Social Status in Norway and the Law of 'Jante': An Analysis of ISSP Social Inequality Data

Daniel R. PALAMARA
daniel.palamara01@uowmail.edu.au

Abstract
This study examines International Social Survey Programme data from the 1999 social inequality module for evidence of Janteloven ('the law of Jante') in Norway – a widely known though often disputed description for aspects of Norwegian (and Scandinavian) society relating to equality, norming and envy. Income equality and social status were examined using survey data across 26 countries. Norwegian respondents did not show a marked preference for income equality when asked to consider the actual and deserved income of high- versus low-status occupations. However, they did stand out in reporting a distinctly and significantly smaller mean difference in social status between a high-status occupation (the chairman of a large national corporation) and a low-status occupation (an unskilled factory worker). Linear regression shows that the attitude towards social status is affected by the respondent's level of education, but not by other personal factors. These attitudes could potentially be attributed to Janteloven, and are considered alongside the results of a small (n=30) online survey as well as popular media and academic portrayals.

Keywords: *Janteloven*; survey; equality; social status; Norway;

JEL Classification: Z13;

1. Introduction

In 1933, Danish writer Aksel Sandemose's book 'En flyktning krysser sitt spor' was published, with an English translation released in 1936 under the title 'A fugitive crosses his tracks'. Sandemose's novel included a list of ten rules that dominate social norms in the fictional town of Jante; these laws, which were founded on a strong sense of social envy, are known in Norway as 'the law of Jante' (*Janteloven* in Norwegian). The idea of *Janteloven* is considered to be a critical, or negative, depiction by Sandemose of the 'egalitarian individualism' (marked by 'a strong suspicion against social climbers and a rejection of formal social hierarchies') that characterises the Norwegian national identity (Eriksen, 1993:16-17). The laws were considered 'famous' in Norway (Tyrell, 1984:103) and can be summarised as 'Don't think that you are anything special. Don't think that you are better than us.' (Hestenes, 1994: 9).

Janteloven is currently a ubiquitous but somewhat contentious concept in Norway; one that is readily identified in individual behaviour but something that has not been thoroughly demonstrated quantitatively in broader traits of Norwegian society. Nevertheless, reference to *Janteloven* is common in popular media, as is the idea that it is an accurate measure of part of Norwegian and Scandinavian culture (Avant and Knutsen, 1994; Gullestad, 1996). In the press it often manifests as a more energetic version of the tall poppy syndrome – which is a form of social backlash against status-seekers and the successful – that is common in Australia (Peeters, 2004: 5-6) and other anglophone countries. It also manifests as a response to such criticism, with both the criticised parties and public commentators dismissing the criticism as simply the product of the *Janteloven*

mindset. Often viewed negatively, it has been raised as a threat to innovation and commercial endeavour, and also – on a more personal level – a barrier to education and self-actualisation.

For example, in 2003 the director of NRK (the Norwegian national broadcasting organisation) suggested that criticism of a potential journalistic prizewinner was a product of *Janteloven* (Knutsen, 2003). In 2011, Norwegian celebrity Trude Mostue labelled *Janteloven* the 'big troll' that prevents Norwegians from trying to stand out, encouraging them instead to always act like sheep (Hansen, 2011). And, in 2014, Norwegian-Spanish singer Adelén was reported to have used the lack of faith that others had in her – which she attributed to the fact that *Janteloven* 'betyr mye her i Norge' ('means a lot here in Norway') – as added motivation to succeed (Bråthen, 2014). It carries similar traits among entrepreneurs and in the business world, who cite *Janteloven* as a barrier to people promoting their successes or even as 'an obstacle to economic growth and prosperity' (Eriksen, 1993: 17). For example, the leader of the business prize jury in 2014 speculated if it was *Janteloven* preventing young leaders from nominating themselves for the business awards (Framstad, 2014). It is clear that this view is not universal, however, because commentators in online forums are often quick to defend criticism of celebrities and aspiring or failed business people, suggesting instead that in some cases the criticisms are warranted and sensible, and not the product of social envy.

Overall, and despite its association with the equality or humility attributed to Norway (for example, Dregni, 2008: 22-23), *Janteloven* is generally viewed negatively (though there are exceptions, such as Edwards [2016] who suggests that *Janteloven* protected Scandinavia from the negative effects of socialism). This conforms to its original presentation in Sandemose's 1933 novel (Gullestad, 1984: 343). Writing in a Norwegian guide book for foreign students, Latin American social anthropologist Eduardo Archetti (1998) also expressed the idea that *Janteloven* carries negative connotations among some Norwegians, who view it as 'a petty moral code that hinders entrepreneurship and real competition' and a form of 'approved mediocrity' (Archetti, 1998: 13). A letter contributed to the Oslo-based newspaper Aftenposten declared that *Janteloven* is killing Norway (Poppe, 2014). More recently, Harald Stanghelle, political editor for the Aftenposten, wrote that *Janteloven* described the worst and most destructive in Norwegian society, where jealousy is supreme, before declaring that it is no longer a social force in Norway as it no longer features in national debates and no longer presents an accurate picture of Norwegian society (Stanghelle, 2016).

In academic literature, its widespread prevalence was asserted by Witozek (2011: 137) who noted that *Janteloven* manifests in nearly all spheres of Norwegian culture: 'To this day the Norwegians invoke the imperative of *Du skal ikke tenke du er noe* ("You shall not think you are anybody special") in all competitive contexts apart from the sports arena'. Previously, Avant and Knutsen (1994: 459) had suggested that *Janteloven* was a succinct and appropriate label for Norwegian shared values, and Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad indicated that it is 'well known and often cited in Norway' (Gullestad, 1996: 96). Perhaps the most thorough, recent exploration of the concept concludes that *Janteloven* 'is neither omnipresent nor omnipotent in Norway' despite that it 'resonates so effectively with Norwegians.' (Trotter, 2015: 2, 6).

2. Background Survey

It is obvious, then, that the way that *Janteloven* is perceived and experienced, and its significance, varies in Norway; it is 'fluid and contextually dependent' (Trotter, 2015: 17). To further explore the modern concept of *Janteloven* in Norway, a brief online survey was deployed as a precursor to this study via a Norwegian online discussion website in mid-2016. The survey was presented entirely in English and yielded data from 30 respondents (over 73% were tertiary educated) generally well-distributed across the 20 Norwegian counties. Although it is no way broadly representative of the Norwegian society at large (there is no doubt significant bias associated with accessing a population drawn entirely from an online discussion forum), it provides useful insights into the differing views on *Janteloven.*

The results of the survey, as discussed here, show mixed attitudes and perceptions of *Janteloven*, but confirm that it is prevalent, in various forms, in Norwegian society today. Thirty percent of respondents (nine from thirty) felt that they completely understood the concept of *Janteloven* as it occurs in Norway, half felt that they understood it 'quite a lot' with the remaining six understanding it 'not at all' or 'a little'. Only two had read Aksel Sandemose's book in which the concept of *Janteloven* was enumerated, though a further six had read some of the book. It is clear that the everyday concept of *Janteloven* is only loosely tied to the ten laws listed in Sandemose's book. One-fifth (six respondents) felt that *Janteloven* was 'not at all relevant' to Norwegian society today; this is matched by another fifth who felt that it is 'very relevant', whereas the remaining 60% (18 respondents) felt it was somewhat relevant. Only 10% felt that it was required for an equal and fair society in Norway, whereas 70% disagreed and 20% responded 'I don't know'. Over 40% felt that *Janteloven* was bad for innovation in Norway, with one third of respondents unsure and the remaining 23% indicating that it was not bad for innovation.

