

# A Ring of Peace around the Oslo Synagogue

## *Muslims and Jews Expressing Interfaith Solidarity in Response to the Paris and Copenhagen Attacks*

*Margaretha A. van Es*

### 1 Introduction

On Saturday evening 21 February 2015, the small Jewish community of Oslo held its weekly *Havdalah* ceremony to mark the end of the Sabbath and the return to everyday life. This time however, they did not perform their rituals inside the synagogue, but in the open air just outside the main entrance. They were surrounded by a human chain of young Muslim men and women, who were again surrounded by a much larger crowd of Muslims and other Oslo citizens that filled the whole street. The ‘Ring of Peace’ (*Fredens Ring*), as it was called, had been organized by a group of seven young Muslim men and one young Muslim woman, in response to recent terrorist attacks targeting Jewish communities in Paris and Copenhagen. The organizers explained that they wanted to express their solidarity with the local Jewish community, make a statement against religious intolerance, and counter prejudices against Muslims and Islam. The event was warmly embraced in Norwegian society as a ‘historical turning point’ where Muslims made a clear statement against antisemitism, and it received broad media coverage in Norwegian and international media. *The Huffington Post* even included the Ring of Peace in its top fifteen of “religious moments in 2015 that gave us hope for the new year” (*Huffington Post*, 18 December 2015).

This chapter provides a case study of the Ring of Peace, with the aim of demonstrating the value of a material approach to the study of peace and conflict, and more specifically the study of interreligious public events that are organized in response to violence. Whereas materiality seems to be a blind spot among scholars working in the field of peace and conflict studies, scholars who take a material approach to the study of religion have only recently begun to pay attention to violent conflict and interfaith peace efforts (van Liere 2020). Inspired by the sociologist Mar Giera (2019), I argue that the act of making the Ring of Peace can be seen as a ritual in which imaginations of interfaith solidarity and peaceful coexistence are being enacted and embod-



FIGURE 9.1 Norwegian Muslims making a “Ring of Peace” around the Oslo synagogue  
 PHOTO: ØISTEIN NORUM MONSEN, DAGBLADET, WITH PERMISSION

ied, reinforced, and transformed. In this chapter, I combine Birgit Meyer’s work on religious mediation (2008, 2016, 2020) with Sara Ahmed’s work on affective economies (2004) to analyze the relationship between materiality, sensory experiences, and affects with regard to the Ring of Peace. I argue that understanding this relationship is crucial to grasp how communities are made and remade in relation to violent conflicts.

The Ring of Peace makes an interesting case study for at least two reasons. First, it was a grassroots initiative taken by young Muslims. Contrary to many interreligious public events, it had not been propelled by the authorities or by established religious organizations. Second, it can be considered a successful event in the sense that it attracted a large number of participants and was highly celebrated in Norwegian and international media. My main question with regard to this case study is: how should we understand the relationship between materiality, sensory experiences, and affects in this public performance of “peaceful togetherness” (Griera 2019, 53)?

Answering this question will help to explain, among other things, why this particular event received such a warm welcome in Norwegian society and even in international news media. However, I will also examine the hidden tensions and paradoxes underlying the Ring of Peace. The event took place in a context where Muslims – as well as Jews – experience that their belonging in Norway is continually questioned, where Muslims are more easily seen as terrorists and as antisemites rather than as peace activists, and where Muslims are frequently pressured to distance themselves from violent extremism (Liebmann 2018; van Es 2021). How did the Ring of Peace disrupt or reinforce the unequal power relations between people of different faith groups in Norwegian society, as well as preconceived notions of Muslims and Jews as each other’s ‘natural enemies’?

My research lies at the interface of religious studies, oral history, and anthropology. The research material comprised: (1) semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the organizers of the Ring of Peace,<sup>1</sup> (2) my own observations of the event, and (3) a collection of news reports and opinion pieces about the event that were published in Norwegian newspapers.<sup>2</sup> I participated in the event not simply as an observer, but as a Muslim who wanted to express her solidarity with the Jewish community in Norway and make a statement against violence committed in the name of Islam. While participating, however, I became more and more intrigued by the politics surrounding the event and its enthusiastic reception. I soon came to the conclusion that the Ring of Peace deserves a critical analysis that goes beyond the celebratory tone of most news reports and opinion pieces that appeared at the time.

In the following sections, I will first outline the context in which the Ring of Peace took place, with a special focus on the different historical trajectories of antisemitism and anti-Muslim racism in Norway, and on contemporary discourses about Muslims as the ‘new antisemites’. I will then give a more detailed description of the event and the motivations of the organizers. I turn to Meyer’s notion of the “sensational form” (2008, 2020) to analyze how different material aspects of the Ring of Peace together created a “wow-effect” (2016) and enabled particular imaginations of a ‘new Norwegian we’ to become tangible in the here and now. Building on Ahmed’s ideas about the circulation of affects, I then analyze how an imagined community of ‘ordinary’ Muslim, Jewish, and (post-)Christian Norwegians became materialized in relation to imagined outsiders who threaten the social cohesion between them. Last but not least, I reflect on the ‘backstage’ frictions and frustrations, as well as the limitations of interreligious events such as the Ring of Peace.

## 2 Dealing with Diversity in ‘the New Norway’

In Norway, religious diversity is a fairly recent phenomenon. Today, about seventy percent of the Norwegian population is registered as baptized members of the Lutheran Church of Norway (Statistics Norway 2019). From the sixteenth century until 2012, Lutheran Christianity was the official state religion. The Norwegian constitution of 1814 strongly reinforced the religious monopoly of

1 All interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Quotations were translated by the author. As full anonymization is not possible in this context, all interview respondents are presented with their own name. All of them have been given the opportunity for a citation control.

2 I collected these articles by means of a keyword search in the online database Atekst Retriever, as part of a larger research project on Muslims condemning violent extremism.

the Church of Norway, despite otherwise being one of the most liberal constitutions of its time. It prohibited Jews and Jesuits from entering the country and forbade the establishing of Roman Catholic monastic orders. Since then, the rights of religious minorities have gradually improved. The Dissenter Act of 1845 gave a certain degree of religious freedom to Christians not belonging to the Church of Norway. The clause against Jews was lifted in 1851, but Jesuits were not allowed to enter the country until 1956. Freedom of religion became guaranteed by the Norwegian constitution only in 1964 (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2014; Hoffmann and Moe 2020; Ulvund 2021).

