





# EXPLORING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS IN SCANDINAVIA

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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Scandinavia and human rights	8
1.2 This report	9
<b>2. Data and methodology</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Awareness of human rights</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Higher rights awareness among Swedes than Danes and Norwegians	13
<b>4. Attitudes towards human rights in principle and practice</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 Human rights matter to the Scandinavians	19
4.2 Scandinavian attitudes to human rights when faced with potential trade-offs	24
<b>5. Perceptions of the human rights situation in Scandinavia</b>	<b>38</b>
5.1 Scandinavians see their countries as leading the way, but believe threats still exist	39
5.2 How do Scandinavians see their governments' efforts in safeguarding human rights?	46
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>51</b>

# Foreword

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”


*Eleanor Roosevelt*<sup>1</sup>

**As national human rights institutions, we are mandated to promote and protect human rights within our countries. To fulfil this mission, it is essential to understand how the public perceives and values human rights. Reflecting on Eleanor Roosevelt’s words, we ask: do human rights resonate with Scandinavians in the “small places, close to home”?**

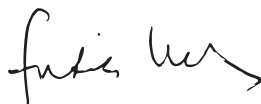
This report reveals a strong commitment for human rights across Scandinavia, but also highlights areas where public support faces challenges, and where greater public awareness is needed. While there are significant similarities in how people across our countries view human rights, important differences also emerge, underscoring the need for tailored approaches.

This report represents the first major collaborative project between the three national human rights institutions in Scandinavia. Knowledge is key to informed discussions on human rights and supports our effort to strengthen these rights within our societies. We hope this report will be a valuable resource for others dedicated to promoting human rights, including policy makers, members of the civil society and the academic community.

In times of global instability, cross-border collaboration to safeguard and promote human rights has never been more crucial. We hope this report will serve as a reminder that human rights belong to everyone, and that it requires concerted efforts of both decision makers and citizens to uphold them, in all places, but also the smallest places close to home.



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# Executive summary

**This report explores how people in the Scandinavian countries perceive and understand human rights issues, highlighting differences and similarities in awareness and opinions. It examines public views on the relevance of human rights and assesses which rights are seen as most at risk, along with trust in the public institutions mandated to protect these rights.**

The goal of this report is to provide insight into current perceptions of human rights in Scandinavia. It aims to spark dialogue about the role of human rights in daily life and the importance of increasing public awareness and understanding of these rights.

The findings are based on a survey conducted by Ipsos in August 2024 on behalf of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Norwegian Human Rights Institution, and the Swedish Institute for Human Rights. The survey gathered responses from 7,500 representative participants across Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Understanding public perception of human rights is crucial because it influences the societal and political landscape where these rights are either upheld or threatened. No prior study has systematically compared awareness and attitudes towards human rights in the Scandinavian countries.

# Key findings

## Awareness:

- ▶ **Awareness of human rights varies significantly across the three Scandinavian countries.** Swedish respondents show the highest level of awareness, while Danish respondents demonstrate the lowest. For instance, 53% of Danish respondents are unable to name a specific human right, compared to 42% in Norway and 35% in Sweden.
- ▶ **People with higher human rights awareness tend to be more supportive of them.** Among respondents with high awareness, 83% believe human rights align with their values, compared to only 61% of those with lower awareness.

## Attitudes:

- ▶ **Human rights are important to most people in Scandinavia.** 82% of respondents affirm that human rights matter to them, and 72% agree that human rights reflect their values. Furthermore, a large majority of respondents express that it is important for them to live in a country where human rights are realized.
- ▶ **Scandinavians see human rights as playing a positive role in society, and do not believe they pose undue limitations.** Over half (54%) of respondents believe that human rights have changed their countries for the better, while only 11% disagree. Only a minority of respondents think human rights excessively restrict political actions, with 17% in Norway, 20% in Denmark and 25% in Sweden. Approximately twice as many respondents dismiss this claim, with 42% in Sweden, 44% in Denmark and 47% in Norway.
- ▶ **While supportive in principle, Scandinavians are more divided when faced with questions where human rights are conflicting with other rights or concerns.** The broad support for human rights does not consistently extend to situations involving trade-offs, where rights are challenged. For instance, more than half of respondents support a ban on public burning of religious symbols or books, highlighting the complex challenge of balancing free speech with religious freedom and the protection against hate-speech.
- ▶ **Many Scandinavians are willing to accept surveillance, even if it compromises their privacy, in order to protect other interests. However, the survey indicates chilling effects on the freedom of speech.** 39% of Norwegians, 41% of Danes, and 45% of Swedes are comfortable with government monitoring of their electronic communications to combat crime. However, 10% of Norwegians and Danes, and 11% of Swedes, have avoided searching online for help on sensitive topics like mental health, abuse, and addiction. Additionally, 17% of Norwegians and Danes, and 21% of Swedes, have refrained from social media debates due to concerns about surveillance by authorities.

## Perception of the human rights situation:

- ▶ **Many respondents believe human rights abuses occur in Scandinavia.** While 34% think abuses are rare, 33% disagree, indicating a divided view. 24% of respondents report that they have experienced violations of their own human rights.
- ▶ **Economic, social, and cultural rights are viewed as more at risk than civil and political rights.** Across all three countries, the top five rights perceived to be most at risk include the right to a healthy environment, the right to health, freedom from discrimination, and the right to social security. Swedes are more likely than Danes or Norwegians to perceive rights as threatened. Swedes are also more likely than Norwegians or Danes to believe that various societal groups face discrimination.
- ▶ **Opinions on government efforts to safeguard human rights differ significantly across Scandinavia.** Swedes are the most likely to feel their government should do more, with 50% holding this view, compared to 43% of Norwegians and just 33% of Danes. In Denmark, half of the respondents believe the government is already doing as much as can reasonably be expected to protect human rights. Swedes also express lower trust in public institutions to uphold human rights compared to Danes and Norwegians. However, higher awareness of human rights correlates with greater trust in institutions to uphold human rights.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Scandinavia and human rights

**Scandinavia, comprising Denmark, Norway and Sweden, is known internationally for a strong commitment to human rights. But what do Scandinavians think about them?**

Denmark, Norway and Sweden are small, wealthy countries with robust welfare systems and strong democratic traditions that consistently rank high on global human rights indices.<sup>2</sup> However, researchers have pointed out a “Nordic human rights paradox”: while Scandinavians advocate for human rights abroad, these issues are less prominent in domestic discussions.<sup>3</sup> This raises an intriguing question: how aware are Scandinavians of human rights, how relevant do they feel human rights are to their everyday lives and what human rights challenges do Scandinavians see within their own borders?

### **A study of awareness, attitudes and perceptions of human rights in Scandinavia**

In recent years, human rights have encountered resistance politically in Scandinavia much like in other parts of the world. Issues such as immigration, national security, and rising populism have fuelled debates, with some politicians and groups questioning or even seeking to limit protection of certain rights. Moreover, emerging global challenges such as digitalisation, pandemics, wars, and climate change have introduced new pressures that test the resilience of human rights frameworks and reveal gaps in social systems like the welfare state.

This study seeks to examine **how the populations of the Scandinavian countries perceive human rights**. Specifically, the report aims to examine the following questions, and compare responses between the three Scandinavian countries:

- ▶ How familiar are people in Scandinavia with human rights?
- ▶ How does the public perceive the relevance of human rights for themselves and society?
- ▶ How does the public balance different human rights with other rights or concerns?

- ▶ How do Scandinavians perceive the current human rights situation in their countries?
- ▶ Which human rights are perceived to be most at risk?
- ▶ To what degree do the Scandinavians trust the public authorities to uphold human rights?
- ▶ Is there a connection between respondents’ awareness of rights and their responses to the questions above?

### **Why is this important?**

While human rights are legally binding rules, decision makers are responsible for ensuring their protection. Public support of human rights can also be important to ensure that they are prioritised and enforced by authorities over time. Exploring how different human rights issues are perceived and prioritised by the public across the Scandinavian countries, can help us identify gaps in knowledge that need addressing, while gauging public support for human rights can inform advocacy efforts and policymaking.

There are important similarities between the Scandinavian countries. Denmark, Norway and Sweden share cultural, linguistic, legal and other similarities that spring from a long-shared history. They often look to each other in regulatory processes and policymaking. A comparative study examining awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of human rights across the three Scandinavian countries has not previously been conducted. By exploring and comparing attitudes and perceptions of human rights between the Scandinavian countries, we can better understand the outcome of different policies and promote cross country learning.



## 1.2 This report

For this report, the national human rights Institutions of the three Scandinavian countries have conducted a comprehensive survey to assess public awareness, attitudes and perceptions of human rights in the three countries. All results that are presented in this report come from this survey. The survey has been conducted among 7,500 persons in Scandinavia, who have been asked a range of questions about human rights. This report is a first presentation of a selection of the results from this survey.

### **The report is structured in the following way:**

Section 2 provides a brief overview of the data and methodology used. For more detailed information, see Appendix 1.

Section 3 examines knowledge and awareness of human rights across the three Scandinavian countries.

Section 4 explores public attitudes towards human rights. We begin by exploring general attitudes—what human rights mean to the public and whether respondents are supportive or critical. We then delve into attitudes toward specific issues, such as surveillance and restrictions on freedom of expression.

Section 5 investigates Scandinavian perceptions of the human rights landscape in each country. This includes identifying which human rights are seen as under threat, which groups are viewed as subject to discrimination, and the level of public trust in institutions to uphold these rights.