Free-text responses to the question 'Can you describe, in your own words, the meaning of *Janteloven* in Norway?' confirm that there are different ways and levels of understanding of *Janteloven*. Some portrayed it as entirely negative: 'everyone is shit', 'it's a tacit, passive-aggressive assertion that one shouldn't be outstanding', 'The tyranny of mediocrity', it depicts 'the intolerant, spiteful and jealous nature of our society.' Others did not judge it so much; their definitions accorded more with the laws as enumerated by Sandemose, 'Don't think you're any better than others', for example, or 'Basically, we're pretty much all the same…' Some saw the positive aspects: 'Equality of all people on a down to earth level', 'Try to help your fellow citizen instead of winning over them', whereas some were dismissive of it, 'It's satire and only idiots actually pays [sic] attention to it', 'Today it is usually used exclusively as an excuse for lack of success or to answer criticism', '...It is not to be taken as real advice. It's meant as a caricature of the society in Norway at that time in history'. Some presented it more as an injunction not against success but against bragging, 'To not brag about your personal success'.

When asked if they had any further thoughts about *Janteloven*, some respondents expressed the view that *Janteloven* is exaggerated – that people 'read too much into it', that 'it is not particular to Norway' and that they dislike when people think it is 'a pure Norwegian thing' or 'a concrete thing' that operates at the individual level. Yet, in response to the question, 'Can you describe how *Janteloven* has affected you personally?' the responses were mixed. A few respondents were profoundly affected and endure issues of self-worth, others indicated that it affected them positively, making them modest and

less likely to brag, but around one third of respondents reported not having been affected by *Janteloven*.

3. Hypotheses

From the perspective of analytical enquiry, it is reasonable to expect that aspects of *Janteloven* could manifest in survey responses about social equality from Norwegians. This section outlines the two hypotheses, informed by previous academic work, popular presentations of *Janteloven* and the background survey, that constitute the design of this study. Not only has the prevalence of *Janteloven*-like attitudes been established in Norwegian popular press and many years of academic literature, but around 80% of respondents to the brief online background survey to this study felt that the idea of *Janteloven* had some relevance to Norwegian society, and the majority (around two-thirds) reported having been personally affected by it. It is the aim of this study, then, to search for evidence of *Janteloven* in quantitative data relating to Norwegian social attitudes. Two aspects, in particular, are considered.

Income equality. The first aspect considered in this study is the attitude towards income equality. Specifically, this study hypothesises that there is greater support for income equality in Norway (and other Scandinavian countries) than elsewhere; this approach is motivated by a similar exploration by Trotter (2015), who concluded that *Janteloven* may be related to wage equality in Norway, though not in a consistent or causal way (Trotter, 2015: 16-17). In part, Trotter's reluctance to attach wage equality in Norway to the 'nebulous' and 'fluid' concept of *Janteloven* rests on his observation that Norway is not alone among European countries in having a comparatively low GINI index (and therefore a higher level of income equality); in his examination of World Bank data there are some countries (such as Slovenia, 0.25 and the Czech Republic, 0.26) with lower GINI index values than that of Norway (0.27) and the other Scandinavian countries (Denmark, 0.27; Finland, 0.28) where *Janteloven* is relevant (Trotter, 2015: 15).

This does not negate the relationship, causal or otherwise, of *Janteloven* and wage equality in Norway. Firstly, the comparable GINI index values observed by Trotter (2015) between Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and the Nordic countries, which led to a weakening of his conclusion that *Janteloven* manifests in income equality, might simply be a temporal coincidence related to different levels of economic development. Income inequality has grown in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989, but the effect is inconsistent between countries and depends on a variety of factors including the level of privatisation and inflation, among others (Rose and Viju, 2014: 16). It may be only a matter of time before these countries experience the levels of inequality of long-term market-states (Medgyesi, 2013: 29).

Furthermore, expanding the comparison of GINI data beyond the scope of Trotter's (2015) study shows that Norway (GINI 2012 = 0.26) is still exceptionally 'equal' from an international comparative perspective, ranking third (after the Ukraine, 0.25 and Slovenia, 0.26) among the 68 countries for which GDP (purchasing power parity per capita) and GINI index data were available in 2012 (World Bank, 2016a, b). Further, unlike the Central and Eastern European countries with a low GINI index, Norway is unique in having a much higher GDP per capita (circa $64,000 at purchasing power parity in 2011 international $), second only to Luxembourg (data not shown), and therefore – unlike the Eastern and Central European countries (for example, the Ukraine, $8,000; Slovenia,

$28,000 or the Czech Republic, $28,000) – maintains equality in the presence of widespread wealth.

Beyond economic indications, there is another possible reason why Trotter's (2015) exploration proved somewhat inconclusive. There is the likely to be a gap between the social idea of income equality and the economic reality. The level of income equality represented – however imperfectly – by the GINI index is not necessarily the level of income equality that Norwegian society considers ideal or appropriate. Sentiment towards income equality is possibly, then, a more accurate reflection of *Janteloven* than actual equality, and is the variable that is considered in this study. Specifically, the study examines what respondents think various professions are paid and what they should be paid, as well as whether they consider that income differences are too large in their country.

Social Status. The second aspect considered in this study is social status. Specifically, the study hypothesises that members of a society in which *Janteloven* is a plausible concept would tend to rate the social situation of others, more centrally (that is, with less distinction) than people from more competitive and meritocratic societies. As has been noted in the case of the tall poppy syndrome that is prevalent in Australia, it is not the act of getting ahead that is problematic, but that of bragging or boasting: 'One has to be mindful of the fact that not every high achiever is a tall poppy (only the braggers are), and that not every high achiever becomes a victim of the tall poppy syndrome (only the braggers do)' (Peeters, 2004: 17). According to Gullestad (1996: 105), a similar coping method applies to *Janteloven*, whereby education and advancement is acceptable, as long as one continues to behave with humility:

> *There is an apparent contradiction between the admonishment to … 'become somebody' and the Jante commandment that one should* not *think of oneself as somebody. In practice, that contradiction is usually solved by not* behaving *as if 'one thinks that one is somebody.' One should not give other people the opportunity to point out that one behaves in certain ways because one 'is somebody'.*

This concurs with many of the statements in the brief online survey conducted in this study – *Janteloven* did not preclude success, only social distinction because of it. As one respondent in the background survey wrote in their definition, *Janteloven* 'doesn't mean that you're not allowed to be successful, but flaunting it will cause negative reactions', whereas another respondent expressed it as, 'You may succeed, but not act like you've succeeded'. Indeed, one respondent suggested that *Janteloven* is about 'institutional and societal-level discrimination of people who are different' which, coupled with other responses in the survey that suggest that *Janteloven* manifests as social criticism of anyone who stands out, provides support for the idea that there is a risk to pursuing social status in Norway. It is hypothesised, then, that Norwegian responses about the social status of selected occupations could show less dispersion than that of other non-Scandinavian countries irrespective of the actual distribution of social status in Norway.