Since the late nineteenth century, and especially since the late 1960s, Norway has witnessed a growing religious and cultural diversity as a result of immigration and globalization. During the last decades, the government has facilitated a certain degree of cultural diversity instead of demanding full assimilation from new citizens. An important aspect has been the funding of ethnic minority organizations (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2014; Liebmann 2018). Moreover, significant efforts have been taken to give minority religions the same rights and privileges as the Lutheran Church. For example, all registered faith and world view communities receive public funding equivalent to their membership numbers. The Norwegian government and the Church of Norway have also taken important steps to initiate interfaith dialogue activities (Leirvik 2015; Liebmann 2018).

In Norwegian public discourse, the terms “the new Norway” (*det nye Norge*) and “the new Norwegian we” (*det nye norske vi*) are often used to describe the religious and cultural diversity that characterizes contemporary Norwegian society (Alghasi 2011; Eriksen and Næss 2011). Ideas about what it means to be Norwegian have changed. A form of ethnic nationalism based on perceptions of a shared ancestry and a shared cultural heritage has increasingly given way to a different form of nationalism based on a strong identification with Norway, enthusiasm for Norwegian traditions (whether one grew up with them or not), and support for secular, liberal values that are seen as “quintessentially Norwegian” (Eriksen and Næss 2011).

Often, the terms “the new Norway” and “the new Norwegian we” are used to celebrate (imagination of) an open and inclusive society where people stand together as one nation while giving room for religious and cultural differences (Alghasi 2011; Eriksen and Næss 2011). Such discourses became especially salient in the aftermath of the 22/7 terrorist attacks in 2011 in Oslo and Utøya, where the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people. Hundreds of thousands of Norwegians – with and without a recent family history of immigration – participated in commemorative public events across the country, the most well-known being the “rose march” (*rosetog*) in Oslo on 25

July 2011 (Lödén 2014; Stordalen 2015). Nevertheless, hostile attitudes towards Jews and Muslims (as well as many other minorities) do exist in Norway, and are not limited to the far Right.

### 3 Jews and Antisemitism in Norway

The first traces of Jews living in Norway date back to the seventeenth century, when small numbers of Sephardi Jews from Portugal entered the country. Jewish immigration became more substantial in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when pogroms in the Russian empire (especially in the Baltics, Poland, Ukraine and Belarus) forced growing numbers of Jews to flee to Norway, among other places. Jewish communities began to emerge in Oslo and Trondheim. In 1892, the first Jewish congregation in Norway (*Det Mosaiske Trossamfund* or DMT) was formally established in Oslo. In 1920, DMT opened a purpose-built synagogue at Bergstien 13, which is still in use today. By the outbreak of World War II, approximately 2,100 Jews lived in Norway (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2014; Hoffmann and Moe 2020).

While Jewish community life began to flourish in Oslo and Trondheim during the pre-war period, antisemitism also grew in Norwegian society. It prevailed on the level of popular attitudes, cultural expressions and among the authorities, and played an important role in the prohibition of kosher slaughter in 1929 and the rejection of Jewish refugees in the 1930s. Antisemitism was also part of the political platform of the Norwegian Nazi party (*Nasjonal Samling*) that was founded in 1933, but the party had only marginal support. The German occupation of Norway began on 9 April 1940. On 26 October 1942, Jewish men were arrested and Jewish assets were liquidated, with the active collaboration of the Norwegian police. The arrest of women and children followed one month later. About 1,000 Jews fled to Sweden during the war to escape persecution. A total of 773 Jews were deported from Norway, almost all of them to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Only 38 of them survived the Shoah (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2014; Hoffmann and Moe 2020).

Today, the Jewish community in Norway consists of an estimated 1,500–2,000 people. Some members of the community and their families have lived in Norway for several generations (with the exception of the years 1942–1945), while others migrated from Denmark, the USA, or Israel to Norway during the post-war period. Most Norwegian Jews live in Oslo or Trondheim. In the year 2000, Jews were officially recognized by the state as a national minority. However, negative sentiments towards Jews have never fully disappeared, and Jewish practices such as kosher rules and circumcision continue to appear in

public debates about “what belongs in Norway” (Døving 2016). During the last two decades, antisemitism has again become an issue of public concern. There are few registered incidents of antisemitic hate crime in Norway (as compared to many other European countries), but antisemitic expressions can regularly be found on the internet and have also repeatedly surfaced in connection to anti-Israel demonstrations (Hoffmann and Moe 2020). According to quantitative surveys conducted in 2011 and 2017, a small but yet significant minority of the Norwegian population scores high in terms of negative sentiments and prejudices towards Jews.<sup>3</sup> In Norwegian public debate, however, antisemitism is first and foremost attributed to Muslim immigrants (Hoffmann and Moe 2020). I will return to this later.

#### 4 Muslims and Anti-Muslim Racism in Norway

Muslims began to arrive in significant numbers during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Migrants from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Morocco, and Yugoslavia were looking for work in the unskilled labor market. Most of them were young men. Since then, the number of Muslims in Norway has increased as a result of family-reunification, marriage migration, and the arrival of refugees from Iran, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2014). At present, about five percent of the Norwegian population has his or her origins in a country with a Muslim majority population. Many of them are living in the capital of Oslo (Østby and Dalgard 2017).<sup>4</sup> Altogether, this superdiverse population forms a significant minority in contemporary Norway.

During the last decades, Muslims have become hyper-visible as a problem category in public debates about a variety of topics, such as gender equality, LGBT rights, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Muslims are often

---

3 The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies conducted a quantitative survey on antisemitism in 2011, and another quantitative survey on antisemitism and Islamophobia in 2017. The results show that 11 percent (in 2011) and almost 8 percent (in 2017) of the respondents agreed to a greater or lesser extent with the statement “I have a certain dislike of Jews”. Furthermore, about 20 percent (in 2011) and about 13 percent (in 2017) believed to a certain degree that “Jews have too much influence on the global economy” and that “world Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests”, and about 18 percent believed that “Jews consider themselves to be better than others” (Hellevik 2020).