Section 6 concludes with key observations and remarks.

### What is a National Human Rights Institution?

A national human rights institution (NHRI) is an independent body established by a country to promote and protect human rights within its borders. Their roles typically include monitoring human rights conditions, providing advice on laws and policies, and conducting research, analysis, and educational programmes to raise awareness about human rights. NHRIs function as intermediaries between the government, civil society, and international human rights mechanisms.

The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish NHRIs are accredited with A-status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, meaning that they operate in accordance with the Paris Principles, a set of international standards ensuring their effectiveness, legitimacy, and independence.

#### **Danish Institute for Human Rights / Institut for Menneskerettigheder**

- ▶ Denmark's NHRI, established in 1987, also covering Greenland. Located in Copenhagen.
- ▶ Also serves as a national equality body in relation to ethnicity and gender and promotes and monitors the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, it is mandated to work internationally.

#### **Norwegian Human Rights Institution / Norges institusjon for menneskerettigheter**

- ▶ Norway's NHRI, established in 2015, with one office in Oslo and one office in Kautokeino.

#### **Swedish Institute for Human Rights / Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter**

- ▶ Sweden's NHRI established in 2022, located in Lund.
- ▶ Also tasked with the promotion and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

# 2. Data and methodology

**To investigate knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of human rights in the three Scandinavian National Human Rights Institutions conducted a survey in August 2024 among 7,500 persons across the three countries. Data was collected by the analysis institute Ipsos.**

In the following we will describe the data collection, representativity of the collected data and the method used. In Appendix 1 you can find a more in-depth description of the data and limitations of the survey.

## 2.1 Data collection

Our survey is based on data collected by Ipsos via their internet-based panel and was conducted from August 5 to August 22, 2024. The target group is individuals over 16 years who were residing in Denmark, Norway, or Sweden at the time of the survey. The survey is based on 24 questions about awareness, attitudes and perceptions of human rights in Scandinavia with answers from 7,500 persons.

The use of survey as a data collection method allows us to ask a large sample of the population the same questions at once, with the hope of generalising the results to the broader population – here the adult population of the three Scandinavian countries. However, surveys always concern self-perceived conditions. This means that responses are always given based on the respondents' own understanding and interpretation of the questions. Moreover, the questionnaire has been developed in English but was translated into Danish, Norwegian and Swedish before it was sent to the respondents. This means that minor linguistic differences occur in the translations. This is important to consider when interpreting the results.

## 2.2 Representativity

The distributed questionnaire was opened by 10,190 respondents and completed by 8,126. After Ipsos had cleaned the data, we ended up with 7,500 usable responses that were included in the study: 2,500 from Denmark, 2,499 from Norway and 2,501 from Sweden. Cleaning survey data involves removing incomplete, inconsistent, or low-quality responses (find more about the cleaning process in Appendix 1).

During data collection, responses were monitored to ensure the sample was not overly skewed in terms of gender, age, geography, and education compared to the national populations. To enhance representativeness, Ipsos applied weighting to adjust for any imbalances. This approach means that underrepresented groups were given a higher weight to address bias, while overrepresented groups were assigned a lower weight. The largest discrepancies between the population and the sample, prior to weighting, were found in Norway, where there was an overrepresentation of people with higher education and an underrepresentation of those with medium-length education (see Table 1 in Appendix 1). For more details on sample distribution, weighting, and limitations of survey data and panels, see Appendix 1.

## 2.3 Methodology

We use descriptive statistics, presented in various figures, to illustrate the results of our survey. We have used 95% confidence intervals as a measure of statistical uncertainty. The cross tables with confidence intervals for all figures presented in the report can be found in Appendix 2.

In the report we only interpret results if they are statistically significant. Statistical significance is a way to determine whether distributions and correlations found in the sample are not merely the result of coincidence. This method is used when deriving results from a sample to apply to an entire population.

All results in this report are split into comparisons between the three countries. Moreover, we look at the correlation between the level of human rights awareness of the respondents and their answers to different questions around attitudes and perceptions towards human rights. The cross tables on this can be found in Appendix 3. In this regard it is important to stress that we only look at correlation and not causality. Thus, we cannot derive that higher awareness of human rights leads to a more positive attitude towards human rights.

# 3. Awareness of human rights

Human rights awareness is crucial for individuals to advocate not only for their rights but also for those of others. By understanding human rights, people can identify violations, seek justice and hold governments and institutions accountable for their actions. Knowledge promotes tolerance, respect, and understanding across diverse groups, fostering social cohesion and reducing discrimination. But how aware are Scandinavians<sup>4</sup> of human rights? This is the question we address in this chapter.

At their core, human rights are legal principles that define fundamental obligations of governments toward individuals within their jurisdictions. But there is often a gap between the formal definition of human rights, and the public's understanding of them. While human rights are legal standards, people may sometimes view them more as values than as enforceable rules.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, different states incorporate human rights obligations differently in national legislation, which means that their legal expression, interpretation and implementation can vary and evolve over time.

Given that human rights are not static and absolute,<sup>6</sup> and to some degree depend on the national context, adaptation and interpretation, measuring knowledge about human rights cross countries is challenging.

In this Chapter we compare Scandinavian's human rights understanding from two perspectives:

1. Self-assessed knowledge about human rights.
2. Awareness of human rights.

These findings will be integrated in the rest of the report to explore links between respondents' levels of rights awareness, and their attitudes towards human rights, their perception of threats to these rights and their trust in public institutions to protect them.

Moreover, we examine the extent to which people in the three countries reflect on human rights in their everyday life and consider how they relate to broader topics such as hate speech and climate change.

## Level of awareness

In addition to addressing the country specific results of the survey, we categorize respondents into two groups based on their level of human rights awareness.

- ▶ The group with a higher level of awareness is defined as respondents who self-report knowing human rights "well" or "very well" and can either name a human right or know at least 8 out of 12 human rights listed in the questionnaire.
- ▶ Respondents who do not meet these two criteria make up the group with lower awareness.

The division of these two groups is used throughout the analysis.

All results on higher versus lower awareness are displayed in appendix 3.

## Key findings:

- ▶ **There are considerable differences in the awareness of human rights across the three Scandinavian countries.** Among respondents in the three countries, Swedish respondents are characterised by the highest level of overall awareness of human rights, while Danish respondents are characterised by the lowest. For example, half (53%) of the Danish respondents cannot name a specific human right, while that is the case for 42% in Norway and 35% in Sweden.
- ▶ **Respondents with high awareness of human rights are also more likely to think they are relevant to real-world issues.** For example, respondents with higher awareness relate climate change more strongly to human rights than respondents with lower awareness. 53% of high awareness respondents relate the two to a high or some degree, while 35% of low awareness respondents do so.

## 3.1 Higher rights awareness among Swedes than Danes and Norwegians

In the questionnaire respondents have been asked about awareness of human rights in different ways.<sup>7</sup>

When asked about their knowledge of human rights (Figure 1), a majority (58%) of Scandinavians across the three countries report that they know human rights well or very well. However, there are notable differences between countries. **68% of Swedes indicate that they know human rights well or very well, compared to 55% in Norway and 50% in Denmark.**

Moreover **53% of the Danes are unable to mention a specific human right, compared to 42% of Norwegians and 35% of Swedes (Figure 2).**

### Higher awareness of civil and political rights

However, when presented with a selection of specific rights, most Scandinavians have heard of at least one of the mentioned rights, with freedom of expression<sup>8</sup> being the most widely known (Figure 3). In general, there is a greater awareness of civil and political rights, such as freedom of religion<sup>9</sup> and right to fair trial,<sup>10</sup> than of economic, social and cultural rights such as the rights to health,<sup>11</sup> housing<sup>12</sup> and social security<sup>13</sup>. An exception to this is the right to education,<sup>14</sup> which is among the rights most Scandinavians have heard of.

### Climate and indigenous peoples' rights

Variation in the level of awareness is greatest when it comes to **indigenous peoples' human rights**<sup>15</sup> and the **right to a healthy environment**,<sup>16</sup> with the level of awareness being considerably lower in Denmark than in the two other countries. Approximately 38% of Danes have heard about rights of indigenous peoples compared to 62% in Sweden and 75% in Norway.

One reason for this could be that indigenous rights are more present in public debate in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark. Both countries are engaged in truth and reconciliation processes following longstanding assimilationist policies<sup>17</sup> against the Sami people and

national minorities, but both also face criticisms including for insufficient consultations on land rights and several other issues. In 2021, the Norwegian Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment in the Fosen case, ruling that the government had violated Sami rights to protection against interference in their traditional reindeer grazing areas.<sup>18</sup> This led to large-scale protests against the government's handling of the case. A case that generated significant attention in Sweden, was when the Swedish Supreme Court in 2020 gave a Sami reindeer herding community the exclusive right to decide who should get a permit to hunt or fish above the cultivation limit.<sup>19</sup>

### Denmark differs from Sweden and Norway

In Denmark, indigenous issues appear to be less outspoken, even though there are significant human rights challenges for the Inuit population in both Denmark and Greenland. For instance, Inuit persons in Denmark do not have the same access to education, healthcare and work as ethnic Danes.<sup>20</sup> It is also worth noting that both the Swedish and Norwegian constitutions contain provisions on indigenous rights, whereas the Danish constitution does not.<sup>21</sup>

### Right to a healthy environment

Similarly, awareness of the right to a healthy environment stands at 35% of respondents in Denmark, while slightly over 55% of respondents in both Norway and Sweden have heard of this right. The right to a healthy environment is a norm that is under development internationally and is perhaps less well established than many other rights. However, this fails to explain the difference in awareness levels between the countries, as Swedes and Norwegians have higher awareness of this right than of some economic and social rights. One significant difference between the three countries is that the right to a healthy environment is protected by the constitution in both Norway and Sweden, but not in Denmark.