4. Data and Methods

This study employs the 1999 Social Inequality Module from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP Research Group, 2002). The more recent 2009 Social Inequality module did not include the same range of questions relating to subjective social status and could not, therefore, provide the same insights. The ISSP surveyed

adults 18 years and over orally, using a standardised questionnaire, with surveying occurring between October 1998 and September 2001. Data from up to 26 countries were used, depending on the questions analysed, and the typical number of valid responses varied by question but generally exceeded 1,000.

The first part of the results sections presents background analyses of questions that are pertinent to ideas of social equality within the context of a *Janteloven* mindset – specifically, a preference for a flatter social structure with limited social distinction. These questions, which for the purpose of analysis and comparison have been collapsed into binary responses (invalid or missing responses were excluded), provide context for the later interpretation of the results of analyses of income equality and social status.

Then, for the first hypothesis, that higher levels of ideal or expected income equality will be evident in Norway (and perhaps Sweden) compared to other countries, the analyses employed responses about perceptions on incomes. The ISSP survey asked respondents to report how much they thought that people in nine different employment roles *actually* earned and how much they *should* earn according to a ten-point scale from (one = highest income decile). Two levels of income are evident from the respondent's estimates of income: skilled factory workers, unskilled factory workers and shop assistants have relatively low mean deciles (4.31, 2.89 and 3.32 respectively), whereas the other occupations are rated highly for income (doctor in general practice: 7.3, chairman of a large national company: 9.18, lawyer: 8.61, owner-manager of a large factory: 9.12, judge in the country's highest court: 8.99, cabinet minister in national government: 9.00).

A similar approach to Gijsberts (2002: 274) is followed, in that the 'high-status occupations' were averaged (six in this study), as were the 'bottom occupations' (shop assistant, skilled and unskilled factory workers) before calculating the absolute difference between the two. The process of averaging different occupational types mitigates, to some extent, possible effects of country-specific assumptions relating to gender and income (for example, shop assistants being female, factory workers being male) and also inconsistencies between occupations and expected income across countries. For example, Gijsberts (2002: 276) found that former socialist countries regard various occupations differently to market economies, ranking, for example, medical doctors lower than other professionals and a chairman lower than a cabinet minister. In this study, attitudes towards income equality were assessed based on the difference between the mean of the high-status occupations and the mean of the low-status occupations between countries, for both the respondent's estimate of the decile of actual income and their impression of what the decile for income should be for those occupations.

To examine social status, the analyses compared responses to questions asking respondents to nominate the social standing of two occupations on a seven-point scale corresponding to one of five distributions for social standing. The ISSP 2009 Social Inequality survey asked about two occupations that could be considered to lie on the extreme ends of social standing – the chairman of a large (private) national company and an unskilled factory worker. Attitudes towards social status were quantified by calculating the difference between the two rankings for each respondent, and then the national means were compared across countries.

To avoid the possibility of ambiguities due to inverted scales (that is, where either the respondent or the reviewer mistakenly responded with a high number – say, six or seven – to indicate a high position in the social hierarchy, whereas the questionnaire expected a coding of one or two for high social status), only the absolute differences are used in the income inequality and social status comparisons. Intra-country comparison is achieved through a simple comparison of means (at the 99% confidence level). Linear regression

least squares models are employed for both the income inequality and social status results for Norway to explore possible influences of age, education, setting (urban versus rural), political leaning (left, centre, right) and the respondent's (including their family's) self-reported social status (on the same seven-point scale as for the chairman and factory worker).

5. Results

5.1. Background Analyses

In the first instance, exploratory analyses (cross tabulations) were undertaken to examine general attitudes towards income and social equality among ISSP survey countries. Nine questions from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality Module were examined at the country level in order to ensure that subsequent analyses and interpretations of income and social status were framed appropriately.

Figure 1. Attitudes towards income and wealth inequality

	Agree or Strongly Agree % of valid responses			
	Differences in income are necessary for prosperity		Differences in income are too large	
	n	%	n	%
Australia	1,627	20.2	1,611	70.9
Austria	930	14.3	986	86.3
Bulgaria	964	14.4	1,078	96.9
Canada	929	18.8	947	68.2
Chile	1,404	47.9	1,470	92.2
Cyprus	976	6.8	976	65.6
Czech Republic	1,658	19.2	1,822	87.8
France	1,836	16.9	1,871	86.8
Germany	1,329	25.4	1,380	82.2
Great Britain	766	19.5	775	81.3
Hungary	1,140	12.4	1,199	93.2
Israel	1,172	29.4	1,201	89.8
Japan	1,187	27.6	1,222	69.2
Latvia	1,040	18.3	1,092	96.7
New Zealand	1,052	19.3	1,069	73.2
North Ireland	752	18.4	769	70.1
Norway	**1,214**	**16.8**	**1,250**	**72.5**
Philippines	1,191	54.5	1,193	65.3
Poland	1,012	29.3	1,063	89.3
Portugal	1,113	27.1	1,133	95.9
Russia	1,456	15.8	1,671	95.8
Slovakia	1,033	9.9	1,075	93.7
Slovenia	950	22.1	988	91.0
Spain	1,124	27.9	1,197	89.3
Sweden	1,089	20.8	1,132	71.1
United States	1,159	27.4	1,188	66.2

Source: Based on data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: The columns report the proportion of respondents, relative to the total number of valid responses, who agree or strongly agree with the statements. The results for Norway are not remarkably different to any of the other countries in the ISSP data.

Figure 1 shows responses relating to attitudes towards differences in income. Specifically, to questions that probed attitudes around the statements, 'Large differences in income are necessary for [respondent's country's] prosperity' and 'Differences in income in [respondent's country] are too large'. Only Chile and the Philippines stand out in terms of general support for large differences being necessary for prosperity, which was around 50% in both countries compared with 14% to 29% for most other countries; Norway in 1999 was situated within this range with only 17% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that income differences were necessary for prosperity. Attitudes in Norway circa 1999, with nearly three-quarters of valid responses agreeing that differences in incomes are too large, are not very different to other countries with the exception of the United States, which showed less objection to income inequality.

Figure 2. Respondents' perception of the social distribution in their country

	n	Type of society your country is today % of valid responses				
		A	B	C	D	E
Australia	1,623	9.3	32.9	24.6	32.4	0.9
Austria	950	8.4	25.3	26.2	38.1	2.0
Bulgaria	1027	69.9	23.0	3.9	2.5	0.7
Canada	948	18.4	22.9	30.0	27.5	1.3
Chile	1399	28.7	49.6	12.2	7.9	1.6
Cyprus	936	5.8	17.5	32.9	37.3	6.5
Czech Republic	1788	31.1	35.9	18.7	12.0	2.4
France	1,859	12.5	50.3	23.4	13.1	0.8
Germany	1,272	14.9	30.0	27.7	25.0	2.4
Hungary	1,118	61.6	26.1	5.9	4.3	2.1
Israel	1,181	21.0	34.2	23.4	19.0	2.5
Japan	1,189	6.6	32.3	22.1	35.2	3.8
Latvia	1,081	67.1	22.9	5.2	4.3	0.6
New Zealand	1,060	19.3	34.1	25.9	19.4	1.3
Norway	**1,189**	**3.2**	**11.3**	**19.9**	**57.9**	**7.8**
Philippines	1,162	25.9	29.8	11.3	20.7	12.4
Poland	943	59.1	19.8	9.2	7.9	4.0
Portugal	1144	17.2	46.9	19.0	11.5	5.4
Russia	1,480	68.5	20.7	6.0	3.5	1.4
Slovakia	1,046	53.1	32.6	6.8	5.5	2.1
Slovenia	957	29.6	25.0	17.6	22.7	5.2
Spain	1058	7.5	37.4	27.0	25.0	3.1
Sweden	1,095	10.7	24.8	28.8	34.3	1.4
United States	1,124	17.2	32.4	19.0	28.7	2.9

