eliminate these tendencies.”<sup>25</sup> The Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions (LO) sent a resolution to their partner organisation in West Germany underlining the necessity to fight all forms of race discrimination: “Any tendency towards antisemitism must be nipped in the bud.”<sup>26</sup> On 30 January 1960, the Norwegian Student’s Organisation arranged a demonstration against antisemitism. It expressed solidarity with Jews who had been harassed and persecuted around the world, and urged the Norwegian Ministry for Church and Education to ensure that Norwegian youths received “proper knowledge about the nature of Nazism and the methods and effects of antisemitism, and the entire philosophy that underlies racial persecution and discrimination.”<sup>27</sup>

As the new manifestations of antisemitism appeared to result from insufficient knowledge about the Nazi past, the task of fighting antisemitism was largely committed to the education system. In substantiating her question raised in Parliament to the Minister of Justice, Labour MP Aase Lionæs emphasised the responsibility of the schools in countering race prejudices and antisemitism and suggested the examination of textbooks by a special committee.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, the question of stereotypical presentations of minorities in textbooks gained public attention.<sup>29</sup> In March 1960, journalist Arne Jørgensen of the Norwegian Communist Party submitted an interpellation to the Oslo Educational Board about educational measures against antisemitism. He argued that students in schools were not receiving proper information about the Nazi period and suggested a critical examination of textbooks.<sup>30</sup> After a controversial debate over the “duplicity” of the communist initiative, the Board agreed to the request that “teachers must be on their guard for all kinds of antisemitism.”<sup>31</sup> In an official recommendation directed to school boards and teachers, the Norwegian Ministry of Church and Educational Affairs took up

25. “En skamplett for den kristne sivilisasjonen”, *Aftenposten*, January, 9, 1960, 2.

26. “L.O. fordømmer jødeforfølgelsene”, *Morgenposten*, January 26, 1960.

27. “Nazismen glemmer vi IKKE”, *Dagbladet*, February 1, 1960, 5.

28. Stortingsforhandlinger 1959–60, 1355. See also “Rasehatets ugress må lukes bort – Viktig oppgave for skolene”, *Morgenbladet*, January 26, 1960, 5.

29. “Rasehatet i lærerbøkene”, *Dagbladet*, January 27, 1960.

30. “Halvannen linje om jødeforfølgelsene i våre skolebøker”, *Friheten*, March 3, 1960, 1 and 6.

31. “Lærerne må være på vakt mot enhver form for antisemittisme”, *Arbeiderbladet*, March 18, 1960, 3.

this rather vague formulation and suggested a special awareness towards anti-Jewish stereotypes in religious education and the need for proper historical information about the disastrous consequences of racial theories for Jews and other groups.<sup>32</sup> The extent to which these recommendations did have a real effect on teaching about antisemitism and the Nazi period is difficult to assess within the limits of this chapter. Since there were no textbooks that covered the Nazi persecution of Jews in any detail, it seems that teachers helped themselves out by showing films. The 1960 Swedish documentary “Mein Kampf”, directed by Erwin Leiser, (Norwegian title “Sannheten om hakekorset” – the truth about the swastika) was apparently widely used in Norwegian schools at the time.<sup>33</sup>

Responding to Lionæs’s question regarding legal measures against racial persecutions in Norway, Minister of Justice Jens Haugland informed the parliament that existing criminal law did not include specific provisions against racism. He maintained, however, that the existing law was sufficient to punish serious hate crimes and insults directed against an individual, while attacks against loosely defined groups of people were more difficult to punish. In general, Haugland was convinced that “public opinion and our democratic world view” were the best weapons to fight antisemitism, but he did not rule out legislative measures.<sup>34</sup> In the end, the graffiti wave led to a sharpening of the Norwegian penal code. In May 1961, the Norwegian parliament passed an amendment to Article 135 that expanded the ban on hate speech to include the protection of certain groups of people, “defined by a specific faith, descent or other common origin.”<sup>35</sup>

Reacting to the wave of antisemitic incidents in 1959/60, the social norm of anti-antisemitism was firmly established in the Norwegian public, especially in the press, the educational sector and the criminal code. The significant public attention and the strong commitment of civil society actors produced a climate of opinion that did not tolerate negative attitudes towards Jews or the spreading of neo-Nazi and antisemitic propaganda. While many protests aimed at the failed

32. “Skolens holdning til rasediskriminering”, *Norsk skole: opplysnings- og kunnskapsblad for skoleverket* 6, no. 8 (September 21, 1960), 107.

33. See Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie*, 365; Johansen, *Jødefolket*, 91.

34. Stortingsforhandlinger 1959–60, 1356.

35. Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie*, 370. In 1970, article 135 of the Norwegian penal code was amended further (article 135a) in order to comply with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. See Helge Årsheim, “Giving Up the Ghost: On the Decline and Fall of Norwegian Anti-Blasphemy Legislation”, in *Blasphemy and Freedom of Expression: Comparative, Theoretical and Historical Reflections after the Charlie Hebdo Massacre*, ed. by Jeroen Temperman and András Koltay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 566–73.

denazification in West Germany, a self-critical tone was heard as well, which addressed persistent antisemitic attitudes in Norway.<sup>36</sup> For example, Professor of Philosophy Harald Ofstad drew attention to the findings of a survey carried out by himself together with other researchers at the Institute of Social Research in Oslo in the early 1950s as part of a larger research project on the dynamics of nationalist attitudes.<sup>37</sup> According to the survey, 44 per cent of a sample of Oslo's population, agreed (totally or partly) with the statement "It is to a large extent the Jews' own fault that they have been persecuted."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, 43 per cent of the sample disagreed (totally or partly) with the statement "The Jews are no more greedy for money than other people."<sup>39</sup> The publication of these results, which were previously unknown to the public, caused a discussion about the formulations in the questionnaire (response bias) and the assessment of the results.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, Ofstad, in an article published in several newspapers, provided more background information. Referring to the results of the Berkeley study on the authoritarian personality (1950)<sup>41</sup> and of the Oslo study on nationalism,<sup>42</sup> he argued that anti-semitic attitudes were part of a more comprehensive personality structure and often combined with ethnocentric and anti-democratic attitudes. The fight against antisemitism had to consider these findings:

For in the end racial prejudices can be stopped neither by laws nor by enlightenment alone, but only by a politics that comprises of organising the social institutions in such a way that the authoritarian urges have no chance to develop.<sup>43</sup>

While there emerged a growing consensus in the Norwegian public that antisemitism was a serious evil that must be opposed, a few voices were critical to the

36. See, for example, Jon Dørsjø, "Jødene og det offisielle hykleriet", *Dagbladet*, January 18, 1960.

37. Christian Bay, Ingemund Gullvåg, Harald Ofstad and Herman Tønnesen, *Nationalism I–III* (typoscript, Oslo: Institutt for samfunnsstudier, 1950–1953). On the nationalism project, see Stein Rokkan, *Report on Activities 9 February 1950–9 February 1952* (Oslo: Institute for Social Research, 1952), 20–23; Harald Ofstad, "Nasjonalisme og uskyldig aggresjon", *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning* 2–3 (1966): 199–240.

38. Harald Ofstad, "Anti-semittismen i Norge", *Dagbladet*, January 18, 1960.

39. Harald Ofstad, "Anti-semittismen i Norge", *Dagbladet*, January 25, 1960.

40. See John Baardsgaard, "Antisemittisme i Norge. Et svar til professor Harald Ofstad", *Dagbladet*, January 20, 1960; Olav Pels "Oslofolks antisemittisme", *Dagbladet*, January 21, 1960.

41. Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950).

42. Harald Ofstad, "Antisemittismen og autoritære innstillinger", *Bergens Tidende*, February 8, 1960, 4.

43. Ofstad, "Antisemittismen og autoritære innstillinger".

establishment of an anti-antisemitic norm. Among those was the poet Alf Larsen, who had been opposed to Nazism during the war and probably was the most radical antisemitic intellectual in post-war Norway.<sup>44</sup> In a polemical article published in March 1960, he denounced the public reactions towards the antisemitic incidents as hysterical. Although it was obvious that no Nazi organisation backed the “swastika influenza”, the alarm sirens went off as if a nuclear attack was imminent.<sup>45</sup> In Larsen’s view, the measures against antisemitism were an attack against the freedom of speech:

Freedom of speech is abolished everywhere, and with equal efficiency in the democracies as in the dictatorships. The battle for *world opinion* is the true struggle now [...] and as an individual, as an outsider, you can no longer participate. Into the ranks with you, or be silent!!<sup>46</sup>

Even more explicitly, Alexander Lange, one of the editors of *Folk og Land* (People and Country), the journal of the veterans of the Norwegian Nazi party (Nasjonal Samling), interpreted the situation with help of antisemitic conspiracy theories. When interviewed in January 1960 about the ongoing graffiti wave, Lange declared that former members of NS had nothing to do with the actions and suggested that they were most likely provocations instigated by “communists or the Jews themselves”.<sup>47</sup> In the same breath, he doubted the numbers of Jewish victims in the Holocaust and challenged the fact that Jews were systematically murdered in gas chambers. As historian Kjetil B. Simonsen recently has shown, the denial of the Holocaust was a core element in the ideological worldview of *Folk og Land*.<sup>48</sup> It was linked to conspiratorial thinking about Jewish power and influence, which, in the post-1945 world, was supposedly based on moral blackmail and therefore needed to magnify Jewish victimhood.<sup>49</sup> Lange’s insinuations were unanimously dismissed by the Norwegian press as the antisemitic fantasies of an old Nazi.<sup>50</sup> In this way, the Norwegian mainstream press categorised the antisemitic ideas of Nazi veterans as beyond the limits of acceptable debate. As a result,

44. On Larsen, see Jan-Erik Ebbestad Hansen, *En antisemitt trer frem. Alf Larsen og Jødeproblemet* (Oslo: Press forlag, 2018).

45. Alf Larsen, “La dem skrike”, *Farmand*, March 26, 1960, 25–31; see also Ebbestad Hansen, *En antisemitt trer frem*, 208–9.

46. Larsen, “La dem skrike”, 29.

47. “NS-folk fornektet jødeaksjonene”, *Verdens Gang*, January 5, 1960, 9.

48. Kjetil B. Simonsen, “Holocaustbenektelse i *Folk og land* (8. mai), 1948–1975. En diskurs tar form”, *Historisk Tidsskrift* 98, no. 1 (March 2019): 7–24.

49. Simonsen, “Holocaustbenektelse”, 17–20.

the open expression of antisemitism was banned from the public sphere (communication latency) and isolated within the segmented public of the circle of former Nazis. If anybody transgressed these boundaries and openly voiced racist or antisemitic ideas, scandal and sanctions would follow. This happened in 1975, when high school teacher Olav Hoaas, who had attracted attention in the 1960s with racist statements, denied the existence of gas chambers during the Holocaust and demanded that all alien races, including Jews and immigrant workers, leave Norway. If Jews did not want to move voluntarily, they should be segregated and live together in a “Jewish society” of their own.<sup>51</sup> These declarations stirred up strong reactions, especially among the Jewish community. After four Jewish personalities, among them two Holocaust survivors, had asked the Prosecuting Authority to investigate the case, Hoaas was charged with incitement to racial hatred (article 135a) and convicted in court. In view of public concern that the antisemitic high school teacher might influence his pupils ideologically, the case was investigated by the school authorities and, in 1978, Hoaas was fired from his teaching position. This decision was upheld by the Norwegian Supreme Court in a trial in 1982.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4. THE EMERGENCE OF ANTI-ZIONISM

While the graffiti wave of 1960 had consolidated a widespread consensus in Norwegian society about the necessity to fight racism and antisemitism, discussions about antisemitism became more controversial at the end of the 1960s, following the Six-Day War, the formation of a radical “New Left” and the concomitant rise of anti-Zionism. The turn against Israel occurred first in small circles of the emerging radical Left. According to Gjerde, three distinct positions on the Israel-Palestinian conflict evolved in these groups, rejecting the traditional pro-Zionist stance of the “Old Left”. (1) The “bridgehead of imperialism position” that took Israel for an outpost of Western imperialism. (2) The “anti-Zionist position” that regarded Israel as an illegitimate state that should be replaced by a different kind of state. (3) The “pro-Palestinian position” that supported a Palestinian struggle

50. See, for example, “Eks-nazistenes formodninger”, *Verdens Gang*, January 6, 1960, 2; Nils Rønning, “Jødehaterne iblant oss”, *Verdens Gang*, January 22, 1960, 2.

51. Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie*, 373–74. On Hoaas’s ideological background, see Irene S. Grimstad, “Holocaustbenektelse på norsk? En studie av Olav Hoaas sitt ideologiske standpunkt” (Master’s thesis, University of Oslo, 2014).

52. Mendelsohn, *Jødenes historie*, 374–377. On the second trial in 1982, see: <https://arbeidsmiljoven.com/verdict/rt-1982-1729/> (accessed 1 August, 2019).

for national self-determination against occupation and foreign rule.<sup>53</sup> While these positions were certainly related to each other, their significance changed over time. In the beginning, the understanding of Israel as “bridgehead of imperialism” dominated, whereas the pro-Palestinian position became prevalent only in 1969.<sup>54</sup> Shortly after the Six-Day war, at its annual conference in October 1967, the youth organisation of the Socialist People’s Party (SF) adopted a resolution stating, “The state of Israel, in its present form as a bridgehead of imperialism, must cease to exist.”<sup>55</sup> It is true that the delegates had toned down the original wording of the resolution by inserting the “bridgehead of imperialism” attribution and by adding a sentence saying that the present population of Israel should receive “guarantees about their right to live in the Middle East.”<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the blunt call for an end to Israeli statehood provoked strong negative reactions within the establishment of the party and the Norwegian public at large.<sup>57</sup> Among the points of criticism were charges of antisemitism. An article in the weekly *Morgenbladet* characterised the resolution as “antisemitism at the lowest level.”<sup>58</sup> The journalist and author Sigurd Evensmo, an influential socialist intellectual, expressed the concern that the resolution, being so “massive in its aggressiveness towards Israel,” might “nourish the primitive antisemitism that still exists in Norway as well.”<sup>59</sup> In an attempt to counter the criticism, the youth organisation argued that the editorial board of the party’s newspaper *Orientering* consisted of socialists who still were affected by their personal experience of the Nazi period and therefore did not see that the situation had changed since then:

[They] all were young when the Nazis ravaged Europe with their persecution of Jews. It is therefore understandable that they are preoccupied with the history of Jewish suffering and care about the rights of Jews. Now, however, time has come to recognise that the tables are turned and that today it is the Arabs who suffer injustice.<sup>60</sup>

53. Gjerde, “Meaning of Israel”, 275.

54. Tarjei Vågstøl, “Den norske solidaritetsrørsle for Palestina, 1967–1986” (Master’s thesis, University of Oslo 2007), 27–30, 42.

55. Gjerde, “Meaning of Israel”, 296.

56. Gjerde, “Meaning of Israel”, 296.

57. See, for example, Editorial, “Motsetninger”, *Orientering*, October 14, 1967, 3; “SF-ungdom vil avskaffe Staten Israel”, *Dagbladet*, October 9, 1967, 1 and 11.

58. Ulf Gleditsch, “Jødehat i dagens SF-regi”, *Morgenbladet*, October 13, 1967, 2.

59. Sigurd Evensmo, “På parti med Mao”, *Orientering*, October 28, 1967, 13.

60. “SUF og Midt-Østen”, *Orientering*, October 21, 1967, 10.



The conflict within the party was not only caused by different generational perspectives on the Middle-East conflict, but also rooted in fundamental antagonisms of political ideology. The young radicals who had proposed the anti-Israel resolution were Maoists trying to direct the party's youth organisation towards a more revolutionary line. That the party conference followed them meant a breakthrough for the nascent Maoist movement in Norway. Two years later, the ideological conflict led to a split between the Socialist People's Party and its radicalised youth organisation. The latter became independent and added the label "Marxist-Leninist" to its name (SUF-ml). Its leading figures were also crucial in the founding of the movement's newspaper *Klassekampen* in 1969 and the establishment of the "Workers' Communist Party" (AKP-ml) in 1973. The new party did not compete at the ballot box, but, as a party of activists, had great influence within the radical milieu of the new social movements, in particular the anti-imperialist solidarity movements. In 1970, the Norwegian Palestine Committee was established, bringing together activists in the fight against "U.S. imperialism and the Zionist State of Israel," solidarity with the "national struggle for freedom of the Palestinian people on its own terms," and the support of the "establishment of a democratic Palestine in which Jews, Christians and Muslims have the same rights and duties."<sup>61</sup> While the Palestine Committee recruited members beyond the hard core of the Worker's Communist Party, the Maoists dominated the ideological profile and practical agenda. Internal conflicts escalated in 1975, resulting in the establishment of a second solidarity organisation, the Palestine Front.<sup>62</sup> It was associated with the non-Maoist radical Left, in particular the Socialist Left Party (SV), and had a broader effect on other groups and organisations, especially the trade unions. In spite of internal conflicts caused by political differences, ideological dogmatism and sectarian strife, the solidarity movement with the Palestinians largely agreed on practical measures, such as the close cooperation with the PLO, fundraising and anti-Israel boycott actions.<sup>63</sup> By the end of the 1970s, its message increasingly found fertile ground within the Norwegian public when sympathies with the Palestinian cause grew stronger. This was mostly due to Israel's military attack against the PLO in South Lebanon in 1978 in retaliation for a PLO terror

61. "Referat fra det konstituerende møte for Palestinakomiteen i Norge", *Fritt Palestina*, no. 1, 1970, quoted in Vågstøl, "Solidaritetsrørsla", 35.

62. See Vågstøl, "Solidaritetsrørsla", 45–71.

63. Vågstøl, "Solidaritetsrørsla", 67. On the main narrative of the Norwegian anti-Zionists, see Eirik Eiglad, "Anti-Zionism and the Resurgence of Antisemitism in Norway", *Resurgent Antisemitism. Global Perspectives*, ed. by Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2013), 144–50.

attack. The following full-scale invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 and the massacres against Palestinian civilians in the refugee camps of Shabra and Shatila, committed by Christian militias allied with Israel, constituted the turning point in Norwegian attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Whereas the vast majority of Norwegians had supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, nine years later most Norwegians (60 per cent) sided with the Palestinians.<sup>64</sup>

During the 1970s, the rise of anti-Zionism periodically caused controversial debates in the Norwegian media about the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. While critics emphasised the similarities between antisemitic and anti-Zionist ways of argumentation and stressed continuities,<sup>65</sup> proponents of the anti-Zionist movement categorically denied any such connection, arguing that since antisemitism and Zionism had a common foundation in ethnocentric and racist thinking, anti-Zionism was in fact anti-racist and could not possibly be anti-semitic.<sup>66</sup> A year after the Lebanon war, the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism was taken up more systematically at a special hearing in Oslo.

## 5. IS ANTI-ZIONISM ANTISEMITIC? THE INTERNATIONAL HEARING ON ANTISEMITISM IN OSLO 1983

In June 1983 the Nansen Committee, the Norwegian Committee against the persecution of Jews, arranged an international hearing on antisemitism in Oslo. The hearing was the first of its kind; it convened international experts on antisemitism, Norwegian scholars, religious leaders and journalists, and the chairpersons of the parliamentary groups in the Norwegian parliament. At the end of the two-day conference, a public declaration, the *Oslo Declaration 1983*, was signed and published that appealed to “all free women and men everywhere to fight the rising new anti-Semitism and thereby help us all, non-Jews and Jews, to create a better world.”<sup>67</sup>

64. Johansen, *Jødefolket*, 133–34.

65. See, for example, Judith Vogt, “Tema uten variasjoner”, *Dagbladet*, February 6, 1970, 3–4, and “I Goebbels fotspor”, *Dagbladet*, April 3, 1970, 3–4; Arne Skouen, “Ringene”, *Dagbladet*, September 28, 1977, 4.

66. See, for example, “Sionisme og rasisme”, *Klassekampen*, October 5, 1977, 12; Eldbjørg Holte, “Er det ‘rasisme’ å fordømme rasismen”, *Dagbladet*, October 20, 1977, 14. For an example of a historically founded and more nuanced position, see Nils Butenschøn, “Antisemittisme eller krav om rettferdighet”, *Dagbladet*, June 23, 1975, 3–4.

67. Leo Eitingier, ed., *The Antisemitism in Our Time. A Threat against Us All. Proceedings of the First International Hearing on Antisemitism, Oslo 7.–8. June 1983* (Oslo: The Nansen Committee, 1984), 4.

The Nansen Committee was established in 1980 and chaired by architect Eigil Nansen, the grandson of Fritjof Nansen and son of Odd Nansen. Like his ancestors, Eigil Nansen was committed to humanitarian work. In 1979, he was co-organiser of a campaign for Vietnamese boat refugees. The Nansen committee against the persecution of Jews was especially concerned with the burdensome situation of Jews in the Soviet Union. By February 1981, the Nansen Committee decided to arrange an international hearing on antisemitism. The main intellectual driving force behind this project was Leo Eitinger, a Jewish physician from Czechoslovakia who had come to Norway in 1939 as a refugee from Nazism. During the War II, he was deported to Auschwitz and was among the very few Jews from Norway who survived the Holocaust. After his return to Norway, he specialised in psychiatry and became professor at the University of Oslo. Eitinger was a pioneer in studying the long-term effects of traumatic experiences among refugees and Holocaust survivors. His commitment to fighting antisemitism was deeply connected to his personal and professional experience.

In order to discuss the international problems of antisemitism on a high level, the organisers of the hearing had invited eminent scholars and experts from Western Europe, Israel and the United States. Among them were the historians Yehuda Bauer (Jerusalem), Jean Halperin (Zürich), Leon Poliakov (Paris), Reinhard Rürup (Berlin), Bela Vago (Haifa), and Erika Weinzierl (Vienna); the French philosopher Bernard-Henry Lévy; the British Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, and the author and President of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council Eli Wiesel. The President of the Socialist International, former Federal Chancellor of West Germany and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Willy Brandt, sent a message of greeting to the hearing. There can be no doubt that the organisers had succeeded in winning the support of influential experts and religious and political leaders for the fight against antisemitism.

Nevertheless, the hearing did not succeed in re-establishing a consensus in Norway about the definition and boundaries of antisemitism. On the contrary, the controversial public debate about the agenda of the hearing clearly demonstrated the deep rift between those who wanted to include anti-Zionism in the definition of antisemitism and those who were opposed to this.

While it mentioned various manifestations of antisemitism in the contemporary world, the *Oslo Declaration* emphasised in particular the significance of anti-Zionism: "The traditional, vulgar stereotypes of anti-Semitism are now being applied to the Jewish state."<sup>68</sup> The history of antisemitism before 1945 was

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68. Eitinger, *Antisemitism*, 4.

thereby used as interpretational key for understanding the opposition to Israel in the present:

In the past anti-Semitism in its most virulent form has endeavoured to deprive Jews of the very right to exist. [...] Today's antisemitism frequently denies Jews the right to a secure, national existence in their homeland, thereby following the traditional pattern, trying to establish a situation where the world again become Judenstaatsrein (free of a Jewish state).<sup>69</sup>

The declaration went on by differentiating between (legitimate) criticism of Israel and (illegitimate) denial of Israel's right to exist:

No one should be denied the right to fairly criticize policies or actions committed by the government of any country, including the government of Israel. But when criticism turns into denial of the right of the Jewish state to exist in line with other independent nations, and when Jews are deprived of their right to choose nationhood, like other people, then we are confronted with the age-old monster of anti-Semitism, conveniently camouflaged in a new disguise. An anti-Zionism that denies the Jews fundamental freedoms and rights which other individuals and nations take for granted, equals discriminations against Jews as a group.<sup>70</sup>

During the hearing, several speakers addressed the issue of anti-Zionism, especially the Swedish politician and journalist Per Ahlmark and the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, who stated that anti-Zionism was the modern form of antisemitism.<sup>71</sup> There were, however, also other voices: the British Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits acknowledged that Israel was often criticized and condemned more harshly than other nations, but he thought it "neither true nor wise to attribute this discrimination simply to antisemitism."<sup>72</sup> Historian Reinhard Rürup suggested the use of different terms for the main manifestations of anti-Jewish tendencies in history: (1) traditional Jew-hatred, which was based on religion and economic relations; (2) modern antisemitism (opposed to Jewish emancipation and integration); and (3) anti-Zionism. Although there were certain over-

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69. Eitinger, *Antisemitism*, 4.

70. Eitinger, *Antisemitism*, 4.

71. Per Ahlmark, "Sweden and The New Antisemitism", in *Antisemitism*", 63–69; Lévy's contribution to the hearing is not included in the volume, but partly quoted in *Klassekampen*, July 25, 1983, 5.

72. Immanuel Jakobovits, "Antisemitism Today – Some Jewish Perspectives", in *Antisemitism*, 94.

laps between these different forms, Rürup argued against subsuming them all under the umbrella term of antisemitism.<sup>73</sup>

The major Norwegian newspapers covered the Oslo hearings on antisemitism in detail. While comments were not unanimously positive, and for instance Per Ahlmark's attacks against the anti-Zionism of the Swedish government under Olof Palme were treated with reserve,<sup>74</sup> there was a certain understanding that the issue of anti-Zionism needed public scrutiny. Reflecting on the strange coincidence that the Oslo hearing started exactly on the anniversary of the Israeli campaign in Lebanon in June 1982, an editorial in *Aftenposten* stated:

It is clear that a marked anti-Israel mood has developed after Israeli soldiers moved into their neighbouring country. It is equally certain that this mood has triggered antisemitic forms of expression. They unquestionably arise from latent anti-Jewish feeling. It is a frightening reaction when criticism of Prime Minister Begin's policies awakens that evil and ancient hatred of the Jews. People must be able to distance themselves from Begin's political actions without at the same time spreading antisemitic declarations.<sup>75</sup>

In an even stronger way, the liberal daily *Dagbladet* supported the Oslo declaration and hoped that it could become a common base for the fight against antisemitism irrespective of political differences. Its editor-in-chief, Jahn Otto Johansen, who was one of the Norwegian panelists at the hearing, made the following appeal:

Antisemitism is not only a threat against the Jewish people. [...] It affects humanity as a whole. First the Jews, then the rest of us. That is why indifference is dangerous. The fight against antisemitism must be taken up everywhere – through teaching and information campaigns, through actions of solidarity and in local communities. Irrespective of whether one stands on the left or the right of the political space, it should be possible to unite in a common struggle against antisemitism and all racism. It concerns all of us.<sup>76</sup>

The idea of a united front against antisemitism as defined by the Oslo declaration was, however, unrealistic. Even before the hearing began, the radical Left in

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73. Eitinger, *Antisemitism*, 60.

74. "Olof Palme anti-semitt?" *Dagbladet*, June 9, 1983, 18.

75. Editorial, "Til felts mot anti-semittismen", *Aftenposten*, June 9, 1983, 2.

76. Jahn Otto Johansen, "Det angår oss alle", *Dagbladet*, June 10, 1983, 2.

Norway mobilised against it, accusing Eitinger of a pro-Israel agenda. Reacting to Eitinger's claim that the left-wing paper *Klassekampen* included articles with anti-semitic content, the leading representative of the Norwegian Maoists and long-term editor of *Klassekampen* Finn Sjøe attacked Eitinger's definition of antisemitism and claimed that it meant an "ideological pollution of an important political debate."<sup>77</sup> Among Norwegian papers, Sjøe argued, it was *Klassekampen* that had been most active in the fight against all forms of racism, including antisemitism. Anti-Zionism was something very different and should not be conflated with antisemitism:

We have understood it to be extremely important to draw a sharp divide between antisemitism, i.e. the hatred of Jews, and anti-Zionism, which is the opposition to the political movement that was the impetus for the founding of the state of Israel. Our criticism of the state of Israel is clearly political: the state is founded on the expulsion of an entire people. The character of the state of Israel as an exclusively Jewish state further makes it an apartheid state. These two things put together are more than enough not to recognise this state. Eitinger uses an ugly ploy when he attempts to eliminate the difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. For him, anyone who will not recognise the state of Israel is a Jew-hater by definition.<sup>78</sup>

During the time of the Oslo hearing, *Klassekampen*, together with the Maoist party and the Norwegian Palestine Committee, tried to de-legitimise the hearings as a mere propaganda show for Israel. It appeared, as Sjøe put it, as "a somewhat desperate attempt at a counter-offensive after Israel was so thoroughly discredited following the war in Lebanon last year."<sup>79</sup> The Norwegian Palestine Committee invited the Jewish-Palestinian politician and journalist Ilan Halevy to Oslo. Halevy, who lived in France, was one of the few Jewish members of the PLO. While his participation in the hearing as an expert panellist was denied by the organisers (as was to be expected), Halevy gave several interviews to counter the message of the hearings. He saw the Oslo event as part of a campaign directed at journalists in Europe and described it as "verbal terror against public opinion in the West."<sup>80</sup> Halevy admitted that antisemitism had become stronger in recent

77. "Jødehat i Klassekampen?" *Klassekampen*, May 27, 1983, 1; Editorial, "Eitingers løgn", *Klassekampen*, May 27, 1983, 3.

78. "Ideologisk forurensning", *Klassekampen*, May 27, 1983, 10.

79. "Ideologisk forurensning".

80. "Når ofrene blir bødler", *Klassekampen*, June 11, 1983, 15.

years, but saw one major cause for this development in Israel's claim to act on behalf of all Jews:

[O]ne very important reason is that Israel has committed these crimes against Palestinians and the Lebanese in the name of the Jews and not in the name of an ideology. The Zionists have demanded solidarity with Israel from all Jews across the world, and labelled those who have disagreed as traitors against the state of Israel. There are surely also forces in the right in Europe that have exploited this situation.<sup>81</sup>

A week after the hearing, initiator Leo Eitinger gave a critical summary of the event in *Aftenposten*.<sup>82</sup> While he was generally satisfied with the resonance the hearing had received among the Norwegian public, he expressed a concern that its main message, i.e. that "antisemitism in our time is a danger for us all as human beings," was lost in the discussion about minor questions. Eitinger identified three such questions that had gained public attention but that he regarded as "derailments": Did the Lebanon war trigger antisemitism? Is the relationship of Jews towards Israel decisive for the emergence of antisemitism? Are antisemitism and anti-Zionism identical? In answering these questions, Eitinger emphasised that antisemitism in post-Holocaust Europe had existed long before the 1982 Lebanon war, and independently of Israel's actions. Regarding the last question, he insisted that the main political aim of anti-Zionism – the liquidation of the state of Israel – in the current political situation in the Middle East would necessarily mean major harm to millions of Jews. "You can call it what you want, but to work (indirectly) for the destruction of millions of Jews is antisemitism."<sup>83</sup> Moreover, a common element of anti-Zionism and antisemitism was given in the "anti", the hate against a group. This point constituted, according to Eitinger, the key message of the hearing:

To hate someone blindly, just because that person belongs to a particular group, [...] is an evil in itself. No one has the right to generalise and no one has the right to attempt to find reasons for their general hate within the group that is being hated. Antisemitism is only the oldest and most tragic example of blind and meaningless hatred.<sup>84</sup>

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81. "Når ofrene blir bødler".

82. Leo Eitinger, "Hatet var høringens tema", *Aftenposten*, June 16, 1983, 2.

83. Eitinger, "Hatet".

84. Eitinger, "Hatet".

Eitinger's summary was not the end of the affair. On the same day, *Dagbladet* published an article by the chairman of the Norwegian Palestine Committee, Trond Lindstad, entitled "Zionism is racism".<sup>85</sup> Four days later, in an op-ed article in *Aftenposten* under the title "Questions after an anti-Jewish hearing", Ebba Wergeland, another representative of the Norwegian Palestine Committee, came to a very different conclusion about the hearing than Eitinger. Challenging the hearing's conclusion that a denial of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state equalled antisemitism, and directly addressing the Norwegian participants in the hearing, she argued that the conference had missed an opportunity to deal with the traditions of antisemitism in Norwegian history:

The hearing in Oslo could have shed light on Norwegian antisemitism, which contributed to almost half of the Norwegian Jews being deported to Auschwitz and murdered there. It could have been a reckoning with both antisemitism and anti-Arab racism, with policies that rejected Jews at Norway's borders, but supported the idea of a separate state for Jews in the homeland of the Palestinians. Instead, you concluded with the Zionists paradoxical answer to antisemitism: on behalf of the Jews, you demand the "right" to a ghetto colony, a "Jewish state" – far from Norway's doorstep. And all of us who do not support this ghetto project you have labelled Jew-haters. Can all of you really approve of the conclusion from the hearing?<sup>86</sup>

Instead of forming a new consensus, the Oslo Hearing on Antisemitism revealed a deep division within the Norwegian public on this matter. While antisemitism was unanimously regarded as an evil that needed to be fought, there was no consensus about the definition of antisemitism and how its boundaries should be determined. Consequently, only Nazi-style antisemitism was ostracised from public communication, whereas there were no restrictions on anti-Zionist and anti-Israel polemics.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In an article on anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Britain, historian David Feldman has recently shown that the controversial debates about the concept of antisemitism that emerged in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in many Western countries

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85. Trond Lindstad, "Sionisme er rasisme", *Dagbladet*, June 16, 1983, 4.

86. Ebba Wergeland, "Spørsmål efter en antijødisk høring", *Aftenposten*, June 20, 1983, 2.



are in many ways still ongoing today and reflected in contrary interpretations among scholars of antisemitism.<sup>87</sup> Whereas some historians, for example Robert Wistrich and Anthony Julius, see the rise of anti-Zionism and anti-Israel activities within the European Left as a new form of antisemitism, other scholars, such as Brian Klug and Jonathan Judaken, are sceptical about this equation and point to the different background conditions of both phenomena.<sup>88</sup> In this respect, the Norwegian development from consensus to conflict was quite typical for debates on antisemitism in Western Europe in general.

In order to bring greater clarity to these debates, Feldman distinguishes between three different uses of the concept of antisemitism in contemporary Britain. (1) The traditional use of the term, denoting *hostility towards Jews as "Jews"* (as defined in the mindset of the antisemites). (2) The new understanding of *institutional* (or structural) *antisemitism*, coined parallel to the concept of institutional racism, focusing on the *results* of a societal practice, for example a boycott, rather than the intentions or world views of the actors. It implies that the outcome of a measure can be antisemitic even if there are no antisemitic intentions. (3) In connection with harassments and attacks, a third understanding of the concept of antisemitism has emerged that makes *the perception of the victims* define whether an incident should be regarded antisemitic or not.<sup>89</sup>

Feldman's distinctions are based on the analysis of present-day debates in Britain, but they also might help to better understand the emotional and largely fruitless controversies about antisemitism in Norway after 1967. While the leftist anti-Zionists clung to the traditional definition of antisemitism and insisted their political attacks against Israel were not directed against Jews as "Jews", Leo Eitinger, and the other initiators of the Oslo Hearing, used an extended concept of antisemitism that included principal opposition towards Jewish national self-determination and a denial of Israel's right to exist as defining characteristics. In addition, Eitinger, without employing the term, indicated an understanding of "institutional antisemitism". It focused on the possible outcome of anti-Zionist activities and argued that under present conditions in the Middle East the consequences of a liquidation of the state of Israel would necessarily be damaging to millions of Jews.

The fading consensus and growing conceptual confusion about antisemitism in the Norwegian public after 1967 was thus due to the fact that the antagonists indeed used different concepts of antisemitism. Moreover, the concept was eroded

87. David Feldman, "Antizionismus und Antisemitismus in Großbritannien", *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, vol. 23, 2014: 42–49.

88. Feldman, "Antizionismus", 42–43.

89. Feldman, "Antizionismus", 47–48.

by the polemical use of the term. Since the charge of antisemitism was a powerful rhetorical weapon in the post-Holocaust world, it could be readily applied to delegitimise political opponents. In this way, Christian Conservatives attacked the radical Left as being antisemitic, and the Left responded by calling the supporters of Israel racist and, in essence, anti-Jewish. As the 1983 Oslo Hearing on antisemitism made clear, it proved impossible to find common ground on antisemitism as long as these ideological antagonisms prevailed.

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## 2.

## The Gaarder Debate Revisited

### *Drawing the Demarcation Line between Legitimate and Illegitimate Criticism of Israel*

CLAUDIA LENZ AND THEODOR VESTAVIK GEELMUYDEN

**ABSTRACT** This chapter explores the afterlife of the newspaper op-ed article “God’s chosen people”, written by Jostein Gaarder in 2006, and the intense and heated debate it sparked off. In this debate, Gaarder was accused of antisemitism due to his portrayal of the Jewish religion as archaic and violent and his indication that Israel, following its brutal warfare in the region, had lost its right to exist. The chapter looks into how the opening of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies and a growing public awareness of the Holocaust may be seen as possible reasons for the fierce criticism of Gaarder and how his op-ed became the prime example of criticism of Israel crossing the line to antisemitism. The chapter argues that the “Gaarder debate”, despite Gaarder’s own attempts to free himself from the stigma of antisemitism, lives a life of its own as a *narrative abbreviation*. As such, the allusion to Gaarder is used to mark the red line between criticism of Israel and antisemitism. The “Gaarder trope” is even used to discuss latent antisemitism in contexts outside Norway.

**KEYWORDS** antisemitism | criticism of Israel | communication latency | Gaarder debate | Norway

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“The outcome of this debate will say a lot about Norwegian culture.”

*Odd-Bjørn Fure, interview with VG, August 8, 2006<sup>1</sup>*

The above quote from Odd-Bjørn Fure, at the time director of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM), gives an idea of the significance the “Gaarder debate” had for one of its main participants. Nothing less than “Norwegian culture” was at stake in this controversy, which began when the internationally renowned Norwegian author of *Sophie’s World*, Jostein Gaarder, published an op-ed article with the title “God’s chosen people” in the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* on August 5, 2006.<sup>2</sup>

The article, in which Gaarder fiercely criticised the ongoing Israeli warfare in Lebanon against Hezbollah, is held in a “prophetic”, judgement-day style, opening with a statement indicating that Israel’s right to exist had ceased:

There’s no turning back. It’s time to learn a new lesson: We no longer recognise the State of Israel. We could not recognise the apartheid regime of South Africa, nor did we recognise the Afghani Taliban regime. Then there were many who did not recognise Saddam Hussein’s Iraq or the Serbs’ ethnic cleansing. We need to get used to the idea: The State of Israel, in its current form, is history.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the entire op-ed, Israeli warfare is characterised with attributes associated with the Old Testament and Judaism as confronted by a collective voice (“we”), which is identified as humanist and Christian:

We do not recognise the old Kingdom of David as a model for the 21st century map of the Middle East. The Jewish rabbi claimed two thousand years ago that the Kingdom of God is not a martial restoration of the Kingdom of David; the Kingdom of God is within us and amongst us. The Kingdom of God is compassion and forgiveness. Two thousand years have passed since the Jewish

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1. Odd-Bjørn Fure, “Gaarder viser farlig kunnskapsløshet”, *Verdens Gang*, August 6, 2006, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/OL7nA/gaarder-viser-farlig-kunnskapsloeshet> (accessed 14.05.2019). This and all following translations from Norwegian have been provided by the authors.
  2. Jostein Gaarder, “Guds utvalgte folk”, *Aftenposten*, August 5, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikk/i/weW34/Guds-utvalgte-folk> (accessed 14.05.2019); translation, <http://emanzipationhumanum.de/downloads/israel.pdf> (accessed 14.05.2019).
  3. Gaarder, “Guds utvalgte folk.”

rabbi disarmed and thoroughly humanised the old rhetoric of war. Even in his time, the first Zionist terrorists were operating.<sup>4</sup>

The antagonism between Jewish/anti-humanistic and Christian/humanistic culminates in expressions such as: “We do not recognise a state founded on anti-humanistic principles and on the ruins of an archaic national and warlike religion”, or “For two thousand years, we have rehearsed the syllabus of humanism, but Israel does not listen.” In this last statement, the state of Israel takes the place of Judaism as confronted with the Christian/humanist “we”.

This overall tone is accompanied by classical anti-Judaist stereotypes. Expressions like “We call baby killers baby killers” or “we reserve the right to not eat Jaffa oranges as long as they are foul tasting and poisonous”, resonate the myths of Jews poisoning wells and drinking the blood of children.

All this builds up to the *leitmotiv* of the op-ed, held in a prophetic language: Israel has lost its legitimacy and therefore has already ceased to exist, with all the consequences this must have for the civilian population:

If the entire Israeli nation should fall to its own devices and parts of the population have to flee their occupied areas into another Diaspora, then we say: May their surroundings stay calm and show them mercy.<sup>5</sup>

During the intense debate that was kicked off by the op-ed, Gaarder’s scenario of displaced Jews being without a country of their own at the mercy of other people was met with the most intense criticism. This “prophecy” was interpreted as a legitimisation of yet another persecution of the Jewish people.

An important aspect of the debate is its immediate internationalisation. Gaarder was internationally known for his famous children’s book *Sophie’s World* and recognised as a moral authority. The news that he had authored an antisemitic pamphlet gained interest in the international media. The reactions in Israeli media were especially stark. *Haaretz*, on August 11, 2006, quoted Professor Dina Porat, head of the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University as follows:

This is a classic anti-Semitic manifesto, which cannot even disguise itself as criticism of Israel.<sup>6</sup>

4. Gaarder, “Guds utvalgte folk.”

5. Gaarder, “Guds utvalgte folk.”

6. Assaf Unai, “Norway Up in Arms After Author Claims Israel Has Lost Its Right to Exist”, *Haaretz*, August 11, 2006, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.4861209> (accessed 14.05.2019).

Gaarder's defenders, on the other hand, insisted that he only had chosen the drastic rhetoric necessary to highlight the severity of Israeli war atrocities. One of the most prominent intellectuals on the left, Thomas Hylland Eriksen,<sup>7</sup> came to his defence in *Aftenposten*<sup>8</sup> four days after Gaarder's op-ed had been published:

As I read it, the op-ed is neither more or less than a hard criticism of the Israeli regime's Apartheid-like politics against the Palestinians and bombardments of civil targets in Lebanon, formulated in a language with associations to the Bible.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the day, went Hylland Eriksen's argument, it was Israeli politics, not Gaarder, which was putting the existence of the Jewish nation at risk.

Looking back at the debate, one can get the impression that neither Gaarder nor his defenders realised that something new was happening: the emergence of a new awareness in the Norwegian public that certain expressions of criticism of Israel are problematic because they are loaded with generalisations, drawn on negative stereotypes against Jews and implying justifications of violence against Jews. In this way, Gaarder, who would define himself as anything but a Jew hater, found himself being the author of what was seen as the iconic text crossing the red line towards antisemitism. This shift calls for an explanation.

To a certain extent, the answer can be found in the choice of stylistic means in Gaarder's article. But even if anti-Judaist stereotypes became starker and more obvious due to the "prophetic" style of this text, many other provocative elements were already familiar from previously expressed criticism of Israel. Neither the comparison with the South African Apartheid regime and its downfall, nor the accusation of "child murder" and the allusion that Israeli military operations followed an archaic "revenge" logic of the Old Testament, were really new in the Norwegian debate. But in 2006, a new public constellation had emerged related to Holocaust commemoration and the public awareness about its ideological roots. In Norway, this was related to the establishment of the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM), which was to be officially opened at the end of August, only a few weeks after the publication of Gaarder's article.

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7. Hylland Eriksen is a social anthropologist and was at the time the research leader for a research project on cultural complexity in Norway (CULCOM) at the University of Oslo.

8. There were fewer contributions in defence of Gaarder in the rather conservative *Aftenposten* than in the left-wing newspaper *Klassekampen*, which was an important platform for the pro-Palestinian political spectrum.

9. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Den vanskelige kritikken", *Aftenposten*, August 10, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikk/i/47k4G/Den-vanskelige-kritikken> (accessed 14.08.2019).



This chapter argues that one of the main reasons for the critical reactions and interpretations of Gaarder's text can be found in the fact that the Holocaust had become a strong frame of interpretation – both in Norway and internationally. We will first show how references to the Holocaust contributed to the widely spread opinion of Gaarder's text being antisemitic and, thus, unacceptable. Besides the impact of the Holocaust as a frame of interpretation, the particular constellation of the Lebanon war in 2006 needs to be taken into consideration. Israel fighting against Iranian-supported Hezbollah – and thereby against a strong power representing a real threat against the existence of the state of Israel – did not fit into previously established patterns of interpretation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We will then demonstrate how Gaarder's article was turned into a symbolic red line marking the boundaries between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism. References to the Gaarder debate can be understood as *narrative abbreviations*,<sup>10</sup> meaning a narrative fragment which only needs to be alluded to in order to recall an entire story and its "morals". The morals in this case are related to the red line towards antisemitism being crossed. The ongoing reference to this boundary has the discursive function of establishing and upholding an anti-antisemitism norm. The Gaarder op-ed and the debate following it have thus become one of those turning points in public discourse that, according to Bergmann and Erb, contribute to establishing communication latency.<sup>11</sup>

## MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

The material used for analysis is a corpus of Norwegian newspaper articles from 2006 to 2018 retrieved from the search engine Retriever.<sup>12</sup> The analysis focuses on the most important contributions to the debate by going through the biggest national and regional newspapers in Norway, with the criteria of having more than

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10. Jürgen Straub, *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, Vol. 3 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

11. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, "'Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland'," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 38 (1986): 223-246; see also chapter 1 in this volume, written by Christhard Hoffmann.

12. The media archive Retriever is a research tool that contains the original issues of national, regional and local newspapers, including magazines and journals. One types in the desired search word combination, e.g., "Gaarder + Israel", and chooses a date range for the search. The result will contain every article, including paper versions and online versions, that contains that specific search combination. Retriever also provides the opportunity to see different graphs and other statistics about the search such as hits over time or which paper provides the most hits for your search. Retriever is owned by NTB and TT.

ten article hits on a keyword combination to be included in the analysis.<sup>13</sup> The initial search comprised the keywords Gaarder + antisemitism, Gaarder + antisemite, Gaarder + antisemitic, Gaarder + Israel, Gaarder + Israeli criticism, Gaarder + Jew hater, Gaarder + chronicle, Gaarder + Holocaust in order to try and get the broadest picture of the debate.<sup>14</sup> As the approach towards the material was qualitative, this combination of keywords secured to catch as many contributions to the debate as possible. Possible double hits represent no methodological problem as no quantitative calculations are intended. The corpus of our research consists of op-ed articles and articles where these keywords appeared together within the text.

The analysis showed that these keywords had several peaks in the time after its publication. Most of the hits were from 2006, the year of publication, but other important peaks were in 2009 and 2014.<sup>15</sup> Because of this initial observation, the analysis looks into the contexts in which these combined references to Gaarder, antisemitism and the Holocaust recurred. It is quite striking that the focus on the Holocaust had a major impact on the outcome of the Gaarder debate in 2006, just weeks before the official opening of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies. Further, debates related to intensifications in the Middle East conflict (escalation between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza strip in 2008-2009 and 2014), as well as a population survey on attitudes towards Jews in Norway conducted in 2011 were identified as triggers for references to the debate from 2006. Each of these contexts is explored in this chapter.

More specifically, the chapter also analyses which actors in these debates have had particular impact by promoting viewpoints and arguments that shaped the entire debate. As perspectives and arguments expressed by journalist Mona Levin and the director of the CHM Odd-Bjørn Fure were taken up by other contributors throughout the debate, they proved decisive for how the article was received. Therefore, searches with extra keywords Gaarder + Levin and Gaarder + Fure were run in order to follow and mirror the afterlife of the original debate. The analysis pays particular attention to these two contributors, their positions and arguments, as well as to Gaarder's responses, which in some cases were directly addressed to them.

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13. For an overview over these newspapers, see Annex, this chapter.

14. Keywords in original; Gaarder + antisemittisme, Gaarder + antisemitt, Gaarder + antisemittisk, Gaarder + Israel, Gaarder + israelskritikk, Gaarder + jødehat, Gaarder + kronikk, Gaarder + Holocaust.

15. In total, the search resulted in approximately 4,000 hits using these keywords in Retriever. The specific numbers for the peaks were: 2006: 3,178 combined hits; 2008/09: 239 combined hits; 2011: 174 combined hits; 2014: 90 combined hits.

## 2. THE HOLOCAUST AS A FRAME OF INTERPRETATION

Jostein Gaarder published “God’s chosen people” when the short but intense military conflict between Lebanon/Hezbollah and Israel in 2006 was at its culmination point. Following military provocations by Iranian-supported Hezbollah against Israel in July 2006, Israel responded with massive airstrikes, a ground invasion and a naval and air blockade against Lebanon. As the airstrikes and blockade hit the Lebanese civil population heavily,<sup>16</sup> Israel was accused of disproportionate brutality and war crimes. The Norwegian debate about the war followed an established “David and Goliath” narrative, in which Israel figures as a reckless giant and oppressor, while its enemies are inferior, but brave in their resistance. Even more dominant was the focus on innocent civil victims, which in some way remained unrelated to the military provocations that time and again triggered Israel’s counterattacks. It is within this morally loaded climate of debate, establishing clear lines between guilty and innocent, that Gaarder’s text has to be situated.

However, another interpretative framework was about to emerge and gain strength. From the early 2000s, Holocaust remembrance was institutionalised in many Western countries. The Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust (“Stockholm Declaration”), which led to the establishment of the Task Force for Holocaust Remembrance (today: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance/IHRA), stressed the obligation to prevent antisemitism:

With humanity still scarred by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, antisemitism and xenophobia, the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils.<sup>17</sup>

The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM) was established in 2001 “as a consequence of the historical and moral settlement related to the handling in Norway of the financial liquidation of the Jewish minority during the Second World War.”<sup>18</sup> The process of economical restitution of the Norwegian Jews, whose assets had been expropriated by the Norwegian state in 1942, resulted in the foundation of the CHM and had contributed to an awareness of the co-responsibility of Norwegian actors in the persecution and deportation of the Norwegian Jews in 1942/43. In this way, Norway became part of an international

16. Middle East crisis: Facts and figures. BBC news, August 31, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5257128.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5257128.stm) (accessed 14.05.2019).

17. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/stockholm-declaration> (accessed 14.05.2019).

18. <https://www.hlsenteret.no/english/about/statutes/> (accessed 14.05.2019).

trend not only to remember the fate of the Jews, but also to acknowledge co-responsibility and antisemitism among perpetrators and bystanders in German-occupied countries.<sup>19</sup>

## THE OPENING OF THE NORWEGIAN CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST AND MINORITY STUDIES

Gaarder's op-ed was published three weeks before the official opening of the CHM at its new premises on the peninsula of Bygdøy.<sup>20</sup> The opening ceremony on 26 August was attended by the Queen and the Crown Princess, and a range of foreign politicians and diplomats. Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre gave one of the main speeches, underlining the responsibility of Norwegian society to come to terms with the active participation of Norwegians in the Holocaust.<sup>21</sup> Arguably, the public attention to the establishment of the CHM and the emphasis on the discourse of responsibility had a crucial impact on the reception to Gaarder's article. With the Holocaust as a frame of interpretation, the destructive power of antisemitism came into focus as it had served to legitimise the persecution and genocide against Jews. This interpretative framework added a moral dimension to the debate, which made it much more difficult to downplay references to antisemitism as deviations of pro-Israel propaganda, as had happened in previous debates.<sup>22</sup> This also gave a particular authority to some of Gaarder's critics.

One of those critics, who very early contributed towards setting the agenda for the debate, was journalist Mona Levin. Levin is daughter of the pianist and composer Robert Levin and belongs to one of the Norwegian Jewish families who escaped Nazi persecution and survived in Sweden during World War II. As a long-standing journalist and theatre critic for the newspaper *Aftenposten*, Levin is a well-known person in Norwegian cultural life. She was one of the first to strongly criticise and accuse Gaarder of antisemitism after the publication of the article. In an article from 5 August (the same day that Gaarder's article was published), in

19. Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

20. The centre had been operative since 2006, with its director Odd-Bjørn Fure and a small administrative and scientific staff in place and being a part of public discourse about issues related to the Holocaust and antisemitism.

21. Claudia Lenz, "Linking Holocaust Education to Human Rights Education – a Symptom of the Universalization and De-Nationalization of Memory Culture in Norway?" In *From Patriotic Memory to a Universalistic Narrative?* ed. Arnd Bauernkämper et al. (Münster: Klartext Verlag, 2014), 87-103.

22. See chapter 1 by Christhard Hoffmann in this volume.

which *Aftenposten* had interviewed a number of Norwegian authors about their reactions to the article, she is quoted as saying: “This is the ugliest thing I have read since *Mein Kampf*.”<sup>23</sup> Levin put the Nazi stamp on Gaarder’s text, interpreting it as a call for violence against Jews.

He attacks (...) each and every Jew in the world, in the USA, Norway or the Middle East. (...) He knows what he is doing. I feel more damage and threat against myself and those close to me by Jostein Gaarder than anyone who smears the Synagogue.<sup>24</sup>

She interpreted Gaarder’s “prophecy” of the destruction of the state of Israel, with the consequence of Jews being expelled and living at the mercy of other countries, as a *threat* against the entire Jewish people. Given the historical background of the 1930s when many Jewish refugees met closed doors in other countries, this reaction is not at all astonishing. This historical frame of interpretation adds an uncomfortable notion to Gaarder’s “literary device”. Director of the Holocaust centre Odd-Bjørn Fure, too, drew upon historical references in his reaction to Gaarder.

It is awkward to play with concepts such as the evacuation of refugees and ‘final solution.’ This touches upon really grave tragedies in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

In a longer interview published a few days later, Fure elaborated his criticism:

His statement ‘We no longer acknowledge the state of Israel’ and ‘Israel does not exist’ are irresponsible word games, which can be exploited by circles who wish to erase Israel from the map. (...) Most problematically, Gaarder contributes towards moving boundary lines – towards deconstructing constraints in describing Judaism and Israel.<sup>26</sup>

Here, we find many of the elements of criticism that were reiterated throughout the debate. In this way, Fure had a strong impact on the discourse. However, in

23. Mona Levin, “Styggeste jeg har lest”, *Aftenposten*, August 5, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/i/wOzzG/--Styggeste-jeg-har-lest> (accessed 30.04.2019).

24. Levin, “Styggeste jeg har lest.”

25. Odd-Bjørn Fure, “Gaarder viser farlig kunnskapsløshet”, *Verdens Gang*, August 6, 2006, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/OL7nA/gaarder-viser-farlig-kunnskapsloeshet> (accessed 30.04.2019).

26. Odd-Bjørn Fure, “Ansvarsløst spill med ord”, *Aftenposten*, August 10, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/6kGbO/--Ansvarsløst-spill-med-ord> (accessed 30.04.2019).

contrast to Levin, he did not assume that Gaarder consciously alluded to genocidal fantasies. Rather, he attributed Gaarder with a pitifully low level of understanding and awareness of the historical and cultural context.

So far, we have highlighted the impact of the Holocaust as a frame of interpretation gaining strength both internationally and in Norway at the beginning of the 2000s. Of course, the significance of the Holocaust was not the only aspect that contributed to the enormous furore after the publication of Gaarder's article: It has to be seen as one strong parameter, interconnected to others, not least the situation in international politics in which Norway's role and reputation as "peace nation" related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was at stake. A Norwegian celebrity publishing what could be interpreted as a legitimization of violence against Jews and the destruction of the state of Israel, and being regarded as representing mainstream or even official Norwegian positions, was a serious problem for Norway's international reputation.

### GAARDER'S RESPONSES

It quickly became obvious that the reactions to Gaarder's article were different from the reactions towards previous expressions of anti-Zionist rhetoric. Even if Gaarder's text, as we have shown, didn't contain a substantially different *criticism of Israel* than, for example, the one the extreme left wing (AKP-ml) had been promoting for years, the political context and Gaarder's position as an internationally recognised author seemed to enforce a different normative coordinate system in this case. The dynamics in the public debate were different this time, and Gaarder's piece was read as proof of a more widespread and mainstream antisemitism *hidden* behind the criticism of Israel.<sup>27</sup>

Still, the heavily attacked author made attempts to (re)gain interpretative power. His first reaction to the criticism was published in *Aftenposten* on 7 August, only two days after the publication of the original article. With its title "Response from Gaarder: Dear Mona Levin",<sup>28</sup> the very short text addresses his most outspoken critic directly and personally – but also as a representative of "Jews in Norway", whom he was allegedly anxious to avoid hurting.

While underlining that he acknowledges the Holocaust and the right of the Israeli people to their nation, and apologising for having mocked the Jewish reli-

27. Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Behind the Humanitarian Mask: The Nordic Countries, Israel, and the Jews* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2008).

28. Jostein Gaarder, "Svar fra Gaarder: Kjære Mona Levin", *Aftenposten*, August 07, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/PoGRX/Svar-fra-Gaarder-Kjare-Mona-Levin> (accessed 14.05.2019).

gion, he expressed hurt feelings about Levin's comparison with *Mein Kampf*. This response, in which Gaarder presents himself as a victim of misunderstandings and bad-will interpretations, gives the impression that at this point Gaarder had not yet grasped the dimension and bearings of the debate he had sparked.

The second, longer response, with the title "Attempt at clarification", was published on August 12, one week after the original article.

As the debate was raging, Gaarder tried to explain that he had been misunderstood due to the stylistic devices he had used under the emotional impact from the news about Israeli war atrocities. He underlined that it was his wish to fiercely criticise the state of Israel, but on the point about Israeli civilians, he announced:

Of course, I do not call for Israeli citizens to leave their country. I do not even regard this to be a possibility. When I evoked the image of Israeli civilians fleeing 'occupied territories' (as Jerusalem or the West Bank), I understand that this might trigger strong emotions. But the message is crystal clear: Regardless of context (...) we can never tolerate violence against civilians.<sup>29</sup>

Gaarder's further line of argument in this second response was entirely based on the attempt to make a conceptual distinction between his strong but misunderstood criticism of Israel and "real" antisemitism, which he exclusively associated with Nazism.<sup>30</sup> He indicated that accusing him of antisemitism would trivialise the problem and could even result in more antisemitism. This rhetorical strategy shows that at that time Gaarder was unable to grasp that the debate was about to change the notion of antisemitism from exclusively denoting hatred of Jews to also covering the underlying and even unintended negative and stigmatising portrayal of Jews and Judaism.<sup>31</sup> At this point, Gaarder, insisting on the difference between the rhetoric he had used and his real felt attitudes, felt like a victim of misunderstandings.

29. Jostein Gaarder, "Forsøk på klargjøring", *Aftenposten*, August 12, 2006, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikk/i/x8j3j/Forsok-pa-klargjoring> (accessed 14.05.2019).

30. Communication researcher Marie Lund is not convinced by Gaarder's "attempt to separate stylistic and literary devices from the 'real message'." She rather interprets the style as an integral part of the "line of argument that Gaarder stood by in his clarification." Marie Lund, *An Argument on Rhetorical Style* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2017), 174.

31. In this respect, we see parallels to the debate in 1983, analysed by Hoffmann in this volume: In 1983, however, the issue of generalised anti-Jewish notions in forms of criticism of Israel as highlighted by Leo Eitinger was not acknowledged, despite the fact that Eitinger was a Holocaust survivor.

## REFERENCES TO HOLOCAUST BY GAARDER'S DEFENDERS

It is interesting to see that those who defended Gaarder also actively referred to the Holocaust as an interpretative framework, albeit with the opposite conclusion as that drawn by Levin and Fure. Far from accepting that certain forms of criticism are problematic in the light of the historical genocide, the reference to the Holocaust is regarded as an emotional obstruction to rational argumentation. The newspaper *Klassekampen* had previously labelled attempts to explore contemporary antisemitism as “pro-Israeli propaganda”.<sup>32</sup> Now, it doubted that Gaarder’s equating of Israel and Judaism was at all problematic, as the following quote by Sandra Lillebø shows:

It is not unusual to wish an in-depth debate on Islamic ideology and its impact on the politics of Muslim countries. While this is regarded as legitimate, participants in the debate about Israel are seeing that all references to Judaism as a religion are strongly rejected as antisemitic. Does the shame about World War II make it difficult to criticise Israel today?<sup>33</sup>

Here, Lillebø suggested that the reference to the Holocaust serves to create a double standard, restraining *all forms* of criticism of Israel. So, while the critics of Gaarder asked: Do *certain forms* of criticism of Israel go too far? his defenders continued to ask: Do the *reservations* against criticism of Israel go too far?

This indicates an ongoing discursive struggle about what is acceptable/unacceptable with regard to criticism of Israel *despite* the strong impact of the Holocaust as a frame of interpretation. Following Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe,<sup>34</sup> the contest about the demarcation line between criticism of Israel and antisemitism constituted a *hegemonial struggle*, in which the power of definition is linked to far-reaching questions of political legitimacy, authority and influence.

## BULLETS AGAINST THE SYNAGOGUE – FROM WORDS TO DEEDS?

During the night of 17 September 2006, 13 gunshots were fired at the synagogue in Oslo. No humans were injured, but the shots left visible marks on the walls of the synagogue building. The attack was shortly after classified as antisemitic and

32. Hoffmann, “A fading consensus?”, chapter 1, this volume, 44.

33. Sandra Lillebø, “Raserer debatten”, *Klassekampen*, 11 August 2006, <https://www.klassekampen.no/38517/article/item/null/-raserer-debatten>.

34. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso, 1985).



an act of terrorism.<sup>35</sup> Four persons from the Islamist scene, among them the well-known Islamist activist Arfan Quadeer Bhatti, were arrested shortly after the attack.

Searching for the deeper causes of the attack, some public voices immediately referred to Gaarder and his op-ed article. Mona Levin placed the attacks in the broader societal context, which she regarded to be hostile towards Israel and Jews in general. Without blaming Gaarder as directly co-responsible for the shootings, she referred to his article as the most recent and most drastic example of a climate of debate that can encourage others to take the step towards violence:

Gaarder's articles, the debates accompanying them, and the Norwegian left wing's one-eyed criticism of the entire Middle East complex (...) have contributed to acts of violence against Jews.<sup>36</sup>

The bullets fired against the synagogue confirmed the perception that Gaarder's words could be read and *had been* read as a legitimization of acts of violence against Jews *in general*. In this way, the notion of Gaarder's text being antisemitic was reinforced.

### 3. THE GAARDER DEBATE AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

In late December 2008, armed conflict erupted in the Middle East, lasting for three weeks between 27 December and until a ceasefire was agreed upon on 18 January 2009. This conflict between Israel and Hamas, which mainly took place in the Gaza strip, gained a lot of attention in Norway and led again to a strong public debate. In Oslo, violent demonstrations took place outside the Israeli embassy for several days. The demonstrations led to riots in the city centre, with large-scale vandalism against houses, cars and shops nearby as the police fired the crowd with tear gas.<sup>37</sup> With the Gaza conflict gaining so much public attention and raising so many passions, the question of how to criticise Israel became relevant again.

35. Camilla Ryste, "Fire terrorsiktet etter synagoge-skudd", *Aftenposten*, September 23, 2006, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/odEjV/fire-terrorsiktet-etter-synagoge-skudd> (accessed 22.08.2019).

36. Harald S. Klungtveit, "Jeg har aldri sagt at Gaarder har skylden", *Dagbladet*, September 24, 2006, <https://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/jeg-har-aldri-sagt-gaarder-har-skylden/66255900>.

37. Dennis Ravndal, "Demonstranter raser mot støttemarkeringen for Israel: Politiet bruker tåregass mot demonstranter", *VG*, Januar 8, 2009, <https://vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/a5qeA/demonstranter-raser-mot-stoettemarkeringen-for-israel-politiet-bruker-taaregass-mot-demonstranter>

In this debate, the issue of defining the line between criticism of Israel and antisemitism also came up again. The basic positions in the public debate had not changed. However, it now became evident that Gaarder and his article figured as negative examples and a narrative abbreviation, indicating the red line that should not be crossed.

### A NEW SENSITIVITY?

At the same time as the Gaza conflict rumbled on, US president-elect Barack Obama appointed Rahm Emanuel as the White House Chief of Staff.<sup>38</sup> Former Norwegian prime minister Kåre Willoch judged the appointment as *worrying*, and later explained there was reason to believe that by being an American Jew who had served as a (civilian) volunteer in the Israeli Army, Emanuel would be pro-Israel. Willoch's statement was criticised for being antisemitic, especially by Mona Levin, who labelled him a Jew hater.<sup>39</sup> In an interview with *Aftenposten* on 15 January 2009, Gaarder re-entered the debate, claiming that the labelling of anybody criticising Israel as an antisemite was derailing the debate.

None of those who participate in the debate, neither Willoch nor myself, are anti-Semites, but every time we talk about Israel, we have to distance ourselves from the Holocaust. It shouldn't be necessary.<sup>40</sup>

The borderline between criticism of Israel and antisemitism was discussed with Gaarder once again at the heart of the debate, despite him having withdrawn from it before. He claimed that the accusation of antisemitism is a planned and calculated derailment, stating that "the Israel lobby and the religious right wing in the US are contributing to an inflation of the word."<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, Gaarder again brought in the Holocaust as a frame of interpretation in order to accuse his opponents in the debate of abusing the term. From the outset of the uproar between Willoch and Levin, the Gaarder debate was lingering in the background. Through Gaarder's intervention, it became a new edition of the battle about legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel – and Gaarder's culpability.

38. <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/11/06/emanuel.reaction/index.html>.

39. Ole Berthelsen, "Kåre Willoch er rasist og jødehater", *TV2*, January 19, 2009, <https://www.tv2.no/a/2509336> (accessed 04.05.2019). The debate between Willoch and Levin flared up again in 2015: Mona Levin, "Klassisk antisemittisme", *Dagsavisen*, February 23, 2015, <https://www.dagsavisen.no/nyemeninger/klassisk-antisemittisme-1.451162>.

40. Flemming Trondsen, "Willoch er ikke en jødehater", *Aftenposten*, January 15, 2009, <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/O3r4E/--Willoch-er-ikke-jodehater> (accessed 04.05.2019).

41. Trondsen, "Willoch er ikke en jødehater."

## GAARDER AS A STIGMATISED PARTICIPANT IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE

In late 2008, the interference of Manfred Gerstenfeld from the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, an Israeli think tank focusing on Israeli security, regional diplomacy and international law, took the debate to an international level. Gerstenfeld gained attention in Norway in 2008 when he published the book *Behind the Humanitarian Mask: The Nordic Countries, Israel, and the Jews*, in which he vehemently criticised Norway and Sweden, claiming that parts of the social elites were responsible for “many pioneering efforts in demonising Israel.”<sup>42</sup> Gerstenfeld also wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* that “Norway has a long history of anti-Semitism”,<sup>43</sup> and accused prominent Norwegians, such as comedian Otto Jespersen, of being antisemitic. Gerstenfeld mentioned Gaarder in particular as a prime example of latent Norwegian antisemitism, writing that the “op-ed by Jostein Gaarder [...] until this day remains the vilest anti-Semitic article published in a European mainstream paper since the Second World War.”<sup>44</sup>

Gerstenfeld’s harsh criticism of Norway caused quite a stir in Norwegian media, leading to a small but fierce debate. Per A. Christiansen, Middle East correspondent for *Aftenposten*, and Thomas Hylland Eriksen were among those who questioned Gerstenfeld’s methods and understanding of the Norwegian debate culture.<sup>45</sup> Gerstenfeld replied in his article “Latterliggjøring av Holocaust” (Ridiculing the Holocaust)<sup>46</sup> by saying that both Christiansen and Hylland Eriksen toned down and whitewashed what were clearly antisemitic actions. Furthermore, Dore Gold, Chairman of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, advised Norway to use Gerstenfeld’s “disturbing findings” for self-examination.<sup>47</sup>

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42. Gerstenfeld, *Behind the Humanitarian Mask*.

43. Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Norway – a paradigm for anti-Semitism”, *Jerusalem Post*, December 13, 2008, <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Norway-a-paradigm-for-anti-Semitism> (accessed 14.04.2019).

44. Gerstenfeld, “Norway – a paradigm for anti-Semitism.”

45. Per A. Christiansen, “En nasjon av jødehatere?”, *Aftenposten*, December 19, 2008, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kommentar/i/Ewyx2/En-nasjon-av-jodehatere>. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, “Ingen løsning i sikte”, *Aftenposten*, January 07, 2009, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/i/m1P0E/Ingen-losning-i-sikte> (accessed 15.05.2019).

46. Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Latterliggjøring av Holocaust”, *Aftenposten*, January 27, 2009, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/1750Q/Latterliggjoringen-av-Holocaust> (accessed 15.05.2019).

47. Dore Gold, “Grunnløs kritikk”, *Aftenposten*, January 03, 2009, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/04VqB/Grunnlos-kritikk> (accessed 15.05.2019).