4 It is unknown how many of them believe in Islam and/or self-identify as Muslims. Besides, it is estimated that a few thousand Norwegians (with and without a family history of migration) have converted to Islam (Østby and Dalgard 2017).

presented as a more or less homogenous group that is fundamentally different from the majority population, fails or even refuses to integrate, and hence poses a serious cultural and political threat to Norwegian society and its secular, liberal values. The Progress Party has been a driving force in Norwegian public debates about Muslims and Islam since the late 1980s. Party leader Carl I. Hagen and his successor Siv Jensen have repeatedly warned against the “stealthy Islamization” of Norwegian society (Bangstad 2014, Bangstad and Helland 2019; Døving 2020). Few topics receive as much coverage in Norwegian mass media as Islam, and this news coverage is mostly negative (Liebmann 2018). Negative sentiments towards Muslims are fairly widespread among broad layers of society. Statistics show that more than one third of the Norwegian population believe that Muslims do not fit in modern Western societies and pose a threat to Norwegian culture.<sup>5</sup>

## 5 Norwegian Muslims as the ‘New Antisemites’

Muslims also feature as a problem category in Norwegian debates about antisemitism. Since 2000, the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has triggered numerous anti-Jewish and anti-Israel offences in several West-European countries that were committed by young Muslims. In 2006, the religious extremist (and former member of a criminal youth gang) Arfan Bhatti fired shots at the Oslo synagogue with a machine gun. In 2009, street protests in Oslo against the Israeli bombing of Gaza ended in violent riots, with some protesters (many of them having a Muslim background) shouting antisemitic slogans. In the subsequent public debates, Muslims were increasingly blamed for the spread of a ‘new’ antisemitism in Norway. In 2010, the Norwegian broadcasting corporation (NRK) aired a report where teachers spoke out against antisemitism among Muslim pupils, which stirred much debate and led to a governmental action plan against racism and antisemitism in 2011 (Døving 2016; Bergmann 2020). In 2012, the Pakistani-Norwegian politician Abid Raja sparked a new controversy when he argued in an opinion piece that “Muslims

5 The quantitative survey conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2017 revealed that over 30 percent of the respondents agreed to a greater or lesser extent with the statement “I have a certain dislike of Muslims”. Moreover, 36 percent of the respondents thought that Muslims do not fit in a modern Western society, 39 percent held the view that Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture, 30 percent believed that Muslims want to take over Europe, and 29 percent were convinced that Muslims are more violent than others (Hellevik 2020).

suckle hatred against Jews with their mothers' milk" (*Aftenposten*, 30 September 2012).

Statistics show that Norwegian Muslims indeed more often hold negative views of Jews than the dominant majority population in Norway, and that they are more often ready to justify harassment or violence against Jews.<sup>6</sup> However, the same statistics show that the majority of Norwegian Muslims do not hold negative views of Jews at all, and that many of them want to cooperate with Jews in a fight against prejudice and discrimination (Bergmann 2020). Nevertheless, in public debates, Muslims are often collectively held accountable for antisemitism (Døving 2016; Lenz and Moe 2020). Some scholars (Silverstein 2007; Özyürek 2016; Romeyn 2020; Topolski 2020) argue that the contemporary fight against antisemitism in Europe entails a process of boundary drawing between a tolerant European 'Self' and an antisemitic Muslim 'Other'. They warn that the singling out of Muslims as the main contemporary antisemites serves to question the belonging of Muslims in European societies, or to raise alarm about a 'war of civilizations'. In Norway, this is exemplified by the far-right opinion maker Hege Storhaug, who argued in her 2015 book 'Islam: The Eleventh Plague' that "Islam is at war with women, Jews, homosexuals, freedom-loving Muslims and anyone unwilling to submit to its doctrines" (Storhaug 2015, in Bangstad and Helland 2019).

Such discourses indirectly put enormous pressure on Muslims to show that they are loyal citizens of Norway who support peaceful interfaith coexistence. This pressure is further enhanced by repeated demands on Muslims to distance themselves from terrorism and other crimes committed in the name of Islam. Such demands have been made by politicians and opinion makers at least since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, often with the argument that the 'silent majority' of Muslims should take more efforts to show that they do not support such violence (cf. *Aftenposten*, 11 November 2001; *Dagbladet*, 27 July 2005;

6 The quantitative survey conducted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies in 2017 indicated that Norwegian Muslims agree somewhat more frequently with the statement "I have a certain dislike of Jews" than members of the dominant majority population (9 percent versus almost 8 percent). Muslims believe significantly more often in anti-Jewish stereotypes than members of the dominant majority population, such as that "world Jewry is working behind the scenes to promote Jewish interests" (28 percent versus 14 percent), "Jews have too much influence on the global economy" (42 percent versus 13 percent) and "Jews consider themselves to be better than others" (33 percent versus 18 percent). Furthermore, about 21 percent of the Muslim respondents agreed to a certain extent with the statement "considering how Israel treats the Palestinians, harassment and violence against Jews are justifiable", versus about 12 percent of the respondents belonging to the dominant majority population (Bergmann 2020).



*Vårt Land*, 15 August 2014). During the last two decades, the Islamic Council of Norway, as well as many other Muslim organizations and individuals, have condemned terrorism and antisemitism on many occasions.<sup>7</sup> They have also regularly participated in interfaith dialogue activities (Leirvik 2015; Elgvin and Bangstad 2016; Liebmann 2018).

Nevertheless, the pressure on Muslims to stand up against antisemitism became even stronger after the terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen. On 7 January 2015, two Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists fatally shot twelve people and injured eleven others at the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. On 9 January, a *Hypercacher* kosher supermarket was sieged by an armed young man who claimed to act on behalf of ISIS, and who was in close contact with the *Charlie Hebdo* shooters. He killed four Jewish civilians and held fifteen other hostages, until the police stormed the supermarket and killed the perpetrator. One month later, on Saturday 14 February 2015, a 22-year-old ISIS sympathizer shot and killed one man during a debate about freedom of speech in Copenhagen. Later that night, the same perpetrator killed the 37-year-old Jew Dan Uzan, who was on security duty outside the Great Synagogue during a *bat mitzvah* celebration. A few hours later, the perpetrator was fatally shot by the police (Elgvin and Bangstad 2016; Titley 2017).