Type A	A small elite at the top, very few people in the middle and the great mass of people at the bottom
Type B	A society like a pyramid with a small elite at the top, more people at the middle, most at the bottom
Type C	A pyramid except that just a few people are at the very bottom
Type D	A society with most people in the middle
Type E	Many people near the top, and only a few near the bottom

Source: Based on data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).
Notes: The columns report the proportion of respondents, relative to the total number of valid responses, who nominated each distribution type, and the distribution types, as enumerated in the ISSP 2009 questionnaires, are shown below the table. Norwegian respondents showed a clear preference for an equally-distribution society with 'most people in the middle'.

The comparisons suggest that Norwegians at that time were, much like the majority from many other countries, likely to feel that differences in income were too large, and that income inequality was not required for prosperity. The significance of this is evident when the analysis also considers the respondent's perceived level of current equality, which for Norway was markedly higher than any other country (including Sweden). This is shown in **Figure 2**, which summarises responses to the question, 'What type of society is [respondent's country] today?' As part of this question the ISSP researchers showed the respondent a series of diagrams representing the five different social types, each with varying distributions across seven strata (the descriptions, as provided to the respondents by the ISSP interviewer, are shown in Figure 2 and the diagrams are in ISSP 2002).

Fifty-eight percent of Norwegians thought that Norway at the time had 'a society with most people in the middle', which is 20 percentage points more than the next highest, Austria, and nearly 40 percentage points higher than the mean for the other countries. Norwegians were just as critical of income inequalities as respondents from other countries, despite having what they perceived to be a much more equal society. Although this is not explicitly indicative of *Janteloven*, the survey results suggest that there was a powerful drive for an egalitarian society in Norway that exceeds anything seen in other countries, including neighbouring Sweden, where only 34% of respondents classified their society as mostly centred in the middle.

Responses from Norway to the question, 'Inequality still exists because ordinary people don't join together to get rid of it' were not markedly different to that from other countries. Thirty-nine percent of Norwegians agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 29% from Australia and 69% of respondents from Portugal. The mean rate of agreement was 47% for all countries other than Norway. Although the proportions change slightly, this general pattern persists even in the subset of respondents who prefer an equal society over other types (that is, 'a society with most people in the middle'). In such cases, nearly 36% of Norwegians felt inequality existed because of a lack of union, which is relatively low compared with other countries but not largely different from the overall rate (46% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement). Although this may be indicative of a shared-norm that promotes equality in Norway (perhaps *Janteloven*), the results do not suggest that Norway is unique in this regard. Furthermore, there is the ambiguity as to whether the lower perception of inequality because of a lack of union was because the respondents entertained other possible causes for inequality or whether they felt that inequality is low overall.

Conversely, when surveyed about the level of conflict arising from inequality, the responses from Norway show distinctly lower perceptions of conflict, as shown in **Figure 3**. When asked, 'In your opinion, in [respondent's country] how much conflict is there between...' with regard to poor versus rich people, only 15% of Norwegians responded with 'Strong' or 'Very Strong' levels of conflict (compared to 'Not very strong' or 'No conflicts'). This was the lowest of all countries (the overall rate, excluding Norway, is 48% perceiving strong or very strong conflicts). Similarly, regarding conflict between the working class and the middle class, only 5% of Norwegian respondents perceived strong or very strong conflicts (again the lowest of all, the others having an overall rate of 24%). Although the proportion of Norwegians that perceived a conflict between people at the top of society versus people at the bottom was higher at 38%, this also is much lower than the proportions of other countries at 59%, with only Spain (29%) and Austria (37%) having recorded a lower rate.

In summary, based on these survey results, Norway can be distinguished as a country that in 1999 had a limited tolerance for inequality and high levels of perceived equality (that is, a society with most people in the middle), which conforms with the *Janteloven* mindset (and in particular its positive aspects). Furthermore, there was little conflict perceived between social extremes, which might also be attributable to the *Janteloven* aspect of strong norming – of Norwegians not acting, or even thinking, that they are 'someone' irrespective of their social situation.

Figure 3. Proportion of respondents indicating *Very Strong* or *Strong* conflicts (compared to *Not Very Strong* conflicts or *No* conflicts)

	Strong or Very Strong Conflicts % of valid responses					
	Conflict between poor people and rich people		Conflict between working class and middle class		Conflict between people at the top and at the bottom	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Australia	1,601	33.2	1,607	15.3	1,599	57.4
Austria	917	25.0	912	11.1	890	37.1
Bulgaria	903	45.3	825	17.0	866	54.9
Canada	933	34.7	929	14.1	935	52.3
Chile	1,428	86.1	1,421	57.3	1,413	86.2
Cyprus	964	20.2	958	15.6	987	43.2
Czech Republic	1,670	32.0	1,690	10.2	1,630	50.1
France	1,832	26.7	1,820	11.8	1,801	51.6
Germany	1,337	41.7	1,329	15.7	1,296	46.7
Great Britain	738	48.9	740	26.8	741	64.0
Hungary	1,180	79.2	1,125	33.4	1,120	80.9
Israel	1,186	39.0	1,170	25.3	1,178	44.7
Japan	1,147	37.3			1,139	48.5
Latvia	1,055	60.7	1,018	14.3	1,037	59.3
New Zealand	1,053	46.0	1,040	18.3	1,039	66.2
North Ireland	764	35.6	760	26.2	748	47.5
Norway	**1,209**	**15.2**	**1,202**	**5.2**	**1,156**	**38.2**
Philippines	1,195	68.0	1,187	55.8	1,190	66.8
Poland	945	64.6	942	34.4	903	56.3
Portugal	1,119	76.8	1,106	63.2	1,113	86.5
Russia	1,621	77.4	1,588	18.1	1,535	82.9
Slovakia	1,037	38.9	1,042	13.9	1,026	54.7
Slovenia	925	41.6	931	21.1	926	65.8
Spain	1,130	32.2	1,132	22.1	1,116	28.6
Sweden	1,083	35.0	1,089	12.6	1,068	64.6
United States	1,087	57.9	1,091	28.0	1,091	72.0