## 2014 – THE USE OF GAARDER AS NARRATIVE ABBREVIATION

In 2014, when tensions in the Middle East escalated once more with new hostilities between Israel and Hamas, Gaarder's original article was again read and shared on social media for a few weeks. This was the first time that the content and message of the article were discussed to any degree for quite a long time. However, newspapers and, in particular, Ervin Kohn, vice director of the Norwegian Center against Racism (Antirasistisk Senter) and president of the Jewish Community in Oslo, were keen to stress that the op-ed was already eight years old, thereby playing down its relevance and credibility. Many might have felt that the article described the current climate of the conflict, but Gaarder's article was now seen as an example of unacceptable criticism of Israel. In many ways, Kohn shut the debate down before it started again by saying that the original text was a "horrible, antisemitic article" that we were all now finished with.<sup>48</sup>

The conflict of 2014 did, however, attract much attention in the media and in Norwegian politics and reignited a debate about how to criticise Israel. In an article, Snorre Valen, a high-ranking politician in the Socialist Left party (SV), claimed that "of course we should expect more from Israel" and that "we should hold Israel to a higher moral standard."<sup>49</sup> The Socialist Left party, now no longer a junior partner in a coalition government after the coalition lost the election in 2013, had long since been critical of Israel's policies towards Palestine and especially its support for the settlements. Valen's criticism of Israel made active use of Gaarder's article by labelling it "*criticism that misses the target*" and showing where the line between legitimate and illegitimate criticism should be drawn. By doing so, Valen's article shows how Gaarder now serves as a well-established marker of failing criticism of Israel – and to place one's own position within the realm of legitimate criticism. Gaarder's article is neither explained nor discussed, merely referred to, leaving Gaarder in the position of an ever-present and stigmatised participant in the debate – even if he does not take active part in it.

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48. Maren Ørstavik, "Gammel Israel-kronikk vekker nytt engasjement", *Aftenposten*, July 22, 2014, <https://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/i/L0OL4/jostein-gaarders-israel-kronikk-vekker-nytt-engasjement> (accessed 15.05.2019).

49. Snorre Valen, "Så klart vi forventer mer av Israel", *Verdens Gang*, July 24, 2014, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/49Xb6/israel-er-et-av-verdens-mest-utviklede-land-og-vi-maa-holde-israel-til-en-hoeyere-moralsk-standard-enn-avskummet-i-isil-skriver-sv-politiker-snorre-valen-kronikk-saa-klart-vi-forventer-mer-av-israel> (accessed 15.05.2019).

#### 4. GAARDER AND THE QUESTION OF ANTISEMITISM IN NORWAY

As indicated in the introduction, the Gaarder debate had also brought up the question of antisemitism as being a part of mainstream discourse in Norway and, as a consequence, the question of how widespread antisemitic attitudes were in the Norwegian population.

In 2010-12, the Holocaust Center conducted a population survey investigating attitudes towards Jews and other minorities. This was the first population survey of this kind in Norway, and was commissioned by three ministries: the Ministry of Children, Equality and Inclusion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice.<sup>50</sup> The support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can, among other things, be interpreted as a consequence of the “bad reputation” Norway had gained through international media coverage of alleged antisemitism related to the Middle East conflict.

An article in the newspaper *Aftenposten* from January 2011, covering the work with the survey, underlined that “Norway has been criticised for an alleged rising antisemitism by individuals and media in Israel.” Higher Education Minister Tora Aasland is quoted saying that “the Council of Europe has requested more information about attitudes towards Jews in the Norwegian population.”<sup>51</sup>

Accusations of antisemitism had become an issue of international reputation for Norway, and there can be no doubt that the “Gaarder affair” was an element in this.

In the same article, the director of the Holocaust Center, Odd-Bjørn Fure, referred to the Gaarder article as the very symbol of an antisemitic incident:

We’ve had a number of problematic issues. We need to ask if they are a result of an environment of anti-Jewish attitudes, or if these are more random cases.

Fure further highlighted Gaarder’s article as an indicator of these attitudes, in addition to the shooting at the synagogue or the bullying of Jewish school children.<sup>52</sup> The examples given by Fure here show that Gaarder’s article is placed in a “line of events” culminating in the shooting at the synagogue and is

50. <https://www.hlsenteret.no/forskning/jodisk-historie-og-antisemittisme/holdningsundersokelse/> (accessed 15.05.2019).

51. Olav Olsen, “Kartlegger nordmenns holdninger til jøder”, *Aftenposten*, January 26, 2011, <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/Qmmxq/Kartlegger-nordmenns-holdninger-til-joder> (accessed 31.08.2019).

52. With this he might be alluding to a survey conducted in Oslo in 2010 bringing to the fore the extended use of “Jew” as a swear word among pupils; [http://2v2ae13etcm31s6bzloe3jz1.wpen-gine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Rapport\\_UDA\\_7.6.2011.pdf](http://2v2ae13etcm31s6bzloe3jz1.wpen-gine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Rapport_UDA_7.6.2011.pdf).

even mentioned as the most prominent example of recent antisemitic incidents in Norway.

Conceptually, this use of the “Gaarder trope” is interesting as it also marks a shift in the conception of antisemitism, bringing it closer to the international discussion and research on the topic. As mentioned before, the perception of antisemitism in the Norwegian public debate tended to be limited to *hatred of Jews*, strongly associated with Nazi ideology. This hatred would only be found in *antisemites*, who most likely would be placed on the extreme right fringes of the political spectre. This, on the other hand, meant that a person who did not hate Jews could not be accused of antisemitism. Even if this perception had been challenged before – e.g. by Holocaust survivor Leo Eitingers<sup>53</sup> – it took the Gaarder debate to significantly change this view in the broader public. Not only the *antisemite* and his or her intentions and attitudes, but the antisemitic *denotation* of utterances or expressions came under the spotlight. As a consequence, it would not be that *any* kind of criticism of Israel would fall under the definition of antisemitism, as claimed by Gaarder’s defenders, but those forms of criticism that carried antisemitic or anti-Judaist stereotypes and generalisations would.

However, Fure’s indication that Gaarder’s article was some of the most striking proof that antisemitism was an issue in contemporary Norwegian society provoked another attempt by Gaarder to rid himself of this stigma. In his article “Not antisemitic attitudes”, Gaarder stressed that his polemic in 2006 had not been an expression of an anti-Jewish sentiment:

In numerous interviews and debate programmes, and in a new article in *Aftenposten* after the first one, I made it crystal clear that my engagement was not an expression of anti-Jewish attitudes. It was an expression of humanism and empathy with the victims of war.<sup>54</sup>

The quote shows that Gaarder’s argument was still informed by an understanding of antisemitism as *anti-Jewish attitudes*. As he considered himself to be accused of such attitudes, he defended himself, emphasising his *real* attitudes as being humanistic and empathic, and then turning into a mode of attack:

53. See Hoffman, chapter 1, this volume.

54. Jostein Gaarder, “Ikke anti-jødiske holdninger”, *Aftenposten*, January 29, 2011, <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikk/i/rgAkw/Ikke-anti-jødiske-holdninger> (accessed 15.05.2019).

But Odd-Bjørn Fure also knows that those who criticise the politics of Israel are automatically accused of antisemitism. Fure knows this mechanism or master suppression technique.<sup>55</sup>

Unwilling or incapable to accept the distinction between antisemitic expressions and anti-Jewish attitudes, Gaarder used the reoccurring defence strategy of claiming that *any* criticism of Israel would be defined as antisemitic. Consequently, Gaarder positioned himself as a victim of a master suppression technique.

Four months later, Gaarder appeared with yet another attempt at clarification. In an article entitled “Afterthought”, he accepted the point that his stylistic devices and expressions, not his attitudes, had been under scrutiny, and seemed, for the first time, to accept the “verdict” of public opinion.

Moreover, Gaarder *himself* insisted on the necessity of distinguishing legitimate criticism of Israel from expressions of antisemitism:

From my side, the op-ed was not at all an expression of anti-Jewish attitudes. But my way of expressing myself in 2006 could easily be interpreted like that. [...]

We never must express ourselves in such a way that legitimate criticism of the politics of the state of Israel can be confused with an illegitimate and in any regard unacceptable agitation against Jews or Judaism. The first to take the consequences of this insight should be myself. My intention was to draw attention to the victims of war and the responsibility of the state of Israel. Unfortunately, I did not realise in time that I was about to formulate several thoughtless and ambiguous statements, and I apologise for that. It has become a case of conscience for me to be very clear about this issue.<sup>56</sup>

In this response, Gaarder gives the impression of a total turnaround. There are no more traces of self-victimisation and accusations to his critics of purposely misunderstanding and misinterpreting him. Instead, there is an expression of regret for not being aware of the offensive meaning of his text and a sense of moral obligation to take responsibility for his fault. Given the development that had transformed his article into the major landmark indicating the red line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism, Gaarder changed his position from

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55. Gaarder, “Ikke antijødiske holdninger.”

56. Gaarder, “Ikke antijødiske holdninger.”

denial to embrace, and even to becoming one of the “gatekeepers” himself by exclaiming that “We never must express ourselves in a way that [...]”.

## 5. THE MOVING TROPE: GAARDER REFERENCES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

As shown, altogether Gaarder came up with four excuses, or attempts at clarification in 2006 and 2011. Apparently, the burden of being associated with a “horrible text that cannot be mitigated by anything else than speaking about the text itself”<sup>57</sup> was too heavy to bear for Gaarder. His attempts at exculpation were commented upon rather ironically by the editor of *Bergens Tidende*, Olav Kobbeltveit, a week later:

Recently, almost five years later, Jostein Gaarder found that even more repentance was necessary. Therefore, he came with one more public confession of his sins on 20 April this year. In *Aftenposten*, he writes under the heading ‘Afterthought’: ‘We must never express ourselves in such a way that legitimate criticism of the state of Israel by any means can be confused with absolute illegitimate and unacceptable bullying of Jews.’ Okay, but who sets the boundary marker between justifiable criticism of the state of Israel and unacceptable bullying against Jews and Judaism?<sup>58</sup>

While pointing to the impossible task of defining an indisputable demarcation line between criticism of Israel and antisemitism, Kobbeltveit did not seem to recognise that Gaarder’s article had become the very symbol of such a red line. However, despite Gaarder’s attempt to place himself on the “right” side of legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel, the op-ed had started to live a life of its own. It had turned into a narrative abbreviation, telling the story of a failed criticism of Israel and conveying the moral that even unintentionally expressed antisemitism was unacceptable.

Years later, references to the Gaarder debate served to indicate the red line between acceptable and unacceptable rhetoric related to Israel, Jews, and Judaism.

In 2015, Gaarder was put under the spot light in connection to the debate about a free speech prize awarded to Kari Jaquesson, a TV personality and journalist known for fitness programs as well as for her outspoken feminist opinions and

57. Inge Lønning, “En tekst og en utblåsning”, *Kirke og Kultur*, no. 03 (2006): 313.

58. Olav Kobbeltveit, “Omstridd antisemittisme”, *Bergens Tidende*, May 2, 2011, <https://www.bt.no/btmeninger/kommentar/i/5bLPz/Omstridd-antisemittisme> (accessed 15.05.2019).



criticism of pornography. Some days before she was to receive the prize at a philosophy festival in southern Norway, Jaquesson posted a comment on a Facebook page in which she insinuated that Israel stood behind IS attacks in Europe. Jaquesson was criticised for playing with old antisemitic rhetoric and a conspiracy theory that led to a whole new debate. The Facebook post caused one member of the jury to step down from her position because she could not persuade the rest of the jury to withdraw Jaquesson's award. The remaining members of the jury believed the opinions from Jaquesson to be "legitimate political utterances", rejecting the proposal to withdraw. Jostein Gaarder was a board member of the festival, and somehow saw himself thrown back into the discussion about antisemitism. Again, in this context of antisemitic utterances, Gaarder's op-ed was used as an example of previous antisemitic posts. Interestingly, even if the criticism of Israel was not an issue here, Gaarder still served as a narrative abbreviation in order to highlight that even subtle and unintended antisemitic expressions need to be addressed as what they are: antisemitic.<sup>59</sup>

The final incident to be analysed here took place during the French presidential elections in 2016. Due to his previous working relation with the Rothschild bank, negative associations to Emmanuel Macron as a representative of moneyed and economic elites circulated. These negative associations had classical antisemitic undertones, such as the "the money Jew". In an article in *VG* explaining this controversy, Gaarder is referred to once again as an example of antisemitism. The article, titled "Den evige påstanden", (The eternal claim) by the Norwegian journalist and media commentator Anders Giæver, explains how the Rothschild bank has held a central role in antisemitic conspiracy theories for over 200 years, and that it was a convenient misunderstanding to think that "if a person is not a racist, he or she cannot make a racist statement."<sup>60</sup> In the discussions of latent antisemitism in contexts outside Norway, Gaarder is used as an analogy or reference.

## 6. CONCLUSION

By exploring some of the main elements of the Gaarder debate in 2006 and following the debate throughout its afterlife for a decade, the analysis has shown that it marks a turning point in several ways. Most obviously, there is a *before* and *after*

59. Didrik Söderlind, "Kunsten "Å bare stille spørsmål", *Verdens Gang*, May 29, 2015, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/52awK/kunsten-aa-bare-stille-spoersmaal> (accessed 15.05.2019).

60. Anders Giæver, "Den evige påstanden", *Verdens Gang*, March 30, 2017, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/jWwPb/den-evige-paastanden> (accessed 04.05.2019).

Gaarder when it comes to what is assumed as legitimate and acceptable forms of criticism of Israel and what is regarded to be crossing a red line towards antisemitism. This does not mean that there is an established consensus regarding where exactly this red line lies, or when it is crossed, but there is an awareness *that* such a line exists and that it *should not* be crossed. This shift is particularly interesting in light of previous debates in Norway, such as those related to a hearing on antisemitism held in Oslo in 1983, when the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel was broadly rejected in the public debate in Norway.<sup>61</sup>

Another insight regards the importance of the Holocaust as interpretative framework internationally, and the impact of the establishment of the Holocaust Center for the shifting boundary between assumed legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism in the Norwegian context. In the light of the persecution and murder of the European Jews during World War II, the denial of the right of the state of Israel to exist was interpreted as a legitimisation of violence against Jews – and became more problematic.

The impact of the Gaarder debate on the discourse on antisemitism even goes beyond the issue of criticism of Israel. While Gaarder repeatedly defended himself against the accusation of being a Jew hater, the debate had consolidated the awareness that neither *hatred of Jews* nor an anti-Jewish *intention* are decisive for qualifying utterances or expressions as antisemitic, but the possible interpretations and *consequences* of the expressions are.

The material analysed shows that references to the Gaarder debate have become a discursive trope recalling and re-establishing this boundary, and that it is used as a narrative abbreviation, alluding to the boundary without repeating the arguments that established it.

In these ways, the debate has contributed to a higher sense of alert related to other forms of antisemitism. As references to the Gaarder op-ed, problematising antisemitic allusions to Jewish conspiracy, occur even ten years later, the debate has contributed to the communicative latency of antisemitism.

And Jostein Gaarder? Despite his attempts to explain and whitewash himself, he has become a symbol of non-intentional antisemitism. After having tried to free himself from this stigma, often by accusing his critics of willingly misinterpreting his good intentions, he finally embraced the criticism. Beyond that, he turned into a moral defender of the demarcation line he involuntarily contributed towards establishing.

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61. See Hoffmann, chapter 1, this volume.

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## ANNEX: OVERVIEW OVER INCLUDED MEDIA WITH MORE THAN 10 CONTRIBUTIONS/ BY KEYWORDS

Kilde	Gaarder+ Israel	Gaarder+ antisemittisme	Gaarder+ Kronikk	Gaarder+ antisemitt	Gaarder+ antisemittisk	Gaarder+ jødehat	Gaarder+ Holocaust	Gaarder+ Levin
📄 Aftenposten	120	48	107	16	16	19	30	24
🌐 Aftenposten	0	45	86	17	13	19	26	20
📄 Dagbladet	55	14	37	7	9	9	13	16
📄 Klassekampen	43	19	28	12	4	4	14	11
🌐 Dagbladet	35	15	22	7	7	5	14	9
📄 NTBtekst	34	9	16	5	1	2	5	5
📄 VG	40	10	16	9	5	4	5	7
📄 Bergens Tidende	30	13	18	5	3	8	5	8
🌐 Dagen	23	15	19	2	7	7	4	2
📄 Adresseavisen	23	11	17	8	3	6	6	5
🌐 Norge IDAG	35	7	16	0	2	6	6	2
📄 Dagsavisen	26	6	24	4	1	3	6	1
🌐 Vårt Land	23	9	18	3	3	2	3	4
🌐 VG Nett	18	9	17	6	2	3	4	5
🌐 Bergens Tidende	19	8	17	4	3	4	5	4
🌐 Dagsavisen	23	9	14	5	1	4	6	1
📄 Morgenbladet	14	8	14	8	5	3	3	2
📄 Fædrelandsvennen	18	6	14	3	2	2	6	2
🌐 Nettavisen	21	6	15	2	2	1	3	4
🌐 Tønsbergs Blad	17	6	12	4	1	2	4	1
🌐 Adresseavisen	13	4	10	4	2	2	2	3
📄 Stavanger Aftenblad	20	5	7	2	2	1	3	2
🌐 NRK	14	4	10	2	1	0	4	2
🌐 Fædrelandsvennen	14	4	9	1	2	0	3	0
🌐 Klassekampen	7	6	7	3	2	1	5	2
🌐 Bergensavisen	13	4	8	4	0	1	2	1
🌐 Nationen	10	4	7	2	2	2	2	0
🌐 Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad	11	6	5	3	1	2	1	2
📄 Nationen	9	5	6	2	1	3	2	1

# 3.

## A Growing Consensus?

### *A History of Public Debates on Islamophobia in Norway*

CORA ALEXA DØVING

**ABSTRACT** The term *Islamophobia* is seldom used in Norwegian public debates, but people are increasingly recognising the phenomenon to which it refers. Regardless of the labelling – anti-Muslim sentiments, discrimination against Muslims, prejudice, harassment, or enmity against Muslims – there seems to be a new awareness of Islamophobia as a problem that needs to be addressed. Although only 56 per cent of the respondents to the population survey conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM) saw a need to combat harassment against Muslims, 81 per cent believed negative attitudes towards Muslims were widespread. The population's perception of prejudice as being prevalent in Norwegian society might be a reflection of a growing concern for Islamophobia expressed in public debates. This chapter gives an overview of the cases that put Islamophobia on the map in Norway: When are anti-Muslim discourses seen as problematic – and why? It identifies developments in the understanding of Islamophobia and asks whether the acknowledgement of the phenomenon has resulted from a growing consensus of Islamophobia as a social and political problem that cuts across various political standpoints.

**KEYWORDS** Islamophobia | public discourse | conspiracy theory | 22 July | anti-Muslim racism | Norway

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term *Islamophobia* has never become properly established in Norwegian public debates. The phenomenon it refers to – widespread prejudice, acts and practices that exclude or discriminate against people on the grounds that they are or are assumed to be Muslim – however, is increasingly recognised.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this chapter is to locate when and in what ways Islamophobia (regardless of what it is called) has been debated in the Norwegian press: When was Islamophobia first recognised as a problem? What are the cases that triggered discussions of Islamophobia, and how have the boundaries of what can be said about Muslims been negotiated?

Not surprisingly, the history of an understanding of Islamophobia is linked to the history of Muslim migration to Norway.<sup>2</sup> Xenophobia, discrimination, and racism have been side effects of debates on migration, and an understanding of Islamophobia has developed hand-in-hand with these issues being publicly discussed.

The late 1980s marked the start of a long-lasting and often conflict-oriented public debate on migration and integration in Norway. An important – almost paradigmatic – shift in these debates was when “the migrants” became “the Muslims”. To begin, Norwegians of Muslim background were generally understood to be immigrants with highly varied national backgrounds, and described with reference to their country of origin rather than their religious affiliation. This changed during the 1990s. The understanding of Islamophobia as a specific phenomenon, different from general xenophobia, is linked to this change. A change from “ethnicity” to “religion” as an identifying marker was not necessarily a one-sided affair, as an increasing number of young Norwegians of Muslim background during the same decade started self-identifying publicly as “Muslim” rather than “Pakistani”, “Moroccan”, or “Turk”.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the chapter, I will discuss whether the understanding of Islamophobia can also be seen as part of a discourse of “resistance” and identity politics among Muslims.

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1. For a definition of the term *Islamophobia*, see the introduction to this book; and for a discussion on how Islamophobia is related to racism, see chapter 8 in this book, Cora Alexa Døving, “Muslims are...: Contextualising survey answers”.
  2. See chapter 8, “Muslims are...: Contextualising Survey Answers”, for a brief introduction to the history of Muslims in Norway.
  3. Cora Alexa Døving and Siv Ellen Kraft, *Religion i pressen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 2013); Christian Stokke, *A multicultural society in the making. How Norwegian Muslims challenge a white nation* (PhD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Social Anthropology, 2012), 7.

One of the debates that has triggered discussions about Islamophobia is that on the term itself, and how it should be conceptualised.<sup>4</sup> These conceptual discussions, however, did not enter the wider public sphere in Norway until 2001, which is late compared to discussions in Britain, Sweden, and France. In Norway, conceptual variations of the term were discussed seriously first around 2009 and then again after the terror attacks of 22 July 2011. In the search for data in the archives of national newspapers, the term Islamophobia was therefore not useful as a starting point for identifying the understanding of what it refers to. Since the aim of this text is to identify some sort of public understanding of the phenomenon rather than tracking the history of the term, the chapter will refer to debates that centred around *a concern* about prejudices, aversion, discrimination, anti-Muslim sentiments, or attacks on Muslims as a point of departure. To simplify reading, I will use the term *Islamophobia* when addressing these phenomena, regardless of the term used in the different debates.

The numbers of articles on Islam and Muslims that appeared in the Norwegian press between the end of the 1980s and 2012 is overwhelming; the press seemed to possess an unlimited interest in the presence of Muslims. This chapter has no intention of covering the breadth and depth of these debates and how they have been fed into Islamophobia.<sup>5</sup> Rather, I have selected a few cases based on the criteria that they, in addition to starting with a negative angle on Muslims, also produced a meta-discussion (often marginal) on the consequences that such negative depictions could have for Muslims. I have chosen some of the cases that can be defined as milestones in the history of both Islamophobia and the attempts to counter it in Norway. I refer to them as milestones because the cases have become references in the national history of Muslim migration, as well as having promoted discussions on Islamophobia.

The rise of Islamophobia in Norway is intimately linked to the rise of populist right-wing formations that mobilise on an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim platform.<sup>6</sup>

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4. The history of the term has been of little interest in these debates. It was first used in French in the book *La Politique musulmane dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française* from 2010, by Alain Quellien. The book criticised French colonial administrators' attitudes towards Muslims. The first usage of the word in the English language can be cited in the works of Edward Said, from 1985. He used the word when arguing for the close association between "Islamophobia and anti-semitism" throughout history.

5. Arranged marriages, Koran schooling, Muslim values (whatever they may be), imams and the building of mosques are examples of typical themes in the general debates. Due to their ongoing nature, they are not discussed in this chapter other than as a general backdrop for more time-specific events.

6. Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2014).



When Islamophobia is recognised and discussed, it is therefore often entangled with political arguments raised against the right-wing populist party, the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*). Consequently, the issue of Islamophobia has often been framed as part of a right/left polarisation established in Norwegian politics. In other words, Islamophobia is often seen as a politicised concept used rhetorically with references to different views on migration or multiculturalism. Inasmuch as the title of this chapter indicates that there is an increasing consensus concerning Islamophobia in Norway, it is because Islamophobia seems to be (slowly) becoming an issue for political parties and debaters independent of a right/left axis in politics (2019). I suggest that the increase in populist and more extreme right-wing milieus in recent years has led to a more hegemonic understanding among politicians of Islamophobia as a phenomenon that needs to be politically addressed, and that it is a phenomenon that combines conspiracy theories and racist elements.

## 2. MUSLIMS IN THE PRESS – A GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor has pointed out that debates on the understanding of a multicultural society in all Western European countries have become debates on Islam and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> This is also the case in Norway.<sup>8</sup> A media survey for 2009 showed that the terms “Islam” and “Muslims” were used more often than the term “swine flu”, which relates to the biggest news of 2009, and that the term “Muslims” was used almost as many times as the name of Norway’s prime minister.<sup>9</sup> The finding illustrates a public sphere with a certain obsession with the issue of Muslim presence.

The press is the primary source of information about Islam and Muslims for most Norwegians.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore reasonable to assume that the media image affects the population’s beliefs and attitudes towards Muslims. Due to the “logic of media”, Islam/Muslims are often visible through exceptional events.<sup>11</sup> Emphasis on sensational rather than everyday matters applies to news in general, but

7. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2007).

8. Fritt Ords medianalyse 2016: [http://www.frittord.no/images/uploads/files/Muslim\\_og\\_islam\\_i\\_medie\\_2016.pdf](http://www.frittord.no/images/uploads/files/Muslim_og_islam_i_medie_2016.pdf).

9. Retriever medianalyse 2009: <https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/e187852a18ca46afb6f2-bc7e4915d6ad/medianalyse-innvandring-og-integrering-i-norske-medier>.

10. Elisabeth Eide and Anne Hege Simonsen, *Mistenkelige utlendinger. Minoriteter i norsk presse gjennom hundre år* (Oslo: Høyskoleforlaget, 2007).

11. Stefano Allievi, “The Media and debates on Islam”, in Brigitte Marechal, B., Allievi, S., Dassetto, F., Nielsen, J. eds., *Muslims in Enlarged Europe. Religion and Society* (Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 291.

because Islam is linked to a part of the population that is vulnerable on account of its migration background and minority status, the consequences of the media logic can be serious. Several studies of ways in which Islam is presented in mass media have documented how stereotypical notions are produced or reproduced.<sup>12</sup> A recent study of representations of Muslims in the British press (from 2000 to 2015), found that Muslims are generally negatively framed, whilst Islam is characterised as an intolerant and violent religion.<sup>13</sup> The history of so-called migration debates in Norway is similarly marked by depictions of Muslims as “a political problem that must be solved”, even in cases where there is no breach of policy or social norms.<sup>14</sup> But some changes have occurred in recent years: Norwegian newspapers today provide a more nuanced picture of Islam than they did just a few years ago, not least because of the increasing number of Muslims participating in public debates. Muslim voices are, as will be shown, central to the increased recognition of Islamophobia as a societal problem in the arena of public debates. National newspapers also have journalists who have covered Islam-related issues for several years and who have actively sought knowledge of Islam and Muslims. Several of these journalists have contributed to an increased focus on discrimination and prejudice against Muslims in the press.<sup>15</sup>

The real turning point in the history of the public awareness of Islamophobia in Norway is to be found in the aftermath of the terror attack on 22 July, 2011. Just before the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people, he posted a manuscript on the internet titled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*. The manuscript explained that Breivik defined the attack as a legitimate act of self-defence on behalf of the European people. His core message was that in the face of an ongoing Islamisation of Europe, the political and social “elite” have entered into a pact with the enemy. These ideas led to a public identification of right-wing extremism as a producer of Islamophobic ideology and of conspiracy theories as essential elements of Islamophobia. However, the first recognition of conspiracy theories as a specific element of xenophobia is to be found twenty years earlier, in the debates triggered by a fake letter from a Muslim to a politician.

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12. Elisabeth Poole, “Reporting Islam: media representations of British Muslims” (New York: Tauris 2002); Peter Hervik, Elisabeth Eide, and Kunelius, R., “A Long and Messy Event”, in *Transnational Media Events. The Mohammed Cartoons and the Imagined Clash of Civilizations*, eds. Eide, E., Kunelius, R., and Phillips, A. (Gothenbeug: Nordicom, 2008); Cora Alexa Døving and Siv Ellen Kraft, *Religion i pressen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2013).

13. Saifuddin Ahmed and Jörg Matthes, “Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A meta-analysis”, *The International Communication Gazette* 79, no. 3 (2017).

14. Døving and Kraft, *Religion i pressen*.

15. Ibid.

### 3. A LETTER FROM MUSTAFA

The so-called Mustafa letter was a fabricated letter written to the chairman of The Progress Party, Carl I. Hagen. The Progress Party developed from being an anti-tax protest movement to becoming an anti-immigrant right-wing populist party, with a breakthrough in 1987 when anti-immigration politics really entered the stage in Norway.<sup>16</sup> At an election rally in September the same year, Hagen read out the “Mustafa letter” for his audience, and the content was immediately circulated by the press:

Allah is Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet! You are fighting in vain, Mr. Hagen! Islam, the only true faith, will conquer Norway too. One day, mosques will be as common in Norway as churches are today, and the children of my grandchildren will live to see this. I know, and all Muslims in Norway know, that one day, the Norwegian population will come to (our) faith, and that this country will be Muslim! We give birth to more children than you, and many right-believing Muslims come to Norway each year, men in fertile age. One day, the heathen cross in the flag will be gone too!<sup>17</sup>

Hagen used the letter as “evidence” for his argument that asylum seekers were about to take over the country. *VG*, one of the national newspapers, quickly revealed the letter as fake. Mustafa existed but had not written the letter.<sup>18</sup>

The letter’s content gave rise to a new concern over migration politics and the year 1987 represents a milestone in the history of the Progress Party’s growth as it tripled its election results that year. But the letter also led to public reflection on a new type of xenophobia: *fear of an intended Muslim takeover*.<sup>19</sup> Journalists described the letter as “something that would spread racist attitudes” and reported that Mustafa himself and his children were subjected to several threatening phone calls with racist statements. In the newspaper *Aftenposten*, the President of Parliament Jo Benkow condemned reference to the letter as it would spread fear of immigrants.<sup>20</sup> Hagen was also sued for racism by an immigrant organisation.

16. The Progress Party has become the country’s third largest political party, and a part of the centre-right government coalition.

17. If not otherwise indicated, all translations are by Cora Alexa Døving.

18. Sindre Bangstad, “Re-coding nationalism: Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway before and after July 22 2011”, in *Islamophobia Studies Yearbook*, ed. Farid Hafez (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016).

19. “Hagens falske brevhet” *VG*, September 8, 1987, front page and 6–7.

20. Jo Benkow, “Hvirvler opp rasistiske holdninger”, *Aftenposten*, September 9, 1987, 4.

Even though the word “Muslim” occurred several times in the letter, the public responses referred to xenophobia (*innvanderhets/frykt*) and racism against Pakistanis rather than to fear or hatred of Muslims. This illustrates an interesting gap between the *content* of the letter, which consists of what would become classic Islamophobic claims, and the *reception* to it, which saw it as racist, xenophobic, and as targeting migrant workers from Pakistan. Still, the Mustafa letter has become an important reference in later years’ understanding of Islamophobia, as it was the first time the depiction of a Muslim takeover appeared in the public press and was acknowledged as being a substantial component of xenophobia and racism.

#### 4. FROM LABOUR MIGRANTS TO POLITICAL MUSLIMS – FROM XENOPHOBIA TO ISLAMOPHOBIA

In the introduction, I referred to the transition when “the migrants” became “the Muslims” as a paradigmatic shift in public debates on Islamophobia. This shift is related to, or rather overlaps with, a shift from seeing immigrants as a category of “poor non-organised people” to a depiction of Muslims as a minority group with the potential to mobilise politically. It is when a minority is associated with some sort of political threat that stereotyping of them seems to increase.<sup>21</sup> When the Runnymede Trust, in its now-classic report from 1997, *Islamophobia – A Challenge for Us All*, re-launched the term Islamophobia, it described the Rushdie affair as one of the “formative and defining events” of processes that would come to stereotype Muslims because the case made the Muslims visible as a political force.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE RUSHDIE AFFAIR

In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini’s religious ruling (fatwa) that Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, deserved the death penalty, led to a diplomatic crisis between Iran and several Western countries. It also led to Muslims all over Europe demonstrating against a book they saw as blasphemous, and “Muslims in Europe” becoming visible as a political force. Although the Rushdie case did not feed into general debates on multiculturalism and integration, which were few in Norway

21. Historian Frode Ulvund illustrates this connection in a book on different religious minorities in Norwegian history: *Nasjonens antiborgere. Forestillinger om religiøse minoriteter som samfunnsfiender i Norge, ca. 1814–1964* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademiske, 2017).

22. The Runnymede Trust Report, *Islamophobia – A Challenge for us all* (1997) 27.

at that time, the press coverage of “angry Muslims burning books in England” led to the beginning of a long-lasting public discussion on freedom of speech versus “Muslim values”.

As a response to the fatwa, the Islamic Defence Council (IDC)<sup>23</sup> was established in Norway as an organ representing 20,000 Norwegian Muslims who proclaimed that they would use all legal means to stop the publication of a Norwegian edition of the book. Demonstrations were organised<sup>24</sup> and, according to the newspaper *VG*, this was the “biggest Muslim event ever held in Norway.”<sup>25</sup> The press referred to individual Muslims, stating that this was not a demonstration against freedom of speech, but more generally against abusive language targeting Muslims. Although most comments and letters to the editors of different newspapers adopted a negative approach in using adjectives such as “fanatics”, “mediaeval”, and “barbaric”, attention was also paid to the problem of negatively stereotyping Muslims.

When a Muslim who was a member of Oslo City Council and the Labour Party in Oslo stated that he would not hesitate to kill Rushdie, the press coverage of the affair became even more marked by anger and shock. At the same time, organisations working against discrimination and racism reported an increase in experiences of prejudice among Muslims in general. A few Muslim voices were also present in public debates, reporting how negative depictions of Muslims in general had led to negative experiences for them personally.<sup>26</sup>

It was in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair that references to prejudice against Muslims rather than against immigrants (Pakistanis) emerged for the first time in the Norwegian press.<sup>27</sup> One example is the reaction to a population survey showing that attitudes towards Muslims’ right to practice their religion had changed dramatically after the Rushdie affair: several politicians and researchers commented on the finding with warnings against negative generalisations of Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

In 1993, the Rushdie affair once again became a media event when an attempt was made to assassinate William Nygaard (who barely survived), the publisher of the Norwegian version of *The Satanic Verses*. Very quickly, Muslim organisations

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23. Later to become the organisation *Islamsk Råd Norge*.

24. On February 25, 1989, 3,000 Muslims gathered in Oslo.

25. “Siste sjanse”, *VG*, February 27, 1989, 11.

26. *Norsk Telegram Bureau*, February 24, 1989.

27. In Britain, the affair led to debates about whether existing laws could be used to protect groups against blasphemy, and the question of whether religious groups should have the same legal protection for “the collective dignity” as the protection given to groups defined by “race” and “gender”. I found no record of this type of debate in Norwegian newspapers.

28. *Norsk Telegram Bureau*, April 18, 1989.

cooperated in making a public statement saying that the murder attempt was a “violent act from which they strongly distanced themselves.”<sup>29</sup> In addition to this, Oslo’s largest mosque made a public statement: “We condemn the book. But we kill no one.”<sup>30</sup> These reactions illustrate a climate in which Muslim organisations knew that solely by being Muslim, they could be held responsible, or at least be seen as representatives of extremism. Muslim debaters tried to explain how it felt to be asked constantly to take a stand against the banning of the book. Still, most of the national newspapers reported an increase in experiences of anti-Muslim attitudes and warned against it: “Rhetorical clichés such as ‘fanatical Muslims’ make us blind to the diversity within the Muslim world.”<sup>31</sup> The editor of *Aftenposten* warned against “making Islam our new enemy.”<sup>32</sup> Although the press, both in terms of op-ed articles, letter to the editor and pieces written by journalists, was dominated by expressions such as “Muslim values at war with European values”,<sup>33</sup> several commentators in different papers and media channels warned against seeing Muslims as a single mass.

According to the Runnymede Trust’s first definition of Islamophobia (1997), the understanding of Islam as a monolithic and static religion, as well as the collectivising of Muslims as aggressive by nature, is the core of the phenomenon.<sup>34</sup> The Rushdie affair was the starting point for recognising these two traits of Islamophobia and for combating them. However, there was no discussion of what to call this form of prejudice. This discussion started at the time of the terrorist acts on September 11, 2001 in the United States, hereafter referred to as 9/11.

## 9/11

It is widely documented in Western countries that the framing of Muslims in mass media changed dramatically in the aftermath of the terror attacks on 9/11 in 2001: Muslims were now described as a threat to civilisation.<sup>35</sup> The expression “fear of

29. “Muslimer i Norge: Tar avstand fra Nygaard attentatet”, NTB in *Dagbladet* and *VG*, October 11, 1993.

30. “Sunnimuslimer: Vi dreper ingen”, *Aftenposten*, October 12, 1993, 4.

31. Jo Bech-Karlsen, “Media skaper kulturkonflikter”, *Bergens Tidene*, October 13, 1993, 6.

32. Harald Stanghelle, “Blir islam vårt nye fiendebilde?” *Aftenposten*, October 13, 1993, 14.

33. For example, “Verdikamp på liv og død”, *Aftenposten*, October 16, 1993, 4.

34. The Runnymede Trust Report 1997, 4. These elements are still central in the latest report in which Islamophobia is defined as anti-Muslim racism.

35. The Runnymede Trust Report 2017; Mattias Gardell, *Islamofobi* (Oslo: Spartacus Forlag, 2011); Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and The Rise of Islamophobia*, (London and New York: Zed Books, 2014).

Muslims” (*muslimfrykt*) suddenly became one of the most common concepts in Norwegian newspapers. Media coverage of extremism was naturally overwhelming, but it also led to a discourse on how this might feed into Islamophobia. The press functioned as an arena for expressions of fear of Muslims *and* as an arena for warning against such fear. One month after 9/11, The Norwegian Centre against Racism organised a campaign to combat fear of Muslims. With funding from the state and from the private sector, the organisation hung up posters in buses and trams. These consisted of the text “Hate at first sight?” and a photo of a veiled woman. The press referred to the campaign, but only briefly.<sup>36</sup>

Several politicians and academics reminded the public of how important it was not to fear or hate Norwegian Muslims because of the terror attacks in USA. Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, also the leader of the Christian Democrat party, warned against seeing the attacks as a “war between religions”,<sup>37</sup> and 11 bishops sent out a message warning against the “harassment of Muslims”.<sup>38</sup>

“Anti-Muslim sentiments on the increase in Europe” was a title of an article referring to a report on incidents in the EU countries after 9/11.<sup>39</sup> The EU report was titled “Islamophobia in the EU” and several papers referred to the examples it gave of how Islamophobia might appear: spitting, vandalism of mosques, harassment of Muslim schoolchildren, and so forth. In an article titled “In the shadow of September 11”, *Klassekampen* used the EU report as a source to gain a better understanding of Islamophobia as more than an attitude; it was also actions.<sup>40</sup>

After 9/11, Islamophobia continued to be understood as a way of negatively generalising Muslims, but greater attention was paid to harassment (actions). An example illustrating this is a demonstration organised by The Islamic Council against stereotypical depictions of Muslims in the press, with the two main slogans: “Against generalisation” and “Stop harassment of Muslims”.<sup>41</sup>

The first opinion text (op-ed) discussing the term Islamophobia was written by a student named Peder Jensen. Jensen was later known as the blogger Fjordman, who inspired the right-wing extremist and terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. Jensen argued that Islamophobia was a trend word, and that it was being used as a weapon against the critique of Islam. Islam, he argued, is a religion that people must be allowed to criticise since many Muslims were very open in saying that

36. For example “Kampanje mot muslimfrykt”, *VG* October 31, 2001.

37. Radio, *P4*, November 8, 2001.

38. “Biskoper advarer mot muslimhets”, *VG*, September 25, 2001.

39. “Antimusliske holdninger på frammarsj i Europa”, *NTB*, May 23.

40. “I skyggen av 11. september”, *Klassekampen* May 27, 2002, 6–7.

41. “Demonstrerer for felles framtid”, *Aftenposten*, February 9, 2002, 4.

“one day Islam will cover the whole planet and replace all other religions and ideologies.”<sup>42</sup>

Islamophobia after 9/11 was generally discussed in three different ways in Norway: 1) as a cognitive way to make generalisations about Muslims (with references to fear/terror); 2) as harassment (also physical) of Muslims; and 3) as a rhetorical means to hinder the legitimate critique of Islam. This last view escalated with our next example – the cartoon affairs – in which Islamophobia was often degraded to being a term that was useful for Muslims who saw the benefit of depicting themselves as victims.

### THE CARTOON AFFAIRS

The response to cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad made the Muslim minority visible as a minority that could mobilise politically in a much broader way than the Rushdie affair did. In 2005, the Danish cartoons of Muhammad (12 in total) were published in the country’s largest newspaper, *Jylland Posten*. According to the editor of the paper, the intention was to stop what they called political correctness based on a misunderstood respect for not hurting the feelings of religious minorities.<sup>43</sup> One of the faces showed the prophet with a bomb in his turban and with the Islamic profession of faith written on it. The printings led to some debates on a new kind of hate speech, but the dominant messages in the press were that “Muslims are too sensitive” or “too demanding”. The understanding of the cartoon affairs as a “clash of civilisations” was more or less hegemonic when the cartoons were printed in Norway a year later.

The Norwegian context for reprinting the cartoons was different than the Danish, which may explain why the debates included more concern about Islamophobia than they had in Denmark. Norway had an established arena for inter-religious dialogue, and when a Christian journal, *Magazinet*, published one of the cartoons, the foreign minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Støre, apologised for the offence felt by many Muslims.<sup>44</sup> The Norwegian Islamic Council accepted the apology that soon came from the editor of *Magazinet*, and called off planned protests.<sup>45</sup> An

42. Peder Jensen, “Islam og det åpne samfunn”, *VG*, August 21, 2003, 41.

43. For an analysis of the cartoon debates in Denmark and Norway, see Hervik, Eide and Kunelius, “A Long and Messy Event”, and Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoon that Shook the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

44. Jonas Gahr Støre, “Dialog som prosjekt”, *Dagsavisen*, March 10, 2006, 4.

45. Christian Stokke, *A multicultural society in the making. How Norwegian Muslims challenge a white nation* (PhD, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Social Anthropology, 2012), 7.



independent group of Muslims, the Volunteers (*De frivillige*), however, proclaimed that they were not satisfied because the government had not addressed anti-Muslim sentiments in general. They organised their own demonstration on February 11, 2006 with slogans about how the press gave a false impression of Muslims, and that free speech had nothing to do with telling lies (about the prophet). The demonstration gathered 1,500 Muslims and was reported in all the main newspapers. Most of the reports had a negative angle with a focus on the threat of Muslim political violence. In fact the only violent act that took place in Norway with reference to the cartoons was when a Palestinian was stabbed with a knife while he being asked: “Why do you burn our flag in the Middle East?” This act of violence did not lead to debates on racism, since the police categorised it as an accident caused by alcohol.<sup>46</sup>

The Volunteers managed to draw some attention to negative portrayals of Muslims in the press. For example, *Dagbladet* used the slogans from the demonstrations, such as “Shame on you, media”, as illustrations the day after the demonstration.<sup>47</sup> Several newspapers also recited slogans such as “Media, mouthpiece of lies”. It is therefore reasonable to describe this as a public recognition of the connection between Islamophobia and the media. The demonstration also made it clear that young Muslims did not necessarily listen to leaders in Muslim organisations (who had tried to stop the event).<sup>48</sup> Several newspapers highlighted fear of a new and more fundamentalist generation, though they also gave access to a variety of Muslim viewpoints.<sup>49</sup> Through the press, several young Muslims had expressed the idea that a peaceful demonstration was a means to counter a stereotype of Muslims as aggressive.<sup>50</sup> They proclaimed that protecting Muslims against hate speech was just as important for them as protesting against the cartoons.

Public support of the Volunteers came first and foremost from members of the International Socialists in Oslo, who addressed anti-Muslim racism as a problem.<sup>51</sup>

46. “Frykter hevnaksjoner”, *Dagsavisen*, February 6, 2006, 9.

47. “Muhammed tegningene”, *Dagbladet*, February 12, 2006, 12–13.

48. The debate that ensued after *Magazinet* published the Mohammed cartoons suddenly started conveying an impression of Norwegian imams in a positive way. This was a result of their warnings against angry uproar. The imams’ desire to engage in dialogue was reiterated in several press reports. However, the caricature also led to imams being characterised as “out of step with younger generations”. Cora Alexa Døving, “Position and Self-understanding of Sunni Muslim Imams in Norway”, *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 3 (2014): 209–233.

49. Stokke, *A multicultural society in the making. How Norwegian Muslims challenge a white nation*, 75.

50. *Dagsavisen*, February 7, 2006.

51. Alf Skjeseth, “Still opp for muslimene”, *Klassekampen*, February 10, 2006, 9.

Professor of Social Medicine Per Fugelli, a well-known voice in public debates, gave his vocal support to the demonstrators and referred to them as “our neighbours” rather than Muslims, thereby addressing the importance of respect.

Internationally, several academic works were written on the issue of Islamophobia related to the cartoon affair.<sup>52</sup> In these texts, the authors discussed the severe lack of recognition of anti-Muslim racism. The main argument was that Western countries understand Islamophobia as hatred against a religion, and not as racism.<sup>53</sup> These academic responses are important contributors to a subsequent understanding of Islamophobia in Norway: the framing of the cartoon affair in terms of racism and the question of legislation (laws against hate speech) were brought into Norwegian public consciousness.<sup>54</sup> Even if their arguments were not prevalent in the debates, they offered an important alternative way of understanding the rise of Islamophobia. The concept of racism turned up in some of the debates on Islamophobia<sup>55</sup> and in relation to the UN’s international day to focus on the problem of racism, the national paper *VG* printed a long text discussing whether it was relevant to understand anti-Muslim attitudes as a form of neo-racism.<sup>56</sup> The article also refers to antisemitism and asks, rhetorically, whether members of the press would have covered cases relating to Muslims in the same way if they exchanged the word “Muslim” with “Jew”. This comparison did not – as it would later – result in harsh reactions. It was simply not commented upon.

A second cartoon affair occurred in Norway four years later. On February 3, 2010, *Dagbladet* used its front page to show a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad as a pig. As a response six individual Muslims organised a demonstration that gathered 3,000 people carrying slogans such as “Islam condemns terror”, “*Dagbladet* divides the nation”, “Stop publishing the cartoons” and “Islam is part of Norway”. However, none of these slogans reached the headlines: one of the organisers made a speech containing a threat towards Norway by referring to what happened on 9/11. He said “When will Norwegian authorities understand that this is serious? Maybe not before it is too late? Maybe not until we get a 9/11 on Norwe-

52. Most cited is Tariq Modood’s work on the cartoons: “Muslims, Religious Equality and Secularism” in *Secularism, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship*, ed. Tarique Modood and Brahm Levey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Saba Mahmood and Judith Butler: *Is critique secular? Blasphemy, Injury and Free Speech* (UC Berkeley University Press, 2009).

53. Nasir Meer and Tarique Modood, “Refutations of Racism in the ‘Muslim Question’”, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43, no. 3–4 (2009).

54. Anthropologists Sindre Bangstad and Thomas Hylland Eriksen and philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen were among the contributors.

55. Cora Alexa Døving, “Islam er er også en norsk religion”, *Aftenposten*, February 7, 2006, 5.

56. Finn Erik Thoresen, “Den nye rasisme”, *VG* March 21, 2006, 31.

gian soil? This is not a threat but a warning.”<sup>57</sup> The result was that the cartoon affairs that had led to some interest in and focus on Islamophobia in 2006 now resulted in the strengthening of a one-sided debate on extremism. Even if the other organisers distanced themselves from the speech and tried to argue that the demonstration had been a peaceful gathering communicating views quite different from those of the speakers, anger from the public characterised the news for several weeks.

Leader of the Progress Party, Siv Jensen, who one year earlier had warned against “Islamisation by stealth”, demanded that “it is time that the silent majority among Muslims also speaks up clearly.”<sup>58</sup> She stated that Norwegian values were under pressure and that Islamisation was proceeding at full strength. With references to the demonstrations in 2010, *Aftenposten* printed a long text by a well-known debater, Hege Storhaug, in which the demonstrators were referred to as “Quislings”; a traitor and enemy within.<sup>59</sup> The seriousness of the threat made by the speaker at the demonstration is probably the reason for the lack of critical responses to generalisations such as those made by Jensen and Storhaug.

Generally speaking, the second cartoon affair led to a setback in public discussions on Islamophobia and warnings against it. Attempts to address the phenomenon were now quickly defined as “naivety against extremism”. Islamophobia, which had been recognised as a problem of generalising and harassing Muslims, was reduced to a marginal problem and a conceptual tool for people who were unwilling to talk about Muslim extremism or to criticise Islam.

### ISLAMOPHOBIA UNDERSTOOD AS AN IDEOLOGY

Between the two cartoon debates, Islamophobia was discussed with the general backdrop of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, even more cartoons, the assassination of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh, terrorist attacks, the increase in hate speech on the internet, and a more or less continuous debate on integration. However, probably of greatest significance for a deepening understanding of Islamophobia was the range of books published after 2001, the so-called warning literature, of which *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005) has been the most influential. This category of literature, with a myriad of titles in English, also includes

57. His message was printed in several papers; see, for example, “Tre tusen i tog” *Dagsavisen*, February 13, 2010, 6.

58. Siv Jensen was interviewed in several papers on this issue, for example, *Aftenposten*, February 14, 2010, 3.

59. Hege Storhaug, “En stigende uro”, *Aftenposten*, January 6 2011, 4.

books translated into Norwegian as well as books written by Norwegian authors.<sup>60</sup>

The underlying premise of this literature is that Norway, as well as other states on the European continent, are becoming “Islamised” by Muslims wishing to introduce Shari’a into Europe and who are transforming Europe into an Islamic domain (“Eurabia”). The word “Islamophobia” is often addressed in these books, but then always as a term developed to cover up information about the alleged takeover and to stop sensible critique of Islam. The so-called Eurabia literature became a well-known phenomenon after 22 July, 2011, as the perpetrator’s worldview was greatly influenced by these books. However, the books also raised awareness of Islamophobia as being linked to conspiratorial thinking. In other words, the books contributed to Islamophobia becoming visible as part of an ideology in which Muslims were portrayed as an enemy of western civilisation.

The term “Islamophobia” is not often used even when the warning literature is being criticised, but when it is, it addresses a fear of an increase in the belief in conspiracy theories. Compared to earlier times when “racism” was used to describe anti-Muslim sentiments (1980s), the concepts of racism and Islamophobia, especially after 9/11, have been kept apart. The increase in conspiracy theories did, however, lead some debaters to question the connection between racism and fear of a takeover. Henrik Lunde, a sociologist and the then-leader of The Norwegian Centre against Racism, was one of the first to actively use the term Islamophobia with references to the warning literature. He saw Islamophobia as a phenomenon that would lead to an increase in racism.<sup>61</sup> The Ministry of Children and Equality also used the word Islamophobia in an opening speech at a conference on racism and discrimination.<sup>62</sup> An expert on Islamic terrorism, Thomas Hegghammer, also used the term when he warned the public of how Islamophobia is a phenomenon that could easily lead to discrimination against Muslims – which in turn could lead to an increase in radicalisation among Muslims.<sup>63</sup>

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60. Examples are Pim Fortuyn, *Against the Islamization of Our Culture* (2001); Oriani Fallachi, *Forluftens styrke* (Gyldendal Forlag, 2004); Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005); Bruce Bawer, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* (Random House/Broadway Books, 2006); Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It* (Regnery, 2006); Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan*, Encounter (2006); Walter Laqueur, *The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent* (Thomas Dunne/St. Martin Press, 2007); Bruce Thornton, *Decline and Fall – Europe’s Slow Motion Suicide*, Encounter (2007); Hallgrim Berg, *Amerikabrevet: Europa i Fare* (Koloritt Forlag, 2007).

61. Lunde interviewed in “Islamofobien øker rasismen”, *LO aktuelt*, December 9, 2005.

62. The ministry’s homepage, November 28, 2007, <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dep/bld/id298/>.

63. “Rasisme er et sikkerhetsproblem”, *ABC nyheter*, January 8, 2008.

Professor in Social Anthropology, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, a well-known contributor to debates about the multicultural society, suggested that Islamophobia should be discussed without linking it to general debates on integration, his main point being that integration processes in Norway are going rather well at the same time as Islamophobia is increasing.<sup>64</sup> He suggested that Islamophobia should be understood as a phenomenon with no direct relation to how well Muslims in Norway are integrating into society. His attempt, however, did not generate much support.

With references to the international Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2007, *Aftenposten* printed an opinion piece asking whether we could learn anything from history: Are there any common features between the antisemitism of the interwar period and the conceptions of Muslims today?<sup>65</sup> The text pointed to semantic similarities between antisemitism in the years before the Nazi period and Islamophobia today and listed several examples. The comparison generated a heated debate for a few weeks.<sup>66</sup>

One of the first debates about Islamophobia as a *term* addressing an ideology was initiated by Marthe Michelet, an editor for the newspaper *Dagbladet*. Michelet wrote a review of one of the Norwegian books warning against a Muslim takeover.<sup>67</sup> Michelet described the book as elucidating because it gives insight into what Islamophobia consists of – namely, a worldview based on the generalisation of Muslims, the propaganda of fear, and representations of Islam as equivalent to radical Islamism.<sup>68</sup> Michelet also expressed how shocking it was that the book was given positive reviews in many newspapers, and she warned against how the press contributed to reproducing author Hege Storhaug's statements by giving her a platform. Michelet's review was responded to by Storhaug and others with the argument that Islamophobia did not exist in Norwegian society, but was used as a concept to stop "vital criticism of Islam".<sup>69</sup> Michelet continued to address the problem and argued, in line with Hylland-Eriksen, that Islamophobia should be seen as one of our time's most dangerous ideologies with a life of its own, separated from the minority it targeted.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, she said, Islamophobia is not

64. Interview, NRK, January, 5, 2007. His point is similar to what I suggest is part of an increasing consensus among politicians: the understanding of Islamophobia as detached from a general debate on integration.

65. Cora Alexa Døving, "Muslimen og jøden", *Aftenposten* February 6, 2007, 4.

66. For example, Herman Willis, "Muslimer ikke som jøder" *Aftenposten*, February 9 2007, 5, or Sara Azmeh Rasmussen, "Fortjent islamkritikk" *Aftenposten*, February 13, 2007, 3.

67. *Tilslørt og avslørt* by Hege Storhaug (2007).

68. Marte Michelet, "Burkafofi", *Dagbladet*, October 5, 2007, 2.

69. For example, Jens Tomas Anfindsen, "Useriøst fra Michelet" *Dagbladet*, October 12, 2007, 42.

70. Marte Michelet, "Muslimhore", *Dagbladet*, March 17, 2008, 3, and "Løgn og bedrag", *Dagbladet*, March 28, 2008, 40.

only dangerous for Muslims but also for democracies in Europe, as it fertilises the soil of the extreme right. This she underlined by referring to specific organisations that distribute an Islamophobic ideology. Her texts provoked many reactions – especially in the online comments – some of which accused Michelet of not seeing that Islam is a form of Nazism or that the term Islamophobia was used to censor important critique.<sup>71</sup> The debates on Islamophobia would continue, but the dominant argument – regardless of political differences – was that the term itself destroyed a healthy debate on “the boundaries of tolerance”.<sup>72</sup>

After the Progress Party warned against “Islamisation by stealth” in 2009, the term Islamophobia gained more support among critical debaters, not least among Muslims who warned against the rhetoric of a creeping Muslim takeover.<sup>73</sup> The author Aslak Nore responded to this with the argument that Islamophobia was nothing but a myth created by Muslim leaders and European liberals. “The allegations of Islamophobia,” he claimed, “are promoted without exception by Western multiculturalists and Islamists.”<sup>74</sup> He suggested there was a conspiracy between super-conservative Islamists and liberal politicians, and that this could be an explanation for the rising prevalence of the term. Although negative to the term Islamophobia, Nore saw discrimination and poverty among immigrants as the real problem, claiming that “discrimination in Europe is due to racism.”<sup>75</sup> Nore’s standpoints were representative for the dominant view in the public at the time (2009): Islamophobia was understood as solely connected to Islam and therefore mostly used to hinder criticism of it; it was not seen as intending to discriminate against Muslims or as an expression of anti-Muslim racism.

Historian of religion Lars Gule responded to Aslak Nore with arguments defending the use of the term Islamophobia. Gule defined it as an important concept for addressing conspiracy theories against Muslims. The seriousness of Islamophobia, he argued, could be mirrored in history: “The central element of antisemitism is not in the devaluation of Jews as a race, but the notion that the Jews are dangerous because they conspire.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, he argued, since we all agree on the fittingness of the term “antisemitism” to describe cases in which Jews are accused of conspiracy, the same should be the case with Islamophobia. Gule received some negative reactions, mostly in short letters from readers.

71. Hege Storhaug, “Av en annen verden”, *Dagbladet*, March 27, 2008, 40.

72. For example, Ole-Fredrik Einarsjon ““Vi tolererer oss til døde”, *Aftenposten*, October 2, 2008, 4.

73. For example, “Siv Jensen og muslimene”, *VG*, February 23, 2009, 2.

74. Aslak Nore, “Islamofobi-myten”, *VG*, March 1, 2009, 2.

75. Ibid.

76. Lars Gule, “Islamofobi er ingen myte”, *VG*, March 5, 2009, 43.

In 2009, the broadest of the various debates on the use of the hijab turned the focus on Islamophobia away from conspiracy theories to the issue of discrimination and civil rights for Muslims.

## 5. ISLAMOPHOBIA AND A MUSLIM STRUGGLE FOR MINORITY RIGHTS

There is a relation between, on the one hand, increased integration and increased recognition of minority rights, and on the other hand, a certain understanding of Islamophobia as a violation of human rights.<sup>77</sup> In Norway the so-called hijab debate is an example of how an understanding of Islamophobia as a threat to civil and minority rights developed alongside a struggle for recognition as practising Muslims. More than any other Islam-related debates, the debates on whether the hijab should be allowed or not in public institutions introduced the public to a plurality of Muslim voices who argued their case with the vocabulary of a human rights discourse.<sup>78</sup>

There have been several debates related to the use of hijabs,<sup>79</sup> but in Norway the biggest took place in 2009, starting with a letter from a Muslim woman to the Police Directorate. The woman was applying for the right to wear the hijab if she was admitted to the Police Academy. The applicant received a positive response from the Ministry of Justice, but the go-ahead was immediately criticised. Among other things, the critique referred to the processing of the case, as the political or bureaucratic management had not granted permission. The Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs<sup>80</sup> investigated what had now come to be known as the “hijab case”. The case became a part of numerous debate programs, news programs, newspaper articles, and a Facebook group was created to

77. David Feldman, “Islamophobia and antisemitism”, in *Islamophobia. Still a challenge for us all. A 20th-anniversary report*, Elahi Farah and Khan Omar, eds. (Runnymede Trust, London School of Economics, 2017), [www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org).

78. For an analysis of the different hijab debates in Norway, see Cora Alexa Døving, “The Hijab Debate in the Norwegian Press: Secular or Religious Arguments?” in *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 5, no. 2 1–2 (2012).

79. The hijab and to what extent it should be used in different public sectors and professions constantly surfaces as a theme in debates, but there have been two main hijab debates in Norway: the first in 2004, which took the introduction of a ban on the hijab in schools in France as its starting point, and the second in 2009, which was about to what extent the hijab could be used as part of the Norwegian police uniform for those who wished to wear it.

80. Stortingets kontroll- og konstitusjonskomite.

campaign against the decision. On February 20, 2009, the Minister for Justice withdrew the permission.

In the debates that followed the withdrawal, Muslims, mainly women who wear the hijab, argued for their equal rights: to wear the hijab as part of a uniform would be in line with international human rights conventions on freedom of religion. Islamic Council Norway (IRN) claimed that being a minority means one sticks out in society, but that this should not lead to questioning the motives and integrity of the minority. The loyalty of the employee is not weakened by the hijab, they argued.<sup>81</sup>

Four young women wrote an op-ed titled “We are underestimated”, in which they argued that women who are practising Muslims are discriminated against if they are denied the possibility of fully participating in all parts of society: “Lots of ads encouraging multicultural Norwegians to apply for jobs don’t help when in reality there is no possibility of this in some professions.”<sup>82</sup> Bushra Ishaq, a leader of a Muslim students’ organisation, drew a connection between the democratic state and the core of the case: “The democratic rights of minorities are weakened when women who would like to wear the hijab are not allowed to in the police force. ... we are talking about the integrity and freedom of action of Muslim women.”<sup>83</sup> Ilham Hassan, also one of the most profiled debaters that year, focussed on the state in large parts of her argumentation.<sup>84</sup> As a hijab-wearing law student, she saw herself as a future representative of the state, wanting a job as a legal practitioner in the police force. Her main argument was that it was important not to let fear of Islam or prejudices against Muslims influence the state’s efforts to maintain a modern, pluralistic, and democratic society.<sup>85</sup>

Several debaters saw resistance to the hijab as a result of Islamophobia, and that this could come to challenge freedom of religion.<sup>86</sup> Pervez Ambreen and Khan Farah claimed that the government’s retreat in the hijab case was a sign of the xenophobia present in Norwegian society. Their contribution to the debate ended with a few declarations: “Muslim girls demand to be treated as equal citizens in our own society”; “We refuse to let ourselves be oppressed and underestimated.”<sup>87</sup> It is not just the relationship with the Norwegian state, but also the proximity to the

81. Shoaib Sultan and Asghar Ali, “Beskytt trosfriheten”, *Dagbladet*, February 12, 2009, 39.

82. Tajamal Hajra, Javed Mariam, |Hussain Sophia, Hussain Sahr M: “Vi blir undervurdert”, *Aftenposten*, February 13, 2009, 3.

83. Interview with Bushra Ishaq, “Et skritt tilbake for Norge”, *Klassekampen*, February 21, 2009, 13.

84. Hassan took the initiative, with Iffit Qureishi, to establish the “Hijab Brigade” and to set up a Facebook page for Muslim girls to support them in wearing the hijab.

85. Ilham Hassan, “Hijab for dommere”, *Dagbladet*, February 18, 2009, front page and 8–9.

86. Iffit Qureshi, “En kamp for likeverd”, *VG*, February 18, 2009, 39.

87. Pervez Ambreen and Khan Farah, “Hijab kommet for å bli”, *Aftenposten*, March 1, 2009, 5.



Norwegian identity that is emphasised by several debaters: “We are a part of the red, white and blue” is the title of Hajra Tajamal’s text.<sup>88</sup>

Counting the concepts used by hijab wearers shows that “identity”, “integrity”, “freedom of religion” and “democracy” are most frequently used. Although many of the arguments *against* the use of hijab as part of the police uniform was based on arguments that had nothing to do with either Muslims or Islam; like the importance of neutrality of the state or similar rational arguments, the hijab debate pushed forward an understanding of Islamophobia as prejudices that could lead to discrimination. However, this understanding of the phenomenon was forgotten in the light of the extreme nature of Islamophobia that came to public consciousness in the aftermath of 22 July 2011.

## 6. IN THE AFTERMATH OF RIGHT-WING TERROR IN NORWAY

The terrorist attacks on 22 July, 2011 started with a bomb placed outside a government building and continued with a mass killing on the island of Utøya, where the Labour Party Youth League was holding its summer camp. The perpetrator himself defined the massacre as an act of terrorism, based on a specific ideology conveyed through a manifesto which he published online prior to the killings. In this document, entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, Breivik defined the attacks as legitimate acts of self-defence on behalf of the European people. The document consists of well-known arguments from several anti-jihadist writers and bloggers, the core message being that in the face of an ongoing Islamisation of Europe, the political and social elite had entered into a pact with the enemy. The underlying motive for Breivik’s actions was, he claimed, to be found in the dream of an ethnically and culturally homogenous (pure) society, and in hating those who allow ethnic “impurity” to develop (politicians, multiculturalists and what he called cultural Marxists). Discussing Islamophobia became a way of issuing a counter message.

### WHAT IF ANDERS WAS NAMED AHMED?

The hegemonic discourse that arose already in the first week after the attacks can be characterised as a “progressive narrative”.<sup>89</sup> This term refers to the development of

88. Hajra Tajamal, “Vi er en del av det røde, hvite og blå”, *Dagbladet*, July 22, 2009, 50.

89. In his study of the responses to the bombing in Oklahoma City in 1997, in which 168 people were killed, Edward Linenthal calls the hegemonic response a development of a progressive narrative. Edward Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 41.

a story about how the horrible events rendered visible the true essence of the nation as warm and good. The idea of a new beginning – initiated by evil, yet which would enable people in Norway to create a new and warmer society – was declared by the then prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and other politicians, the Crown, religious leaders, journalists, and newspaper editors alike. The parallel to the reconstruction of the country after 1945 was rhetorically activated “Never again April 9” – “Never again July 22”. However, another part of this progression consisted of recognising and countering the message of the terrorist – namely racism and Islamophobia.<sup>90</sup>

After the first hours following the attack, during which some voices in the media claimed that the perpetrators of such terrorist attacks could only possibly be of Muslim background,<sup>91</sup> the general message was that the only way to respond to the terror was to embrace the “multicultural Norway” that the Labour Party’s youth organisation represented.<sup>92</sup> Journalists and editors selected headlines, pictures, and perspectives that conveyed an ideological response to the terrorist’s motives. Never before were churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques featured in such a positive light as during the weeks after the attacks. Minority religions were not measured *against* Norwegian values, but described as *part of* Norwegian public values: the multicultural aspect was simply not up for debate. The newspapers mediated the “multicultural society” as the image of the nation. Alongside this new embrace of the multicultural Norway, there ran a debate on what could explain the terrorist’s worldview.

Several reporters asked what Norwegian society would look like if a Muslim had been behind the terror, and several newspapers reported unpleasant incidents experienced by dark-skinned individuals in the city centre in the hours after the horrific events. The editor of the national newspaper *Aftenposten* wrote that Muslims had good reason to be relieved that the perpetrator was not a Muslim.<sup>93</sup> It is reasonable to say that the massacre made the general public in Norway aware of the extent of anti-Muslim sentiments both at street-level and in online discussions and blogs. The press wrote about Breivik’s ideas, thus bringing the so-called anti-jihadist blogosphere to the wider public’s attention.<sup>94</sup> Critical journalists wrote

90. For an analysis of the press’s counter messages after the terror, see Cora Alexa Døving (2018), “Homeland Ritualized: An Analysis of Written Messages Placed at Temporary Memorials after the Terrorist Attacks on 22 July 2011 in Norway”. *Mortality*, 23(3).

91. Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and The Rise of Islamophobia* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2014), 286.

92. As examples are several pieces in *VG* July 28, 2011 and *Dagens Næringsliv* July 28, 2011.

93. “Han er ingen fremmed”, Kommentar, *Aftenposten*, July 24, 2011.

94. The most central ideological inspiration for Behring Breivik’s ideas about Muslims was the Norwegian extreme right-winger Peder Jensen, who called himself “Fjordman”.

pieces on the prevalence of Islamophobia,<sup>95</sup> and several politicians expressed shock over their new insight into the hatred found in some online milieus.

### ISLAMOPHOBIA COMPARED TO ANTISEMITISM

Two prominent political leaders expressed shock over online Islamophobia by comparing it to antisemitism. The leader of the Liberal Party (*Venstre*), Trine Skei Grande, suggested in a radio interview that from now on, claims made about Muslims should be tested by exchanging the word Muslim with the word Jew or Black. Negative reactions to the comparison with historic antisemitism exploded when the leader of the Conservative Party (*Høyre*), Erna Solberg, compared the antisemitism of the 1930s to expressions about Muslims in contemporary debates.<sup>96</sup> She was quickly accused of putting Muslims in a similar position to that of Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. Solberg refuted this accusation and defended herself by making it clear that she was not making any comparisons between the situations of Jews and Muslims. Rather, she had essentially wanted to highlight some of the similarities in the stereotypes and conspiracy theories:

I have not said Muslims today are treated as Jews were in the 1930s. On the contrary, I stated that they are NOT treated equally. What I said was that extreme anti-Islamic groups' mentions of Muslims is reminiscent of the way antisemites referred to Jews in the decades before World War II.<sup>97</sup>

Solberg also referred to research done at the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies that shows similarities between conspiracy theories and specific patterns in depicting the two minority groups as an enemy.<sup>98</sup> She defined the real danger to be in the mechanisms of Islamophobia that collectivised Muslims; for instance, the mechanism of making a whole minority group responsible for acts committed by individuals.

Solberg's attempts to nuance the issue apparently had little effect; *VG* had to shut down its online comments function following the case, as it filled up with racist comments against Muslims.<sup>99</sup> Several intellectuals soon entered the debate,

95. Examples are to be found in *Dagsavisen* July 25, 2011, *Vårt Land* July 26, 2011, *Aften Aften* July 28 2011, *Dagens Næringsliv* July 28, 2011, *Klassekampen* July 28, 2011, *Aftenposten* July 24, 2011.

96. Interview with Erna Solberg, *VG*, August 4, 2011, 4–5.

97. Erna Solberg "Lærdom fra historien", *Dagbladet*, August 6, 2011, 65.

98. Cora Alexa Døving, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: A Comparison of Imposed Group Identities*, *Dansk Tidsskrift for Islamforskning*, nr. 2, 2010.

99. Comments on *VG*, August 5, 2011.

referring to the long history of Jewish suffering (from medieval, religiously reasoned hatred to the Holocaust) as an argument for the unique character of antisemitism. In the following three weeks, Solberg's statement was the focus of several opinion pieces. Debaters, historians, and other academics from different disciplines called Solberg's comparison a result of lack of knowledge. Others pointed to her lacking acknowledgement of Islamophobia functioning as a concept to stop an open debate on Islam.

An argument frequently cited in the responses to Solberg was that Muslims are not a race; they are followers of a religion. Antisemitism, however, is racism because it attacks a race, a nation, namely "the Jews".<sup>100</sup> A well-known professor in the history of ideas, Trond Berg Eriksen, argued against Solberg by defining Islamophobia as something qualitatively different from antisemitism. Racism played a central part in the persecution of Jews and had no such part to play in Islamophobia, he argued. He referred to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, and proclaimed that even among extremists, racism is not a part of the xenophobia against Muslims. He further described Islamophobia as a marginal phenomenon. Compared with antisemitism, he claimed, anti-Muslim harassment comes from anonymous persons who only represent a margin of the population.<sup>101</sup> His text illustrates both how racism is understood in solely biological terms and also how Islamophobia is reduced to a phenomenon existing solely among extremists. The social anthropologist Sindre Bangstad wrote a follow-up in which he agreed upon historical differences between antisemitism and Islamophobia, but pointed out the structural similarities that Edward Said found as early as 1985. He also argued that Islamophobia had racist elements and should not be seen as something qualitatively different from racism.<sup>102</sup> Bangstad's arguments were heavily criticised in the following issues of the same newspaper, and his arguments never reached a broader media coverage.

