

EXPLORING ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE CLASSROOM

A case study among Norwegian Adolescents from minority backgrounds

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Introduction

This study explores high school students' views of Jews in one minority-dominated school in Oslo, Norway (with the pseudonym "Junior High"). Employing a qualitative approach, semi-structured interview guides and classroom-based discussions teased out attitudes towards Jews drawing on questions from a nation-wide research conducted by The Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities (2102). The findings are analysed through the conceptual prism of anti-social capital and the literature on anti-Semitism with a focus on Jean-Paul Sartre's (1948) analysis. This study warns that failure to pay attention to the increasing fragmentation of the educational landscape in Norway along ethnico-religious lines will serve to undercut teacher's efforts to combat anti-Semitism. This task is made all the more urgent given recent demographic projections warning that the skewed schooling distribution along ethnic lines will only get worse with time. At the beginning of 2013, Norway had 593 000 immigrants (11.7 per cent of the population) and 117 000 Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, together 14.1 per cent of the total population. In 2006 the numbers were 320 000 and 68 000, respectively. Of all immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, 42.6 per cent had a background from EU etc., 57.4 per cent had a background from Africa, Asia etc. The largest groups of immigrants came from Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany and Somalia (between 77 000 and 24 000). The largest numbers of Norwegian-born to immigrant parents had their background from Pakistan, Somalia, Vietnam, Iraq, Turkey, Poland and Sri Lanka (15 000 to 6 000). In 2013, three of ten inhabitants in Oslo were immigrants or Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. In 2006 one third of those with an immigrant background in Norway lived in Oslo, in 2013 it was one in four. From 2006 to 2013 the number of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents increased with 325 000 individuals, almost 80 per cent of the total population growth of 410 000 individuals. The last few years, the population growth of Norway has been slightly

higher than the global population growth; 1.2 per cent versus 1.1 (Østby, 2014). The largest non-western category are Somalis with 37 631.

The lion's share of the steep rise in immigration in the last decade or so is due to the former East Bloc countries joining the EU and the Schengen Treaty that guarantees free movement of labor. Although not an EU member, Norway is signatory to the EEA (European Economic Area) and Schengen. The overall conflation of East European and Norwegian cultural values has seen these groups settle in relatively peacefully with many taking up jobs in the construction industry. However, where some non-western categories (Somalis, Pakistanis, and Iraqis for instance) have formed enclaves in the east and southeast regions of the capital, Oslo, for instance, there have been some challenges with respect to schooling. Schools, politicians, teachers and the media intermittently report on the nature of some of these challenges:

- concerns about female genital mutilation among Somalis
- debates about the young girls donning veils
- issues related to concepts of “shame” and “honor” among Arab and Pakistani girls
- parents who withdraw their children from schools in Norway and send them to schools in unstable countries like Somalia for religious education
- the increasing phenomenon of “White flight” as some Norwegian parents move out of such enclaves citing reasons of poor linguistic skills among immigrants and the discomfort of being a minority in one's own country.

The students have self-identified as one of the following: Norwegians, Iraqis, Somalis, Pakistanis, Kurdish, Turkish, Afghans, Chechens, Thai, Congolese, Palestinians and Moroccan. Some of the participants shared their views during English classes, but the lion's share of the data was obtained during the bi-weekly classes in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. The latter is commensurate with the observation, “Aside from history, the other principal curricular area which easily benefits from focus on anti-Semitism is religious and moral education” (Cowan & Maitles, 2012, p. 191). Although not a religious phenomenon alone, anti-Semitism is often nested in theological tensions. All translations from Norwegian to English, whether in print or verbal, are mine.

The historical contours of anti-Semitism in Norway

Anti-Semitism in Norway has a long pedigree. In 1436, Archbishop Aslak Bolt made it an offense to observe the Sabbath in a Jewish manner (Mendelsohn, 1969, p. 10). Although a few

Sephardic Jews escaping persecution in Portugal in the 1490s were granted some dispensation and permitted to settle in Norway by King Christian IV, Christian V rescinded these exemptions in 1687 during the Union of Denmark-Norway. It is this latter injunction that the second paragraph of the 1814 Constitution sought to uphold with the words, "...Jews are *still* forbidden from entering the country". The German reformer Martin Luther's anti-Semitism looms large in any study exploring the subject in Scandinavia. One Danish goldsmith, who accused the King of protecting Jews in their alleged attempts to plunder the country, melt the gold and smuggle it out of Denmark in 1771, cites Martin Luther as an inspiration (Eriksen, Harket, & Lorenz, 2009, p. 213). The architects behind the Constitution defended their decision with arguments that were typically anti-Semitic. Lauritz Weidemann contended, for instance:

The Jewish nation's history demonstrates that the presence of these people has been rebellious and treacherous, that their religious teaching, the hope of a revival of their own nation, has, as often as they have amassed a significant fortune, driven them to intrigues and to create a state within a state. In the interests of state security, therefore, an absolute exception must be made in regards to them (Mendelsohn, 1969, p. 44).

Selbekk (2013, p. 8) calls such declarations "state-sanctioned anti-Semitism". The preoccupation with Jews appears perplexing given that there were no Jews to speak of in Norway at the time (Eriksen, Harket, & Lorenz, 2009, p. 208). Although his father, the vicar Nicolai Wergeland, was opposed to granting Jews entry to Norway (Mendelsohn, 1969, p. 62), the celebrated poet, Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845), made it his mission to expunge the infamous anti-Jewish clause, simply referred to as Paragraph 2. He argued strongly against the prevalent belief that Jews were in possession of particularly negative characteristics and were unreliable in money matters. He contended that these "vices" (Norwegian: *udyder*) must be skin-deep since, according to public opinion, they disappear the moment a Jew converts and is baptized. Furthermore, he appealed to the biblical injunction, "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Selbekk, 2013, pp. 18,19). Wergeland died in 1845 six years before his efforts to expunge the clause against Jews entering Norway was crowned with success.

When war broke out in 1940, about 2100 Jews lived in Norway. Of these, 350 were refugees from the continent. About 290 were stateless individuals who had lived here for many years. Among the roughly 1500 Norwegian Jews, none had roots in Norway that went back further than 1851 (Ulstein, 2006, p. 37).