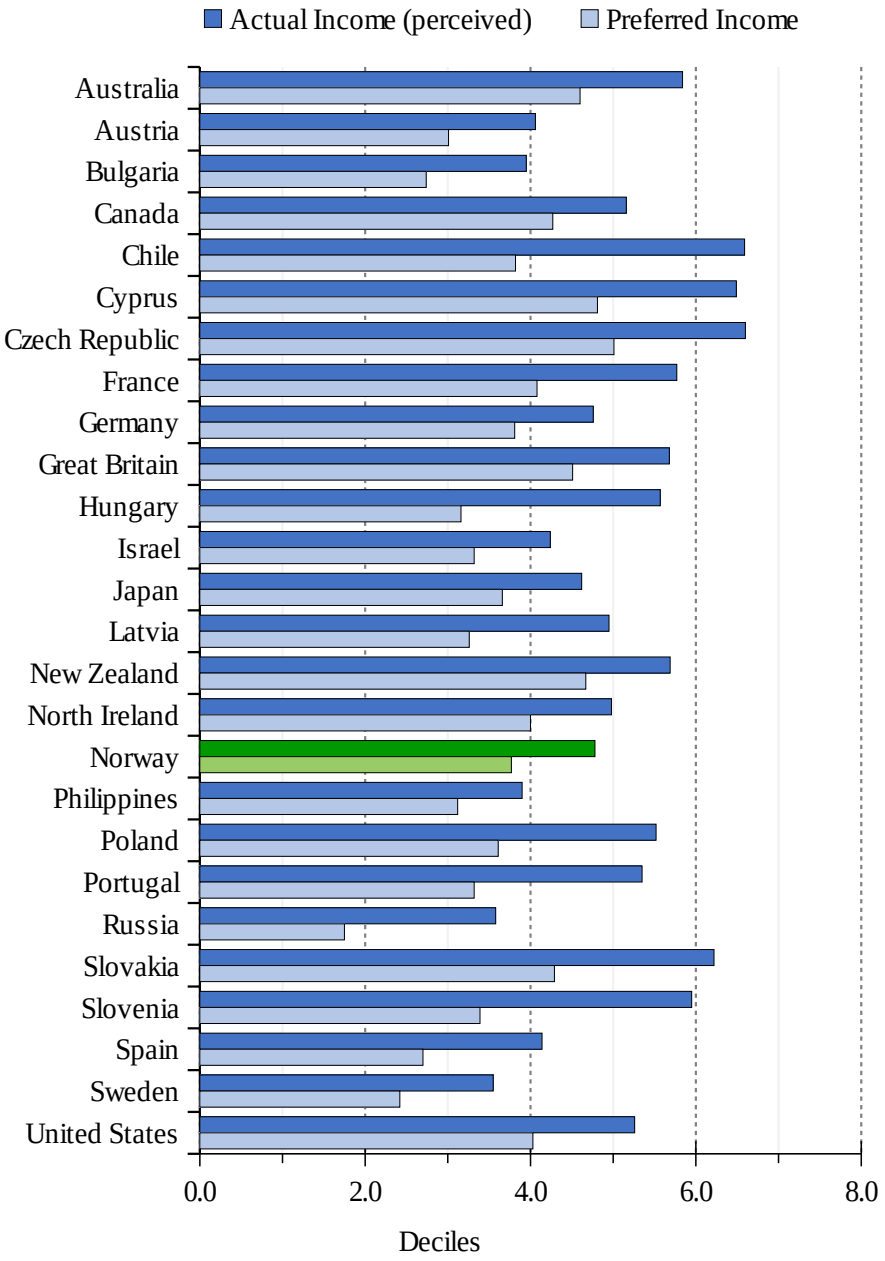
Source: Based on data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: Compared with other countries, Norwegians report low levels of perceived conflict due to wealth, class and social status.

5.2. Income Equality

As outlined previously, differences in perceived and preferred income between different occupation classes were examined across 26 countries (including Norway) to examine if a *Janteloven* mindset manifests in expectations of reduced income inequality. The results are shown in **Figure 4**, which depicts absolute differences (in deciles) between mean values for high-income occupation types and low-income occupation types.

Figure 4. Mean differences between high- and low-income occupations, in deciles



Source: Based on analysis of data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: The results for Norway are not markedly different to those of other countries or to the overall mean, indicating that Norwegian respondents were equally tolerant to income inequality.

The differences in the respondent's estimates of the actual income and their opinion of what the income ought to be for each type is shown. Respondents from all countries showed a preference for smaller differences in income than the income differences that they estimated for actual incomes. That is, for all countries the mean of the respondents' estimates of actual income was greater than the mean of the respondents preferred difference in income between high- and low-status occupations. This difference ranges from 0.8 of a decile to 2.8 deciles, with the difference in Norway measuring one decile. This concurs with the background summaries presented earlier that examined attitudes towards differences in income, in which the majority of respondents in all countries agreed that the differences were too large. And, as was the case with the background questions, the magnitude in income differences for the high- and low-status occupations in the Norwegian responses are not notably different to that of other countries. That is, the mean income difference of the 'high' and 'low' occupation types across the 25 countries (excluding Norway) was 5.19 deciles for the respondent's estimates of actual income (99% confidence interval = 5.17 to 5.21) and 3.68 for their income preferences (99% confidence interval = 3.65 to 3.70). The Norwegian means were 4.78 (4.71 to 4.84) and 3.77 (3.68 to 3.86) respectively.

Least squares regression results (**Table 1a**) show that, for the attitudes towards what the incomes differences ought to be, the respondent's social status, age (in intervals), regional setting (rural, suburban, urban) and political leaning (left, centre, right) are not statistically relevant, whereas the effect of education is statistically significant and practically relevant. Higher levels of education favour greater differences, perhaps representing attitudes that reflected the effort and expected rewards of investment in higher education. In this case, respondents with only primary school education favoured a smaller difference, by about 0.36 income deciles ($p = 0.012$), than university educated respondents.

Similarly, for the respondent's perception of the actual difference in income between the high and low status occupations, most of the explanatory variables were not statistically or practically relevant (**Table 1b**). The main exception is the respondent's setting; compared to those in rural settings, respondents from urban areas expected slightly larger differences in income (by 0.21 deciles and 0.18 deciles, respectively; $p = 0.0039$ and 0.0133).

Table 1. Least squares linear regression for the difference (in deciles) in Norwegian respondents' perceptions of how much high- and low-status occupations (a) *ought* to be paid and (b) are *actually* paid.

	a. Ought (n = 1,010)			b. Actual (n = 1,033)		
Parameter	**Estimate**	**Standard Error**	**Pr > |t|**	**Estimate**	**Standard Error**	**Pr > |t|**
Intercept	4.033	0.394	**<.0001**	4.853	0.307	**<.0001**
Self-Perceived Social Status (respondent's family)						
1 - Top	0.486	0.863	0.574	0.622	0.675	0.358
2	0.671	0.386	0.082	0.163	0.302	0.590
3	0.300	0.354	0.397	0.171	0.277	0.537
4	0.183	0.349	0.600	0.082	0.273	0.763
5	-0.046	0.355	0.897	0.111	0.278	0.690
6	-0.074	0.389	0.850	0.159	0.303	0.601
7 - Bottom	Reference			Reference		
Education Categories						
Primary completed	-0.363	0.144	**0.012**	-0.109	0.112	0.334
Incomplete secondary	-0.259	0.122	**0.034**	-0.049	0.094	0.604
Secondary completed	-0.223	0.093	**0.017**	-0.007	0.073	0.924
Incomplete university	-0.215	0.118	0.068	-0.095	0.092	0.301
University completed	Reference			Reference		
Political Leaning						
Left	-0.105	0.093	0.258	-0.011	0.071	0.876
Right	0.119	0.096	0.218	-0.053	0.074	0.477
Centre, None or Other	Reference			Reference		
Regional Setting						
Urban	-0.074	0.096	0.441	-0.214	0.074	**0.004**
Suburban	0.030	0.083	0.720	-0.036	0.064	0.577
Rural	Reference			Reference		
Age Intervals						
18-24 years	-0.480	0.213	**0.025**	-0.283	0.163	0.083
25-34 years	-0.330	0.203	0.104	-0.283	0.155	0.068
35-44 years	-0.271	0.202	0.181	-0.118	0.155	0.446
45-54 years	-0.194	0.203	0.340	0.065	0.155	0.676
55-64 years	-0.116	0.213	0.587	0.133	0.163	0.414
65-74 years	-0.164	0.222	0.459	0.140	0.168	0.405
75-98 years	Reference			Reference		