Another wave of reactions to Solberg's statements came from spokesmen on behalf of the Jewish community, who found the analogy inappropriate. The leader of the Mosaic Faith Congregation, Ervin Kohn, called it a comparison that revealed a lack of historical knowledge because antisemitism had been integrated into Norway's judicial system in the 1930s, while Islamophobia obviously was not.<sup>103</sup> *Aftenposten's* theatre reviewer, Mona Levin, also reacted strongly. With the title "Cannot be compared", she asked how an industrialised genocide could

100. Bjørn Nistad, "Vår tids jøder?", *VG* August 10, 2011, 47.

101. Trond Berg Eriksen, "Noe annet enn rasisme", *Morgenbladet* August 12, 2011, 9.

102. Sindre Bangstad, "I professorens verden", *Morgenbladet* August 19, 2011, 19.

103. Ervin Kohn, "Historieløs sammenligning", *Dagsavisen* August 5, 2011, 7.

be used as a comparison.<sup>104</sup> Harassment of Muslims is terrible, she wrote, but to compare it with antisemitism is a way of relativising the Holocaust as well as Jewish history. Other spokespersons from the Jewish community warned against putting antisemitism in “‘a sack’ of bullying, racism, and hate crimes”.<sup>105</sup>

One of the reasons why the use of antisemitism as a basis for comparison was met with harsh reactions seems to be that the term antisemitism makes the mind leap directly to the Holocaust. In spite of the heatedness of the debates, they opened up for new recognition of the danger of depicting a minority group as the enemy of society. As I will argue at the end of the chapter, today’s debate climate is much more willing to make analogies between patterns of prejudice.

### ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE QUESTIONING OF POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

A year before the terror attacks on July 22, 2011, two members of the Progress Party, Christian Tybring-Gjedde and Kent Andersen published an opinion piece in *Aftenposten* in which they accused the governing Norwegian Labour Party of “wanting to tear the country apart” by allowing “thousands of immigrants” with their harmful culture into the country every year.<sup>106</sup> The two authors also referred to the Labour Party’s ideas as a multicultural Disneyland that would destroy Norwegian culture. This text became an important reference point in public debates after the terror attacks: Did Anders Behring Breivik’s ideas have some sort of resonance in the established discourses on migration and Islam, particularly those in which “our culture” was portrayed as falling apart because of the politics of the Labour Party?

The newspaper *Klassekampen* offered critical self-reflecting questions on behalf of the nation. It reminded readers about criticism from the European Council (ECRI) in 2009, which stated that the government of Norway did not recognise the growing Islamophobia in the country.<sup>107</sup> The politician from the radical-left party Rødt, Aslak Sira Myhre, stated that he hoped the discovery of “the heart of darkness” in the midst of our own society would lead to changes in our depictions of minorities as an enemy and that we would “go through a process of self-examination.”<sup>108</sup>

104. Mona Levin, “Kan ikke sammenlignes”, *Aftenposten* August 9, 2011, 5.

105. *Vårt Land* August 6, 2011.

106. Christian Tybring-Gjedde and Kent Andersen, “Drøm fra Disneyland”, *Aftenposten* August 26, 2010, 4.

107. Eivind Trædal, “Vær varsom” *Klassekampen* August 8, 2011. The report from ECRI concluded on the basis of interviews with NGOs, politicians, researchers and representatives from Muslim organisations.

108. Aslak Sira Myhre, *Klassekampen* August 27, 2011.

Most debaters were careful not to give the Progress Party responsibility for the terror attacks, but the party's contribution towards mistrust in Muslims in general was highlighted by several politicians and debaters. Four well-known scholars discussed publically the distinction between words and actions with the goal of pointing to the moral responsibility that follows hate speech ("the rhetoric of war always precedes a war").<sup>109</sup> Dehumanising Muslims is a form of action, and so is depicting Muslims as enemies, they argued, pointing to the highly polarised and heated debates on migration in the years preceding July 22, 2011. They ended their text by stating that "after July 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are obliged to struggle against Islamophobia and racism."<sup>110</sup>

The *term* Islamophobia was also discussed after the terror attacks. Marthe Michelet, who was also one of the persons the terrorist referred to by name as an enemy in his document, introduced the debate by asking "What shall we call it?"<sup>111</sup> She argued that Norwegian society needed a term for anti-Muslim sentiments and hate. Politicians and editors of various newspapers who had condemned the word Islamophobia had to look at it again, she claimed: "After Utøya, the word has to be taken out of the taboo box."<sup>112</sup> Michelet was immediately confronted with how the word could be used to silence an important debate on Islam and how the term implied that a rational fear was a psychiatric diagnosis.<sup>113</sup> The attempt to merge a certain understanding of Islamophobia as a phenomenon with the term Islamophobia was, in other words, heavily criticised.

"Make yourself familiar with what Islamophobia is" was the title of an op-ed trying to counter the accusations of the term being used to silence critiques by examining what sort of phenomenon it referred to.<sup>114</sup> The message was that by being able to recognise Islamophobia, one would also be able to criticise Islam; some characteristics of Islamophobia were listed. The op-ed also warned about placing Islamophobia solely in the landscape of the extreme right and gave some examples of how it is part of mainstream society as well.

To sum up: Before 22 July, 2011, the term Islamophobia was almost non-existent in the Norwegian public discourse, but in at least the first six months after

109. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Arne Johan Vetlesen, Sindre Bangstad, and Bushra Ishaq, "Uakseptable ytringer", *Aftenposten* August 22, 2011, 4 (part 2).

110. Ibid.

111. Marte Michelet, "Hva skal vi kalle det?", *Dagbladet*, August 14, 2011, 2.

112. Ibid.

113. For example *Morgenbladet* August 29, 2011, or *Aftenposten* August 15, 2011. Human Rights Service published on their homepage a much-quoted piece on Islamophobia being a useless concept and a tool of illegitimate power (*hersketeknikk*) to silence voices, <https://www.rights.no/>.

114. Cora Alexa Døving, "Gjør deg kjent med islamofobien", *Aftenposten* August 7, 2011, 4 (part 2).

the terror, it was used every day in several mass-media channels. Interestingly, and probably because of the seriousness of the terror attack, it did not end up in a debate on the term, but kept focus on the phenomenon. This, however, did not last: The meaning of, as well as the legitimacy of the term, did not become hegemonic. After being used more or less without reflection in the first shocking description of the ideology motivating the terrorist, the concept ended up figuring in warnings against using the very concept. Islamophobia became a term for describing the worldview of the extreme right and nothing else. So did the general debates on the phenomenon; it was something belonging to the margins. The rejection of the term Islamophobia, then, has made it difficult to refer to the seriousness of negative experiences of discrimination among Muslims, as well as to discuss more mainstream examples of anti-Muslim sentiments.<sup>115</sup>

The debates on the comparison of Islamophobia and antisemitism – in spite of not being very fruitful (since it ended up centring on differences in historical periods rather than on the understanding of the phenomenon) – did, however, engage voices across the political left/right axis in Norwegian politics. It was in the aftermath of the terror attack that Islamophobia as a phenomenon was thoroughly discussed for the first time without being connected to statements from the Progress Party. This was the beginning of an understanding in which the *danger* of collectivising Muslims through negative prejudices became a reference point for the understanding of Islamophobia. It also started the process of a broader acceptance of seeing a link between antisemitism and Islamophobia: not only because they are attitudes that society must combat, but also because they are two key aspects of right-wing radicalism and are related to racism as a phenomenon.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS: ISLAMOPHOBIA – A GROWING CONSENSUS?

The review of when and how Islamophobia has been debated in Norway illustrates a development in the understanding of the phenomenon: from general xenophobia and discrimination of migrants, to *a way of thinking* that generalised Muslims in particular. This cognitive dimension of attitudes was again explained as a result of seeing Muslims as a homogenous group of fanatical religious people. Islamophobia was also understood as a phenomenon linked to positioning on the right/left

115. This has its parallel in what Christhard Hoffmann describes in his chapter in this book, “A Fading Consensus: Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983”: when antisemitism is only associated with Nazi ideology and genocide, more moderate forms slip under the radar.

axis of Norwegian politics, and Islamophobia was mainly addressed as part of criticism against the Progress Party. After the terror attacks of 9/11 in 2001, Islamophobia was commonly referred to as “fear of Muslims” (*muslimfrykt*). This fear was often described as understandable, but still something that could harm innocent Muslims and expose them to discrimination. Due to reports of the harassment of Muslims, the understanding of Islamophobia went from addressing a cognitive dimension of attitudes to also incorporating actions – practices – and the expression “harassments against Muslims” (*muslimhets*) became the dominant way of referring to Islamophobia. A few years after 9/11, Islamophobia was once again closely linked to debates on migration, with references to political statements usually from members of the Progress Party. Islamophobia was also largely understood as a phenomenon in the mass media; Muslim voices, in particular, referred to the press as a place where negative portrayals of Muslims were broadcast. Due to the growing number of Muslim voices, the issue of equal rights and minority rights became part of an understanding of Islamophobia as discriminating against the rights of a religious minority. However, parallel to the increase in literature that warned against a Muslim takeover, and the explosion of online hubs circulating negative images of Muslims, Islamophobia increasingly came to be understood as a worldview and an ideology belonging to the landscape of the far right. In the aftermath of 9/11, it became almost synonymous with a belief in, and fear of, a Muslim conspiracy to take over Western society. Such an understanding placed Islamophobia at the margins of the population, but it also led to an important understanding of Islamophobia as attitudes existing in a part of the majority population, *independent* of the how well the Muslims were integrated. Islamophobia, especially after July 22, 2011, became a phenomenon recognised as not only dangerous for Muslims, but also for democracies in Europe because of its link to the extreme right. Seeing Islamophobia as an ideology also opened up for an understanding of it in the light of other prejudices, such as antisemitism.

The years after 22 July 2011 have featured several debates on Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in which the understandings of the concept have alternated between those presented above. However, some recent policy measures (2019) make it reasonable to suggest that increased consensus on how to address Islamophobia is in the making, and a new interest in the concept of racism seems to play a role in this.

When the Runnymede Trust put Islamophobia on the map in 1997, its writers stated that the term referred to three phenomena: “unfounded hostility towards Islam”; “practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities”; and “exclusion of Muslims from main-



stream political and social affairs.”<sup>116</sup> In a follow-up report, they have kept this broad understanding, but shifted the weight from negative images of Islam to a more specific concentration on the exclusion of Muslims. They also offer a new definition: “Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism.”<sup>117</sup>

Islamophobia, understood as anti-Muslim racism, is, as I have argued in chapter 8<sup>118</sup>, very far from being a common understanding of Islamophobia in the Norwegian population. In 2015 the Norwegian government was criticised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for not using the word “racism” in any political plans and programs. Warnings like this, in combination with the prevalent negative attitudes towards Muslims found in the CHM report (broadly referred to in the media), and the increase in hate-crime statistics for Muslims and darker skinned citizens, have led to new concerns about Islamophobia as a form of racism at the political level. An illustrative example of this is that various political parties have initiated the development of a national action plan to combat racism towards ethnic and religious minorities. In the notes written in preparation for the plan, “hostility towards Muslims” is specifically addressed. Islamophobia is on the verge of being understood as a variant of racism existing in the midst of our society and not solely in the worldview of right-wing extremism.

Political differences on the issue of Islamophobia have by no means disappeared from public debates, but it seems like the growing visibility of extreme milieus and arenas for expressing hate and anti-Muslim racism has created room for at least some cooperation across party boundaries in combating the phenomenon. An example of this is the consensus in parliament to implement a national action plan against racism in which Islamophobia is specifically addressed (2019).

According to historian of religion Mattias Gardell, Islamophobia is a “regime of knowledge” in the Foucaultian sense of the expression.<sup>119</sup> It is in the framework of an Islamophobic regime of knowledge that “certain statements, beliefs, and claims about Islam and Muslims through the logic of repetition are perceived as adopted truths because it matches what we have always heard, and thus know.”<sup>120</sup> In many ways, combating Islamophobia has also been restricted by a “regime of knowledge”: that of discursive borders protecting a specific understanding of what racism is, namely something solely connected to ideas about race or skin colour. It is this

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116. The Runnymede Trust Report, *Islamophobia – Still a challenge to us all* (2017) 1 (referring to the old report).

117. Ibid.

118. Cora Alexa Døving: “Muslims are...: Contextualising survey answers”, chapter 8 in this book.

119. Michelle Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1969).

120. Mattias Gardell, *Islamofobi* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2011).

regime of knowledge that is at the very beginning of opening up for new perspectives – perspectives that acknowledge Islamophobia to be a phenomenon with mechanisms and consequences that are similar to those of other types of racism.

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# 4.

## Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway

### *A Survey Analysis of Prevalence, Trends and Possible Causes of Negative Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*

**OTTAR HELLEVIK**

**ABSTRACT** The aim of the chapter is to establish how widespread negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims are among the Norwegian population, and to look for factors that may stimulate such attitudes, through an analysis of the two representative population surveys conducted by The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2011 and 2017.

Attitudes towards Jews are measured by indices of prejudice, dislike, social distance, and a summary index of antisemitism. Islamophobia is measured by a corresponding set of indices in 2017. The level of negative attitudes towards Jews is low and declining for all indices. Negative attitudes towards Muslims are more widespread. Women, younger people and those with higher education have a lower level of negative attitudes towards the two minorities. Opinion on the Middle East conflict affects antisemitism and Islamophobia in opposite directions, while both are strongly influenced by xenophobia. Negative attitudes towards the two minorities tend to coexist in individuals.

**KEYWORDS** Islamophobia | antisemitism | population survey | xenophobia | attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict | Norway

## 1. OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

The analyses use data from the two representative population surveys from 2011 and 2017, conducted by The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM). Each survey had a little over 1,500 respondents (section 2). Indices of prejudice, dislike and social distance, which are combined in a summary index of antisemitism, were measured in the same way in both surveys (section 3). For Islamophobia, a corresponding set of indices was used in 2017 (section 4).

The importance of the respondents' own attitudes for how they perceive the prevalence of negative attitudes towards the two minorities in Norway, and whether they see a need to combat such attitudes, is analysed in section 5. The relationship between attitudes towards the two minorities, whether they are opposing or go together at the individual level, is the topic of section 6.

Variations in attitudes towards Jews and Muslims depending on respondent characteristics such as social background, religiosity, opinion regarding the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants are studied in order to shed light on possible causes for antisemitism and Islamophobia (section 7). Changes in these variables and their contribution to the effect of generational replacement and individual changes in attitudes on the trend for antisemitism between 2011 and 2017 are analysed (section 8). The concluding section (9) summarises the main findings from the analyses.

## 2. THE DATA

The population surveys were conducted electronically using GallupPanellet, Kantar TNS's access panel. The sample members received email invitations to complete a web questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> The gross samples were stratified prior to distribution and selected in proportion to the Norwegian population's distribution by education, gender, age and geographical region. Weights were calculated to correct for observed biases with regard to these variables in the net sample.<sup>2</sup>

One reminder was issued during the field period. The number of interviews obtained was 1,522 in 2011 and 1,575 in 2017 (response rates 48% and

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1. The questionnaire in Norwegian is an appendix in the report from the study: Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017): 126–153, <https://www.hlsenteret.no/english/research/jewish-history-and-antisemitism/Population%20survey%3A%20Attitudes%20towards%20Jews%20and%20Other%20Minorities/index.html>
  2. More information on samples and response rates is given in the report. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes*: 22–25.

54%).<sup>3</sup> The interviews took place in November 2011 and January to April 2017. In 2017, three minority samples (Jews, Muslims and non-Muslim immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries) were also interviewed. Results from these surveys are presented in chapter 7 of this volume.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. MEASURING ANTISEMITISM

Determining the prevalence of negative attitudes towards Jews in the Norwegian population through the help of a survey is no easy task. The distribution of responses to a specific question will depend not only on the subject matter, but also on the wording and response options provided.<sup>5</sup> The research group at CHM therefore decided to use multiple questions to construct indices that combine questions with related content. This way, more reliable measures may be obtained by reducing the impact of random errors, as well as more valid measures of complex phenomena that cannot be captured by a single question.

The indices cover three aspects of antisemitism: an affective dimension of dislike of Jews, a dimension of social distance from Jews, and a cognitive dimension of prejudice where negative characteristics are ascribed to Jews.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the three indices are combined in an overall index of antisemitism. These measures were the same in the 2011 and 2017 population surveys. Although there may be some uncertainty regarding the estimated level of antisemitism in each year, since this will depend on the measuring instruments, there will be less uncertainty regarding the direction of change in that level between the two points in time.

#### 3.1 INDEX FOR DISLIKE OF JEWS

The index is mainly based on a question asking how respondents react to the statement “I have a certain dislike of Jews” (Table 4.1). In 2011, three out of four respondents felt that the statement did not fit with their own opinion, 43% not at

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3. Most of the tables and figures in this chapter show distributions for the entire samples (N=1,522 for 2011 and 1,575 for 2017). For tables/figures containing distributions for subgroup where Ns are not included, they are given in Table A1 and A2 in the appendix.
  4. See Werner Bergmann, “How do Jews and Muslims in Norway perceive each other? Between prejudice and cooperation”, in the present volume.
  5. Howard Schuman and Stanley Presser, *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys. Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context* (London: Sage, 1996).
  6. Steven Breckler, “Empirical validation of affect, behavior and cognition as distinct components of attitude”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 47, no. 6 (1984): 1191–1205.



all, and 34% rather badly.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, the corresponding figures were 49% and 33%. The share for the two negative responses taken together fell by 3.7 points, from 11.2% to 7.5%, a significant reduction (1% level). These answers were scored 1 and 2 on the index, and all other answers scored 0.

**TABLE 4.1.** Negative and positive feelings towards Jews (Percent. Population samples)

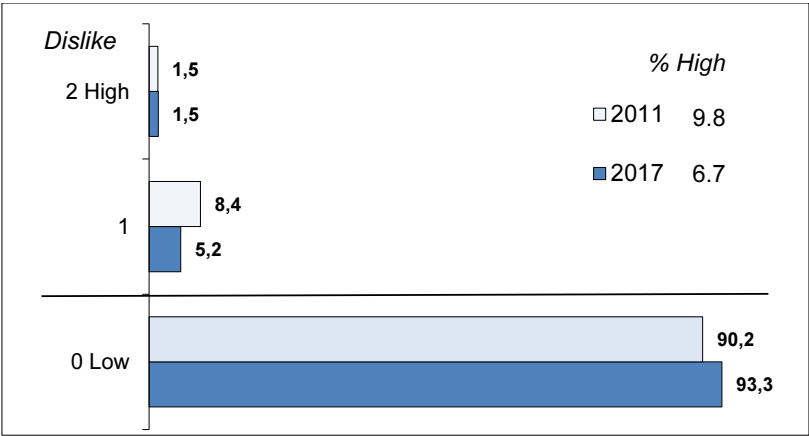
How well do these statements fit with your own opinion?	Year	Not at all	Rather badly	Impos. to answer / NA	Rather well	Completely	Total
I have a certain dislike of Jews	2011	43.4	33.9	11.5	9.5	1.7	100.0
	2017	48.6	32.7	11.3	5.9	1.6	100.0
I have a particular sympathy for Jews	2011	21.3	31.7	20.4	20.8	5.9	100.1
	2017	22.0	27.6	23.3	20.8	6.3	100.0

The responses to the statement concerning sympathy were more evenly distributed, with a majority that did not find it fitting, down from 53% in 2011 to 50% in 2017, and a quarter of the respondents who did. This question was used to adjust the index score, by assigning the score of 0 on the index for respondents expressing both dislike and sympathy. This contradictory pattern may be a case of response error, but it may also reflect a genuine ambivalence. Feelings can be positive due to, for instance, the particular history of the Jews, yet simultaneously negative due to, for instance, Israel's policies towards the Palestinians today. Regardless, there may be grounds for disregarding such an ambivalent response pattern when defining dislike of Jews, and only including respondents who only express dislike.

This adjustment reduces the percentage scoring high on dislike of Jews (score 1 or 2 on the 0–2 index) from 11.2% to 9.8% in 2011 and from 7.5% to 6.7% in 2017 (Figure 4.1), compared to the share of respondents expressing dislike (Table 4.1).<sup>8</sup>

7. These response categories were used instead of agree-disagree scales in order to reduce the amount of yea-saying (response acquiescence), as discussed among others by Arthur Couch and Kenneth Keniston, "Yeasayers and naysayers. Agreeing response set as a personality variable", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 60, no. 2 (1960): 151–174.

8. The sum for scores 1 and 2 in 2011 is 9.9 in Figure 4.1. The percentage 9.8 reported for a high score is the result when two decimals are used in the calculations, as is done in this and other figures/tables.



**FIGURE 4.1.** Index for dislike of Jews (Percent. Population samples).

The reduction of 3.1 percentage points in the share of respondents scoring high on the index for dislike of Jews between 2011 and 2017 is significant (1% level).

3.2 INDEX FOR SOCIAL DISTANCE FROM JEWS

This index uses questions similar to items from Bogardus’s social distance scale.<sup>9</sup> When asked how much they would like to have Jews as neighbours or in their circle of friends, most respondents replied “wouldn’t mind it”. Between 2011 and 2017, the combined share for “dislike a little” or “dislike a lot” fell from 10.6% to 7.0% regarding Jews as neighbours, and from 9.8% to 7.0% for Jews as friends. Both reductions are significant (1% level).

**TABLE 4.2.** Social distance from Jews (Percent. Population samples)

To what extent would you like or dislike:	Year	Like it	Wouldn't mind it	No answer	Don't know	Dislike it a little	Dislike it a lot	Sum
Having Jews as neighbours?	2011	13.6	73.0	0.0	2.9	7.4	3.2	100.0
	2017	13.6	75.4	0.2	3.8	5.3	1.7	100.0
Having Jews in your circle of friends?	2011	13.9	72.8	0.0	3.4	6.4	3.4	100.0
	2017	17.9	70.5	0.3	4.3	5.0	2.0	100.0

9. Emory S. Bogardus, “Measurement of Personal-Group Relations”, *Sociometry* 10, no. 4 (1947): 306–311. Two of his items were the following: Accept a person “in my close circle of friends”, “as neighbours in the same street”.

For each question the answer “dislike a little” was scored 1 and “dislike a lot” 2 on the index. Top scores are quite rare (Figure 4.2). When the index is dichotomised so as to consider scores 2–4 as a high social distance, the share is 8.5% in 2011, falling to 5.9% in 2017, a reduction of 2.6 percentage points (significant at 1% level).

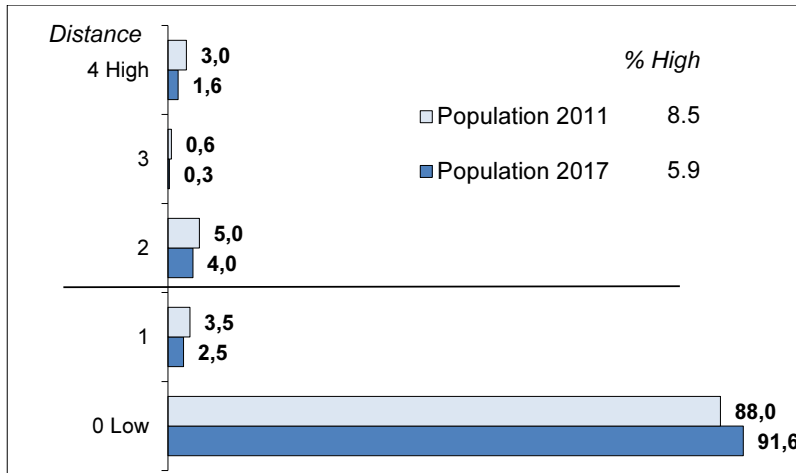


FIGURE 4.2. Index for social distance from Jews (Percent. Population samples)

### 3.3 INDEX FOR PREJUDICES AGAINST JEWS

The questionnaire included a series of statements about Jews that express stereotypical, generalised, negative images that are commonly found in antisemitic ideas regarding issues such as power, finance and blame. In antisemitism research there are several prejudice indices, which served as a basis for the construction of our index.<sup>10</sup> Table 4.3 shows the share of the respondents in 2011 and 2017 who find that a statement fits “completely”, “rather well”, “rather badly” or “not at all”

10. See Anti-Defamation League, *Global 100, Index of 11 antisemitic statements*, 2014; Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publ., 1997), German edition: *Der Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1945–1989. Ergebnisse der empirischen Forschung* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1991); Andreas Zick et al., “The Syndrome of Group-Focused Enmity: The Interrelation of Prejudices Testes with Multiple Cross-Sectional and Panel Data”, *Journal of Social Issues* 62, no. 2 (2008): 363–383; Henrik Bachner and Jonas Ring, *Antisemitic Images and Attitudes in Sweden* (English Summary), (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2005), [https://www.levandehistoria.se/sites/default/files/material\\_file/antisemitiska-attityder-rapport.pdf](https://www.levandehistoria.se/sites/default/files/material_file/antisemitiska-attityder-rapport.pdf). Some of the questions have been used directly, others have been partly modified.

with their own opinion. “Impossible to answer” was also a response option, and the few respondents who did not tick any response alternative are listed under NA (“No answer”) in the table.

The statements are ordered according to how many respondents chose one of the two answers expressing a negative opinion in 2011, varying between 13% and 26%. In 2017 the corresponding proportions range from 8% to 18%. For all statements the percentage expressing agreement is smaller in 2017, with a decrease of between 3 and 8 percentage points. All the changes are statistically significant (1% level).

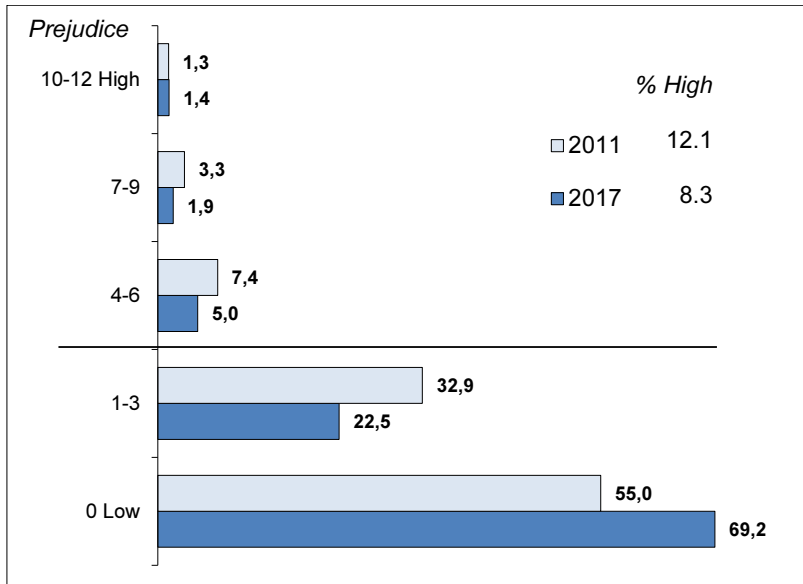
TABLE 4.3. Prejudices against Jews (Percent. Populations samples)

Below is a list of statements that have previously been made about Jews. How well do they fit with your own opinion?	Year	Statement fits:					Sum
		Not at all	Rather badly	Impos. to answer/ NA	Rather well	Com-pletely	
Jews consider themselves to be better than others	2011	15.8	21.6	36.3	19.9	6.4	100.0
	2017	20.0	23.7	38.4	13.6	4.3	100.0
Jews have too much influence on the global economy	2011	17.1	24.5	37.5	16.4	4.4	99.9
	2017	19.8	26.0	41.4	9.8	3.1	100.1
World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests	2011	17.4	20.7	42.9	15.2	3.9	100.1
	2017	20.9	21.2	44.8	9.6	3.5	100.0
Jews have always caused problems in the countries in which they live	2011	27.2	30.3	27.9	11.2	3.4	100.0
	2017	31.0	31.3	29.4	6.0	2.3	100.0
Jews have enriched themselves at the expense of others	2011	22.2	28.1	35.1	11.8	2.8	100.0
	2017	23.1	28.6	36.7	9.0	2.6	100.0
Jews largely have themselves to blame for being persecuted	2011	38.6	27.1	21.7	10.3	2.3	100.0
	2017	39.4	30.5	22.0	6.4	1.7	100.0

For the index of prejudice against Jews, a score of 1 is assigned to the response “fits rather well” and 2 to “fits completely”, giving an additive index ranging from 0 to 12 points (Figure 4.3). The distributions show high proportions for the lowest score (0), telling us that most of the respondents did not find that any of the six

negative statements matched their own opinion. This holds for 55% in 2011 and 69% in 2017, an increase of as much as 14 percentage points.

The percentage of respondents scoring in the 10–12 interval was just 1.3 in 2011 and 1.4 in 2017. Above the midpoint of the scale (7–12 points) the percentages were 4.6 in 2011 and 3.3 in 2017. The decrease of 1.3 percentage points is small but significant (5% level).



**FIGURE 4.3.** Index of prejudice against Jews (Percent. Population samples)

On the dichotomised prejudice index, the cut-off point between high and low was set between scores of 3 and 4. This means that as a minimum, two of the six negative statements have been considered to fit with their own opinion. According to this dichotomy, 12.1% of the respondents showed high levels of prejudice against Jews in 2011, falling to 8.3% in 2017, a decrease of 3.8 percentage points (significant 1% level).

### 3.4 INDEX OF ANTISEMITISM

The summary index of antisemitism is an additive index of the three dichotomised sub-indices scored 0 and 1 (Figure 4.4). The vast majority have no high scores on the sub-indices, increasing from 80% to 87% between 2011 and 2017. In some of the analyses that follow, the combined index is dichotomised with a high score on

at least two of the three sub-indices defined as a high level of antisemitism. This applies to 7.8% of the population in 2011 and 5.5% in 2017. The reduction of 2.3 percentage points is significant (1% level).

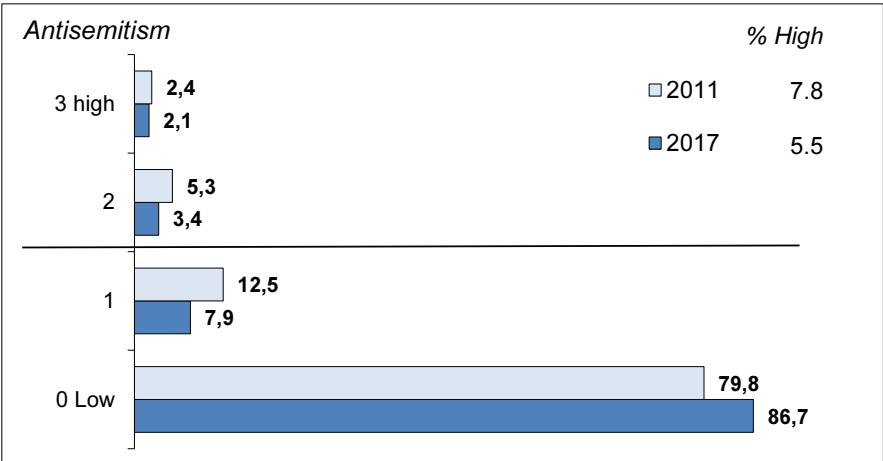
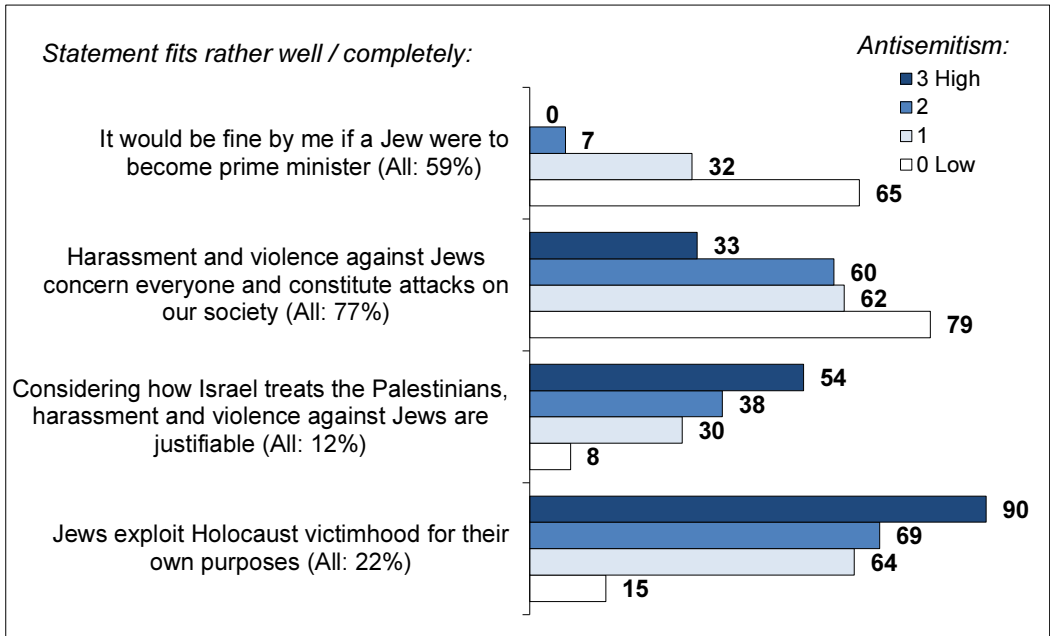


FIGURE 4.4. Combined index of antisemitism (Percent)

3.5 TESTING THE VALIDITY OF THE ANTISEMITISM INDEX

We can test whether the index in fact captures what we mean by antisemitism by examining the association between index scores and various opinions where attitudes towards Jews can be expected to create clear differences in the distribution of responses. Figure 4.5 shows such associations, with sharply increasing or decreasing proportions as we move from score 0 to 3 on the combined antisemitism index.

The difference between the two extreme groups scoring respectively 0 and 3 on the index is 65 percentage points regarding acceptance of a Jew as prime minister, 46 percentage points for seeing harassment and violence against Jews as an attack on our society, or as justifiable considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, and 75 percentage points for thinking that Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes. The higher the distance between two extreme groups, the stronger is the relationship between antisemitism and the attitude in question. This pattern gives reason to conclude that the index is a valid measure of antisemitism, actually measuring what was intended.



**FIGURE 4.5.** Validity test for antisemitism index (Percent. Population 2017)\*

\*N for the first question is reduced from 1,575 to 804 due to a split ballot procedure for this question and the one concerning a Muslim as prime minister (Figure 4.10).

In 2017, the gaps in the distribution of responses for the test questions are larger between scores 0 and 1 than between scores 1 and 2. This means that the group with score 1 more closely resembles the group with score 2 than the group with score 0. This is an argument for using the dichotomy 0 versus 1–3, which would give the percentages of 20.3 in 2011 and 12.4 in 2017 for a high level of antisemitism. Such a dichotomisation would imply a slightly sharper reduction in antisemitism in Norway between 2011 and 2017, with a 6.9 percentage point drop instead of the 2.3 points shown in figure 4.4.<sup>11</sup>

When validity was tested in the report for the 2011 survey using other test questions, the largest gap in the distributions occurred between scores 1 and 2 on the combined index.<sup>12</sup> This was one reason why the dichotomisation of 0–1 versus

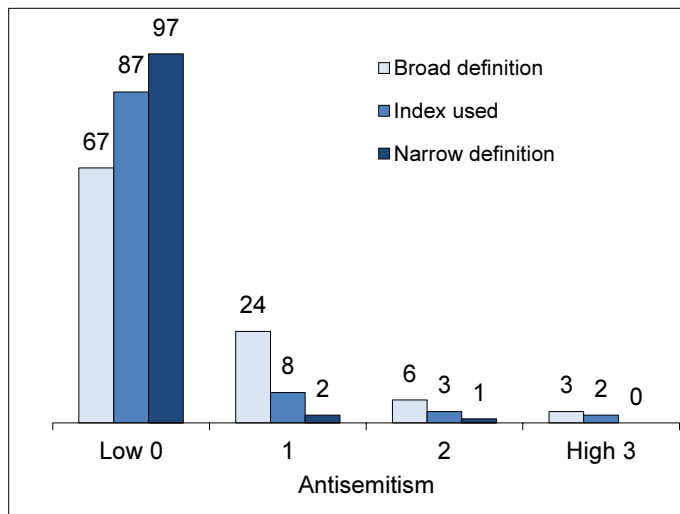
11. The difference will be less if the decrease is estimated in terms of relative rather than absolute differences (percentage points). Relative to the initial value, the decrease from 20.2 to 13.3 represents a 34% reduction, while the decrease from 7.8 to 5.5 in relative terms is 29%.

12. Christhard Hoffmann, Øivind Kopperud and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population Towards Jews and Other Minorities* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2012), 54–56.

2–3 was chosen. It was also seen as reasonable not to use the antisemitism label for respondents who had a high score on just one of the three sub-indices. Both in 2011 and 2017, it is a high score on the prejudice index alone that is most common for those scoring 1 on the combined index (this holds respectively for 41% and 47% in 2011 and 2017). The prejudice index may be more open for discussions regarding the choice of indicators than the other two sub-indices.

In order to get results comparable with those reported for 2011, the following analyses will stick to the dichotomy used in the prior report, with 0–1 versus 2–3 for low versus high level of antisemitism. The same dichotomisation is also used for the summary index of Islamophobia.

There is no denying that the decision of where to draw the line when the sub-indices are dichotomised is also somewhat arbitrary, and will affect the estimated prevalence of antisemitism in Norway.<sup>13</sup> The extent of this is seen when we compare the two extremes of a narrow and a broad definition of dislike, social distance and prejudice (Figure 4.6). In the first case, only a top score on the sub-index is considered a high value; in the second case, all index scores above 0.<sup>14</sup> The result-



**FIGURE 4.6.** Alternative indices of antisemitism (Percent. Population 2017)

13. For a discussion of the arbitrariness in defining cutting points and the validity of the antisemitism construct, see Bergmann and Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945*, Appendix 1: Problems in the Development of Anti-Semitism Scales (1997): 326–337.

14. For the prejudice index, the score 11, in addition to score 12, is counted as high in the narrow definition. Score 11 means that five of the six statements are seen as completely fitting and the remaining one as somewhat fitting with one's own opinion.



ing proportions for a score of 0 on the combined index vary between 67% and 97%. A high score (2–3) varies less, from 1% with a narrow to 9% with a broad definition.

The dichotomisation used for the three sub-indices lies between the broad and narrow definitions, with around two-thirds of the index scale defined as a high value. The result for the dichotomised antisemitism index of 5.5% high is slightly closer to the result for the broad than the narrow definition.<sup>15</sup>

## 4. MEASURING ISLAMOPHOBIA

In the 2017 population survey, negative attitudes towards Muslims were measured using the same kind of indices as for Jews. The questions in the dislike and social distance indices are identical with those in the corresponding indices for Jews. The statements used to measure prejudice are necessarily different, although some of them have content resembling statements in the index for prejudice against Jews.

### 4.1 INDEX FOR DISLIKE OF MUSLIMS

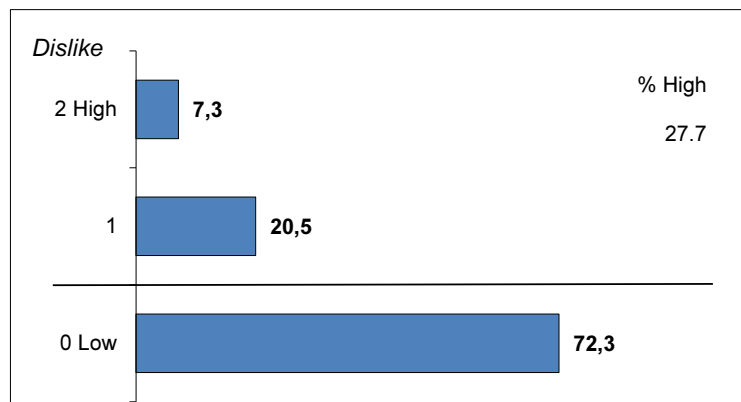
A majority of 56% find the statement of dislike as “not at all” or “rather badly” fitting with their own opinion, compared to 30% who see it as “rather well” or “completely fitting” (Table 4.4). The result though, is far more negative for Muslims than for Jews in 2017, where 81% found the dislike statement “not fitting” and only 8% “fitting” (Table 4.1).

**TABLE 4.4.** Dislike of Muslims (Percent. Population 2017)

How well do these statements fit with your own opinion?	Not at all	Rather badly	Impos. to answer / NA	Rather well	Completely	Total
I have a certain dislike of Muslims	23.1	32.9	13.5	22.5	7.9	99.9
I have a particular sympathy for Muslims	32.3	32.9	20.4	11.8	2.6	100.0

15. To see whether the results of our analyses depend on the how the sub-indices are dichotomised, we have made robustness tests using the three alternative indices of antisemitism from Figure 4.6 as well as the dichotomised version as dependent variables in multivariate regression analyses, with quite similar patterns for the effects of a set of independent variables (Table A3 in appendix).

After adjusting for respondents indicating sympathy as well as dislike, the proportion with a high score on the dichotomised index is 28% for Muslims (Figure 4.7), as compared to 7% for Jews (Figure 1).



**FIGURE 4.7.** Index for dislike of Muslims (Percent. Population 2017)

#### 4.2 INDEX FOR SOCIAL DISTANCE FROM MUSLIMS

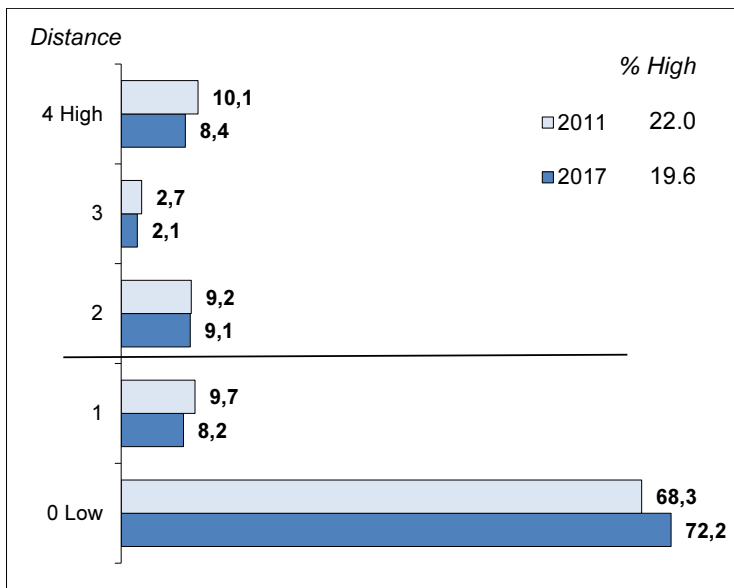
The questions regarding social distance from Muslims were asked also in 2011. A negative feeling towards Muslims as neighbours (dislike it a little or a lot) was expressed by 28% in 2011 and 26% in 2017. The corresponding results for dislike of having Muslims in circle of friends are 25% and 21% (Table 4.5). These figures are substantially higher than those for Jews, which lie between 7 and 11% (Table 4.2). The reductions in the share of negative answers, which are most pronounced for “dislike a lot”, are small (2.2 and 3.8 percentage points), but the latter is significant (5% level). The trend may appear surprising for some in view of a general impression of a growing scepticism towards immigrants and Muslims in particular among Norwegians. Such a negative trend has not, however, been confirmed by opinion research.<sup>16</sup> There also is a positive correlation between the share of immigrants in a local community and positive attitudes towards them, suggesting that part of the explanation for the observed trend towards more positive attitudes is immigration itself.

16. Ottar Hellevik and Tale Hellevik, “Utviklingen i synet på innvandrere og innvandring i Norge” (“Changes in the opinion on immigrants and immigration in Norway”), *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning* 58, no. 3 (2017): 250–283, [https://www.idunn.no/tfs/2017/03/utviklingen\\_i\\_synet\\_paa\\_innvandrere\\_og\\_innvandring\\_i\\_norge](https://www.idunn.no/tfs/2017/03/utviklingen_i_synet_paa_innvandrere_og_innvandring_i_norge).

**TABLE 4.5.** Social distance from Muslims (Percent. Population samples)

To what extent would you like or dislike:	Year	Like it	Wouldn't mind it	No answer	Don't know	Dislike it a little	Dislike it a lot	Sum
Having Muslims as neighbors?	2011	6.9	62.6	0.0	2.7	15.3	12.6	100.1
	2017	8.0	60.4	1.4	4.6	14.9	10.8	99.9
Having Muslims in your circle of friends?	2011	9.5	62.7	0.0	3.4	12.8	11.7	100.1
	2017	13.2	59.1	1.7	5.3	11.4	9.3	100.0

The social distance index for Muslims has shares of high scores around one-fifth of the population (Figure 4.8), compared to between 8% and 6% for distance from Jews (Figure 4.2). There is a modest decrease of 2.4 percentage points between 2011 and 2017 (significant 5% level).

**FIGURE 4.8.** Index of social distance towards Muslims (Percent. Population samples)

### 4.3 INDEX FOR PREJUDICE AGAINST MUSLIMS

The statements used to measure whether the respondents hold negative, stereotypical opinions of Muslims necessarily differ from those in the index for prejudice

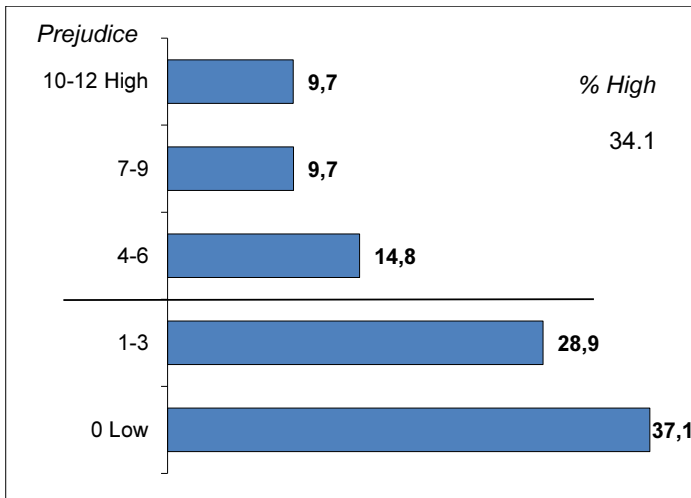
against Jews.<sup>17</sup> The results in Table 4.6 are thus not directly comparable to those of Table 4.3. The share of negative answers for Muslims varies between 29% and 47%, as compared to between 8% and 18% for prejudices against Jews in 2017.

TABLE 4.6. Prejudices against Muslims (Percent. Population sample 2017)

Below is a list of statements that have been made about Muslims. How well do they fit with your own opinion?	Statement fits:					Sum
	Not at all	Rather badly	Impos. to answer/ NA	Rather well	Completely	
Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment	10.8	22.6	19.1	30.9	16.5	100.0
Muslims consider themselves morally superior to others	9.7	16.6	28.6	27.6	17.5	100.0
Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture	15.8	30.0	14.8	24.6	14.8	100.0
Muslims do not fit into modern Western society	14.4	31.8	17.4	23.2	13.2	100.0
Muslims want to take over Europe	20.1	23.0	26.6	16.6	13.7	100.0
Muslims are more violent than others	18.0	27.5	25.5	19.1	9.9	100.0

On the index for prejudice against Muslims, nearly 20% of the respondents score above the midpoint of 6 on the scale, and 34% score high (4–12) on the dichotomised index (Figure 4.9). This is far above the corresponding results for prejudice against Jews of 3% and 8% in 2017 (Figure 4.3).

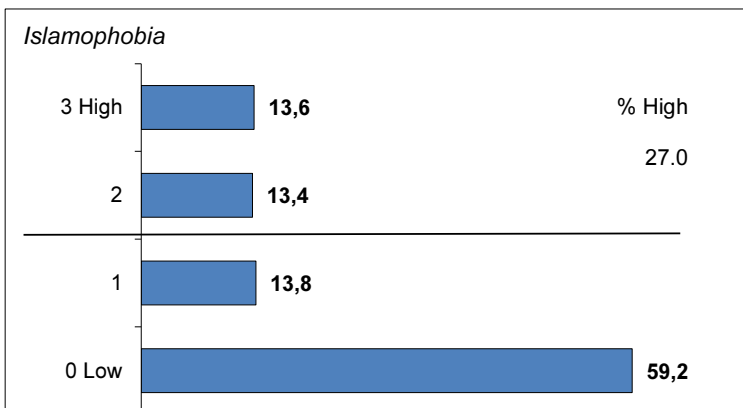
17. In contrast to our situation when selecting statements for the index on prejudice against Jews, there are few international attempts to construct such indices with regard to prejudice against Muslims. One example is the index presented in the article by Ronald Imhoff and Julia Recker, “Differentiating Islamophobia: Introducing a New Scale to Measure Islamoprejudice and Secular Islam Critique”, *Political Psychology*. 33, no. 6 (2012): 811–824.



**FIGURE 4.9.** Index of prejudice against Muslims (Percent. Populations sample 2017)

#### 4.4 INDEX OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

For the summary index of Islamophobia made from the dichotomised sub-indices, nearly 60% of the respondents have a low score on all three (Figure 4.10). The rest is evenly split between 1, 2 and 3 high scores, with shares of 13–14%. For the dichotomised index of Islamophobia, 27% have a high score. Once again, the result for Muslims is markedly more negative than for attitudes towards Jews, with a high score of 5.5% in 2017 (Figure 4.4).



**FIGURE 4.10.** Index of Islamophobia (Percent. Population sample 2017)

4.5 TESTING THE VALIDITY OF THE ISLAMOPHOBIA INDEX

As for the antisemitism index, we have tested the validity of the Islamophobia index by looking at the association between index scores and other attitudes one would expect to be highly correlated with negative attitudes towards Muslims. The first two questions in the test, and to some degree also the third one, are similar in content as those used in the test for antisemitism. As expected, figure 4.11 shows markedly increasing or decreasing proportions as we move from score 0 to 3 on the combined Islamophobia index.

The difference between the two extreme groups is 45 percentage points regarding acceptance of a Muslim as prime minister, 27 percentage points for seeing harassment and violence against Muslim as an attack on our society, 26 percentage points for seeing harassment and violence against Muslims as justifiable considering recent terrorist attacks, and 52 percentage points for thinking that harassment and violence against Muslims would not be a problem if there were fewer Muslim asylum seekers. These differences, although somewhat smaller than the corresponding results for the antisemitism index (Figure 4.5), suggest that the index is a valid measure of Islamophobia.

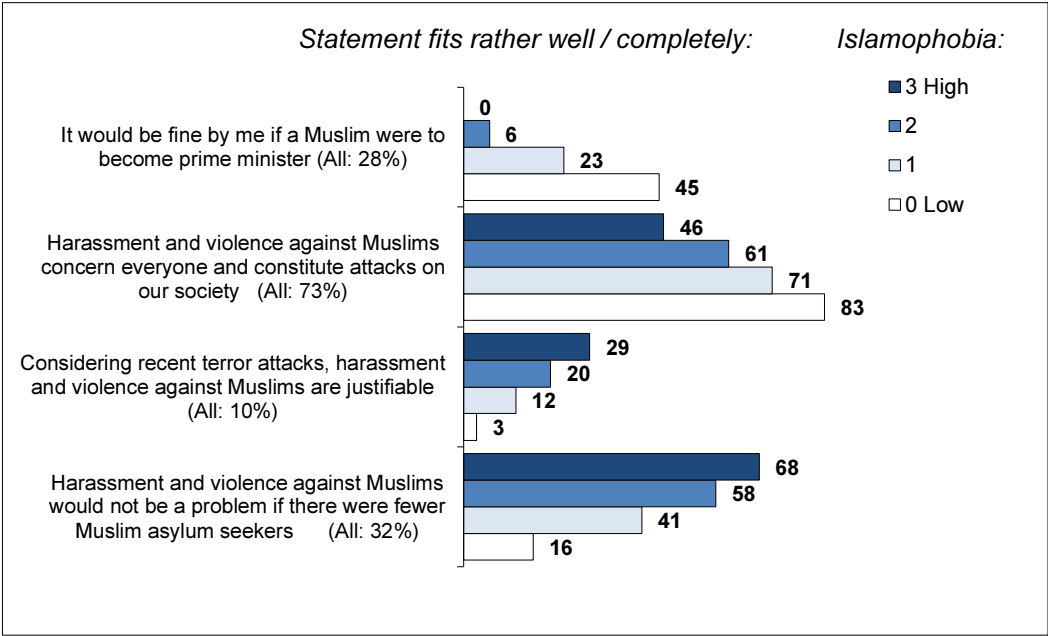
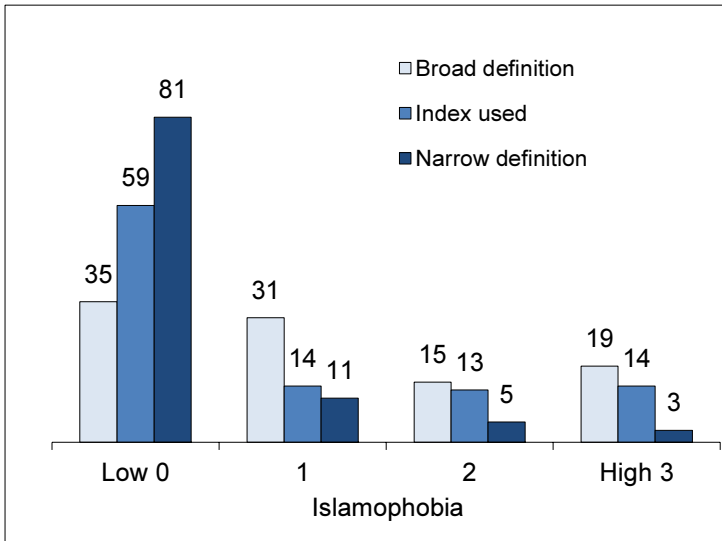


FIGURE 4.11. Validity test for Islamophobia index (Percent. Population 2017)\*

\* N for the first question is reduced from 1,575 to 771 due to a split ballot procedure for this question and the one concerning a Jew as prime minister.

Even more than for the antisemitism index, how the sub-indices are dichotomised affects the estimated prevalence of Islamophobia in Norway. This becomes clear when we compare the two extremes of a narrow and a broad definition of dislike, social distance and prejudice, as explained earlier in section 3.5. The resulting proportions for a score of 0 on the combined index vary between 35% and 81% (Figure 4.12). A high score (2–3) varies from 8% with a narrow to 34% with a broad definition, as compared to the result of 27% for the index used in our analyses.<sup>18</sup>



**FIGURE 4.12.** Alternative islamophobia indices (Percent. Population sample 2017).

## 5. PERCEPTION OF THE PREVALENCE OF ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMPHOBIA

How widespread are negative attitudes towards the two minorities perceived to be by members of the Norwegian population? Far more respondents believe negative attitudes towards Muslims to be widespread than negative attitudes towards Jews (Table 4.7). The proportions in 2011 and 2017 respectively answering “fairly” or “very” widespread are 86% and 81% in relation to Muslims and 20% and 19% in relation to Jews.

18. As for antisemitism, the effects of the various definitions of a high score on the sub-indices are tested in a multivariate regression analysis. For Islamophobia, the results are also quite similar (Table A3 in appendix).

The change with regard to the perception of negative attitudes toward Jews is too small to be significant. However, at the same time there was an increase in the proportion who believed negative attitudes towards Jews not to be widespread at all, from 7% to 10%, which is significant (1% level). This tendency for the change in the general impression of the prevalence of antisemitism coincides with the actual opinion trend as measured by our indices, all of which, as we have seen, show a modest decrease for negative attitudes towards Jews in the Norwegian population between 2011 and 2017.

For the Muslims, we only have trend data for attitudes regarding social distance, which show a modest decrease (Figure 4.8). As for antisemitism, this is in line with how the opinion climate regarding Muslims is perceived as somewhat less negative in 2017 than in 2011.

**TABLE 4.7.** Impression of the prevalence of negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims (Percent. Population samples)

How widespread do you think negative attitudes are in Norway today?	Year	Very wide-spread	Fairly wide-spread	Impossible to answer	Not very wide-spread	Not wide-spread at all	Sum
Towards Jews	2011	1.7	18.7	12.7	60.1	6.7	99.9
	2017	2.4	16.9	11.8	58.8	10.1	100.0
Towards Muslims	2011	20.7	65.7	3.2	10.1	0.3	100.0
	2017	16.5	64.3	4.7	14.0	0.5	100.0

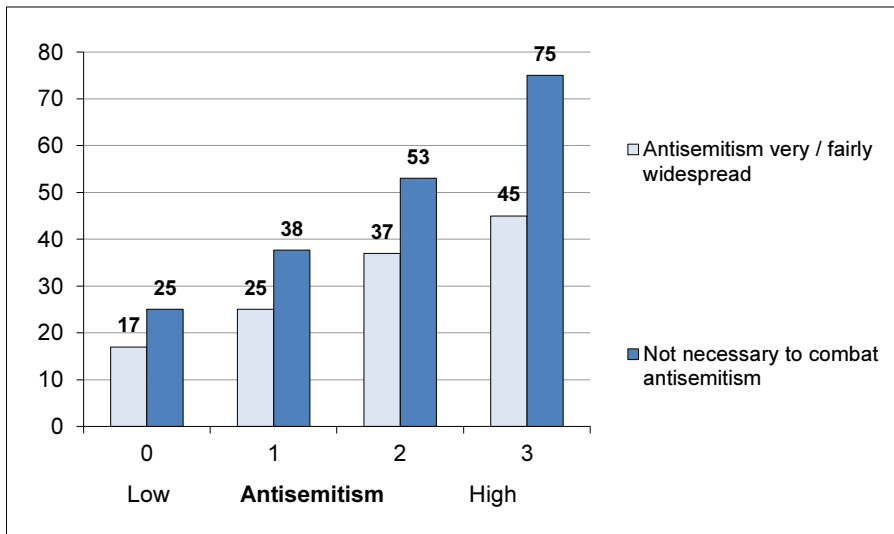
Does the public acknowledge the need to combat harassment against these minorities? Most of those who expressed an opinion believe that measures to combat anti-Jewish harassment are needed, increasing from 38% in 2011 to 41% in 2017 (Table 4.8). The corresponding figures with regard to anti-Muslim harassment are higher, but slightly decreasing, from 59% to 56%. The results mean that while twice as many respondents considered it important to combat anti-Jewish harassment as believed negative attitudes towards Jews to be widespread, the pattern is the opposite for negative attitudes towards Muslims. In this case, a larger proportion believed such negative attitudes to be widespread than saw a need to combat anti-Muslim harassment.



**TABLE 4.8.** Need for combating anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim harassment (Percent. Population samples)

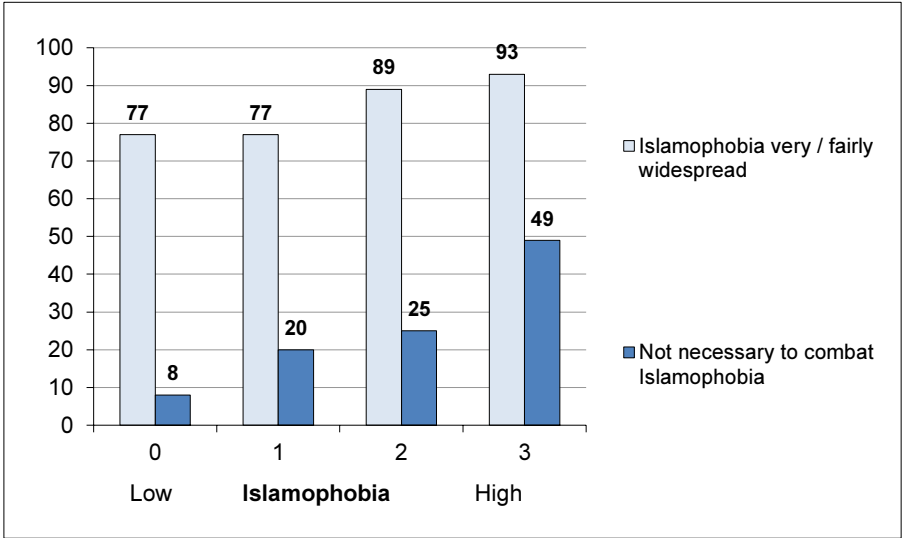
Do you see a need to do something to combat harassment in Norway?	Year	Yes	No opinion	No answer	No	Sum
Against Jews	2011	37.5	32.5	0.1	29.9	100.0
	2017	40.7	31.2	0.0	28.1	100.0
Against Muslims	2011	59.3	20.9	0.0	19.7	100.0
	2017	56.1	26.1	0.1	17.7	100.0

There is a strong correlation between respondents' own attitudes and their impression of the prevalence of negative attitudes in others. High scores on the antisemitism or Islamophobia indices tend to go together with the belief that such attitudes are widespread. In the 2017 survey, 17% of respondents who scored 0 on the combined index for antisemitism believed negative attitudes towards Jews to be very or fairly widespread (most answered "fairly"). In the small group with the top score of 3 on the index, 51% believed negative attitudes towards Jews to be widespread (one-fifth answered "very"). In other words, respondents who themselves are prejudiced towards a certain group tend to think that others are too (Figure 4.13).

**FIGURE 4.13.** Antisemitism and opinion on prevalence of negative attitudes towards Jews in Norway and the need to combat them (Percent. Population sample 2017)

There is also a high correlation between respondents’ own attitudes and their assessment of the need for measures to combat anti-Jewish harassment in Norway: the more negative the attitudes of respondents according to the antisemitism index, the less need they see for such efforts. The pattern suggests that people who are themselves negative would rather promote than combat such attitudes.

Similarly, the results for the Islamophobia index show that the more negative the attitudes of the respondents themselves, the more often they believe such attitudes to be widespread in the general population. In the 2017 survey, most of the respondents in the population sample have the impression that negative attitudes towards Muslims are very or fairly widespread, increasing from 77% of those who scored lowest on the combined index of Islamophobia to 93% of those who scored highest (Figure 4.14). The proportion that answered “very widespread” rose from 12% to 39%.



**FIGURE 4.14.** Islamophobia and opinion on prevalence of negative attitudes towards Muslims in Norway and the need to combat them (Percent. Population sample 2017)

A similar pattern as for antisemitism also exists with regard to the relation between respondents’ own attitudes and their opinion on whether it is necessary to combat anti-Muslim harassment in Norway. The more negative the attitudes of respondents according to the index of Islamophobia, the less often they see the need for measures to combat anti-Muslim harassment.

## 6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Are antisemitism and Islamophobia related phenomena, or attitudinal opposites? Is it a matter of both—and or of either—or when it comes to such attitudes? The former is conceivable if xenophobia is a dominant influence behind these attitudes. The latter might be expected if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict plays a decisive role in the attitude formation, and individuals develop positive attitudes towards the party they sympathise with and negative attitudes towards its opponent.

That there is a tendency for antisemitism and Islamophobia to coincide in individuals is reflected by the correlation between these two indices and the two sets of sub-indices. All coefficients (Pearson's  $r$ ) are positive in the population sample in 2017 (Table 4.9). For the two summary indices the coefficient equals 0.24, a clearly significant though not very strong correlation.<sup>19</sup>

**TABLE 4.9.** Correlations between indices for negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims (Pearson's  $r$  ( $p < 0.001$  for all). Populations sample 2017).

	Negative attitudes: Jews				Negative attitudes: Muslims			
	Prejud.	Dislike	Distan.	Anti-sem.	Prejud.	Dislike	Distan.	Islam.
Prejudice against Jews	1	0.56	0.47	0.78	0.27	0.19	0.21	0.22
Dislike of Jews	0.56	1	0.53	0.80	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.16
Social distance towards Jews	0.47	0.53	1	0.74	0.23	0.20	0.33	0.25
Antisemitism	0.78	0.80	0.74	1	0.25	0.21	0.27	0.24
Prejudice against Muslims	0.27	0.18	0.23	0.25	1	0.68	0.70	0.85
Dislike of Muslims	0.19	0.16	0.20	0.21	0.68	1	0.66	0.84
Social distance towards Muslims	0.21	0.17	0.33	0.27	0.70	0.66	1	0.80
Islamophobia	0.22	0.16	0.25	0.24	0.85	0.84	0.80	1

19. The Group-Focused Enmity Studies find stronger correlations between antisemitism and Islamophobia in 2003:  $r = .58$  for the West Germans,  $r = .60$  for the East Germans. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit. Die theoretische Konzeption und empirische Ergebnisse aus 2002 sowie 2003", in Wilhelm Heitmeyer, ed., *Deutsche Zustände, Folge 2*, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp (2003): 19.

Table 4.10 presents three versions of the relationship between the two dichotomised summary indices. The left part shows that the likelihood for scoring high on Islamophobia is far greater for people with a high level of antisemitism than for people with low. The difference is 30 percentage points. Correspondingly, the middle part of the table shows that scoring high on Islamophobia increases the likelihood of having antisemitic attitudes. The difference is 8 percentage points.

**TABLE 4.10.** The relationship between antisemitism and Islamophobia (Percent. Population 2017)

Islamophobia	Antisemitism		% -d H-L
	Low	High	
High	25	55	30
Low	75	45	-30
Sum	100	100	0

Islamophobia	Antisemitism		Sum
	Low	High	
High	89	11	100
Low	97	3	100
% -d H-L	-8	8	0

Islamophobia	Antisemitism		Sum
	Low	High	
High	24.0	3.0	27.0
Low	70.5	2.5	73.0
Sum	94.5	5.5	100.0

The pattern in Table 4.10 means that the combinations high–high and low–low for the antisemitism and Islamophobia indices will occur more frequently than chance would predict. This is shown to the right in the table. Here, the distribution of the respondents on the two dichotomised indices is shown as percentages of the Grand Total. A majority of 70.5% of all respondents score low on both indices, while 3% score high on both. Antisemitism alone is found in 2.5% of the sample, while Islamophobia alone is found in 24%.

If the responses had been distributed in the cells of the table randomly (by drawing lots), and in such a way that we kept the marginal distributions for the two indices (94.5–5.5 and 73–27), the proportion that fell in the high–high or the low–low cells would be 1.5 percentage points lower in each cell (resulting in 1.5% instead of 3% located in the high–high cell, for example). Correspondingly, the proportion in each of the two cells with a low value on one index and a high on the other, would be 1.5 percentage points higher.

This shows that there is a tendency for antisemitism and Islamophobia to occur in combination. They are, in other words, related attitudes rather than opposites.<sup>20</sup>

20. Another illustration of how antisemitism and Islamophobia tend to go together is found when we look at the attitudes of the voters of Norwegian parties. There is a clear tendency that the higher the level of antisemitism in a group of voters, which in the population sample from 2017 varied between 0.7% and 13.3% for a high value on the combined index, the higher the level of Islamophobia, varying between 4.5% and 63.2%. See Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes*: 99–100.

It is clear, however, that they also do occur alone, especially in the case of Islamophobia, since negative attitudes towards Muslims are far more widespread in Norway than antisemitism according to our measures.

## 7. POSSIBLE CAUSES OF ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

It is difficult to draw causal conclusions based on non-experimental survey data. What the data can show are statistical correlations, but these do not necessarily reflect causal influence. Correlations may be spurious, brought about by prior causal variables affecting both variables in question. This section will attempt to reveal non-causal association through analyses where such variables are controlled for. However, one can never be absolutely sure that such a control will cover all the relevant variables. Another problem is causal direction, i.e. in which direction an influence between the variables flows. For example, this can be difficult to know in the case of the relationship between attitudes towards Jews and views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In many cases, it is reasonable to assume that an influence will work both ways.

Which factors may influence peoples' attitudes towards Jews or Muslims? We will look at how attitudes vary between groups defined by gender, age, and education, as well as religiosity, opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, xenophobia, and scepticism towards immigrants in Norway.

The aim of the analyses is to form a picture of what may have contributed to individuals in the Norwegian population developing negative attitudes towards Jews or Muslims. For this purpose, separate indices were constructed for opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, xenophobia, and attitudes towards immigrants.

### 7.1 OPINION ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Two to three times as many respondents in the population sample support the Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as support Israel (Table 4.11). Very few choose the extreme alternatives "support solely", and more than half of the respondents refrain from expressing an opinion. The results from the 2017 survey show a slight decrease since 2011 in the proportion that supports the Palestinians and an increase in the proportion not taking sides. In the subsequent analyses, the two categories at either end of the spectrum were combined, as were the two categories in the middle expressing no support for either side, thereby reducing the number of values for the variable from eight to five.

**TABLE 4.11.** “People have conflicting views on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Which side do you support most?” (Percent. Population samples)

Year	Solely Israel	Mostly Israel	To some extent Israel	Neither	Impossible to answer/ NA	To some extent Pales- tinians	Mostly Pales- tinians	Solely Pales- tinians	Sum
2011	1.3	6.8	4.7	30.3	20.8	12.7	21.1	2.2	99.9
2017	2.1	6.7	4.5	31.9	22.5	10.5	18.3	3.6	100.1

Table 4.12 shows that statements expressing positive positions on Israel (the first two) received less support than those expressing positive positions on the Palestinians (last two).<sup>21</sup> Norwegians have more faith in the sincerity of the Palestinian than the Israeli leaders when it comes to solving the conflict. The distribution of responses to the pro-Israeli statements was quite similar in both surveys, while the pro-Palestinian statements received slightly less support in 2017.