# People from Sweden know more about human rights

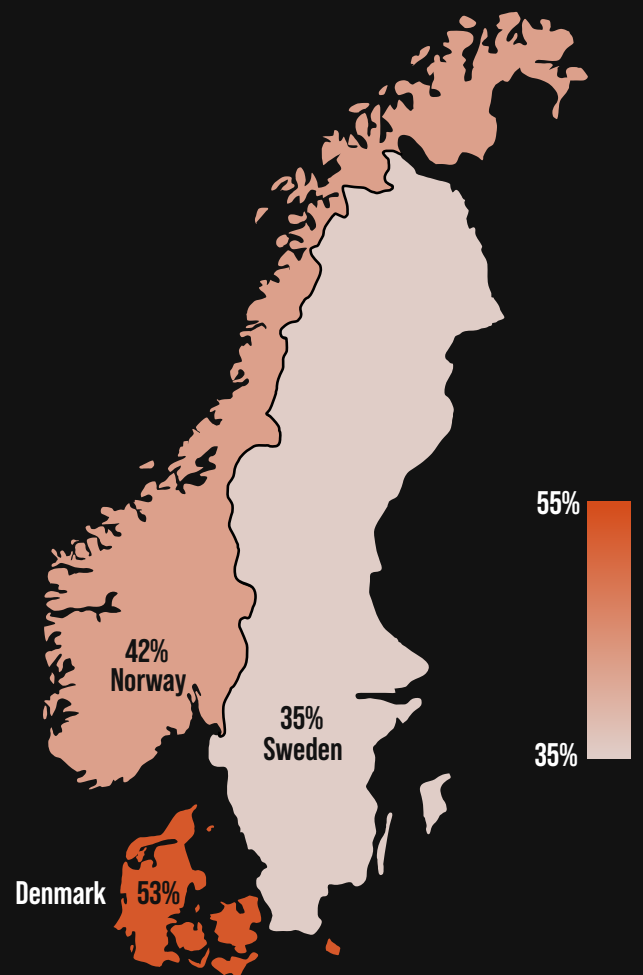
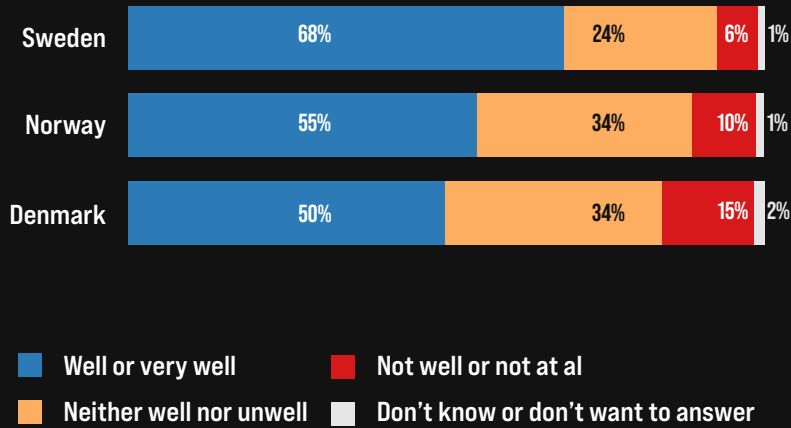


Figure 1: Answers to the question "in your assessment, how well do you know your human rights?" (n=7500)

Figure 2: Proportion that cannot mention a specific human right (n=7500)

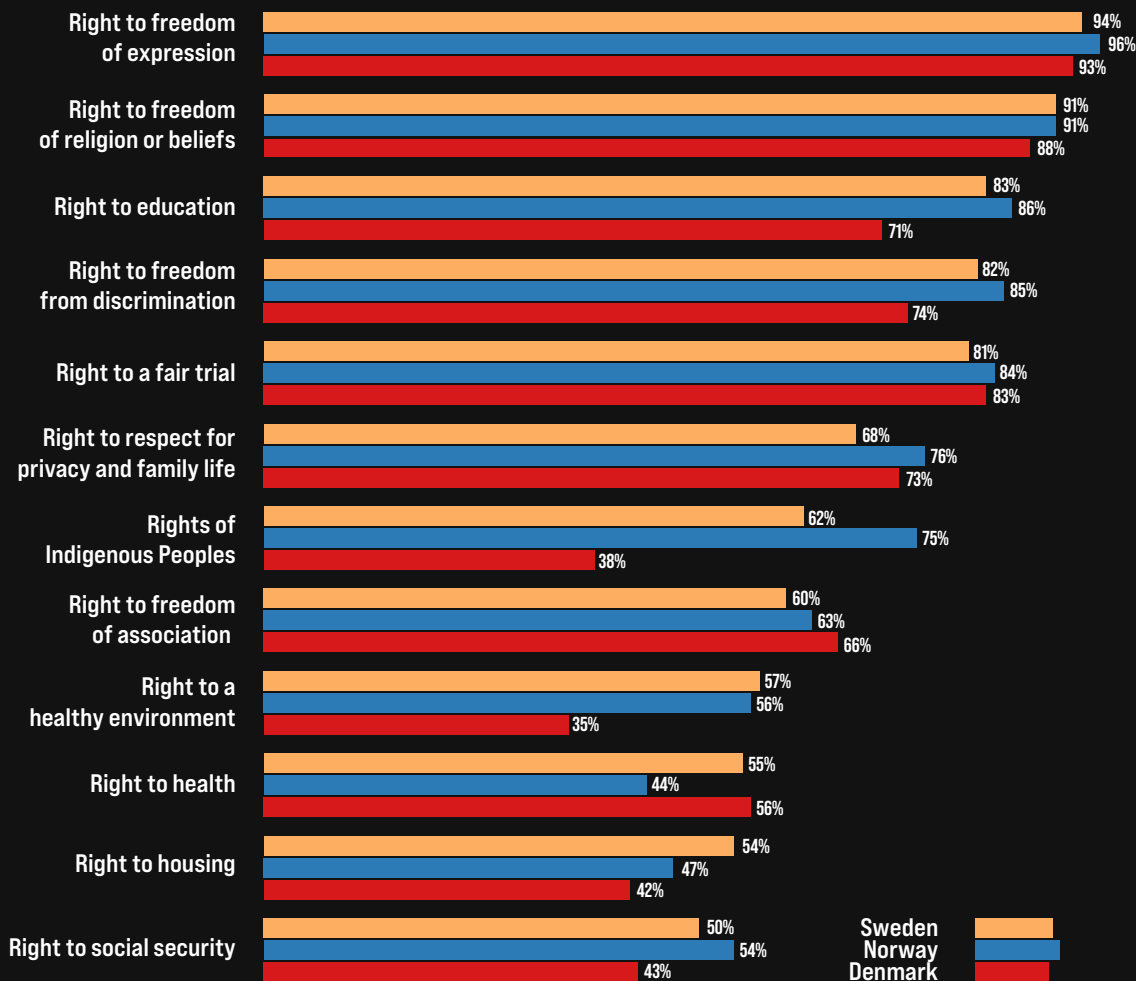


Figure 3: Proportion that have heard about the following human rights (n=7500)

# Danes are more likely to never think about human rights than Swedes and Norwegians

Respondents were asked whether they agree with the statement: "Human rights are something I never think about". Disagreement suggests that respondents do reflect on human rights in their everyday lives. Also here, Danes seem to reflect less on human rights than Norwegians and Swedes. 36% of Danish respondents disagree or highly disagree with the statement, while the same is true for 44% of Norwegian and 49% of Swedish respondents (Figure 4).

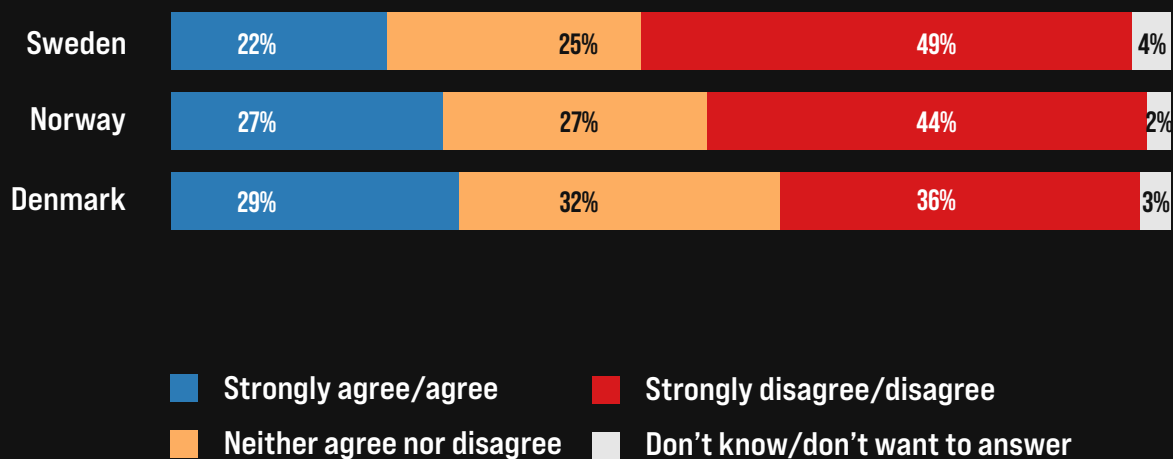


Figure 4: Response distribution to statement "human rights are something I never think about" (n=7500).