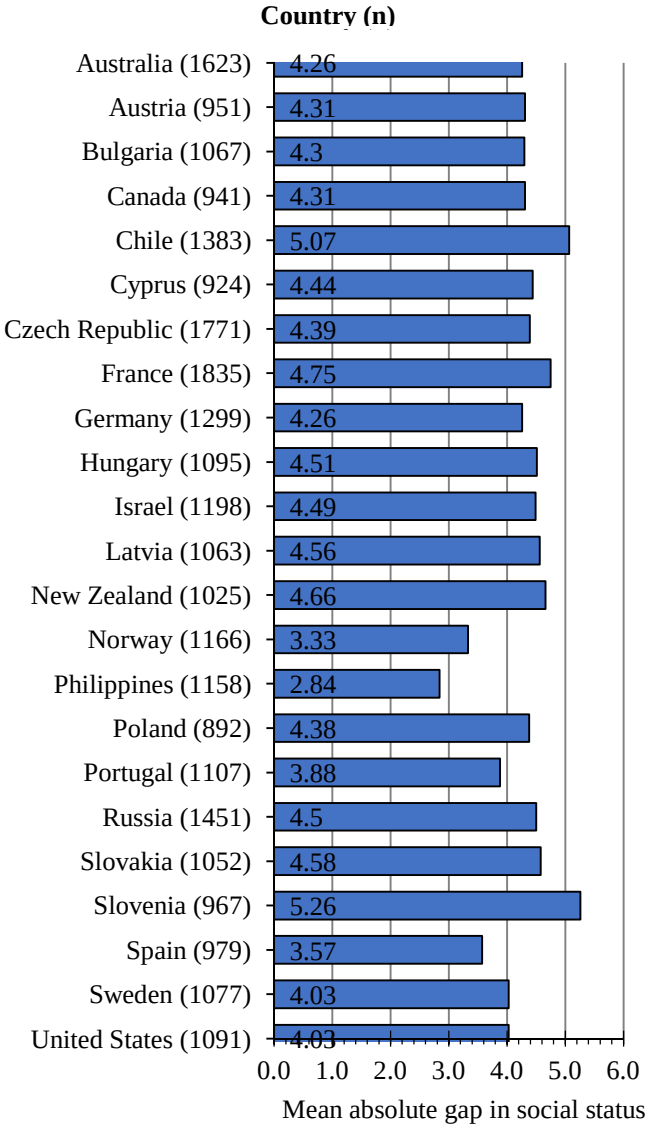
Source: Based on analysis of data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: Only education is relevant (statistically) for attitudes towards how much *ought* to be paid, and only regional setting for how much respondents thought the occupations are *actually* paid.

5.3. Social Status

Social status was examined in a similar manner as income inequality, with the expectation that *Janteloven* might manifest in Norway as a relative reduction in the perception (accurate or otherwise) of social status inequality relative to the other 25 countries in the analysis.

Figure 5. Mean differences between respondents' placement of factory workers and chairmen on a seven-point scale for social status



Source: Based on analysis of data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: The results show that, relative to other countries, Norwegian respondents perceive or prefer a markedly smaller difference in social status between the two occupations; only the result for the Philippines shows a smaller difference in social status.

As shown in **Figure 5**, respondents from Norway (as well as the Philippines and Spain) stood out from the other countries in their perception of a smaller gap in social status between an unskilled factory worker and the chairman of a private national company.

The Norwegian mean (3.33, 99% confidence interval: 3.24 to 3.42, standard deviation 1.20, n = 1,116) is more than one decile below the mean of the other 22 countries (mean = 4.35, 99% confidence interval 4.33 to 4.37, standard deviation = 1.34, n = 25,949). The difference is suggestive of the *Janteloven* edict, 'You shall not think you are anybody special' in that the respondents did not accord a much higher social status to the chairman of a large private national company or a particularly lower status to an unskilled factory worker.

It is worth asking, though, whether this perception of social status equality is achieved because *Janteloven* 'holds its people down', as Sandemose declared (Bjaaland, 1999: 79) and as many Norwegians today insist. A comparison of the mean social status perceived for a chairman and a factory worker, relative to other countries, suggests that the opposite might be the case. The mean decile for an unskilled worker in Norway (5.07, 99% confidence interval = 5.01 to 5.13, standard deviation = 0.82, n = 1,200) is nearly one decile higher (one is the highest decile for social status, ten the lowest) than that for all other countries in the 1999 ISSP data (mean = 5.94, 99% confidence interval = 5.93 to 5.96, standard deviation = 1.03, n = 26,267). For a chairman it is statistically different but practically the same at a mean of 1.78 (99% confidence interval = 1.72 to 1.85, standard deviation = 1.51, n = 1,204) for Norway and a mean of 1.66 (99% confidence interval = 1.65 to 1.68, standard deviation = 0.95, n = 26,320) for the other countries. It is unlikely, then, that this attitude of equality of status in the face of extreme differences in occupation is due to negative attitudes towards traditionally lower occupations. Instead the opposite occurs; in Norway, an unskilled worker is afforded an uncommon level of social status that is not evident in other countries.

Least squares regression (**Table 2)** shows that, as with income inequality differences (actual and preferred), perceptions of social status based on occupation are largely independent of personal factors such as self-perceived social status, age, urban-rural setting and political orientation. Social status according to occupational extremes (such as chairmen versus factor workers) varied significantly based on education. Compared to university-educated respondents, those with only secondary education declared a smaller difference (b = -0.32, p = 0.0007) as did those with only primary schooling completed (b = - 0.80, p = <0.0001) or incomplete secondary schooling (b = -0.64, p = <0.0001). As with the respondents' attitudes towards what income inequalities ought to be, the relevance of education possibly results from the personal investment of the respondent into tertiary education and the anticipated future rewards of such an investment.

6. Discussion

The ISSP data have proven useful in distinguishing broad social trends that are somewhat unique to Norway, at least among the 26 countries in the current analysis that included only Sweden from among Norway's Scandinavian fellows. In particular, there is strong evidence that occupational prestige is not as a strong a factor for social status in Norway as it might be elsewhere. But assigning these traits to the concept of *Janteloven* is not straightforward. In fact, there is an element of futility in attempting to demonstrate a relationship between quantifiable social attitudes and a fluid concept such as *Janteloven* using empirical survey data. This is largely because, as the introductory online survey reported here and the examples in popular media demonstrate, *Janteloven* is understood (and experienced) differently by different people, as well as being 'socially constituted' (Trotter, 2015: 17).

Table 2. Least squares linear regression for the gap (on a seven-point scale) in Norwegian respondents' perceptions of social status between the chairman of a private national company and an unskilled factory worker.