Although these were neither the first terrorist attacks linked to ISIS, nor the first attacks targeting Jewish communities in Europe, the Paris and Copenhagen attacks were widely covered in international media and sent shock waves throughout Europe (Elgvin and Bangstad 2016; Titley 2017). In Norway, members of the Mosaic Faith Community expressed their fear and asked for more police protection around the Oslo synagogue (*Dagen*, 13 January 2015; *Dagbladet*, 16 February 2015; *Klassekampen*, 16 February 2015). Meanwhile, calls were made for a strong and broad movement among Muslims against religious extremism and intolerant attitudes. These calls came from the side of non-Muslim commentators with a critical attitude towards Islam (cf. *Dagen*, 12 January 2015; *Aftenposten*, 14 January 2015; *Vårt Land* 16 February 2015), but also from the side of Muslim individuals and civil society organizations (*Dagsavisen*, 8 January 2015; *Dagsavisen*, 10 January 2015; *Aftenposten*, 14 January 2015). These pressures, in combination with public discourses about a

---

7 These statements have not always received much press coverage, but many of them can nevertheless be traced in Norwegian newspaper archives. An event that did gain a lot of attention in Norwegian (and international) media was a protest march against ISIS organized by young Muslims in Oslo in August 2014, which counted more than 5,000 participants (van Es 2021).

'new Norway' where people stand together in dark times despite their differences, formed an important part of the context in which the 'Ring of Peace' took place.

## 6 Making a 'Ring of Peace' around the Oslo Synagogue

The 'Ring of Peace' (*Fredens Ring*) was organized by a group of seven young Muslim men (Ali Chishti, Zeeshan Abdullah, Morad Jarodi, Hassan Raja, Mudassar Khan Mehmood, Atif Jamil and Thomas Holgersen Daher Naustdal), and one young Muslim woman (Hajrah Arshad). Until the Copenhagen attacks, they had only known each other online as fellow moderators of the Facebook page 'Injustice Revealed' (*Urett Avsløres*). This was a closed community page where they shared news reports that they thought were not receiving enough attention in the mainstream media, such as Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians, hate crimes against Muslims in Europe, and cases of animal abuse. Some of them had also organized protests together against the Israeli bombardments of Gaza. The day after the Copenhagen attacks, the moderators contacted each other via Facebook messenger to discuss whether they should do something. Although they were highly critical of the continuous pressure on Muslims to distance themselves from terrorism, they wanted to express their solidarity with Norwegian Jews (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017; Morad Jarodi, interviewed on 5 June 2017; Ali Chishti and Zeeshan Abdullah, interviewed on 2 March 2018). Hajrah Arshad still remembers the horror and anger that she and the other moderators felt after the attacks. They did not know any Jews themselves, but with the violence coming geographically closer and closer to Oslo, they sensed how threatened the small Jewish community must feel at that time. Additionally, they were worried about how the attacks would reflect on Muslims and Islam: "We also felt deeply hurt. Just the idea that our religion was put in such a bad light!" (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017).

Spontaneously, the idea came up to form a human ring around the Oslo synagogue. In the middle of the night between Sunday the 15th and Monday the 16th of February, Hajrah Arshad created a Facebook event page titled 'Ring of Peace', with the following text:

Islam means to protect our brothers and sisters, no matter what religion they belong to. Islam means to rise above the hatred, and never sink to the same level as the haters. Islam means to defend each other. As Muslims, we want to show that we strongly condemn all forms of anti-

semitism, and that we are here to support Jewish people. Therefore, we will create a human circle around the synagogue on Saturday 21 February.<sup>8</sup>

The next day, hundreds of people had already signed up for the event, and Arshad received the first phone calls from journalists who wanted to make news reports about the initiative. She remembers that she was totally surprised about how well the event caught on (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017).

Only then the group began to think about the practical aspects of their initiative, such as contacting the synagogue and applying for a permit from the Oslo police. Fortunately, the Mosaic Faith Community responded positively and proposed to perform the *Havdalah* ceremony in the open air, so that everyone could join the closing of the Sabbath. On Wednesday, three of the young Muslim initiators had a preparatory meeting in the synagogue with representatives of the Jewish community and the Oslo police. Their initial plan to make a full circle around the synagogue turned out to be impossible, as the synagogue is not a stand-alone building. Instead, they planned to let a small group of Muslims make a semicircle in front of the synagogue, while all other participants could stand in a larger semicircle on the street and observe the ceremony from a short distance (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017; Morad Jarodi, interviewed on 5 June 2017; Ali Chishti and Zeeshan Abdullah, interviewed on 2 March 2018).

Meanwhile, the growing number of Facebook sign-ups and the extensive media coverage fueled each other. News reports appeared in Norwegian media outlets such as *TV2*, *Aftenposten*, and *Vårt land*, but the upcoming event also caught attention from foreign news channels such as *Al Jazeera*, the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Washington Post*, *Fox News*, *BBC* and *CNN*. Within a few days, the number of Facebook sign-ups rose to over two thousand. To bring as many people together as possible, and to prevent debates about the Israel-Palestine conflict from overshadowing the event, the organizers tried to sideline these debates as much as possible. They announced that all possible references to Israel or Palestine (whether in the form of protest banners, clothing, or otherwise) would be banned during the event. In interviews, the organizers made it clear that they were highly critical of the Israeli state policy towards Palestinians, and that they were aware of the fact that many DMT members openly

---

<sup>8</sup> The event page is no longer available. The text has been retrieved from various news reports (*Framtida*, 20 February 2015; *NA24*, 21 February 2015; *ABC Nyheter*, 21 February 2015).

supported the Israeli government. However, they considered this irrelevant. The 'Ring of Peace' was not about Israel, they said, but about supporting Jews as a minority group in Norway (*Framtida*, 20 February 2015; *Aftenposten*, 20 February 2015; *TV2*, 21 February 2015).

## 7 Between Fear and Hope

Ultimately, more than 1300 people participated despite the winter cold. The event was live broadcasted by different news channels across the world. People of different origins and religious affiliations stood shoulder to shoulder. Everyone in the tightly packed crowd gazed at the synagogue, listening to the *Havdalah* song sung by members of the congregation and the speeches given by representatives of DMT and the organizers. It was dark outside, but strong lights were aimed at the small platform near the synagogue entrance. Arshad addressed her speech to the Jewish community. She spoke about the importance of standing up for each other, while she also criticized the continuous pressure on Muslims in wider society to denounce violent crimes committed by others:

It is unfair to be held accountable for everything that other Muslims do. We are not here to say sorry for what happened in Copenhagen, but to show that we stand with you. (...) We feel the same fear as you do, and we will take the blows together with you. (...) Together, as a nation, we shall break the prejudices we have against each other (*TV2*, 21 February 2015).

