

## **ENGLISH SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

This report presents the findings from two surveys conducted by the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities: a population survey on attitudes towards Jews and Muslims and a minority study in which Jews and Muslims in Norway were asked about their experiences and attitudes. The data collection was carried out by Kantar TNS between 11 January and 6 April 2017. The report also presents findings from qualitative group interviews with Jewish and Muslim informants conducted between May 2016 and May 2017.

The surveys have mapped attitudes based on three dimensions: a cognitive dimension (prejudices), an affective dimension (feelings such as sympathy and antipathy) and one that measures degree of social distance. These dimensions are to some extent independent of each other. For example, prejudices against a group will often be more prevalent than antipathy and social distance. Such tendencies are also found in the present study.

### **THE NORWEGIAN POPULATION'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWS**

A key premise for the population survey conducted in 2017 was that the findings should be comparable with the first survey conducted by the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in November 2011. Asking identical questions will bring to light any changes in attitudes and trends.

The findings show that stereotypical views about Jews still prevail in Norwegian society in 2017 but that they are less prevalent than in 2011. Overall, the proportion of the Norwegian population with marked prejudices against Jews decreased from 12.1 to 8.3 per cent (3.8 percentage points). At the same time, the proportion of the Norwegian population that does not agree with negative statements about Jews whatsoever increased from 55 per cent to 69 per cent; that is, by as much as 14 percentage points. Some antisemitic views clearly still prevail in the Norwegian population, though far less markedly so than five years ago. For example, 13 per cent agree with the statement "World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests" (in 2011 the corresponding figure was 19 per cent), and 18 per cent believe that "Jews consider themselves to be better than others" (2011: 26 per cent). The same trend emerges regarding negative feelings towards and social distance from Jews. Overall, the indices show that 6.7 per cent of respondents harbour a dislike of Jews (2011: 9.8 per cent) and 5.9 per cent of the Norwegian population would dislike having Jews as neighbours or in their circle of friends (2011: 8.5 per cent). The decrease in the incidence of anti-Semitic attitudes in Norway between 2011 and 2017 cannot be explained by any changes in the background variables, such as level of education, attitudes towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict or degree of xenophobia. The explanation may lie in the shift in public opinion, where media and

policies have paid more attention to antisemitism as a social issue in response to, among other things, terrorist attacks on Jews in Europe. A similar decrease in support for conventional antisemitic statements has been observed in other European countries in recent years.

While the general trend clearly points in a positive direction, some findings are more problematic. In particular, the findings show that attitudes towards Jews are influenced (and heightened) by attitudes towards Israel and the Middle East conflict (see below).

## **THE NORWEGIAN POPULATION'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSLIMS**

We also asked respondents about their attitudes towards Muslims. Indices similar to those used in 2011 and 2017 for attitudes towards Jews were developed for negative attitudes towards Muslims. The findings regarding the affective dimension and social distance are directly comparable, but those regarding perceptions (the cognitive dimension) are not, because the statements used in the indices for Jews and Muslims differ.

The findings show that negative stereotypes of Muslims are widespread in Norwegian society. Overall, 34.1 per cent of the population displays marked prejudices against Muslims. As many as 47 per cent of respondents agree with the statement "Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increasing anti-Muslim harassment, and 42 per cent agree with the statement "Muslims do not want to integrate into Norwegian society"; 39 per cent agree with the statement "Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture" and 30 per cent with the statement "Muslims want to take over Europe". Relatively many respondents also express negative feelings towards and social distance from Muslims. 27.8 per cent dislike Muslims, and overall 19.6 per cent would dislike having Muslims as neighbours or in their circle of friends. But these findings do not show a negative trend; in fact in 2011 slightly more respondents wanted to keep a social distance from Muslims.

Where there is a basis for making direct comparisons between the Norwegian population's attitudes towards Muslims and its attitudes towards Jews, dislike of Muslims is in 2017 far more prevalent than dislike of Jews (social distance: 19.6 per cent compared with 5.9 per cent; dislike: 27.8 per cent compared with 6.7 per cent).