Fears of a mass immigration of Jews to Norway once the paragraph was expunged proved baseless: only *one* Jew resided in Norway in 1853. 15 years later, the number had increased to

a paltry 25. The traditional toxic blend of xenophobia, Christian Judeophobia and modern anti-Semitism culminated in a ban on the Jewish ritual slaughter of animals (*Schächting*) in 1930 (Eriksen, Harket, & Lorenz, 2009, pp. 410, 411). On April 9 1940, the Nazis occupied Norway. Norwegian police were ordered to confiscate radios from Jewish homes and register the name of every Jewish organization and its members. Jews were now required by law to have “J” (for Jew) stamped on their identity cards. Norwegians now read in the Nazi-controlled newspapers that international Jewry was responsible for the war, and that Jews pulled the strings behind the scenes in London and Washington (Ulstein, 2006, p. 41). According to Ulstein (2006, p. 72), “On Yom Kippur, 10 September 1942, one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar, the Nazis confiscated many Jewish-owned villas in the Oslo area. This occurred while many were in the Synagogue” (Ulstein, 2006, p. 55). Writing in October 1942, *Aftenposten*, one of Norway’s most prestigious national newspapers, alleged that Norwegian Jews worked in clandestine with Jewish Bolshevism to undermine national movements (Ulstein, 2006, p. 72). Haldis Neegård Østbye, who wrote an anti-Semitic book blaming the Jews for the war, wrote in a letter to Vidkun Quisling, the puppet Minister-President installed by the Nazis in Norway, that the urgent task of decapitating Jews ought to be implemented “swiftly and painlessly” by Russians and Asians, as this was not a job fit for young *Nasjonal Samling* (Quisling’s political party) men of Nordic blood (Ulstein, 2006, p. 73).

On the other hand, there were several voices raised in dissension. After reinstating the 1814 Constitutional ban on Jews from entering Norway, many clergymen, representing 19 national Christian organizations and 6 independent churches, wrote to Quisling:

Jews have for 91 years had the legal right to live and work in our country. But now you deprive them without warning of their possessions and arrest the men, so they are hindered from succouring their homeless wives and children...They are punished because of their lineage, solely because they are Jews (Ulstein, 2006, p. 120).

On October 26 1942, the night before Jews were rounded up and sent to Nazi Germany from Oslo, coded messages were relayed to several people who worked tirelessly to warn Jews to go into hiding. 770 of a total of 2200 Jews who lived in Norway were deported and sent to concentration camps in, among others, the infamous ship *SS Donau*. The majority were murdered upon arrival with only 30 surviving (Eriksen, Harket, & Lorenz, 2009, p. 419). On 27 January 2012, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, issued an official apology to the Jewish community for the arrests and deportations. Reflecting on how this was possible, Eriksen, Harket, & Lorenz (2009, p. 420) ask:

Can one of the explanations be that Norwegian society already was so tainted by latent anti-Semitism that the Jews, after a presence of nearly a hundred years, were still considered an alien element? That they were as a group still excluded from the national “we”, and therefore were in the main abandoned to their own destiny?

I turn next to the theory of social capital and Jean-Paul Sartre’s (1948) analysis of anti-Semitism which will later be synthesized using the concept of anti-social capital theory in discussing the findings.

Theoretical framework

Social capital theory

Putnam (1993, p. 167) referred to social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficacy of society by facilitating coordinated actions.” This umbrella term has been subclassified in recent theoretical work into various distinctions among which “bonding” and “bridging” are salutary to our present study (Halpern, 2005; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). Bonding is understood to refer to forms of social capital that are parochial and seek to reinforce exclusive identities among homogenous groups. Bridging encompasses networks that are outward looking and seek commonalities across social cleavages. Whereas ethnic fraternal organisations, church-based women’s reading groups and fashionable country clubs are highlighted as examples of bonding social capital, civil rights movements, youth service groups and ecumenical religious organisations serve as examples of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000, p. 22,23).

A high degree of trust, closeness and trustworthiness are vital ingredients of social capital. In a seminal paper, James Coleman (Coleman, 1988) researched New York wholesale diamond merchants who frequently handed over bags of expensive diamonds for members of the trading community to examine at their leisure with virtually no insurance, guarantees or comparable safeguards drawn up. This element of trust, or social capital, augments efficiency and information flow by, among others, eliminating the need for cumbersome contracts and expensive insurance arrangements. Social bonding is often portrayed as an inhibiting force detrimental to social cohesion; however, when seen through the lens of the actors, it becomes a necessary catalyst facilitating bridging activities (Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002).

Sartre and the “idea of the Jew”

In his scathing analysis of anti-Semitism, Jean-Paul Sartre makes this observation: “It is therefore the *idea* of the Jew that one forms for himself which would seem to determine history, not the ‘historical fact’ that produces the idea.” (Sartre, 1948, p. 16). Hence the concern of this study is to approximate the *idea* of the Jew as the distillation of an anti-Semitic discourse propagated in the classroom milieu. As Sartre puts it succinctly, “And we must ask, not ‘What is a Jew?’ but ‘*What have you made of the Jews?*’” (Sartre, 1948, p. 69). Anti-semitism, according to Sartre, is sustained by a passion that “precedes the facts that are supposed to call it forth; it seeks them out to nourish itself upon them” (Sartre, 1948, p. 17). An anti-Semite has espoused hate as an article of faith; any attempt to destabilize this unfounded hate is met with anger – a tactic which belies wilful impenetrability. Furthermore, the anti-Semite,

...has made himself an anti-Semite because that is something one cannot be alone. The phrase, “I hate the Jews,” is one that is uttered in chorus; in pronouncing it, one attaches himself to a tradition and to a community – the tradition and community of mediocrity...and anti-Semitism is an attempt to give value to mediocrity as such, to create an elite of the ordinary (Sartre, 1948, p. 22).

Sartre maintains that anti-Semitic communities are inauthentic in that they refuse to set themselves up as legal entities with political programs that contend elections. Such “equalitarian” communities are comparable to “mobs or those instantaneous societies which come into being at a lynching or during a scandal...The social bond is anger” (Sartre, 1948, p. 30). These communities have the potential to temporarily suspend or upend class differences as was the case during the Dreyfus Trial (1894-1906) in France. Alfred Dreyfus, a French artillery officer of Jewish extract, was charged with treason on trumped up charges of passing on state secrets to the Germans. Sartre notes “how anti-Semitism brought the duke closer to the coachman, how, thanks to their hatred of Dreyfus, bourgeois families forced the doors of the aristocracy” (Sartre, 1948, p. 29). Though such communities are ephemeral, their anti-Semitism lives on as a latent force waiting to be seized upon and revived by subsequent communities of anti-Semities, which goes some way to explain the age-old tenacity of anti-Semitism.” Sartre sees parallels between the surreal “incarceration” of Josef K., the protagonist in Franz Kafka’s novel, *The Trial*, and the precarious situation of Jews worldwide. “Like the hero of that novel, the Jew is engaged in a long trial. He does not know his judges, scarcely even his lawyers; he does not know what he is charged with, yet he knows that he is considered guilty” (Sartre, 1948, p. 88).