Ali Chishti addressed the antisemitic statements he had made during a panel debate in March 2009, and that had given him a highly controversial reputation in Norwegian society (cf. *Aftenposten*, 23 March 2009; *Aftenposten*, 4 April 2009). In his speech, he contrasted the ideas he had back then with his current views:

Five years ago, I stood in front of a large audience at the House of Literature in Oslo, and gave a speech titled 'Why I feel hatred against Jews'. It was a long and angry tirade full of conspiracy theories and pure anti-semitism. Today, five years later, I am standing here, and I want to protect my Jewish fellow citizens, with my words, with my presence, and most of all with my Islamic beliefs. In the course of these five years, I have read and reflected a lot about Islam, history, and politics. The world is not black and white.

He then explained that Islam promotes peaceful interfaith coexistence, and that Jews and Muslims have been living peacefully together for many centuries.

The speech that seemed to move people the most, and that became frequently cited in Norwegian media, was that of Rabbi Michael Melchior. He spoke about his meeting with Dan Uzan's father in Copenhagen, who had said to him:

Tell those young Muslims in Oslo that they have given me hope. They have given me a reason to continue to live. Perhaps my son's death had a meaning after all. Perhaps it will be a source of life in the future.

Upon hearing this, many participants got tears in their eyes. Some of them cried out loud. Rabbi Melchior then said to the organizers: "By making a circle, you have broken another circle. By making a circle of friendship, love and solidarity, you have broken a circle of fear, hatred, mistrust and murder". Finally, he discussed how religious language is abused by violent extremists. He then shouted "Allahu Akbar" as loud as he could, and said:

God is great! Our common God is everywhere in the world, but most of all God is where rings are formed and bridges are built between people. That's where God wants to be. That's where the future of humanity is secured.

While his words echoed through the street, the crowd burst into applause (*TV2*, 21 February 2015).

In his closing speech, Ervin Kohn said:

Your presence here today is a strong signal to our community that we are not alone. (...) The fear is there. (...) It is not easy to work against this fear on our own. To work against this fear together with others is much easier. We are grateful to be with so many of you today. (...) It is unique that Muslims stand up against antisemitism this way, and it fills us with hope. Honor is due to the entire Norwegian society for the fact that this is possible. Namely, that young people have taken this grass roots initiative on their own. We can again say 'look to Norway' after what has happened here tonight.<sup>9</sup>

9 The phrase "look to Norway" refers to the Norwegian response to the 22/7 July attacks by Breivik in 2011, and especially to the slogan "more openness, more democracy, more diversity", which received much praise internationally.



FIGURE 9.2 The Ring of Peace around the Oslo synagogue  
 PHOTO: FREDRIK VARFJELL, AFP/GETTY IMAGES, WITH PERMISSION

## 8 The Public Reception of the Event

The responses to the Ring of Peace were overwhelmingly positive. Already before the event took place, the initiative was warmly welcomed on social media by people across the world, especially by Jews (Vårt Land, 19 February 2015). Zeeshan Abdullah and Ali Chishti remember meeting an elderly Jewish woman outside the synagogue during the preparation week, who was moved to tears when she discovered that the two were among the organizers of the upcoming event (Ali Chishti and Zeeshan Abdullah, interviewed on 2 March 2018). The organizers also received many enthusiastic responses from Norwegian Muslims in their own social environment and on social media, both before and after the event. Arshad remembers many Muslims expressing their relief that “finally some people were speaking on behalf of them” (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017).

During the days after the event, news reports, opinion pieces and full-length interviews with the organizers appeared in Norwegian and international media, often illustrated with photos of the event featuring young, hijab-wearing women standing hand in hand in front of a white building with a Hebrew text above the front door. All reports shared the same celebratory tone, emphasizing how the event had managed to “bring people together”, “break

prejudices” and “strengthen social cohesion” (cf. *Klassekampen*, 23 February 2015; *Vårt Land*, 23 February 2015). Later that year, the organizers of the Ring of Peace received the *Fritt Ord* Honorary Award, an annual prize to encourage freedom of speech (NRK, 17 April 2015). The then US Secretary of State John Kerry praised the Ring of Peace, saying “this is the kind of solidarity that inspires the world” (TV2, 15 May 2015).

Not everyone was equally enthusiastic about the event. Arshad received hateful messages and death threats from *Profetens Ummah*: a small, but infamous group of Norwegian Muslims who openly supported ISIS, and said that Arshad “would do anything for a shoulder pat from the infidels” (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017). The Norwegian Muslim convert Trond Ali Linstad remarked in an interview that Muslims had “made a mistake” by “expressing support for a Zionist organization such as DMT” (VG, 23 February 2015). At the same time, far-right activists and opinion makers tried to present the organizers as crypto-extremists. Max Hermansen, leader of the newly established anti-Islam movement Pegida Norway, referred to the Ring of Peace as “trickery” and a “solid dose of *taqiya* (dissimulation)” (NA24, 22 February 2015). The aforementioned Hege Storhaug speculated that there were very few Muslims among the participants and contrasted this with the “large crowds” of Muslims protesting the anti-Islam movie *Innocence of Muslims* in 2012. Furthermore, she commented that the organizers only wanted to “whitewash Islam instead of rising up against those who legitimize violence” (HRS, 22 February 2015). Elsewhere (van Es 2021), I argue that the very fact that the Ring of Peace triggered such negative responses from different parties reveals the political impact of the event.

Overall, the Ring of Peace gained an iconic status in Norwegian society as a strong example of Muslim-Jewish solidarity. Ervin Kohn has warm memories of the event, and he observes that many Norwegian Jews look back positively at the Ring of Peace (Ervin Kohn, interviewed on 20 December 2021). This is confirmed by Claudia Lenz and Vibeke Moe (2020) in their study of Jewish-Muslim relations. They discovered that several years after the Ring of Peace, many Norwegian Jews and Muslims still remembered the event and had positive associations with it.

## 9 The Ring of Peace as a Ritual Performance

Whereas the *Havdalah* ceremony is a well-known religious ritual, the Ring of Peace can be analyzed as a meta-ritual in which an ideal of interfaith solidarity and peaceful coexistence is being enacted and embodied. In her work

on interreligious public events, the sociologist Mar Griera (2019) observes the recent emergence of rituals where believers belonging to different faith traditions come together for worship, celebration, or commemoration in response to specific events, such as a terrorist attack. Since the 1990s, and especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, these interreligious rituals have gained popularity across the world as vehicles for ‘interfaith harmony’ in increasingly pluralized societies. According to Griera, such rituals momentarily turn imaginations of peaceful coexistence into reality, and emphasize the capacity of religious groups to be peacebuilders and peacekeepers. As such, they can be seen as “dramatizations” or “public choreographies” of a counternarrative against public perceptions of religious diversity as a threat to social cohesion, and, more specifically, of Islam as a security threat. Put differently, these interreligious rituals serve to “enact togetherness” and to “create public representations of a plural ‘we’” (Griera 2019, 43).