The incidence of both antisemitic and Islamophobic attitudes is higher among men than among women, among older respondents than among younger, and among respondents with a low level of education than among those with a high level of education. Moreover, xenophobia, skepticism towards immigration and opinions on the Middle East conflict (see below) are important background variables. Closer analysis shows that antisemitism and Islamophobia are more alike than unlike.

## **MUSLIMS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWS**

The question of whether Muslims in Norway are "more antisemitic" than the population in general has been widely debated in the Norwegian media, though without sufficient empirical basis. The current survey now shows that Muslim immigrants who have lived at least five years in Norway stand out on the cognitive dimension of antisemitic attitudes and agree with negative statements about

Jews to a larger extent than the population in general (28.9 per cent compared with 8.3 per cent). For example, as much as 42 per cent of the Muslim sample believes that “Jews have too much influence on the global economy” (compared with 13 per cent of the general population) and only 9 per cent (but 46 per cent of the general population) disagrees with this statement. Twenty-eight per cent of the Muslim sample agrees with the statement “World Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests” (compared with 13 per cent of the general population). While stereotypical views of Jewish power and influence are highly prevalent in the Muslim sample, the notion that Jews have themselves to blame for being persecuted is supported by a minority of those who expressed an opinion (17 per cent agree compared with 37 per cent who disagree). The difference between the Muslim sample and the population sample is minimal regarding social distance (few would dislike having Jews as neighbours or in their circle of friends) and the affective dimension (dislike of Jews).

As in the population in general, negative attitudes towards Jews in the Muslim sample are also found to be more prevalent among men, people aged over 45, and people with a low level of education. The proportion of Muslims with antisemitic attitudes is particularly large among older people (aged over 60). The finding that prejudice against Jews is more prevalent among Muslims than in the population in general is also found in surveys conducted in other European countries. Although the findings cannot be compared directly, there is much to indicate that the difference between the Muslims and the population in general on this issue is smaller in Norway than in countries such as Belgium, France, the UK and Germany.

### **JEWS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSLIMS**

Similarly, we asked the Jewish sample about attitudes towards Muslims. The findings show that negative attitudes towards Muslims are far less prevalent in the Jewish sample than in the population in general. This difference is apparent on all attitudinal dimensions (cognitive (14.7 per cent compared with 34.1 per cent), affective (14.5 per cent compared with 27.8 per cent) and social distance (13.5 per cent compared with 19.6 per cent). Whereas 39 per cent of the population sample considers Muslims to represent “a threat to Norwegian culture”, 22 per cent of the Jewish sample agrees with this statement. Furthermore, more Jews consider negative attitudes towards Muslims to be widespread in Norway and that anti-Muslim harassment should be combated. Eighty-seven per cent of the Jewish sample agrees with the statement that acts of violence against Muslims represent “an attack on our society”, and 71 per cent believes that this shows that hatred of Muslims has become a serious problem in Europe. These findings must be interpreted in light of the significantly large proportion of respondents – 76 per cent – with a high level of education in the Jewish sample. Moreover, the Jewish minority’s own experiences of discrimination may have contributed to heightened sensitivity to and caution towards negative attitudes against other groups.

### **JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORWAY: EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION**

To supplement the attitudes survey, we asked the Jewish and Muslim minority populations in Norway about their experiences. Only a minority report having had personal experiences of

discrimination during the past 12 months: 35,5 per cent of Muslims and 28 per cent of Jews have “often or sometimes” been given the feeling that they do not belong in Norwegian society. Fewer respondents (27 per cent of Muslims and 18,5 per cent of Jews) have experienced that people behave negatively towards them when they learn of their religious affiliation, and fewer still (14 per cent Muslims and 11 per cent Jews) have been directly subjected to harassment. Experiences of discrimination in everyday life occur slightly more often among Muslims, but the feeling of vulnerability is more widespread among Jews. As many as 64 per cent of Jews (and 26 per cent of Muslims) report that they avoid displaying their religious affiliation because they are afraid of negative attitudes. Furthermore, both minorities notice a negative trend and think that prejudice in the Norwegian population against their groups has become more prevalent over the past five years. The majority of respondents in both samples who expressed an opinion (75 per cent Jews and 48 per cent Muslims) report that Jews and Muslims share some common experiences as minorities

in Norway, and clear majorities in both samples (81,5 per cent Jews and 70 per cent Muslims) believe that they could cooperate on combating prejudice and discrimination.