The content of the two remaining statements (the third and fourth in Table 4.12) is critical of Israel.<sup>22</sup> Around one-third of the respondents answered fits “rather well” or “completely” to the statement “Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly

21. The statement on the right to a state of their own is seen here as pro-Palestinian in its content, since it is for the Palestinians that such a right is not fulfilled at present. Since there are groups that do not accept Israel’s right to existence, the statement may also be seen as pro-Israel. This is reflected by the positive responses in the Jewish sample. The interpretation of the statement as pro-Palestinian is, however, supported by the results of the factor analysis.

22. Researchers have so far used various items and indices to measure hostility towards Israel without yet reaching a consensus. Edgar H. Kaplan and Charles Small, “Anti-Israel sentiment predicts anti-Semitism in Europe”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 548–561, used the data of the ADL survey, “Attitudes toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Ten European Countries”, New York 2004; for Germany see the study of Aribert Heyder, Julia Iser and Peter Schmidt, “Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Meinungsbildung zwischen Öffentlichkeit, Medien und Tabus”, in Wilhelm Heitmeyer, ed., *Deutsche Zustände, Folge 3* (Frankfurt/M. 2005): 144–165; L. Daniel Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2017); Wilhelm Kempf, *Israelkritik zwischen Antisemitismus und Menschenrechtsidee. Eine Spurensuche* (Berlin 2015). The items used in our study were first used by Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb for the construction of an anti-Zionism index: Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eretgebnisse der empirischen Forschung von 1946 bis 1989*, Opladen 991 (English edition: *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945*, Chapter: “Antizionism and Antisemitism”, 182–191). (Bergmann and Erb, “Antizionism and Antisemitism”, in *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945*, English).

as the Jews were treated during World War II”, the proportion being slightly smaller in 2017 than in 2011. The statement “As long as the State of Israel exists there can be no peace” was supported by 20% in 2017 and 16% in 2011.

**TABLE 4.12.** Opinions regarding the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Percent. Population samples)

How well do these statements on the Middle East conflict fit with your own opinion?	Year	Statement fits:					Sum
		Not at all	Rather badly	Impos. to answer/NA	Rather well	Completely	
Israel's leaders genuinely want to find a solution to the conflict	2011	12.9	32.1	34.2	16.6	4.2	100.0
	2017	10.0	31.2	37.0	17.8	4.1	100.1
Israel is at the forefront of the war on Islamic terrorism	2011	12.4	20.4	46.9	15.9	4.5	100.1
	2017	8.0	20.9	51.9	14.7	4.5	100.0
As long as the State of Israel exists there can be no peace	2011	24.9	23.7	35.6	11.7	4.1	100.0
	2017	13.2	20.9	45.6	15.8	4.6	100.1
Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly as the Jews were treated during WW2	2011	11.5	21.0	29.4	29.1	9.0	100.0
	2017	9.9	20.5	37.4	25.4	6.9	100.1
Both the Israelis and the Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own	2011	2.5	3.7	17.4	27.8	48.6	100.0
	2017	2.2	4.4	23.1	30.9	39.5	100.1
The Palestinian leaders genuinely want to find a solution to the conflict	2011	6.1	21.8	34.4	31.6	6.2	100.1
	2017	7.3	19.2	40.4	28.2	5.0	100.1

A factor analysis<sup>23</sup> of the six statements resulted in three dimensions, each with a pair of the statements. When the responses for each statement are coded from 0 to 4, this gives three additive indices with scores ranging from 0 to 8, called pro-Israeli attitudes (statements 1 and 2), anti-Israeli attitudes (statements 3 and 4), and pro-Palestinian attitudes (statements 5 and 6). Table 4.13 shows the distribution on the indices and how they are dichotomised. The scale is divided just above the midpoint so that scores of 5 to 8 are defined as high values on the index.

23. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation. A similar analysis in 2011 with four statements in addition to these six produced the same dimensional solution.

**TABLE 4.13.** Indices for opinions on the Middle East conflict (Percent. Population samples)

Index	Year	Index score										Sum	High 5-8
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
Pro-Israeli attitudes	2011	5.2	7.8	13.1	15.5	39.4	9.3	6.8	1.8	1.2	100.1	19.0	
	2017	3.0	5.8	15.2	14.6	40.8	10.3	6.6	2.3	1.4	100.0	20.6	
Anti-Israeli attitudes	2011	7.5	8.7	12.8	12.8	33.5	12.1	7.8	3.8	1.1	100.1	24.8	
	2017	5.2	5.4	12.2	11.2	38.7	12.6	9.3	3.4	2.0	100.0	27.2	
Pro-Palestinian attitudes	2011	0.7	1.0	2.4	5.2	24.8	20.9	19.7	20.2	5.3	100.2	66.0	
	2017	1.2	1.3	3.0	5.3	28.8	19.3	21.8	15.7	3.8	100.2	60.5	

The proportion with a high value remained stable at around 20% from 2011 to 2017 for the pro-Israeli index. Around a quarter of the population sample had a high value on the index for anti-Israeli attitudes, with an insignificant increase from 25% in 2011 to 27% in 2017. The proportion of respondents on the lower end of the scale (scores 0–3), not supporting the anti-Israeli statements, decreased from 42% to 34%. Most of the respondents are located above the midpoint on the pro-Palestinian index, with 66% in 2011 and 60.5% in 2017. Both of these changes are significant at 1% level.

In addition to being dichotomised in multivariate analyses, the indices are tri-chotomised in some tables. Then a low value will denote scores 0–2, a medium value 3–5 and a high value 6–8.

7.2 XENOPHOBIA

Earlier we presented the attitude towards social contact with Jews and Muslims, defined by whether respondents would like or dislike having them as neighbours or friends. An index of social distance was constructed by assigning 1 point for the response “would dislike it a little” and 2 points for “would dislike it a lot” for each of the two types of contact. Table 4.14 shows the distribution on a similar index of social distance towards Roma, Somalis and Poles. The first two groups in particular stand out with respect to a high level of scepticism in the population sample. The proportion with high scores (2–4) in the 2017 survey is 44% for Roma, 27% for Somalis and 8% for Poles. For the purpose of comparison, the score for Americans was 4% and for Catholics 3%, and, as already presented, 21% for Muslims and 6% for Jews.



**TABLE 4.14.** Indices of social distance towards Roma, Somalis and Poles (Percent. Population samples)

Index of social distance:	Year	Index score					Sum	High (2-4)
		0	1	2	3	4		
Towards Roma (Gypsies)	2011	36.8	19.7	19.3	10.5	13.7	100.0	43.5
	2017	41.7	13.9	19.6	5.4	19.4	100.0	44.4
Towards Somalis	2011	52.0	16.2	16.1	6.6	9.2	100.1	31.9
	2017	62.2	11.1	12.4	2.8	11.6	100.1	26.8
Towards Poles	2011	80.4	8.3	8.0	0.8	2.4	99.9	11.2
	2017	87.1	5.2	5.6	0.6	1.5	100.0	7.7

Table 4.14 shows stability between 2011 and 2017 in negative attitudes (score 2–4) regarding social contact with Roma and significantly less scepticism towards contact with Somalis and Poles (1% level).<sup>24</sup>

Could reluctance to have contact with Jews or Muslims be part of a more general scepticism towards foreigners, or xenophobia, as it is also known? To measure xenophobia, we use an additive index of the total scores for the three groups in Table 4.14. With three indicators scored 0 to 4, the result is an index ranging from 0 to 12. If a high level of xenophobia is defined as a score above the midpoint on the scale (7–12), we find this in 15% and 13% of respondents in 2011 and 2017 respectively.

**TABLE 4.15.** Xenophobia index based on social distance towards Roma, Somalis and Poles (Percent. Population samples)

Year	Index score												Sum	High (7-1 2)	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			12
2011	32.0	12.5	12.0	8.8	9.8	4.9	5.3	2.8	5.7	2.5	2.1	0.6	1.0	100.0	14.7
2017	37.9	10.6	13.9	4.7	10.3	3.0	6.1	2.6	5.8	0.9	2.6	0.2	1.2	99.8	13.4

24. A minor change was made to the wording of the question. In 2011, the wording used was “When you think about xx, what type of contact do you think you would feel comfortable with? To what extent would you like or dislike ...?” In 2017: “We will now ask you some questions about contact with people of different nationalities and religions. To what extent would you like or dislike ...?”

7.3 SCEPTICISM TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

The respondents were asked about their views on the economic and cultural consequences of immigration. The questions were presented in the form of a discussion between two people, A and B, and the respondents asked to indicate with whom they agreed most (Table 4.16).<sup>25</sup>

Majorities of 54% (2011) and 57% (2017) believe that the effect of immigration on Norwegian culture is positive, supporting statement A. Around a quarter of the respondents chose the negative statement of a “threat”. The view concerning the economic effects is not quite as positive, but there is a clear trend towards less scepticism. In 2011, the two alternatives were chosen by 37% each, while in 2017 this had changed to 31% for the “exploit” alternative (A) as opposed to 44% for “contribute” (B).

TABLE 4.16. Attitudes towards immigrants (Percent. Population samples)

Two people are discussing the possible effects of immigrants from other cultures arriving in Norway. With whom do you agree most, A or B?								
A says: Immigrants contribute to greater cultural diversity in Norway, introducing new and exciting food, music, art, etc.					A says: Immigrants want to exploit our welfare system and enjoy benefits which they played no part in creating.			
B says: Immigrants’ ways of life don’t fit into Norwegian society. Their foreign customs are problematic for those around them and could threaten Norwegian culture.					B says: Immigrants are hard-working, diligent people who make a valuable contribution to the Norwegian economy and working life.			
Year	A Diver- sity	Imposs. to choose /NA	B Threat	Sum	A Exploit	Imposs. to choose /NA	B Contri- bute	Sum
2011	54.2	20.9	25.0	100.1	37.1	25.9	37.1	100.1
2017	56.8	18.4	24.8	100.0	31.0	25.4	43.6	100.0

An index of scepticism towards immigrants was created by assigning a score of 0 for a positive response, 1 for not expressing an opinion, and 2 for a negative

25. The questions were copied from the Norsk Monitor surveys, which were previously used in analyses of trends in attitudes of Norwegians towards immigrants; see Hellevik and Hellevik, *Utviklingen*. Norsk Monitor uses telephone interviews and postal questionnaires, whereas our survey is a web survey. Nonetheless, the results are quite similar both with regard to the level and with regard to the trend in scepticism towards immigrants from foreign cultures.

response. When the scores of 3 or 4 on the index are regarded as high values, 31% of the sample is classified as being sceptical towards immigrants in 2011 and 29% in 2017, a reduction too small to be significant. The proportion expressing two positive attitudes (score of 0) increased from 31% in 2011 to 38% in 2017 (significant 1% level).

**TABLE 4.17.** Index of scepticism towards immigrants (Percent. Population samples)

Year	Index score					Sum	High (3-4)
	0	1	2	3	4		
2011	30.7	17.4	21.4	11.5	19.1	100.1	30.6
2017	38.2	14.9	18.2	10.9	17.9	100.1	28.8

#### 7.4 POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWS AND MUSLIMS

When the respondents are grouped according to social characteristics or opinions measured by the indices discussed above, variations in the incidence of antisemitism or Islamophobia between the groups may provide clues as to what stimulates development of such attitudes. The dichotomised summary indices, where a high value denotes a high score on at least two of the three sub-indices, are used. Table 4.18 shows how the proportion of respondents displaying high levels of antisemitism or Islamophobia according to this definition varies between different groups in the population.

The incidence of both antisemitism and Islamophobia is higher among men, among older people, and among people with lower levels of education. Belief in God and regarding religion as important in one's life show no clear correlations with antisemitism or Islamophobia in the general population, though the proportion displaying high levels of Islamophobia among those who answered "yes" to the question about belief in God is larger than for those who answered "no" (significant 1% level).

**TABLE 4.18.** Variation in antisemitism and Islamophobia (Percentage with high scores on the combined indices. Population sample 2017)

Variable	Values (index scores)	High anti- semitism	High Islam- ophobia	Percent of sample	N (=100%)
Gender	Female	3	20	50	786
	Male	8	34	50	789
Age	18–29 years	2	11	18	282
	30–44 years	5	27	28	434
	45–59 years	7	30	27	417
	60+ years	6	34	28	442
Education	University level	3	18	32	506
	Lower	7	31	68	1069
Belief in God	Yes	6	31	34	528
	Not sure	4	28	25	398
	No	6	23	41	649
Importance of religion	Very important	4	31	12	104
	Fairly important	5	29	28	235
	Neither	6	32	36	304
	Not very important	4	38	18	149
	Not important at all	7	32	7	55
Support for parties in Middle East conflict	Solely/mostly Pal.	12	13	22	345
	To some extent Pal.	6	18	11	165
	Neither /No opinion	3	28	54	856
	To some extent Israel	5	47	5	70
	Solely/mostly Israel	2	60	9	138
Pro-Israeli attitudes	Strong (6–8)	3	52	10	162
	Medium (3–5)	4	24	63	1035
	Weak (0–2)	11	26	23	378

Variable	Values (index scores)	High anti- semitism	High Islam- phobia	Percent of sample	N (=100%)
Anti-Israeli attitudes	Strong (6–8)	22	36	15	231
	Medium (3–5)	3	23	66	984
	Weak (0–2)	2	34	24	360
Pro-Palesti- nian attitudes	Strong (6–8)	7	20	41	650
	Medium (3–5)	4	31	53	840
	Weak (0–2)	9	45	5	85
Xenophobia	None (0)	2	5	38	597
	Weak (1–2)	2	15	25	387
	Some degree (3–4)	7	36	15	236
	Medium (5–6)	8	55	9	144
	Strong (7–12)	19	83	13	211
Scepticism towards immi- grants	None (0)	3	3	38	602
	Weak (1 )	4	12	15	234
	Medium (2)	4	29	18	286
	Quite strong (3)	4	42	11	171
	Strong (4)	13	80	18	282
All		5	27	100	1575

Which side the respondents support in the Middle East conflict and what opinions they hold on the conflict clearly correlate with antisemitism and Islamophobia in the expected direction. The exceptions are that the correlation between pro-Palestinian attitudes and antisemitism is weak, and that strong anti-Israeli attitudes go together with Islamophobia. The first finding indicates that having pro-Palestinian attitudes is not necessarily a result of antisemitism.<sup>26</sup> The second finding may be a result of xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants stimulating both anti-semitism and Islamophobia. These attitudes have clear correlations with antisemitism and, in particular, Islamophobia.

26. But the ambiguity of one of the indicators, the statement supporting the right to a state for both parties to the conflict, may also have contributed to this result.

In terms of incidence of high levels of Islamophobia, the difference between the groups at the extremes of the indices of xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants is almost 80 percentage points. It could be questioned whether there is any merit in considering scepticism towards foreigners or immigrants on the one hand and antisemitism or Islamophobia on the other as separate phenomena that may influence each other, as we have done here, or whether they should instead be considered as different aspects of the same phenomenon, a syndrome that has been called group-focused enmity.<sup>27</sup>

Several of the variables in Table 4.18 are correlated. For example, individuals displaying high levels of xenophobia will often also be sceptical towards immigrants. In order to see what a characteristic in itself means for negative attitudes towards the minorities, the groups to be compared must be made equal with respect to the other variables through a multivariate analysis were these variables are included. This can be done by means of a multivariate regression analysis (Table 4.19). Since importance of religion according to Table 4.18 did not correlate with antisemitism or Islamophobia, this variable is omitted from the analysis.

To ease comparison of the importance of the different explanatory variables, they are dichotomised in the multivariate analysis. The exception is which side respondents supported in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is represented by two dummy variables, with not taking sides as reference group. With the dichotomised indices of antisemitism and Islamophobia, coded 0 for low value and 1 for high value, as dependent variables, the linear regression coefficients equal proportion differences. When multiplied by 100 as shown in the table, the coefficients can be interpreted as percentage differences.<sup>28</sup> The bivariate association between gender and antisemitism in Table 4.19 (−4.9) for example corresponds to the difference in percentage points between women and men in Table 4.18 (3−8 = −5).

The variables in the table are divided into two categories. The first contains the social background variables and belief in God, the second opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants. The latter group of variables lie closer to antisemitism and Islamophobia in the causal chain, and can be considered as intervening variables producing an indirect effect

27. Andreas Zick, Beate Küpper and Andreas Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination. A European Report* (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011).

28. For arguments for using linear instead of loglinear regression analysis with a dichotomised dependent variable, see Ottar Hellevik, "Linear versus logistic regression when the dependent variable is a dichotomy", *Quality & Quantity* 43, no. 1 (2009): 59–74, and Carina Mood, "Logistic regression: Why we cannot do what we think we can do, and what we can do about it", *European Sociological Review* 26, no. 1 (2010): 67–82.

between the first group of variables and negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims. They represent potential mechanisms that may explain the correlation between them.

It could also be possible that the influence works in the opposite direction; for instance, that Islamophobia leads to scepticism towards immigrants, or that it works both ways, meaning that these phenomena stimulate each other. This is impossible to determine with the available data, making the causal interpretation of the effects uncertain.

The multivariate analysis is performed in two stages. In the first, the social background variables and belief in God are included. Changes in the bivariate correlation for a variable show how much of this correlation can be explained by the other variables in the group. For some, such as gender and age, this part of the association will be indirect effects. For others, it may also be a case of spurious (non-causal) association caused by variables in the group prior to them in time. In the second stage, all the variables are included, and the remaining association constitutes the direct effect of the variable in question, given the variables included in the model and its assumptions of causal direction.

Table 4.19 shows that when we remove differences between women and men with regard to the other variables, the gender difference for antisemitism is reduced, but only marginally (from  $-4.9$  to  $-4.4$  percentage points). For Islamophobia, however, the effect of gender is radically reduced when controlled for all other variables (from  $-14.2$  to  $-5.1$ ). This can largely be ascribed to the clear gender differences with regard to xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants evident in the correlations in Table 4.20. The fact that these correlations are negative indicates that women – who are assigned high value on the gender variable – have lower incidences of such attitudes than men. Table 4.19 shows that both xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants have a strong effect on the likelihood of scoring high on Islamophobia, and thereby transmit a negative indirect effect between gender and Islamophobia according to the model.

The results of the final multivariate analysis show that xenophobia has the strongest effect on the antisemitism index, followed by anti-Israeli attitudes and supporting the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict, while being a woman reduces the chances for a high score.

Xenophobia has strongest effect on the level of Islamophobia, closely followed by scepticism towards immigrants, which had little effect on the incidence of antisemitism. Supporting Israel in the Middle East conflict increases the chance for a high level of Islamophobia. Supporting the Palestinians reduce the chances, and so does being a woman or young in age.

**TABLE 4.19.** Bivariate and multivariate regression analysis with dichotomised indices of antisemitism and Islamophobia as dependent variables (Regression coefficients multiplied with 100. Population sample 2017)\*

Variable	High value (index scores)	Antisemitism			Islamophobia		
		Bivariate	Multivariate		Bivariate	Multivariate	
Gender	Female	−4.9	−4.8	−4.4	−14.2	−14.0	−5.1
Age	−44 years	−2.4	(−2.2)	(−0.5)	−11.5	−9.9	−5.1
Education	University	−3.5	−2.9	(−1.7)	−12.7	−10.4	(−0.8)
Belief in God	Yes	(0.5)	(0.3)	(1.9)	6.1	4.9	−2.6
Israeli-Pal. conflict (2 dummy var.) (Refer. group: Do not take sides)	Support Israel	(−2.6)		(−1.3)	33.0		13.9
	Support Palest.	6.6		5.4	−18.7		−8.0
Pro-Israeli attitudes	Strong (5–8)	(−2.6)		(−1.9)	12.7		(0.6)
Anti-Israeli attitudes	Strong (5–8)	12.6		10.3	5.0		5.5
Pro-Palestinian attitudes	Strong (5–8)	(0.3)		(−1.6)	−11.1		(−0.3)
Xenophobia	Strong (7–12)	15.9		14.6	64.1		39.9
Scepticism towards immigrants	Strong (3–4)	6.2		(1.0)	54.4		36.4
Explained variance (adjusted R squared)			0.016	0.130		0.056	0.419

\* In brackets: Not significant (5% level).

Education has a clear bivariate correlation with Islamophobia, which shows little change when controlled for other social background variables, but disappears when controlled also for attitudinal variables. Thus, according to our analysis, education does not have a direct effect, but rather an indirect one, primarily via xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants. Such attitudes are less common among people with university or university college education (Table 4.20).



**TABLE 4.20.** Correlation matrix for the independent variables (Pearson's  $r$ . Population samples 2011 and 2017 combined)

Variables	High value	Gender	Age	Education	Xenophobia	Immigrant scepticism	Support Israel	Support Palestinians	Pro-Israel attitudes	Anti-Israel attitudes	Pro-Palest. attitudes
Gender	Female	1	-0.04	0.06	-0.09	-0.15	-0.15	-0.01	-0.06	0.04	-0.03
Age	Age 18–44	-0.04	1	0.05	-0.06	-0.01	-0.08	-0.07	-0.08	-0.12	-0.14
Education	University	0.06	0.05	1	-0.11	-0.17	-0.03	0.11	-0.04	-0.07	0.03
Xenophobia	High	-0.09	-0.06	-0.11	1	0.41	0.09	-0.12	0.06	0.05	-0.12
Immigrant scepticism	High	-0.15	-0.01	-0.17	0.41	1	0.16	-0.2	0.07	0.03	-0.16
Israeli-Pal. conflict	Support Israel	-0.15	-0.08	-0.03	0.09	0.16	1	-0.28	0.4	-0.18	-0.17
Israeli-Pal. conflict	Support Palest.	-0.01	-0.07	0.11	-0.12	-0.2	-0.28	1	-0.19	0.27	0.31
Pro-Israeli attitudes	High	-0.06	-0.08	-0.04	0.06	0.07	0.4	-0.19	1	-0.07	0.03
Anti-Israeli attitudes	High	0.04	-0.12	-0.07	0.05	0.03	-0.18	0.27	-0.07	1	0.14
Pro-Pal. attitudes	High	-0.03	-0.14	0.03	-0.12	-0.16	-0.17	0.31	0.03	0.14	1

An intuitive and perhaps more easily understandable way of documenting the effects of these variables on antisemitism or Islamophobia is through a tabular analysis. However, there is a limit to how many characteristics that can be examined simultaneously in order to avoid getting too few respondents in the cells of the table. Tables 4.21 and 4.22 use two of the independent variables shown by the multivariate analysis to have the greatest effect on antisemitism and Islamophobia, namely xenophobia and opinion on the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Limiting the number of independent variables to two allows the use of five values for each in the table, instead of the crude dichotomy used in the regression analysis.

With two independent variables of five categories each, we get 25 combinations, which provide a wide variation in the proportion with a high level of anti-semitism (Table 4.21). The percentage ranges from 0 in the bottom left-hand corner for respondents with no xenophobia who support Israel, to 52 in the upper right-hand corner for respondents with high levels of xenophobia who support the Palestinians. Between these extremes, the percentage with high antisemitism gradually increases in a pattern that follows the main diagonal of the table.

**TABLE 4.21.** Percent high antisemitism depending on xenophobia and opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Population samples 2011 and 2017 combined)

<b>Xenophobia</b>	<b>Which party supported in the conflict</b>					<b>Difference</b>
	<b>Solely/ Mostly Israel</b>	<b>To some extent Israel</b>	<b>Both/ none</b>	<b>To some extent Palestini- nians</b>	<b>Solely/ Mostly Palestini- nians</b>	
Very high	5.9	11.8	19.6	33.2	52.0	46.1
High	2.0	3.8	6.9	5.0	20.6	18.6
Medium	0.0	2.4	2.1	7.7	22.1	22.1
Low	1.5	0.0	1.5	7.4	7.5	6.0
Very low	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.7	4.7	4.7
Difference	5.9	11.6	18.5	32.5	47.3	41.4

Table 4.22 for Islamophobia is set up in the same way as Table 4.21. Since the correlation with opinion on the parties in the conflict has the opposite sign as for anti-semitism, the proportions increase from the bottom right-hand corner to the upper left-hand corner along the bi-diagonal. The variation ranges from 2% among respondents with no xenophobia who strongly support the Palestinians, to 91% among respondents with very high levels of xenophobia who strongly support Israel.

**TABLE 4.22.** Percentage of high Islamophobia depending on xenophobia and opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Population sample 2017)

<b>Xenophobia</b>	<b>Which party supported in the conflict</b>					<b>Difference</b>
	<b>Solely/ Mostly Israel</b>	<b>To some extent Israel</b>	<b>Both/ none</b>	<b>To some extent Pales- tinians</b>	<b>Solely/ Mostly Pales- tinians</b>	
Very high	90.9	92.5	83.7	72.6	66.7	24.2
High	87.4	56.5	49.3	40.2	57.2	30.2
Medium	67.7	44.4	34.5	33.3	20.3	47.4
Low	42.1	14.1	15.4	7.1	6.3	35.8
Very low	17.3	22.1	5.8	1.2	1.9	15.4
Difference	73.6	70.4	77.9	71.4	64.8	8.8

In Table 4.21 for antisemitism, the distance between the extreme groups is slightly greater for xenophobia (columns) than for opinion on the Middle East conflict (rows), with mean differences of 23.2 and 19.5 percentage points respectively. This applies even more so for Islamophobia (Table 4.22), with mean differences of 71.6 and 30.6 percentage points. The pattern testifies to the importance of xenophobia – a general scepticism towards foreigners – for the development of negative attitudes towards Jews and, in particular, Muslims.

## 8. EXPLAINING TRENDS IN ANTISEMITISM

The two population surveys have shown a reduction in the share of respondents with high scores on the antisemitism index in Norway in 2017, down from an already low level in 2011. The question raised in this section is what can explain such a trend. It will be addressed first by looking at the role played by generational replacement versus individuals changing their opinion, secondly by looking at changes in the variables that, according to the analysis in the previous section, affect antisemitism.

### 8.1 GENERATIONAL REPLACEMENT OR PERIOD EFFECTS

Table 4.18 showed that a high level of antisemitism is three times more common in the oldest than in the youngest age group: 6% versus 2%. The same holds for Islamophobia, with 34% versus 10% for the 60+ years old compared to the young of 18–29 years old.<sup>29</sup> Does this reflect a life-phase effect, where people grow more sceptical toward strangers and foreign cultures as they age? Or is it a sign that new generations have developed attitudes that differ from those of older generations due to changed circumstances during adolescence, the formative years for the values of an individual?<sup>30</sup> If the latter is the case, this means that generational replacement over time will change the population opinion climate. The question is to what extent replacement explains the reduced antisemitism in Norway, or to what extent this trend is a result of individuals present through the whole period changing their opinion, so-called period effects.

These are questions addressed by cohort analysis, where cohorts (generations) are followed over time to see whether they have stable characteristics that differ between them, giving rise to generation replacement effects.<sup>31</sup> Or does the opinion of the individuals within the cohorts change over time due to the impact of historical events or processes, producing so-called period effects that change popular opinion? This is in contrast to individual changes related to life phase, which will not affect overall opinion unless the age distribution of a society changes markedly.

Table 4.23 is a standard cohort matrix, with age groups six years wide placed along the left margin, and the two points of observation, six years apart, placed over the columns. In this way, we may follow a cohort by reading the table diagonally as indicated by the shading. The tendency within the cohorts, as captured by the mean of their changes, is a reduction of the percentage of high antisemitism within the cohorts of 1.7 points. It is unlikely that this should be a life-phase effect, since the tendency is away from, rather than towards, the more negative attitudes of older people. The reduction is a little less than the change for the population as a whole between 2011 and 2017 of –2.3 percentage points, indicating that generational replacement has also played a role.

29. With one decimal  $6.0 / 2.2 = 2.7$  for antisemitism and  $34.2 / 10.8 = 3.2$  for Islamophobia.

30. Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution—Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

31. Norman D. Glenn, *Cohort Analysis. Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*, vol. 5. (Newbury Park: Sage, 1977).

**TABLE 4.23.** Percentage with high antisemitism (Standard cohort matrix, population samples)

Age	Year		Birth cohort	Cohort change	N=100% (weighted)		Simplified matrix	
	2011	2017			2011	2017	2011	2017
18–23	8.0	3.0	1988–93		177	94	Stayers Time 1 7.6	G.in 3.0
24–29	2.1	1.8	1988–93	–6.2	145	188		Stayers Time 2 5.6
30–35	5.3	5.9	1982–87	3.8	148	199		
36–41	6.1	5.2	1976–81	–0.1	156	155		
42–47	7.7	4.3	1970–75	–1.8	168	153		
48–53	5.1	7.7	1964–69	0.0	157	142		
54–59	16.7	7.9	1958–63	2.8	143	203		
60–65	9.0	5.7	1952–57	–11.0	239	154		
66–71	8.8	4.8	1946–51	–4.2	143	168		
72–77	11.9	9.4	1940–45	1.6	35	102	Gen. out 9.4	
78–	(8.9)	(0.0)	1934–39	–	9	17		
All	7.8	5.5	Change –2.3	Mean –1.7	1522	1575		

The cohort patterns in Table 4.23 are varied, which to some extent may be a result of random errors due to small bases for the percentages in the cells. An alternative to the full matrix is a simplified version where we distinguish between cohorts taking part in the replacement process – the out-going and the in-coming generation – and cohorts present at both times (called stayers at time 1 and time 2). The in-generation is respondents 18–23 years in 2017, who were too young to be part of the sample from the adult population in 2011. The members of the out-generation are not as easily defined. It should be those members of the adult population in 2011 that have died between 2011 and 2017. They would have come from several age groups, but predominantly the oldest ones. In the analysis, we let the age groups 66 years and older represent the out-generation.

The difference between the in- and the out-generation in the prevalence of high antisemitism is  $3.0 - 9.4 = -6.4$ , and the change between 2011 and 2017 for the “stayers” is  $5.6 - 7.6 = -2.0$ . Table 4.24 also gives the results for the three sub-indices. The differences between the in-coming and the out-going members of the

population are larger than the changes in opinion for those present at both points in time.<sup>32</sup> This especially holds for prejudice.

**TABLE 4.24.** The importance of generation and period effects for negative attitudes towards Jews (Percent. Population samples)

Change over time in popular opinion due to:	Relevant differences:	Indices for negative attitudes towards Jews				N (=100%)
		Dislike	Dis-tance	Preju-dice	Anti-sem.	
Change of members of population (generational replacement)	In: 18–23 years 2017	2.0	3.9	3.9	3.0	94
	Out: 66+ years 2011	9.1	10.8	19.6	9.4	187
	Difference In – Out	–7.1	–6.9	–15.7	–6.4	
Change of opinion among stayers between 2011 and 2017	2017: 24+ years	7.0	6.0	8.5	5.6	1481
	2011: 18–65 years	9.9	8.2	11.0	7.6	1335
	Change Time2–Time1	–2.9	–2.2	–2.5	–2.0	
Resulting population change from 2011 to 2017		–3.1	–2.6	–3.8	–2.3	

When the actual changes from 2011 to 2017 for the total samples lie close to the period effects, the reason is that the group of stayers is so much larger than the groups being exchanged. This is due to the short time span of six years. Over a longer period, the generational replacement would involve larger shares of the population and contribute more to the population trend, but in the present six-year period not more than 6% are newcomers in 2017.

8.2 CHANGES IN VARIABLES AFFECTING ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Why do the in- and out-going generations between 2011 and 2017 differ in attitudes towards Jews? What has caused a net shift in the attitudes of individuals in the cohorts present at both points in time? This may have to do with changes in the independent variables that, according to the analyses in section 7.4, have an effect on antisemitism. For this to be the case, the variables – in addition to affect-

32. Since this is a time series and not a panel study, the respondents are not the same in 2011 and 2017. The results thus are estimates of the net changes taking place within a cohort.

ing antisemitism – must have changed in the “right” direction in this time period (i.e. show a decline for the value that increases the likelihood of antisemitism or an increase for the value that reduces this likelihood).

The criterion of change in incidence excludes variables such as gender and age, where the composition of the population will not have changed much during the time period in question. It also excludes variables with negligible direct effect on antisemitism in the multivariate analysis in Table 4.19, such as religiosity. This leaves us with the variables in Table 4.25.

A variable’s contribution to changes in the incidence of high levels of antisemitism equals how much it has changed multiplied by its effect on antisemitism. It turns out that the changes in incidence in particular are so negligible that this contribution amounts to only a few tenths of one per cent. The greatest contribution – for anti-Israeli attitudes – even has the “wrong” sign; the trend towards slightly higher incidence of such attitudes should have contributed to more, not less, antisemitism. The result, when contributions for all the variables are added up, is –0.2 percentage points.

Considering the actual decline of 2.3 percentage points, we must conclude that the changes in the variables in Table 4.25 cannot explain the decline in antisemitism in Norway between 2011 and 2017. In order to understand the background for this development, we must look for trends or events during this period that are not captured by these variables. One possibility might be increased media and political attention to antisemitism as a social issue during this period, generated by terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe, among other things.

**TABLE 4.25.** Effect of changes in independent variables on the trend in antisemitism (Percent. Population samples)

Variable	High values (index scores)	Incidence			Direct effect on antisem. (2017)	Change x Direct effect
		2011	2017	Change		
Education	University	28.4	32.1	3.7	–1.7	–0.06
Middle East conflict	Support Palest.	36.0	32.4	–3.6	5.4	–0.19
Anti-Israeli attitudes	Strong (5–8)	24.8	27.2	2.4	10.3	0.25
Xenophobia	Strong (7–12)	14.7	13.4	–1.3	14.6	–0.19
Scepticism towards immigrants	Strong (3–4)	30.6	28.8	–1.8	1.0	–0.02
Antisemitism	High (2[g] 3)	7.8	5.5	–2.3	Total:	–0.21

For Islamophobia we only have data for social distance in 2011, which show a small reduction in 2017. For the other indices, the actual amount of change is not known. Although modest in size, the reduction in xenophobia and scepticism towards immigrants shown in Table 4.25 may have contributed to a reduced incidence of all kinds of negative attitudes due to the strong effects these variables have on Islamophobia (Table 4.19).

## 9. CONCLUSION

The level of negative attitudes towards Jews in Norway is low and declining, according to our measures. In the 2017 survey, 6.7% scored high on the index of dislike, a reduction of 3.1 percentage points from 2011. On the index for social distance, 5.9% scored high in 2017, down 2.6 points from 2011. The percentage scoring high on the index for prejudice was 8.3 in 2017, down 3.8 points from 2011. The summary index of antisemitism showed that 5.5% had a high score on at least two of the three sub-indices in 2017, a reduction of 2.3 points from 2011.

The corresponding levels of negative attitudes towards Muslims in 2017 are much higher. For the dislike index, 27.7% score high, for social distance 19.6%, for prejudice 34.1% and for the summary index of Islamophobia 27.0%. The only index where we have results also for 2011 regarding Muslims – social distance – shows a reduction in high scores of 2.4 percentage points.

In 2017, negative attitudes towards Jews were perceived to be very widespread by just 2.4% of the respondents. If we add fairly widespread, the result is 19.3%, a figure which seems high compared to our results for measures of actual popular opinion. The same holds for the perception of negative attitudes towards Muslims, which is 16.5% for very widespread and 80.8% when we add fairly widespread. The perception of the opinion climate regarding Muslims has become less negative from 2011 to 2017 (5.6 percentage points for the two answers combined). Regarding Jews there is a tendency in the same direction, but this is too small to be significant.

There is a clear tendency that the more negative the attitudes of a person towards Jews or Muslims are, the more likely it is that he or she will perceive the general opinion climate as negative, and the less likely it is that an effort to combat harassment against these minorities is seen as necessary.

It turns out that there is a tendency for negative attitudes towards the two minorities to go together. Accordingly, antisemitism and Islamophobia can be seen as related phenomena rather than opposites, with xenophobia as the most important



stimulating factor. In addition negative attitudes towards Israel go together with antisemitism, and scepticism towards immigrants with Islamophobia.

In the years to come, will we see a continuation of the trend towards less negative attitudes towards these minorities? The development for antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway will depend upon generational replacement as well as individuals changing their opinion influenced by current events. Judging from the present generational differences, the first process may be expected to stimulate a continued gradual reduction in the prevalence of negative attitudes towards Jews as well as Muslims, among other things as a result of an increasing level of high education in the new generations.

The effect of historical events on attitudes is more uncertain. Up until now the growing number of immigrants in Norway seems to have affected the attitude of Norwegians towards Muslims positively, but what will happen in the future depends on factors such as the level of immigration and the success of the process of integration. For antisemitism, it is primarily events in the Middle East conflict that may have an impact on the attitudes of Norwegians.

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## APPENDIX: N AND TEST OF ROBUSTNESS

**TABLE A1:** N for Figures 4.5, 4.11, 4.13, 4.14 and Table 4.10 (Population sample 2017)

Combined index for	Scale	0	1	2	3
		Low		High	
Antisemitism	0–3	1342	136	61	36
	Low-High	1478		97	
Islamophobia	0–3	885	234	217	239
	Low-High	1119		456	

**TABLE A2:** N for Table 4.21 and 4.22 (Populations samples 2011 and 2017 combined)

Xenophobia	Which party supported in the conflict					Sum
	Solely / Mostly Israel	To some extent Israel	Both/ none	To some extent Pales- tinians	Solely / Mostly Pales- tinians	
Very high	68	22	246	31	59	426
High	34	22	164	31	50	301
Medium	58	32	271	70	105	536
Low	56	32	386	104	174	752
Very low	58	32	544	136	312	1082
Sum	274	140	1611	372	700	3097

**TABLE A3.** Multivariate regression analysis with different versions of the antisemitism and Islamophobia indices as dependent variable (index with values 0–1, 0–3 or 0–3 versions narrowly and broadly defined. Regression coefficients for the last three divided by 3. Population sample 2017)\*

Variable	High value (index scores)	Antisemitism index				Islamophobia index			
		0–1	0–3	Narrow	Broad	0–1	0–3	Narrow	Broad
Gender	Female	–0.044	–0.052	–0.024	–0.090	–0.051	–0.036	(–0.013)	–0.064
Age	–44 years	(–0.005)	(–0.017)	(0.001)	–0.026	–0.051	–0.064	–0.029	–0.073
Education	University	(–0.017)	(–0.019)	(–0.007)	–0.026	(–0.008)	(–0.022)	–0.026	–0.033
Belief in God	Yes	(0.01 9)	0.021	(0.002)	(0.012)	–0.026	(0.012)	(–0.001)	(0.012)
Middle East conflict (2 dummy variables) (Reference group: No opinion)	Support Israel	(–0.013)	–0.032	–0.018	(–0.017)	0.1 39	0.144	0.060	0.125
	Support Palestinians	0.054	0.058	0.017	0.079	–0.080	–0.085	(–0.009)	–0.109
Pro-Israeli attitudes	Strong (5–8)	(–0.019)	(–0.022)	(0.005)	(–0.028)	(0.006)	(–0.012)	(0.020)	(–0.004)
Anti-Israeli attitudes	Strong (5–8)	<b>0.103</b>	<b>0.104</b>	<b>0.032</b>	<b>0.132</b>	0.055	0.068	0.032	0.208
Pro-Palestinian attitudes	Strong (5–8)	(–0.016)	(–0.017)	(–0.009)	(0.007)	(–0.003)	(–0.008)	–0.025	(0.009)
Xenophobia	Strong (7–1 2)	<b>0.146</b>	<b>0.136</b>	<b>0.057</b>	<b>0.155</b>	<b>0.399</b>	<b>0.341</b>	<b>0.262</b>	<b>0.305</b>
Scepticism towards immigrants	Strong (3–4)	(0.010)	0.024	(0.011)	0.039	<b>0.364</b>	<b>0.347</b>	<b>0.163</b>	<b>0.303</b>
Explained variance (adjusted Rsq)		0.130	0.198	0.096	0.211	0.419	0.513	0.409	0.450

\* Regression coefficients in brackets: Not significant (5% level). In bold: Two strongest effects. Distribution on the indices: see Figure 4.11 (antisemitism) and 4.12 (Islamophobia). Meaning of broad and narrow definition: see section 3.5.

## 5.

# Counting Antisemites versus Measuring Antisemitism

## *An “Elastic View” of Antisemitism*

**WERNER BERGMANN**

**ABSTRACT** In a recent study on “Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain”, Daniel Staetsky introduces a promising new way of thinking about the level of antisemitism in society, which exists at different levels of intensity.<sup>1</sup> By differentiating a more or less coherent “learned antisemitism” (the diffusion of antisemitic ideas and images) from open dislike of Jews, he proposes the concept of an “elastic view”. In this chapter, Staetsky’s concept and the different ways to measure antisemitic ideas and open dislike of Jews, as well as anti-Israelism and the relationship between antisemitism and anti-Israelism are used to analyse the data of the Norwegian Survey “Attitudes toward Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017”. Furthermore, this chapter will also examine how the legitimization of violence against Jews is influenced by the levels of antisemitism and anti-Israelism. Lastly, although the Norwegian and the British studies mainly do not use the same questions to measure antisemitism and anti-Israelism, the results for Norway will tentatively be compared with the results of the British study by looking at the underlying patterns and correlations instead of the numerical data.

**KEYWORDS** antisemitism | stereotypes | antipathy | anti-Israelism | justification of violence | Norway | Great Britain

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1. My special thanks go to Ottar Hellevik, without whose help in the calculation of data this contribution in the present form could not have been written. My thanks also go to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive criticism of an earlier version of this chapter.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, studies on antisemitic attitudes have revealed all over Europe a big gap between the findings of surveys about attitudes toward Jews and the perception of the Jews themselves concerning the spread of antisemitism. While the non-Jewish populations do not consider antisemitism to be a widespread phenomenon, and while surveys on antisemitic attitudes in many European countries attitudes even show a slight downward trend, Jews assess the situation quite differently: a large majority of them rates antisemitism to be a very widespread and growing problem.<sup>2</sup> In order to tackle this problem, L. Daniel Staetsky proposes to differentiate between a more or less coherent “learned antisemitism” (antisemitic ideas) from open dislike of Jews, which “exists in society at different levels of intensity and with different shades to it”.<sup>3</sup> Many studies have shown that on a cognitive level there are a large number of people believing in a small number of antisemitic ideas without being consciously hostile or prejudiced toward Jews on the emotional/affective and behavioural level. Therefore, the “elastic view” takes these possibilities explicitly into account:

Some people may be strongly antisemitic, others less so; and while others may not fit into either of these categories, they may still hold certain negative ideas about Jews – even if these are small in number and weak in intensity – that have the potential to make Jews feel offended or uncomfortable. Thus, no single figure can capture the level of antisemitism in a given society.<sup>4</sup>

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2. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in EU Member States: Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism*, 2013; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU*, 2018. Andreas Hövermann et al., *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland*. Studie des Instituts für Konflikt und Gewaltforschung der Universität Bielefeld für den Unabhängigen Expertenkreis Antisemitismus, Bielefeld 2016.
  3. L. Daniel Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain. A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, September 2017), 3.
  4. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 3. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb used a similar approach by measuring antisemitic attitudes in their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions, and have also worked with three broadly defined antisemitism scales. For the first time they also developed an anti-Zionism scale; *Der Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1945–1989. Ergebnisse der empirischen Forschung* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1991); Enlarged English edition: *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Publishers, 1997).

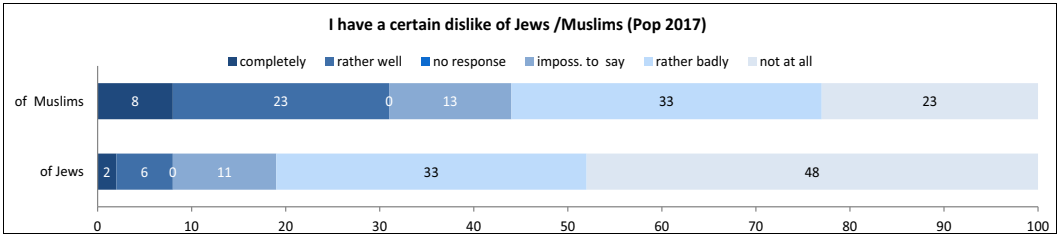
In this chapter, Staetsky's approach to measuring the different dimensions of anti-semitism is used to analyse the data of the Norwegian Survey "Attitudes toward Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017".<sup>5</sup> A one-on-one comparison between the Norwegian and the British studies is not possible mainly because they do not use the same questions to measure antisemitism and anti-Israelism. The following chapter does not directly compare the quantitative results, but the results for Norway can tentatively be compared with the results of the British study by looking at the underlying patterns and correlations instead of the numerical data.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. COUNTING ANTISEMITES VERSUS MEASURING ANTISEMITISM

How widespread are negative feelings and opinions about Jews in Norway?<sup>7</sup> In both the Norwegian and the British studies, there are findings on the emotional, the cognitive and the behavioural level. Following Staetsky, the most straightforward approach is used in "clarifying the extent of negativity toward Jews [...] by

5. The survey consists of a representative sample of the Norwegian population (N=1,575). Since there are 13 Muslims among the 1,575 respondents, these are not included in the questions concerning the attitudes towards Muslims, so that in these cases the sample comprises only 1,562 respondents. Christhard Hoffmann and 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).
6. In order to make comparisons of the British and Norwegian study possible, some of the indexes for measuring antisemitism and anti-Israelism in the Norwegian study are aligned with those in the British study. Thus, they differ from the construction of the indexes in the report of the Norwegian study and the other chapters in this volume.
7. Recently in social psychology the importance of specific emotions for research on prejudice has been stressed. See Eliot R. Smith, "Social Identity and Social Emotions: Toward New Conceptualizations of Prejudice", in *Affect, Cognition, and Stereotyping. Interactive Processes in Group Perception*, ed. Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton (New York: Academic Press, 1993), 296–315; Diane M. Mackie, Thierry Devos and Eliot R. Smith, "Intergroup Emotions: Explaining Offensive Action Tendencies in an Intergroup Context", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, no. 4 (2000): 602–616. The only survey in which emotions play an important role in analysing antisemitism and anti-Israelism is a Swiss study from 2007: *Kritik an Israel von antisemitischen Haltungen unabhängig. Antisemitismus-Potenzial in der Schweiz neuartig bestimmt. Schlussbericht zur Studie Anti-jüdische und anti-israelische Einstellungen in der Schweiz*, by Claude Langechamp et al. (Bern, 2007). A factor analysis shows that emotions towards Jews as "respect, admiration, incomprehension, disappointment, rejection, anger, contempt, envy and hatred" load on two dimensions: a positive dimension with respect and admiration, and a negative dimension of incomprehension, disappointment, rejection, anger, contempt, envy and hatred. "On an emotional level, Jews are perceived by respondents with little differentiation", according to the authors of the study (p. 2).

presenting people with a direct question about their feelings toward Jews”.<sup>8</sup> In the Norwegian study, participants were asked two questions concerning their emotional attitudes towards Jews compared to those towards Muslims.



**FIGURE 5.1.** Dislike of Jews and Muslims (Percent. Population sample).

Only a minority of 7.5% of the Norwegian population show an openly declared negative attitude toward Jews, and those who declared their opinion strongly (opinion fits completely/dislike a lot) are an even smaller group (1.6%). Accordingly, 81% disagree with the “dislike” item. As Fig. 1 shows, an unfavourable view/dislike of Muslims is more widespread compared with Jews.

A second question, “I have a particular sympathy for Jews/Muslims”, also asked the other way round about the spread of a positive emotional attitude towards Jews and Muslims. In this case “a particular sympathy” for Jews is clearly more widespread compared with Muslims: 27% of the Norwegian population have “particular sympathy” for Jews, compared to only 14% for Muslims. Twenty-three per cent (for Jews) and 20% (for Muslims) chose the “no response” and “impossible to say” option.

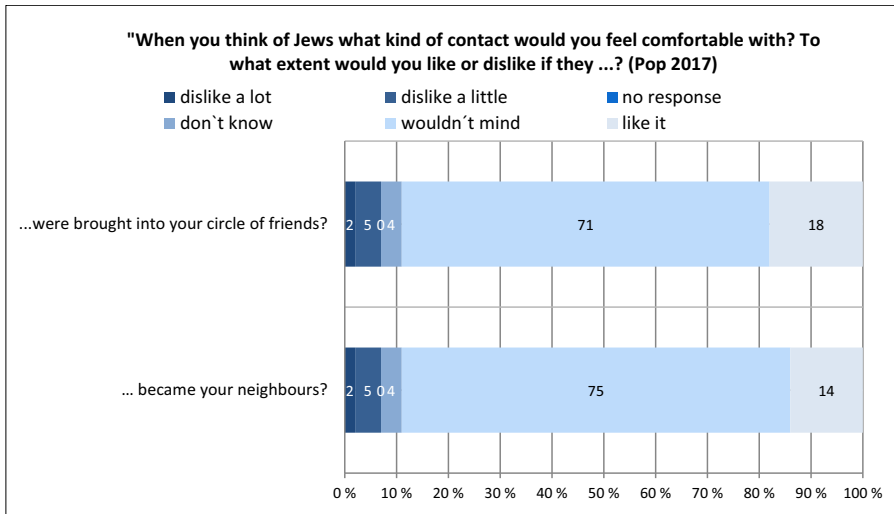
Another way to measure attitudes towards other groups is to measure the social distance between them.

Concerning the attitude toward Jews, we can again identify a group of 7% in the general population harbouring an aversive attitude. The proportion of those opting out by choosing the “don’t know” or “no response” option is very small (4%). The “elastic view” includes two groups “marked by varying intensities of anti-Jewish attitudes”, which amount to about 7% of the Norwegian population: about 2% show a hard-core negativity in relation to Jews, while another 5% hold a “somewhat unfavourable” view.

Looking at this rather small proportion of respondents showing their negative emotional attitude towards Jews openly, it would be hard to understand why Jews in Norway see antisemitism as a very widespread and rising phenomenon. Given

8. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 16.





**FIGURE 5.2.** Social distance towards Jews (Percent. Population sample).

that unfavourable attitudes towards Jews in Norway as well as in Britain are minority phenomena, and that there exists only a loose connection between violence and negative attitudes in the sense that the threat against Jews is not necessarily dependent on the prevalence of negative attitudes, it can be concluded in line with Staetsky that “the real meaning of this level – i.e. is it dangerous for the Jewish population [...] or what level does it have to reach to become socially or politically problematic or dangerous – remains unclear.”<sup>9</sup>

### 3. IDEAS AND IMAGES OF JEWS

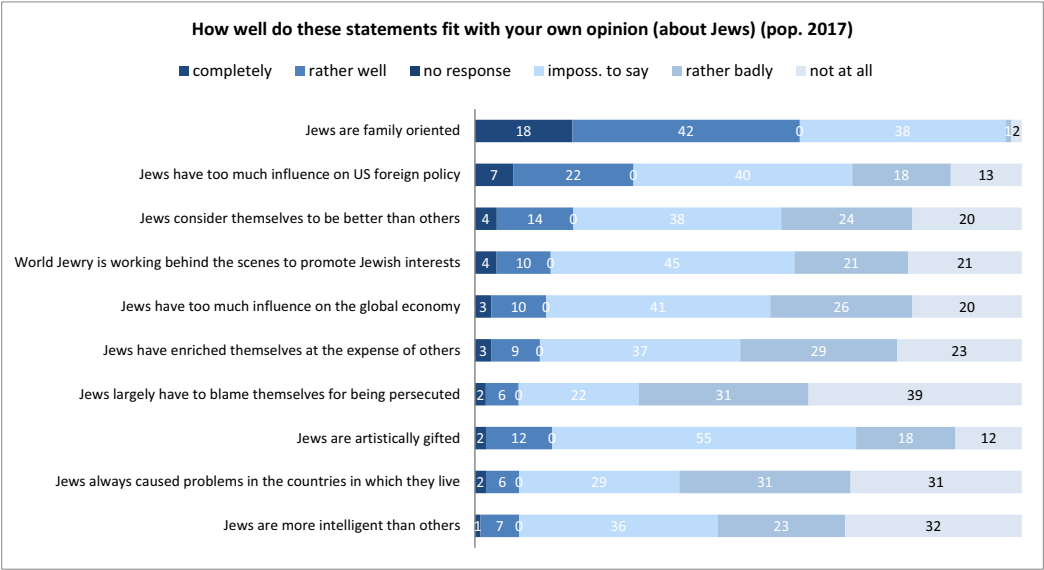
To give an answer to this question, Staetsky suggests widening the view by looking to the other dimension of prejudice since the attitudes toward Jews (and other groups) are not limited to a simple emotional characterisation, but rather also have a cognitive dimension. “People may have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Jews, but they may also have absorbed some specific ideas about what Jews are or are not in terms of their pattern of behavior, their loyalties, or their political tendencies”,<sup>10</sup> which need not necessarily be linked to strong negative feelings.

In the Norwegian study the same items were used that are common in other surveys on antisemitism.

9. *Ibid.*, 20.

10. *Ibid.*

Opinions held by the Norwegian population on specific statements about Jews, including three positive items: family oriented, artistically gifted and more intelligent than others.



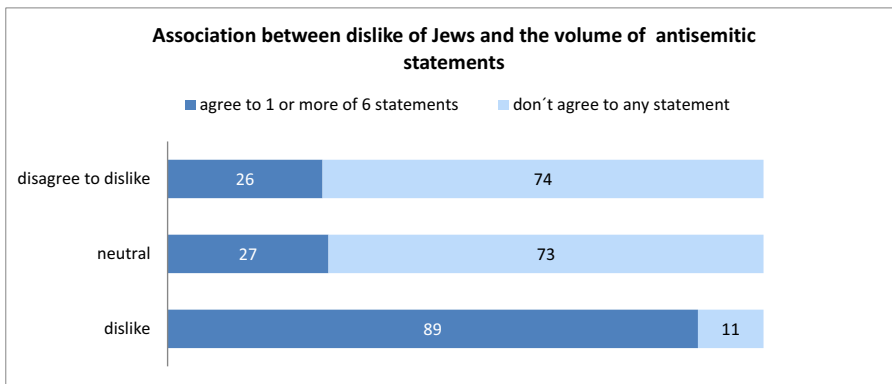
**FIGURE 5.3.** Opinions about Jews (Percent. Population sample)

On average, the percentage of those who agree with the six prejudice items in Norway is 12% (range is from 8%–18%).<sup>11</sup> To agree with just one of these antisemitic ideas may not be a good indicator of a pronounced antisemitic attitude. Therefore, it will be useful to look at the distribution of the volume of antisemitic ideas. In a first step, it is possible to clearly differentiate those respondents who do not agree with any of the antisemitic statements presented to them from those who agree to at least one statement.

11. In addition to the three positive items, we also decided to exclude the item “Jews have too much influence on US foreign policy” from consideration, since the significantly higher approval rate compared to the other items indicates that many respondents perceived it more as a matter of political opinion rather than a negative verdict on Jews. Perhaps the approval of this item may be primarily referred to the US Middle East policy – that is, it may be more of an anti-Israeli than anti-Jewish statement. If this item was included in the Prejudice against Jews index, it would increase the measured prevalence of antisemitism among the Norwegian population considerably. On average, the percentage increases from 9.1% to 12.7% (the range increases from 8% to 29%).

In the Norwegian case, 69.2% do not agree with any antisemitic statement, while 30.8% agree with at least one of the six statements: 14.5% agree with one statement, 5.7% with two, 3.2% with three, 2.8% with four, 2.7 with five and 2% with all six statements. This means that 7.5% of the respondents agree with the majority of at least four out of the six items. This amounts to the same quantity that was determined for the emotional dimension of antisemitism (7.5%).

To determine the association of emotional attitudes and cognitive ideas, Staet-sky proposes to cross-tabulate the answers to one's opinion of Jews (dislike/don't dislike or neutral – Fig.1.) with the volume of specific antisemitic ideas.<sup>12</sup> In the Norwegian survey there is a clear association between the emotional and cognitive dimension.

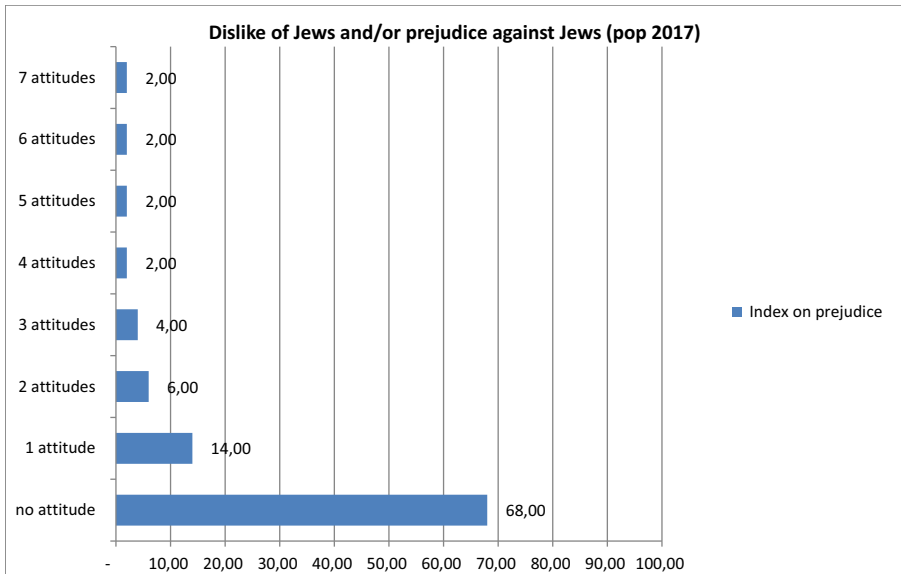


**FIGURE 5.4.** Feelings toward Jews and support of antisemitic statements (Percent. Population sample)

For the Norwegian population, we get the same pattern of association between the emotional dimension (like/dislike) and antisemitic ideas as in Britain. Three quarters of those who disagree to the dislike item did not agree to any antisemitic statement, compared with just one-tenth of those who held an unfavourable view, i.e. who dislike Jews. This means that among the Norwegian population the association between dislike of Jews and the agreement to antisemitic ideas is quite close. Only one in ten (11%) of those who have a certain dislike of Jews did not agree to any antisemitic idea and only very few of the neutral respondents may have chosen this option out of social desirability (latent antisemitism). Given that 11.3% of the sample chose the neutral option, of whom 27% agree with at least one antisemitic statement (2.9% of the total population), and another 26% of those who

12. Staet-sky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 22.

disagree with having a certain dislike of Jews nevertheless agree with at least one antisemitic statement (this is 21.1% of the total population), one can say that 24% of the Norwegian population disagree with disliking Jews, although they agree to one or more antisemitic statements. To this number we have to add the 89% of those among the respondents who have a certain dislike of Jews (8%) who also agree to at least one antisemitic statement. This is another 6.6% of the total population.



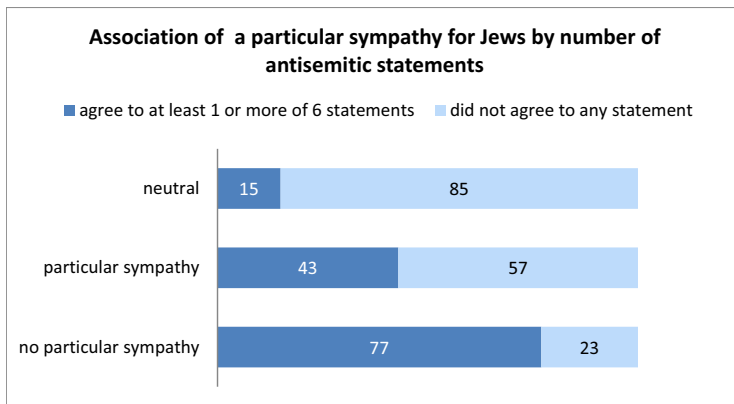
**FIGURE 5.5.** Additive Index of the Prejudice against Jews (6 statements) and expression of dislike (one statement) (Percent. Population sample)

Following Staetsky's suggestion to adopt a "multifaceted view of the prevalence of antisemitism", we include in the calculations of prevalence all people "who *either* hold an unfavourable opinion of Jews *or* who endorse at least one antisemitic statement".<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, one can say that 30.8% of the Norwegian population endorsed at least one antisemitic statement. Of those 7.5% of the Norwegian population, who hold an unfavourable opinion of Jews (see Fig. 1) one in eleven (0.8%) does not agree with any antisemitic statement (see Fig. 4) Integrating these respondents into an enlarged 0–7-point index, the numbers *together* add up to 31.6% of the Norwegian population, which in Staetsky's view marks a boundary of the *diffusion* of antisemitic ideas in society. It is important to keep in mind,

13. *Ibid.*, 24.

however, that Staetsky interprets this figure “*not* as the proportion of antisemites that exists (...)”<sup>14</sup> but rather as a boundary of the *diffusion* of antisemitic attitudes in society.”<sup>15</sup> The new term *diffusion* is of great analytical significance to him because it signals “a shift in emphasis from counting antisemitic individuals to quantifying the spread of attitudes that Jews consider to be antisemitic” and which may be a source of discomfort or offence to many Jews.<sup>16</sup> This view is supported by the fact that in Norway, one-half of those who agree to antisemitic statements agree to only one of them (13.8% – see Fig. 5); another 6.3% agree to two statements. From this fact one can conclude that these persons do not have a closed antisemitic world view.

This assumption is supported by the result presented in Figure 5.6. In the Norwegian survey the sympathy/antipathy (dislike) dimension is split into two items: on the one hand, we asked about antipathy (dislike) to Jews. However, those who have rejected this need not necessarily have a special affinity with Jews. That’s why we asked a second question about particular sympathy towards them.<sup>17</sup>



**FIGURE 5.6.** Sympathy towards Jews and support for antisemitic statements (Percent. Population sample)

14. This claim would in Staetsky’s view “simply not stand up to any reasonable scrutiny” (*Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 24).

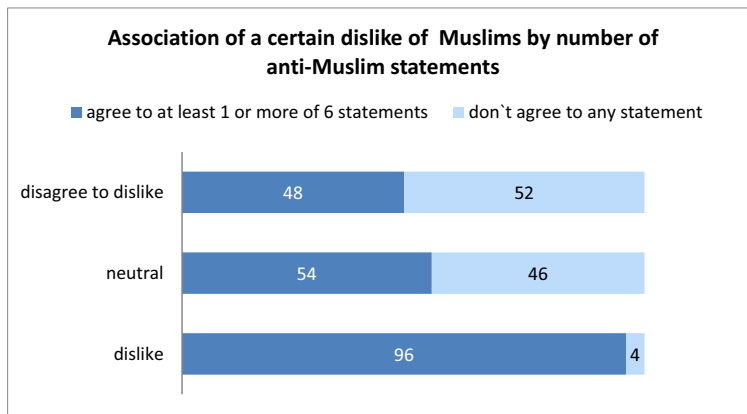
15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. In the survey, some interviewees agreed to have a “certain dislike” of Jews as well as to harbour a “particular sympathy” toward Jews. Unlike in Ottar Hellevik’s chapter (3.1), where the approval of the “dislike” item of these respondents was not counted for the “index for dislike of Jews”, here all those who agreed to the “dislike” item are included in the calculation, even if they also responded positively to the “particular sympathy” question. The same applies to those who agreed to the “particular sympathy” question, even if they agreed to the “dislike” question too.

The figure shows that among respondents considering themselves to feel a *particular* sympathy for Jews (27% of the sample), 43% nevertheless agree to at least one antisemitic statement. The self-assessment of being especially attached to Jews hardly corresponds with being a staunch antisemite. The finding that out of the large neutral group of respondents (23% of the total sample), far less agree to at least one antisemitic statement than the sympathetic respondents (15% to 43%), is harder to explain. One explanation may be that the “neutral respondents” also use the “impossible to answer” option for the prejudice questions or do not respond to them.

With the data of the Norwegian survey, it is possible to compare the pattern of association between the dislike of Jews and the dislike of Muslims and the respective antisemitic or anti-Muslim (Islamophobic) statements.

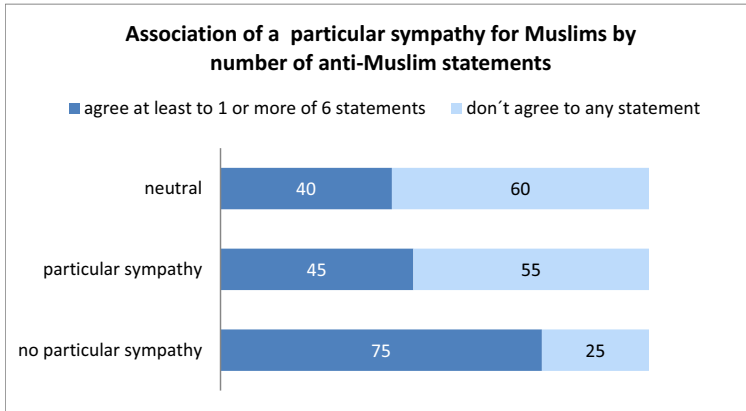


**FIGURE 5.7.** Feelings towards Muslims and support of anti-Muslim statements (Percent. Population sample)<sup>18</sup>

It is obvious that the emotional attitude toward Muslims is less closely connected with the approval or rejection of Islamophobic ideas than the dislike of Jews with antisemitic ideas. Though almost all of those who dislike Muslims also agree to a least one Islamophobic statement (96%), which is quite similar to the quantity of respondents who dislike Jews (89%), half of those who take a favourable or neutral stance toward Muslims agree anyway to a large portion to at least one Islamophobic statement (48% and 54%), compared to just a quarter of respondents in the case of attitudes towards Jews (26% and 27%). Therefore, we can conclude that agreeing with anti-Muslim prejudices seems to be relatively independent of a

18. In this case, N=1,562. See footnote 4.

negative emotional attitude toward Muslims. Such opinions about Muslims seem to be understood more as a description of a social reality rather than a pejorative prejudice and are therefore considered more acceptable and quite compatible with a positive or neutral attitude towards Muslims.<sup>19</sup>



**FIGURE 5.8.** Sympathy towards Muslims and support of anti-Muslim statements (Percent. Population sample)<sup>20</sup>

When respondents are asked about their “particular sympathy toward a group”, the picture depicted for Jews and Muslims is rather similar, with just one exception. While those who have a particular sympathy and no particular sympathy agree to the same amount to at least one antisemitic (43% and 77%) or anti-Muslim statement (45% and 75%), those who take a neutral stance agree more often to at least one Islamophobic statement (40%) compared to those agreeing to at least one antisemitic statement (15%). This result may confirm the supposition that the emotional attitude toward Muslims has less influence on the cognitive dimension of prejudice than in the case of the attitude toward Jews. It means people have prejudices toward Muslims without strong anti-Muslim feelings.

19. See in this volume the debate on the relation between (realistic, acceptable) descriptions and prejudice in terms of characterisations of Muslims, in Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe, “Negotiations of Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Group Conversations among Jews and Muslims” chapter 10. For the connection between events such as the Rushdie affair and the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001 with the framing of Muslims as “a threat to civilisation”, see also Cora Alexa Døving, “A Growing Consensus? The History of Public Debates on Islamophobia in Norway”.

20. In this case N=1,562. See footnote 4.

#### 4. ANTI-ISRAELISM

In many other European countries, Jews have a deep emotional and religious attachment to Israel. Therefore “negativity toward Israel expressed by non-Jews is likely to be a cause for significant concern and apprehension among many Jews”.<sup>21</sup> In the FRA Study and in a German study on “Jewish perspectives”, it becomes clear that a large majority of Jews evaluates the comparison of Israeli politics toward the Palestinians to be like that of the Nazis toward Jews, the support of the boycott of goods from Israel and a “distorted presentation” of Israel’s politics in mass media as an expression of an antisemitic attitude.<sup>22</sup> For many years now there has been a lingering debate about the relationship between antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes. Some scholars even believe that antisemitism today comes mainly in the guise of hostility to Israel. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some speak therefore of a “new antisemitism”, treating Israel as a kind of “collective Jew”.<sup>23</sup> So on the one hand it is important to examine the extent to which antisemitism and anti-Israelism overlap, but on the other hand – as the following results show – respondents with a very negative attitude toward Israel do not agree to any of the antisemitic ideas and it is therefore necessary to decide if their anti-Israel statements should be classified as antisemitic or as a “pure” hostility directed only against the state of Israel, but not against Jews in general.

Our study follows Staetsky’s proposal to explore the attitude of the population toward Israel “along the same lines as their attitudes toward Jews: first, at the level of favourable or unfavourable opinion, and second, testing the prevalence of specific ideas about Israel”.<sup>24</sup> The connection between antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes is treated here as an open research question.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the British study, the Norwegian survey does not include a direct sympathy/dislike question like for the attitude toward Jews.<sup>26</sup> As a makeshift, the survey uses the positioning of respondents on either the Israeli or Palestinian side as an indicator of sympathies or antipathies towards Israel.<sup>27</sup> It is clear that this replacement is not without problems and that it is less suitable for measuring the emotional attitude compared to the direct favourable/unfavourable item in the British survey. In Norway the respondents showed less indifference or uncertainty compared to the British respondents, since nearly half of them side with one of the

21. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 27.

22. FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in EU Member States*; Hövermann/Jensen/Zick/Bernstein/Perl/Ramm, *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 12 and 16.

23. Brian Klug, “The collective Jew: Israel and the new antisemitism”, *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 2 (2003): 117–138.