Methodology

The questions in the semi-structured interview guide are buttressed in these classroom experiences over the years. The chief advantage of a semi-structured interview guide is its suitability in covering a sequence of themes while retaining an openness for follow-up questions and changes of sequence where necessary (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The questions were inspired by a large-scale study of attitudes towards Jews in Norway undertaken by the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities between August 2010 and May 2012 commissioned by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice (Center for the Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2012). The study concludes, “The results show that stereotypical views of Jews exist in Norwegian society. All in all, 12.5 per cent of the population can be considered as being significantly prejudiced against Jews” (Ibid, 2012, p. 6). Questions were administered before final-year students visited the main Synagogue in Oslo in connection with the subject of Religion, Philosophy & Ethics. Having shared the tragic history of Jews in Norway and anti-Semitism in general, the objective was to trigger a reflective process which, hopefully, would challenge students to consider their own attitudes to Jews.

In Norway, high school students (high school in the USA) are in the age range of 16 to 18 around the time they enroll. Although voluntary, the lack of jobs coupled with legal frameworks that enshrine the right to further education for youth in the age group 16 to 19 (Thune et al. 2015), ensures that students invariably go on to high school. 15 549 (roughly 92 - 93 %) students were enrolled as high school students in Oslo in 2014. The majority of high schools (344 in 2011) are state-owned and run by the individual counties from the public purse. Recent years have seen a rise in the proliferation of private high schools with the number standing at 85 in 2011 (Statistics Norway, 2013). Despite this, the abiding Norwegian ethos of egalitarianism is loathed to countenance any hierarchization in education.

The responsibility for the development of the curricula for upper secondary schools (both public and private) rests with The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The national curriculum sets out the programs of study which includes, for instance, common core subjects (*Fellesfag* in Norwegian) such as Norwegian, English, Mathematics, Natural Science, Physical Education, Social Studies, Mother Tongue Teaching for Minorities and Foreign Languages. Common core subjects in programs for General Studies in the final year include History, Geography and Religion/Ethics. Those pursuing vocational studies can choose

between a variety of options, such as Building and Construction, Design, Arts and Crafts, Electricity and Electronics and Media and Communication, to name a few (The Ministry of Education, 2013)

“Junior High” is a high school located in the east of the capital, Oslo, with 622 students.

There are 22 public high schools in Oslo and 8 private ones that receive state subsidies. Some figures follow to illustrate the challenges faced by the school. The highest entrance score requirement for the best school was 50, with the overall average for all schools being 39.7.

“Junior High” was among the four lowest-performing schools where all students who applied (average admission score was 31.3 in 2014) secured admission (Oslo Kommune, 2015/2016).

Additionally, whereas the dropout rate for students in Oslo was about 3 % in 2014, the number rose steeply to 12.5% for “Junior High”. The absenteeism rate was 14.3 for “Junior High” compared to 9.6 for Oslo. Finally, while 77.2 % of students in the capital successfully completed high school, the corresponding figures for “Junior High” were 50.6 %. Figures for the ethnic composition of high schools in Oslo have not been divulged (reason unknown), but one can get a fairly reasonable idea from the figures for primary and lower secondary school (grades 1-10) which have been published by Oslo county. 40.1 % of a cohort of 59 308 students come from a minority background (i.e. those who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian) with 22.9 % of these deemed too weak in Norwegian to follow with regular classroom lessons (Oslo Kommune Utdanningsetaten, 2014). Several of these students, unable to satisfy the competitive entry requirements in the top high schools, find it easier to gain admission to “Junior High”. Of concern is the fact that these students – soon comprising about half of the cohort in primary and lower secondary schools in Oslo – for reasons to do with academic underachievement and cultural affinity – become overrepresented in certain high schools in the east and south-east of Oslo further adding to the skewed ethnic distribution pattern in the capital.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, classroom-based discussions were employed as a research method. Researching one’s own classroom presents its own challenges. A particular challenge is cultivating the dexterity required to manage and process multiple voices synchronously. As Kvale and Brinkman (2006) maintain, good interviewing is akin to a craft. Dilley (2000, p.134) outlines five important points.

- Listen to what the person is saying (as well as observe how he is saying it)

- Compare what the person says to what we know (from previous interviews and/or background studies)
- Compare what the person says to the questions on the rest of the protocol
- Be cognizant of time – to make judgements on whether to stray from the protocol or stick to it
- Offer information to prompt reflection, clarification, or further explication

The notion of power relations is also salient (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The calculus of risk kicks in when students are asked to candidly divulge their opinions on so fraught a subject to a teacher. There is the tacit fear that their confessions may be used against them. This can induce a Machiavellian response in which a politically correct stance is feigned. Unlike the semi-structured response sheet where students were asked to write anonymously to circumvent the risk of traceability, the classroom-based discussions were face-to-face interactions. Hence the importance of paying attention to the asymmetric nature of power relations between teacher and students (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) in the interstices of what Elwood & Martin (2000, p. 653) call the “microgeographies of interview locations”. Not least, the researcher/teacher’s own reflexivity in regards to issues of positionality must be interrogated. The above highlights the enormous subtleties of power in research (Foucault 1977).

The English and Religion (including Philosophy & Ethics) curriculum competence aims at the upper secondary school level in Norway state nothing about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in particular. During the course of this study, it dawned on me that nothing of substance is mentioned in the competence aims of some of the other subjects I assumed grappled with the subject of anti-Semitism. This applies to Norwegian, English, Religion, Politics and Social Studies. The only subject where the topic was treated was History where the curriculum stipulates the following concerning the persecution of ethnic minorities and WWII:

- Discuss and elaborate on the background of the two world wars and discuss and elaborate on the impact these wars had on the Nordic countries and the international community.
- Discuss and elaborate on the policy conducted by the Norwegian national state in relation to indigenous peoples, national and ethnic minorities in the 1800s and 1900s, and discuss some consequences of this policy (History: Common core subject in programmes for general studies 2016).