## High awareness respondents think more about human rights

56% of people with high awareness of human rights disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that they never think about human rights, compared with 31% of people with lower awareness.

# Which topics do people relate to human rights?

The respondents were asked to which degree they relate a range of topics with human rights.

The topics presented here were selected because they address both current and emerging challenges to human rights within Scandinavian countries. Some topics focus on pressing issues such as prison conditions, accessibility in public buildings, and the use of force in elderly care homes. Additionally, we included topics related to emerging concerns, including online hate speech, the use of AI tools by public authorities in decision making, and the human rights implications of climate change.

Responses to this question reveal public awareness of human rights in relation to specific issues, as opposed to the more abstract concept of human rights. It also highlights whether Scandinavians view human rights as a relevant framework for addressing and debating issues like hate speech and climate change. These responses, therefore, reflect not only knowledge but also attitudes towards human rights. For example, the framing of climate change as a human rights issue is an evolving discussion actively debated across all three Scandinavian countries.

Among the topics selected (Figure 5), online hate-speech is the topic most commonly viewed by Scandinavians as a human rights issue. **More than 60% of Scandinavians consider online hate-speech as a human rights problem to some or to a high degree.** Many of the respondents in all three countries also see the use of force in nursing homes for the elderly, conditions for inmates and accessibility to public buildings as issues related to human rights.

Climate change generates the most different responses: In Sweden and Norway, around half of respondents (51% and 45% respectively) think that climate change relates to human rights to a high or some degree, whereas only 35% of Danes do. The share that does not see any link between climate change and human rights is significantly larger in Denmark (27%) than in Norway (17%) and in Sweden (15%).

For each topic, a minority of respondents were uncertain or chose not to answer. This proportion is notably higher for the question on AI tools used by authorities, reflecting the novelty and complexity of this emerging issue.

## High awareness respondents also see more issues related to human rights

For instance, 25% of respondents with higher human rights awareness related climate changes to human rights to a high degree compared with 14% of those with lower awareness.



# The majority consider online hate speech a human rights issue

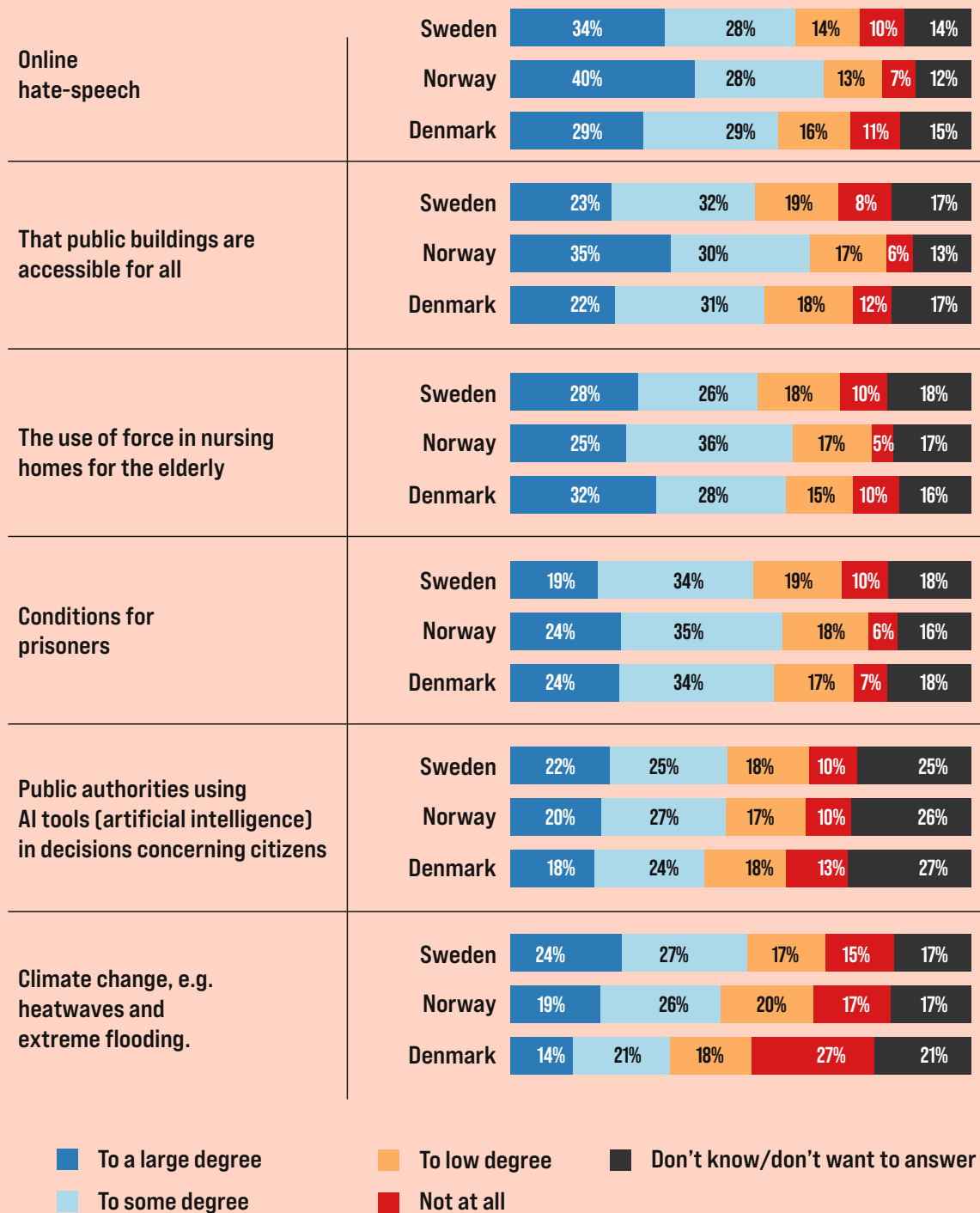


Figure 5: Response distribution of the degree to which the respondents related the six issues to human rights (n=7,500)

# 4. Attitudes towards human rights in principle and practice

**Opinions matter.** In democratic societies such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden, people's opinions inform policy decisions. While human rights are core legal principles, their public support can be important to ensure that they are prioritised and enforced by authorities over time. However, states have a duty to ensure that fundamental rights and human dignity are upheld for everyone, irrespective of public opinion or social pressures. In this section, we investigate Scandinavians' attitudes towards human rights.

While today's human rights system has been evolving since the aftermath of World War II, human rights norms have seen increasing challenges globally in recent decades. For example, wartime atrocities and democratic backsliding pose serious human rights challenges in themselves, but also undermine fundamental human rights principles such as accountability, the rule of law, and the protection of minorities.<sup>22</sup>

The international system of human rights has also faced different criticisms, both regarding their effectiveness and the claim that they fail to represent non-Western values.<sup>23</sup> In Scandinavia, a recurrent discussion concerns the relationship between human rights law and politics, and how to balance universal human rights standards with political priorities, national security concerns, and the interpretation of rights within domestic policy and judicial systems.<sup>24</sup>

In this chapter, we aim to explore how these global trends influence public opinion in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Do human rights resonate with the public? Are there rights that lack strong public support? How do people prioritise specific human rights issues compared to other rights, values or concerns?

To assess Scandinavian attitudes towards human rights, respondents were presented with various statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement. The statements are broadly divided into two categories.

- 1. Broad attitudes towards human rights:** The first set of statements assesses respondents' general attitudes towards human rights, both as principles or values and in practice (see Section 4.1).
- 2. Concrete issues:** The second set of statements addresses specific dilemmas where different human rights are challenged (see Section 4.2). Here, we focus on the following rights:
  - ▶ freedom from torture and inhuman treatment
  - ▶ right to privacy
  - ▶ freedom of expression
  - ▶ freedom of assembly

# Key findings:

- ▶ **Human rights clearly matter to people in Scandinavia.** Despite differences in awareness and knowledge in the three countries, 82% of Scandinavian respondents say that human rights are important to them, and 72% say that human rights reflect their values.
- ▶ **Positive views on human rights prevail.** Scandinavians are more likely to disagree with negative statements about human rights. However, it is not clear that this support carries over to dilemmas where the protection of concrete rights involves potential trade-offs or conflicts with other concerns. This includes both hypothetical and topical scenarios concerning freedom from torture, the right to privacy and other rights.
- ▶ **Most respondents in all three countries report feeling safer due to camera surveillance in public spaces but are divided when it comes to accepting surveillance of their electronic communication.** The proportion of respondents who feel safer due to camera surveillance in public spaces ranges from 55% in Denmark to 64% in Sweden, while acceptance of electronic surveillance ranges from 39% in Norway to 45% in Sweden.
- ▶ **More than half of respondents support a ban on public burning of religious symbols or books, despite differences in legislation between the countries.** Responses are similar in the three countries. 57% of respondents in Denmark and Sweden agree with a ban, and 54% in Norway. This reflects the complex dilemma between balancing freedom of expression, religious freedom, and protection against hate speech.