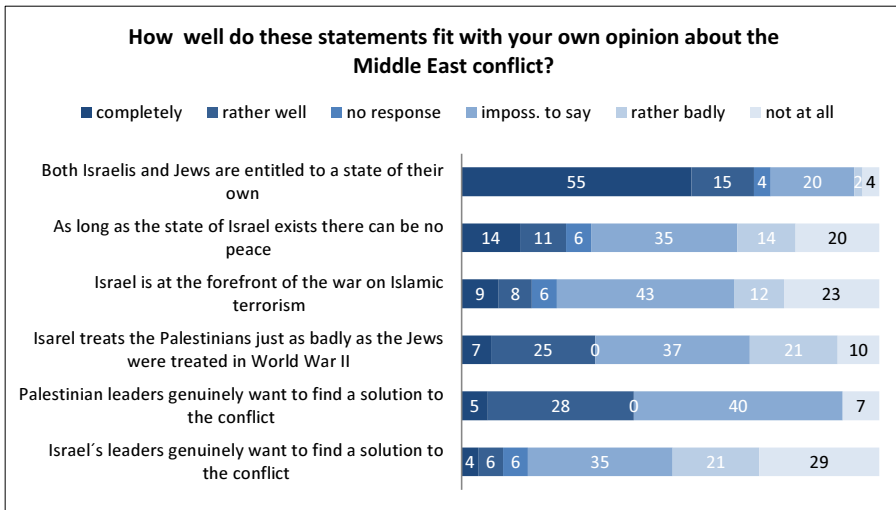
24. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 27.



conflicting parties (in Britain only 24%). This may support our choice of attitude towards the Middle East conflict as a measure of emotional rejection of Israel. Therefore, we suppose the 32% siding with the Palestinians to have an unfavourable opinion of Israel, especially those 22% of them who chose the option solely or mostly, while 14% have a favourable opinion of Israel (9% solely/mostly; 5% to some extent). One third of the respondents do not tend to either side (32%) and 22% don't have an answer.

The next problem that makes a comparison between the British and Norwegian results difficult is the fact that while the British study used twelve specific positive and negative statements about Israel (eight of them negative), the Norwegian study only used six items, and only two of them are clearly negative. That is why we can construct only a very short index of anti-Israel attitudes of two items. The large difference in the length of the scales may affect the comparability of the results.

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25. There are already a few studies investigating the link between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes. Edgar H. Kaplan and Charles Small, "Anti-Israel sentiment predicts anti-Semitism in Europe", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 548–61, used the data of the Antidefamation League survey, *Attitudes toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Ten European Countries* (New York: ADL, 2004); for Germany, see the study by Aribert Heyder, Julia Iser, and Peter Schmidt, "Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Meinungsbildung zwischen Öffentlichkeit, Medien und Tabus" in *Deutsche Zustände, Folge 3*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2004): 144–165. The most comprehensive study to date is by Wilhelm Kempf, *Israelkritik zwischen Antisemitismus und Menschenrechtsidee. Eine Spurensuche* (Berlin: Verlag Irena Regener, 2016). For a discussion of these and some other studies (on Sweden and Switzerland) see Werner Bergmann, "Is there a 'New European Antisemitism?' Public Opinion and Comparative Empirical Research in Europe", in *Politics and Resentment. Anti-Semitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union*, ed. Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 83–115, here 89ff.; see for an early example also Bergmann and Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945*, Chapter: Antizionism and Antisemitism, 182–191. Bergmann and Erb, "Antizionism and Antisemitism", in *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 83–115.
  26. The British study uses the item "I'd like you to consider how you feel about certain countries overall. Please tell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, very unfavourable opinion of the following countries" (List of seven countries) to measure an anti-Israel attitude.
  27. In the British survey, both measures – the favourable/unfavourable item, and the sympathies in relation to the Middle East conflict – differed considerably: while 33% show an unfavourable opinion toward Israel, only 18% side with the Palestinians. As far as a negative attitude towards Israel is concerned, among Norwegians this may also be determined by the political orientation of the Israeli government, as the country has been ruled by a right-wing coalition government for several years.



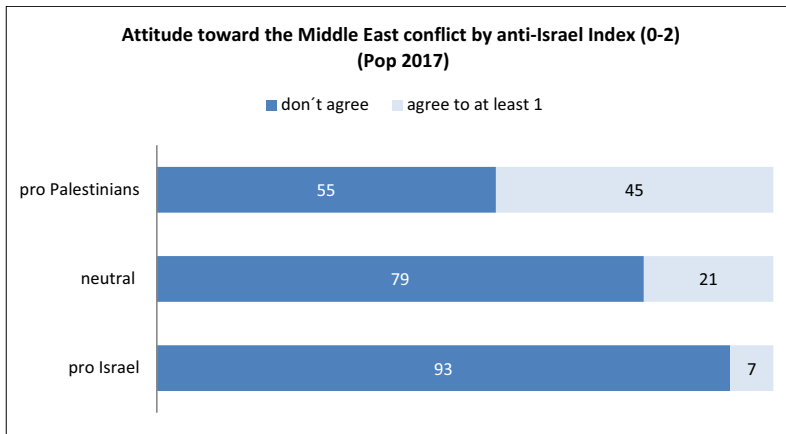
**FIGURE 5.9.** Opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Percent. Population sample)

Negativity towards Israel is significantly more common among Norwegian respondents than negativity toward Jews. While the level of endorsement of anti-semitic statements is in the range of 8–18%, anti-Israel statements range between 25–32%.

In the Norwegian population the difference between those agreeing to at least one antisemitic statement (30.8%) and those agreeing to at least one anti-Israel statement (40%) is not very large. This may be partly because of the fact that in this case, the anti-Israel Index consists of only two items.

Parallel to the connection between the emotional and the cognitive dimension in the case of attitude toward Jews, we can do the same for the attitude toward Israel. All in all, the pattern for both attitudes is rather similar: the large majority of those holding a favourable opinion of Israel (93%) does not agree with any anti-Israel statement, and again, as was the case with attitudes toward Jews, the profile of those who claim neutrality in relation to Israel, or who did not respond to a question, is much closer, with 79%, to those with a favourable opinion of Israel than to those with an unfavourable opinion.

As already mentioned above, using the positioning of respondents on either the Israeli or Palestinian side as an indicator of sympathy or antipathy towards Israel in the Norwegian study is not without problems, because the partisanship for one of the conflicting parties does not necessarily mean having a decidedly unfavourable view of the other party. Compared with the British study, an even larger majority of those supporting Israel in the Middle East conflict (14% of the sample)



**FIGURE 5.10.** Opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and support for Israelis or Palestinians (Percent. Population sample)

does not agree with any anti-Israel statement (93%), and as was the case with attitudes toward Jews, the profile of those who claim neutrality in relation to the Middle East conflict is even much closer to the pro-Israel camp than to those who side with the Palestinian cause. Even a small majority of those who claim to be pro-Palestinian does not agree to any anti-Israel statement. This may be due to the fact that the indicator for an “unfavourable opinion” (to be pro-Palestinian) used in the Norwegian study is too closely connected with a partisanship in the Middle East conflict. The positioning on the part of the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict is only partially motivated by negative attitudes toward Israel.

## 5. ATTITUDES TOWARD JEWS AND ISRAEL: ARE THEY LINKED?

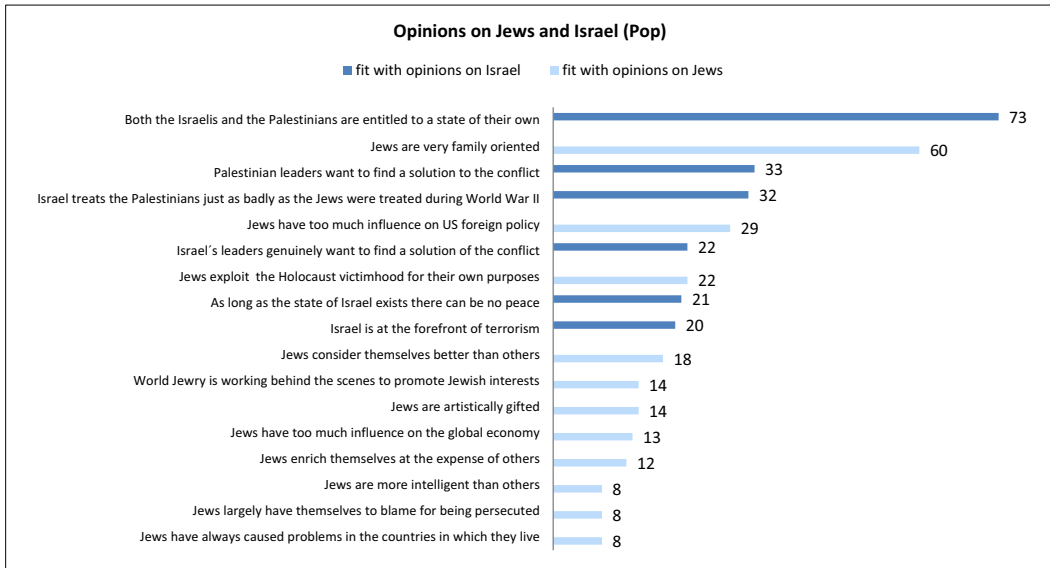
The question of the extent to which antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes are linked (or are almost identical) is the most hotly debated issue in recent research on antisemitism.<sup>28</sup> So far, no consensus has emerged. For Staetsky, a “strictly empirical social scientific approach to this question requires an ‘overlap-test’”.<sup>29</sup> The finding that negativity towards Israel is significantly more common than negativity

28. Robert Fine, “Fighting with phantoms: A contribution to the debate on antisemitism in Europe”, *Patterns of Prejudice* 43 (2009): 459–479; David Feldman, “Antizionismus und Antisemitismus in Großbritannien”, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 23 (2014): 43–49; Klug, “The collective Jew”, 117–138.

29. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 33.

toward Jews in Norway (and in Great Britain as well) gives a first hint that it cannot be expected to find a complete overlap between the two.<sup>30</sup>

The findings show that in the Norwegian survey, more respondents agree to the negative statements concerning Israel than those concerning Jews.

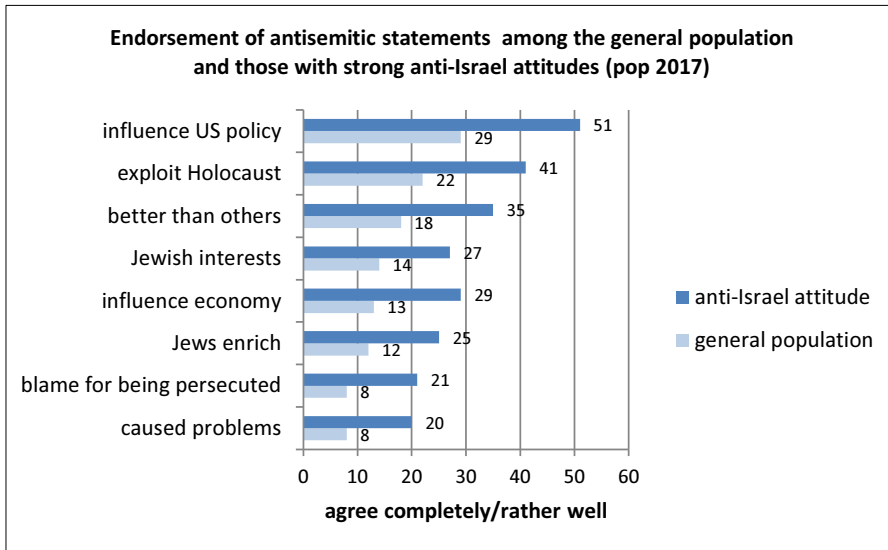


**FIGURE 5.11.** Opinions about Jews and Israel (Percent finding that the statements fit completely or rather well with your own opinion (Percent. Population sample).

To test how antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes are linked, Staetsky proposes comparing the degree of endorsement of antisemitic opinions in the general population with that of those respondents holding anti-Israel attitudes. We can see that both attitudes are connected since holding anti-Israel attitudes has a reinforcing influence on antisemitic attitudes. Those holding strong anti-Israel attitudes on the enlarged anti-Israel index (0–3/N=339)<sup>31</sup> also clearly agree more often with antisemitic statements than the general population (Figure 12).

On average, the agreement of the general population to the eight items in Figure 5.12 is 16%, while those holding strong anti-Israel attitudes agree on average to

30. For the British case, the correlation between the antisemitic and the anti-Israel index is statistically significant: the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) is 0.48; and 23% of variation in the anti-Israel index is explained by variation in the antisemitism index (Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 35, Footnote 24). In the Norwegian survey, the Pearson correlation of the anti-Israel index and the prejudice against Jews index is smaller ( $r = 0.31$ ) than in the British study.



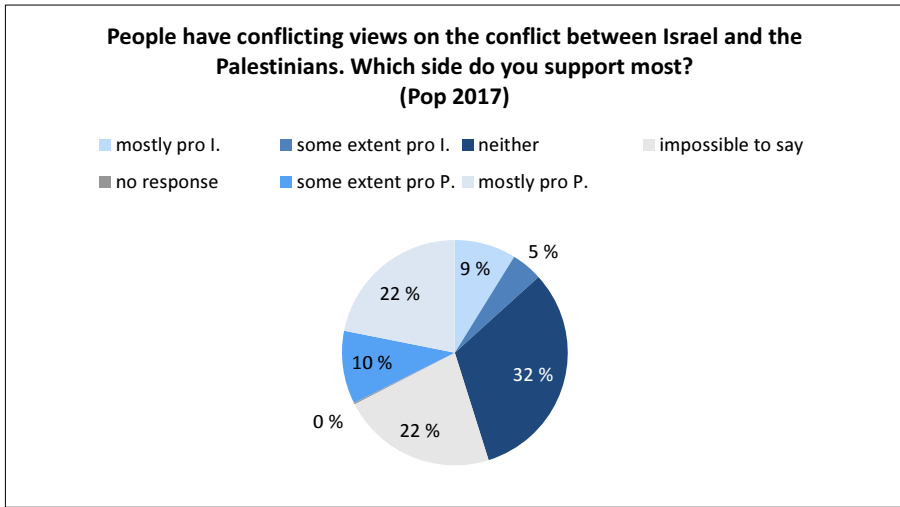
**FIGURE 5.12.** Antisemitic statements held by the general population compared to those who strongly agree on the anti-Israel Index (2+3 points) (Percent. Population sample).

31%.<sup>32</sup> The ratio between the general population and those harbouring anti-Israel attitudes in Norway is 1 to 2.

In the British survey, Staetsky added those who have an unfavourable view of Israel but do not agree to any of the eight statements on the anti-Israel index to create an index that increases from an eight-point to a nine-point scale. In the Norwegian case, a comparable question (unfavourable opinion of Israel) does not exist, so we measured the attitude toward Israel by asking for the partisanship in the Middle East conflict instead. One can expect that those taking sides with Israel will be antisemitic less often than those siding with the Palestinians.

31. The enlarged anti-Israel index is composed of the two anti-Israel statements ("Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly as the Jews were treated during World War Two"; "As long as the State of Israel exists there can be no peace") and those who solely/mostly side with the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict. Those who agree to two or all of the three items are labelled as having strong anti-Israel attitudes.

32. The increase in support for the eight antisemitic statements is eight percentage points lower using the extended anti-Israel index (0–3) compared to using the anti-Israel index (0–2). In addition to the two anti-Israel statements of the shorter index (0–2), the enlarged anti-Israel index (0–3) also contains those respondents with a strong sympathy for the Palestinian side in the Middle East conflict. This may be due to the fact that the Palestinians' support is less often associated with antisemitic prejudices than the two strong anti-Israel statements.



**FIGURE 5.13.** Support for Israelis or Palestinians (Percent. Population sample).

From those who side with the Palestinians, only those for the anti-Israel index, who do so “solely/mostly” (22%) were selected because one can rather assume that it is more likely that they will have a negative image of Israel compared to those who answered only “to some extent”. We then cross-tabulated the enlarged anti-Israel index (0–3) with the enlarged prejudice against Jews index (0–7). Although in the Norwegian case the anti-Israel index is quite short, we find the same pattern of connection between antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes, but it could be that the level of those harbouring anti-Israel prejudice is underestimated because of the shorter index compared to the British one.

Of the Norwegian respondents, 43.7% agree neither to any statement on the prejudice against Jews index, nor to any on the anti-Israel index. One can see by comparing the columns that the higher the percentage of anti-Israel opinions, the higher the percentage of people with antisemitic attitudes. Based on this approach, Staetsky’s conclusion “that the existence of an association between the antisemitic and the anti-Israel attitudes tested, is unambiguous”<sup>33</sup> can be approved.

Two-thirds of those who exhibit only a low level of an anti-Israel attitude (score 1) score 0 on the prejudice against Jews index (62%), while those who exhibit a high level of anti-Israel attitudes (2–3) show a low level of those scoring 0 on the prejudice against Jews index less often (46% and 35%), and 19% and 32% score highly on the antisemitism index (4–7).

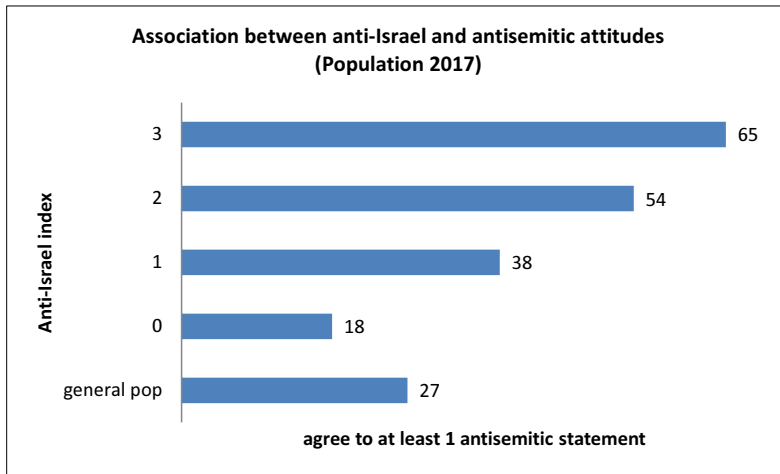
33. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 33.

**TABLE 5.1.** Prejudice against Jews and anti-Israel attitude (Percent. Population sample)

	<b>Anti-Israel index and mostly pro-Palestinian</b>				
<b>Prejudice against Jews 0–7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	82	62	46	35	
<b>1</b>	11	14	21	14	
<b>2</b>	3	10	9	13	
<b>3</b>	2	6	5	6	
<b>4</b>	1	3	8	3	
<b>5</b>	1	2	4	8	
<b>6</b>	0	2	5	7	
<b>7</b>	0	1	2	14	
<b>Total %</b>	100	100	100	100	
<b>N</b>	841	393	238	101	1,575

From the sample of 1,575 Norwegian respondents, 12.3% score highly on the anti-Israel index (score 2–3) and also hold at least one antisemitic attitude. However, 38% of those scoring 1 on the anti-Israel index also show a least one antisemitic prejudice (this is 9.5% of the total sample), and 18% of those scoring 0 on the anti-Israel index hold at least one antisemitic prejudice (9.6% of the total sample), while a clearly larger proportion of 24.6% of the Norwegian population agrees to one or more anti-Israel statements, but to none of the antisemitic statements. If we understand antisemitism and anti-Israelism in a softer sense (23% being labelled as antisemitic or 46.5% as anti-Israel, when agreeing with at least one negative item on both indexes), both kinds of prejudice overlap in 21.8% of the Norwegian population.

If focussing on those scoring highly on both indexes (2–3 on the anti-Israel index (21.5% of the total sample) and 4–7 on the antisemitism index (8% of the total sample) – 3% are just antisemitic and 16.6% are just anti-Israel. Both attitudes overlap in this case by 4.9%. This means that 75.5% of the Norwegian respondents do not harbour very strong antisemitic or anti-Israel attitudes.



**FIGURE 5.14.** Anti-Israel attitude and agreement to a least one antisemitic statement (Percent. Population sample).

But Staetsky is right with the restriction that this association between antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes is demonstrated here at “a population level, not at an individual level”. “An individual holding even the highest volume of anti-Israel opinions is not *necessarily* antisemitic; rather it indicates that the *probability* of such an individual of being antisemitic is considerably higher than an individual who does not hold anti-Israel opinions”.<sup>34</sup> On the basis of our data, it is not possible to answer the question of causal direction: Is being critical of Israel caused by antisemitic attitudes, or are antisemitic attitudes a result of critical attitudes towards Israel?

## 6. VIOLENT ORIENTATIONS: DO ANTISEMITIC OR ANTI-MUSLIM ATTITUDES COINCIDE WITH THE JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST JEWS OR MUSLIMS?

A third dimension of attitudes is called conative or behavioural, i.e. meaning the behavioural tendencies of a person toward a particular object, such as acceptance, readiness to help but also withdrawal and aggression (for example, the readiness

34. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 35. The statistical analysis cannot solve the problem of political communication – whether in a specific case an anti-Israeli statement actually justifies the assumption that the speaker is antisemitic or not – although there exists a certain probability.



to use or excuse violence against an individual group). Of course, there is no direct and unambiguous connection between the existence of a cognitive and emotional prejudice with violence, because many other factors come into play (psychological dispositions, cultural context, situational factors etc.).<sup>35</sup> Readiness to use or excuse violence takes us, as Staetsky has phrased it, “metaphorically ‘half-way’ between attitudes and behavior, and somewhat closer to an empirical assessment of the potential for violence”.<sup>36</sup>

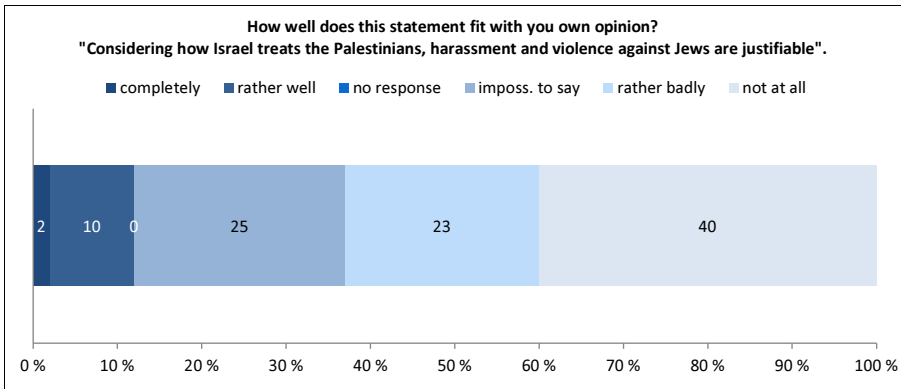
In the Norwegian survey, we measured the readiness to justify harassment or violence against Jews by asking “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews is justifiable”. This operationalisation is, of course, somewhat problematic due to the connection with the Middle East conflict, because although it is explicitly asked about violence against “Jews” and not against “Israelis”, it could also be understood as if it were about the use of violence by Palestinians against Israeli Jews in the context of the conflict.<sup>37</sup> So it could be that some Norwegian respondents who consider violence against Jews to be justifiable do not want to justify violence against Jews outside Israel, but in the Antisemitism survey of 2012, 4% of Norwegians agreed that the shooting incident at the Oslo Synagogue in 2006 to be justifiable given Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians.<sup>38</sup> So, we can assume that at least a part of the 12% consider harassment and violence against Jews in Norway or other countries to be justifiable.

35. Howard Schuman and Michael P. Johnson, “Attitudes and Behavior”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 2 (1976): 161–207; Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson, 1980); Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, “The influence of attitudes on behavior”, in *Handbook of attitudes and attitude change*, ed. Dolores Albarracín, Blair T. Johnson and Mark P. Zanna (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 2005), 173–221. Mackie, Thierry and Smith, “Intergroup Emotions: Explaining Offensive Action Tendencies in an Intergroup Context”, 602–616.

36. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 39.

37. However, the British study, in which the justification of violence against Jews is not asked in the context of the Middle East conflict, shows that in Great Britain violence against Jews is often or sometimes considered justified by 4.1%, while a further 9.8% consider it “rarely justified”. When asked about violence against Zionists or Israelis, the values are very similar (4.4%/10.1% and 4.8%/10.4%) (Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 40). The question was asked in the British survey as follows: “Thinking about Britain today, to what extent do you feel that using violence against any of the following groups or institutions would be justified in order to defend your political or religious beliefs and values?”

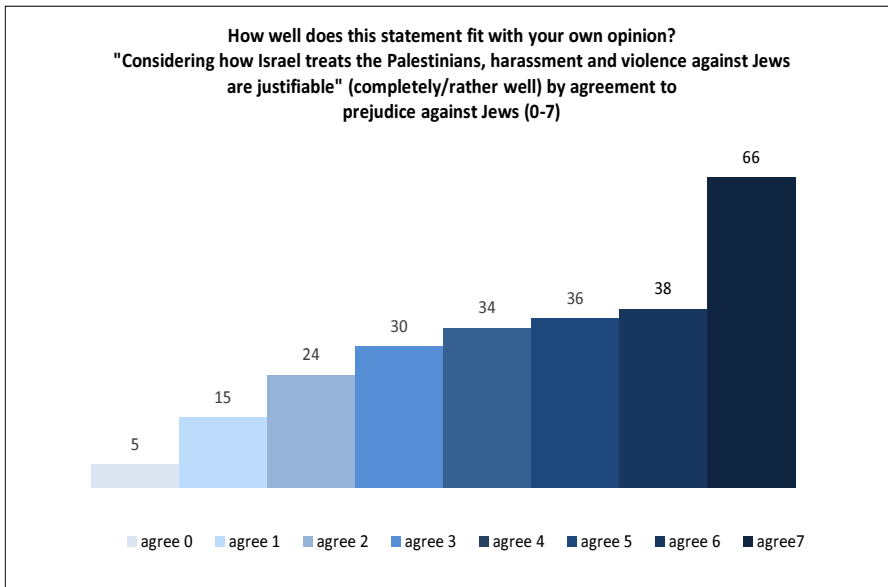
38. HL-senteret, *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and Other Minorities*, Oslo 2012, p. 23, Fig. 5 (“Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, such acts are justifiable”).



**FIGURE 5.15.** Attitude towards Israel and justification of harassment and violence against Jews (Percent. Population sample).

Almost two-thirds of the Norwegian population (63%) reject this opinion fully or mostly; 25% say it is impossible to answer/or did not respond, and only 12% agree to it “completely or somewhat”. If we cross-tabulate the answers to this question with our prejudice against Jews index (0–7), the percentage of those agreeing to four and more items of this index increases from those who reject this statement fully (3.1%) over those who reject it somewhat (8.4%) to those who agree somewhat (23.9%) and those who agree completely (48.9%). Among those who chose the option “impossible to say”, 5.9% agree, so they rank between those who reject the question fully or somewhat. Of the Norwegian respondents, 4.3% show a high level of antisemitic prejudice and legitimise harassment or violence against Jews, but 3.2% of those respondents rejecting the question fully or somewhat also show a high level of antisemitic prejudice. Therefore, a high level of antisemitic prejudice does not necessarily lead directly to a legitimization of violence, but we can see that there is a closer connection between prejudice and legitimization of violence among those who show a high degree of antisemitic prejudices than among those who show no or only a small degree of prejudice.

The proportion of those respondents who justify harassment and violence against Jews “completely or somewhat” grows with the increasing number of antisemitic prejudices, and among the high-scorers on the antisemitism scale (4–7) between one-third to two-thirds justify harassment and violence.



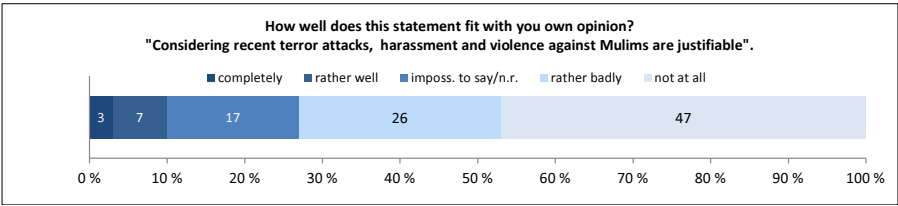
**FIGURE 5.16.** Justification of harassment and violence against Jews and level of anti-semitic prejudice (Percent. Population sample).

Norwegian population: Those justifying harassment and violence completely/rather well, N=182

Agree 0 N=58; agree 1 N= 34; agree 2 N=24; agree 3 N=16; agree 4 N=13, agree 5 N=11 agree 6 N=11  
 agree 7 N=15

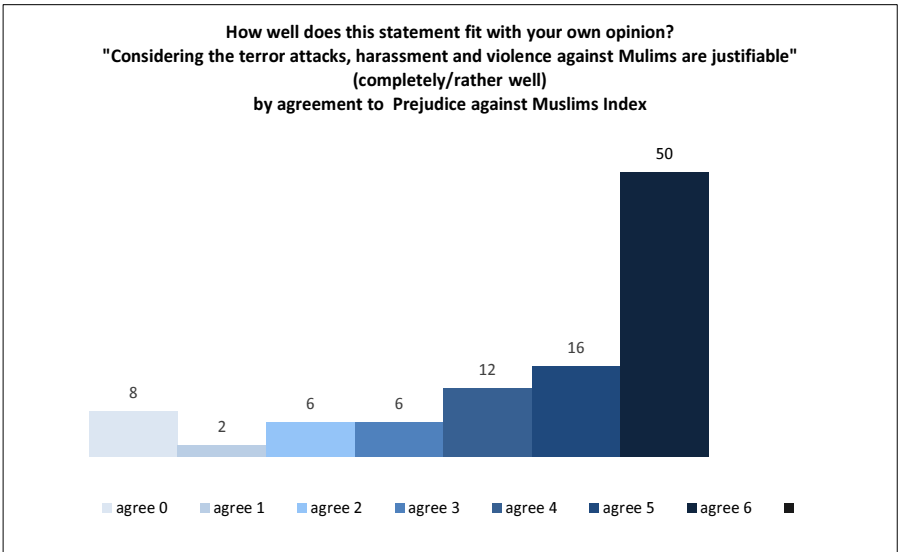
When we look at those respondents who justify harassment and violence against Jews “completely or somewhat”, we can see that their proportion also increases with the increasing number of anti-Israel prejudices. Among those who do not agree to any anti-Israel item, 5.4% justify harassment and violence against Jews “completely or somewhat”, the proportion increases among those who agree to one anti-Israel statement up to 11.3%; among those who agree to two statements it increases to 19%, while the percentage of those who agree to all three items of the anti-Israel index increases to even 34% justifying harassment and violence.

Among the Norwegian respondents, about the same proportion justifies harassment and violence against Jews (12%) as against Muslims (10%), while they reject violence against Muslims (73%) more often than against Jews (63%).



**FIGURE 5.17.** Recent terror attacks and justification of harassment and violence against Muslims (Percent. Population sample)<sup>39</sup>

The following Figure 5.18 shows a clear connection between anti-Muslim prejudice and the readiness to justify the use of violence against Muslims in Norway. The higher one scores on the anti-Muslim prejudice index, the greater the likelihood that one justifies violence against Muslims. While only a small proportion of those who do agree to violence are among those who agree 0–3 times on the anti-Muslim index, their share increases with those who agree 4–6 times with each stage and reaches a peak with half of those who agree to all items on the anti-Muslim prejudice index.



**FIGURE 5.18.** Justification of harassment and violence against Muslims and level of anti-Muslim prejudice (Percent. Population sample).<sup>40</sup>

Norwegian population: Those justifying harassment and violence completely/rather well, N=156  
Agree 0 N=12; agree 1 N=4; agree 2 N=10; agree 3 N=9; agree 4 N=19; agree 5 N=25; agree 6 N=77

39. In this case N=1,562. See footnote 4.

40. In this case N=1,562. See footnote 4.

For Norway (as for Great Britain too), the readiness to justify violence against Jews, Muslims and other groups is a minority position that is more likely to occur among people with highly biased attitudes.

Among the Norwegian respondents, 24% of those who “somewhat” justify harassment and violence against Jews also justify violence against Muslims (somewhat or completely) and even 36% of those who completely justify harassment and violence against Jews also justify violence against Muslims (somewhat or completely). This group amounts to 3% of the total sample (N=47 out of 1,562). For comparison: only 5% of those who do not justify harassment and violence against Jews at all do justify violence against Muslims “completely or somewhat”.

## 7. COMPARING NORWAY WITH GREAT BRITAIN

The present analysis followed the procedure used in Daniel Staetsky’s survey on contemporary antisemitism in Great Britain. Finally, the results of the Norwegian survey will now be compared with those of the British study. A one-on-one comparison between the Norwegian and the British study is not possible, mainly because they do not use the same questions to measure antisemitism and anti-Israelism. Due to this, it was not possible to compare the quantitative results directly, but the results for Norway can be tentatively compared with the results of the British study by looking at the underlying patterns and correlations instead of the numerical data.

The Norwegian findings corroborate what Staetsky has determined for Britain – that “an unambiguous, well-defined antisemitism is distinctly a minority position”.<sup>41</sup> By combining different ways of measuring attitudes toward Jews, we found that approximately 8% of the Norwegian population (see Figure 5.5 – those agree more than 3 times the 7-point index) “hold attitudes of a kind and intensity that would qualify them as being called antisemitic”.<sup>42</sup> In the Norwegian case, this

41. *Ibid.* These results are in line with the results of many surveys on antisemitism in which the UK and the Scandinavian countries have the least prevalence of antisemitic prejudice in Europe (Antidefamation League, *Global 100. An Index of Anti-Semitism* (New York: ADL, 2014) – <http://global100.adl.org/>).

42. In the study Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017*, Figure 5.13, a combined index on antisemitism is used, which includes items on prejudice, social distance and antipathy. On this scale 5.5% of the respondents are labelled as “high scorers”, while 86.7% score zero on this index. 7.9% show a lower degree of antisemitic attitudes. See the discussion in Ottar Hellevik’s chapter of where the limit for “high” scores on the antisemitism scale should be drawn. His analyses provide a good argument to draw the boundary between low and high scorers elsewhere, which would result in an increase of the proportion of high scorers to 12.4%. This would argue for a greater spread of antisemitic attitudes in Norway.

value more or less matches the proportion of those who openly admitted to having a “certain dislike of Jews” (7.5%). In Great Britain 5.4% declared having a “very or somewhat unfavourable view” of Jews,<sup>43</sup> and 6.1% agree with more than 3 items on the combined antisemitism scale (ranging from 0 to 8).<sup>44</sup> In both countries, the proportion of those who declare this opinion very strongly (very unfavourable/dislike completely) is even smaller (1.6% in Norway, and 2.4% in Great Britain). To come back to the “elastic view” concept, the 8% of the Norwegian population that can be counted as “antisemites” are not the whole story, since another, larger part of the population endorse a number of antisemitic statements. Among British respondents, 28% agree with at least one out of seven antisemitic statements, while in Norway 30.8% agree with at least one out of six antisemitic statements, which “a majority of Jews are likely to perceive or experience as antisemitic”.<sup>45</sup> If we take the presence of an unfavourable opinion (emotional dimension) and/or the endorsement of at least one antisemitic statement (cognitive dimension)<sup>46</sup> together, the maximal diffusion of antisemitic attitudes for the British population is about 30%, of which 6.1% are to be qualified clearly antisemitic, while the other 23.9% express some degree of prejudice towards Jews. For the Norwegian case, we determined the widest diffusion of antisemitic attitudes at 31.6%, 8% of which are to be qualified as antisemitic persons, with the other 23.6% showing some degree of prejudice toward Jews. In this regard, the degree of agreement and the ratio of convinced antisemites to those who agree with only some antisemitic statements are also quite similar for Norway and Great Britain.

In light of these findings, it is surprising that a larger part of the Norwegian respondents (12%) justify harassment and violence against Jews, 2% of them even completely.<sup>47</sup> This 12% go beyond the 8% that were classified as clearly antisemitic. In Britain, the percentage of those who agree to anti-Jewish violence is

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43. Because 47.9% of the British respondents opted for “neither favourable nor unfavourable” and “Don’t Know/Refused” Staetsky omitted the “neither favourable nor unfavourable” option in an additional question. Under this condition another 7.2% went to the unfavourable side, so that Staetsky added to 5.4% another 7.2% of respondents with a “latent negativity towards Jews”. So the range of people with an unfavourable view of Jews is between the minimum of 5.4% and the maximal estimate of 12.6%.

44. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 24, Figure 5.8.

45. *Ibid.*, 63.

46. This means that to the 7-point index of the British study and the 6-point index of the Norwegian study, which measured antisemitic ideas and images, those were added who do not agree to any of these ideas but nevertheless harbour an unfavourable view of Jews, so that we get an 8-point index and a 7-point index respectively.

47. The consent to violent acts against Jews (and Muslims) belongs to the behavioural or conative dimension of attitudes.

within the range of those with strong antisemitic attitudes (4%). The higher approval in the Norwegian case is probably due to two factors: to refer to the treatment of Palestinians by Israelis in measuring the justification of harassment and violence against Jews is connecting Jews with Israel's policy, therefore the much more widespread anti-Israel attitudes among the Norwegian population come into play here. In addition, it is likely significant that the British study asked for the justification of violence, while in Norwegian study it is asked for the justification not only of violence but also of the less harmful harassment.

Among the Norwegian respondents, about the same number justifies harassment and violence against Jews (12%) and Muslims (10% – see Figures 5.15–5.18), while respondents reject violence against Muslims (73%) more often than against Jews (63%). In contrast, in Britain violence against Jews is less often justified (4% “often or sometimes”; another 9.8% say “rarely”) than against Muslims (7.5% “often or sometimes”; another 10.8% say “rarely”). Correspondingly, violence against Jews (71.2%) is rejected somewhat more frequently than violence against Muslims (67.1%).<sup>48</sup> Overall, however, the differences in the approval of violence and harassment against Jews and Muslims in both countries are only small. Moreover, that which survey research has found in the context of prejudice against various minorities<sup>49</sup> also applies to the willingness to justify violence, since the results of the British study confirm that “strongly antisemitic people showing relatively high levels of justification for violence against other targets”, such as Muslims and immigrants but also against banks, big business and British military personnel.<sup>50</sup> Because these other targets do not seem to indicate the existence of a coherent ideological worldview, Staetsky concludes from the non-exclusive tendency to justify violence that these respondents may be “simply more likely to consider violence to be an acceptable method of protest *in general*”.<sup>51</sup>

Attitude towards Jews cannot be considered without reference to the attitude towards Israel and the Middle East conflict, since in Norway a strong negative attitude toward Israel is more widespread (21.5%) than a strong negative attitude towards Jews (7.9%). As in Great Britain too, the proportion of those who agree with anti-Israel statements is higher than the proportion of those who agree with

48. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 40, Figure 5.20.

49. The Group-Focus-Enmity project; see: Andreas Zick, Beate Küpper and Andreas Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination. A European Report* (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011); Wilhelm Heitmeyer, ed., *Deutsche Zustände, vol.1–10* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2002–2012).

50. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 40.

51. *Ibid.*

antisemitic statements. This is proven also by the different level of endorsement between antisemitic statements and anti-Israel statements. While the range of antisemitic statements is 2–15% in Great Britain, it is much higher in the case of anti-Israeli statements (9–24%). The same pattern exists in Norway, but the level of endorsement is higher for both antisemitic statements (range of 8–18%) and anti-Israel statements (between 25–32%). These differences may in part be due to the fact that the wording of negative items concerning Israel is harsher in the British compared to those in the Norwegian survey. What applies to the cognitive dimension of antisemitism can also be observed in regard to the emotional dimension of anti-Jewish prejudice. Of the British respondents, 33% have a “very or somewhat unfavourable” view of Israel (17% have a “very or somewhat favourable view”) compared with only 5.4% harbouring a “very unfavourable or somewhat unfavourable” view of Jews, and only 6% declare that their sympathies lie with the Israelis, while 18% lean on the side of the Palestinians. However, in general Staetsky characterises the attitude of the British population towards Israel “as one of uncertainty or indifference, but among those who hold a view, people with sympathies toward the Palestinians are numerically dominant”.<sup>52</sup> Uncertainty and indifference are also characteristic of the attitude of the Norwegian respondents, since 54% of them answered the question on which side they are in the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians with “impossible to say” or opt for “neither side” (Figure 5.13). However, compared with the British respondents, the Norwegian respondents showed less indifference or uncertainty since nearly half of them take sides with one of the conflicting parties (in Britain only 24%).

The proportion of British respondents agreeing to at least one anti-Israel statement is 47% higher than in the case of antisemitic statements (28%). This means that half of the British population “agrees to some extent with at least one in the eight anti-Israel statements”.<sup>53</sup>

In the Norwegian population, the difference between those agreeing to at least one antisemitic statement (30.8%) and those agreeing to at least one anti-Israel statement (40%) is much smaller. This may be partly due to the fact that in this case the anti-Israel index consists of only two items, compared to eight in the British survey. It is surprising that Staetsky did not include the fact of this greater dissemination of anti-Israeli attitudes in his considerations as to why Jews perceive widespread antisemitism. As the FRA Study has shown, many Jews evaluate negative comments about Israel – especially in the mass media – as an expression of

52. *Ibid.*, 28. 76% do not declare their sympathy for one of the conflicting parties; in Norway the proportion is much smaller: 46%.

53. *Ibid.*, 30.



antisemitism.<sup>54</sup> To explain the paradox with regard to the feelings among Norwegian Jews of rising antisemitism while at the same time the spread of antisemitic attitudes among the Norwegian population decreased, this may be partly due to the fact that anti-Israel attitudes are playing a role here. Yet, it is also possible that internet communication and media have a greater influence on the Jewish perception than public opinion (see below).

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Staetsky discusses these findings from a Jewish perspective. He states that even if only 5% as in the British case, or 8% as in Norway can be labelled with the extremely negative label “antisemite”, and while this label could not be used indiscriminately in relation to the remaining quarter of the population, which holds some antisemitic attitudes, the latter group nevertheless plays an important role in the Jewish perception. Jews may not meet regularly with extreme antisemites, but they encounter people much more frequently who hold – and may sometimes even express – opinions about Jews or Israel that make Jews feel uncomfortable or even offended. In a single encounter, it is difficult for a Jewish individual to assess whether a complete antisemitic worldview stands behind a single expressed negative opinion toward Jews, or whether it is just an isolated opinion that is only of minor importance to the person in question.<sup>55</sup>

In this circumstance, Staetsky explains the fact that while in many European countries Jews continue to perceive widespread antisemitism, the number of pronounced antisemitic persons is not very high. While 30% of the population in Britain and 31.6% in Norway “holding potentially uncomfortable or upsetting views from a Jewish perspective, anxieties among Jews about widespread antisemitism become more understandable”.<sup>56</sup> The chances of meeting a hard-core antisemitic individual is about one in twenty in Britain, or one in about fourteen in Norway,

54. FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in EU Member States*, Figure 5.3.

55. For the estimation of the spread of antisemitic or racial attitudes in the majority population, however, the corresponding expectation of members of the minority also plays an important role. As social psychological studies of intergroup contact show, “members of majority status groups typically involve being perceived as prejudiced by individuals of lower status groups, whereas the concern of members of minority status groups involve becoming the target of prejudice from individuals of higher status groups”; “Intergroup attitudes of minority group members are often based in the anticipation of prejudice by majority group members” (Linda R. Tropp and Thomas F. Pettigrew, “Relationships Between Intergroup Contact and Prejudice Among Minority and Majority Status Groups”, *Psychological Science* 16, no. 12 (2005): 951–52).

56. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, p. 64.

but it is about one in three if we refer to the diffusion of antisemitic ideas in the populations of Britain and Norway.

If one considers what Staetsky has not done in his analysis, that anti-Israel attitudes are more widespread and some of them are also perceived by the Jews as antisemitic, then the likelihood of meeting an individual with strong anti-Israel attitudes or a person who makes anti-Israel remarks increases even further. In the British case, the probability of meeting a person with a strong anti-Israel opinion (9.2% of the population) is almost one in ten, but it is one in two if we refer to the diffusion of anti-Israel statements (56%). In Norway, the probability of meeting a person with a strong anti-Israel opinion (21.5% of the population) is even one in five, but—like in Britain—it is one in two if we refer to the diffusion of anti-Israel statements (53.4%).

With the concept of the elastic view, Daniel Staetsky offers an interesting and at least a partial explanation for the gap between the Jewish perception of the dissemination of antisemitism and the number of convinced antisemites. This is important for the public debate because it helps to better understand that there is a difference between a small number of convinced antisemites and a larger number of people who harbour one or the other negative stereotype about Jews without holding a negative attitude towards Jews.

However, the perception on the Jewish side is not determined solely by personal contacts with persons making antisemitic remarks. The FRA study shows that the communication on the internet and media coverage plays an especially big role here.<sup>57</sup> In order to explain the gap between Jewish perception of antisemitism and the results of survey research, not only personal communication, but also the role of public communication on the internet and in the media must be included. It is not only the occurrence of antisemitic remarks experienced by Jews themselves, but also the reporting on antisemitic occurrences, discussions about antisemitism in Parliament, on talk shows, publications by the government or the police, and even programs to combat antisemitism that greatly influence the perception of the dissemination of antisemitism in society.

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57. In the FRA Study, *Discrimination and Hate Crimes against Jews*, figure 5.3, 75% of the respondents in eight EU countries see antisemitism on the internet as a problem, 59% choose antisemitism in the media, while 54% see antisemitic remarks in public space as a problem. In 2018 the second FRA survey, *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*, 21, Table 2, an even larger majority of respondents in 12 EU member states consider antisemitism expressed online as a problem in the country they live in. In the German survey *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland* by Hövermann et al., 87% of the respondents agree that antisemitism on the World Wide Web and social networks is a concerning problem, and 84% agree that the distorted media coverage about Israel is a concerning problem, while 74% agree that antisemitic remarks in personal contacts (at school, at the work place etc.) are a concerning problem.

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## 6.

# Conspiracy Beliefs about Jews and Muslims in Norway

**ASBJØRN DYRENDAL**

**ABSTRACT** Studies of conspiracy beliefs in Scandinavian countries have been few and qualitative in nature. This chapter analyses recent surveys and gives tentative answers as to how international research findings about conspiracy beliefs hold up in a Norwegian setting.

Some of the expected effects were found. Two surveys validate the five-item conspiracy mentality scale for Norway, a measure of the generalised propensity towards believing in conspiracy theories. Scores on conspiracy mentality predicted belief in single-item conspiracy beliefs regarding Jews and Muslims, but the effect size was small. Conspiracy stereotypes of Jews and Muslims were a contributing factor in a more general xenophobia and correlated positively with measures of social distance. The conspiracy stereotypes contributed to explaining differences in views on the legitimacy of violence towards members of outgroups in general.

Contrary to expectations, anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs were more closely tied to conspiracy mentality than antisemitic ones. With regard to the debate on whether adherents of the political far left and far right believe in conspiracy theories more than those of centrist and mainstream parties, the Norwegian left-wing adherents generally scored lower on conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims. Conspiracy theories were for election winners: the populist right generally scored significantly higher than other political orientations. The differences in scores were particularly strong for anti-Muslim beliefs.

The analyses were run by adopting questions asked for other purposes. With the exception of conspiracy mentality, scales were constructed by using those survey items that were arguably approximate items to those in reliable measures. Further inquiries should adapt established scales for more robust answers and in order to build reliable models.

**KEYWORDS** Islamophobia | antisemitism | conspiracy mentality | conspiracy stereotypes | conspiracy theories | conspiracy beliefs | Norway

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There exists, states social psychologist Roland Imhoff boldly, “an intrinsic affinity between conspiratorial thinking and anti-Semitic ideology”.<sup>1</sup> He argues that this relation is specific to antisemitic ideology. Prejudicial attitudes towards Roma (anti-Ziganism) and Muslims (“Islamoprejudice”<sup>2</sup>) do not have the same intrinsic relation to conspiracy thinking. Imhoff’s conclusion is built on research findings in several countries showing that antisemitism and a general propensity towards conspiracy thinking correlate substantially, even when the former is measured without reference to conspiracy beliefs, and the latter without reference to Jews. The relatively strong relation between antisemitism and conspiracy mentality – compared with prejudice against Muslims, for instance – has been confirmed by studies on several regions. Is it also true for Norway?

Before we attempt to answer that question, we should ask why this kind of relation exists at all. There is an extensive literature on antisemitism and its tradition of conspiracy theories. This chapter will draw on the findings of the evolving field of conspiracy theory research, and primarily its social psychological branch. Instead of concentrating on questions about history and tradition, this field has looked at questions such as “what are conspiracy beliefs and how do they relate to prejudice?” Here, the questions are more specifically about Norway. To begin answering, I will first introduce some basic concepts.

## 2. CONSPIRACY THEORIES, CONSPIRACY MENTALITY, AND CONSPIRACY STEREOTYPES

Humans are narrative creatures. We make up stories about the world as a way of inhabiting it. These stories often serve as entertainment, but more generally, we make stories to understand, communicate, and memorise. This is also true for conspiracy narratives – tales about hidden, intentional threats, and hidden, intention-driven causes behind undesirable events. Narratives commonly dubbed “conspiracy theories” are typically speculative, driven, among other things, by overly sen-

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1. Roland Imhoff, “Beyond (Right-Wing) Authoritarianism: Conspiracy Mentality as an Incremental Predictor of Prejudice”, in *The Psychology of Conspiracy*, ed. Michal Bilewicz, Aleksandra Cichocka, and Wiktor Soral (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 125.

2. “Islamoprejudice” is a term minted in an attempt to differentiate between analytically different sides to what is usually termed Islamophobia, underlining the difference between actual fear of Islam and prejudice against Islam and Muslims in general. See Roland Imhoff and Julia Recker, “Differentiating Islamophobia: Introducing a New Scale to Measure Islamoprejudice and Secular Islam Critique”, *Political Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2012): 811–824.

sitive pattern perception and agency detection.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they often express an underlying preference for conspiracy as explanation. Conspiracy belief is, in one important manner, a “unitary” phenomenon. Belief in one conspiracy theory is one of the best predictors of whether a person is likely to believe another, unrelated conspiracy theory.<sup>4</sup> Context matters in making conspiracy theories seem plausible or not. It works in two ways: threatening social situations raise levels of suspicion, with attendant focus on hidden agency and patterns; and conspiracy theories directed against groups that are already defined as suspicious form a context that predicts heightened belief.

Even considering context, however, some people are more prone to believe in conspiracy theories than others. This is a robust observation that has led researchers to coin the concepts of “conspiracist mindset” or, more commonly used, “conspiracy mentality”.<sup>5</sup> It is usually measured on a scale, asking about the propensity to suspect powerful actors, and to ascribe intentional secrecy and hidden, sinister acts to them. It is a measure of political, not abnormal, psychology. While very high scores on conspiracy mentality are almost certainly associated with some measure of psychological and social problems,<sup>6</sup> the scale draws from common cognitive capacities, emotions, and motivations. We all score somewhere along the continuum, some higher than others, and as noted above, more of us will score higher in specific situations that trigger the underlying motivations and capacities.

What kinds of motivation drive conspiracy beliefs? Social psychologists focus on three overarching categories of motivation: epistemic, existential, and social.<sup>7</sup> These are related. The epistemic dimension relates to understanding and being able to explain what is going on, especially in chaotic or ambiguous, threatening circumstances. The quest for understanding is both a social venture and an individual one. On the individual as well as the interpersonal level, it is existentially important to feel that we understand and have some sort of explanation for ongoing events. Knowledge gives a feeling of relative control. Telling ourselves a narrative about how things really are may give a relative feeling of safety, or at least

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3. Rob Brotherton, *Suspicious Minds. Why We Believe Conspiracy Theories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

4. See for instance Brotherton, *Suspicious Minds*, 81–98.

5. Martin Bruder et al., “Measuring individual differences in generic beliefs in conspiracy theories across cultures: Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire”, *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013): 225, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00225>.

6. Daniel Freeman and Richard P. Bentall, “The concomitants of conspiracy concerns”, *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 52 (2017): 592–604.

7. Karen M. Douglas, Robbie M. Sutton, and Aleksandra Cichocka, “The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories”, *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 26, no. 6 (2017): 538–542.

of autonomy and agency. Rather than being thrown into chaos and anomie with no way out, the conspiracy narrative tells us that there is some order to the world, and that there are effective ways of acting intentionally within it.<sup>8</sup>

The social part of motivation to believe in conspiracy theories appears at several levels. Conspiracy theories are “social knowledge”. They are constructed, narrated, and used in social processes. They also typically have an intergroup dimension.<sup>9</sup> Conspiracy theories form knowledge-claims as part of the same social processes as rumour and gossip.<sup>10</sup> This means that they contribute to constructing, maintaining, and mobilising community. One of their functions is to manage group- and self-image, and one way they do so is by exaggerating differences between ingroup and outgroup. Conspiracy theories then typically present the outgroup as a cause of social ills and a threat to the moral order constructed by the (good) ingroup. It is still an open question as to whether this means that conspiracy beliefs are more common at the far ends of the political left-right spectrum,<sup>11</sup> more common only on the political far or populist right,<sup>12</sup> or whether the degree of such beliefs are basically related to one’s side being in or out of power.<sup>13</sup> But while few data are available, there is good theoretical and empirical reason to expect that higher scores on conspiracy beliefs are associated with increased acceptance of violence as a legitimate tool of politics.<sup>14</sup> I will have a closer look at both these questions later in this chapter.

There are both individual and group differences in prevalence of conspiracy beliefs. Both are partially tied to social situations. Conspiracy theories about outgroups are typically tied to situations in which feelings about intergroup threats run higher and

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8. There is, however, a growing body of evidence that attempts to use conspiracy theories thus tend to fail, and rather lead to the aggravation of the problems they attempt to counter.

9. Jan-Willem van Prooijen and Paul A.M. van Lange, “The social dimension of conspiracy theories”, in *Power, Politics and Paranoia: Why People are Suspicious of their Leaders*, ed. Jan-Willem van Prooijen and Paul A.M. van Lange (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 237–253.

10. Nicholas DiFonzo, “Conspiracy Rumor Psychology”, in *Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them*, ed. Joseph E. Uscinski (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 257–268.

11. Jan-Willem van Prooijen, André P. M. Krouwel, and Thomas V. Pollet, “Political extremism predicts belief in conspiracy theories”, *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 6 (2015): 570–578.

12. J. Eric Oliver and Thomas J. Wood, *Enchanted America. How Intuition and Reason Divide Our Politics* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

13. Joseph E. Uscinski and Joseph. M. Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

14. J. M. Berger, *Extremism* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2018); Uscinski and Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories*.



ingroup identification is less secure, leading to increased collective narcissism.<sup>15</sup> Such situations may lead to an increase in expressions of *conspiracy stereotypes*.<sup>16</sup>

Conspiracy stereotypes, as conceptualised by the Polish psychologists Miroslaw Kofta and Grzegor Sedek, have three central elements. The stereotyped outgroup is represented as committed to (1) obsessive, collective striving for domination; as (2) engaging in deceptive, conspiratorial action to achieve these goals; and having (3) a high degree of group egoism. This sort of stereotype ascribes exceptionally high group entitativity to the outgroup. In practice, it presents the outgroup as a single entity, moreover an entity that is “a dangerous, potent, and deceptive enemy”.<sup>17</sup> The group level is central to conspiracy stereotypes. While visible individuals and episodes may illustrate the stereotype, it covers the whole; outgroup members are mere “subordinated executors” of the collective will.<sup>18</sup>

As measured by these three dimensions, conspiracy stereotypes are positively related to both conspiracy mentality, and to series of specific conspiracy beliefs.<sup>19</sup> Specific beliefs in conspiracy stereotypes tend to be positively related to conspiracy beliefs against some, but not all, other social groups. Conspiracy stereotype beliefs are mainly related to those groups deemed to be strong or otherwise a threat,<sup>20</sup> and less to minorities and other socially devalued groups.<sup>21</sup> Belief in

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15. Aleksandra Cichocka et al., “Grandiose delusions: Collective narcissism, secure in-group identification, and belief in conspiracies”, in *The Psychology of Conspiracy*, ed. Michal Bilewicz, Aleksandra Cichocka, and Wiktor Soral (New York, NY: Routledge 2015), 23–41.
  16. Miroslaw Kofta and Grzegorz Sedek, “Conspiracy Stereotypes of Jews under Systemic Transformation in Poland”, *International Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 1 (2005): 40–64.
  17. Kofta and Sedek, “Conspiracy Stereotypes”, 42.
  18. (*Ibid.*)
  19. Monika Grzesiak-Feldman, “The relationship between conspiracy beliefs about events, conspiracy stereotypes and prejudice towards out-groupers” (Conspiracy Theory Conference, University of Miami, 2015).
  20. Kofta and Sedek’s concept will have us focus on groups deemed powerful. It is a both common and logical assumption that conspiracy beliefs against outgroups target those who are deemed powerful and thus a threat. This is clearly not always the case, as we see in examples of conspiracy beliefs about slaves in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century British colonies or about LGBTQ in the current era. Often more elaborate conspiracy theories will tie weaker outgroups to a more powerful enemy, such as Jews, in e.g., “gypsy crime” conspiracy narratives and anti-immigration theories, but in less elaborate versions, notions of lesser conspiracy (“fomenting slave rebellion”, “recruiting our youth to homosexuality”, “organised crime syndicate”) are quite common.
  21. Monika Grzesiak-Feldman and Anna Ejsmont, “Paranoia and conspiracy thinking of Jews, Germans, Arabs, and Russians in a Polish sample”, *Psychological Reports* 102 (2008): 884–886; Monika Grzesiak-Feldman and Herbert Suszek, “Conspiracy stereotyping and perceptions of group entitativity of Jews, Germans, Arabs, and Homosexuals among Polish students”, *Psychological Reports* 102 (2008): 755–758.

these stereotypes also correlate positively to non-conspiratorial prejudices and to measures of social distance against the same groups.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of conspiracy stereotypes was built on the tradition of antisemitic conspiracy theories where Jews control vast wealth and hidden networks in a search for world domination. Power is central to the concept as it has been used. When Imhoff concluded that there is an “intrinsic affinity between conspiratorial thinking and anti-Semitic ideology”,<sup>23</sup> it was also based on the strength of association between conspiracy mentality and prejudice against outgroups societies consider to be powerful.<sup>24</sup> When the same measure was found to be either weakly related or not at all related to prejudice against Muslims or anti-Ziganism, this may be explained by the fact that these groups were not widely seen as powerful, and accordingly a threat, in the same sense. However, outgroup stereotypes vary, and they may include ideas about conspiracy and high group entitativity without necessarily involving vast power, as in conspiracy theories about LGBTQ. Outgroup stereotypes also *change*, as do social (“folk”) threat assessments.

This potentially calls into question the special relation between conspiracy mentality and antisemitism stated in the opening quote. Conspiracy mentality as measured by the relevant scale centres on suspicions directed upwards towards e.g. authorities and big businesses. It measures suspicion that the powerful are secretly up to no good. The imaginary Jews of Kofta and Sedek’s conspiracy stereotypes are part of this elite. Their elite status is why scores on antisemitism correlate so well with conspiracy mentality. But if we do not take the attribution of elite status and powerful threat for granted, this relation could change. If Jews are regarded as a less powerful threat and Muslims as a more powerful one, it seems reasonable to expect that the relative relations between prejudice and conspiracy mentality changes. If we take threat assessment as the primary driver and conspiracy narratives as consequences, an increase or decrease in feelings of being threatened should influence levels of conspiracy beliefs, but they should also influence the correlation between specific conspiracy beliefs and conspiracy mentality. An increased belief in the conspiracy theory about Muslims “taking over” should correlate with them being seen as more powerful and threatening. As a consequence, the general measure of conspiracy mentality should predict prejudice against

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22. Michal Bilewicz et al., “Harmful ideas. The structure and consequences of anti-Semitic beliefs in Poland”, *Political Psychology* 34 (2013): 821–839; Grzesiak-Feldman, “Relationship between conspiracy beliefs;” Kofta and Sedek, “Conspiracy Stereotypes”.

23. Imhoff, “Beyond (Right-Wing) Authoritarianism”, 125.

24. See Roland Imhoff and Martin Bruder, “Speaking (Un-)Truth to Power: Conspiracy Mentality as a Generalised Political Attitude”, *European Journal of Personality* 28 (2014): 25–43.

Muslims equally well as – perhaps in some cases even better than – it predicts anti-semitism.

Some recent results suggest that this may be the case. While using a less power-focused measure of conspiracy mentality than the best established scales, Dyrendal et al. found only weak relations of conspiracy mentality to conspiracy stereotypes about Jews and Muslims among (mostly) American Neopagans.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, even though both associations were weak, the correlation was higher for anti-Muslim conspiracy belief.

No such study has been conducted for Norway. As mentioned above, the research on both conspiracy beliefs and the intersection of conspiracy theory and prejudice in Norway has so far been wholly qualitative.<sup>26</sup> While there are ongoing projects that attempt to remedy this, no studies have yet been completed. This chapter is therefore exploratory, and I will mostly be making use of data gathered for other purposes and in different research designs. In the following, we will see which, if any, of the theoretically expected patterns hold up. But given that the data were gathered for other purposes, which patterns *could* we look for?

### 3. FOUR SURVEYS, MEASURES AND GOALS

Like the chapters by Bergmann and Hellevik in the current volume, this chapter uses data from the surveys conducted by the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (CHM) in 2011 and 2017.<sup>27</sup> In addition, it uses data from wave 8 (2017) of the Norwegian Citizen Panel (NCP-8),<sup>28</sup> and from a 2016 student survey conducted at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).<sup>29</sup> The

25. Asbjørn Dyrendal, Leif E. O. Kennair, and James R. Lewis, “Conspiracy Mentality and Paranormal Beliefs Predict Conspiracy Beliefs, but not Conspiracy Stereotypes. Results from the Pagan III Survey”, *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 8, no. 1 (2017): 73–97.

26. Asbjørn Dyrendal, “Conspiracy theory research in and about Norway”, COST Action 15101 internal paper (2017).

27. For details on these surveys, see Hellevik’s introductory chapter on survey data, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway”; Christhard Hoffmann, Øivind Kopperud, and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and other Minorities* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2012); and Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017* (Oslo: Center for the Study of Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017).

28. The Norwegian Citizen Panel conducts web-based surveys “of Norwegians’ opinions toward important societal matters”. It is run by four departments at the University of Bergen and the Rokkan Center. See <https://www.uib.no/en/citizen#>.

29. Participants in NCP-8; N = 2133, NTNU-2016; N = 891.

student survey draws on a convenience sample of students from most of NTNU's campuses; the others use representative population samples.

The NCP-8 and NTNU surveys contain items that were expressly designed with the purpose of testing hypotheses about conspiracy beliefs. This was not a topic in itself for the CHM surveys. The first survey, CHM-2011, has only one explicit conspiracy item: "World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests". The three other surveys each have one conspiracy theory item about Muslims and one about Jews. In addition, the NCP-8 and the NTNU 2016 surveys also include an internationally validated, five-item measure of conspiracy mentality. The latter also asks about a host of unrelated conspiracy theories. Taken together this allows for taking a closer look at the relation between the antisemitic and anti-Muslim conspiracy items. It will also give an indication about the relation of these beliefs to a general propensity towards conspiracy thinking. The theory of an underlying conspiracy mentality predicts a positive correlation between conspiracy beliefs. We can test both the construct and its prediction of positive correlation between beliefs directly from data in CHM-2017, NCP-8, and NTNU-2016.

Each of the surveys covers political affiliation in some way, mainly through questions about past and planned electoral behaviour. This facilitates comparison on whether political affiliation plays a role, and if so, which political affiliation plays a larger role for which conspiracy belief – if it differs (as expected). As mentioned above, international research also gives us reason to expect the conspiracy items in CHM-2017 to correlate positively with items about the legitimacy of violence against Jews and Muslims.

While the concept of conspiracy stereotypes was not explicitly involved in the design of the CHM-surveys, the surveys nevertheless ask questions relevant to the concept, implicitly or explicitly asking about group egoism and obsession about power as well as conspiratorial behaviour. These are, indeed, part of the scales of prejudice employed by Hellevik and Bergmann.<sup>30</sup> Even though it is ad hoc, this theoretically opens the possibility for testing the predictions related above on a "poor man's version" of conspiracy stereotypes. However, there are some preconditions. The conspiracy items should correlate positively with the other theoretically related prejudices (egoism, power obsession, etc.) at a high enough level so they combine into an internally consistent, acceptable scale.<sup>31</sup> If they do, it is possible to get an idea about the degree to which Norwegian findings correspond to those from countries whose societies differ greatly from Norway.

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30. See Hellevik's and Bergmann's contributions to this volume.

31. Rule of thumb says Cronbach's alpha should be 0.7 or higher.

Most of the relevant questions are scored on a Likert-like scale, typically 1–5 for the CHM-surveys and 1–7 for NCP-8 and NTNU-2016. In almost all instances, I have chosen to score “don’t know/impossible to answer” as a mid-point, thereby interpreting the answers along a “probability of truth” continuum. As Bergmann’s analyses show,<sup>32</sup> there is no clear tendency of the “impossible to answer” responses going in any particular direction, such as hiding open expressions of antisemitism. They thus seem to be true midpoints.<sup>33</sup> I have made one exception: when scoring the items on social distance, I only made use of respondents who chose to state a preference for or against having the outgroups in their neighbourhood or circles of friends. The choice was made pre-analyses, on consideration that this group of questions seems to call even more for respondents’ reflections on the specific qualities of the hypothetical individual (e.g. neighbour) in question.

All scales were computed as mean scores of all the items mentioned.

#### 4. ITEMS AND LEVELS OF CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ABOUT JEWS AND MUSLIMS

The first survey, CHM-2011, explored levels of antisemitic attitudes. Among the statements respondents were asked to assess as fitting or not fitting to their own opinion, there was one conspiracy item: “World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests”. This was repeated in 2017, when items about prejudice against Muslims were added. Again there was one conspiracy item: “Muslims want to take over Europe”. The conspiracy item about Muslims in NCP-8 addressed the same notion in more detail (“Muslims participate in organised, religiously based lies to hide a plan for societal takeover”). The item about Jews in the same survey was “American politics is controlled by Israel”.<sup>34</sup>

In the student survey (NTNU-2016), the conspiracy item about Muslims was the same as in NCP-8. The antisemitic conspiracy theory was reverse-phrased and related explicitly to group stereotype: “Jews are not more likely to engage in conspiracy than others”. This item created some problems that need to be discussed briefly.

32. Bergmann, “Counting Antisemites versus measuring Antisemitism”, this volume.

33. I have also, separately, run most of the analyses with the “don’t know”/“impossible to answer” responses left out. As suspected, this tends only to make the effect of e.g. the conspiracy items stronger, while leaving the direction, etc., intact.

34. For the thinking behind this item, see Pierre-André Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck. The New Anti-Semitism in Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004).

While pre-tests on students at master level had discovered no problem with the item, in practice it turned out that the phrasing was unclear. Some of it was related to miscalculation of the time needed to complete the full questionnaire. Mean time of completion increased by around 50% when most of the students were in their first year. This item came towards the very end of the survey, when students were pressed for time. I was contacted by several students who said they had first misread the item as asserting the opposite, and two students explicitly stated that because of this misreading they had answered the item in a misleading manner. The first look at the data also showed a disproportionate response of (especially complete) disagreement with the statement. Since there was no pattern to explain the responses otherwise, it was concluded that misreading was the likely explanation. Thus we recalculated responses to fit the response style of the students in the following manner: When responses to the items immediately before and after were fully or almost fully negative to the conspiracy theory and responses to the antisemitic item that were positive, were recalculated to fit the response style (i.e. 7=1, 6=2, etc.), and vice versa. While obviously not optimal, the resulting changes made responses fit the larger pattern better, and as we shall see, makes sense within the larger set of investigations.

So what proportion of Norwegian respondents express belief in the conspiracy theories presented to them? Mean response is on the side of disbelief. This is very clear in the student survey and NCP-8, where the graph is highly left-skewed by the proportion of answers in the category of “disagree”. The surveys conducted by the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies stand out in that these surveys show a normal distribution, with “impossible to answer” the most popular response for all items. Since the items vary in how they are framed, and two surveys were scored on 1–5 scales and two on 1–7 scales, they are not fully comparable, but if we look at those who score highest, “strongly agree”, we get an impression of those who really want to express belief.

TABLE 6.1. Frequency of strongly agree with conspiracy items

Survey	Antisemitic	Islamophobic
CHM-2011	3.9%	–
CHM-2017	3.6%	12.9%
NCP-8	4.0%	9.5%
NTNU-2016	1.7%	1.8%

We see some notable differences between antisemitic and anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs. The Muslim conspiracy clearly has more believers than the Jewish conspiracy does, except for in the student survey. This may be partially accounted for by three things: (1) the students in question are the Utøya generation, and the conspiracy item is known as Breivik's partial motivation (we also had Breivik's anti-Labour belief covered); (2) anti-Muslim attitudes is a known, partisan issue for the right, and the student sample was highly left-leaning; (3) the students are students, thus both with regard to age and level of education, we would expect a negative effect on belief in conspiracy theories compared to weighted data from representative samples.

There is also a difference in the level of belief between CHM-2017 and NCP-8 which may not be accounted for by the different Likert scales used, and the difference only grows as we calculate the total on the "belief" side. It seems reasonable to suspect that the different, more elaborate framing of conspiracy in NCP-8 made more respondents negative.