Questions about WWII in most history textbooks revolve around the following: why did Nazi Germany attack Norway on 9 April 1940? How did Hitler try to change the Norwegian political system during the autumn of 1940? How did the Nazis treat civilians? Why did some Norwegians decide to collaborate with the Nazis? How did the Home Resistance Movement (*Hjemmefronten*) fight back against the Nazis? What did the government and King Haakon in exile in London do to succor the resistance against Hitler in Norway?

According to the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (2015), a new study has found that the description of ethnic and religious minorities in current teaching materials for lower and upper secondary schools, with a particular focus on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, extreme and radicalization processes are deficient in the subjects of Social Studies and Religious Education. Teachers and students reported that they were dissatisfied with the quality of the materials and teaching of these vital topics. Concretely, the Ministry states, “A study of the teaching materials disclosed that minority groups, such as Sami and Jews, are mentioned quite often, but only in a historical context. Contemporary challenges are given minimal attention.” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2015).

The above appears to corroborate the struggle I faced in finding what the mandatory state-devised curriculum had to say about the teaching of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust at the upper secondary school level. A prolonged search on the Ministry’s website (available in English at www.udir.no), where the concrete teaching aims and purposes of each subject is listed, failed to turn up anything of substance on the subject.

I decided to consult five colleagues who have taught Norwegian, History, Social Studies, Religion and Politics for several years at the upper secondary level and put the question to them. Quite surprisingly, none seemed able to be able to pin down what the curriculum guidelines for their subjects said about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Despite this, there was an air of unwarranted assurance that the subject was given its due “somewhere” in the curriculum. Each teacher kept referring to the other’s subject. The Social Studies teacher to whom I was referred shook his head and said, “There is nothing about anti-Semitism in my subject.” One teacher assumed that the subject of Religion/Philosophy & Ethics, which I teach and is compulsory in the final year of the upper secondary, was the appropriate forum where the issue is covered. He was baffled when I mentioned that while Christianity, Islam, Philosophy, Ethics and Humanism were obligatory, Judaism is voluntary. Significantly, while the old curriculum for Religious Education from 1997 (L97) stated, “Students shall be taught about the history of Jews in Norway”, the current curriculum which came into force in 2006

(LK06) changed this to “Students must be able to describe and reflect on the characteristics of art, architecture and music linked to Judaism.” Clearly, this lacuna in the curriculum stipulation must be addressed if the challenges uncovered in this study are to be ameliorated.

Classrom discourse

For Rymes (2016, 8), classroom discourse analysis critically considers “language in use” in the classroom and the manner this is influenced by multiple social contexts both within and beyond the classroom. As parents’ and other significant others’ views on Jews could not be solicited, the minimum I could hope for as a teacher was to create an environment where a critical lens was brought to bear on taken-for-granted assumptions and utterances which were clearly anti-Semitic. Rymes’ (2016) employs a classroom discourse analysis in which the “communicative repertoires” of students is salient. She defines this as “The collection of ways individuals use language and other means of communication (gestures, dress, postures, accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate” (Rymes, 2010). Of significance are the three components of communicative repertoire:

1. The social context: students come with repertoires from their home/country milieu which may augment or collide with the school and class discourse. The literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, calls this living in “a world of other’s words” (Bakhtin, 1984, 143). I have revisited some of the responses in this study and asked 10 of the respondents with strong anti-Semitic sentiments about the social context at home, specifically what views their parents/relatives hold at home in regard to Jews. While 3 stated that they did not live with their parents (either lived alone or with foster families), 7 shared that their parents were very “anti-Jewish”, “anti-Israel” or “skeptical” about Jews.
2. Interactional context: building on Bakhtin, the second dimension of communicative repertoires (Rymes 2016, 22) explores how students’ use of language not only is populated by others’ words (e.g. significant others at home), but is further shaped by what goes on in the classroom. The thesis in this paper is that the social and interactional context conflate and reinforce antisemitism. It is my contention (along with 7 teachers I have spoken with about their experiences when touching on the topic of antisemitism) that there appears to be a common repertoire hostile to Jews which frustrates attempts at countering such sentiments.

Agency: Here Rymes (2016, 23) refers to the control and power individuals have to shape interaction in the classroom. She envisages students from multicultural backgrounds with diverse repertoires. “Students in today’s classrooms are likely to have lived in different geographical regions, if not different countries. Even those who have remained in the same region their entire life have likely interacted with a wide diversity of people via Internet-circulated social media” (Rymes 2016, 23). She advocates the jettisoning of the pursuit of “standards” and calls for enhancing “awareness and expansion of multiple repertoires”. When extrapolated to the findings in this study, it is a paradox that despite the plethora of nationalities represented, a “standard” anti-Semitic classroom discourse is palpable. Rymes’ (2016) communicative repertoires would suggest an urgent need for diversifying the repertoires of students. It is argued that the current clustering together of students in some schools in Norway, who traditionally hail from countries where a strong undercurrent (often explicit) of antisemitism is the norm, can only serve to silence the voices of the tiny few who may not share these views and further bolster the dominant view.

Findings

Semi-structured interviews

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict

In this segment, semi-structured questions were administered to two classes - one in the first year (total 12) and the other in the final year (total 23). In response to the question, ‘What in your opinion is the reason for anti-Semitism in Norway?’, the majority, 12 of 35 students, blamed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A few examples follow.

In my view, the reason there is anti-Semitism in Norway today is Israel’s war against the Palestinians. It is no secret that the majority of those who hate Jews come from religious immigrant backgrounds. They see that this war affects families who practice the same religion as theirs (A1: final-year student).

As long as “Jews” continue to kill Palestinians, all Jews will be objects of hate (final-year student).

Israel and Jews in general are responsible for this hate. They oppress the Palestinians and the majority of Jews support this. They say that they have the right to defend themselves, but the Palestinians are defenceless – you cannot oppress those who have

no military or economic strength. Jews have thought they are superior to others for thousands of years, which is the cause of anti-Semitism (A2: final-year student).

When people see Israel's aggression in the media, they believe that all Jews are murderers, which is the reason for anti-Semitism (A3: final-year student).

Another reason why some individuals hate Jews could be what is happening in Palestine. Hating someone for killing innocent people to me is normal. But hating all Jews is wrong (A4: first-year student).