Similarly, the Ring of Peace can be seen as a ritual that allowed participants to momentarily turn their imaginations of ‘the new Norway’ – and also of a more global interfaith coexistence – into an embodied reality, and it allowed Muslims to emphasize their capacity to make a positive contribution to Norwegian society. In fact, the Ring of Peace went a step further than a performance of mere peaceful coexistence. As an enactment of interfaith solidarity, Muslim and other participants expressed their willingness to protect Jews even if this meant putting themselves at risk. The big question, however, is *how* exactly the Ring of Peace worked to enact an imagination of peaceful coexistence and interfaith solidarity?

Answering this question will also help to understand why this particular event received such a warm welcome in Norwegian society and even in international news media. It seems that part of the answer lies in the fact that the Ring of Peace was not organized at the initiative of the authorities or established organizations, as is usually the case with public interreligious rituals (Griera 2019), but by a group of ‘ordinary’ young Muslim citizens. This element was explicitly mentioned by Ervin Kohn in his speech, and it was also emphasized in several Norwegian news reports (cf. *Framtida*, 20 February 2015; *Dagbladet*, 21 February 2015; *VG*, 21 February 2015). It also seems that the Ring of Peace filled an emotional need that was felt by many different people across the world at that time. As Morad Jarodi says: “The situation was so dark that as soon as there was a glimpse of light, everyone jumped on it” (Morad Jarodi, interviewed on 5 June 2017). However, this does not offer a full explanation.



## 10 Materiality, Sensory Experiences, and Affects

To answer the questions raised above, I combine Birgit Meyer's work on religious mediation (2008, 2009, 2016, 2020) with Sara Ahmed's work on affective economies (2004). Building on Émile Durkheim (1912), Meyer raises the question of how sensory experiences induced by collective rituals can invoke feelings of awe and create a sense of togetherness among people. She introduces the term "sensational form" (2008) to analyze how particular configurations of buildings, objects, spaces, sounds, images, light and darkness, flavors, odors, clothes, and/or corporeal practices of touching and being touched, appeal to – and tune – the senses and create a "wow effect" (2016).<sup>10</sup> These shared, embodied experiences produce what Durkheim (1912) calls "collective effervescence": a "feeling of being brought out of oneself into something larger and more powerful" (Collins 2011, 2). Hence, Meyer (2008, 2009) points to the important role of sensational forms in making "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983) such as the Catholic Church, the Islamic *ummah* or the nation tangible outside the realm of the mind. It is important to note that these imagined communities are not merely represented or enacted through these collective rituals, but also remade. Meyer proposes the term "aesthetic formation" to create a more dynamic understanding of how communities are made (Meyer 2009).<sup>11</sup>

Analyzing the Ring of Peace as a sensational form makes it possible to see how different material aspects together invoked feelings of awe: the large crowd of people looking at the nearly hundred-year-old synagogue with its turret, its glass-stained windows and the Hebrew text above the front door; the human (semi)circle in front of the synagogue, with female participants being clearly recognizable as Muslims because of their headscarves; the visible presence of Norwegian and foreign journalists; the narrow street that compelled participants of different national origins and religious affiliations to stand at a close distance from each other and form a tightly packed crowd; the contrast between the darkness outside and the lights aimed at the synagogue; the contrast between the ice-cold weather and the warmth coming from other human bodies; the soft voices of members of the Jewish community singing the *Havdalah* song; and the strong and determined voice of Rabbi Melchior shouting "Allahu Akbar", with the sound of his voice echoing off the high

10 The word "sensational" here refers to the senses as well as to the breathtaking effect that is being produced.

11 The value of the "sensational form" and the "aesthetic formation" as analytical tools go far beyond the study of collective rituals, as showcased on the research website [www.religionmatters.nl](http://www.religionmatters.nl).

walls of the surrounding buildings. Together, they allowed particular imaginations of ‘peaceful interfaith coexistence’ and of ‘the new Norway’ to become materialized in the here and now. Besides, some of these aspects made the event highly photogenic, which seems to have contributed to the high media exposure. News photos circulated widely of women with headscarves holding hands in front of the synagogue, with its Hebrew letters visible in the background. This helped the Ring of Peace to make an impact even on people who were not physically present.

However, in my view, it is important to note that events such as the Ring of Peace are never only about those who are there (or even those who follow the event with positive interest through mass media), but also about those who are *not* there. Ahmed’s work on affective economies (2004) helps to understand how affects work to produce a ‘new Norwegian we’ in relation to outsiders who threaten this ‘we’. Like Meyer, Ahmed goes beyond the domains of imagination, rhetoric, and ideology, and stresses the importance of strong emotions in the making and remaking of communities. Ahmed raises the question of how emotions such as hate and fear align some subjects with other subjects against a common object. Instead of assuming that affects simply emerge within an individual, she argues that affects circulate among people, and also between people, texts, and objects. Affects *do* something: they align individuals with communities, and create the very outline of a common threat. Fear and hate create the very effect of ‘that which I am not’. In her analysis of public responses to the 9/11 attacks in the US, Ahmed writes: “Fear does not involve the defense of borders that already exist. Fear makes those borders by establishing objects from which the subject, in fearing, can stand apart” (2004, 127–128). She then argues that this circulation of fear and hate constitutes a community of “ordinary” people that is under threat from an imagined “other”.