	Gap in Social Status (n = 1,015)		
Parameter	**Estimate**	**Standard Error**	**Pr > |t|**
Intercept	3.297	0.406	**<.0001**
Self-Perceived Social Status (respondent's family)			
1 - Top	0.069	0.757	0.928
2	0.332	0.399	0.406
3	0.248	0.367	0.500
4	0.291	0.362	0.422
5	0.542	0.369	0.142
6	1.022	0.398	**0.010**
7 - Bottom	Reference		
Education Categories			
Primary completed	-0.795	0.149	**<.0001**
Incomplete secondary	-0.643	0.125	**<.0001**
Secondary completed	-0.325	0.095	**0.001**
Incomplete university	0.050	0.122	0.680
University completed	Reference		
Political Leaning			
Left	0.002	0.094	0.983
Right	0.067	0.098	0.495
Centre, None or Other	Reference		
Regional Setting			
Urban	-0.021	0.097	0.827
Suburban	0.030	0.086	0.731
Rural	Reference		
Age Intervals			
18-24 years	-0.015	0.217	0.946
25-34 years	-0.112	0.206	0.588
35-44 years	-0.035	0.205	0.865
45-54 years	-0.041	0.206	0.844
55-64 years	-0.055	0.216	0.800
65-74 years	0.120	0.225	0.595
75-98 years	Reference		

Source: Based on analysis of data from the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

Notes: Only education is relevant (statistically).

To some extent, what is required are 'thick' analyses, akin to Gullestad's autobiographic reviews, to complement and build on the traits identified here in the 'thin' analyses based on the large survey samples (Gullestad, 1996: xi). Because, despite its limitations, this study has shown that there is something unique and distinct in Norwegian attitudes to equality, and it is not unreasonable to suggest these traits might be the manifestation of the *Janteloven* that Sandemose wrote about, and the *Janteloven* that most Norwegians understand even today. Regardless of what label is given to this attitude, the role of social

status in Norway warrants further attention. None-the-least because social status has repeatedly and consistently been linked to health outcomes. For example, in an inter-country comparison of that relationship using ISSP data, Norway stood out in terms of the magnitude of the link between subjective social status and both self-rated health and psychological wellbeing (Präg *et al.*, 2016: 87)

Norwegians 'strongly wish to *agree*', according to Eriksen (1993: 18), and this is evident in the results of the 1999 ISSP Social Inequality survey. There is a clear and marked lack of perceived conflict in Norway due to differences in wealth, social class or social status. Aspects of this trait – that is, a lack of conflict around social or professional status – have been identified previously in the cross-cultural comparisons of Hofstede, which rank Norway second lowest (after Sweden) on the 'masculinity' scale. This indicates a 'softer' culture that favours consensus and cooperation and one that exhibits *Janteloven*-like traits, including that '[t]rying to be better than others is neither socially nor materially rewarded' and that 'status is not shown' (Hofstede, 2016). As Trotter (2015: 8) indicates, 'the equality paradigm also promotes aversion to conflict'. The lack of conflict between social strata or occupational positions resonates with other accounts of *Janteloven*, too. For example, with Gullestad's (1996: 105) observation that what *Janteloven* precludes is not getting ahead but acting in a way that promotes distinction; the critical task is to still be 'able to meet local people one their own terms'. Or, as Kiel (1993: 61) proposes, being 'modest in all endeavours and to avoid holding a banner up which says "I am somebody important"'. This would, undoubtedly, provide a strong mechanism for avoiding conflict due to social or occupational status.

The first hypothesis of this study entertained the notion that Trotter's observation of similar levels of actual equality in Norway to other European counties (Trotter, 2015: 17) did not negate a relationship between *Janteloven* and income inequality. Instead, it was considered that in an examination of attitudes towards income inequality would mark Norway as unique. In that regard, Norway in 1999 was only unique in that, despite having had a markedly more level society than others (as perceived by respondents), the perception of wealth and income inequality is similar to that in other much less equal countries. However, income inequality is not representative of other aspects of inequality (Binelli *et al.*, 2015: 244).

It is not surprising, then, that the attitudes towards social status based on occupational classes in Norway are different to attitudes around income inequality relating to occupational classes. The second hypothesis of this study, that Norwegians would be more likely to describe less difference between the social position of a high-status and a low-status occupation, was supported by the data, and in fact strengthened by the lack of a unique relationship (in Norway) between income and status. That is, income inequality is remarkable but not entirely exceptional in Norway, yet social status is somewhat uncoupled from occupation and (and therefore presumably to some extent also less contingent on income and education). It captures the – perhaps central – feature of *Janteloven*, which is generally understood to 'focus on self-beliefs, rather than accomplishment.' (Hvide, 2000: 16).

There is, then, scope for deeper and more robust research into the nature of equality and *Janteloven* in Norway as compared to elsewhere. The current research could be improved through the use of a larger, more representative survey of Norwegian attitudes towards *Janteloven*. It is worth considering that, simply by providing an ordered-category scale, the questions about inequality, conflict and social status in the ISSP may have prompted users to nominate differences that would otherwise not have occurred to them. The

evaluation of the results around social status and inequality could also explore paradigms other than *Janteloven.* For example, *Janteloven* seems to be a local (Scandinavian) manifestation of the more general 'control of upstarts' phenomenon described by Boehm (1999: 43), within which egalitarian societies reign-in alpha-males and upstarts. Boehm's description of this phenomenon as observed in hunter-gatherers is remarkably reminiscent of *Janteloven*: 'The result, with most hunter-gatherers most of the time, is a low-key personal approach to social relations in the band. This is particularly true in situations that may lead to competition: people are careful about extolling their own success.' (Boehm, 1999: 44).

The current results are also limited to providing a snapshot of Norway as it was in 1999 – a much more rural and less global country than Norway now. More than one of the respondents in the background survey suggested that *Janteloven* is a rural or regional phenomenon that is less evident in the cities and also less evident in modern times. The rural-urban aspect was addressed, and dismissed, however, through the use of linear regression, but the temporal question remains unanswered. The popular media and academic references to *Janteloven* presented in the introduction are, however, recent and tangible evidence that the notion of *Janteloven* still lingers in the Norwegian consciousness, even if the strength and nature of the idea has changed over time. Nevertheless, it is unclear how attitudes towards income and social status equality have changed both in Norway and in other countries since the time of the 1999 ISSP survey, particularly given secular trends towards democracy, capitalism and globalisation. In the face of these forces it is possible that international differences in attitudes towards social status have decreased markedly since 1999.

Returning to the insights of Trotter (2015), which in part motivated the income inequality portion of this study, there are a number of points to address. One criticism he raised about *Janteloven* research, such as the brief exploration of pride in Norway versus the United States by Bromgard *et al* (2014), is the failure to pay due attention to respondent characteristics as an alternative explanation for cultural differences. In this case, it has been assumed here that the sampling undertaken by the ISSP researchers has limited any potential biases, and furthermore that the large sample sizes (circa 1,000 respondents per country) are sufficient to establish a representative slice of each country. And furthermore, linear regression for the income inequality and social status results for Norway has shown that, of the most readily assessed respondent traits, only education is relevant when considering these attitudes.

Trotter's (2015: 16) other criticism of past research in *Janteloven* is that it takes a 'common-sense' understanding of the concept and does not, therefore 'allow for any meaningful analysis'. Regarding this current research, there is definitely a portion of the 'common-sense' approach to interpreting *Janteloven* in the results of the ISSP data. This approach, however, is founded to some extent both on Trotter's common-sense approach (specifically, his comparison of wage equality between Norway and the UK for ministers versus public servants) and the more 'meaningful analysis' stemming from the review of *Janteloven* in popular media and the background survey presented in the introduction.