In summary and commensurate with response A1, the outrage felt against Israel is precipitated by a sense of religious altruism – a shared suffering with the afflictions of their fellow-Muslims in Palestine. Generally, no attempt was made to distinguish between the modern state of Israel and anti-Semitism as a racist phenomenon that predates the creation of the state of Israel. Besides the 12 above who singled out the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 8 others felt that anti-Semitism in Norway was a result of either familial influence or a consequence of the old charge that Jews killed Jesus Christ (deicide).

Strong religious belief which states that Jews killed God and a generational influence that declares that Jews are bad people I think explains anti-Semitism in Norway (A5: final-year student).

I believe that prejudices against Jews are “inherited”. It has become a trend to look negatively upon Jews. Most of all, people consider the terrible crimes committed against Jews in history and think they must have done something to deserve this (A6: final-year student).

Hate against Jews in Norway began with the crucifixion of Christ and has since been only building up (A7: final-year student).

Jews are hated because of ignorance. Events such as WWII and the death of Jesus Christ (A8: first-year student).

“Jew” as an offensive term

The second question elicited responses to the question, “Have you heard the word ‘Jew’ used as a term of abuse? How should one react if ‘Jew’ is used to malign someone you know?” 23 of 35 students responded that they have heard someone use the term as a pejorative. The answers can broadly be grouped according to those who heard the term and unequivocally denounced its use, as opposed to those who heard the pejorative but appeared complacent, while a tiny minority even justified its use. I will begin with former.

I have heard many use the word “Jew” as a term of abuse. It is used in much the same way as “homo” to hurt someone. One should put a stop to such behaviour (B 1: final-year student).

I have experienced this. I think one should react with disgust; it is just as hurtful as being called “homo”. To malign an entire ethnic group with such abuse is unacceptable (B2: final-year).

It is really upsetting the way people use “Jew” as a term of abuse. In regards to reaction, if this happens in a school or the workplace, the offender should be fired. Jews are people too; people can be so callous (B3: final-year).

I hear this pejorative used quite often actually. We should put a stop to it. It is just as unacceptable as the labelling of an entire ethnic group as “terrorists” (B4: final-year).

The lion’s share of what I described as “complacent” responses (with some clearly indulging in classical anti-Semitism) came from first-year students. Some of these follow.

Not only my friends and family use this term pejoratively, but even I do. For instance, “stingy Jew” refers to someone who does not share his food with us. I do not think most of us mean it in a bad way, but it is a stereotype that Jews are stingy (B5: first-year).

Yes, I have heard friends use the word “Jew” in a bad way. But there is no deep hatred harboured towards Jews. Nothing special, really! (B6: first year).

Yes, it is quite funny because “Jew” is used when someone is being greedy or has a big nose (B7: first-year).

I have heard many, including myself, use the word in a very derogatory manner. Not just once, but almost on a daily basis. I don’t know any Jews so I don’t bother (B8: final-year).

Obviously, it isn’t nice to call someone a “Jew”, but the Jews have themselves to thank for this negative connotation because of what they did to other religions in the past. I actually am indifferent (B9: final-year).

Yes, I have heard this abuse several times. It is not good, but quite normal (B10: final year).

A few other respondents affirmed the pejorative use of this word by making reference to friends who “hated” Jews, without divulging information about their own stance on the topic. “Yes, I have a friend who really hates Jews” (B11: first-year student), and “Yes, my best friend uses “Jew” offensively. She is from Palestine” (B12: first-year student). The last of the semi-structured questions asks, “Do you think that Jews have too much influence over the

world economy?” About 5 responded that they had no idea, while the rest were split down the middle. Answers in the affirmative are considered first.

Jewish influence in the world

I don't think Jews have too much power, matter of fact they control the world. How do they control the world? Jews own most companies; it is hard to boycott Jewish products because they own most things we eat (C1: first-year student).

Yes, because the USA has most power in the world (economic, military and media). It is the Jews who control everything – the big banks, newspapers and most of the media. It is wrong that such a small group should have such a big say. In a democracy, all should have a say in government (C2: final-year).

The Jews do control the world through the illuminati. America supports Israel with money and weapons, according to the media (C3: final-year).

Yes, I do think Jews control too much of the world's finances (C4: first-year).

Well, generally I do believe that Jews have too much influence in the world (C5: first-year).

On several occasions over the course of the last two years, students have wanted to know my opinion about what they refer to as the illuminati, a supposedly omniscient organization which they have invested with “god-like” powers, apparently pulling the strings behind world events for pernicious purposes. In their minds, the organization is a Jewish conspiracy for world domination. Such is this conviction that one student writes, “Jews work through the illuminati which is behind the killing of innocent children and adults in Syria”. On the other hand, the other half rejected the notion that Jews controlled the world economy.

No, if Jews have succeed in international finance, it is only because they have worked hard. Furthermore, the issue of whether one is a Jew or not is irrelevant (C6: final year).

It is erroneous to speak of Jews controlling the world. A country may do this, but a not an ethnic group like the Jews. One would have to prove that Israel controls world finance because Jews in the world do not form a country (C7: final ear).

The majority of Jews live in the USA and Israel. There are very few Jews in Europe and the other continents. Their power is limited (C8: final-year).

Just because many Jews work in international banks doesn't mean that they have big influence (C9: final-year).

Classroom discussion

In addition to views culled from semi-structured interviews, three classroom-based discussions took place with a second-year class. During an English lesson, students came across reference to the first European settlers in the USA who explored the feasibility of using either Hebrew or Greek as the national language. When students asked for an elaboration, I explained that the Puritans believed the Bible to be divinely inspired and the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. This triggered a spontaneous discussion on the subject of Jews.

Student (D1): I believe that Jews collaborate closely with the Devil?

Teacher: Can you please explain what you mean by this? Are you speaking metaphorically?

Student (D1): No, no...they really have special powers through contact with Satan.

Teacher: Is there anyone else who believes this?

Student (D2): Teacher, have you read the Torah?

Teacher: Yes, I have. What are you alluding to?

Student (D2): It says in the Torah that Jews are permitted to tear out the vital organs of non-Jews and use their hearts, kidneys etc. for themselves.

Teacher: I am a teacher of religion, philosophy and ethics and have not come across anything remotely approaching what you say. Where in the Torah is this? Can you give me the chapter and verse please?

Student (D2): I don't have it here but I will show you.

Teacher: What is the cause of so much anti-Semitism in the world?

Student (D3): You have to understand that Jews wish to dominate and colonize wherever they go. This is why they create tension wherever they go. They control all the multi-corporations of the world.