Such a circulation of affects can also be observed in relation to the Ring of Peace. Hajrah Arshad, Rabbi Melchior and Ervin Kohn referred to fear in their speeches, and Melchior directly contrasted fear, hate, and mistrust with friendship, love and solidarity. Both Arshad and Kohn explicitly referred to the Norwegian nation. The establishing of a community of ‘ordinary’ Norwegians through this circulation of affects can perhaps best be observed in the words of Zeeshan Abdullah. When asked for his motivations, he remembers:

There was so much hatred in the air. We thought that a symbolic ring would pinch a hole in that bubble. During the last years, two opposite poles have been feeding each other: the extremists, on both sides [jihadists and right-wing extremists]. And then you have the large majority of ordinary people – whether they be Muslim, Christian, Jewish, or atheist – and they are negatively affected by this. (...) We wanted to take

the power of definition away from these extremists and give it to the masses, to the common people in the streets. It is actually up to us to define what Islam is. It is up to the ordinary Jews to define Judaism, and it is up to the ordinary Christians to define what Christianity is about. (Zeeshan Abdullah, interviewed together with Ali Chishti on 2 March 2018)

Here, 'ordinary' Muslims, Christians, Jews, and atheists are aligned together against not one, but two 'others': jihadists and right-wing extremists. It is the shared fear of, and the perceived hate from these two 'others' that produce an imagined community of 'ordinary' Norwegians, and that contribute to the circulation of positive affects among them. This is enhanced by the impossibility to pin these two 'others' down to specific individuals or groups: the fear of terrorism is a fear of future terrorists who are still unknown (Ahmed 2004).

## 11 Muslims and Jews as 'Ordinary' Norwegians

The aligning of Muslims and Jews together with (post-)Christians as 'ordinary' Norwegians, however, is a precarious endeavor. Muslims, Jews, and Christians are not equally positioned in Norwegian society, and interreligious events are not level playing fields (Liebmann 2018). The Ring of Peace took place in a context where Muslims (and also Jews) experience that their belonging in Norway is continually questioned. It is also a context where Muslims are much more strongly associated with terrorism than other Norwegians, and where Muslims are more easily seen as terrorists than as peace activists. The Ring of Peace could make a big impact precisely *because* it was counter-intuitive. This is why the organizers made sure to position only Muslims in the first semi-circle around the synagogue, why news photographers zoomed in on women with headscarves, and why some critical commentators scrutinized the relative number of Muslim participants in the event.

Here, we can see an interesting paradox. On the one hand, Muslims have to invoke their Muslim identity and visibly mark their difference in order to be recognized as Muslims, and to enable a performance of peaceful interfaith coexistence. On the other hand, this emphasis on their 'Muslim-ness' makes it all the more difficult for them to be perceived as 'ordinary' Norwegians. Moreover, while the event challenged stereotypical perceptions of Muslims as antisemitic and aggressive, and of Muslim-Jewish relations as always loaded with conflict, it also highlighted the violence that the organizers and participants reacted against.

This precarious status as ‘ordinary’ Norwegians also applies to Jews, albeit in a different way. In their study of Jewish-Muslim relations in Norway, Lenz and Moe (2020) recount:

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 color or a hobby’. In contrast to that desired normality, the Ring of Peace had underlined that the minority was ‘different, small, protected and special’. (Lenz and Moe 2020, 312)

It is noteworthy that while Muslims and Jews were almost compelled to participate *as* Muslims and Jews in the event, members of the dominant majority could participate as unmarked individuals instead of as Christians or atheists.

It is not surprising, then, that the Ring of Peace was not free of ‘backstage’ frictions and frustrations. In private conversations with the organizers, some Muslims explained that they did not want to participate in the event. They did not disagree with its message of solidarity towards Jews, but they were fed up with having to defend themselves, and they wanted to avoid making any sort of statement that could be interpreted as “Muslims saying sorry for terrorism” (Morad Jarodi, interviewed on 5 June 2017). Frustrations can also be found among some of the organizers. Although Hajrah Arshad is generally very positive about the Ring of Peace and the impact it made. She regrets that she did not lash out more strongly against anti-Muslim racism:

Whether you wear a kippa or a headscarf, it is the same sh\*t. (...) I wished I had used this platform more to show how difficult it is for Muslim youth in contemporary society. Regardless of how ‘liberal’ or ‘moderate’ you are, you are being judged no matter what you do! (Hajrah Arshad, interviewed on 12 February 2017)

This points to an important limitation of interreligious events. Whereas the Ring of Peace can be seen as a powerful critique of jihadists and right-wing extremists alike, the overall focus on ‘togetherness’ leaves little room to criticize mainstream society or the political midfield.<sup>12</sup>

12 Similar observations have been made by other scholars regarding efforts for peaceful interfaith coexistence in Norway (Liebmann 2018) and Kenya (Meinema 2021), for example.

Nevertheless, the Ring of Peace managed to disrupt a problematic pattern in contemporary discussions about Jews and Muslims. Lenz and Moe (2020) point out that public discourses about Muslims as the ‘new antisemites’, as well as competing discourses about Muslims as the ‘new Jews’, can contribute to a competition of victimhood between Jews and Muslims, and to a public “prioritization between the two minorities when it comes to measures fighting prejudice and discrimination” (2020, 298–299). The Ring of Peace built on neither of these two discourses. Instead, it emerged from a perception of similarities between the contemporary experiences of Jews and Muslims. In expressing their compassion, the organizers opened a door to mutual solidarity in a shared struggle against stigmatization, hatred and exclusion. Moreover, during the last few years, Ervin Kohn has witnessed young Jews and Muslims taking more and more interfaith initiatives together. In his view, the Ring of Peace has paved the way for these initiatives (Ervin Kohn, interviewed on 20 December 2021).

## 12 Conclusion

Focusing on materiality proves to be a beneficial approach to the study of peace and conflict, and more specifically the study of interreligious events that are organized in response to violence. In this chapter, I have explored the relationship between materiality, sensorial experiences, and affects in such public performances of peaceful togetherness. I argue that this relationship can best be understood by combining Birgit Meyer’s concept of the “sensational form” (2008, 2009, 2016, 2020) with Sara Ahmed’s notion of “affective economies” (2004). Each in their own way, Meyer and Ahmed go beyond the domains of imagination, rhetoric, and ideology in their analyses of how communities are continually made and remade, stressing the importance of strong emotions as well as particular configurations of material elements (including our own human bodies). Meyer explains how the different material aspects of a collective ritual induce sensory experiences that result in feelings of awe. This “wow effect” allows particular imaginations of a community to become materialized in the here and now. Ahmed’s work reminds us that this happens in relation to outsiders who are not part of the ritual. Ahmed explains how the circulation of affects such as hate, fear, and love produces a community of ‘ordinary’ people that is under threat from one or more ‘others’. Combining these analytical frameworks creates a fruitful ground to analyze how communities are made and remade in relation to violent conflicts, and how unequal power relationships between people of different origins and beliefs are challenged as well as reproduced through efforts for peaceful interfaith coexistence.