## 5. CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND CONSPIRACY MENTALITY IN THE SURVEYS

As noted in the introduction, those who believe in one conspiracy theory tend to believe in more than one, and those who dislike one outgroup also tend to dislike more than one. Both would lead us to expect that conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims should correlate. We also have some reason to expect that it *could* be otherwise. Political and religious ideologies may select certain groups as allies or as what J. M. Berger calls "eligible in-groups".<sup>35</sup> To the degree such views of the outgroups are partisan issues, it could reduce or remove an expected correlation. For instance, any full-on identification of Jews with Israel could activate political identities strongly invested in the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as religious identities, making one group an ally and the other the enemy. So what do we see in the data?

Briefly put, we find that one conspiracy belief about an outgroup predicts belief in the other. Using weighted data, the conspiracy items about Jews and Muslims in CHM-2017 correlate in the medium range.<sup>36</sup> We find exactly the same correlation size for NCP-8, again using weighted data, correcting for gender, age, education,

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35. Berger, *Extremism*.

36.  $r = 0.33$ ;  $p < 0.001$

and county of habitation. The student sample gives a correlation size that is effectively the same.<sup>37</sup>

As predicted by theory and previous research in other countries, we do find a positive correlation between the conspiracy beliefs. While the items vary somewhat between the surveys, the relation between them is stable, suggesting that they tap into similar underlying phenomena. Moreover, the correlation is of a moderate, rather than small size. Considering only these two variables, we have “accounted for” between 11–13% of their shared variance.

I say “accounted for” because the relation between scores on the conspiracy items are obviously not explained merely by pointing to the correlations. The correlations show that there is something here that underlying factors might explain. Previous research says a generalised propensity to conspiracy thinking – conspiracy mentality – should be one such factor. However, we also have competing hypotheses about how well the *measures* we use for conspiracy mentality should do in explaining conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims. To the degree the relevant respondents just dislike (certain) minorities, including Jews and Muslims, at face value it is not apparent that conspiracy mentality should correspond to any significant degree. Certainly, a general dislike might predispose respondents to *also* ascribe conspiratorial activity on the part of the outgroup, but then we would expect correlation to other conspiracy beliefs to fall, or even reverse direction.<sup>38</sup>

No measure of conspiracy mentality has previously been employed in a Norwegian (or Scandinavian) setting. The 5-item measure of conspiracy mentality used in NCP-8 and NTNU-2016 is geared towards shadowy and powerful actors. Both surveys have at least one conspiracy item in addition to the two about Jews and Muslims. This should make it possible to validate the scale for Norway, and in addition test its power to predict conspiracy beliefs about the two groups. The degree of correlation with other conspiracy beliefs may also indicate something about *whether* the items primarily express correlation with other conspiracy theories and if so, what *kind* of conspiracy beliefs they are. If our items of interest share more than surface characteristics with unrelated conspiracy items, they should correlate positively. If the measure of conspiracy mentality is valid, the anti-

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37.  $r = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . As explained above, the item about conspiracy belief about Jews in NTNU-2016 is problematic. That the correlation size here is effectively the same as in the other surveys indicates that the item was handled in a manner that does little to distort the underlying relations.

38. Cf. Michael J. Wood and Debra Gray, “Right-wing authoritarianism as a predictor of pro-establishment versus antiestablishment conspiracy theories”, *Personality and Individual Differences* 138 (2019): 163–166.



Jewish and anti-Muslim items should correlate well with it if the respective group is seen as powerful, but less if it is seen as less powerful.<sup>39</sup>

The 5-item scale of conspiracy mentality showed good reliability in both NCP-8 and NTNU-2016,<sup>40</sup> and all items loaded on one factor. Both surveys also show a positive correlation between conspiracy mentality and conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims. The correlation size is small, and only at its highest reaches “almost medium” size.<sup>41</sup> As mentioned above, this is what we would expect if respondents do not see Jews and Muslims as particularly powerful. An alternative hypothesis is that conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims in the Norwegian setting do not share much with generalised tendencies towards conspiracy thinking of any kind. This was what Dyrendal et al. found earlier for American Neopagans: the items about Jews and Muslims did not correlate with other conspiracy items at the level of other intercorrelations. Only the item about Muslims reached even the level of “low” correlation with conspiracy mentality, and anti-egalitarianism and political position explained more of the variance on conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims than conspiracy mentality did.<sup>42</sup> In the NTNU student survey, however, scores on the anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim items correlate highly with mean scores on 14 other conspiracy theories.<sup>43</sup> This indicates that the anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim conspiracy items *are* partially explained by one or more underlying factors of generalised conspiracy belief, including those theories that explicitly address conspiracy from above.<sup>44</sup>

These survey results also allow for tentatively answering the introductory question: will the relative strength of the relation between antisemitism, Islamophobia and conspiracy mentality be the same in Norway as that found elsewhere? The answer seems to be “no”. In both surveys, the measures of conspiracy mentality correlate higher with the item about Muslims than it does with the one about Jews. To the degree we can trust Imhoff and Bruder’s results,<sup>45</sup> this would indicate that Norwegians tend to consider Jews less powerful and threatening than Muslims.

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39. Imhoff and Bruder, “Speaking (Un)Truth”; cf. Dyrendal, Kennair, and Lewis, “Conspiracy Mentality and Paranormal Beliefs”.

40. Cronbach’s alpha = 0.83 and 0.86,  $p < 0.001$

41.  $R$  ranges from 0.18–0.29.

42. Dyrendal, Kennair, and Lewis, “Conspiracy Mentality and Paranormal Beliefs”.

43.  $R > 0.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$

44. Other conspiracy items in these surveys, specifically those implicating governments and big business, correlate more highly with conspiracy mentality. This is as it should be, since these items cover more specific theories along the general lines asked about in the measures of conspiracy mentality.

45. Imhoff and Bruder, “Speaking (Un)Truth”.

So far, we have looked only at single items of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim conspiracy beliefs. We do not have full data related to our questions about conspiracy stereotypes, but we do have some data that could speak to our questions: the ones from the two CHM surveys, and particularly CHM-2017.

## 6. CONSPIRACY STEREOTYPES OF JEWS AND MUSLIMS: MEASURES AND CORRELATIONS

There is no single Norwegian survey or experiment addressing the topic of conspiracy stereotypes as theorised by Kofta and Sedek explicitly.<sup>46</sup> However, in the first survey conducted by the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2011, six out of the ten statements about Jews are relevant to conspiracy stereotypes. We remember that conspiracy stereotypes typically presented prejudice along three dimensions: striving for domination, conspiracy, and high group egoism. The survey presented the following six propositions for participants to evaluate:

- ▶ Jews consider themselves to be better than others.
- ▶ World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests.
- ▶ Jews have enriched themselves at the expense of others.
- ▶ Jews have too much influence on the global economy.
- ▶ Jews have too much influence on US foreign policy.
- ▶ Jews have always caused problems in the countries in which they live.

Items one, two and six are tied clearly to group egoism, number two explicitly also to conspiracy. Items three, four, and five are tied to (successful) striving for domination, and they can be implicitly tied to conspiracy. The items do not divide specifically into the three dimensions mentioned by Kofta and Sedek. However, the dimensions blend into each other both explicitly, as in item two above, and more implicitly, by drawing on cultural stereotypes. The listing of the items thus allows for each to prime respondents to react to stereotypes they may already know. Do they scale into a single scale for conspiracy stereotype, with or without our explicit conspiracy item?

The answer is yes, they do. The different items correlate highly; the only item generally falling (just) below  $r > 0.5$  with other components is the one about US foreign policy.<sup>47</sup> Using six items, the internal validity shows as Cronbach's alpha

46. Kofta and Sedek, "Conspiracy Mentality".

47. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.87, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

of 0.85, and if we delete the explicit conspiracy item, it only falls to 0.82. Principal component analysis showed only one component with Eigenvalue above one. This was true also for CHM-2017, where Cronbach's alpha was 0.87 for six items and 0.84 for five.

The items about Muslims that were first included in CHM-2017 are less suited to the theoretical formulations of conspiracy stereotypes based on classical anti-semitism. Arguably, and again before looking at the data, there are four items that theoretically fit into a reasonable test of similar conspiracy stereotypes:

- Muslims consider themselves morally superior to others
- Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture
- Muslims want to take over Europe
- Muslims are more violent than others

None of the items are optimal for measuring conspiracy stereotypes after the model of antisemitic conspiracism.<sup>48</sup> Item three is the closest to an *explicit* appeal to conspiracy here. With item three and four, it also addresses “striving for domination”. Arguably, item one addresses group egoism. The four items show remarkable consistency, with Cronbach's alpha at 0.9. Intercorrelations are high, ranging from  $r$  at 0.66 to 0.77. Principal component analysis showed only one component (i.e. with Eigenvalue above one). The correlation between conspiracy stereotypes of Jews and Muslims is medium-sized and positive, just as it was for the single conspiracy items.<sup>49</sup>

Above, I have operated with the items that seem most directly relevant to the concept of conspiracy stereotypes. However, the scales could equally have taken into account all the negative stereotype-based items for each: factor analysis show that both the seven negative items about Jews and the nine negative items about Muslims (one reverse-phrased) load on a single component. The intercorrelations for the prejudice items about Muslims are so high that it almost seems like one has asked the same question over and over. Cronbach's alpha for anti-Muslim prejudices was 0.94;<sup>50</sup> for antisemitism 0.88. From this observation alone, it seems likely that “conspiracy” is a factor in xenophobic prejudices as just one more

48. Since stereotypes vary, one may argue that they should not be exactly the same.

49.  $r = 0.35$

50. Again, several of the items used in CHM-2017 are related to, but not identical with the ones used to construct the scale for “Islamoprejudice” (see Imhoff and Recker, *Differentiating Islamophobia*). Alone, the items on the cognitive dimension of Islamophobia should not be mistaken for the whole, thus my choice of a different term here.

negative trait; negatively viewed outgroups are seen as *also* conspiring. With that caveat, in the following analyses we shall nevertheless continue to use scales based only on items that should theoretically be part of conspiracy stereotypes.

7. CONSPIRACY STEREOTYPES, SOCIAL DISTANCE, AND THE LEGITIMACY OF VIOLENCE

One of the predictions from previous research was that conspiracy stereotypes should predict social distance not only to the group in question, but also to other outgroups, especially those of a similar social status.<sup>51</sup> This holds for the Norwegian data as well. Scores on our measure for conspiracy stereotypes typically correlate positively with social distance to all groups in the questionnaire: Catholics, Americans, Poles, Roma, Jews, Muslims, and Somalis. There was one exception. Conspiracy stereotypes about Muslims did not correlate at a significant level with disliking having American neighbours. All other correlations were significant.<sup>52</sup>

The correlations were, as expected, highest with the group in question. Conspiracy stereotypes about Jews correlated most strongly with disliking Jews as neighbours or in the circle of friends, and, stereotypes about Muslims social distance towards Muslims. The latter showed a large effect.

TABLE 6.2. Pearson Correlation Matrix Conspiracy Stereotypes and Social Distance

	1. Anti-semitic CS	2. Anti-Muslim CS	3. Dislike Jews as neighbours	4. Dislike Jews among friends	4. Dislike Muslims as neighbours	4. Dislike Muslims among friends
1		.35***	.39***	.42***	.21***	.22***
2			.24***	.28***	.63***	.63***

\*\*\*p < 0.001

If we look further, conspiracy stereotypes about Muslims predicted social distance to denigrated social groups strongly (i.e. Roma,  $r = 0.53$ ; Somali,  $r = 0.58$ ). It predicted social distance to groups of higher status and those of lower socio-cultural

51. Grzesiak-Feldman, “Relationship between conspiracy beliefs”.  
52. As all correlations mentioned in this article (unless otherwise noted), it was significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

difference less well.<sup>53</sup> The effect on social distance towards Jews was relatively weak, only just above the distance towards Catholics.

Conspiracy stereotypes about Jews also showed a general effect on social distance, but the effect was weaker and more specific to distance towards Jews. All other correlation sizes were small.<sup>54</sup>

One of the main reasons for the (almost) consistently significant, positive correlations was the high degree of intercorrelation of scores on social distance. Those who dislike contact with one outgroup were more likely to dislike contact with any other outgroup. Conspiracy stereotypes about Jews and Muslims thus seem to be a contributing factor in a more general xenophobia.<sup>55</sup> Especially with regard to the measure we have used for conspiracy stereotypes about Muslims, the relation to xenophobia seems strong.<sup>56</sup>

Xenophobia is tied to both violent behaviour and attitudes that condone violence. As noted in the introduction, conspiracy beliefs in general also seem to predict views that violence can be a legitimate form of political behaviour.<sup>57</sup> That finding was, however, from the United States alone, and it is uncertain how well this transfers over to a very different political culture, such as the Norwegian. The 2017 CHM survey asks Norwegians directly whether violence against Jews or Muslims can be legitimate, considering terrorism/Israeli behaviour against Palestinians. Taken on their own, the single questions show the expected pattern: conspiracy beliefs show a moderate, positive correlation with support for violence. This is a general effect. Belief in the antisemitic conspiracy item correlates positively with support for violence against Jews, but it *also* correlates with support for violence against Muslims. We see the same general relation for conspiracy belief about Muslims.

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53. E.g., Polish, but not Americans, and Catholics only at  $r \approx 0.2$

54.  $R$  ranged from 0.14 to 0.28

55. See Hellevik, "Antisemitism and Islamophobia", this volume, for more on this.

56. This would not be surprising since intergroup conspiracy theories tend to add to prejudice across outgroups; see Daniel Jolley, Rose Meleady, and Karen M. Douglas, "Exposure to intergroup conspiracy theories promotes prejudice which spreads across groups", *British Journal of Psychology* (2019).

57. Uscinski & Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories*.

**TABLE 6.3.** Pearson Correlation Matrix, Conspiracy Beliefs and Support for Violence

	1. Antisemitic CT	2. Anti-Muslim CT	3. Support for violence against Jews	4. Support for violence against Muslims
1		.33***	.35***	.31***
2			.28***	.46***
3				.41***
4				

\*\*\*p < 0.001

If we exchange the single items with the scales for conspiracy stereotypes, some of the “noise” is reduced. This results in a slightly increased correlation with support for violence against the “conspirator” group and a slight decrease in correlation with support for violence against the other group. However, there seems to be a general dimension of finding retributive violence legitimate. Support for violence against one group is the best predictor for support of violence against the other.<sup>58</sup>

**8. CONSPIRACY BELIEFS AND IDEOLOGY: PARTY-POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

Specific conspiracy beliefs should vary according to party political affiliation. Conspiracy theories do, after all, address different culprits as causes of the world’s (or “our”) ills. Moreover, the trend is that those whose political party are out of power should be more vulnerable in general to conspiracy beliefs than those in power.<sup>59</sup> However, theories about outgroups may not be similarly vulnerable to being in or out of power. Specifically, populists and extremists should be less influenced, perhaps even be encouraged in such beliefs by power. What do we see in the Norwegian data?

58. Regression analysis confirms the impression: a general support for violence seems to lie behind most of the effect. Using only these factors, support for violence against the other contributes most to a combined  $R^2$  of 0.23 for violence against Jews, and  $R^2$  of 0.3 for violence against Muslims, but conspiracy beliefs contribute separately in both cases. For a broader discussion, see the section on violence in Bergmann, “Counting Antisemites”, this volume.

59. Uscinski and Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories*.

It is quite clear that the framing of the antisemitic conspiracy items varies enough to appeal somewhat differently between the surveys. There is some consistency: for all the representative samples, those who vote for the Christian Democratic Party score lowest on the explicit conspiracy item, and the mean score for all parties is below the “don’t know” value. At the other end, the Progress Party voters score highest. Although still unbelieving at the mean value, there is a large difference ( $d \approx 1$ ) between them and the Christian Democrats in both CHM surveys. This difference is somewhat smaller when we use the broader measure of the conspiracy stereotype. The differences between the parties, which generally are not big, smooth out more. What we do not really see is a left-right difference. The voters of Socialist Left, less a radical-left party than a competing, social democratic party to the left of Labour, scores at about the same level as Christian Democratic Party voters, while voters for Red, a far-left socialist party, built on the ruins of an ex-Maoist communist party, scores at about the same level as the Conservative party. When we use the conspiracy stereotype, the leftists go further into disbelief, as do the Progress Party voters, while those voting for Christian Democrats score slightly higher. Overall, there is something of a consensus of disbelief in Jewish conspiracy in these surveys.

Those who vote for the largely rurally based Centre Party score at about the level of voters of the Conservative party and Labour in the CHM surveys. In NCP-8, they score highest, while Christian Democratic Party voters again score lowest. Again, the difference is large ( $d \approx 1$ ), but again, no party’s voters have a mean score on the side of belief. All are on the side of disbelief in the conspiracy. This repeats itself in the student survey. Even though we can observe some middle to large differences between political party preferences, disbelief in the Jewish conspiracy is a consensus position. This is not true for the Muslim conspiracy theory.

In CHM-2017, there is a clear left-right divide with regard to belief in the anti-Muslim conspiracy item. The voters of the Progress Party score highest, and at a mean of 3.89, the score is clearly into the realm of belief. The voters of the two leftist parties score lowest, at 1.67 and 1.52, making for a very large difference between the left and right ( $d = 2.1$  to the Socialist Left, larger for Red). This means that given a random selection from either group, one is all but guaranteed ( $> 90\%$ ) that a Progress Party voter will score higher than one voting for the Socialist Left. Moreover, the relation seems relatively linear, with voters of the Conservative Party (3.02) and two of the old “centre” block following the Progress Party. This time, when we use the conspiracy stereotype scale, the differences become larger, not smaller. Standard deviations become smaller, and scores on the right rise while they fall on the left.

We find similar results in NCP-8, where those who vote for the leftist parties again score lowest. Voters for the Green party, which with the Liberal Party voters also scored very low in CHM-2017, score at the level of the leftist parties with regard to the conspiracy items. The differences are large, but not quite as big as they were in CHM-2017. In the student survey, the tendency is the same, but the effects are smaller and disagreement with the items more universal.

Overall, we see an interesting pattern, where the political left tends to score slightly – but often not significantly – higher on the conspiracy item about Jews than they do on the one for Muslims. The opposite is true for those on the political right, but here the difference is often large. Taken as a whole, the left scores lower on both conspiracy items than the right, and only voters for Red (in NCP-8) come close to scoring at the top on the antisemitic item. Since the item in NCP-8 was formulated with the explicit intention of appealing most to the far left, using a combination of complaints observed earlier among conspiracist segments of the far left, it is perhaps more surprising that other parties still scored higher.

When we move our attention to the views on legitimacy of violence (CHM-2017), we observe something similar. There is a clear consensus in that terrorism, state-sponsored or not, is not seen as a legitimate excuse for violence against innocents by voters of any party. However, the left is least prone to seeing violence as legitimate, with “realist” Conservative and Labour voters closest behind the populist Progress Party at the top of the list. There is a clear difference between social-democratic left and populist right in attitudes about violence against both Muslims ( $d = 1.09$ ) and against Jews ( $d = 0.7$ ), even though mean scores are solidly on the side of violence being illegitimate for all parties.

For all the differences between voters, disbelief in a Jewish conspiracy is also the consensus position at the aggregate level for each political party. This is not true for allegations about Muslim conspiracy. This is clearly a divisive, partisan issue.

## 9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings in this chapter should be interpreted with some caution. We have seen that the discussion is based mostly on adapting survey data for purposes to which they were not primarily intended. The conspiracy items about Jews and Muslims suffer from the fact that there is only one of each in the three surveys that include both. As noted by Hellevik,<sup>60</sup> a combination of several valid items would

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60. Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia”, this volume.



reduce noise and give us more solid ground on which to stand when analysing the data.

The survey material we have examined in this chapter goes some way to strengthening a number of previous observations. We have seen that conspiracy beliefs about outgroups generally do predict increased social distance to the outgroup and increased support for violence as a political tool. We have also seen that measures of conspiracy mentality predict conspiracy beliefs about both Jews and Muslims, and that both these conspiracy beliefs predict increased belief in other conspiracy theories.

On the surface, this gives us some strange talking points: the more one believes in conspiracy theories about Jewish world domination, the more likely one is to think that violence against Muslims is legitimate. The more one believes Muslims are trying to take control, the more likely one is to believe Jews are misusing the Holocaust.<sup>61</sup> This is, obviously, because conspiracy beliefs predict increased belief in other conspiracy theories of a similar kind. Furthermore, because conspiracy beliefs are tied to other, underlying factors, it is as expected that when turned around, we also note that the more negative people are to refugees, the more they express belief in conspiracy theories. In CHM-2017, those who think we cannot afford to help refugees are moderately more likely to believe in conspiracy theories about Jews ( $d = 0.55$ ), and much more likely to believe in conspiracy theories about Muslims ( $d = 1.51$ ), than those who think we can afford to do so. Conspiracy beliefs about outgroups express as well as contribute to a more general xenophobia, and agreeing to conspiracy beliefs is also a way of justifying the xenophobia.

Other results do not fit quite as well into the expected pattern. International research into conspiracy thinking and antisemitism has noted that there is an intrinsic affinity between them that we do not find for prejudice against other social groups. As we have seen, there is also such an affinity in the Norwegian data, but it is not clearly separate from the affinity of the other xenophobic prejudice. Conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims were moderately correlated throughout the surveys, no matter the exact phrasing of the items. They also showed moderate correlation with general measures of conspiracy mentality, but contrary to what we would expect from previous research, conspiracy mentality was more highly correlated with conspiracy beliefs about Muslims than it was with those about Jews.

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61.  $r = 0.24$ , CHM-2017

Following Imhoff and Bruder,<sup>62</sup> this could indicate that Muslims were seen as more closely related to other, hidden, powerful actors guiding political developments. When looking at the items we used for conspiracy stereotypes, however, we see that the antisemitic items are clearly in line with the kind of power usually attributed to the hidden world conspiracy, and these items are highly intercorrelated. The anti-Muslim items are of a slightly different kind. While they do attribute power to Muslims, they more clearly present them as a *threat*. Moreover, the threat indicated is of a kind that is known to activate authoritarian responses, i.e. threats against group values and norms.<sup>63</sup> Authoritarianism, when activated, is related to conspiracy beliefs, but most of the beliefs it reliably relates to are thought to be predicted better by measures of right-wing authoritarianism than conspiracy mentality.<sup>64</sup> This could indicate that there may at times be less difference between measures of authoritarianism and conspiracy mentality in predicting certain types of conspiracy beliefs than has been shown.

Another pattern that may fit local intuitions better than international research regards the political dimension of beliefs. We have seen that belonging to the edges of the established political landscape in and of itself does not predict conspiracy beliefs all that well. The populist right, as was expected, generally scored higher on conspiracy beliefs than other ideologies. Only when appealing specifically to other dimensions of their political ideology (anti-USA and anti-Israel combined) did the far left rise to a level close to “don’t know”, and even then, it was only voters for the farthest left, i.e., Red. The Socialist Left voters stayed firmly at or near the bottom of the list and with a clear disbelief in conspiracy theories throughout. These attitudes were not visibly affected by the populist right being part of the ruling coalition since 2013. The populist right stayed at the top of conspiracy beliefs, and the far left stayed at the bottom. Turning Uscinski and Parent’s finding that “conspiracy theories are for losers” on its head,<sup>65</sup> we might say that for this combination of beliefs and politics, conspiracy theories are, rather, for election winners. This pattern may be specific to conspiracy beliefs about minorities, particularly Muslims, thus mirroring ideological differences, or it may be relevant to other conspiracy beliefs as well. If so, it might be related to political patterns of trust and distrust in a society that are still characterised by a high level of trust.

62. Imhoff & Bruder, “Speaking (Un)Truth”.

63. Cf. Karen Stenner, *The Authoritarian Dynamic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

64. Imhoff & Bruder, “Speaking (Un)Truth”; cf. Wood & Gray, “Right-Wing Authoritarianism”.

65. Uscinski and Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories*, 130–153.

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## 7.

# How Do Jews and Muslims in Norway Perceive Each Other?

## *Between Prejudice and the Willingness to Cooperate*

**WERNER BERGMANN**

**ABSTRACT** For more than a decade, there has been a discussion about the scope and character of a “Muslim antisemitism” in Europe, spurred on by anti-Jewish harassment and terrorist attacks by Muslims in some European countries.\* However, there are only a few major studies on the attitudes of Muslims towards Jews in Europe, while larger studies on the attitude of Jews towards Muslims have so far been missing completely. Based on the data from the 2017 survey, “Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway. Population Survey and Minority Study” (CHM), it is now possible to investigate how Jews and Muslims in Norway perceive each other, whether they see opportunities for cooperation as minorities and have common experiences of discrimination, what their positioning in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looks like, and whether it influences their mutual perception. While the focus is on the relationship between Muslims and Jews, in some cases the results for the general Norwegian population are included as a *tertium comparationis*, since Jews and Muslims form part of Norwegian society.

**KEYWORDS** antisemitism | Islamophobia | Jews | Muslims | Israeli-Palestinian conflict | Norway

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2002, when an escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict triggered a wave of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel offences in some Western European countries in which young immigrant Muslims were for the first time alongside/among the usual right-wing extremist perpetrators, there has been a discussion about the scope and character of a “Muslim antisemitism” in Europe. Some blame Muslim immigrants for the spread of antisemitism in Europe, while others see them as a “scapegoat” diverting attention from antisemitism in the general population and, at the same time, inciting hostility towards Muslims. Up to now, there exist only a few empirical studies on this issue, but all results available so far indicate that antisemitic attitudes are more prevalent among Muslims immigrants than among the general populations of the respective European countries.<sup>1</sup> The study for Norway confirms this finding with some modifications, namely those related to social distance and emotions. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has undertaken two surveys on Jewish experiences and perceptions of antisemitism, discrimination and hate crime, first in eight then in twelve EU Member states, but there is no specific focus on the Muslim population.<sup>2</sup> Small-scale surveys of Norwegian Jews’ attitudes towards Muslims have been conducted in Norway, in which this topic has been one among other larger prob-

1. See Günther “Jikeli, Antisemitic Attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review”, *ISGAP Occasional Paper Series* 1, 2015; see also for a recent overview: “The Norwegian Results from an International Perspective”, in Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway. Population Survey and Minority Study* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017), 117–120.
2. In two studies by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in which Jews were asked to give a “Description of person(s) making negative judgements about Jewish people in the past 12 months” in eight EU member states, extremist Muslims were quite often mentioned as making anti-Jewish remarks. On average, 53% of the respondents answered “someone with a left-wing political view”; 51% answered “someone with a Muslim extremist view”; 39% answered “someone with a right-wing political view” and 19% answered “Someone with a Christian extremist view” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Discrimination and hate crimes against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism* (2013) 27, Table 6). In a recent study on *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU*, also conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018, Jewish respondents in 12 EU Member States state that on average the “perpetrators in the most serious antisemitic incident of harassment in the 5 years before the survey” were most frequently “someone else I cannot describe” (31%), followed by “someone with a Muslim extremist view” (30%) and “someone with a left-wing political view” (21%). Less often are named “work or school/college colleagues” (16%), “a teenager or group of teenagers” (15%) and “an acquaintance or friend” (15%). Surprisingly only 13% named “someone with a right-wing political view” (54, Table 6).

lem areas.<sup>3</sup> The survey on attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway in 2017<sup>4</sup> was the first broad-based empirical study to include a sample of both Muslim and Jewish respondents, allowing the investigation of the relationship between the two groups in terms of various aspects. It is now possible to look at mutual opinions and feelings, the question of social distance, opinions on the prevalence of negative attitudes, opinions on the need to combat anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim harassment, willingness to cooperate, common experience of discrimination and exclusion, and last, but not least, positioning in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While the focus of this chapter is on the relationship between Muslims and Jews, it is important, for a better understanding of the results, to include in some cases the results for the general Norwegian population.<sup>5</sup> The survey of 2017 has three target groups and samples: a representative sample of the Norwegian population (N=1,575),<sup>6</sup> and samples of Jews (N=162) and of Muslims (N=586) in Norway.

Surveys among religious and ethnic minorities always face the problem of getting representative samples and often having low response rates. This problem could not be completely solved in the present case either. This should be borne in mind when evaluating the following results. The survey among Jews (total population in Norway about 1300 persons) was distributed to 504 members of the Jewish communities in Oslo and Trondheim. The response rate was 29% (N=170 – this is 13% of the whole Jewish population in Norway).<sup>7</sup> The educational structure of the Jewish sample deviates from the population sample and the Muslim sample by a larger proportion of people with higher education. Due to a technical error in the data collection process, 60 respondents were not asked some of the questions. Analyses show this group not to differ systematically from the rest with regard to the questions answered by all, indicating that the loss of respondents is random

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3. R. Golombek, Irene Levin, and J. Kramer, “Jødisk liv i Norge”, *Hatikva*, no. 5 (2012); C. Alexa Døving and Vibeke Moe, “Det som er jødisk”. *Identiteter, historiebevissthet og erfaringer med antisemittisme. En kvalitativ intervjustudie blant norske jøder* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2014).
  4. Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway. Population Survey and Minority Study* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017).
  5. As representative of their religious group, those who stated respectively Judaism or Islam as their religious affiliation are chosen (see Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 22–25).
  6. Since there are 13 Muslims among the 1,575 respondents, these are not included in the questions concerning the attitudes towards Muslims, so that in these cases the sample comprises only 1,562 respondents.
  7. Of these 170 respondents, only 162 stated Judaism as their religious affiliation, so the sample of Jews comprises 162 respondents.

rather than systematic in character. Even if a sample of only 110 respondents gives large random errors, the absence of a systematic bias would mean that we can rely upon clear-cut results.

The target population for the survey among Muslims were people of immigrant background (immigrants and Norwegian-born citizens with immigrant parents) with a minimum of five years of residence in Norway and from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Iran, Kosovo, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Turkey. TNS Kantar used addresses selected from the National Registry, and randomly selected 7,000 individuals disproportionately pre-stratified based on previous survey response rates from the various national groups. After two reminders, 826 replied, which gives a response rate of 12%. Of these, 586 answered Muslim to the question of religious affiliation, and this is the sample used in the analyses that follow.<sup>8</sup> The respondents have lived in Norway for different lengths of time; only some were born in Norway to immigrant parents. However, all had lived in the country for five years or more and were expected to be able to answer the questionnaire in Norwegian. In any case, we are dealing with a considerably heterogeneous minority.<sup>9</sup>

The response rate is low, but similar to what is often the case in present-day surveys.<sup>10</sup> Tests have shown that low rates do not necessarily result in a biased sample.<sup>11</sup> For the Muslim sample, the response rates vary somewhat according to country of origin, but very little with regard to age and gender. The resulting composition of the sample corresponds quite well to the immigrant population with regard to these variables. This also applies to the educational structure of the Muslim sample, which largely corresponds to that of the Norwegian population (in contrast to the Jewish sample).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, we cannot rule out that the kind of attitudes we were studying may have had an influence on the willingness to participate in the survey, which would affect the results. Furthermore, it is to be

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8. The sample of 242 non-Muslim immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries are not included in the analyses in this chapter.

9. 326 respondents of the Muslim sample came to Norway in 2000 or later, 192 came before 2000, and 68 were born in Norway (second generation). See Hofmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 103, Table 54.

10. PEW Research Center (2012). Assessing the Representativeness of Public Opinion Surveys. <http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys/>

11. This is the case for Norsk Monitor, with a response rate of 4 per cent (Ottar Hellevik, "Extreme nonresponse and response bias. A 'worst case' analysis." *Quality & Quantity*, 50 no. 5 (2016): 1969–1991. See also Robert M. Groves, "Nonresponse Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Household Surveys", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70 no. 5 (2006): 646–675.

12. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 22–25.



expected that difficulties in answering a questionnaire in Norwegian may have led to higher non-response rates among the less well-integrated immigrants. This must be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Another problem is the risk of respondents considering what they think is socially acceptable or wise when answering the attitude questions.<sup>13</sup> Here, it is an advantage that the interviews were done by means of a self-completion questionnaire, thus avoiding an interviewer effect.

## 2. ATTITUDES OF JEWS AND MUSLIMS TOWARD EACH OTHER

According to attitude theories, one can differentiate between three dimensions of attitudes: the affective or emotional dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the conative or behavioural dimension.<sup>14</sup>

To measure mutual feelings, respondents were asked if they had a particular sympathy or a certain dislike of the other group.

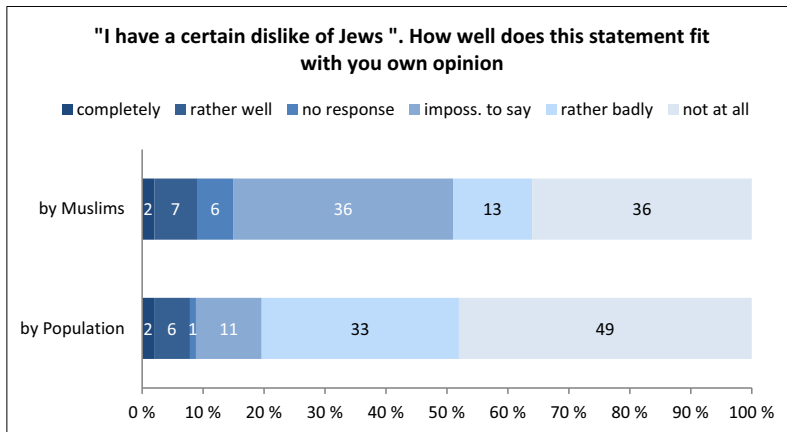


FIGURE 7.1. Dislike of Jews (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)

13. If one assumes that negative attitudes towards Jews are perceived as socially undesirable in Norway, then the values collected for the Muslim sample as well as for the general population sample are likely to deviate more into the positive rather than into the negative (phenomenon of communication latency).

14. The three dimensions: *Cognitive* – thoughts, beliefs, and ideas about something; *affective* – feelings or emotions that something evokes (sympathy, fear, love or hate); *Conative, or behavioural* – tendency or disposition to act in certain ways toward something or someone; See Steven J. Breckler, “Empirical validation of affect, behavior and cognition as distinct components of attitude”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51 (1984): 1119–1205.

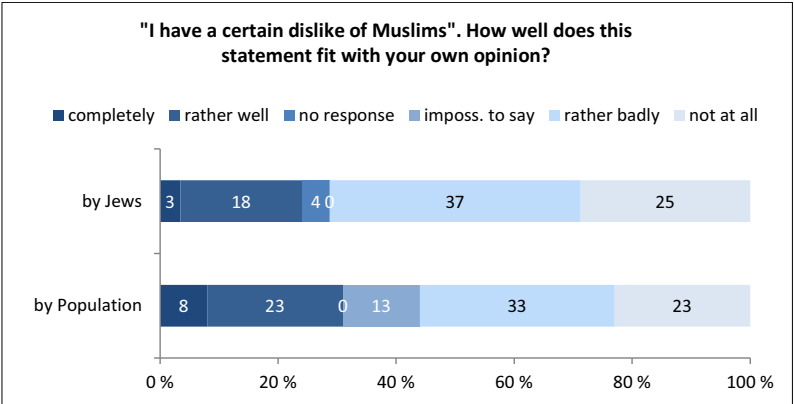


FIGURE 7.2. Dislike of Muslims (Percent. Population and Jewish samples)<sup>15</sup>

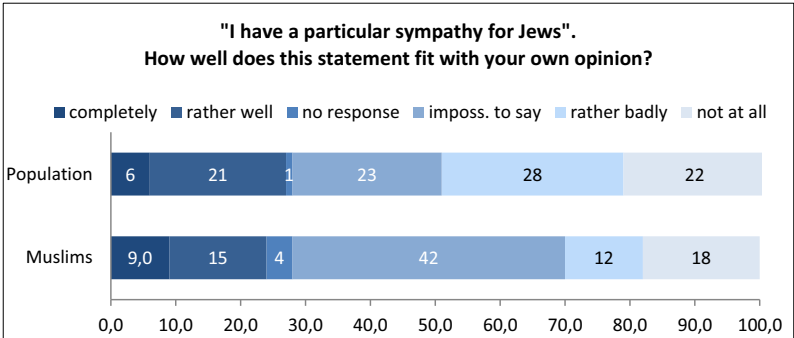


FIGURE 7.3. Sympathy for Jews (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)

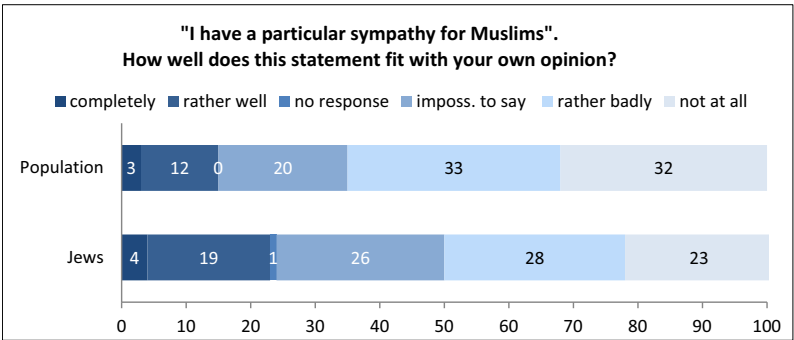


FIGURE 7.4. Sympathy for Muslims (Percent. Population and Jewish samples)

15. In this case, the population sample is N = 1,562, as among the respondents thirteen were Muslims who were not counted. Due to a sampling error, this question was only asked of 110 respondents in the Jewish sample.

In both cases, the Jews less often show negative feelings and more often positive feelings towards Muslims, while the Muslims more often show negative feelings and less often positive feelings toward Jews compared to the attitudes of the general population. However, when both minorities are compared directly, Muslims less often express negative feelings toward Jews (9.1%) than vice versa (20.9%) while the groups are equal in their degree of mutual sympathy (24.3% and 22.7%). Since a large proportion of Muslim respondents chose neutral or evasive answers as “impossible to say” and “no response”, one nevertheless has to be careful with a conclusive assessment. To decide if this is to be “interpreted as a manifestation of unclear feelings or lack of opinion” or as a conscious refraining from answering in order to hide a negative view,<sup>16</sup> one has to look more closely at these respondents by cross-tabulating them with the index on prejudice against Jews (see below).<sup>17</sup> Both groups seem to follow approximately the same tendencies as the general population: Jews are generally seen less negative and more often positive than Muslims – that is, Muslims reject Jews only a little more frequently (9.1%) than the general population (7.5%), while Jews reject Muslims more often (22.3%) than they were rejected by Muslims (9.1%), but still reject them much less compared with the general population. The same picture emerges when we look at the answers to the “particular sympathy” question. Muslims show only a little less sympathy for Jews (24.3%) than the general population (27.1%), while Jews show clearly more often sympathy for Muslims (22.7%) than the general population (14.4%).

To get information about the social relationship between groups, one can try to measure the social distance or proximity between them. In order to do this, we used two questions of the “social distance scale” developed by Emory Bogardus.<sup>18</sup> The respondents were asked to give their opinion on having Jews or Muslims as neighbours or in their circle of friends. The answers to the question of Jews as

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16. Hoffmann and Moe (eds.), *Attitudes toward Jews and Muslims*, 30.

17. That the proportion of those respondents choosing a neutral option (impossible to say/no response) is larger for all groups in case of the “particular sympathy” question may be due to the specific wording of this item. The fact that someone feels no particular sympathy towards a group does not necessarily mean that he has an antipathy, but only that his sympathy may not be very pronounced. Therefore, many respondents seem to have chosen the option “impossible to say”. The answers to the more clearly worded “dislike” item show that far less respondents chose the “neutral option”, with one exception: the very large proportion of the Muslim respondents choosing this option in case of the “dislike Jews” item.

18. Emory S. Bogardus, “Social Distance in the City”, *Proceedings and Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 20 (1926) 40–46; Emory S. Bogardus, *Social distance* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1959).

neighbours or friends show almost the same picture as the “dislike” item: 7% of the general population and 8.5% of the Muslim sample dislike having Jews as neighbours, and again 7% of the population and 11% of the Muslims dislike them in their circle of friends, while an overwhelming majority of 89% and 88.4% among the population and between 85% and 79% of the Muslims would like or would not mind to have them as neighbours or friends. As in the case of the item of “a certain dislike”, Muslim respondents are only slightly more often negative than the general population. Both the general population and the Jews dislike Muslims as neighbours and in the circle of friends more often: 26% of the population and 20% of the Jews dislike Muslims as neighbours, and both reject them a little less often as friends (21% and 12%). The same pattern emerges as in the case of having “a certain dislike” of Muslims: Muslims were clearly more often disliked as neighbours or friends than Jews, and Jews show this dislike of Muslims less often than the general population. Contrary to the expectation that respondents would rarely accept Jews or Muslims as friends, i.e. closer to them than neighbours, in the case of social distance from Muslims, the situation is exactly the other way around. The finding that the general population and Jews would like Muslims more often among their friends than as neighbours may be explained by the fact that one can choose socially similar persons as friends, while this is not the case with neighbours. In the case of rejection as a neighbour, apart from ethnic or cultural differences, social status also plays an important role. Since Muslims in Norway are immigrants, it is possibly assumed that they have a different lifestyle and more often belong to a lower social class.

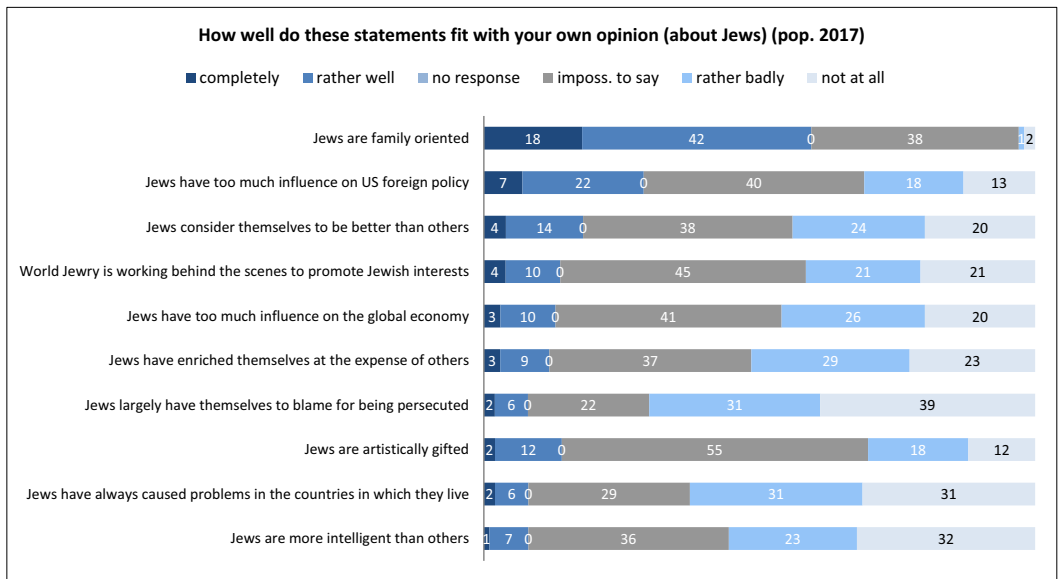
With regard to the emotional components of antipathy and social distance, one can conclude, that the responses of the two minorities are not very different from those of the general population.<sup>19</sup> Muslims show dislike and social distance towards Jews only slightly more frequently than the general population; Jews show this towards Muslims even less compared to the attitude of the population. However, Jews are more likely to show dislike and social distance to Muslims than vice versa.

While the differences between the attitudes of Muslims and the general population towards Jews are quite small with respect to the emotional and social dimension of prejudice, they become larger in the cognitive dimension, as the following figures

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19. We find the same pattern in the attitudes of Jews and Muslims towards some other groups: While Muslims reject Roma (27%) and Somalis (16%) less often than the general population (57% and 36%) and the Jews (44% and 26%), Muslims reject Americans and Poles a little more often (8% and 12%) than the Jews (3% and 7%) and as often as the general population (7% and 12%). Muslims feel closer to groups seen as outsiders (Roma) or stemming from non-western countries, while Jews, like the general population, feel closer to people from western/European countries.

7.5 and 7.6 show. Muslim respondents agree clearly more often than the general population to all negative items.<sup>20</sup> Concerning the three positive items (Jews are family-oriented, artistically gifted and more intelligent), there is no clear pattern. Muslims see Jews as more intelligent than the population does; this may be due to the ambiguous meaning of intelligence, which is seen as a very positive characteristic for members of one's ingroup, but can be seen as dangerous (in the sense of sly or crafty) as a characteristic of members of an outgroup.<sup>21</sup> Concerning the positive item of family orientation, Muslims clearly agree less often (34%) than the general population (60%), which may be due to a comparison with the self-image of Muslims, who see themselves as very family-oriented, while the general population compares the Jewish orientation with their own nuclear family situation.<sup>22</sup>



**FIGURE 7.5.** Opinions regarding Jews (Percent. Population sample)

20. But compared to the widespread dissemination of antisemitic attitudes in many of the countries of origin of Muslim immigrants, these attitudes are much less common among Muslim respondents in Norway. See Antidefamation League, *Global 100. An Index of Anti-Semitism*, New York: ADL, 2014, <http://global100.adl.org/>.
21. For the latter speaks that the percentage of high scorers on the "Index of Prejudice against Jews" who consider Jews to be "more intelligent than others" is two-thirds, while their share among those who disagree is only one-third. That is, those who consider Jews to be particularly intelligent often do so against the background of an antisemitic prejudice.
22. It could be that behind the widespread opinion that Jews are very family-oriented stands the idea that Jews stick together too much ("clannishness"), which is often used as an item in antisemitism scales.

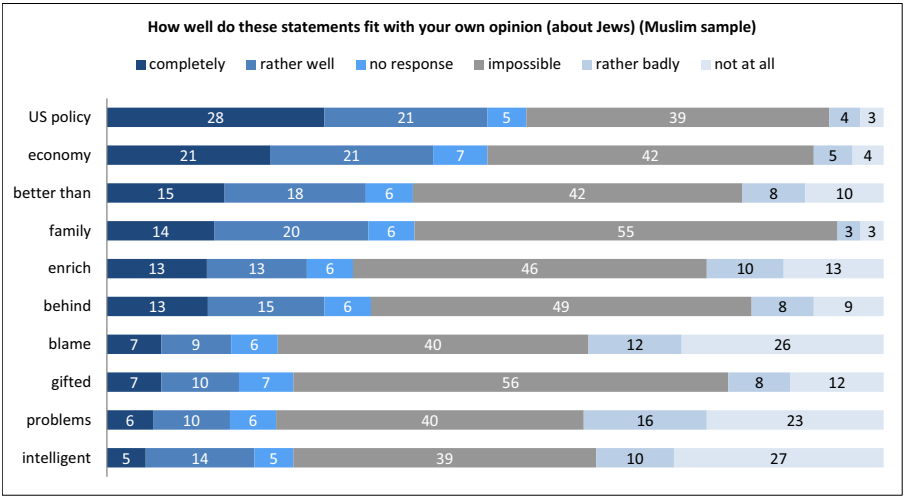


FIGURE 7.6. Opinions regarding Jews (Percent. Muslim sample)

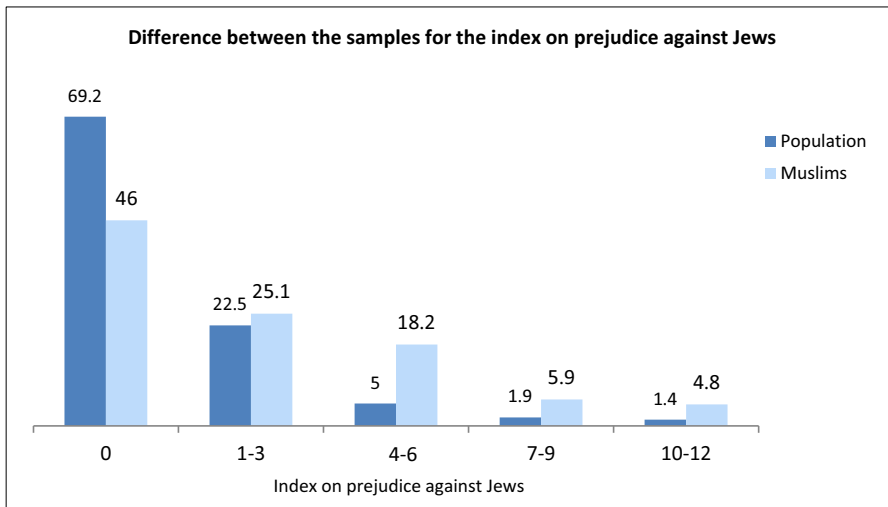
Table 7.1 shows the differences between the two samples in agreeing with the six negative statements about Jews:

TABLE 7.1. Percent. who find that the statements fit rather well or completely with own opinion (Population and Muslim samples)

	General population	Muslims	Difference
Jews have too much influence on the global economy	13	42	29
Jews have too much influence on US foreign policy	29	49	20
Jews consider themselves to be better than others	18	33	15
World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests	14	28	14
Jews have enriched themselves at the expense of others	12	26	14
Jews have always caused problems in the countries in which they live	8	16	8
Jews have largely themselves to blame for being persecuted	8	16	8

In the Muslim sample, statements about the international influence of Jews are the most important. This may perhaps be explained by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which Israel/the Jews are seen to receive much greater international support, especially from the US, than the Palestinians. The ancient topos of Christian theology that Jews have to attribute their visible misfortune and persecution to themselves as punishment for the denial of Jesus as the Messiah and their killing of Christ may be not so important for the Muslims. Another reason could be a feeling of a common fate: as a minority in Norway (and in other European countries) Muslims also see themselves confronted with prejudice and discrimination (see below).<sup>23</sup>

With six out of seven negative items in Table 7.1, we built an index on “Prejudice against Jews” in which the statements are arranged by the proportion of those respondents that answered “rather well” (getting one point on the scale) and “completely” (2 points).<sup>24</sup> This results in a scale ranging from 0 to 12. If we determine the cut-off point between 3 and 4 points to differentiate the low from the high scorers,<sup>25</sup>



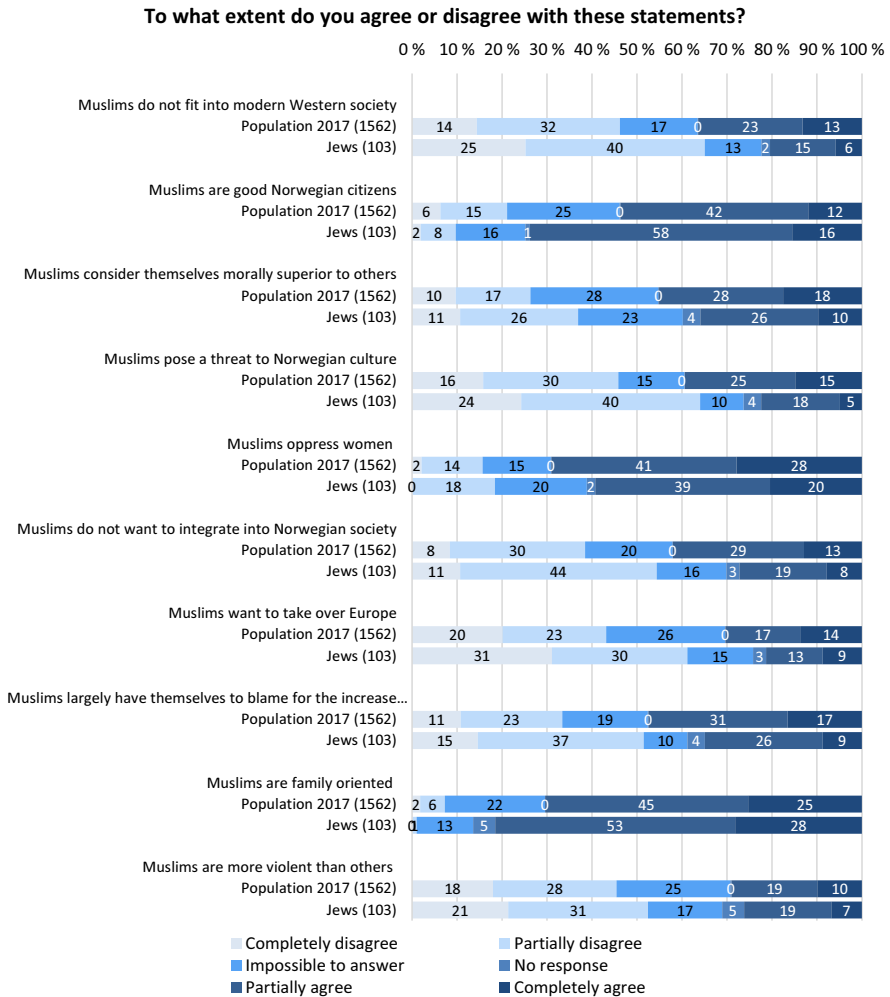
**FIGURE 7.7.** Index on prejudice against Jews (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)

23. See also Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe, “Negotiations of Antisemitism and Islamophobia”, “Ring of Peace”, chapter 10 in this volume, pp. 312–320.

24. We decided not to use the item “Jews have too much influence on US foreign policy”, since the significantly higher approval rate compared to the other items indicates that many respondents perceived it more as a matter of political opinion rather than a negative verdict on Jews.

25. To give an example: to get at least 4 points on the index, one has to agree either to 2 items “completely”, or to one item “completely” and to two items “rather well”, or to four items “rather well”.

with 28.9% the Muslims range much more often among the high scorers compared to the general population, with only 8.3%.<sup>26</sup>



**FIGURE 7.8.** Opinions on stereotypes of Muslims (Percent. Population and Jewish samples)<sup>27</sup>

26. For the building of this index, see Ottar Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway”, Section 3.3, chapter 4 in this volume.

27. In this case the population sample is N = 1,562. See footnote 6. Due to a sampling error, this question was only asked of 103 respondents in the Jewish sample.



Turning to the list of statements about Muslims, we can see that in this case the general population agrees more often to the negative statements and less often to the positive ones than the Jewish respondents. But both groups agree more often to the Islamophobic prejudices compared to the prevalence of anti-Jewish prejudices among the general population and the Muslims. Since the scales of prejudice against Jews and Muslims consist of different items, one cannot, of course, compare the results directly. Nevertheless, in this case one can at least say that they point in the same direction as the emotional rejection and social distance, which are higher with respect to Muslims than to Jews.

Looking at the eight negative statements, one can see that the general population and the Jews differ most in those statements, which formulate doubts about the ability or the will of Muslims to adhere or to integrate into Western society and in particular into Norwegian culture and society, while both groups are closer together in statements dealing with Muslim violence, the oppression of women and the fear that Islam might want to take over Europe.<sup>28</sup> The reason why Jews believe in the ability of Muslims to integrate more often than the general population lies probably in the historical experience of the Jews, whose ability to integrate and belong to European society had similarly been doubted for a long time. The very high education level among the Jewish sample may also have exerted an influence here.

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28. The approval of Jews to fearing that Muslims want to take power in Europe is a rather surprising since Jews have long faced similar conspiracy accusations. See also Asbjørn Dyrendal, Conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims in Norway (in this volume).

**TABLE 7.2.** Percent. who find that the statements fit rather well or completely with own opinion<sup>29</sup>

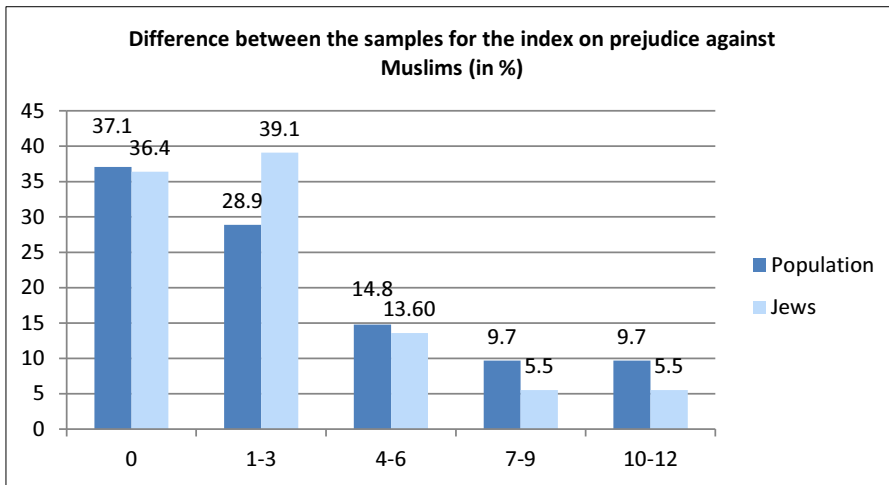
	<b>General population</b>	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture	40	23	17
Muslims do not fit into modern Western society	36	21	15
Muslims do not want to integrate into Norwegian society	42	27	15
Muslims have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment	48	35	13
Muslims consider themselves morally superior to others	46	36	13
Muslims oppress women	69	59	10
Muslims want to take over Europe	31	22	9
Muslims are more violent than others	29	26	3

Out of these eight negative statements, six were chosen for the construction of a “Prejudice against Muslims index”.<sup>30</sup>

Prejudices against Muslims are less widespread among Jews than among the general population, which may be due to the higher level of education of the Jewish respondents and possibly also to a form of minority solidarity (see section 3). While 34.1% of the general population are among the high scorers (4–12), there are only 24.6% scoring high among the Jewish respondents. In case of the anti-Muslim prejudice, the general population and the Jews differ less (9.5 percentage points) compared to the situation concerning prejudice against Jews, where the

29. In this case, the population sample is N = 1,562. See footnote 6. Due to a sampling error only 110 of the total Jewish sample were asked this question, which was answered by 103 respondents (7 missings).

30. We left out the items on integration into Norwegian society because two others items (threat to Norwegian culture, fit into Western society) measured quite similar things, and we left out the item “Muslim oppress women”, which received the highest percentage of approval. The high level of approval may be an indicator that the respondents evaluate this as a kind of common knowledge with a certain basis in reality. For the building of the “prejudice against Muslims index”, see chapter 4 by Ottar Hellevik in this volume.



**FIGURE 7.9.** Index on prejudice against Muslims (Percent. Population and Jewish samples)

difference between the population and the Muslim sample is 20.6 percentage points. When we compare the number of high scorers in both minorities, i.e. those harbouring prejudice against the other group, the difference is clear (6.1 percentage points), but not as large as one may have expected given the focus of public discussion on the danger of antisemitism among Muslims.<sup>31</sup>

In a last step, we build combined indexes of antisemitism and Islamophobia by linking up the three indexes we build to measure dislike, social distance and prejudice.<sup>32</sup>

When the cut-off point is determined between 1 and 2 points between low and high scorers, one gets not only a small proportion of high scorers among the population (5.4%), but also among the Muslims (6.9%), while there is a quite large difference when choosing a cut-off point between 0 and 1 point (13.3% compared to 34.5%). The lower difference between the general population and the Muslims on the surveys combined index on antisemitism is due to the fact that in the other dimensions of prejudice, “dislike” and “social distance”, both samples show more similar results. Therefore, one can say that antisemitic ideas are quite widespread, especially among the Muslims, but that the number of hard-core antisemitic respondents is rather small.

31. A problem here is rather the small Jewish sample, because of a sampling error only 110 of the total Jewish sample were asked this question, which was answered by 103 respondents (7 missings).

32. For the construction of combined indexes on antisemitism and on Islamophobia, see Ottar Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway”, section 3.4 and 4.4.

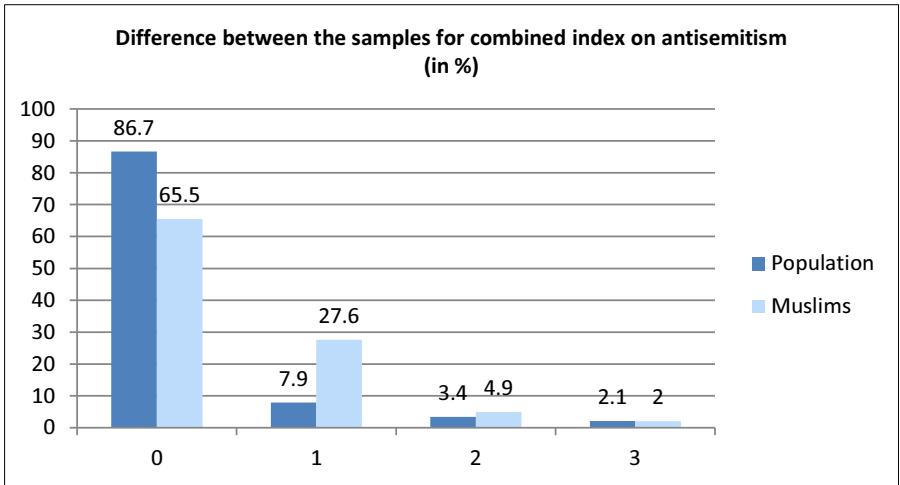


FIGURE 7.10. Combined index on antisemitism (Percent. Population and Muslim sample)

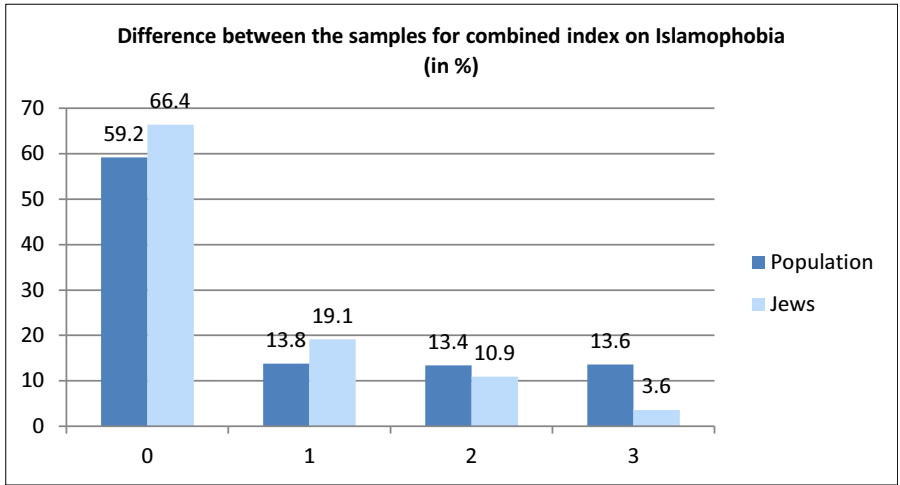


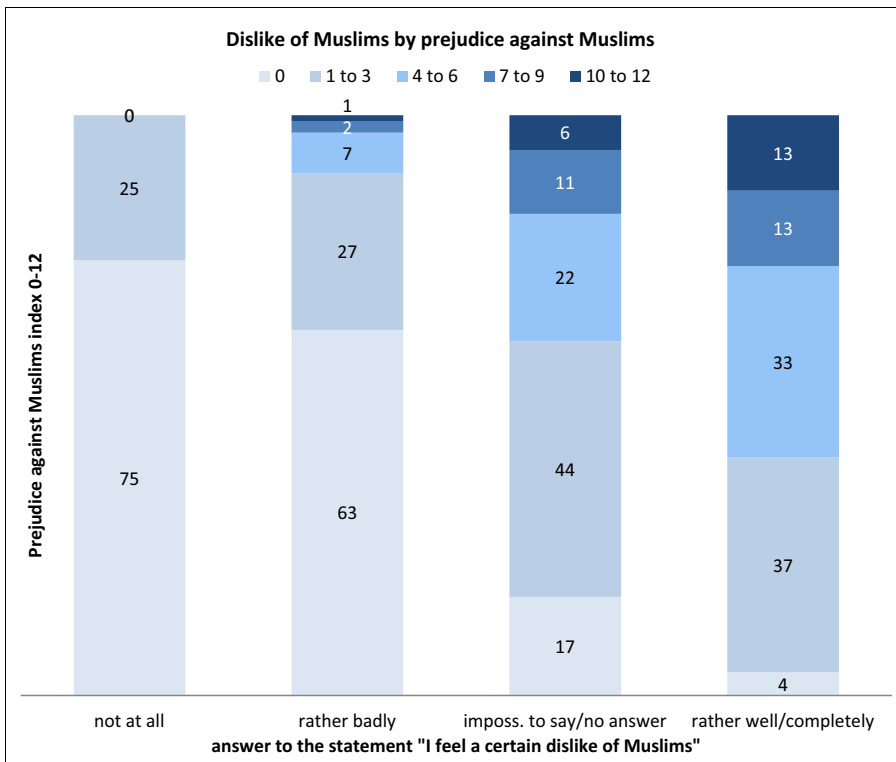
FIGURE 7.11. Combined index on Islamophobia (Percent. Population and Jewish sample)<sup>33</sup>

The picture is not as good when we look at the combined index on Islamophobia, where we count a much higher proportion of respondents who are among the hard-core Islamophobes – despite the low approval on the dislike dimension and the

33. In this case the population sample is N=1,562. See footnote 6. Due to a sampling error, this question was only asked of 110 respondents in the Jewish sample.

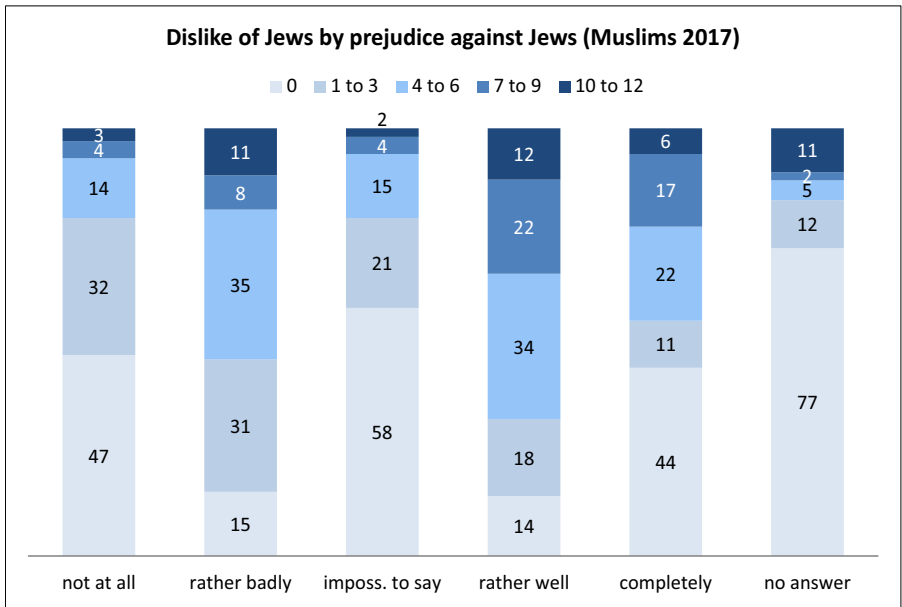
social distance dimension. This holds true for both samples, although we find the high-scorers twice as often among the general population (27%) as among the Jews (14.5%). One has to keep in mind that both indexes (of prejudices against Jews and against Muslims) consist of different statements, so the results cannot be compared one to one. Nevertheless, negative attitudes are much more prevalent towards Muslims than towards Jews.

One can assume that an emotional rejection (dislike) of a group will be closely connected with negative opinions towards them. But given the clearly smaller proportion of those who declared having a certain dislike of Jews or Muslims compared to those agreeing to one or more antisemitic or Islamophobic statements, both dimensions of prejudice seem only partly to overlap.



**FIGURE 7.12.** Dislike of Muslims by Prejudice against Muslims (Percent. Jewish sample)

Jews N=110: 28 – 41 – 18 – 23 (because of very small N for “completely” (N=3) the option is summed up with “rather small”; the option “no answer” (N=4) is summed up with “impossible to say”).



**FIGURE 7.13.** Dislike of Jews by prejudice against Jews (Percent. Muslim sample)  
N=586: 210 – 74 – 215 – 42 – 13 – 32 (The unexpected result for “completely” may be due to low N)

The Jewish respondents answered on both dimensions of prejudice in a coherent way. Those who score low on the “dislike” statement also rank low on the prejudice index (0 to 3 points), and a clear majority of those who agree to the statement rank high in the prejudice index (4–12).

For the Muslim respondents, the emotional and the cognitive dimensions of antisemitism seem not to be very closely connected. Of those who dislike Jews “completely”, 46% don’t agree to any antisemitic statement and another 8% rank low on the prejudice index, while 20% of those who agree “not at all” to the “dislike” statement score high on the prejudice index, and even the majority of those who answered “rather badly” does so. There is also an interesting difference between the samples concerning those who chose the “impossible to say” option: while among the Jewish respondents they rank in the middle between the “likers” and “dislikers” and show a tendency to score high on the prejudice index compared with the “likers”, the Muslim respondents who chose the option “impossible to say” tend more to the “likers”, yet score zero even more often on the prejudice scale than those agreeing “not at all” to the “dislike” statement. Therefore, we can say that the correlation between the emotional and the cognitive dimension of prejudices differs greatly between the two groups.

An important question for the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Norway concerns the attitude towards the Holocaust, whereby here, too, the attitude of the Norwegian population as a benchmark is important. On the subject, three questions were included in our survey.

**TABLE 7.3.** How well do these statements fit with you own opinion?

		<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Rather badly</b>	<b>Impossible to answer</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Rather well</b>	<b>Completely</b>	<b>Total</b>
Jews exploit the Holocaust for their own purposes	Population	20.2	29.6	27.7	0.1	16.8	5.6	100
	Muslims	10.1	12.5	33.8	13.8	15.9	13.8	100
	Jews	72.6	16.9	4.8	2.4	2.4	0.8	100
Because of the Holocaust Jews today are entitled to their own state where they can seek protection from persecution	Population	13.2	17.9	35.5	0,1	22.9	10.4	100
	Muslims	11.9	10.9	33.7	13.5	16.3	13.6	100
	Jews	6.5	16.9	12.9	2.4	20.2	41.1	100
Knowledge about the Holocaust is important for preventing the oppression of minorities today	Population	0.7	2.5	8.9	0,1	31.4	56.4	100
	Muslims	3.6	4.0	21.9	13.9	19.8	36.7	100
	Jews	0.8	0.8	1.6	2.4	13.7	80.6	100

Population N= 1,535; Muslims N=476 (only those respondents that have heard about the Holocaust); Jews N=124

First, it is important to note that the Muslim respondents have frequently chosen the options “impossible to answer” and “no response”. Muslim respondents who have never heard of the Holocaust (25.6% compared with only 2.2% of the general population) are omitted from the sample; another 8.3% were not sure, and 2.5% did not respond. Only 63.7% have heard about it compared with 95.7% of the general population.