One student from Thailand was quiet throughout the discussion. I solicited her views on the subject but she declined to comment.

Trip to the Synagogue

This study would not be complete without including, albeit cursorily, a trip to the main synagogue in Oslo. Teachers of religion in the final year of high school in Norway often plan a trip to a church, a Mosque and either a Hindu or Buddhist Temple. Some may elect to include a visit to the mainly atheist Norwegian Humanist Association. Although there is an entire chapter on Judaism, the religion is not a part of the mandatory curriculum. Having

initially planned a trip to the local Lutheran Church, I decided a visit to the Synagogue would be salutary given the unvarnished anti-Semitic views I had encountered.

Upon hearing about the decision to visit the Synagogue, several of the students appeared visibly uncomfortable and took umbrage. I had to respond to a volley of questions: “Do we have to go to a Synagogue?” “Are we seriously expected to put on *kippas* (Jewish skullcaps)?” “What if I don’t want to go?” I explained the importance of cultivating tolerance in a multicultural world. Furthermore, would they not take offense if a fellow-student refused to remove his or her shoes when entering a Mosque? Somehow, the latter counter-argument ameliorated the earlier recalcitrance.

Only 2 of 30 students failed to show up during the excursion to the Synagogue. The Synagogue resembled a fortress with concrete blocks, armed police guards patrolling the vicinity and even a security guard inside the building. In September 2006, the Norwegian-born Islamist of Pakistani extract, Arfan Qadeer Bhatti, was arrested for spraying the façade of the Synagogue with bullets. The armed police presence, an aberration in the otherwise peaceful urban ambience of Oslo, was a jarring reminder of how easily anti-Semitism transmogrifies into murderous violence. All the students (males) respectfully put on the *kippas* and behaved themselves in an exemplary manner. The female speaker lectured on diverse aspects of the Jewish faith and Jewish life in Norway. She made reference to the aforementioned Henrik Wergeland who spearheaded the effort to jettison Paragraph 2 that bars entry to Jews. Furthermore, she paid tribute to the Muslim youth who formed a “Peace Ring” around the Synagogue earlier this year (February 2015), generating attention in international media outlets. The speaker made the case for decoupling events that transpire in Israel with her right to be a Norwegian-Jew. “I cannot be held responsible for the politics of the state of Israel,” she reiterated. Along the way, she expressed her admiration for a choir that toured Norway featuring Palestinian and Jewish children singing about peace and coexistence. Quite suddenly, she asked a few male students whose heads were buried between the pews to lift their heads and look at her. She shared that a student had recently engraved a swastika in the pew during her lecture. Prior to this, a student sitting close to me quietly drew my attention to this swastika engraved close to where he sat. There was pin drop silence and stunned looks as students tried to come to terms this.

Discussion

Although Norway and the USA diverge in many ways with reference to Holocaust education, there are some commonalities. The Norwegian educational curriculum is highly centralized. A population of just over 5 million, relatively few private schools and a long-standing tradition of equity and egalitarianism has seen the authorities aim for standardization in curriculum development and learning outcomes. The USA, in contrast, evinces a more fragmented educational landscape: stratification, religious schools and home schooling, which are frowned upon in Norway. However, Schweber's (Schweber, 2006; Schweber, 2008) research on Holocaust education in the USA sheds some interesting light on the findings in this study. Schweber, who looked at a public high school, fundamentalist Christian school and a Lubavitch girls' Yeshivah, among others, concluded that the teaching circumvented a proper and rigorous focus on the history of anti-Semitism and ended up misappropriating the Holocaust. The public school project diluted the Holocaust by universalizing and democratizing it as a generalized portrayal of the individual's struggle against evil. In the Christian school, the specifics of the Holocaust and Jewish suffering played a subsidiary role to the "Christ-like" sacrifice of the missionary Corrie ten Boom. The Lubavitch Yeshiva girl's school fared no better in failing to rationally grapple with the historicity of the Holocaust. Rather than exploring the rise of Nazism and its racialized hierarchy, for instance, the teacher recruited simplistic theological rationales such as non-Jewish envy towards the Jews as God's chosen people. In comparing German and US Holocaust education, Peaceman's (2003) research appears commensurate with Schweber's. She notes the tendency in the USA to "Americanize" Holocaust education as an exercise in fighting against all injustices and promoting American patriotism. Holocaust studies are nestled in subjects like Social Studies and Civic Education which she believes are underpinned by a moral discourse that dislocates the Holocaust from its historical moorings and focuses on American triumphalism. The above observations clearly parallel findings in the Norwegian context. The paucity of references to the Holocaust in all subjects is telling. The only subject in high school which makes brief mention is History where one paragraph out of 20 pages about WWII refer to the Nazi incursion into East Europe and the Soviet Union. The paragraph mentions how the SS Einsatzgruppen followed in the wake of the regular Nazi soldiers into these countries to apprehend and kill Jews many of whom were sent to Auschwitz with 5.6 million Jews dying during the Holocaust. This is weaved in more as an appendage to the Nazis march on East Europe and the Soviet Union rather than a subject to be probed in its own right given that the

Holocaust devastated Norwegian Jewry. One teacher, who has taught History for over 35 years in Norway, told me, “There is little problematization of the topic, and results from recent research are not included in the textbooks. Any proper study of the Holocaust in Norway is contingent therefore upon the teacher’s knowledge and will to work with the topic”.

“What have *you* made of the Jew?” was Sartre’s (Sartre, 1948, p. 69) question to not only the anti-Semite, but also the world, for as he maintains, “Anti-Semitism is a problem that affects us all directly; we are all bound to the Jew, because anti-Semitism leads straight to National Socialism” (Sartre, 1948, p. 151). Jikeli (2015, p. 281) advocates the pursuit of a two-pronged approach in combating anti-Semitism: bolstering individual responsibility in adopting proxy beliefs (e.g. Muslims and Jews are enemies) and the promotion of a human rights education with an emphasis on equal individual rights. The European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) has often emphasized the importance of making “a clear distinction between anti-Semitism and criticism of the policies of the Israeli Government” (EUMC, 2002). There is a consensus that criticism of the policies of the State of Israel similar to that levelled against other countries cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. The following, however, go beyond criticism and into the realm of anti-Semitism: “(1) Holding Jews responsible collectively for the actions of the State of Israel and (2) accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations” (Jikeli, 2015, pp. 284,285).