## Acknowledgements

The research for this article was supported by the H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (Grant Number 703071), and an NWO Spinoza Prize awarded to Professor Birgit Meyer at Utrecht University. The author wishes to thank the editors of this edited volume for the collaboration, which has been a great pleasure. She also wants to express her gratitude to Birgit Meyer and the Religious Matters research team at Utrecht University, as well as the anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. Special thanks go to the interview respondents, without whom this research would not have been possible.

## References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. "Affective Economies". *Social Text* 22 (2): 117–139.
- Alghasi, Sharam. 2011. "Norges Nye 'Vi': Den Irske Diasporaen og den Norske Utenrikspolitiske Dynamikken" [trans.: Norway's New 'We': The Iranian Diaspora and Norwegian Foreign Policy Dynamics]. *Internasjonal Politikk* 69 (4): 645–676.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso Books.
- Bangstad, Sindre. 2014. *Anders Brevik and the Rise of Islamophobia*. London: Zed Books.
- Bangstad, Sindre, and Olav Elgvin. 2016. "Norway." In *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 7, edited by Oliver Scharbrodt, 436–449. Leiden: Brill.
- Bangstad, Sindre, and Frode Helland. 2019. "The Rhetoric of Islamophobia: An Analysis of the Means of Persuasion in Hege Storhaug's Writings on Islam and Muslims." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, published online on 17 April 2019.
- Bergmann, Werner. 2020. "How Do Jews and Muslims in Norway Perceive Each Other?" In *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice: Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Norway*, edited by Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe, 211–253. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Brochmann, Grete, and Knut Kjeldstadli. 2014. *Innvandringen til Norge 900–2010*. [Immigration to Norway 900–2010]. Oslo: Pax.
- Collins, Randall. 2011. "The Micro-Sociology of Religion: Religious Practices, Collective and Individual." Association of Religion Data Archives. Available online at: <http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers/collins.pdf>. Accessed: 2-10-2020.
- Døving, Cora Alexa. 2016. "Jews in the News: Representations of Judaism and the Jewish Minority in the Norwegian Contemporary Press." *Journal of Media and Religion* 15 (1): 1–14.

- Døving, Cora Alexa. 2020. "A Growing Consensus?" In *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice*, 76–107.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland, and Hans Erik Næss. 2011. *Kulturell Kompleksitet i det Nye Norge* [Cultural Complexity in the New Norway]. Oslo: Unipub.
- Griera, Mar. 2019. "Interreligious Events in the Public Space: Performing Togetherness in Times of Religious Pluralism." In *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries: Explorations in Interrituality*, edited by Marianne Moyaert, 35–55. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hellevik, Ottar. 2020. "Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Norway." In *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice*, 108–154.
- Hoffmann, Christhard, and Vibeke Moe. 2020. "Introduction." In *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice*, 7–25.
- Leirvik, Oddbjørn. 2015. "Policy toward Religion, State Support, and Interreligious Dialogue: The Case of Norway." *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 25 (1): 92–108.
- Lenz, Claudia, and Vibeke Moe. 2020. "Negotiations of Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Group Conversations among Jews and Muslims." In *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice*, 297–323.
- Liebmann, Louise Lund. 2018. "Media, Muslims and Minority Tactics: Compelling Dialogues in Norway." In *Contesting Religion: The Media Dynamic of Cultural Conflicts in Scandinavia*, edited by Knut Lundby, Chapter 11. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Lödén, Hans. 2014. "Peace, Love, Depoliticisation and the Domestic Alien: National Identity in the Memorial Messages Collected after the Terrorist Attacks in Norway 22 July 2011." *National Identities* 16 (2): 157–176.
- Meinema, Erik. 2021. *Regulating Religious Coexistence: The Intricacies of 'Interfaith' Cooperation in Coastal Kenya*. PhD Thesis. Utrecht: Utrecht University.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2008. "Media and the Senses in the Making of Religious Experience: An Introduction." *Material Religion* 4 (2): 124–134.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2009. "Introduction – From Imagined Communities to Aesthetic Formations: Religious Mediations, Sensational Forms, and Styles of Binding." In *Aesthetic formations: Media, Religion, and the Senses*, edited by Birgit Meyer, 1–28. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2016. "How to Capture the 'Wow': R.R. Marett's Notion of Awe and the Study of Religion." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22 (1): 7–26.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2020. "Religion as Mediation." *Entangled Religions* 11 (3) 1–21.
- Østby, Lars, and Anne Berit Dalgard. 2017. "4 Prosent Muslimer i Norge?" [trans.: 4 Percent Muslims in Norway?]. <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/4-prosent-muslimer-i-norge-351303>. Accessed: 18-07-2019.
- Özyürek, Esra. 2016. "Export-Import Theory and the Racialization of Anti-Semitism: Turkish- and Arab-Only Prevention Programs." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58 (1): 40–65.

- Romeyn, Esther. 2020. "(Anti) 'New Antisemitism' as a Transnational Field of Governance." *Patterns of Prejudice* 54 (1–2): 199–214.
- Silverstein, Paul. 2007. "Comment on Bunzl." In *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe*, edited by Matti Bunzl, 61–68. Chicago: Prickley Paradigm Press.
- Stordalen, Terje. 2015. "The Trail of Roses: Time, Media and Space in Memory Practices in Oslo after 22 July 2011." In *The Formative Past and the Formation of the Future: Collective Remembering and Identity Formation*, edited by Saphinaz Amal-Naguib and Terje Stordalen, 315–344. Oslo: Novus Press.
- Titley, Gavan. 2017. "Introduction. Becoming Symbolic: From Charlie Hebdo to 'Charlie Hebdo'." In *After Charlie Hebdo: Terror, Racism and Free Speech*, edited by Gavan Titley et al., 1–27. London: Zed Books.
- Topolski, Anya. 2020. "Rejecting Judeo-Christian Privilege: The First Step Towards Semitic Solidarity." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 27 (3): 298–318.
- Ulvund, Frode. 2021. *Religious Otherness and National Identity in Scandinavia, c. 1790–1960: The Construction of Jews, Mormons, and Jesuits as Anti-Citizens and Enemies of Society*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Van Es, Margaretha A. 2021. "Norwegian Muslims Denouncing Terrorism: Beyond 'Moderate' versus 'Radical'?" *Religion* 51 (2): 169–189.
- Van Liere, Lucien 2020. "The Image of Violence and the Study of Material Religion: An Introduction." *Religions* 11 (7): 370–388.