7. Conclusions

In concluding, then, some liberty has been taken here by suggesting that *Janteloven* is an 'explanatory tool' (Trotter 2015: 16) for the distinct differences in conflict and social status evident in Norway circa 1999, when compared to a number of other countries ranging from market-states, post-socialist states and countries in Asia. Irrespective of the label given to this phenomenon, however, it is evident that Norwegian attitudes towards occupationally-derived status were unique, despite the fact that attitudes towards income inequality based on occupation are not remarkably different.

In that regard, this examination of ISSP data for 1999 clarifies the recent findings of Trotter (2015: 16-17). Trotter noted that recent income inequality is not remarkable in Norway; the analyses of ISSP data undertaken in this study show that attitudes towards income inequality in Norway over a decade earlier were also not remarkable relative to those of other countries. However, for other social markers such as agreeableness and perceived levels of conflict, and the role of social status relative to income, the results support the prevailing expectations about society in Norway. They conform to the views that are generally associated with *Janteloven*. Importantly, any notion that *Janteloven* was not a pertinent social force in Norway at that time can be dispelled, as can the idea that it was solely a rural phenomenon. This is despite the fact that, as the small survey deployed in this study has demonstrated, *Janteloven* is interpreted differently, and sometimes in incompatible ways, at the individual level. There are, essentially, many *Jantelovens*. Further research, using more modern data, is required to explore the currency of the idea of *Janteloven* in modern Norway and in particular the mediating effect of education on *Janteloven*-like attitudes.

Acknowledgements:
The author thanks participants of the online survey. Google Translate assisted with translating Norwegian content. Valuable feedback from anonymous reviews is gratefully acknowledged. The author acknowledges the diligence and generosity of the ISSP in making survey data readily available online. Statistical analyses were performed using SAS® Studio 3.5.

References:

Archetti E (1998): A Foreigner's Experience of Norway, in Bridges to Norway: a Snapshot of Norwegian Culture, Everyday Life and the Norwegians for Foreign Students Living in Norway. Bergen. Centre for International University Cooperation (SIU)/Norwegian Council of Universities, 7-18.

Avant GR and Knutsen KP (1994): Understanding Cultural Differences: Janteloven and Social Conformity in Norway. ETC: A Review of General Semantics 50(4): 449-460.

Binelli C and Loveless M and Whitefield S (2015): What is social inequality and why does it matter? Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe. World Development 70: 239-248.

Bjaaland PC (1999): Living in Norway: Patricia Crinion Bjaaland's Classic Guide for New Residents (3rd ed.). Oslo. Palamedes Press: 412 pages.

Bråthen J (2014): MGP-Adelén bruker Janteloven som inspirasjon. VG Rampelys [online]. 10 April. http://www.vg.no/rampelys/musikk/melodi-grand-prix-eurovision/mgp-adelen-bruker-Janteloven-som-inspirasjon/a/10130431/ [Accessed 5 June 2016]

Boehm C (1999): Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior. Cambridge. Harvard University Press: 292 pages.

Bromgard G and Trafimow D and Linn C (2014): Janteloven and the expression of pride in Norway and the United States, Journal of Social Psychology 154(5): 375-8.

Dregni E (2008): In Cod We Trust: Living the Norwegian Dream. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press: 206 pages.

Edwards W (2016): Is Scandinavian 'Socialism' Really a Cause of Happiness? Investor's Business Daily – Commentary [online] http://www.investors.com/politics/commentary/is-scandinavian-socialism-really-a-cause-of-happiness/ [Accessed 22 June 2016]

Eriksen TH (1993): Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World: Reflections on Norwegian Identity in Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Society (Kiel A.C., ed). Oslo. Scandinavian University Press: 11-38.

Framstad AP (2014): Lurer på om det er Janteloven som gjelder. E24 [online]. 10 September. http://e24.no/jobb/ledertalentene/lurer-paa-om-det-er-Janteloven-som-gjelder/23291026 [Accessed 6 June 2016]

Gullestad A (1984): Kitchen-table Society: A Case Study of the Family Life and Friendships of Young Working-Class Mothers in Urban Norway. Oslo. Universitetsforlaget: 356 pages.

Gullestad A (1996): Everyday Life Philosophers: Modernity, Morality, and Autobiography in Norway. Oslo. Scandinavian University Press: 346 pages.

Hansen HK (2001): Trude Mostue ut mot Janteloven: Norge er en halvkommunistisk stat. VG Rampely [online]. 7 December. http://www.vg.no/rampelys/trude-mostue-ut-mot-Janteloven-norge-er-en-halvkommunistisk-stat/a/10032317/ [Accessed 5 June 2016]

Hestenes A (1994) Norge, - forsøk på en diagnose, in Jeg så, jeg så Norge/Uniquely Norway (Holter T, ed.). Oslo. Fotografi/Nordisk Fagpress. 224 pages.

Hvide HK (2000): Tournament Rewards and Risk Taking. Discussion Paper 14/2000. Bergen. Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration: 39 pages.

Hofstede G (2016): What about Norway? [online] https://geert-hofstede.com/norway.html [accessed 23 June 2016]

ISSP Research Group (2002): International Social Survey Programme: Social Inequality III - ISSP 1999. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA3430 Data file Version 1.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.3430

Kiel AC (1993): Confessions of an Angry Commuter: or Learning How to Communicate the Non-Communicating Way in Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Society (Kiel A.C., ed). Oslo. Scandinavian University Press: 55-70.

Knutsen IE (2003): Janteloven regjerer. VG Rampelys [online]. 25 September. http://www.vg.no/rampelys/tv/Janteloven-regjerer/a/77661/ [Accessed 5 June 2016]

Medgyesi M (2013): Increasing income inequality and attitudes to inequality: a cohort perspective. AIAS, GINI Discision Paper 94, Tárki Social Research Institute. 61 pages.

Präg P and Mills MC and Wittlek R (2016): Subjective socioeconomic status and health in cross-national comparison. Social Science and Medicine 149: 84-92.

Peeters B (2004): Tall poppies and egalitarianism in Australian discourse: from key word to cultural value. English World-Wide 25(1), 1-25.

Poppe H (2014): Janteloven tar livet av Norge. Aftenposten. 25 April [online] http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/sid/Janteloven-tar-livet-av-Norge-91084b.html [Accessed 6 June 2016]

Rose S and Viju, C (2014): Income inequality in post-communist Central and Eastern European countries. Eastern Journal of European Studies 5(1), 5-19.

Stanghelle H (2016): Er ikke Janteloven død, da? Aftenposten (Redaksjon).

Trotter SR (2015): Breaking the law of Jante. eSharp 23: 1-24.

Tyrrell S (1984): Ways of Norway: Rambling Through Past and Present. Oslo. Grøndahl. 144 pages.

Witoszek N (2011): Origins of the 'Regime of Goodness': Remapping the Cultural History of Norway. Oslo. Universitetsforlaget. 231 pages.

World Bank (2016a): GINI index 2012. [online] http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?display=default [Accessed 26 May 2016]

World Bank (2016b): GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $). [online] http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD?display=default [Accessed 31 May 2016]