Every statement on Jews and Israel was scrutinized carefully. For instance, student A2, while “justifying” anti-Semitism with Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians, digresses and states, “Jews have thought they are superior to others for thousands of years, which is the cause of anti-Semitism”. I seized upon this and drew the student’s attention to the jump he made from the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the purported Jewish hubris going back “thousands of years”. The student thought about it for a moment and agreed to withdraw the last statement in line with the ethical framework drawn up for the discussion. Student A1 stated, “It is no secret that the majority of those who hate Jews come from religious immigrant backgrounds. They see that this war affects families who practice the same religion as theirs”. The student, a Muslim, was asked if he was implying this would not be the case if the victims were Christians or Hindus. I wrote the famous quotation attributed to the German Pastor Martin Niemöller (Marcuse, 2000) on the board and asked students to discuss it in twos.

First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.

One student raised up her hand and said that we ought to show solidarity with all people globally, irrespective of color or creed. I complimented student A1 for being honest enough to verbalize what many people knew intuitively – that anti-Semitism in Norway and Europe is increasingly associated with Muslims. In fact, the statistics seem to back this up:

In 2006, the Pew Global Attitudes Project asked Muslims and non-Muslims in a number of countries if they have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Jews. In the UK 7 percent of the general population and 47 percent of Muslims stated that they do have an unfavourable opinion of Jews. In France, the figures were 13 and 28 percent, respectively, while in Germany they were 22 and 44 percent (Jikeli, 2015, p. 41.42).

In regards to the use of “Jew” as a pejorative term, I introduced students to Norway’s “Anne Frank” – Ruth Maier, an Austrian Jewish girl whom the majority had never heard of. The *Anschluss* of 1938 devastated Ruth’s life in Austria and she was forced to flee to Norway. Ruth spoke Norwegian fluently within a year, graduated from high school and read Knut Hamsun’s classic “Hunger” (*Sult*) with ease. Ruth modelled for the sculptor Gustav Vigeland, and is immortalized in the statue “Surprised” which stands on permanent display in Frogner Park, Oslo. The diary runs the gamut of the joys, loneliness, frustrations and hopes of a young girl. She makes a brave effort to live as normal a life as possible despite the ever-louder din of Jew hatred encroaching on her private space. I read excerpts from her diary to the students:

People oppress others because of their views. People kill other people to defend their fatherland. But you don’t punish, you don’t strike other people because they *are* what they are. Because they have Jewish grandparents. That’s moronic, idiotic. That’s madness. It runs counter to all reason...They torture us because we’re Jews. I’d like to be able to destroy this boundary that makes Jews into Jews. I’d like to see Jews without wounds. Without any at all. They should not weep any more. They should walk upright (Bulloch, 2010, pp. 406,407).

On 26 November 1942, Ruth Maier was arrested at her address in Oslo. According to the newspaper *Aftenposten*, “When the petite Jewish girl was brought out between two burly policemen....one of them looked at the beautiful golden wristwatch on her skinny wrist and said, ‘Take off the watch. We can take care of it for you until you return.’ ‘I will never return,’ says Ruth” (*Aftenposten*, 2007). Ruth was put on the *SS Donau* and sent straight to

the gas chambers in Auschwitz five days later. In 2012, the then Prime Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg (currently General Secretary of NATO), apologized on behalf of Norway for what happened to Ruth Maier and other Jews. He further decried the fact that Jews in Norway are still afraid to walk around visibly as Jews (Government.no, 2012). The above strategy of introducing students to Ruth's diary was inspired by a tenet of Critical Race Theory called subversive counter storytelling. Bell (1995, p. 902) writes:

In my case, I prefer using stories as a means of communicating views to those who hold very different views on the emotionally charged subject of race. People enjoy stories and will often suspend their beliefs, listen to the story, and then compare their views, not mine, but with those expressed in the story.

At issue is the question of naming one's own reality (Delgado, 1989). The story of Ruth Maier brought tears to a few eyes in the classroom. Ruth challenges the students' smug disregard for the pejorative use of "Jew" and its consequences. Whatever else students may have invested in the word "Jew", they are compelled to include Ruth Maier – an innocent young girl, whose universe revolved around the same hopes and fears they have, but whose only crime was that of being a Jew. Clearly, it is difficult to measure change in attitudes, but there was no hiding from Sartre's (1948) question, "What have *you* made of the Jew?"

In what follows, I will argue that a major challenge facing educators who seek to upend anti-Semitic discourse in lower and upper secondary schools is the current pattern of segregated schooling in certain parts of the Capital Oslo, a trend that is spreading to other major cities. "Figures for 2014 from the Municipality of Oslo indicate that 40.2 per cent of pupils in the Capital Oslo (primary and lower secondary schools) hail from minority/immigrant backgrounds" (Thomas, 2015, p. 5). With respect to upper secondary school, the national figures indicate a 52 percent increase in the number of students from immigrant/minority backgrounds in the course of the last 4 years (Thomas and Breidlid, 2015). What educators and policy-makers need to realize is that this current clustering together of sections of the population in ethnico-religious enclaves runs the risk of compounding the task of combating anti-Semitism. Lumping together students who, as student A1 confessed, are united by a religiously-based adversarial stance towards Jews, furnishes optimal grounds for anti-Semitic incubation. In what follows, I will situate this thread within the framework of the theory of anti-social capital.

As referred to earlier, social capital is a conceptual lens employed to explore certain intangible assets mobilized among individuals and communities where trust and network building is paramount. Robert Putnam (1993), who popularized the concept has been critiqued for a rather narrow preoccupation with social capital's positive socio-economic efficacy, while neglecting the equally important potential of social capital to spawn networks and communities of crime, hate and deviance (e.g. terrorism, racism and misogyny) (Berman, 1997; Levi, 1996). By anti-social capital, I mean the manner in which such parochial communities – Giddens (2001) prefers “group closure” – inculcate and perpetuate values and norms that promote deviance. For instance, Mustafa (2006) considers the role of the non-governmental Islamist organization Jamaat-e-Islami in secreting anti-social capital in civil spaces in Pakistani. Nussio & Oppenheim (2014), who looked at anti-social capital among paramilitary and guerilla armed groups in Colombia, define the concept as “Ingroup bonding used to foster trust and cohesion within an illicit organization and distance toward outgroups”.