## 4.1 Human rights matter to the Scandinavians

While awareness of human rights varies across the three Scandinavian countries, the survey shows that human rights matter to people in all three countries and reflect their values.

**In Sweden 86% of respondents state that human rights are important to them, followed by 83% in Denmark and 78% in Norway (Figure 6).**

Furthermore, 72% of Scandinavians state that human rights reflect their values and only 6% disagree. However, the proportion stating that human rights reflect values they believe in varies across the three countries. In Norway and Sweden, 74% and 75% say that human rights reflect their values, while it is 66% in Denmark (Figure 7). A 2023 survey by the Open Society Foundation,<sup>25</sup> which included responses from 30 countries outside Scandinavia, asked the same question. In this survey, the global agreement with the statement was 71%, indicating that the views in the Scandinavian countries are closely aligned with this average, and do not stand out either positively or negatively.

**Many Scandinavians believe that human rights have changed their countries for the better.** In each country, more than four times as many people agree with this statement compared to those who disagree (Figure 8). However, the level of support varies between the countries. While 58% of respondents in both Sweden and Norway agree that human rights have had a positive effect, only 47% of Danish respondents feel the same way. Additionally, 29% of Danes “neither agree nor disagree,” compared to 21% in Norway and 19% in Sweden.

In comparison, the 2021 Fundamental Rights Survey revealed that 88% of respondents in the 27 EU-countries agreed with the statement “human rights are important for creating a fairer society in this country”. Notably, the levels of agreement in both Sweden and Denmark were higher than average, with 94% for Sweden and 92% for Denmark. Norway was not included in the survey.<sup>26</sup>

# The majority thinks human rights are important, reflect their values and have caused positive change

## High awareness of rights is associated with more positive attitudes towards them

There is a notable overlap between respondents with a high awareness of human rights and those who hold positive attitude towards them.

- ▶ 91% consider human rights to be important compared to only 74% of those with lower awareness.
- ▶ 83% of respondents with higher awareness believe that human rights reflect values that they believe in compared with 61% of those with lower awareness.
- ▶ 67% of respondents in the higher awareness category agree that human rights have changed their country for the better, in contrast to 43% of respondents in the low awareness category.

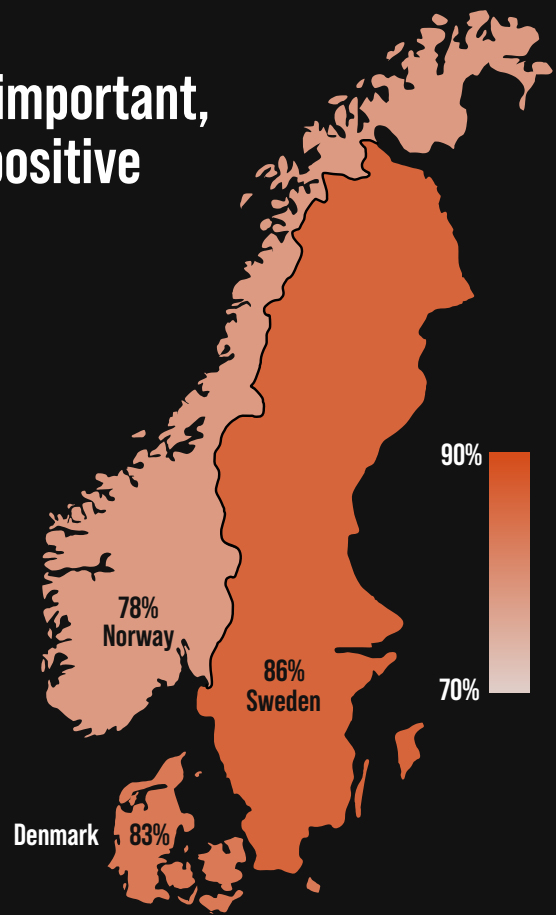


Figure 6: Proportion that find that human rights are important to them (n=7,500)

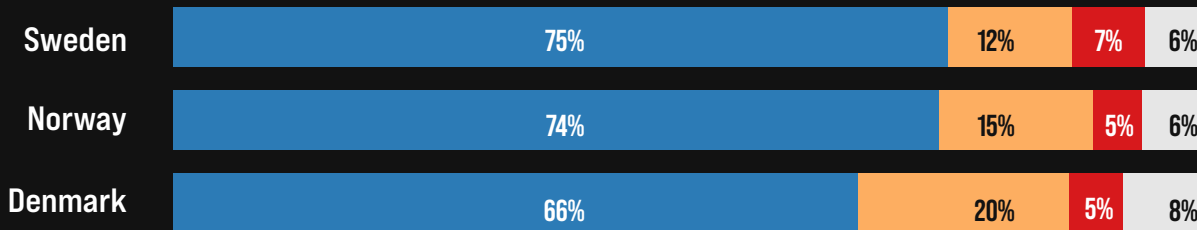


Figure 7: Response distribution of how much people agree that human rights reflect values they believe in (n=7,500)

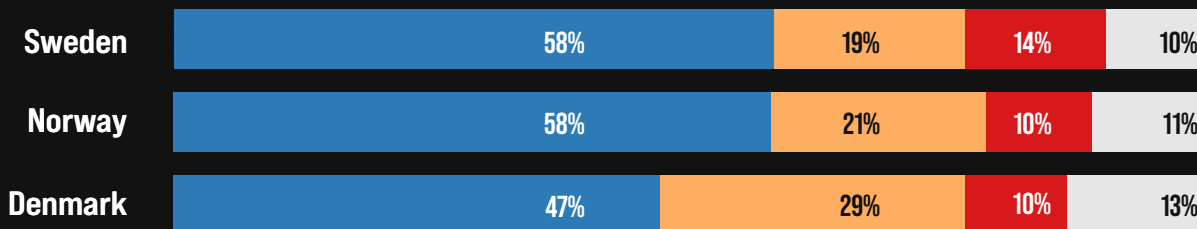


Figure 8: Response distribution of how much people agree that human rights have changed their countries for the better (n=7,500)

■ Strongly agree/agree      ■ Strongly disagree/disagree  
■ Neither agree nor disagree      ■ Don't know/don't want to answer

# High support for human rights principles

The examination of public opinions reveals that a high proportion of the respondents in Scandinavia agree that it is important to live in a country where core principles of human rights apply, such as rule of law, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, equal access to education and health, and protection against discrimination (Figure 9). However, it is noteworthy that the issue of discrimination against minorities is regarded as significantly less important in Denmark compared to the two other countries and relative to the rest of the values.

High awareness respondents find it more important to live in a society where rights are guaranteed

- ▶ This includes the freedom from discrimination, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, access to education and health are guaranteed, as well as being able to count on the legal system not being corrupt.
- ▶ It is especially pronounced when it comes to freedom from discrimination where agreement differs between the two groups with 12 percentage points.

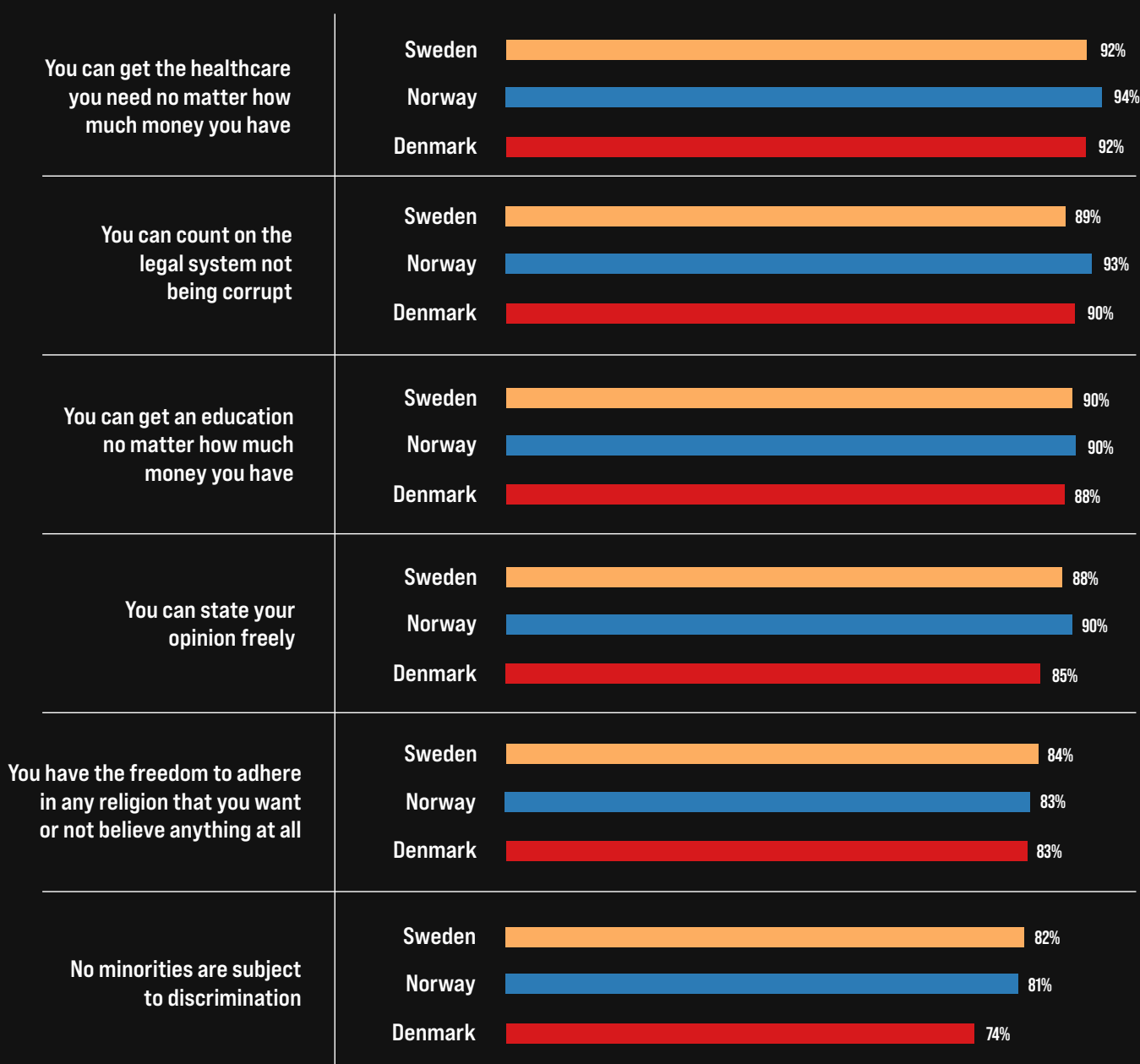


Figure 9: Proportion that thinks it is important to live in a country where these six conditions are present (n=7,500)