It is no surprise that Jewish respondents almost completely disagree that Jews exploit the Holocaust (89.5%), and almost all of them consider the knowledge of the Holocaust an important means of prevention the oppression of minorities (94.3%). Half of the Muslim respondents cannot answer the question of whether Jews exploit the Holocaust; after all, almost a third (29.7%) agrees here, while only 22.6% reject this allegation, compared with half the Norwegian population. Nevertheless, a quarter of the latter cannot answer the question, while 22.4% agree to the allegation of exploitation too. Especially among Muslim respondents, this opinion may be based on the general view that in Norway and other Western

countries, Jewish victims of the past are acknowledged more than Muslims in the present (Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, etc.). Muslims see themselves in a kind of victims' rivalry with Jews. The impression that as an obligation from the consequences of the Holocaust, the United States especially, but also Western European states tend to support the side of Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or, for example, do not sufficiently criticise its settlement policy, may also play a role here.

Concerning the question about the importance of knowing about the Holocaust, almost none in the three samples contest the assumption that this would help in preventing oppression of minorities. However, while a large majority of the Jews and the general population is convinced that the knowledge of the Holocaust is a suitable means of prevention, the Muslim respondents are less likely to believe it. Concerning the question of whether Jews today are entitled to their own state because of the Holocaust, there are no clear-cut answers in either group; even 38.9% of the Jewish sample disagree or cannot answer the question. It is, however, likely that there are different reasons for this refusal. While Jews may feel they have a right to their own state regardless of the Holocaust, Muslims and a part of the general population could contest that Jews are entitled to their own state in spite of the Holocaust. This may be especially true of those who agree with the statement that there "can be no peace as long as the State of Israel exists" (25% of the Muslim sample, 21% of the general population). In the face of the conflict over land between Israelis and Palestinians, it is surprising that Muslims reject this opinion less frequently than the general population and agree with it as often as the population. Both among the Muslims and among the general population, it is striking that a large proportion cannot answer this question, or did not answer.

Overall, the opinions on Holocaust-related issues are clearly divergent between the Muslim and the Jewish sample, with the population taking a middle position that is, nevertheless, closer to Muslims than to Jews – with the exception of the item about the importance of knowledge about the Holocaust for the prevention of racism.

### 3. THE RELATIONSHIP AND EXPERIENCES OF JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORWAY

As we have seen, antipathy and social distance between Jews and Muslims in Norway are not very widespread, despite the existence of mutual prejudice. It is therefore not surprising that a large majority in both groups, as minorities in the country, want to cooperate in the fight against prejudice and discrimination. Only a



small minority in both groups does not believe that Jews and Muslims can cooperate in this respect.

**TABLE 7.4.** Do you think that Muslims and Jews can cooperate on combating prejudice and discrimination? (Percent. Muslim and Jewish samples)

	Yes	Don't wish to answer/ no response	Don't know	No	Total
Muslims	69.5	6.6	19.6	4.1	100
Jews	81.5	2.4	7.4	8.6	100

**TABLE 7.5.** Do you think that Muslims and Jews as minorities in Norway have any common experiences? (Percent. Muslim and Jewish samples)

	Yes	Don't wish to answer/ no response	Don't know	No	Total
Muslims	48.1	6.3	39.6	5.8	100
Jews	74.7	3.1	4.9	17.3	100

The distribution of the answers in Tables 7.4 and 7.5 reveal the same pattern. A majority sees the possibility for cooperation based in common experiences as religious minorities. Jews are here more often optimistic than Muslims, although their proportion is also a little bit larger among those who disagree with both statements. The high proportion of those who do not answer or respond “don’t know” is quite large among Muslim respondents (26.4% and 46.2%). The reason could be that the Jewish community in Norway is very small so that the respondents never came into contact with Jews or do not feel well informed about activities of the Jewish community, but it could also be grounded in the fact that Muslims do not want to be associated with the Jews as a “persecuted minority”.

Do the attitudes towards the other group have an influence on the answers to the question of common experiences? In the case of the Jews, a clear relation can be seen between the answers to this question and the level of Islamophobia, measured by the combined index on Islamophobia. Because of the small Jewish sample (N=103) the distribution has a certain amount of contingency, but what can be said is that a large majority of those who harbour no prejudice against Muslims (point 0 – 81%) see common experiences with the Muslim community,

while only very few (9%) do not see it. Those who show at least some degree of Islamophobia, and especially those scoring at the top (point 3 – 75%) contest much more often that Jews and Muslims have any common experience as minorities.

The answers of the Muslim respondents (N=586) to this question differ from those of the Jewish respondents. What is most significant in comparison with the Jewish sample is the high proportion of those who say they do not know or give no response (ranging from 27% to 49%) – regardless of their attitude towards Jews. Obviously, part of the Muslim population in Norway does not know much about the Jewish community and therefore cannot say anything about common experiences (lack of contact) or they are accustomed to thinking here in different categories (victim rivalry), so that the idea of similarities seems unusual. In contrast to the distribution of responses in the Jewish sample, about half of the Muslim interviewees, regardless of whether they have an antisemitic attitude or not, also see common ground between the experiences of Jews and Muslims. As expected, the proportion of those who deny this increases with the strength of prejudices against Jews (from 2% at 0 points on the combined index on Antisemitism via 11% and 23% to 27% reaching 3 points on the index).

An important point for the readiness to cooperate concerns the question of equal treatment of both groups. In this case, a majority of the respondents of both samples seem to have no clear idea about how the authorities treat the other group.

**TABLE 7.6.** Do you think that Norwegian authorities treat Muslims and Jews equally? (Percent. Muslim and Jewish samples)

	Yes	No response	Don't know	No, they treat Jews better	No, they treat Muslims better	Total
Muslims	27.6	18.9	32.0	21.3	0.1	100
Jews	22.2	7.4	46.3	7.4	16.7	100

Only about a quarter in both groups presumes an equal treatment by the Norwegian authorities, and each group believes the other would be treated better, while large parts do not respond or choose “don’t know”. Almost no respondent in the Muslim sample sees a better treatment of their own group. This judgement may be based on real experiences. Muslims more often have the feeling that they are treated unfairly compared with the Jewish respondents (see Table 7.7). While an Islamophobic attitude has no significant influence on the judgement of Jewish

respondents concerning equal treatment,<sup>34</sup> Muslim respondents with antisemitic attitudes see a preference for Jews.<sup>35</sup>

**TABLE 7.7.** Do you feel that you have been treated unfairly by Norwegian public institutions?

	Yes	Not sure	No response	No	Total
Muslims	14.6	16.9	2.4	66.1	100
Jews	6.8	5.6	0	87.7	100

(Labour and Social Work (NAV), school, health service, police) because of your religious affiliation?  
(Percent. Muslim and Jewish samples)

This difference only occurs when we ask about unfair treatment by public institutions, but it obviously does not apply to the behaviour of the general population. In this case, the answers of the respondents of both groups are quite similar. When asked if they “have been made to feel that they don’t belong in Norwegian society in the past 12 months” and “if anyone behaved negatively towards them in Norwegian society in the past 12 months”, Jewish respondents agree here a little bit less often (18.5% to 26.7%) than Muslim respondents (26.9% to 35.5%), but the differences are quite small. We find the same pattern in the answers to the question if “one had experiences of harassment in Norway in the past 12 months because of one’s religious affiliation”; 14.2% of the Muslims and 11.1% of the Jews choose the option “often/sometimes”.

**TABLE 7.8.** Do you ever avoid showing your religious affiliation out of fear of negative attitudes? (Percent. Muslim and Jewish samples)

	Yes	No response	No	Total
Muslims	26.0	2.1	71.8	100
Jews	63.6	0.0	36.4	100

Although members of both minorities state having experienced harassment because of their religious affiliation, both groups react quite differently. Jews

34. This may partly be due to the small sample, since 67% of the high scorers (3 on the combined Index on Islamophobia) see a better treatment of the Muslims, but in that category we find only three respondents. Therefore, we cannot make a statistically assured statement.

35. The proportion that agrees here increases from 15% scoring zero on the antisemitism index to 44.8% scoring 2, and even 66.0% scoring 3.

much more often avoid showing their religious affiliation than Muslims, although they declare having experienced unfair treatment and harassment less often than Muslims. In our report we try to explain this as a manifestation of the minorities’ different historical experiences, “where the Jews in Europe have often kept a low profile so as to avoid persecution”, while for Muslims as a more visible and numerous group it may be “less relevant ... to avoid showing their religious affiliation”,<sup>36</sup> as some were accustomed to from their countries of origin.

**TABLE 7.9.** How widespread do you think negative attitudes towards Muslims are in Norway today?

	Very wide-spread	Fairly wide-spread	Impossible to answer	No response	Not very wide-spread	Not wide-spread at all	Total
Population	16.5	64.3	4.7	0.0	14.0	0.5	100
Muslims	18.1	34,2	19.0	3.1	20.5	5.2	100
Jews	8.7	71.8	6.8	1.0	11.7	0.0	100

Population: N=1,568; Muslims N= 387; Jews N=103

The evaluation of how widespread negative attitudes toward Muslims are differs between the general population and the Jews on the one hand, and the evaluation of the Muslims on the other. While among the former about 80% believe those attitudes are “very” or “fairly widespread”, only about half of the Muslims do so, and for another fifth the question is “impossible to answer”. On the other hand, almost two-thirds of the Muslim sample (63%) believe that negative attitudes toward them have become more widespread in the past five years.<sup>37</sup> The opinion on this matter among the population is slightly influenced by the degree of Islamophobia: those scoring high on the combined index on Islamophobia see negative attitudes as more widespread than those scoring low on the index. This is not the case for the Jewish respondents.

36. Hoffmann and Moe eds., *Attitudes Towards Jews and Muslims*, 75.

37. Due to a sampling error, this question was only answered by 18 respondents of the population sample.

**TABLE 7.10.** How widespread do you think negative attitudes towards Jews are in Norway today? (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)<sup>38</sup>

	<b>Very wide-spread</b>	<b>Fairly wide-spread</b>	<b>Impossible to answer</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Not very wide-spread</b>	<b>Not wide-spread at all</b>	<b>Total</b>
Population	2.4	16.9	11.8	0.0	58.8	10.1	100
Muslims	1.7	8.0	37.1	0.4	34.3	18.6	100

The response pattern concerning the spread of antisemitism in Norway is quite different from the pattern regarding the spread of Islamophobia; neither the population nor the Muslims see negative attitudes towards Jews as very widespread, while the few Jewish respondents see such attitudes as very or fairly widespread.

Although one cannot make reliable statements about the distribution of opinions among Jews in Norway because of the small number of respondents, surveys among Jews in a number of European countries suggest that Jews perceive antisemitism to be very widespread and increasing.<sup>39</sup> This is also supported by the fact that 69.4% of Jews in Norway believe that antisemitism has spread more widely in the last five years (25.0% say as widespread as before; 4.8% say less widespread than before).

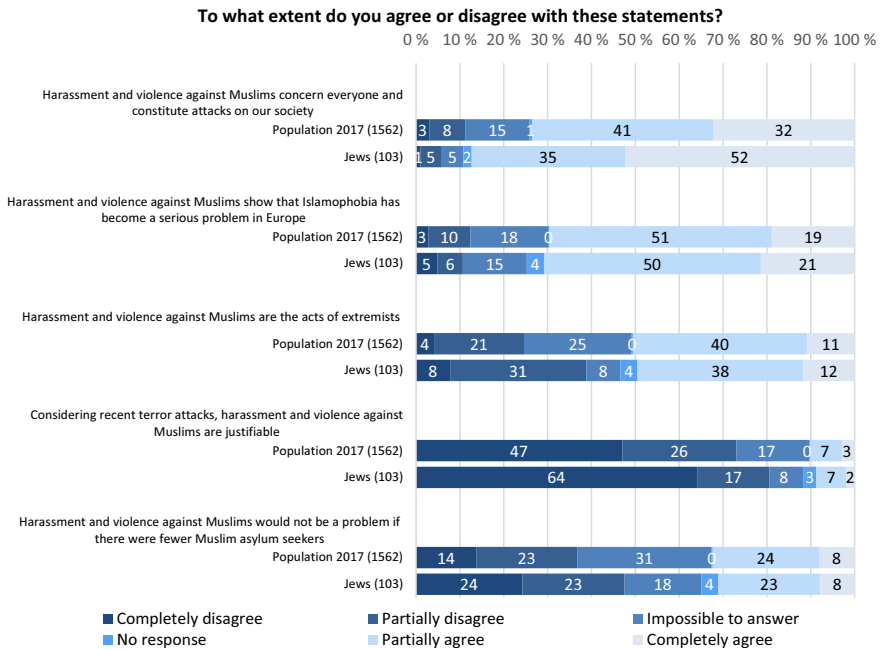
Jews and Muslims were also asked if it was necessary to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway. Since Muslims are less likely than the general population and Norwegian Jews to think that Islamophobia is very widespread in Norway, they are also less likely to agree to the need to combat Islamophobia than the general population (54.3% to 56.0%), and even less than the Jews (67.2%).

38. Due to a sampling error, this question was only answered by 20 Jewish respondents (of them, 58% see antisemitism as very or fairly widespread, while 30% see it as not very widespread); we cannot make a statistically assured statement here.

39. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Discrimination and Hate Crime*. In a recent study, 89% of Jewish respondents in 12 EU Member States agreed to the statement that the level of antisemitism has increased a lot or a little in the last five years since the first study. See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*, Figure 7.2.

#### 4. VIEWS ON HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THE OTHER GROUP

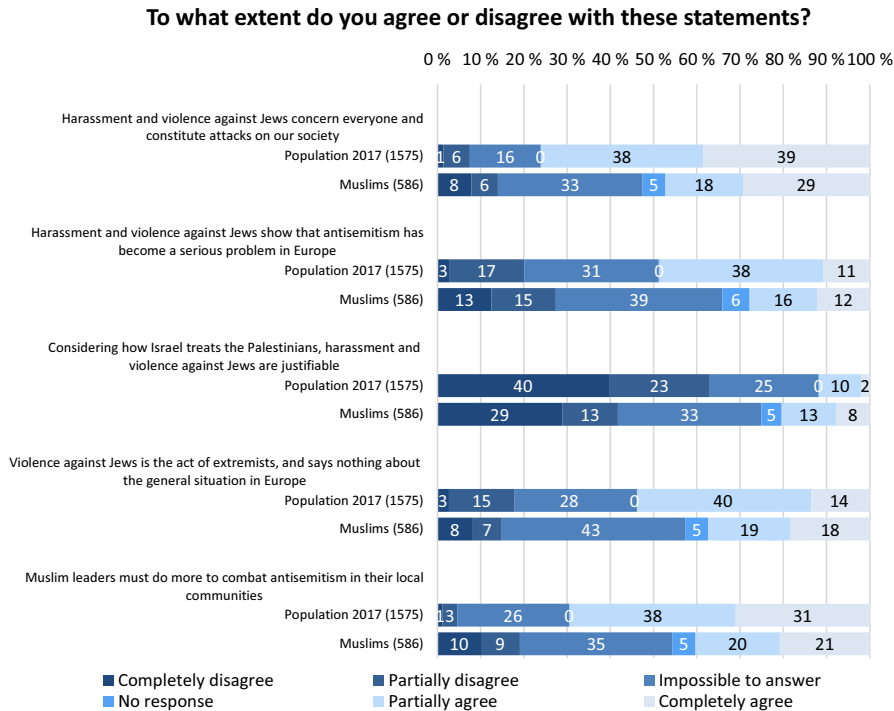
Antisemitism and Islamophobia are not just attitudes, but manifest themselves also in harassment and even violence against members of the Jewish and Muslim populations. In the 2017 study we used five items for each group to measure the attitudes of the three samples toward this topic.



**FIGURE 7.14.** Views on harassment and violence against Muslims (Percent. Population and Jewish sample)<sup>40</sup>

Figure 7.14 shows that the distribution of the answers given by Jews and the general population concerning harassment and violence against Muslims are quite similarly distributed. A large majority of both samples agrees that violence and harassment against Muslims show that Islamophobia has become a serious problem in Europe, and both ascribe these acts to extremists. Both also disagree that terror attacks justify harassment and violence against Muslims; only 10% of the population and 9% of the Jewish sample agree here. But one-third of the popula-

40. In this case, the population sample is N = 1,562; see footnote 6. Due to a sampling error, this question was only asked of 110 respondents in the Jewish sample.



**FIGURE 7.15.** Views on harassment and violence against Jews (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)

tion and the Jewish samples agree that there is a connection between the number of Muslim asylum seekers and the problem of violence against Muslims, i.e., the immigration of Muslims to Norway is seen as a causal factor in this respect.

By contrast, figure 7.15 shows quite clear differences between the distribution of answers given by Muslims and by the general population. Muslims clearly agree less often that harassment and violence against Jews concern everyone and constitute an attack on “our society”, that they are an indication of strong antisemitism, or that Muslim leaders must do more to combat antisemitism in their local communities. This is partly due to the fact that a large part of the Muslim respondents chose the option “impossible to say” or did not answer the question. Correspondingly, if one looks at those who disagree to the above-mentioned statements, Muslim respondents differ a little less from the general population. This may be an indication that the parts of the Muslim population who have not lived in Norway for long are unfamiliar with these issues and have not formed a clear opinion yet (as can also be seen in the distribution of their answers to other items of the study).

In the following, I will investigate what these results tell us about the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Norway. For Jews who have a long history of harassment and violence in Europe, the attack on a minority is a warning sign that should concern everyone, and is not only seen as a problem of the affected group because it may spill over to other minorities. Muslims see these attacks less often as something that concerns the whole society, to which some of them as immigrants may not feel yet closely related. The answer to the question “Muslim leaders must do more to combat antisemitism in their local communities”, is supported by a clear majority of the population (69%),<sup>41</sup> but is seen as necessary by only 41% of the Muslims. Accordingly, 19% disagree (compared to 4% of the population) or were not able to give an answer (40%). It may be that the latter either do not see antisemitism as being widespread among them, or they do not support this demand because they have experienced that the Muslims are implicitly given the primary responsibility for antisemitic violence.

A third dimension of prejudice is called conative or behavioural, meaning the behavioural tendencies of a person toward a particular object, such as acceptance and readiness to help, but also withdrawal and aggression (for example, the readiness to use or excuse violence against an individual group). Of course, there is no direct and unambiguous connection between the existence of a cognitive and emotional prejudice with violence, because many other factors come into play (psychological dispositions, cultural context, situational factors etc.).<sup>42</sup> Readiness to use or excuse violence takes us, as Daniel Staetsky has phrased it, “metaphorically ‘half-way’ between attitudes and behaviour, and somewhat closer to an empirical assessment of the potential for violence”.<sup>43</sup> The question is, do antisemitic or anti-Muslim attitudes coincide with legitimisation of violence against Jews or Muslims?<sup>44</sup>

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41. This question is unfortunately not posed to the Jewish respondents, but we can expect that a large majority of them would have also supported this demand.

42. Howard Schuman and Michael P. Johnson, “Attitudes and Behavior”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 2 (1976): 161–207; Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson, 1980).

43. L. 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), 39.

44. Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, “The influence of attitudes on behavior”. In *Handbook of attitudes and attitude change*, edited by Dolores Albarracín, B.T. Johnson and M.P. Zanna (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 2005), 173–221; Laura R. Glasman and Dolores Albarracín, “Forming Attitudes that Predict Future Behavior: A Meta-Analysis of the Attitude-Behavior-Relation”, *Psychological Bulletin*, 123, no. 5 (2006): 778–822. For this relationship among the general population, see my chapter “Counting Antisemites versus Measuring Antisemitism – An “Elastic View” of Antisemitism”.



In the CHM survey, the readiness to justify harassment or violence against Jews is measured by asking “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable” (12% of the population and 21% of the Muslims agree). Here a higher percentage of Muslims agree, which is partly influenced by the connection that the statement formulates between the violence against Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which some Muslim countries, as neighbours of Israel, are much more involved than Norway.<sup>45</sup> It may also be that both groups generally have different ideas about violence. Norwegians generally do not consider violence and harassment justified.

The other way around, the readiness to justify harassment and violence against Muslims is measured by asking the population and the Jews “Considering recent terror attacks, harassment and violence against Muslims are justifiable” (10% of the population and 9% of the Jews agree here).

One can now ask how the justification of harassment and violence against the other group is related to prejudices against the other group. For this purpose we have crossed the two questions “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable” and “Considering recent terror attacks, harassment and violence against Muslims are justifiable” respectively with the index on Antisemitism and with the index on Islamophobia. We consider here only those whose opinions fit with these statements “completely and rather well”. In both cases, justifying harassment and violence against Muslims and against Jews, there is a steady increase from point 0 to point 3 on the index of Islamophobia/on the index on Antisemitism for the population sample as well as for both minority samples (the fact that the pattern differs somewhat in the case of the Jewish respondents (high scorers: 2 and 3 on the index) is due to the small number of respondents in the Jewish sample (N=110), especially among the high-scorers (N=16). The general trend remains nonetheless.<sup>46</sup> This means that the proportion of respondents who consider harassment and violence against another group justifiable increases steadily with an increase in antisemitic or Islamophobic attitudes. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a correlation between the strength of antisemitic or Islamophobic attitudes and the justification of violence against Jews or Muslims.

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45. The readiness to justify harassment or violence against Jews is measured by asking “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable”. This operationalisation is, of course, somewhat problematic because of the connection with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although it is explicitly asked about violence against “Jews” and not against “Israelis”, it could also be understood as if it were about the use of violence by Palestinians against Israeli Jews in the context of the conflict, which some of the general population and the Muslim population may find more often justified than violence against Jews in general.

Although there is a clear correlation between prejudice and justification of violence, the figures (footnote 39) also show that a large majority of those considering harassment and violence against Jews as justifiable harbour no or only low levels of antisemitic prejudice. Looking at the absolute numbers, of the 183 interviewees among the population that consider harassment and violence against Jews justifiable, 146 (or 79.8%) are among the low scorers (scores 0 and 1) on the index on Antisemitism, while only 37 (20.2%) are among the high scorers (scores 2 and 3). Among the Muslim respondents, the ratio is similar: of the 122 respondents who believe that violence against Jews is justifiable, 102 (75.6%) are low scorers and 20 (24.4%) are high scorers.

In the case of Islamophobia, we find the opposite picture. Looking at the absolute numbers, of the 157 respondents who consider harassment and violence against Muslims to be justifiable, only 53 (or 33.7%) are among the low scorers on the index on Islamophobia, while 104 (66.3%) are high scorers.<sup>47</sup> Thus, a large majority of those who justify violence against Jews can do so without a decidedly antisemitic attitude,<sup>48</sup> while the majority of those who justify violence against Muslims also harbour an Islamophobic attitude. In other words, there is a closer connection between Islamophobia and justifying violence against Muslims. That one does not find such a close connection in the case of antisemitism and justifying violence against Jews may be partly due to the fact that the justification in this case is connected with the policy of Israel and so may be closer connected to an anti-Israel attitude than with an antisemitic attitude. Those who score high on the anti-Israel index (score 2) clearly hold harassment and violence against Jews more often to be justifiable than those who score low on anti-Israel sentiment (score 0 and 1 – see Table 7.11).

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46. “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable” by combined index on Antisemitism: Population: index 0: N=913; index 1: N=218; index 2: N=211; index 3: N=214 (total N=1556); Jews: index 0: N= 73; index 1: N=21; index 2: N=12; index 3: N= 4 (total N=110); “Considering recent terror attacks, harassment and violence against Muslims are justifiable” by combined index of Islamophobia: Population: index 0: N=1365; index 1: N=124; index 2: N=54; index 3: N=32 (total N=1,575); Muslims: index 0: N=392; index 1: N=165; index 2: N=30; index 3: N= 12 (total N=598).

47. The proportion of Jewish respondents who believe that violence against Muslims is justifiable (N=10) is too small (N=10) to make reliable statements, but the response distribution is similar to that in the total population.

48. Since the question is related to Israel's behaviour, it may be necessary to restrict the meaning of this result somewhat. Perhaps it should be discussed in light of the “new” forms of antisemitism related to Israel.

**TABLE 7.11.** “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable” (completely and rather well) by anti-Israel index (0–2)<sup>49</sup>

Group/Anti-Israel index (0–2)	0	1	2
Population	6.5	9.4	29.4
Muslims	10.0	14.8	39.1

Population N= 1,575; index 0: N=360; index 1: N=984; index 2: N=231

Muslims N= 598 (weighted sample); index 0: N= 78; index 1: N=367; index 2: N=153

One can also look at two other items in which a kind of justification of violence or persecution is mentioned. Among the items of the “Prejudice against Jews index”, we find the following statement: “Jews largely have themselves to blame for being persecuted” (see Figures 7.5 and 7.6), to which 8% of the population and 16% of the Muslim sample agree fully or somewhat. Among the list of stereotypic statements toward Muslims, we find a rather similar item: “Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment” (see Figure 7.8), to which a rather large part of the population (48%) and of the Jews (35%) agrees. Those who harbour antisemitic and/or anti-Israel prejudice blame Jews more often than those ranking low on the respective indices. While only 2% of those among the population scoring zero on the anti-Israel index agree, 26% of the high scorers do so. Among the Muslim respondents, 9% of the low scorers compared to 34% high scorers agree. Among those of the population who score high on the index on antisemitism (scores 2+3 N=86) 54.6% (N=47) are blaming Jews for being persecuted while only 5% (N=82) out of the low scorers (0+1, N=1,489) do so. Among the Muslim respondents, 61.9% (N=26) of those who score high on the combined antisemitism index (2+3; N=42) blame Jews, while only 13.4% (N=75) among the low scorers (N=557) do so. We find here a clear correlation between antisemitic attitudes and justifying persecution of Jews by putting the blame for this on the behaviour of the Jews themselves.<sup>50</sup>

49. We have to keep in mind here that the anti-Israel index is composed of two items, one of which deals with the same subject, namely treatment of the Palestinians by Israel (“Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly as the Jews were treated during World War II”), to which 32% of the population and even 50% of the Muslims agree completely or somewhat.

50. When using the combined Index on antisemitism, however, it must be pointed out that in this case the item “Jews have largely themselves to blame...” is at the same time a component of the Prejudice against Jews index and thus has an (albeit minor) influence on the correlation measured here.

Among those of the population who score high on the index on Islamophobia (scoring 2 and 3), as much as 92.4% blame Muslims for an increase in anti-Muslim harassment, and even 20% of the low scorers do so, which is quite a difference compared to the number of respondents who put the blame on the Jews. Among the Jewish respondents, we find almost the same distribution, but the number of Jewish respondents (N=16) is too small to make reliable statements here.<sup>51</sup> We can see an even higher correlation between Islamophobic attitudes and justifying harassment against Muslims by putting the blame for this on the behaviour of the Muslims themselves, compared to the blaming of Jews for being persecuted.<sup>52</sup>

This result may reflect in part the greater rejection of Muslims, who are more often perceived as a threat to Western societies, but this is also partly due to the choice of words, as in the case of the Jews there is talk of persecution, whereas in the case of the Muslims it is harassment that is spoken of. Especially against the background of the Holocaust, blaming of Jews could be considered particularly problematic.

Both minorities are affected by discrimination and harassment; this would be an area where cooperation would be useful. That's why we asked in the study what the opinion on combating anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment is.

**TABLE 7.12.** Do you see a need to do something to combat anti-Jewish harassment in Norway? (Percent. Population and Muslim samples)<sup>53</sup>

	Yes	No opinion	No response	No	Total
Population	40.7	31.2	0.0	28.1	100
Muslims	27.8	48.4	3.6	20.3	100

51. 93.7% (N=15) of those Jewish respondents who score high on the combined index on Islamophobia (scoring 2 and 3) blame Muslims, while 14.6% (N=13) among the low scorers do so.

52. When using the combined index on Islamophobia, however, it must again be pointed out that in this case the item “Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment” is at the same time a component of the Prejudice against Muslims index and thus has an (albeit minor) influence on the correlation measured here.

53. Due to a sampling error, this question was only asked of 20 respondents in the Jewish sample, so the number of Jewish respondents is too small to get reliable data, but the responses were as expected: 90.0% answered “Yes”, another 10.0% chose “no response”.

**TABLE 7.13.** Do you see a need to do something to combat anti-Muslim harassment in Norway?

	Yes	No opinion	No response	No	Total
Population	56.1	26.1	0.1	17.7	100
Muslims	54.4	26.9	3.8	14.9	100
Jews	67.0	24.3	1.0	7.8	100

Population N= 1,575; Muslims N= 387; Jews N=103

The responses to these questions seem to mirror the opinion about how widespread the respondents of all three samples consider antisemitism and Islamophobia to be distributed in Norwegian society (see Tables 7.9 and 7.10). Accordingly, the general population and the Muslims are less likely to see the need to fight anti-Jewish harassment than harassment directed against Muslims. The fact that Jews almost all consider the fight against anti-Jewish harassment necessary corresponds to the expectation, since Jews have a long history of fighting against antisemitism in whatever form it appeared.<sup>54</sup> This experience, connected with an above-average level of education, is presumably also the reason why Jews more often also consider a need to combat anti-Muslim harassment than the population and even the Muslims themselves, since they know from history that each form of anti-minority offence can spill over to them.

Among the Muslim respondents, there seems to be a great deal of ignorance or indifference to anti-Jewish harassment. This is even true for harassments against their own group, since almost half of them (45.6%) has no opinion, does not answer the question, or views a fight against harassment as unnecessary, which is even higher than among the Jewish respondents (32.1%). As far as cooperation between Jews and Muslims in the fight against attacks is concerned, there is a widespread awareness of the problem on the Jews' side, but not yet on the side of the Muslims.

54. One has to keep in mind here that in the question of harassment and violence there exists a special, asymmetrical situation, inasmuch as Jews in Europe often become the target of transgressions on the part of Muslims, whereas the reverse is not yet known. Qualitative interviews in the Norwegian report of 2017 reveal that "Jewish informants showed signs of ambivalence: on the one hand they feared the growth of antisemitism among Muslims and felt vulnerable to the aggression that could be directed at them. On the other hand, several Jewish informants conveyed that the presence of such a large minority helped to promote acceptance of diversity in Norwegian society" (Hoffmann and Moe eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 75).

## 5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT BY JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORWAY

Jews in many European countries have a deep emotional and religious attachment to Israel. Therefore, “negativity toward Israel expressed by non-Jews is likely to be a cause for significant concern and apprehension among many Jews.”<sup>55</sup> In the FRA Study and in a German study on “Jewish perspectives”, it becomes clear that a large majority of Jews evaluates the equating of Israeli politics toward the Palestinians to Nazis politics towards Jews, the support of the boycott of goods from Israel and a “distorted presentation of Israel’s politics in mass media” as an expression of an antisemitic attitude.<sup>56</sup> While only a part of Muslims in Norway come from the Middle East, many of them are likely to be supportive of the Palestinians, and accordingly show a rather negative attitude to the state of Israel and its policies towards the Palestinians. Accordingly, we can assume that the attitude to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a repercussion on the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Norway as well. This is clearly confirmed by the following table 7.14.

**TABLE 7.14.** People have conflicting views on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Which side do you support most?

	<b>Solely/ mostly Israel</b>	<b>To some extent Israel</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Impossi- ble to answer</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>To some extent Palestinians</b>	<b>Solely/ mostly Palestinians</b>	<b>Total</b>
Population	8.8	4.5	31.9	22.3	0.2	10.5	21.9	100
Muslims	2.9	0.4	17.3	15.5	4.7	7.2	52.0	100
Jews	65.9	13.5	5.3	14.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	100

Population N=1,575; Muslims N=598 (weighted sample); Jews N=170

It comes as no surprise that the Jews and Muslims in Norway clearly vote for their “own” party in the conflict. Most of all, Jews take sides with Israel and are less often undecided, while the attitude of the Muslims is less clear and one-third is undecided or unable to answer the question. In the population sample, there is

55. Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 27.

56. FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime*; FRA, *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*, 29, Table 5 (seen by Jews as antisemitic opinions: “Supports boycotts of Israel or Israelis” (82% agree); “Criticizes Israel” (38% agree) Andreas Hövermann, Silke Jensen, Andreas Zick, Julia Bernstein, Nathalie Perl and Inna Ramm, *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland*. Studie des Instituts für Konflikt und Gewaltforschung der Universität Bielefeld für den Unabhängigen Expertenkreis Antisemitismus, Bielefeld 2016, 12,16.

even a half that does not tend to either side or cannot answer the question. If the population takes sides, it does so especially for the Palestinians (32.3%): only a minority, 13.3%, sides with Israel.

The positioning in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is correlated with the emotional attitude, in this case dislike/antipathy towards Jews and Muslims. The influence can, of course, go both ways. Israel's policy may affect which side one supports, which again may lead to the dislike of Jews.

**TABLE 7.15.** "I have a certain dislike of Jews". How well does this statement fit with you own opinion?

Dislike /Position in Israeli-Palestinian conflict (%)	pro Israel		Neither/no response		pro Palestinian		Total N	
	Population	Muslims	Population	Muslims	Population	Muslims	Population	Muslims
Not at all/rather badly	15	4	54	31	31	65	1279	294
Impossible to say /no response	4	2	76	50	20	48	178	250
Completely/rather well	7	5	27	16	66	79	118	54

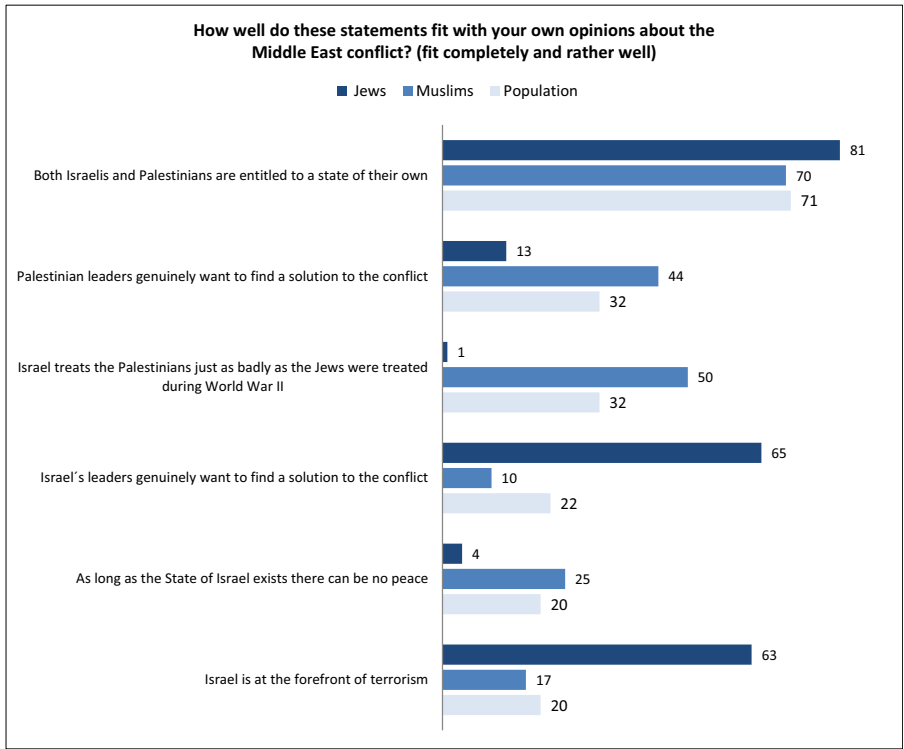
**TABLE 7.16.** "I have a certain dislike of Muslims". How well does this statement fit with your own opinion?

Dislike /Position in Israeli-Palestinian conflict (%)	pro Israel		Neither/no response		pro Palestinian		Total	
	Population	Jews	Population	Jews	Population	Jews	Population	Jews
Not at all/rather badly	9	75	49	22	42	3	873	69
Impossible to say /no response	8	83	69	17	23	0	229	18
Completely/rather well	24	100	57	0	19	0	473	23

Table 7.15 shows that the emotional attitude towards Jews plays only a minor role in taking side with Israel, since there is almost no difference between those who

dislike or like Jews or take a neutral position. Among the population, those who reject the dislike question are more often pro-Israel than those who dislike Jews or take a neutral position. What can be seen is that there is a clear correlation between dislike of Jews and taking side with the Palestinians: two-thirds of the population who dislike Jews chose this option compared to one-third of those who do not dislike Jews. Among the Muslims respondents, many take sides with the Palestinians regardless of whether they like Jews or not. The proportion of those 79% who profess to disliking Jews is not so different from the two-thirds (66%) who disagree to disliking Jews.

Concerning the emotional attitude of the population towards Muslims, the distribution in respect of taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is as expected. Those respondents who dislike Muslims are more likely to have a pro-Israeli attitude than those who are neutral or positive in this regard, while those who dislike Muslims less often side with the Palestinians compared to those who have a pos-



**FIGURE 7.16.** Opinions about the Middle East conflict (Percent. Population, Jewish and Muslim samples)

Jews N= 124



itive attitude towards Muslims – and vice versa. Those, however, who do not choose sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (which is more than half of the sample), do so largely regardless of their emotional attitude towards Muslims.

Concerning the emotional attitude of Jews towards Muslims, one can say that Jews side with Israel almost regardless of their feelings towards Muslims. While those who agree to the dislike item side totally with Israel, partisanship for Israel among those who reject the dislike item is a little lower, but even among them, only 3% choose the Palestinians' side and almost a quarter occupies a neutral position.

If we compare the positioning of the Norwegian Jews and Muslims in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is striking that both groups very rarely support "the other side", regardless of their emotional attitudes towards members of the other group. However, Muslims more often choose a neutral position in the conflict, whereas only a small proportion of the Jews occupy a neutral position. In both cases those who take a neutral position in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reject the "dislike" question or show a neutral attitude toward the other group.<sup>57</sup>

The two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the only question in which all three samples agree and in which there is also a high level of consensus. Jews have the clearest position in this question; they not only show the highest percentage of agreement, but also of disagreement (11% compared to 6% of the Muslims and the population), and only very few of them are unable to answer the question (8% compared to 20% of the Muslims and 25% of the population). It

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57. The hypothesis that Muslims from countries more involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Palestinians, Iraq, Iran) are less likely to take a neutral position than those who are less affected, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Pakistan or Somalia, cannot be confirmed for the Norwegian sample. The table of the country background on antisemitism for Muslim immigrants shows surprising results that differ completely from the results of the *ADL Global 100 study* (Anti-Defamation League, *Global 100. An Index of Anti-Semitism*, (New York: ADL, 2014 – <http://global100.adl.org/>) on antisemitism for their countries of origin. Immigrants from Iraq, Morocco and Palestine, countries in which the ADL study has determined values above 80% and even 90%, are on average in the Norwegian sample of values for all Muslims, while immigrants from countries that show a significantly lower level in the ADL Study have scores of antisemitism such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Pakistan at 21.5% and 11.8%, respectively, well above the average for all Muslim immigrants of 6.9%. See Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 103, Table 55. These findings contradict the results of a German survey, which confirms that Muslim migrants from Arab and North African countries and their descendants more often display antisemitic attitudes than do migrants from the Balkans, Afghanistan and Pakistan. See *Lebenswelten junger Muslime in Deutschland: Ein sozial- und medienwissenschaftliches System zur Analyse, Bewertung und Prävention islamistischer Radikalisierungsprozesse junger Menschen in Deutschland*, Abschlussbericht von Wolfgang Frindte, Klaus Boehnke, Henry Kreikenbaum, and Wolfgang Wagner (Berlin: Bundesministerium des Innern, 2011).

comes as no surprise that none/almost none of the Jewish respondents agree to the two statements accusing Israel of treating Palestinians as badly as Jews were treated during World War II and that the pure existence of Israel is an obstacle to peace, statements to which the Muslim respondents agree quite often (50% and 25%) and which also find resonance among the Norwegian population (33% and 21%). The other way around, Jews view Israel as a means for resolving the conflict with the Palestinians and in a leading role in fighting Islamist terrorism, a view shared only by few Muslims and respondents of the population. Correspondingly, Jews have little faith in the will of the Palestinian leaders for a peaceful solution of the conflict. As was to be expected, Jews and Muslims form contrary opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The answers make it clear once again that the respondents in the general population are more inclined to support the Palestinian side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

An index on anti-Israel attitudes is set up from the two negative statements “Israel treats the Palestinians just as badly as the Jews were treated in World War II” and “As long as Israel exists there will be no peace.” The index ranges from 0 to 8 and we set a cut-off point between 4 and 5 points on the scale in order to differentiate low from high scorers. Given this cut-off point, 38.9% of the Muslim respondents show a high level of anti-Israel attitudes, compared with 27.2% of the general population.<sup>58</sup>

First, we have to ask about the correlation between anti-Israel and antisemitic attitudes.<sup>59</sup> The correlation between the two is  $r = 0.32$  for the general population

58. See Ottar Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway”, section 7.

59. There are already some studies investigating the link between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes. Edgar H. Kaplan and Charles Small, “Anti-Israel sentiment predicts anti-Semitism in Europe”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no.4 (2006): 548–561, used the data of the ADL survey, *Attitudes toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Ten European Countries* (New York, 2004); for the British case, the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) between the antisemitic and the anti-Israel index is 0.48 (Staetsky, *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain*, 35, Footnote 24); for Germany, see the study by Aribert Heyder, Julia Iser and Peter Schmidt, “Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Meinungsbildung zwischen Öffentlichkeit, Medien und Tabus”, in *Deutsche Zustände, Folge 3*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2004) 144–165. For a discussion of these and some other studies (on Sweden and Switzerland), see Werner Bergmann, “Is there a ‘New European Antisemitism?’ Public Opinion and Comparative Empirical Research in Europe”, in *Politics and Resentment. Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union*, eds. Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 83–115, here 89ff.; for an early example, see also Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany. The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publ., 1997) Chapter: “Antizionism and Antisemitism”, 182–191. See also probably the most detailed study on this question by Wilhelm Kempf, *Israelkritik zwischen Antisemitismus und Menschenrechtsidee. Eine Spurensuche* (Berlin: Verlag Irena Regener, 2016).

and it is only marginally stronger for the Muslims with  $r = .37$ . Among the Muslim high-scorers on the anti-Israel index (5–8), 18.7% also score high on the combined antisemitism index (4–12), while the same is the case for only 5.3% of the population.<sup>60</sup> There is a certain overlap between the two attitudes among Muslims, but on the other hand, we have to keep in mind that 81.3% of the high scorers on the anti-Israel index do not harbour strong antisemitic attitudes, and even 94.7% of the population with an outspoken anti-Israel attitude do not score high on the combined antisemitism index. It is strange, however, that high scorers on the anti-Israel index, with 12.4%, are also high scorers on the Islamophobia index. In other words, a negative attitude towards Israel does not have to go hand in hand with a positive attitude towards Muslims.<sup>61</sup> This is due to the fact that both attitudes are an expression of xenophobia as a general background variable.<sup>62</sup>

If we look among the general population for the possible influence of Islamophobic attitudes regarding attitudes toward Israel and towards the Palestinians, we find only quite low positive correlations with a pro-Israel attitude ( $r = .12$ )<sup>63</sup> and also a quite low negative correlation with a pro-Palestinian position ( $r = -.18$ ).<sup>64</sup> We get another picture for the Jewish respondents. Here there is a higher positive correlation with pro-Israel attitudes ( $r = .36$ ), and a higher negative correlation with a pro-Palestinian attitude ( $r = -.28$ ).<sup>65</sup> However, an Islamophobic attitude exerts a stronger influence concerning partisanship in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here there is a negative correlation of  $-.32$  for the population, which is even more pronounced for the Jewish respondents, with  $-.42$ . An antisemitic attitude, measured by the combined index on antisemitism, exerts a smaller influence on the attitude towards the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the positive correlations for the population are  $.20$  for the general population and  $.25$  for the Muslim respondents. That leads to the conclusion that an Islamophobic attitude in both

60. The negative correlation between the combined antisemitism index with siding with Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also not very high ( $r = -.17$ ) for the general population, but also for the Muslim sample ( $r = -.12$ ). All correlations are significant on the  $<.001$  level.

61. This is also supported by the fact that the combined antisemitism index has no significant correlation ( $r = .06$ ) with a pro-Palestinian attitude in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the population sample, but the same holds true for the Muslim sample ( $0.9$ ).

62. Ottar Hellevik, "Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway", section 7.2.

63. See Fig. 16: Index build out of two statements: Israel is at the forefront of the war on Islamic terrorism; Israel's leaders genuinely want to find a solution to the conflict.

64. See Fig. 16: Index build out of two statements: Both the Israelis and the Palestinians are entitled to have a state of their own; Palestinian leaders genuinely want to find a solution to the conflict.

65. The correlations for the population sample are significant on the  $<.001$  level; for the Jewish the correlation of the Islamophobia index and a pro-Israel position is significant on the  $.001$  level; the negative correlation with a pro-Palestinian attitude is significant on the  $.05$  level.

the population and among Jewish respondents exerts a stronger influence in favour of taking sides with Israel than an antisemitic attitude does in the direction of taking sides with the Palestinians.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In order to better understand the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Norway, it makes sense to include the Norwegian population in general as *tertium comparationis*. This allows examining to what extent the minority samples share the views of the general Norwegian population.

Comparing the mutual prejudices between Jews and Muslims with those of the general Norwegian population towards both groups, then Jews show less emotional rejection and less negative stereotypes towards Muslims than the general population, while conversely Muslims are more likely to show an emotional rejection of Jews and agree clearly more frequently with antisemitic stereotypes than the general population.

On the other hand, if we compare both minorities, Jews and Muslims, directly, Jews are more likely to show an emotional and social rejection of Muslims than they themselves experience from the side of the Muslims. Jews and Muslims thus both seem to follow the attitudinal pattern of the majority population. As far as the spread of negative cognitive attitudes (prejudices) is concerned, Jews and Muslims agree with each other's prejudices to about the same degree.<sup>66</sup> An interesting, but not easily explicable finding is that, among Jews, the emotional and cognitive attitudes towards Muslims correspond to each other – that is, that the emotional rejection is associated with a higher approval of Islamophobic stereotypes – while the dimensions do not seem to be very closely connected among Muslim respondents.

Despite mutual prejudices, a majority of Jews and Muslims in the survey agrees that the minorities can co-operate in combating prejudice and insults. Jews who have the experience of a long history as a minority among other minorities in Europe are much more likely than Muslims to believe that the two minorities share common experiences. Perhaps the immigrant Muslim population may have little knowledge of the small Norwegian Jewish community and less experience of being a minority. Although large parts of the two minorities assume that they have

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66. On average, 27.1% of Jews agree with the six items of the “Index of Prejudice against Muslims” (Table 7.2), while on average, 28.5% of Muslims agree with the six items of the “Index of Prejudice against Jews” (Table 7.1).

shared experiences, only a quarter of them believe that they are treated equally by the Norwegian authorities. Muslims more often than Jews feel treated unfairly and more often experience harassment, but both groups react, however, very differently to these experiences. While Jews avoid showing their religious affiliation in the public, Muslims are much less likely to do so. This different reaction may be due to the fact that Jews, because of their long history of discrimination, are more likely to fear the spread of negative attitudes and violence towards them, but also towards other minorities, than groups who have not had the same experience so far. That is why it is not surprising that Jews and Muslims are also particularly different in their assessment of the spread of antisemitism and Islamophobia and the evaluation of harassment and violence against both groups. Since both minorities are affected by discrimination and harassment, we asked for the opinion of combating anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment. Among Muslim respondents, we find a great amount of indifference or ignorance concerning anti-Jewish harassment; surprisingly, this is also true for the harassment against their own group. The Jews show a greater attention to both, and see the need to combat anti-Muslim harassment even more often than the Muslims themselves. As far as cooperation between Jews and Muslims in the fight against discrimination and prejudice is concerned, there is an asymmetric distribution of attention between the two groups, which may be a certain obstacle to understanding the necessity for cooperation.

As for the behavioural dimension of prejudice, in the given context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and terrorism, Muslims more often than Jews consider harassment or violence against the other group as justifiable. While the Muslims differ from the general population in this respect, the general population and the Jews show the same amount of agreement in the question of harassment or violence against Muslims. This may partly be due to the fact that the justification of violence against Jews is not connected with the behaviour of Jews, but rather with the treatment of Palestinians by Israel. Thus, a large proportion of the Muslim respondents who justify violence against Jews does so without a decidedly antisemitic attitude, but may instead be motivated by a widespread anti-Israel attitude,<sup>67</sup> while in the question of violence against Muslims only a third of the Jews does so without a decidedly Islamophobic attitude.

One area where the attitudes of Muslims and Jews are expected to diverge widely is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where Jews are almost entirely on the

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67. 38.9% of the Muslim respondents show a high level of anti-Israel attitudes and even 50% agree to the statement that "Israel treats the Palestinians as badly as Jews were treated during World War II".

side of Israel and the Muslims are predominantly in favour of the Palestinians. Those among the Jewish and Muslim respondents who show a dislike of the other group more often take their “own” side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but overall, the emotional attitude to the other group does not make much of a difference concerning taking sides in the conflict. This does not apply to the general population, for whom the emotional attitude toward Jews or Muslims influences their partisanship in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Evidently, greater influence than the emotional dimension is exerted by the mutual prejudices, since for Islamophobia and antisemitism we find middle-range correlations with partisanship in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the respondents to all three samples.

If we look at the statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is only one major consensus between Jews, Muslims and the general population – namely that both Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own. On all other issues, Jews and Muslims are more or less distinct from each other, and the opinion of the general population is much closer to the opinion of the Muslims.

All in all, it can be said that Jews and Muslims in Norway see themselves as minorities exposed to discrimination on the part of the majority population, so that for parts of both groups there exists a willingness to cooperate, while on the other hand there are mutual prejudices and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular can be seen as a divisive factor.

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## 8.

## “Muslims Are...”

*Contextualising Survey Answers***CORA ALEXA DØVING**

**ABSTRACT** Negative stereotypes of Muslims are widespread in Norway: 34 per cent of the population displays marked prejudices against Muslims and 28 per cent also dislike and show hostility towards Muslims. The fact that these numbers are from a population survey and not from a survey conducted in established anti-Muslim milieus shows a disturbing degree of anti-Muslim attitudes among “ordinary Norwegians”. This chapter consists of an analysis of the answers to an open-ended question that was part of the population survey: “What do you think might be the reasons for existing negative attitudes to Muslims?” The findings are interpreted in light both of claims about Muslims found in the quantitative part of the survey and of different public discourses that took place the same year as the survey was conducted. I argue that the increase in anti-Muslim discourses that has developed at the margins of the public sphere cannot be understood as fully separated from the public mainstream, and that it has affected attitudes in the general population. The chapter also discusses whether the results from the survey can be explained by a lack of recognition of the racist elements in Islamophobia. Islamophobia is commonly understood as “fear of a Muslim takeover” or as something similar to a critique of Islam. This understanding has concealed the racist elements in Islamophobia: Would Islamophobic statements be met with stronger self-sanctioning if they were understood as varieties of racism?

**KEYWORDS** Islamophobia | population survey | stereotypes | social media | racism | Norway



## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2017, for the first time in Norway, a population survey (hereby referred to as the CHM survey) was conducted on attitudes towards Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Although prejudices towards Muslims proved widespread, the total picture of attitudes towards Muslims is multi-faceted: 52% agree with the statement "Muslims are good Norwegian citizens". Moreover, annual population surveys show that a larger majority is positive towards a multicultural society and to immigrants having the same rights as the rest of the population.<sup>2</sup> Seventy-three per cent would not mind having a Muslim in their circle of friends, and a survey by the Pew Research Center in 2018 shows that 82% of the Norwegian respondents are willing to accept a Muslim as a member of their family.<sup>3</sup> These results may caution against an alarmist view. They illustrate the importance of measuring attitudes along different dimensions: Stereotyping and prejudice is often far more prevalent than the wish for social distance. An illustrative example is that at the same time as 39% agree with the statement "Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture", more than 80% would like to have a Muslim as a friend or neighbour. One third of the respondents, however, score high on all three dimensions measured: cognitive, affective, and degree of social distance.

Similar to other Western European countries, Norway is undergoing demographic and social change, and increasingly Islam and Islamist extremism are subjects of intense politicisation and debate. Public scrutiny on this topic is very likely one of the factors that may explain the degree of negative attitudes towards Muslims. Nevertheless, different dimensions of xenophobia, fear of terrorism, or a general feeling of loss or anxiety are only *part* of the explanation. Norway is a country that has not experienced terror or violent riots conducted in the name of Islam; furthermore, it is a country with relatively low unemployment and a good welfare system. The integration of Muslims into Norwegian society on a general level has been successful.<sup>4</sup> Socio-economic factors alone cannot therefore explain why negative stereotypes of Muslims are so widespread in one of the

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1. Christhard Hoffmann and 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).
  2. IMDIs integreringsbarometer: <https://www.imdi.no/om-integrering-i-norge/innvandrer-og-integrering/fellesskap-og-deltakelse/>
  3. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/01/qa-measuring-attitudes-toward-muslims-and-jews-in-western-europe/>
  4. IMDIs integreringsbarometer: <https://www.imdi.no/om-integrering-i-norge/innvandrer-og-integrering/fellesskap-og-deltakelse/>. Statistisk sentralbyrå (SSB): "Fakta om innvandring 2019: <https://www.ssb.no/innvandring-og-innvandrer/faktaside/innvandring>

world's most stable countries. In the following, I argue that it is an increase in ideological anti-Muslim discourses has affected attitudes in the general population.

This chapter analyses answers to the open-ended question, “What do you think might be the reasons for existing negative attitudes to Muslims?” Focusing on the content of this qualitative part of the survey, it asks to what extent the answers of the respondents correlate with well-known stereotypes from established Islamophobic discourses prevalent in what is often described as marginalised or extreme milieus. One third of the answers name fear of terrorism as a reason for negative attitudes, but most common are references to “harmful” cultural and religious values. Some of these answers illustrate, I will argue, how Islamophobia is not only an expression of hate or fear of Muslims, but also includes racist elements. I therefore find it useful to explore the answers to this open-ended question in light of theories on racism.

Until some recent changes in political debates on Islamophobia (2019), Norwegian debates on anti-Muslim sentiments was marked by an absence of references to racism.<sup>5</sup> Racist elements, such as hierarchy of groups, essentialisation of the mentality of individual members of a group, and support for discrimination – often couched in Islamophobic statements – are rarely recognised as racist. This absence, I will argue, has created a public space in which Islamophobic statements are able to pass for “dislike” or legitimate critique of Islam. Racism – when recognised – is strongly sanctioned against in the Norwegian public sphere; it is therefore interesting to ask whether Islamophobic claims would have been met with stronger self-sanction *if* the respondents had recognised them as racism. In a similar way to antisemitism, expressions of racism have become what Werner Bergman describes as communicative latency (see chapter 7): expressions of attitudes that are very clearly not acceptable in the public sphere.<sup>6</sup> Racism as a phenomenon is therefore surrounded by stronger boundaries for what can be said than in comparison to Islamophobia.

In accordance with the introduction of this book and chapter 3, the term Islamophobia is used to describe widespread prejudice, acts and practices that attack,

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5. For an analysis on public debates on Islamophobia, see chapter 3 of this book: “A Growing Consensus? A History of Public Debates on Islamophobia in Norway”. There, I point to an increase in the use of the term “racism” when comparing previous years and 2017, when the survey was conducted.

6. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 38 (1986): 223–246.

exclude or discriminate against people on the ground that they are – or are assumed to be – Muslim.<sup>7</sup> How Islamophobia is related to racism, and what we mean by the term racism, will be explained in the last section of the article.

## 2. MUSLIMS IN NORWAY – A SHORT BACKGROUND

Islam is the biggest minority religion in Norway and Statistics Norway estimates that around 200,000 inhabitants in Norway are Muslims (4 per cent of the population). Most Muslims still have an immigrant background; i.e., the first immigrants from Muslim societies were men coming as labour migrants in 1967. Until the early 1970s, labour shortages functioned as a pull factor, and there were few restrictions on immigration to Norway. The Pakistani group of immigrants grew rapidly, and even when immigration policies were tightened in 1975, family reunification led to further immigration of Pakistanis to the major Norwegian cities. Pakistani immigration was a typical *chain migration*, meaning a type of migration where new jobseekers already have relatives and friends in the country. Chain migration, in contrast to individual migration, contributes to close networks and the maintenance of Pakistani traditions in the new country. Chain migration has also created a relatively homogenous community among the majority of Pakistanis in Oslo.

Today, Norwegian Muslims form a heterogeneous group in terms of country background, religious tradition, and degree of religiosity. The majority comes from Somalia, followed by Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran, and Turkey. In addition to linguistic and ethnic diversity, Islam is represented by different orientations and interpretive traditions. Different immigrant groups have achieved varying levels of success in education and the labour market; nonetheless, the integration of Muslims into Norwegian society has generally been successful.<sup>8</sup>

One characteristic of Islam in Europe is the emergence of new Muslim spokespersons, which is to say new interpreters of Islam. Professor in Islamic Studies Brigitte Maréchal calls those who achieve such a position “producers of discourse on Islamic praxis” or “new mediators”.<sup>9</sup> In Norway, too, there has been a surge of

7. John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, eds., *Islamophobia. The challenge of pluralism in the 21st century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

8. Statistisk sentralbyrå (SSB): “Fakta om innvandring 2019”: <https://www.ssb.no/innvandring-og-innvandrer/faktaside/innvandring>

9. Brigitte Marechal et al., “Mosques, organization and leadership”, in *Muslims in the Enlarged Europe. Religion and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

a string of reform-oriented and highly educated Muslims in leadership positions in different student organisations, and they are also well-known contributors to public debates. Maréchal also points to the many arenas outside of the mosque where Islam is thematised by the modern Muslim elite. This development is relevant in explaining attitudes towards Muslims because it has resulted in a multiplicity of sources of “what Muslims believe” and “who they are”. It is, for example, possible that the positive answers regarding having Muslims as friends can be explained by the increase in multi-faceted representations of Islam and Muslims.

### 3. SURVEY DATA: THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

In the CHM survey of 2017, 48% of respondents agree with the statement “Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment”; 42% agree with the statement “Muslims do not want to integrate into Norwegian society”; and 31% with the statement “Muslims want to take over Europe”. A relatively large proportion of respondents also expressed negative feelings towards Muslims and a desire for social distance: 27.8% score high on all dimensions, and can be categorised as Islamophobic.<sup>10</sup> Islamophobia assumes a level of group construction and hostility concerning Muslims that is not necessarily present in all negative attitudes towards Muslims: Islamophobia is an ideology that attributes inherent, negative traits to Muslims solely by virtue of being Muslim. Islamophobia can be defined as widespread prejudice, acts and practices that attack, exclude or discriminate against people on the ground that they are – or are assumed to be – Muslim.<sup>11</sup>

Population surveys seldom explain the motives or ideas behind the numbers. The CHM survey, however, included an open-ended question. Those answers provide certain insight into the respondents’ reasons as to why they answered the way they did. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they thought negative attitudes to Muslims were widespread. If their answer was “yes” (as it was for 81% of the respondents), they were asked to elaborate on what they believed was the reason for this: “What do you think might be the reasons for existing negative attitudes to Muslims?” The formulation of the question opens up for describing what might explain negative attitudes “out there”, independent of their own beliefs. Still, many of the responses were formulated as expressions of the respondents’

10. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*.

11. John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin eds., *Islamophobia. The challenge of pluralism in the 21st century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

own opinions about Muslims. Answers very often lacked expressions of distance, such as "Many believe that Muslims..."; instead, the majority of them consisted of essentialised assertions about how Muslims *are*.<sup>12</sup>

Methodologically, the data from the open-ended questions were read in two different ways. First, I collected the main arguments in the individual responses (one response often contained several themes, such as "the media", "oppression of women" and "terrorism"). Next, I counted the number of times the main themes and terms occurred *across* the different responses. I then read the responses in light of how ideas on power relations, issues of belonging, good vs. bad etc. were expressed in the language of the respondents. The themes and expressions in the responses were then compared with those in other arenas of discourse about Islam and Muslims, such as media depictions of Muslims.

The answers to the open-ended questions (n = 1,026) were grouped into two different sets as follows: 1) the reasons for negative attitudes were placed *within* the respective categories "Muslims" (as if these were designations of groups, e.g. "It is because of their culture"); and 2) the reasons were placed in *external* factors (for example, in stereotypical media representations in Norwegian society). One-third of the respondents stated that the reasons for negative attitudes lay solely with Muslims themselves.<sup>13</sup> Only the answers from the first category, those that explain negative attitudes towards Muslims by pointing to specific group characteristics of Muslims, are analysed in the following.

## 4. THEMES AND PATTERNS

### RELIGION AND CULTURE

In a simple word search, the term "terrorism" generates the most hits (using Words, "find" function)<sup>14</sup>, but if value-related words like "culture", "mentality" and "religion" were counted together they clearly dominated as explanations of the reasons for negative attitudes.<sup>15</sup> "Their religion" is commonly referred to as

12. The question asked for the reasons for *negative* attitudes, and the material might have looked different if the respondents had not been asked to focus on the negative. Importantly here, the responses give insights into the terms, metaphors, and adjectives used when describing issues connected to Muslims.

13. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*.

14. "Terrorism" (368 hits) was the main reference of factors explaining negative attitudes in both the answers that were responsible outside the group and inside the group. Many answers defined the core problem to be generalisations from extremist/terrorists to "all Muslims", such as "The extremist gives the Muslims a bad reputation".

15. See chapter 9, Vibeke Moe: "How People Explain Antisemitism. Interpretation of Survey Answers" for a similar analysis of the open-ended questions on the reasons for antisemitism.

fundamentalism and Islam is often described as a tool used to exploit others – or it is characterised as plain stupidity. Irrationality seems to be fairly directly connected to an understanding of how Muslims are religious. As a religion, Islam is seen as responsible for the collective mentality of Muslims and characterised by authoritarian structures. Typical examples referring to religion are:

- “They have an incomprehensible religion that does not fit in here.”
- “They have a totally different religion, which prescribes revenge and hostilities.”
- “It is a religion that puts fanatical religious orders before the society they live in.”
- “They live at least 500 years behind us.”
- “They say the Quran gives them the right to make hell [gjøre faenskap].”

Expressions like “incomprehensible”, “does not fit”, “totally different”, “behind us” “the right to make hell” illustrates a “language of othering”.<sup>16</sup> The use of the word “they”, which occurs in almost all of the answers referring to religion and culture, illustrates the degree of generalising (they have, they are, they say etc.). The focus on values illustrates that Norwegian citizenship alone does not make a person Norwegian.

When anger was revealed in the answers, it was usually with references to Islam. The quote below also illustrates how de-humanising expressions such as “virus”, “bastards” and “crazy” occur:

They want to force Islam into every society they come to. They behave like a virus. The majority has to show a lot of consideration towards those bastards. Call for prayers, screaming from the mosques, pork, Ramadan etc. Laws and rules that are crazy in a contemporary society, for example stoning, and they are not interested in adjusting to the society they come to, only interested in the money...

The use of de-humanising expressions is well known in the history of racist rhetoric. (Words such as “monkeys”, “barbarians”, “cockroaches” and “rats” are examples from antisemitism as well as racism against black people). The quote above is clearly hierarchising all Muslims as subordinates as it states that Muslims behave like a *virus*, are *bastards* and that their traditions “are crazy” in modern society. In addition to this, Muslims have the intention of exploiting our resources (money).

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16. Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (London and Thousand Oaks, California: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997).

## INTEGRATION AND THREAT

Another central theme in the answers is the supposedly lack of Muslims' will to integrate. This corresponds with the quantitative data from the same survey: 42 per cent agree with the statement "Muslims do not want to integrate into Norwegian society." Examples from part of the freely written answers that refers to integration and culture are:

- ▮ "They don't really want to become Norwegian."
- ▮ "They expect us to adapt to them instead of them having to adapt to Norwegian society."
- ▮ "They do not respect our values and culture and way of living. They believe they have the right to force us to live like them (...) our culture is being watered down and Muslims are the people [folkegrupper] that are doing most harm to our way of living and to our culture".
- ▮ "They have little understanding of democracy and are responsible for very much of what is going on of wars in Europe. They use violence to convert people to their religion. If you read the history of their prophet Muhammad, it does not give you much confidence."

The unwillingness to integrate is often put together with "they" showing resistance against democracy, as the last quote above illustrates. Expressions like "don't really want to", "expect us to adapt", "the right to force", "our culture is being watered down", "harm", "war", "violence" all point to something threatening. A group being construed as having bad intentions – or a will they seek to conceal – is also well known from the literature on how fear of minorities can be part of a racist worldview.<sup>17</sup> The idea of Muslims not respecting the values of the majority and putting pressure on the host society to change is a well-known trope from Islamophobic discourses. I will return to the sources of ideas about the threatening Muslims in the section on social media.

## WOMEN

The word "woman" was the second most used (again using Word's "find" function). Phrases such as "the way they treat women" show that Muslims ("they") are largely understood as a community of men; men represent Muslimness/Islam,

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17. See as an example: George Moss, "The Jews: Myth and counter-myth" in I Back Les and John Solomos *Theories of Race and Racism, A reader* (London: Routledge, 2000).

while women are victims of it. The construal of Muslims as having a violent mentality was often part of the answers concerning women:

- “They are responsible for far too much violence, crime and lack of equality.”
- “Islam and everything it involves, like oppression of women, child brides, rape of women, children and animals, beheading [...] and harassment of ethnic Norwegians.”
- “Muslims hostile attitude, being extremely demanding, provocative – criminals and fortune hunters, liars”.
- “Oppression of women, child abuse, honour killings, poor integration, religious fanatics, sharia taking over Norwegian law, crime, rape, other acts of violence, identity falsification, terror – do not fit into a Norwegian society!”

To some extent, the frequency of references to “women” mirrors Norwegian public debate about Islam in which the theme of suppression of women has been prevalent.<sup>18</sup> This interest in Muslims’ lack of gender equality can be explained by the facts that Islam as a religion holds a clear gender ideology which in several ways is in opposition to Norwegian political values: Gender equality as a national core value is hegemonic in the Norwegian political discourse. In other words, both aspects of Islam and aspects of the majority society may explain why the theme of women is so prominent in the responses. However, even if we can explain the extent of references to women by pointing to public discourse, public discourse does not sufficiently explain the harshness and degree of generalisations in the allegations. See how the responses relating to women quoted above include terms such as “rape”, “child bride”, “abuse”... It is difficult to explain the character of these formulations without linking them to the more marginal but well-established anti-Muslim discourses.

The parts of the answers that refer to gender equality is especially interesting in the light of Gordon Allport’s pioneering work on prejudices and how they seem to be ethnocentrically organised (the making of prejudice reflects a social and national identity)<sup>19</sup>. Gender equality is an important theme in a Norwegian national self-image, and this renders the subject very forceful when being employed in the making of prejudice: References to “women” effectively explains why “Muslims do not fit in”.

18. Cora Alexa Døving and Siv Ellen Kraft, *Religion i pressen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2013).

19. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Anchor Books, 1958).



## EXPLOITING THE WELFARE SYSTEM

Politicians' "preferential treatment" of Muslims and other references to a conflict of interest over the use of resources was also quite common in the answers to the open-ended questions. Muslims are said to have easier access to welfare benefits and are favoured by the authorities:

- ▶ "The way politicians squander money on them (Muslims). It is the elderly in nursing homes here in NORWAY who are suffering."
- ▶ "Many came to Norway to exploit our welfare system and without an intention of contributing themselves. In addition to this, they look upon persons who are not Muslims in a negative way and they have a low degree of willingness to adapt to Norwegian values."
- ▶ "They have no respect. They get great benefits from the state compared to our elderly at nursing homes. If a Norwegian worker needs help from the social office for a short period it is a lot of paper work and always ends up with an offer of a loan..."

The answers show traits of the respondents perceiving themselves as victims: Victimised by politicians who "give priority to Muslims", and victimised by Muslims because they have a "will to dominate".

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In general, one third of the answers to the open-ended question include nationalistic (protectionist) elements. The nation is seen as threatened by Muslims. This threat is not only due to their numbers, but also to a fear of a value-related takeover in which "they" are subverting society's traditional morality, religion, and way of life. "They are too different" is the essential message: "They have a religion which is not compatible with how we live in Norway ... if they cannot live the same way as we do here in Norway they should not be here".

The last sentence from the quote above *they should not be here*, is a direct call for the expulsion of Muslims. Stuart Hall's expression "the spectacle of the Other" – that is, gazing at representations of racialised others – fits well with how the answers operate with an "us" (the imagined community in which those who are the perceived normal are bound together) who are very different from the others who are sent into "symbolic exile".<sup>20</sup> By "symbolic exile", Hall referred to the

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20. Hall, "Representations: cultural representations and signifying practices", 258.

language and practices that were used to legitimise the exclusion of others. It is primarily the open-ended answers' "sending of Muslims to a symbolic exile" through formulas of not fitting in that renders the answers as vehicles of elements of racism.