As a teacher researching the subject of anti-Semitism in 3 classrooms (a total of 50 students), in a school with a majority of minority background students, evidence of what I shall refer to as “anti-social anti-Semitic capital” was omnipresent. Consider two statements reported in the findings:

“Yes, I have a friend who really hates Jews” (B11: first-year student)

“Yes, my best friend uses “Jew” offensively. She is from Palestine” (B12: first-year student).

Students experienced no qualms in reporting the anti-Semitism of friends. None reported rebuking these friends or making an effort to challenge these views which reminds one of Eli Wiesel's warning, “Indifference reduces the other to an abstraction” (Mann, 2015, p. 100).

Student A6 and others acknowledged the power of familial/generational influence. Among the entries into my diary are the following observations:

- Five students vociferously tried to hush down a girl who stated that many of the students at “Junior High” hated Jews. I asked them to be quiet and permit her to have her say.
- One male student kept interrupting another male who took umbrage when students demonized Jews. He kept shouting: “Would you marry a Jew? Answer me, would you marry a Jew?” I had to intervene to silence this student.
- The trip to the Synagogue was jeopardized today when the usual hard-core anti-Semitic students tried to recruit the rest of the class in boycotting the Synagogue. Thankfully, they did not prevail.

The above underscores the formidable power of anti-social anti-Semitic capital. Central to the concept of social capital is the issue of trust. While generally distrustful of western sources, the majority of the students, who mainly originate in Arab/Muslim countries, clearly fed off each other's Antisemitism. The machinations of this discourse follows a certain logic: there appears to be a default position that converges around the conviction that Islam and the Qur'an castigate Jews because they are irreconcilable enemies. Obviously, this interpretation can be challenged by other Muslim scholars (Tibi, 2009) who are aware that historical vagaries granted ascendancy to one school of theological thought over another competing one, as was the case when the liberal school of Islamic thought (*falsafa*) was trumped by the conservative one (*fiqh* and Al Ghazali). Anytime discussions in the classroom touched upon issues relating to 911, the USA or the Middle East, these students were quick to secrete anti-Semitic opinions into the discussion. I have lost count of the number of times these students have stated: "No Jew died in the Twin Tower attacks on 911 because they government of Israel, which was behind these atrocities, warned its people to stay away." Many would nod concurring with the statement. No counterargument seems to dent this strongly held belief. Walking around the school campus, I have often observed these students socializing together either in the canteen or playing table tennis for instance. One can only surmise that the school campus serves as a social bonding arena where the discourse of Antisemitism is further stoked and reinforced.

On another occasion, a Somali, final-year student who was passing out flyers approached me in the campus area and invited me to attend a lecture by a visiting Muslim cleric from the UK. I later found out that this cleric was known for his anti-Semitic views. The fervor with which the girl engaged students and the number who stood around her nodding was telling. The above once again underscores the sheer challenges involved in monitoring every activity in a school with over 600 students spread across three buildings along with an enormous mall adjacent to the school popular with the students during recess.

Finally, social bonding or what I have called "anti-social anti-Semitic capital" is inculcated through the kind of media the students imbibe at home. *Al Arabiya* and *Al Jazeera* were often cited when I asked students about the kind of news channels they watch at home. Few trust the BBC, CNN or other western news sources. In January 2016, three English classrooms worked in groups and were tasked with selecting one online newspaper from the Anglosphere: UK, USA, Canada, Australia or the New Zealand. They were to look among others at the

history, layout, the difference between a tabloid/spreadsheet and ideology. Several students asked if they could look at *Al Jazeera* stating that it was the only paper one could trust when it came to coverage about Israel and the USA. Clearly, the home environment (Rymes 2016) and the cultural capital/habitus (Bourdieu) inculcated there appears to feed into an anti-Semitic discourse which bedevils the work of teachers. In summary, some of these students have arrived at a point where only views and material that confirms their anti-Semitic worldview is entertained.

Clearly, teachers seeking to remedy anti-Semitism are faced with a mammoth challenge in such a milieu. Successful socialization in such ethnically and religiously segregated schools appears a priori to demand a disdain for Jews. Adroit ideological manipulation, verbal threats and fears of ostracizing all go into making the glue that seals the door to contrary views. Sartre's (1948) analysis that an anti-Semite cannot be alone but attaches himself to a tradition and to a community is apposite. On one occasion, while a discussion raged about the Zionism's militant aspirations, students laughed in derision when I stated that Zionists like Theodor Herzl did not envision an Israel with soldiers, and that Ahad Ha'am was more concerned with a homeland for Jews with spiritual rather than political acumen (see Popkin, 2015, pp. 20-33). In the face of such anti-social capital, the noble task of purging anti-Semitism can appear Sisyphean.

Conclusion

This study has explored what has been called the most successful hate ideology in history (Wisse, 1992) – anti-Semitism among students in a Norwegian high school. The responses solicited through interviews and classroom discussions give cause for concern. As the responses indicate, anti-Semitic attitudes proliferate. Like Josef K. in Kafka's *The Trial*, one is hard-pressed to nail down the source of the accusations, and yet the intensity and clamour undergirding these convictions is perplexing. I have argued that policy-makers must redress the skewed ethnic distribution in urban schools in order to offset the secretion of anti-social anti-Semitic capital into schools like "Junior High".

Despite the aforementioned anti-social bonding, the trip to the Synagogue can be described as an exercise in bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000, p. 22, 23). Like the initiative to form a "Peace Ring" around the Synagogue, the sight of close to 60 students (two final-year classes), mostly from Muslim backgrounds in the Synagogue, gave cause for hope. For many of the

students, this was the first time ever that they encountered a Synagogue and a Jew. To pretend that the excursion was a success would be speculative as most were silent two days later when asked whether the trip was worthwhile. It will take more than one such geographical dislocation to dislodge an obstinate anti-Semitism inculcated over several years. Nevertheless, the alternative is a capitulation to the forces of bigotry. The British Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Jonathan Sacks, states “The only people who can successfully combat anti-Semitism are those active in the cultures that harbour it” (Sacks, 2009, p. 109). At the height of the anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish students in Britain in 2002, he addressed the Union of Jewish Students with these surprising words, “And now I want you to do the most unexpected thing. I want you to lead the fight against Islamophobia (Sacks, 2009, p. 109)”. This spawned the Coexist Foundation through which Jews and Muslims combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Britain. It will take initiatives like the “Peace Ring” around the Oslo Synagogue and Rabbi Sack’ example to chip away at the edifice of hate whether towards Muslims or Jews.

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