## **ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA AS SOCIAL ISSUES**

How does the Norwegian population itself assess the prevalence of negative attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway? Does it see the necessity to combat harassment against these minorities? In 2017, as in 2011, the proportion of respondents (81 per cent) who believe that negative attitudes towards Muslims is widespread in Norway is far larger than the proportion of respondents who believe that the same applies to negative attitudes towards Jews (19 per cent). In their attempts to explain the negative attitudes towards Jews, respondents often cited Israel’s role in the Middle East conflict and the media’s coverage of it, as well as to old prejudices and ignorance. Negative views of Muslims are explained by (Islamist) terror and extremism, cultural conflicts in multicultural Norway, and xenophobia in wider society. To a larger degree than in 2011, the responses cite circumstances outside the minorities as the causes of antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Most of those who responded believe that measures to combat anti-Jewish harassment (41 per cent) and anti-Muslim harassment (56 per cent) are needed. With reference to the incidents of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence in Europe in recent years, a large majority of the Norwegian population (approximately 75 per cent) disapproves of acts of violence against Jews and Muslims, and sees them as “an attack on our society”. Among a minority of respondents, however, violence is justified. As much as 12 per cent of the population sample and 20 per cent of the Muslim sample agree with the statement “Considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, such harassment and violence against Jews is justified”. Ten per cent of the population sample and nine per cent of the Jewish sample agree with the corresponding statement, “Considering recent terror attacks, harassment and violence against Muslims is justified”.

## **THE HOLOCAUST**

In 2011 there was considerable agreement within the population sample that education about the Holocaust was important. In 2017 almost everyone (96 per cent) reports having heard about the

Holocaust. Among Muslim immigrants, however, the corresponding proportion is only 64 per cent. It is particularly Muslims who received their education in Norway and Europe that have heard about the Holocaust. An overwhelming majority of the population sample and of the Jewish sample, and a clear majority of the Muslim sample, believe that knowledge about the Holocaust is important for preventing the oppression of minorities today. However, opinions differ on whether Jews can demand any special treatment on account of this history. One-third of the population sample (in 2011 the corresponding proportion was only 26 per cent) agree with the view that Jews today were, because of the Holocaust, entitled to their own state, where they could seek protection from persecution. Compared to 2011, far fewer (31 per cent compared to 44 per cent) disagree with this statement. In the Muslim sample, too, more respondents agree (30 per cent) than disagree (23 per cent) with the statement that Jews are entitled to their own state because of persecution during the Holocaust. At the same time, 22 per cent of the population sample (in 2011 the corresponding figure was 25 per cent) and 30 per cent of the Muslim sample believe that Jews today exploit the memory of the Holocaust for their own benefit.

### **ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

Regarding views on the parties in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, two to three times as many respondents in the population sample support the Palestinians than support Israel. However, more than half of the respondents expressed no opinion or refrained from responding. Attitudes in the two minority samples are more clearly divided: fifty-nine per cent of Muslims support the Palestinians (and only three per cent support Israel), and 80 per cent of Jews support Israel (and only two per cent support the Palestinians). Although opinions on the conflict are generally divided, there is one statement which clear majorities (over 70 per cent) in all three samples support, namely “Both the Israelis and the Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own”.

When the general population’s views on the conflict are grouped into three types of opinions (pro-Israel, pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli) and compared with the findings from 2011, the pro-Israeli attitudes remain relatively stable at around 20 per cent; the pro-Palestinian attitudes remain high, but drop slightly from 66 per cent to 60 per cent; and the anti-Israeli attitudes increase slightly from 25 per cent in 2011 to 27 per cent in 2017. More respondents than in 2011 (20 per cent compared with 16 per cent) believe that “As long as the State of Israel exists there can be no peace in the world”. Fewer respondents than in 2011 (32 per cent compared to 38 per cent) agree with the statement that Israel treats the Palestinians “just as badly” as the Nazis treated the Jews during World War II. Nonetheless, one in three in the population sample still agrees with this statement. The proportion of Muslims (51 per cent) who agree is even higher. No-one in the Jewish sample agrees with the statement.