## 5. THE GENERAL PUBLIC – POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA

Turning to those respondents who put the explanation for negative attitudes to Muslims on *external* factors, many referred to the media as a reason. They argued that the media focuses too much on Islam/Muslims as a problem, and that one-sided portrayals in the media explain why prejudices are widespread.<sup>21</sup> According to research on correlations between depictions of Muslims in the media and attitudes towards Muslims, they might be right.<sup>22</sup>

Research has shown that when Islam is in the news, it is very often presented as a political problem that needs to be solved (terrorism, radicalisation, refugees and *niqabs* were the main topics in 2017). Research has also shown a close correlation between the representation of Islam in the media and public opinion.<sup>23</sup> Media representations seem to have great influence on the majority's interpretation of minority groups, especially in communities where contact between majority and minority is small.<sup>24</sup>

Norwegian media are in general very critical of Islamophobic statements (see chapter 3), and Norwegian newspapers today provide a relatively nuanced picture of Islam, not least because of the increasing number of Muslims participating in the public debate. But even if the media is an arena for negotiating *different views* rather than just reproducing negative portrayals of Muslims, it is still the main arena in which ideas about Muslims circulate. Further, it is reasonable to assume that the media's influence is strong when the news is dominated by politicians speaking about Muslims. The year of the survey was also the year of the general

21. More than one-third of the respondents in the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies survey considered negative portrayals of Muslims in the media to be the main cause of prejudice and xenophobia against Muslims in the population (Hoffmann and Moe 2017).

22. Elisabeth Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims* (New York: Tauris, 2002).

23. Elisabeth Poole, "Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims", 240 and 250; Peder Hervik, Elisabeth Eide & Risto Kunelius, "A Long and Messy Event" in Eide, E.; Kunelius, R. and Phillips, A. eds., *Transnational Media Events. The Mohammed Cartoons and the Imagined Clash of Civilizations* (Gothenburg: Nordicom, 2008), 29–38.

24. Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin, *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011).

election (autumn 2017), which resulted in four more years with a coalition government consisting of the liberal Conservative Party and the populist Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*).<sup>25</sup> Stereotyping of Muslims played a part in the Progress Party's election campaign. The Progress Party is well known for its anti-immigration policies, and it is reasonable to say that the party's success was due to its focus on immigration as a threat not only to the Norwegian welfare state, but also to "our security" and "our values".<sup>26</sup> This political message was naturally discussed in the general media.

Of relevance in a contextual explanation of the content of the answers is also that from 2015 to 2018 the post of Minister for Immigration and Integration was held by the Progress Party, represented by Sylvi Listhaug. During 2017, Listhaug was the most prominent governmental voice concerning the issue of Islam, Muslims, refugees and immigration. Her rhetoric has been criticised by political colleagues, journalists, and a range of different debaters for inciting anti-Muslim sentiments in the population. During 2017, the minister made several statements that indicated a reason to fear Muslims: "We are fully aware that there are wolves in sheep's clothing"<sup>27</sup>; and "Fundamentalists who hate our Norwegian system are coming to exploit the boundless Norwegian naivety".<sup>28</sup> Such statements are worth mentioning because it is the first time in Norwegian political history that a member of the government has used expressions so close to those found in anti-Muslims organisations online.

In addition to her rhetoric, Listhaug figured in three debates in 2017 about regulating Muslim traditions where she suggested a prohibition against hijabs at elementary school (because they sexualise young girls), but received no support from the other coalition parties. The government also proposed a national ban on the use of niqabs in schools and institutions of higher education that won broad parliamentary support and was based mainly on references to teaching situations rather than on references to Islam as such. The Progress Party has also proposed banning the circumcision of baby boys as part of its party political manifesto (but has won no parliamentary support). The three cases all led to several public debates.

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25. The survey data show a correlation between high values on the index for Islamophobic attitudes and belonging to the voters group of the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*): The percentage of the Progress party voters that scored high on the combined index (62 per cent) is far greater than for the other parties voters" (Hoffmann and Moe, eds. *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims*, 99).

26. <https://forskning.no/moderne-historie-valg-politikk/2015/05/frps-vei-mot-valgtoppen>

27. <https://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/politikk/2017/08/04/195321874/listhaug-foran-500-muslim-er-fullstendig-klar-over-det-finnes-ulver-i-fareklaer>

28. <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/politikk/i/bG1A/10-sitater-som-viser-at-Sylvi-Listhaug-liket-a-sla-med-storslegga>

As referred to in the former section, ideas about Muslims' views on women being the antithesis of "all things Norwegian" to some extent mirror Norwegian public debate about Islam.<sup>29</sup> However, as already mentioned, while the media may explain *why* the theme of women is so prominent in the responses, it cannot explain the harshness and degree of generalisations in the allegations in the survey. It is far more relevant to point to the influence of the more marginal but well-established anti-Muslim discourses from different online forums. Islam as uniquely sexist, and Islam as inherently violent, are myths that are recycled in several online arenas.<sup>30</sup>

## 6. FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM – THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As has been demonstrated, the statements put forward in one-third of the answers to the open-ended questions are much harsher and less complex than the media's depictions of Islam and Muslims. An explanation resting on the influence of discursive contexts needs to look beyond the mainstream public sphere and include the ideology of the anti-Muslim blogosphere and alternative news sources.

Similar to other European countries, Norway's media landscape is seeing an increase in right-wing populist alternative news sources carrying biased stories about Islam or Muslims.<sup>31</sup> Established anti-Muslim/anti-Islamic organisations increased their activities during 2017,<sup>32</sup> and there has been a steady increase in the number of open Facebook groups that, in spite of some differences in political ideology and degree of radicalism, can be categorised as belonging to *the far right* as they are marked by ethnic nationalism, a distrust in democracy, and the identification of Muslims as "the enemy within".<sup>33</sup>

Research has shown that right-wing online milieus are not impermeable enclaves or simply echo chambers; they also act as gateways to wider digitally networked audiences.<sup>34</sup> It is reasonable to suggest that the following quotes of the

29. Døving and Kraft, *Religion i pressen*.

30. Mattias Wahlström, Anton Törnberg, and Hans Ekbrand, "'A beating is the only language they understand': Dynamics of violent rhetoric's in radical right social media" (C-Rex conference, UiO, Oslo, 28–29 November 2018).

31. Tore Bjørge ed., *Høyreekstremisme i Norge* (PHS Forskning, 2018), 4.

32. The most active among the more established anti-Muslim organisations are *Stop Islamisation of Norway*, *Human Rights Service* and *Document.no*.

33. Tore Bjørge ed., *Høyreekstremisme i Norge* (PHS Forskning, 2018).

34. Samuel Merrill and Matilda Åkerlund, "Standing up for Sweden? The Racist Discourses, Architectures and Affordances of an Anti-Immigration Facebook Group", *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication* 23, no. 6 (2018): 1–22.

answers to the open-ended question are such examples since they illustrate a high degree of thematic overlap with statements well known to be circulating in Islamophobic discourses in social media.

I don't think there is only one reason [for negative attitudes towards Muslims]. For example, they suppress women and they do not want to be integrated. They hate Christians, Jews and non-believers. Around them you find war and misery. And a lot of terror. They stick together in gangs and ghettos.

Terror, fatwa, religious warfare, honour killings, religion, their general way of living, burka, niqab and no respect for Norwegian values and way of living, wishes for sharia laws and a desire to take over the whole world.<sup>35</sup>

Typical statements selected from anti-Muslim Facebook groups are: "Muslims have a built-in desire for occupation"; "areas in Norway are already ruled by Sharia"; "Muslims conduct a modern form of warfare by multiplying and using their networks"; "Muslims pretend to be modern, but hate liberal Norway"; "Muslims are violent; rape will become an everyday experience".<sup>36</sup> Sometimes Muslims are described as "irresponsible individuals" because Islam has presumably removed their personal will. They have "Allah-infested brains" or are "slaves to religion" and are thus mindless tools in the service of Islam. It is thus not only Muslims who act, but Islam itself that has agency.<sup>37</sup>

Terje Emberland and Alexa Døving followed eight open Facebook sites closely between September 2016 and May 2017 with the aim of identifying various conspiracy theories, or elements of such.<sup>38</sup> They found several examples of, or rather fragments of, Islamophobic conspiracy theories.<sup>39</sup> Muslims were depicted as what Asbjørn Dyrendal calls a "conspiracy stereotype" (see chapter 6): one group seizing territorial and social power and subverting a society's traditional morality,

35. Two of the answers to the open-ended questions in the survey.

36. Cora Alexa Døving and Terje Emberland, "Konspirasjonsteorier I det ytterliggående høyrelandskapet", in Tore Bjørgo ed., *Høyreekstremisme i Norge* (PHS Forskning 2018), 179–235.

37. Døving and Emberland, "Konspirasjonsterorier I det ytterliggående høyrelandskapet".

38. A representative example of a new and active open Facebook group is *Slå ring om Norge* (Protect Norway). It defines itself as a patriotic defender of the nation and portrays Muslims and left-wing politicians as "the enemy within". The group had 35,502 followers as of April 2017.

39. The main reference for Islamophobic conspiracy theories is the so-called Eurabia theory, which claims that the European Union, since the 1970s, has collaborated with North African states via EAD (the Euro-Arabian Dialogue), and have secretly worked to turn Europe into an Islamic caliphate. The theory was launched in 2005 by the author Bat Ye'or, but has since been supplemented with other books with the same basic theme.

religion and way of life. Islamophobic conspiracy theories concern an alleged war between civilisations, one where symbolic-cultural usurpation plays the main role. Markers for what it means to be Norwegian, such as traditions, symbols and values, are presented as being under threat. Comments on conspiracy revolve particularly around the nation's identity, where a national *ingroup* stands in contrast to an *outgroup*.

In the literature on conspiracy theories, authors often use the concept "conspiracy stereotype". The concept underscores that the stereotypes contain an idea that the group seeks power over other groups. The idea of a purportedly unified, destructive goal also involves the notion that the group members have a mutual and fixed pattern of behaviour linked to precisely this kind of destructive and subversive activity.<sup>40</sup> As shown, the mix between distrust, fear and claims about certain Muslim behaviour (subversive activity) is exactly what characterises many of the answers to the open-ended questions. The answers referring to religion, culture and the welfare state in particular are hints to the threat of a Muslim takeover.

The claim that moderate Muslims actually do not exist is a common theme in Islamophobic Facebook communities. A normal illustration of such claims is the image of a snake in tall grass, with the caption: "Radical Muslims are snakes, moderate Muslims are the grass they hide in".<sup>41</sup> The claim that Muslims are fundamentalists who lack the will to integrate, even if they pretend to do so, was also frequently found in many of the answers to the open-ended questions ("they don't really want to become Norwegian").

That the nation and the identity of the majority is threatened by Muslims is the main messages in the alternative news sources and Facebook sites on the far right, and the same narrative, as I have shown, can be found in the answers from the survey. In the quantitative part of the survey, as many as 34% agree with six out of eight statements about Muslims that circulate on the so-called anti-jihadist websites and social media. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the borders between the margin and the mainstream are porous.

## 7. "ISLAMOPHOBIA" AND "RACISM"

There is no consensus concerning how to use the term "racism", either in the field of research or in public debates. Because the term "race" has been used and is used

40. Fatih Uenal, "The 'Secret Islamization' of Europe: Exploring integrated Threat Theory of Predicting Islamophobic Conspiracy Stereotypes", *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 10, no. 1 (2016): 94–108.

41. Døving and Emberland, "Konspirasjonsteorier I det ytterliggående høyrelandskapet", 179–235.

for a variety of forms of diversity and ways to differentiate between people,<sup>42</sup> two supplementary concepts related to racism have been introduced: "cultural racism"<sup>43</sup> and "neo-racism".<sup>44</sup> These terms reflect not only a change in the theory of racism, but also in the well-documented fact that racism in European society changed during the 1970s and 1980s. It was in this period that the focus shifted from skin colour (understood as an expression of race) to culture and/or religion as a dominant sign of inequality and subordination; in other words, "racism without races".<sup>45</sup> That "they" are so different that they should not be part of the community is a central claim in cultural racism, and clearly reflected in the material analysed here. The concept "culture/neo-racism" is meant as a tool for capturing racism's forms without becoming dependent on race as an analytical category. As M. Ekman argues in his article concerning online Islamophobia, by using "cultural elements to distinguish groups from each other, cultural racism also denies the very notion of race and racism."<sup>46</sup> The references to narrow biologically based definitions of racism are common in online milieus when accusations of racism are denied. The arguments seem to be that immigrants or Muslims cannot be the victims of racism because they are not a single race.<sup>47</sup>

The understanding of racism as a concept that also includes references to religion and culture is not historically new. The term "race" has been used in European languages to denote descent and family or groups of people who were bound by virtue of their beliefs and way of life: Historically, the categories of race and religion overlapped.<sup>48</sup> Racism, whether old, new, cultural, or biological, consists of assigning specific properties to people on the basis of their putative membership of a particular group of origin, with these properties defined as so negative that they constitute an argument for keeping members of the group

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42. Ann Lentin, A. (2016): "Eliminating race obscures its trace: Theories of Race and Ethnicity symposium", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39:3, p. 383–391; Ann Lentin, "Eliminating race obscures its trace: Theories of Race and Ethnicity symposium", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 383–391.

43. Franz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

44. Etienne Balibar, "Is there a Neo-Racism?" in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London, New York: Verso Press, 1991).

45. David Goldberg, "Racial Europeanization", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (2006): 331–364.

46. Mattias Ekman, "Online Islamophobia and the politics of fear: Manufacturing the green scare", *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 11 (2015).

47. David Goldberg, *Are We Postracial Yet?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

48. Georg Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press). The classical example of this overlap is the expulsion of Arabs and Jews from Christian Spain in the name of "purity of blood" in the fifteenth century.

at a distance, excluding them, and if possible, actively discriminating against them:

Racism is to attribute negative traits to people based on their belonging to a category linked to ideas about origin (cultural, biological, religious, national, and so forth), and to allow this to legitimate their subordination.<sup>49</sup>

The represented data from the survey clearly state who does not belong and why, and the why is often a clear-cut example of defining an entire category of people (Muslims) as subordinate due to ideas about their natural way of being. In *The Multiple Faces of Islamophobia* (2014), Ramón Grosfoguel writes on the place of religion in racism:

In the new cultural racist discourses, religion has a dominant role. [...] Focusing on the “other’s” religion is a way to escape being accused of racism. However, when we examine carefully the hegemonic rhetoric in place, the tropes are a repetition of old biological racist discourses and the people who are the target of Islamophobic discourses are the traditional colonial subjects of the Western Empires, that is, the “usual suspects”.<sup>50</sup>

Grosfoguel notes how in Great Britain, Muslims are associated with Egyptians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (colonial subjects from former British colonies) and that Islamophobia in Britain is therefore associated with anti-black, anti-Arab and anti-South Asian racism. In France, Muslims are mostly North Africans from former colonies. Additionally, in Norway, Islam and Muslims are associated with immigrants, and highlighting specific ethnicities is often part of Islamophobia. Still, I do not think that racism referring to religion or culture should only be seen in the light of how they overlap with the “old race categories”. As an example, the material analysed in this chapter lacks references to ethnicity, skin colour or other genetically inherited differences. Grosfoguel’s argument could therefore be taken further by saying that religion and culture *alone* often make up the core elements in racist ideas about Muslims (Norwegian white-skinned converts seem to be particularly popular hate objects in Islamophobic arenas).

In research, the term Islamophobia has developed from referring to specific clusters of prejudice against Islam and Muslims to being defined as racism against

49. Sindre Bangstad and Cora Alexa Døving (2015).

50. Ramón Grosfoguel, “The Multiple Faces of Islamophobia”, *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (2012): 9–34, 13 and 14.



Muslims.<sup>51</sup> However, in Norwegian public debates, "Islamophobia" is mainly understood as an ideology belonging to the far right, or it is understood as a synonym for "fear of a Muslim takeover", a conspiracy.<sup>52</sup> Islamophobia, then, is often referred to as a form of dislike built solely upon a fear of Muslim dominance. Consequently, references to Islamophobia usually lack the recognition of racist elements in the phenomenon. The aspects of hierarchising, de-humanising and exclusion – usually part of an Islamophobic argument (aspects that are prevalent in the examples from the open-ended questions) – are seldom identified in Norwegian debates.<sup>53</sup> This might be a reason for why Islamophobia is commonly explained as something similar to a critique of religion, or simply a specific form of xenophobia.

Until very recently (2019), the concept of racism in general has seldom been used in Norwegian public debates,<sup>54</sup> and when the term is applied, it is often linked exclusively to a belief in biological differences and racial hierarchies. When recognised (most often if a black person has been subject to harassment), racism is widely condemned in Norway. To be accused of Islamophobia, then, is something quite different from being accused of racism or antisemitism – here the borders for what is allowed to be said are clearer.<sup>55</sup> I therefore find it difficult to explain the degree of negative generalisation and stigmatisation in the data from the population survey other than by asserting that a specific rhetoric established in the discourses about Muslims serves to disguise content that is racist.

## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The idea that "being a Muslim" is intrinsically linked to having a threatening mentality, poor morals, and terrible cultural values, as is stated in several of the answers to the open-ended questions, is of a racist nature. Returning to the question of what might explain the degree of negative statements about Muslims in a

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51. This development is significant if one compares the first and second report on Islamophobia from the Runnymede Trust (1997 and 2017).

52. See chapter 3 in this book: "A Growing Consensus? A History of Public Debates on Islamophobia in Norway".

53. Sindre Bangstad and Cora Alexa Døving, *Hva er rasisme* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2015).

54. In 2015 Norway was criticised by the UN Racial Discrimination Committee for not using the word racism. Politicians were asked how they intended to combat racism if they never referred to it, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16330&LangID=E>

55. See chapter 1 in this book by Christhard Hoffmann: "A Fading Consensus: Public Debates on Antisemitism in Norway, 1960 vs. 1983"

population survey undertaken in a country where anti-racism (as an ideal) is hegemonic: The answer is likely to be found in the general acceptance – even among liberal anti-racist voices – of discrediting Muslims as adherents of Islam. This widespread attitude has given way to a rhetoric that conceals its message to avoid accusations of racism. The most common way of doing this is to present oneself as a participant in a battle of values in which Muslims are defined as a threat. Examples of such rhetoric are, for example, that those who oppose a Muslim presence in Europe do so in the name of freedom because Muslims are said not to endure liberal values. A fight for freedom is a moral battle and can thus be a useful rhetorical means of hiding racism.

In the Norwegian public sphere, racism is strongly sanctioned. It is therefore relevant – or at least tempting – to ask whether Islamophobia would have been met with stronger social sanctions by the Norwegian public *if* it were elucidated in the context of, or exposed as, a variety of racism. Even more tempting is to ask whether the one-third of the answers to the open-ended questions in the population survey would have looked different if the respondents had recognised their expressions as racist.

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## 9.

# How People Explain Antisemitism

## *Interpretation of Survey Answers*

VIBEKE MOE

**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*.<sup>1</sup> 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).

## 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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

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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 Antisemites 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 latency<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.

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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.<sup>13</sup> 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 NRK<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.”

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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](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 confluences, 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.<sup>17</sup>

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:

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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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.

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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.<sup>21</sup> The discussion demonstrated how strong, negative attitudes towards Israel may represent an obstacle between the two minorities and prevent a consensus of anti-antisemitism.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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

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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.<sup>24</sup>

### 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.<sup>25</sup> 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](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.<sup>26</sup> However, whether it is really a question of a “new” form of antisemitism is debatable, and scholars often point to how the antisemitic notions, despite referring to (relatively) new political situations and incorporating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, draw on long historical continuities.<sup>27</sup> 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”.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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

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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.<sup>30</sup> 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,

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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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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-miljoforesnsning/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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

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:

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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!!<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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

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36. “Henger igjen fra historien bl.a. misvisende opplysninger fra foreldre/besteforeldre – Sions Viser 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.”<sup>38</sup> 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 conflations 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 conflations. 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,

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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.<sup>39</sup>

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-

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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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# 10.

## Negotiations of Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Group Conversations among Jews and Muslims

**CLAUDIA LENZ AND VIBEKE MOE**

**ABSTRACT** The following chapter presents findings from group interviews with Muslims and Jews conducted in Norway between May 2016 and May 2017. Six groups were interviewed; three had Jewish participants and three had Muslim participants. The chapter explores interpretative patterns among the interviewees, focusing on the ways in which antisemitism and Islamophobia were expressed or rejected in the conversations, and how antisemitism and Islamophobia were perceived as contemporary societal problems. Photographs were used as visual prompts during the interviews and served as a starting point for the analysis of the social interaction between the interviewees. A central question of the analysis is how intergroup attitudes were negotiated and eventually regulated throughout the conversations.

**KEYWORDS** Latent antisemitism | Islamophobia | group interviews | Muslim-Jewish relations | photo elicitation | Norway

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, antisemitism among Muslims has emerged as a topic in research as well as in public debate.<sup>1</sup> A recent example of this attention is the massive protests in France following the murder of two Jewish women committed by Muslims in 2017 and 2018, accompanied by the publication of a “manifesto” against the “new antisemitism”.<sup>2</sup> The manifesto was signed by a range of public persons and celebrities, among them former President Sarkozy and actor Gerard Depardieu. The “new” antisemitism is a term often used to describe a form of antisemitism that has emerged in recent decades among Muslims and in the European far-left in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and anti-Zionism. This “new” antisemitism is contrasted to “older” forms of Jew hatred that largely drew on religious, nationalist or racial biases.<sup>3</sup> However, the novelty of the phenomenon is debated. A central criticism underlines the continuity of the antisemitic notions, claiming that instead of representing “new” forms of antisemitism, the expressions are only modifications of traditional anti-Jewish ideas.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there is a tendency among some proponents of the term to attribute the “new” antisemitism particularly to Muslim immigrants, and thus to see antisemitism mostly as an imported problem in today’s Europe. This discourse of “new antisemitism”, indicating that antisemitism has been overcome in the autochthon populations of Western European countries, is also present in the Norwegian public debate. Connected to this, we find the assumption that Jews regard Muslims as a potential threat.

On the other hand, Muslims in Europe are perceived as targets of prejudice and stigmatisation resembling the antisemitism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While this portrayal may promote insight into some common experiences and ideological similarities, the idea of Muslims being the “new Jews” can contribute to a competition of victimhood and of prioritisation between the two minorities when it comes to measures fighting prejudice and discrimination. These two narratives, presenting Muslims either as “the new antisemites” or as

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1. See, for example: Günther Jikeli, “Antisemitic attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A survey review” (*ISGAP Occasional Paper Series 1*, 2015a); Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urban Males Say They Don’t Like Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).
  2. <http://www.leparisien.fr/societe/manifeste-contre-le-nouvel-antisemitisme-21-04-2018-7676787.php>.
  3. Pierre-André Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002); Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed., *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
  4. Jonathan Judaken, “So what’s new? Rethinking the ‘New Antisemitism’ in a Global Age”, *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 4–5 (2008): 531–560, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220802377453>.

“the new Jews”, may thus promote negative attitudes between the two minorities. Professor of Religious Studies Björn Krondorfer states that:

[I]n either case Muslim and Jewish communities are pitted against each other. Rather than sharing a common experience of facing fears and hatreds directed at Muslims and Jews, the experience of antisemitism and Islamophobia deepens the mistrust between these two communities.<sup>5</sup>

By analysing how participants discuss two events linked to the relationship between the two minorities, this chapter explores these interpretative patterns. Based on group interviews among Muslims and Jews in Norway conducted in 2016/2017, the study investigates experiences and attitudes among the minorities.

The interviews constituted a subproject within the larger project that also included the two quantitative surveys among Jews and Muslims and in the general population.<sup>6</sup> While the population survey showed a decrease in the prevalence of antisemitic prejudices (from 12.1 per cent to 8.3 per cent) and an increase in the percentage that did not support any negative statements about Jews (from 55 per cent to 69 per cent), the minority survey in 2017 also showed that two out of three Jewish respondents sometimes avoid showing their religious affiliation for fear of negative attitudes. Furthermore, the survey displayed widespread negative attitudes towards Muslims in the general population. One in four respondents (27 per cent) expressed what was defined as Islamophobic attitudes.

The survey was the first to explore attitudes between Jews and Muslims in Norway. The results underlined the importance of a nuanced approach, most notably related to how prejudice in the form of stereotypical views may be prevalent while other dimensions of negative attitudes such as antipathy or social distance may be less pronounced. The survey also indicated that the Jewish (75 per cent) and Muslim (48 per cent) minorities believe they have common experiences as minorities in Norway and that they can cooperate in the fight against prejudice and discrimination (Jews: 86 per cent and Muslims: 70 per cent).<sup>7</sup>

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5. Björn Krondorfer, “Introduction: Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia”, *CrossCurrents* 65, no. 3 (2015): 292–296.
  6. Christhard Hoffmann and 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).
  7. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway*, 72–75. See also, in the current volume: Werner Bergmann, “How do Jews and Muslims in Norway perceive each other? Between prejudice and the willingness to cooperate”, and Ottar Hellevik, “Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway: A survey analysis of prevalence, trends and possible causes of negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims.”

Part of the background for this chapter is a public discourse that is concerned with antisemitic attitudes among Muslims and tends to portray the relationship between Muslims and Jews as polarised. Perhaps in contrast to what one might assume, based on the public discourse, the quantitative survey also revealed that negative views of Muslims are less prominent in the Jewish minority than in the general population.<sup>8</sup> This may in part be attributed to the very high level of education in the Jewish sample.<sup>9</sup>

## FOCUS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

By focusing on “shared attitudinal patterns”<sup>10</sup> in group interviews, and by applying the concept of communication latency,<sup>11</sup> this chapter analyses the ways in which Jewish and Muslim interviewees interpret, express or reject antisemitism and Islamophobia. Forms of open or latent antisemitism are explored, as well as the extent to which antisemitism and Islamophobia are regarded as related problems in contemporary society. The diverse composition of the focus groups allows insight into the impact that generation, gender and religiosity have on inter-group attitudes. The analysis views social interaction as an intermediate layer between individual attitudes and discursive frameworks.

The development of antisemitism after the Holocaust and features of contemporary antisemitism constitute an important background for the analysis of this study. After the Holocaust, antisemitism lost legitimacy and was banned from

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8. The question of the Jewish minority's attitudes towards Muslims was briefly touched upon in a survey conducted by the Jewish community in 2012. See Rolf Golombek, Irene Levin and J. Kramer, “Jødisk liv i Norge”, *Hatikva*, no. 5 (2012). The topic was also touched upon in a qualitative interview study among Jews in Oslo and Trondheim conducted two years later. See Cora Alexa Døving and Vibeke Moe, *Det som er jødisk. Identiteter, historiebevissthet og erfaringer med antisemittisme. En kvalitativ intervjustudie blant norske jøder* (Oslo: HL-senteret, 2014).

9. Hoffmann and Moe, eds., *Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway*, 23. High education levels were associated with less prevalent negative attitudes in the general population towards both Jews and Muslims (100).

10. Ralf Bohnsack, “‘Orientierungsmuster’: Ein Grundbegriff qualitativer Sozialforschung”, *Methodische Probleme der empirischen Erziehungswissenschaft*, ed. Folker Schmidt (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider, 1997), 49–61.

11. 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; Heiko Beyer and Ivar Krumpal, “Aber es gibt keine Antisemiten mehr”: Eine experimentelle Studie zur Kommunikationslatenz antisemitischer Einstellungen.” *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 62 (2010): 681–705.

public discourse in Europe. Instead, the social norm of anti-antisemitism has come into place. However, this has not led to the disappearance of antisemitism as a phenomenon, rather to its transformation, suppression and coverage. Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb describe the “latency” of antisemitism as the underlying presence of antisemitic interpretative patterns and narratives in public discourses, social interactions or individual attitudes.<sup>12</sup> This latency can take a number of forms, such as re-framing or moderation of stereotyped language in public contexts (communication latency).

According to the theory of communication latency, negative attitudes toward Jews will less likely be expressed in the form of “classical” racist antisemitism that culminated in the Nazi ideology of extermination, but rather in more socially and politically acceptable forms.<sup>13</sup> One way in which antisemitic attitudes can find legitimacy lies in one-sided portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to Matti Bunzl, “Israel’s policies in the struggle with Palestinians are giving Europe renewed license to openly despise the Jews.”<sup>14</sup> The anti-globalisation discourse is another area that sometimes triggers antisemitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories.<sup>15</sup> In this discourse, antisemitism hardly appears as open enmity to Jews, but rather as a perpetuation of negative ideas about Jewishness and Jewish attributes. For the present study, the concept of communication latency generates several interesting perspectives related to social regulation and expression or rejection of antisemitism.

A set of visual prompts (photographs) used during the interviews served as a starting point for the analysis of the social interaction between the interviewees, asking how intergroup attitudes are negotiated and eventually regulated throughout the conversations. Six photographs were used, all of which were related to prejudice, hate crime and conflict on the one hand, and inclusion, recognition and participation on the other. The analysis focuses on two of these photographs, investigating how they promote different responses and interpretations among the interviewees both linked to the motifs on the photographs and to broader discursive tendencies in Norwegian society. One element in the analysis explores how interpretations can be connected to the photographs as “iconic” images, in the

12. Bergmann and Erb, “Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung.”

13. 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.

14. Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds old and new in Europe* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007).

15. Nicolas Bechter, “Anti-Semitism and Anti-Capitalism in the Current Economic Crisis”, *Global Anti-Semitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Charles Asher Small, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 27–35.

sense that they draw on established metanarratives.<sup>16</sup> The chapter asks whether the conversations touch upon antisemitic or Islamophobic stereotypes and interpretations, and if so, whether antisemitism and Islamophobia are referred to as external phenomena or if the comments themselves convey antisemitic or Islamophobic ideas and interpretations. Do reactions indicate an underlying acceptance, or is the expression of negative views seen as a transgression of social norms and sanctioned accordingly? The chapter thus investigates signs of social regulation in the way that expressions of antisemitism and Islamophobia are discussed and commented on by the participants, exploring what can be termed the boundaries of the acceptable.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Six group interviews were conducted between May 2016 and May 2017; three with Jewish participants and three with Muslim participants. Five of these interviews were conducted in Oslo, and one in Trondheim. The groups consisted of between three and five interviewees.

Being a qualitative study, the aim of the analysis was not to map prevalence of attitudes, but rather to explore nuances in the expressions and the meaning of social interactions. To accomplish this objective, the composition of the groups was broad in terms of variables such as generation, education, gender and religiosity.<sup>17</sup> The aim to explore social interaction and “negotiations” of meaning and normative underlying frames of reference suggested the members of the respective groups should be acquainted prior to the interviews or be recruited within the same milieu. Only participants in the last interview (J3) were not personally acquainted, though they too came from the same milieu.

### THE FUNCTION OF GROUP INTERVIEWS AS PART OF THE MINORITY STUDY

The main purpose for supplementing the quantitative surveys with qualitative group interviews was to enable a deeper insight into the attitudes than that obtained by a questionnaire. Group interviews provide information such as a group’s shared values and views, interpretations behind the views, insight into

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16. Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, “Public Identity and Collective Memory (2003) Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of ‘Accidental Napalm’”, *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 no. 1; 35–66.

17. For the composition of the groups, see appendix to this chapter.



underlying ambiguities, uncertainties or differences, and the underlying norms and processes behind the opinions.<sup>18</sup>

The group interviews also enabled exploration of the dynamic and adaptive character of the attitudes in question and how these attitudes are related to other opinions of the interviewees. The conversations between the participants demonstrate how opinions and interpretations may change following interaction with other people, and thus show how the expressions of attitudes are flexible and adapted to given social contexts. One of the questions guiding the analysis was how the interactive regulation of the expression of attitudes took place. The manners in which the interviewees modified their views during the course of the interviews varied, and could involve both directions – either downplaying or intensifying expressions. The conversations also showed how different topics can be related – for example when the interviewees referred to their own experiences when asked about the other minority.

The choice of group interviews as a method also made it possible to explore the significance of interaction and social acceptance in attitudinal development and expression. Michael Bloor et al. describe how conversations in groups enable articulation of hidden norms and attitudes:

The situation of the focus group, in principle and with a fair wind, can provide the occasion and the stimulus for collectivity members to articulate those normally unarticulated normative assumptions. The group is a socially legitimated occasion for participants to engage in “retrospective introspection,” to attempt collectively to tease out previously taken for granted assumptions. This teasing out may only be partial with many areas of ambiguity or opacity remaining and it may be disputatious (as limits are encountered to shared meanings), but it may yield up as much rich data on group norms as long periods of ethnographic fieldwork.<sup>19</sup>

The interviews focused on two questions: “What do you think is the reason for negative attitudes towards Jews” and “What do you think is the reason for negative attitudes towards Muslims?” The use of photographs facilitated an open conversation driven by the interviewees’ free associations, which enabled the discussion to develop with lesser interference of the interviewer. The photos used in the interviews were “multi-layered” or even somewhat ambivalent, and could serve

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18. Michael Bloor et al., *Focus Groups in Social Research* (London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2001).

19. Bloor et al., *Focus Groups in Social Research*, 5–6.

as a starting point for a broad number of associations.<sup>20</sup> The following analysis focuses on two photographs: no. 3, the “ring of peace”, showing the solidarity event organised by young Muslims youth outside the synagogue in Oslo, February 21, 2015; and no. 4, “9/11” showing the two airplanes crashing into the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001.

During the interviews, the researcher’s initial assumption, that almost all images shown were well-known to the interviewees, was confirmed.<sup>21</sup> Image no. 3 and no. 4 used in the analysis sparked off rich associations and conversations in both Muslim and Jewish groups. The two images proved to be particularly valuable for the exploration of mutual perceptions between the minorities. In addition, image no. 3, “ring of peace”, provides a visual representation of one of the key questions in the minority survey regarding the cooperation between Jews and Muslims.

The interviewees were asked to describe and comment on the photos. They were free to choose whatever topic they preferred to focus on and were not obliged to comment if they did not want to.

### 3. ANALYSIS

#### 9/11

The image of the airplanes crashing into one of the Twin Towers was well known to the participants. The iconic status of the motif was reflected in the way the photo was discussed in the groups, with almost identical phrases and frequent use of so-called narrative abbreviations. Narrative abbreviations are short and fragmented expressions that still contain a whole course of events.<sup>22</sup> The use of such abbreviations indicates that the events referred to are expected to be known to the listener, and that detailed explanations are unnecessary. Below are two examples

20. The photos showed: (1) A pig’s head outside a mosque in Kristiansand (anti-Muslim incident from 2012); (2) A shop window with the text “Palestine calling. Jews are not tolerated in Norway” (photo from Oslo during World War II); (3) “The ring of peace”; (4) The 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York; (5) The Norwegian King and Crown Prince wearing kippahs during a visit in the Oslo synagogue in 2009; and (6) The wall between Israel and the West Bank, with Jerusalem to the rear.

21. Image no. 2 was an exception, with Muslim interviewees being confused regarding the historical or present-day context of the image.

22. Jürgen Straub, ed., *Narrative, Identity and Historical Consciousness* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), 123.

of how the interviewees talked about the 9/11 photo. The first is from a group with Muslim participants (M2):

4: To me, when I saw this, it was “the beginning of the war on terror”.

1: “That’s when everything changed” [speaks English], to say it like that.

4: It was a big turning point, absolutely.

1: Yes.<sup>23</sup>

Almost the same phrases were used in one of the groups with Jewish informants (J3):

2: This is the beginning, I believe, of many things...

1: Yes.

2: Many things that we struggle with today.

1: Very much changed at that point.<sup>24</sup>

As the examples show, both Muslim and Jewish interviewees perceived 9/11 to be a turning point in our time, linked to a number of contemporary societal challenges. However, following these initial remarks, interpretations deviated between the groups concerning which challenges were included into the narrative.

### ***Different views of consequences***

The Muslim interviewees referred to charges of terrorism being used as a pretext for Islamophobia as one of the effects of 9/11. Portrayals of both Muslims and Islam were seen as significantly altered in the aftermath of the attack. One interviewee pointed to how the portrayals of Muslims and Islam were politically motivated, and that Islam was interpreted as a religion that “commits terror”. Another interviewee mentioned how this focus deeply affected Muslims in their day-to-

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23. 4: For meg når jeg så denne her, så er det starten på krigen mot terror.

1: “That’s when everything changed,” for å si det sånn.

4: Det var et stort vendepunkt, absolutt.

1: Ja.

24. 2: Det er jo starten, tenker jeg, på veldig mye ...

1: Ja.

2: Veldig mye som vi strever med i dag.

1: Da endret mye seg ...

day life immediately following the attack: “to look someone in the eyes was almost impossible.” One of the interviewees contrasted the widespread group constructions of Muslims after 9/11 with the way the Norwegian public had reacted to the terror attack on 22 July, 2011. The “majority” Norwegian perpetrator made use of Christian symbols, but a similar group construction of Christians did not occur in the aftermath of the attack: “No one mentioned that a Christian was behind the attack, even though he had a cross on his manifesto. He was not ‘a Christian’ [makes quotation marks with her fingers].” The comment indicates a sense of injustice in the way Muslims are treated compared to other religious groups in the Norwegian public sphere, or perhaps more specifically between the Muslim minority and the majority, which is perceived as Christian.

The discussions in the groups with Jewish informants focused on the “war on terror” and international conflicts, but also on terrorism as a threat in Western societies (J3). The photo thus promoted interpretations that focused on change and had Muslims in a central position, but while Muslim interviewees often mentioned the rise of widespread Islamophobia, Jewish interviewees saw political conflict and (Muslim) terrorists.

### ***Negotiating Islamophobia***

An engaged discussion emerged in the first group of Jewish interviewees in connection to the 9/11 photo. Starting from a discussion about Muslims, Islam and integration, two of the participants later ended up debating the relation between (realistic, acceptable) descriptions and prejudice, more precisely where the line should be drawn in terms of characterisations and group constructions of Muslims:

2: You say a lot about Muslims that we don’t like to be said about Jews

1: Really?

2: The generalisation – if you had only said “certain Muslims”, “certain imams”, “certain mosques” –

1: No, I think it is –

2: then, it would have been ok –

1: a majority of Muslims who have those attitudes.

2: But there are still certain... your moderation comes somewhat late and is too small...

1: But would you see it differently, if the same had happened in Norway, which has happened in Paris and Copenhagen?

2: Yes

1: Would you be a little less for a “colourful community” then?

2: Maybe.<sup>25</sup>

The initial reaction is concerned with the lack of nuances and a tendency to associate negative characteristics with all Muslims. By drawing attention to similar group constructions and prejudices towards Jews, the interviewee explicitly relates the Jewish and Muslim experiences, appealing for self-reflection and moderation in the discussion.<sup>26</sup> However, the perspective is not supported. On the contrary, it is met with insistence that the problems can be found among the majority of Muslims. Furthermore, the interviewee is confronted with the reality of terror attacks as an ultimate argument against a general sympathy with Muslims.

The atmosphere in the conversation was tense at this point of the interview, and it was clear that the participants differed both in their opinions about Islam and Muslim integration and in their view of what was appropriate to express on these subjects. While displaying a lack of consensus, the discussion thus simultaneously opened for an articulation and negotiation of norms indicating where the limits of

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25. 2: Du sier mye av det om muslimer som vi ikke liker at blir sagt om jøder

1: Å?

2: Den generaliseringen – hadde du bare tatt med enkelte muslimer, enkelte imamer, enkelte moskeer –

1: Nei, jeg tror det er –

2: Så hadde det vært –

1: et flertall av muslimer som har de holdningene

2: men det er fortsatt enkelte.. modereringen din kommer litt for sent og litt for lite..

1: Får du en annen innstilling hvis det skjer i Norge det som har skjedd i Paris og i København?

2: Ja –

1: Vil du, vil du være litt mindre for fargerikt felleskap da?

2: Kanskje.

26. This perspective is at the core of the Common Identity Ingroup Model, which asserts that perceptions of common experiences of discrimination and prejudice may support the development of common identities and engender positive attitudes between members of stigmatised groups. See Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio, *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model* (Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 2000). In contrast to this, research on social identity threats indicate that perceptions of such threats lead to derogation of members of out-groups. See Nyla R. Branscombe, Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears and Bertjan Doosje, “The context and content of social identity threat”, *Social identity: Context, commitment, content*, ed. Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears and Bertjan Doosje, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 35–58.

expression should be drawn. The citation also indicates how the severe threat that Jews may experience from extremist individuals among the Muslim minority can represent an obstacle towards an inclusive and open approach to Muslims in general and in the question of integration in Europe.

### *Conspiracy theories*

The 9/11 photo promoted references to various conspiracy theories both in the Jewish and the Muslim groups. In one of the Jewish groups, such ideas were referred to in an ironic manner, underlining the absurdity of the claims. Again, the conversation suggested that the ideas were well known among the participants (J1):

1: Yes, speaking of antisemitism, there were no Jews who died in the attack, so it must have been Jews who were behind.

3: Yes

2: I too have heard that.

1: Have you also heard this? [turns towards interviewers]

2: Yes, yes, all the Jews working in the building were told to stay at home that day.

1: Yes, hm.

2: Received a phone call.

1: But that is not really correct, either.

3: It's rare that antisemitic propaganda is correct, isn't it, or what do you think?

[laughter]<sup>27</sup>

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27. "1: Ja, apropos antisemittisme, det var ingen jøder som døde i det angrepet, så det må ha vært noen jøder som har stått bak.

3: Ja.

2: Jeg har også hørt [det].

1: Har dere hørt den historien der også? [henvender seg mot C og V]

2: Ja, ja alle jøder, alle som jobbet i bygget fikk beskjed om å holde seg hjemme den dagen.

1: Ja, mm...

2: Fikk en telefon...

1: Men det stemmer jo ikke, det heller.

3: Det er vel sjelden at antisemittisk propaganda stemmer, er det ikke det da, eller hva tenker du?"

The joking indicates a relaxed attitude towards the conspiracies and the otherwise serious subject. Some of the interviewees also mentioned the similarities that exist between antisemitic and Islamophobic conspiracy theories.

References to conspiracy theories were typically made in a way that suggested a distance to the ideas. However, in the group with the older Muslims (M1), a discussion developed indicating that one of the interviewees supported the idea of a Jewish conspiracy or at least was uncertain of how to relate to it. He started by defining conspiracy theories as something people believed in “the third world”, thereby distancing himself and the rest of the group from such ideas. However, as the conversation continued, he expressed more doubt:

3: What people think is that, to split the Muslims, the Muslim world, and the USA, in order to create hatred between them, the Jews did this themselves. They have done it, there is planning behind, and they have done it. I am just telling what it says in the newspapers. [...] Many people in Pakistan and India or Bangladesh or such places believe that the Jews are behind this, that they took the day off from work and that there were no Jews at work that day, or just a few ... Important people who did not go to work and who planned this themselves, and they provided training and money and stuff to the Muslims who are behind it. So, “in reality” [makes quotation marks with his hands], it is Jews who have played this themselves, to split the US and Muslims. Very many believe [this], in Asia.

4: But we do not know what the truth is.<sup>28</sup>

Interviewee no. 3 returned to the claim that Jews were behind the attack several times, though he did not receive much support from the others. Interviewee no. 4 underlined how shocked they had been over the attacks, and that he was horrified over the way innocent people had been killed. However, the discussion ended with him stating that the truth about the attacks is as yet hidden. Though the main purpose

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28. 3: “Men det folk tror, var for å splitte muslimer, muslimsk verden og USA, for å sann, få hat mellom de to, så har jøder spilt dette selv. De har gjort, de ligger planlegging bak, og de har gjort dette. Det er bare sann, jeg forteller deg det som står i avisen. [...] Det er veldig mange som tror i Pakistan eller i India eller Bangladesh eller noe sånt, at det er jøder som står bak dette, og de tok fri den dagen fra jobben, ingen jøder ble jo den dagen på jobb, eller noen få som ble jo viktige personer, som ikke gikk på jobb, at de planla jo dette selv, og de ga jo trening og penger og sann til noen muslimer som står bak dette. Og så i “realiteten” [lager anførselstegn med hendene] så er det jøder som har spilt dette selv, for å splitte USA og muslimer, det tror veldig mange, i Asia

4: Men vi vet ikke hva sannheten er.”

seemed to be to end the conversation on the topic, the remark effectively served to spread doubt as to whether the interviewees supported the conspiracy theory.

However, the central issue in the discussion was that such ideas are widespread among other Muslims in *other* – “third-world” – countries, not here, or perhaps, more specifically, not among the participants’ own community. Research has shown how support for conspiracy thinking rarely involves complete “theories”, but is made indirectly, by pointing to what “others” believe or claim to know, or by hinting at broader ideas.<sup>29</sup> The example demonstrates how different interpretations of the terror attack may be used to express group identities and group boundaries; while Muslims in various Asian countries are perceived to believe that Jews are behind the attacks, Norwegian Muslims are not. Furthermore, the discussion indicated where the limits of socially acceptable interpretations were drawn. When one of the interviewees, despite his initial rejection, indicated support for certain elements of the theory, he was immediately confronted by his discussion partners. The reaction may have been reinforced by the interview situation and the presence of the interviewers, but the discussion nevertheless demonstrated awareness that such support was not “ok”.

### *Interpretations of victimhood*

The issue of double standards came up in the discussion in the third group of Muslim interviewees (M3). One of the younger participants mentioned how the victims of 9/11 are commemorated every year in the USA, in contrast to other victims of war and conflict:

4: Many commemorate this, at least in the USA. Do we have commemorations every day for those who are killed in Yemen, Afghanistan? And Guantanamo, where people have been held prison for 14 years, do we talk about that? People are tortured; I can’t even bear to engage in it. And you call that democracy? It is probably criticised here and there, but that is not my point. If that is not terrorism, I don’t know what is. If you ask me, the politics of ISIS and of the US are not that different. It’s the same, just different ...<sup>30</sup>

29. Wolfgang Benz, *Was ist Antisemitismus?* (München: C.H. Beck, 2004), 87.

30. 4: “Det er jo mange som markerer dette, i hvert fall i USA. Har vi markeringer hver dag for de som blir drept i Jemen, Afghanistan? Og Guantánamo, der mennesker har vært 14 år i fengsel, snakker vi om det? Mennesker blir torturert, og jeg orker ikke sette meg inn i det engang. Og det kaller man demokrati. Det blir sikkert kritisert, men det er ikke det som er fokuset mitt. Om ikke det er terrorisme, så vet ikke jeg. Så for min del, så er ikke IS og USAs politikk så forskjellig. Det er likt, bare andre...”



The comment describes a difference between the commemoration of the victims of 9/11 in the USA and the attitude towards what are generally Muslim victims of war, indicating a difference in the valuation of the victims. The comment was made by the interviewee who also was critical to the “ring of peace” (see below), and displays a feeling of injustice that goes beyond the concrete situation of Norwegian Muslims and Jews. The feeling of double standards was related to the way “the West” and the USA act in the world, particularly with regard to military dominance. The conversation touched on a number of issues where the interviewees perceived imbalances and injustices. The comment also suggests a reinterpretation of central concepts such as “democracy” and “terrorism”, which essentially serves to counter the perceived imbalance by reinstating a new understanding where there is “no difference” between the USA and ISIS.

This sequence of the discussion was from the beginning oriented towards a comparison of victims, the first remarks pointing to how the war that followed the 9/11 attack had resulted in new victims, and the disproportion between “100,000 deaths because of 1000 people dying there.”<sup>31</sup> An important point in this argument concerns the relation (or lack of such) between the victims and the crime, with the interviewee underlining how the victims of the post 9/11 war had nothing to do with the terror attack. However, the innocence of the victims of Islamist terror is not mentioned; the focus is solely on the victims of war and the perceived opposition between “the West” and “the Muslims”.

In this sequence of the group interview, an interpretative pattern emerges based on the bitterness over political injustice, resulting in an avoidance or rejection of empathy with the victims of Islamist terror. The frustration over the lack of attention and focus on the victims of Western/US warfare might be legitimate; however, the comparison, and even competition of victimhood opens the way to a slippery slope. Similar arguments are used in connection to the notion that Jewish victimhood receives too much attention, while the suffering of other victims is neglected, particularly as a criticism of Holocaust remembrance. Our informants did not mention victims of the Holocaust or memory culture after the Holocaust. Rather, the perceived imbalance in acknowledgement of and attention towards the victims in question was based on a criticism of Western military power and dominance. However, the conversation later displayed unwillingness to specifically acknowledge Jewish victimhood and to show solidarity with Norwegian Jews (see next section), indicating that the anti-antisemitism norm did not have a strong impact in this group.

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31. “100.000 er døde på grunn av at tusen mennesker døde her.”

In summary, the 9/11 image disclosed a set of interpretations among Jews and Muslims, some of which contributed to notions of mutual understanding and solidarity, others to mistrust and hostility. The analysis also showed that notions of conspiracy theory were regarded as problematic and subject to social regulation.

### **"THE RING OF PEACE"**

Reactions in all groups suggest the "ring of peace" photo is iconic in the sense that everybody was familiar with the reference and talked about it in a manner that indicated an established narrative of "young Muslims initiating solidarity action for Norwegian Jews." The overall response both among the Jewish and the Muslims interviewees was positive, typical examples of comments being, "Then we have this one [picks up the photo of the circle], this we support;" "That was really nice, I think. To show that you are *together*" and "Yes, that was really nice, it was outside here and a good ambiance."

### ***Underlying ambivalence***

While positive association dominated the immediate reactions among all participants, one of the Jewish interviewees also mentioned the Jihadist terror that caused the "ring of peace" demonstration. Her remark revealed a certain ambivalence towards the whole event, indicating distrust of the motives behind it and towards the Muslim participants. She said:

I had just come from Copenhagen, because this was straight after Copenhagen, so I had just been to Copenhagen that week to lay down flowers with my family. It made a strong impression. Lots of emotion, and I definitely did not feel safe and I also sensed a certain ambivalence.<sup>32</sup>

The comment gives an indication of the significant impact the terror against the Danish synagogue had made. Both the fact that the interviewee travelled to the place of the incident to lay down flowers and the use of the abbreviation (this was "after Copenhagen") indicates the strong impression and may also explain the insecurity she felt at the event in Oslo. She later referred to the Facebook page of

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32. "Jeg hadde akkurat vært i København, for dette var jo rett etter København, så jeg hadde jo nettopp vært i København den uken og lagt ned blomster sammen med familien min der. Og det var jo så sterkt. Det var masse følelser, og jeg følte meg absolutt ikke trygg og jeg følte også en sånn ambivalens."

one of the organisers, and how it had contained strong anti-Israel statements. While emphasising her positive view of the ring, she admitted that these statements gave her a “double feeling”. However, the sense of ambivalence seemed also to be related to how the interviewee viewed those who were behind the ring in relation to the rest of the Muslim population in Oslo: “I still get goose bumps when I think about it, that they stood up the way they did. After all, they can get stabbed in the back by their own for taking that stand. It was brave.” The comment suggests that the Muslim community did not generally support the attitude behind the “ring of peace”. The assumption can be linked to reactions in the aftermath of the event, among others from a Norwegian Muslim convert who claimed the ring had been “a mistake” due to the Zionist affiliation of the Jewish congregation in Oslo.<sup>33</sup> The fact that the interviewee underlined the “braveness” of the Muslims who initiated the ring also indicates her mixed feelings: the immediate sense of insecurity due to the fresh impression from the terror attack in Copenhagen, the admiration for the organisers of the event, and the assumption that their attitudes were not supported by many other Muslims.

In the first group of Jewish interviewees (J1), ambivalence was related to how the event necessarily pointed out the minority identity of the Jewish participants. One of the interviewees said her goal was that a Jewish identity would be seen as something ordinary, “like hair colour or a hobby.” In contrast to that desired normality, the “ring of peace” had underlined that the minority was “different, small, protected and special.” So, while she appreciated the solidarity demonstrated by the event and liked to take part in it, the interviewee could not embrace it wholeheartedly.

### *Ownership and pride*

The interviewees in the group of young Muslims (M2) expressed a sense of pride and ownership related to the “ring of peace”:

4: [The act of terror] shows that Muslims are prejudiced, too, and that some Muslim individuals hate Jews intensely. Still, you see an entire generation of young, Norwegian Muslims, standing together, hand in hand, in order to protect and create a ring around a synagogue. There is no better response than that. It is so crystal clear that this is just perfect.

2: Mm [confirms]

33. <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/5xE91/Muslimske-linstad-fredsringen-er-en-alvorlig-feil>. Accessed December 5, 2018.

4: Such actions can contribute to breaking up stereotypes.

2: Not just in public, but one also has to work within one's own groups. Muslim leaders must be more engaged in the Norwegian debate and establish a dialogue with different members of parliament that keep some of these attitudes against Muslims, so we can break up the vicious circle. So, it is of absolute importance that Muslims go out more and do not defend themselves, but prove the opposite.<sup>34</sup>

In this short sequence, interviewee no. 1 acknowledges that there are negative attitudes and hate against Jews among Muslims, but describes how these attitudes are found in a minority (some individuals), which were confronted by "an entire generation of young Muslims" during the event. Furthermore, she sees the event as the ultimate way of counteracting negative stereotypes against Muslims, a view that is supported by one of the other interviewees. In this, she accepts the responsibility of (young) Muslims to show society that they stand up against antisemitism in their own community. She also claims that Muslim leaders should more clearly confront those having negative attitudes by "proving the opposite". In this way, she positions the young Muslim organisers of the ring of peace as role models for the Muslim community, and even as their leaders.

### *Imbalance*

In contrast to the pride and ownership expressed in the group of young Muslims (M2), one of the interviewees in the group of female Muslims (M3) was sceptical. Her criticism was mostly related to perceptions of the expectations Muslims face:

4: As Muslim, we really try hard to show that we are not evil. I mean, how many times have there been "rings of peace" around mosques? Do we really have to go out, it is almost expected, one always expects that Muslims distance

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34. 4: "[Terroren] viser at også muslimer har mye fordommer og enkelte muslimer har mye jødehat. Likevel ser du en hel generasjon unge, norske muslimer som står samlet, hånd i hånd, for å verne og slå ring rundt en synagoge. Det finnes ikke noe bedre svar enn det. Det er jo så krystallklart og det er jo så perfekt.

2: Mm.

4: Sånne handlinger er det jo som gjør at man kan klare å bryte ned stereotypiene.

2: Ikke bare i offentligheten, man må også jobbe innad i egne grupper. Muslimske ledere må i større grad være med i den norske debatten og gå i dialog med ulike norske stortingsrepresentanter som har i seg en del av disse holdningene mot muslimer, slik at vi klarer å bryte den onde sirkelen, da. Så det er absolutt viktig at muslimer går mer ut og ikke forsvarer seg, men beviser det motsatte."

themselves when something happens, but do the Americans do that? Did all Norwegians go out in the streets to say “we do not support ABB” [meaning the terrorist Anders Behring Breivik], or the Jews say: we are against Netanyahu’s actions? The intentions were surely good, but I wouldn’t have taken part in it. Because I do not need to go out to say that I do not kill Jews. I do not have anything against Jews, so why do I have to express it?<sup>35</sup>

This interviewee is clearly less willing to accept responsibility for distancing herself from acts of terror performed in the name of Islam and Muslims. From her perspective, it is unfair that Muslims in general are held responsible for whatever bad things any Muslim does. It is quite interesting that she chooses the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik and the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in order to illustrate that other people are not held responsible for actions conducted by individuals. Here, we see another example of comparison. The sequence expresses what can be termed the counterpart of the interpretative pattern of competition of victimhood, namely the comparison of wrongdoings. By mentioning Netanyahu, the interviewee indicates that his actions are comparable with Islamist and right-wing extremist terror.

The two sequences together can serve to illustrate what Bohnsack describes as underlying collective patterns of orientation in group interviews.<sup>36</sup> The interviewees seem to share an underlying view according to which Muslims do not receive the acknowledgement and respect they deserve, but are blamed and scapegoated in society. In one of the groups (M3) this seems to result in a rejection of empathy or solidarity with groups they regard as being favoured.

Towards the end of the quote, the interviewee in M3 stresses that she does not feel hatred against Jews, though she once again mentions the feeling of being pressured to take distance from such hate. The feeling of imbalance when it comes to the claims society directs towards Muslims and the lack of solidarity shown to Muslims (“how many times did we see ‘rings of peace’ around mosques?”) seem to be the reason for the unwillingness to support the ring of peace around the synagogue. However, this unwillingness to show empathy and solidarity, com-

35. 4: “Som muslim så prøver vi jo skikkelig hardt å vise at vi ikke er onde. Altså, Hvor mange ganger har man hatt fredsringer rundt moskéer? Må vi virkelig gå ut, det forventes nesten som man alltid forventer at muslimer tar avstand når noe skjer, men.. Gjør alle amerikanere det? Tok alle nordmenn i gatene og sa ‘Vi støtter ikke ABB’? eller om jødene sa: Vi er i mot Netanyahus handlinger? Det var sikkert gode intensjoner, men jeg hadde ikke deltatt der. For jeg har ikke behov for å gå ut å si at jeg dreper ikke jøder. Jeg har ikke noe imot jøder, så hvorfor skal jeg gå ut og ytre meg?”

36. Bohnsack, “‘Orientierungsmuster’: Ein Grundbegriff qualitativer Sozialforschung.”

bined with the equation of Netanyahu and “Jews” sheds light on the previous comment about “not hating Jews”. This statement seems to express a commitment to the anti-antisemitism norm, understood as the obligation to (at least) not to *hate* Jews.

### *Victimhood versus agency*

While there seems to be an underlying agreement in the group of female Muslims (M3) of an unwillingness to show solidarity with Jews due to a perception of Muslims being more discriminated against, the members of the other group of young Muslims (M2) conclude differently when talking about the hostility they experience. One female interviewee talks about how Muslims are being dehumanised:

1: If we look at Norway as a body, Muslims are almost regarded as a tumour. The question is if this tumour is benign or malign? If it is malign, how shall we remove it? How shall we fix the problem? How shall we fix the tumour? Cure Norway? If it is benign, how can we let it be, not touch it and kind of calm it down? If we look at Muslims as a vital organ in the body that is Norway, how can we contribute to making this body a hundred times better? I think this is underlying the entire debate. (...)

4: I think it is understandable that Muslims somehow take the victim position. It is also understandable if you think about all that pressure from the media, a lot of verbal harassment on the internet. It is understandable. The victim position does not come by default. But the problem is that we have very few voices in the media who manage to give an academic response, few who can break the media image.<sup>37</sup>

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37. 1: “Hvis vi ser på Norge som en kropp, så blir muslimene sett på som en svulst, nesten. Og så er spørsmålet om dette er en ondartet svulst eller en godartet svulst? Og hvis det er en ondartet, hvordan skal vi fjerne den? Hvordan skal vi fikse problemet. Hvordan skal vi fikse svulsten? Kurere Norge? Og hvis det er en godartet, hvordan skal vi bare la den ligge, ikke røre den og lik-som dempe den ned? Hvis vi ser på muslimene som et vitalt organ i kroppen, som er Norge, hvordan kan vi være med til å gjøre kroppen hundre ganger bedre? Det er dette jeg synes ligger under hele debatten, da. [...]”

4: Jeg synes det er forståelig at muslimer går litt i offerrolle. Det er forståelig også med tanke på alt det mediepresset, mye verbal hets på nettet.. Det er jo forståelig. Det er jo ikke ubetinget at offerrollen kommer. Men problemet er at vi har dessverre veldig få stemmer i media som klarer å gi et akademisk svar tilbake, som kan knekke ned mediebildet.”

This interview sequence starts with referring to a drastic and dehumanising aspect of Islamophobic discourse. At this point, it would not be surprising if the conversation turned in the same direction we saw in the other group, rejecting any claims of the wider Norwegian society. But as the interviewee continues to ponder the metaphor of Norway as a body, she turns it into the complete opposite, insisting that Muslims are a vital part of the nation, being able to contribute positively. As this interviewee refrains from a self-victimisation, the other interviewee reflects on how the victim position can emerge. However, similar to the first speaker, he chooses a positive outlook of being able to give an “academic response” and “break the media image.”

In these two short paragraphs, we see an underlying orientation contrasting the one in the first group: instead of dwelling on the subject of discrimination and using it as a pretext for rejecting claims of empathy or solidarity, this group insists on being able to intellectualise their experience and articulate their own voice. Positioning themselves as resourceful agents against discrimination, they also position themselves as agents of solidarity when another minority is threatened.

### *Balance of solidarity*

In the interview with the Muslim “veterans” (M1), the issue of “balance” was brought up as the discussion lead on to solidarity. One of the interviewees referred to an event held in front of one of the Oslo mosques a week after the “ring of peace” around the synagogue. However, the event by the mosque did not receive the same amount of support, neither through direct participation or coverage in national media. On the contrary, due to allegedly antisemitic statements by the mosque’s imam, the initiative was met by a number of critical reactions. Despite this, the interviewees seemed to regard the two events as equally important:

1: Then it is this here [points to the image of the “ring of peace”], we support that! We joined it, and we took part in it. And then we had [one] right outside [mosque X]. So, there are images of them, why do you not have images of [the other event]?

3: But it was nice, that one.

[...]

#### 4: We wish to see such kind of solidarity.<sup>38</sup>

In this short sequence, we see the negotiation concerning the evaluation of the ring of peace around the synagogue at work. The way the interviewee uses “we” here suggests an almost formal statement, an “official” attitude towards this issue, indicating that there is little room for different views of interpretations. However, there was a certain tension between the interviewees, one critically asking why no representation of the ring of peace around the mosque had been included into the set of images, while the other underlines the sympathy with the ring of peace around the synagogue. Is it a necessary condition for the appreciation of the event that also a similar “ring of peace” around a mosque is acknowledged? Or is the act of solidarity in itself unconditioned, a “nice thing” which can be appreciated? The tension was settled by the somewhat open comment on solidarity – which in fact could have been related to either one or both of the events.

#### *Doubt about long-term effect*

As shown in the previous paragraphs, both Jewish and Muslim interviewees shared an overall positive evaluation of the “ring of peace”. It had clearly given the participants a positive encounter and common experience with (representatives of) the other minority. Following Gordon Allport and what is known as “contact theory” in the field of research on prejudice, such symbolic and clearly emotionally loaded events can contribute to dismantling existing negative attitudes towards groups.<sup>39</sup> In the case of the “ring of peace”, massive and undivided positive media coverage will have contributed to this effect beyond the persons directly involved in the event. However, some of the Jewish interviewees expressed doubts about the prevalence of this effect, as this quote illustrates: “well intentioned indeed, but unfortunately forgotten two days later. Thank you, next one please.”

The young Muslim interviewees, who had shown such enthusiasm about the “ring of peace”, expressed some of the same scepticism:

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38. 1: “Så er det den her [viser bildet av fredens ring], den støtta vi. Den var vi med på, og den har vi tatt der og så har vi tatt rett utenfor moskéen [X]. Så det er bilder av dem, hvorfor har dere ikke bilder av [den andre ringen]?”

3: Men det var en fin en, den der.

[...]

4: Sønn solidaritet vil vi ha.”

39. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Basic books, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979 [1954]).



2: But it is a little bit sad, it has been such a *golden opportunity* for the two communities to move somewhat closer together. But this has not happened yet, now in the aftermath. It is maybe more obvious that one should have more meetings.

4: But it became a little bit like that, somehow (# 2: yes, maybe). We still have the same grandfather.

[light laughter]

3: Yes.

4: We are family.

2: But, we talk about two minorities, who for sure could have learned from each other.

3: Yes, I feel that there was somehow, in any case in Oslo afterwards, there was an intention to stay in touch.

1: Yes, maybe, but it fades out [English in the original]. People have their own lives and so. It's like [makes a movement with her head] shall we be mingling?<sup>40</sup>

The interviewees doubt the long-term effect of the event, yet the scepticism is not rooted in a deeper sense of mistrust, but is rather explained by hectic lives and everyday challenges that make such promises difficult to keep. Though the tone

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40. 2: "Men det var og litt synd, at det var sånn *golden opportunity* til at de to samfunnene kanskje er litt mer sammen da, men det har jo ikke skjedd ennå, nå i etterkant, det er klarere [?] kanskje, at man skulle hatt mer samlinger sammen

4: Men det ble jo litt sånn, eller sånn

2: Ja, kanskje

4: Vi har jo samme bestefar da, det har vi da

[lett latter]

3: Ja

4: Vi er jo i familie

2: Men, eh, det er jo to minoriteter da, som kunne sikkert ha lært av hverandre

3: Ja, jeg føler at det var litt, i hvert fall i Oslo etterpå, det var litt at man skulle ta kontakt og sånn

1: Ja, kanskje samme

3: Ja

1: Men det fader [engelsk] jo ut, altså folk har jo sine egne liv og så er det sånn der [lager en bevegelse med hode], skal man mingle, da?"

was disappointed, the interviewees did not seem to think that contact between the minorities was principally impossible; it was only difficult in practice.

In summary, the image of the ring of peace, being an icon of successful Muslim-Jewish solidarity, triggered immediate positive reactions among the interviewees. However, the image was also associated with some ambivalent feelings, insecurity and even a sense of resistance, the latter being related to perceptions among the Muslim interviewees of imposed culpability.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The photographs used as prompts in the group interviews sparked a range of reactions, comments and conversations in the groups, providing an insight into the attitudes the Jewish and Muslim interviewees hold towards each other. The two photos of 9/11 and the “ring of peace” were immediately recognised by the participants and seemed to have an “iconic” status in the sense that they were associated with established interpretations and narratives. Both images were related to different aspects and effects of Islamophobia and antisemitism, which was apparent in the discussions. However, few examples of open Islamophobia or classical antisemitic stereotypes were expressed, and when they appeared, they did not remain uncontested. The mentioning of conspiracy theories about the terror attack on 9/11 was accompanied by a certain unease among the other interviewees and led to attempts to place these ideas “outside” their respective communities. By suggesting that conspiracy ideas regarding Jews were widespread in other countries, but unacceptable in Norway, the interviewees distanced themselves from such ideas and positioned themselves as Norwegian. These interview sequences indicated how the fine line between acceptable and non-acceptable statements was established and maintained.

The analysis of the group interviews points to a double ambivalence among the interviewees. On the one hand, this ambivalence is an aspect of the relationship between the minorities; on the other, the interviewees express ambivalent feelings related to the experiences of being minorities in Norwegian society. The experience of not being acknowledged as proper Norwegians opens for an interpretation of having something in common as minorities. This complexity is illustrated by the fact that the Jewish interviewees were appreciative of the “ring of peace”, but also expressed doubts and even anxiety towards the solidarity event organised by Muslims. The reactions thus showed little immediate trust, and indicated doubt as to whether the organisers and motivation behind the event could be regarded as representative. The Muslim interviewees were divided in their reactions: some

interviewees expressed pride and ownership, based on the acceptance of an obligation to distance oneself from antisemitism and terror. In contrast to this, other interviewees rejected any such obligation and expressed indignation over what they perceived as asymmetry regarding what the Muslim minority was expected to “prove” to the majority, compared to what was expected from the Jewish minority.

Methodologically, the study shows the usefulness of images as visual stimuli in the study of collective underlying orientations and latency. The exploration of interactions in social groups gives relevant insight into processes of negotiation of attitudes. The analysis has shown how the boundaries of the acceptable and non-acceptable are not static, but rather framed by existing social and cultural norms and regulated by social interaction of the groups.

In our study, we found perceptions of communality and solidarity between Muslims and Jews as well as perceptions of mistrust and competitive victimhood. Solidarity seems to be undermined when public discourse is perceived to apply different standards and expectations to the minorities. Latent negative attitudes against Jews expressed by Muslim interviewees in this study are linked to and legitimised by feelings of bitterness due to stigmatisation and lack of acknowledgement. The findings thus indicate that the impact of initiatives taken in order to establish trust and solidarity among the minorities only can be understood when taking into account the impact of public policy and discourse. The solidarity shown by Muslims and Jews after the recent right-wing extremist terror attacks against a synagogue in Pittsburgh, USA<sup>41</sup> and mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand<sup>42</sup> show that a sense of mutual solidarity may grow in the face of hate and violence targeting both minorities. The different ways that societal contexts and public discourse frame attitudes among minorities is a topic for further research.

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## APPENDIX

### COMPOSITION OF THE GROUPS:

Muslim interviewees	Jewish interviewees
<p>M1:</p> <p>Three men aged over 70, first-generation immigrants from Pakistan, no higher education. The informants were mutual acquaintances and attended the same mosque. The interview was attended by two other individuals who did not actively participate, one of whom was the imam of the mosque.</p>	<p>J1:</p> <p>One woman and two men aged between 40 and 60. The woman described herself as atheist. The two men were religious. The informants were not personal acquaintances.</p>
<p>M2:</p> <p>Two women and two men aged between 19 and 25, high level of education, liberal interpretation of religion (one was a convert). Socially engaged. One individual in the group was personally acquainted with the others, but all of them belonged to the same community.</p>	<p>J2:</p> <p>Three women and one man aged between 20 and 30 and affiliated to the Mosaic Faith Community in Trondheim. The informants were personal acquaintances; two of them were related.</p>
<p>M3:</p> <p>Four women; two second-generation immigrants in their twenties, and two women in their forties of Norwegian descent who had converted to Islam as adults. All devoutly religious. The informants were personal acquaintances.</p>	<p>J3:</p> <p>Three women aged between 50 and 60, affiliated to the Mosaic Religious Community in Oslo. All participants had either backgrounds from countries other than Norway, families abroad, or had lived for long periods outside Norway.</p>

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