# More Scandinavians disagree than agree with negative statements about human rights

Over the years, human rights have faced various critiques. In the context of immigration and asylum, some critics have argued that human rights protections for refugees may conflict with national security or social cohesion.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, there has been pushback against international human rights bodies, such as the European Court of Human Rights, which some believe infringe on national sovereignty.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, critics contend that human rights have little impact in times of war<sup>29</sup> and that they primarily reflect values from the western countries, thus questioning their universality.<sup>30</sup>

In our survey, we have asked Scandinavians about their views on selected negative assertions about human rights, namely:

- ▶ Human rights go too far in limiting what politicians can do in my country.
- ▶ There is too much focus on the human rights of minority groups.
- ▶ The only people who benefit from human rights are those who do not deserve them.
- ▶ For people living in war and conflict, human rights don't make a difference.
- ▶ Human rights are only based on Western values.

When presented with these different critical statements a larger proportion of respondents disagreed than agreed (Figure 10).

**Norwegians are more likely to disagree with negative statements about human rights compared to people in the other two countries.** For instance, 58% of Norwegians disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "The only people who benefit from human rights are those who do not deserve them," compared to 51% in Sweden and 52% in Denmark. Danes are more likely to neither agree nor disagree.

A similar statement was posed in the EU Fundamental rights survey, namely "The only people who benefit from human rights in this country are those who do not deserve them such as criminals and terrorist".<sup>31</sup> In this survey, the proportion who disagreed in Sweden and Denmark was roughly equivalent, but a considerably higher proportion agreed with the statement.

When respondents were asked if they think human rights impose excessive limitations on what politicians can decide, one fifth agreed, while more than twice as many (45%) disagreed. This is interesting considering recurrent debates on the relationship between politics and law.<sup>32</sup> The significant gap between the rate of disagreement and agreement in each country, indicates that most Scandinavians disagree with the notion that human rights represent an undue 'judicialization' of politics.

When asked if there is too much focus on human rights of minority groups, 39% of Swedish and 42% of Norwegian respondents disagreed with the statement, notably higher than the share who agreed. In Denmark there were about as many respondents who agree with the statement, 31%, as respondents who disagreed with it, 30%.

Another interesting observation is that a considerably higher percentage of people in Denmark agreed with the statement "For people living in war and conflict, human rights don't make a difference." In Denmark 38% agreed, compared to only 25-26% in Sweden and Norway.

Regarding the statement that human rights are only based on western values, around 40% of the respondents disagreed with the statement in all three countries. However, slightly more Swedes agreed, with 26% supporting this view, compared to 19% of respondents from Norway and Denmark.

## High awareness respondents disagree most with negative statements

- ▶ This is consistent across all the five negative statements about human rights
- ▶ For example, 45% in the higher-level awareness group strongly disagrees with the statement "The only people who benefit from human rights, are the ones who do not deserve them" compared with 27% in the lower awareness group.

# Scandinavians show limited support for critical views on human rights

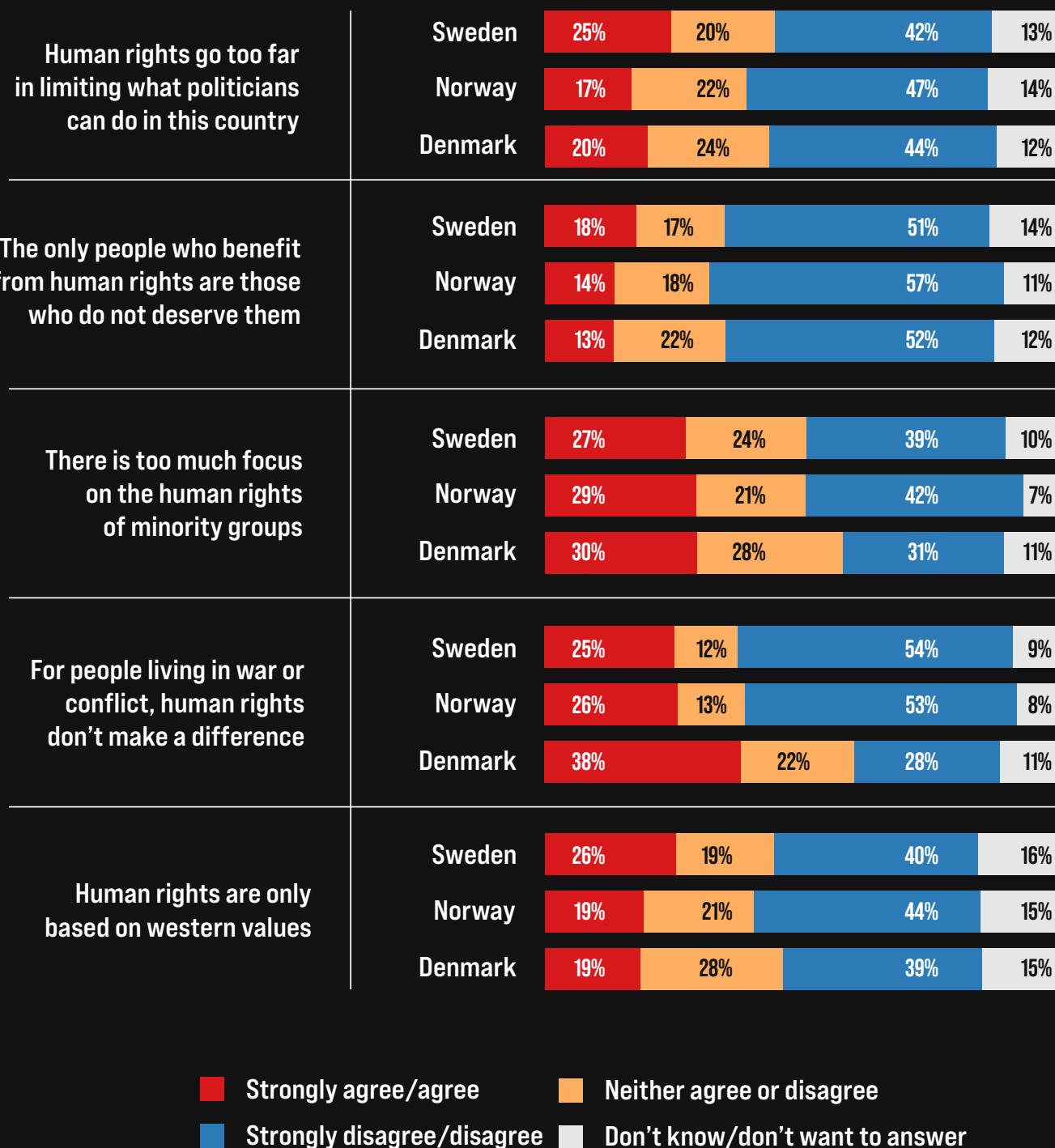


Figure 10: Response distribution of different negative statements about human rights (n=7,500)

## 4.2 Scandinavian attitudes to human rights when faced with potential trade-offs

While it is evident that Scandinavians generally are in favour of human rights, this support does not necessarily translate into support for specific rights in specific situations. To investigate this, we presented respondents with a range of dilemmas that involve challenges to specific human rights. In these dilemmas, respondents were faced with choices that involve limitations of rights, trade-offs between human rights and other objectives, or where different rights collide.

In the following section, we focus on the these rights:

- ▶ The prohibition on torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- ▶ The right to privacy
- ▶ The right to freedom of expression
- ▶ The right to freedom of assembly

### 4.2.1 The majority of Scandinavians rejects torture, even in exceptional circumstances

The prohibition against the use of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment is enshrined in several human rights documents, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The prohibition is absolute, meaning that there are no exceptional circumstances under which torture or inhuman treatment is permitted.

Respondents were presented with a hypothetical dilemma, where the question was whether police torture could be justified in exceptional circumstances where it could save lives. Despite the statement's claim that torture in this case may save lives, the vast majority across all three countries (61-64%) believe that torture could not be permitted (Figure 11).