Which side the respondents support in the Middle East conflict, and other attitudes they may have towards the conflict, are clearly related to their attitudes to Jews and Muslims. Those who support the Palestinians and those who display anti-Israel attitudes are also more negatively inclined towards Jews. Those who support Israel and who display pro-Israeli attitudes score high on the index for Islamophobia.

## CONCLUSION

The survey of antisemitic attitudes in Norway presents a complex picture. There is clearly a decline in support within the general population for conventional antisemitic attitudes. The findings also show a positive trend in degree of social distance and dislike of Jews. But this trend is not reflected in Jews' own assessment of the situation; they see today's antisemitism as a serious and escalating problem in society. Two of three Jews in the sample report that they hide their religious affiliation in public so as to avoid negative reactions. The same picture (little support for conventional antisemitism within the general population but a perceived high level of antisemitic threat among Jews) has been observed in Sweden, and has been explained in a recent survey by the development of three distinct forms of antisemitism in today's Europe: classic antisemitism, Israel-derived antisemitism and Enlightenment-based (i.e. based on religious criticism) antisemitism. The Jews' assessment of the situation is often influenced by the latter two<sup>1</sup>. There is much to indicate that attitudes towards the MiddleEast conflict are also a decisive factor in Norway. In the prevailing pro-Palestinian – and to some extent anti-Israeli – climate in Norway, the Jews are alone in their fundamentally positive attitudes towards the state of Israel. Although support for conventional antisemitism has decreased within the general population in recent years, anti-Israeli attitudes have not. The most alarming finding, however, is the justification of violence and harassment against Jews based on Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. In 2011, four per cent of the Norwegian population considered the shots fired on the synagogue in Oslo to be justified considering how Israel treats the Palestinians. In 2017, 12 per cent of the population sample and 20 per cent of the Muslim sample believe that violence and harassment against Jews can be justified using the same argument.

The survey of Islamophobia in Norway shows that negative attitudes towards Muslims is quite prevalent in the Norwegian population; between one-fifth and one-third score high on the various indices. This is reflected in the Norwegian population's own assessment, in which over 80 per cent assess negative attitudes towards Muslims to be highly or quite prevalent. Muslims view the actual situation less negatively than the population sample, though more than half (52 per cent) share this assessment. Regarding perceptions of whether negative attitudes towards Muslims have become more or less prevalent in Norway over the past five years, Muslims see a negative trend more clearly than does the general population. Almost two of three Muslims believe that negative attitudes are today more prevalent than they were five years ago, while only one of three in the general population share the same view. We only have data on the actual trend in social distance, where the trend from 2011 to 2017 has moved slowly in a positive direction. Negative attitudes towards Muslims in Norway are clearly linked to xenophobia and scepticism towards immigration. This connection can be traced back to the heated public debates of recent years over the refugee crisis, the integration of Muslims in Norway, and the threat of terrorism. The discussion of immigration and integration in these debates has centred largely on *Muslim* immigration and integration in Norway. Moreover, Islamophobic views have been used for political mobilisation and have thereby become part of an ideological worldview, particularly on the far right of the political spectrum. Although a large majority of the Norwegian population is convinced that negative attitudes towards Muslims are

---

<sup>1</sup> Dencik and Marosi (2016).

widespread in Norway, fewer consider it necessary to do something to combat anti-Muslim harassment.

Based on the divided opinions about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, antisemitism and Islamophobia are often seen as polar opposites, but this is only partly true. These attitudes are, to a greater extent, closely related phenomena, and are linked to xenophobic views in the general population. Those who display prejudice towards and dislike of foreigners score high on *both* indices (that is, for Islamophobia *and* antisemitism). The minorities' experiences of discrimination point in the same direction; they show that Jews and Muslims share a number of the same problems associated with being minorities in Norway. Large majorities in both groups therefore see a possibility to cooperate on combating prejudice and discrimination. The picture is more complex, however, because the survey also found more negative attitudes towards Jews among Muslims than in the population in general. Some distinctions are in order here, too: the negative attitudes among Muslims are based mainly on classic stereotypes of Jewish power and influence in the world and not on social distance or dislike of Jews in everyday life. These may, nonetheless, pose a serious obstacle to cooperation between these minorities.