While there is substantial support for the prohibition of torture, a considerable minority of the respondents endorse its use under certain circumstances. This corresponds with previous studies assessing the support for the prohibition of torture among Scandinavians. For instance, a Norwegian survey from 2010 found that 30% of respondents agreed that "is it acceptable to use all means, including torture, in order to make a person provide information that can hinder acts of terrorism?"<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in a 2023 study on awareness of human rights among Danish school children in the 6-10th grade, 20% of the respondents agreed with the statement "I think it's acceptable if police use torture in special circumstances".<sup>34</sup> Although this study focuses on children — a completely different respondent group— it's interesting to note that their level of acceptance is not notably different compared to the respondents in our study.

#### Prohibition of torture under the European Convention on Human Rights

No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

*The European Convention on Human Rights, Article 3*



# The majority reject torture – even to save lives

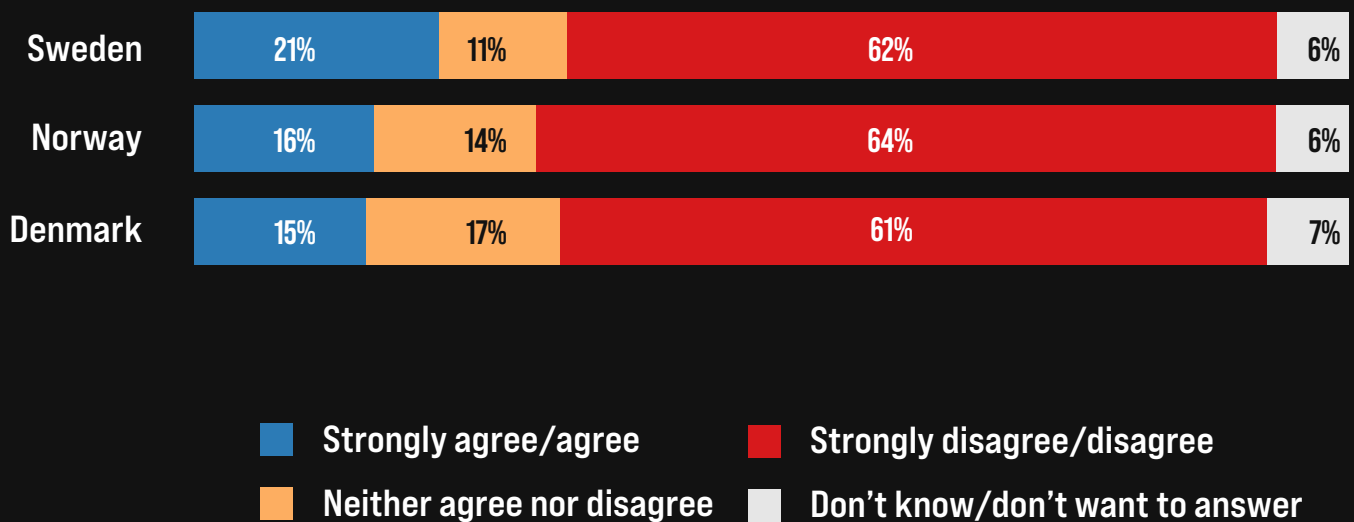


Figure 11: Response distribution of answers to the statement “The police in my country should be allowed to use torture in situations of emergency, if it can save the lives of others” (n=7,500)

## Both high- and low awareness respondents clearly reject torture

- ▶ More than three times as many disagree than agree with this statement in both groups.
- ▶ Agreement with the statement is 17% for the low awareness group and 18% for the high, while disagreement in the respective groups is at 59% for the low awareness group and 66% for the high.

## 4.2.2 Many Scandinavians are willing to accept surveillance

When public authorities use surveillance to prevent crime, one reason to do so is to fulfil their human rights obligations to protect the lives and security of their citizens. However, such actions can interfere with other rights, notably the right to privacy. Limitations must meet several criteria, and may not violate the principle of non-discrimination.<sup>35</sup>

In recent years, surveillance has been on the national agenda in all three Scandinavian countries, both in the context of combatting crime and of preventing terrorism.

### Many feel safer with camera surveillance

The majority of respondents in all three countries report feeling safer due to camera surveillance in public spaces (55–64%). When asked about their attitudes regarding electronic surveillance, responses are more divided. While more than one out of three respondents in each country state that they do not mind surveillance of their electronic communication if it can help authorities fight crime (39–45%), more than one of three (36–44%) also disagree (Figure 12).

### Norwegians least prone to accept digital surveillance

There are notable differences in responses to these questions among the three countries. The proportion of respondents who feel safer due to camera surveillance in public spaces ranges from 55% in Denmark to 64% in Sweden. When it comes to surveillance of electronic communication, Norwegians are less prone to agree (39%) and more prone to disagree (44%) that they 'do not mind' such surveillance than respondents in Denmark and Sweden.

Here, it is worth bearing in mind the structural difference between the two questions. Respondents may feel safer due to camera surveillance, while at the same time being worried about its effect on the right to privacy. Responses to this question may therefore not be interpreted unambiguously as support for limitations to the right to privacy. The question about electronic surveillance is less ambiguous, and responses to this question are thus more likely to say something about respondents' real attitudes to surveillance and the right to privacy. It is also worth noting that electronic surveillance of personal communications represents a significantly more intrusive measure than camera surveillance, which occurs in public spaces.

### Support findings in other studies

These findings align with results from other studies. The European Values Survey (2017, 2022) found that a higher percentage of respondents in Sweden and Denmark are willing to grant their government the right to use camera surveillance in public areas compared to Norwegians. Danish and Swedish respondents ranked among the most positive in Europe. Moreover, they found a higher

### The right to privacy under the European Convention on Human Rights

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

*The European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8*

share of Swedes and Danes than Norwegians stating that they thought their governments "definitely" or "probably" should have the right to monitor all e-mails and any other information exchanged on the internet.<sup>36</sup>

A 2024 privacy survey by the Norwegian Data Protection Authority (Datatilsynet) also found that whether respondents were positive or negative towards camera surveillance varied depending on the location of the surveillance. Respondents were more positive towards camera surveillance in shops, public transportation, taxis, and on the street, compared to workplaces, schools or kindergartens.<sup>37</sup> A 2024 survey by the Swedish Internet Foundation showed that 70% of the respondents thought that camera surveillance with facial recognition should be permitted in public places to fight crime.<sup>38</sup>

### Trust in government

The acceptance of surveillance is closely tied to high levels of trust in government. People are more likely to support or tolerate surveillance measures when they believe that authorities are acting in their best interest. This has been shown in other studies,<sup>39</sup> but we can find similar patterns in this study, as a high trust in public entities (which we will look further into in the next chapter) is associated with higher acceptance of surveillance (see appendix 3).

# Many Scandinavians accept surveillance, even at the cost of their privacy

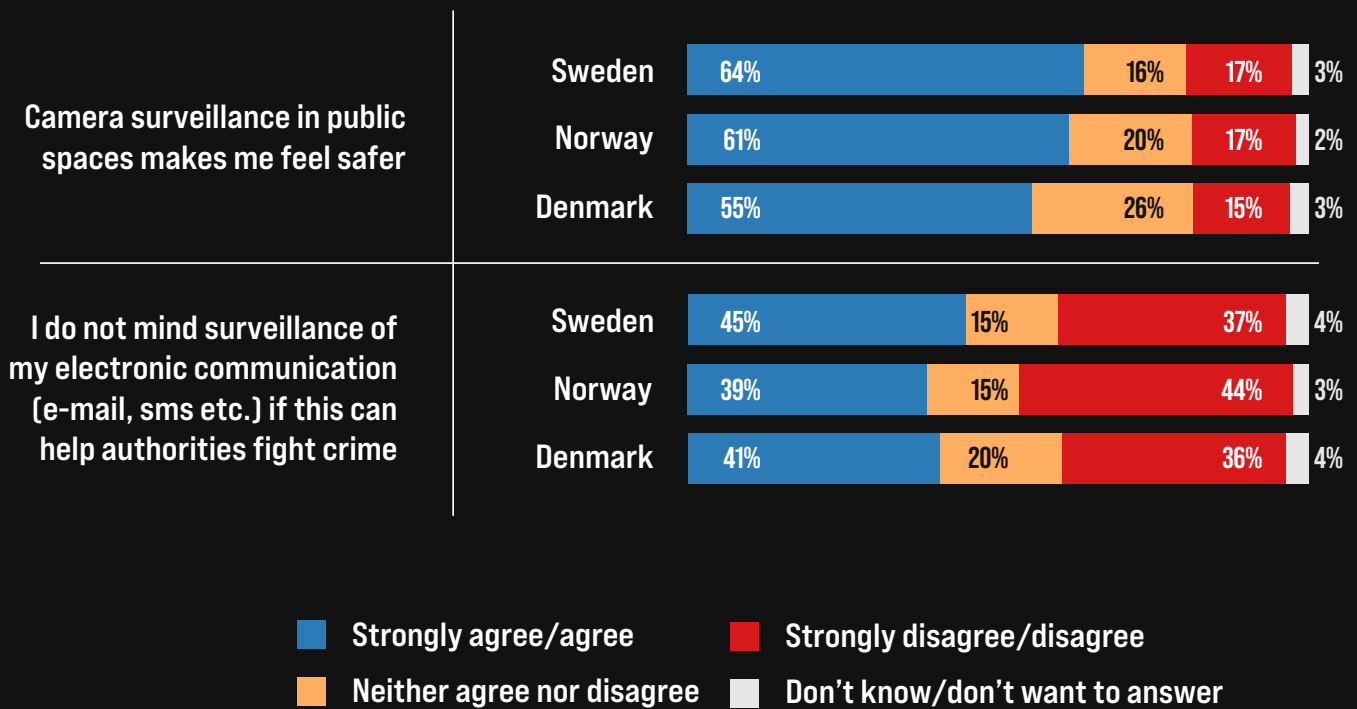


Figure 12: Response distribution of answers to statements about surveillance (n=7,500).

## Limitations: Conditions of legality, legitimate aim, necessity and proportionality<sup>40</sup>

While some human rights are absolute and non-derogable, others allow for restrictions, provided that certain criteria are met:

**Legality:** Actions must align with legal standards, meaning they are authorised by and based on existing laws.

**Legitimate aim:** Actions must address a legitimate need and be essential to achieving a specific, justified goal.

**Necessity and proportionality:** Actions must be necessary in a democratic society. They must be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued, using only the minimum force or restriction necessary.

## Human rights awareness and acceptance of surveillance

There are no major differences between high and low awareness groups in responses to these questions.

This suggests that even individuals who are more informed about their rights may still accept surveillance, which could pose challenges on ensuring strong privacy protections.

## Scandinavians and surveillance: Is there a chilling effect on behaviour?

When concerns about surveillance make people change how and when they express themselves, it is often referred to as the 'chilling effect' on the freedom of expression.<sup>41</sup>

Respondents were asked whether surveillance has influenced their behaviour in different ways. **The majority indicated that concerns about surveillance by authorities have not led to changes in their behaviour** (Figure 13).

Nevertheless, a notable minority of respondents in all three countries report that they have indeed changed their behaviour due to these concerns.

When it comes to online behaviour, **21% of Swedes and 17% of Danes and Norwegians state that they have refrained from taking part in a debate on social media** due to concerns about surveillance by public actors, and **19% of Swedes, 18% of Norwegians and 16% of Danes state that they have exited a group on a social media platform** due to such concerns. **10-11% of respondents have refrained from searching for help or information online regarding sensitive personal topics.**

For all the examples given, Swedes are more likely to have altered their behaviour due to concerns about public surveillance compared to Norwegians and Danes. **The most significant difference in responses between the countries is related to whether respondents have chosen to pay in cash instead of using a credit card due to these concerns.** While 22% of Swedes and 20% of Danes report doing so, only 15% of Norwegians have.

# A minority has changed their behaviour due to concerns about surveillance

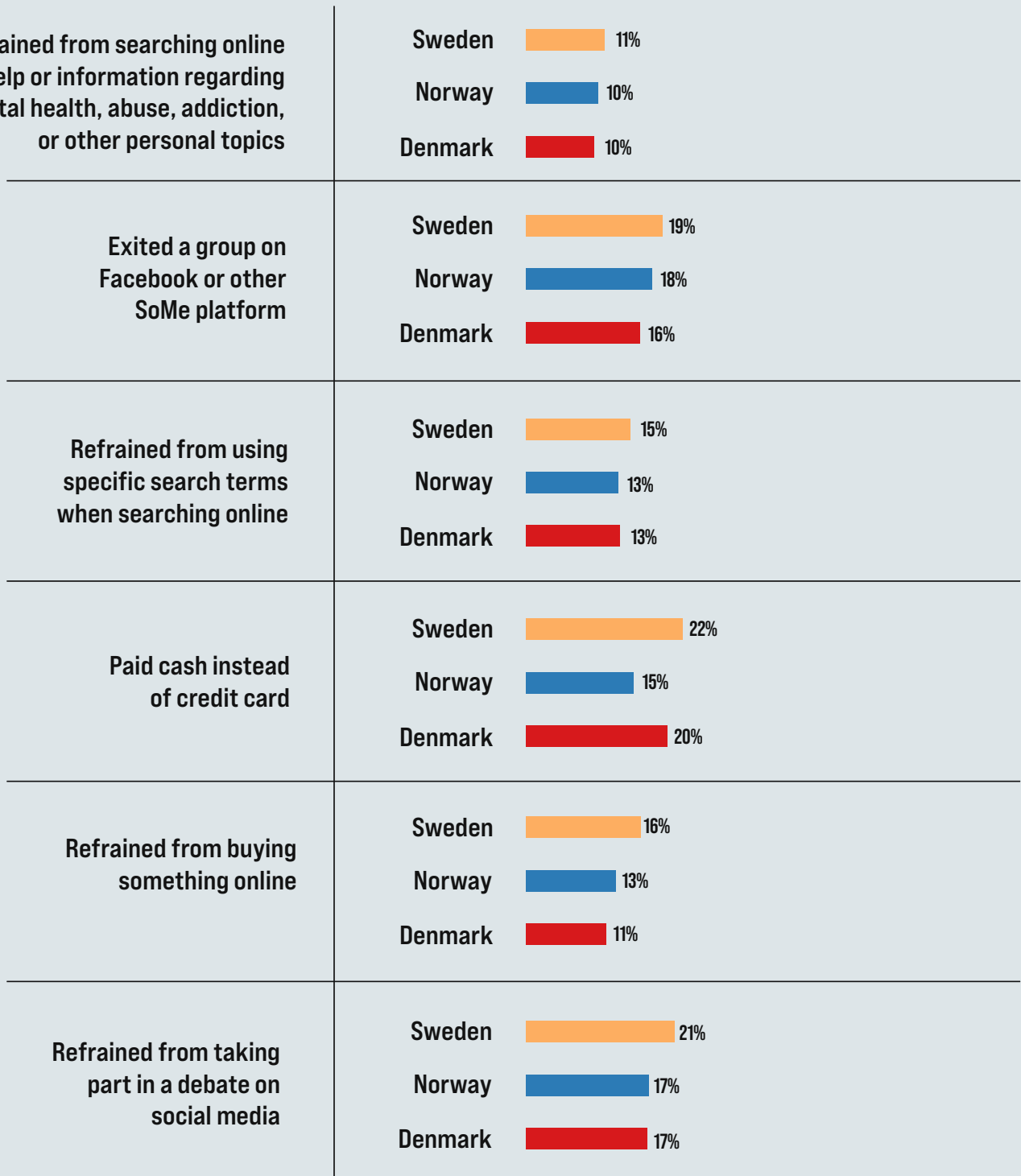


Figure 13: Share of the respondents who have answered yes to the question: Have you done any of the following because you were worried about police, domestic intelligence services or other public actors accessing your information? (n=7,500)

## 4.2.3 The majority of Scandinavians support certain limitations on the freedom of expression

As this study reveals **freedom of expression is the human right that Scandinavians are most aware of** (Figure 3). It enjoys strong support among Scandinavians, with more than four out of five respondents stating that it is important or very important for them to live in a country where you can state your opinion freely (Figure 8).

Freedom of expression is not an absolute right. While there is a high threshold for interference, authorities may restrict this freedom if certain conditions are met, as outlined in Article 10(2) of the European Convention on Human Rights (see text box). While national security can be a legitimate aim, interferences must also meet the criteria of lawfulness and necessity and proportionality.

### Balancing rights

Another legitimate aim for limitations of human rights, is the protection of other rights. As established by European Convention on Human Rights, the freedom of expression is applicable “not only to ‘information’ or ‘ideas’ that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population”<sup>42</sup> As such, authorities generally cannot limit expression because it offends or ridicules others. However, balancing freedom of expression with protection from discrimination and the right to privacy and reputation is a recurring theme in courts and public discourse. While statements that ridicule or offend can cause harm both on an individual and societal level, they must be clearly separated from hate-speech and incitement to violence.

### Freedom of Expression under the European Convention on Human Rights

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

*The European Convention on Human Rights, Article 10*

While the majority of Scandinavians support freedom of expression and view it as a fundamental value in their country, the image becomes more nuanced when it conflicts with other important concerns or rights.<sup>43</sup> The respondents were asked whether they support freedom of expression based on the potential consequences of that expression, namely 1) threaten national security or 2) offend or ridicule others.

**A majority in all three countries disagree with the statement “people should be able to express themselves as they wish, even if it may threaten national security” (54-64% - Figure 14).** The proportion that agrees is between 18-22%.

For comparison, between **39% and 48% of respondents in all three countries disagree with the statement, “people should be able to express themselves as they wish, even if it may offend or ridicule others”**. The proportion of respondents who agree ranges from 28% in Denmark to 36% in Norway.

### Other studies

The same question was asked by “Ytringsfrihedskommissionen” in Denmark in 2019. While the level of support for expressions that may threaten national security was like that in our survey, the support for expressions that may offend or ridicule others was considerably higher in Ytringskommissionen’s study, namely 51%. Although there are minor linguistic differences,<sup>44</sup> this gap is large enough to suggest that public opinion may have shifted over the past five years. Acts like Koran burnings may have influenced public acceptance of provocative rhetoric and extreme actions, as they highlight the tension between free speech and respect for others.

These findings indicate that while there is broad general support for freedom of expression, this support diminishes when conflicting issues arise. Although freedom of speech is a clear principle in theory, it becomes more challenging when the speech in question is uncomfortable. Understanding the fundamental principles of freedom of speech—such as the necessity of truth-seeking, democracy, pluralism, and individual autonomy—is crucial for people to grasp why this right requires broad protection in pluralistic societies. It must encompass not only speech that is sympathetic, but also speech that is unfavourable, even if it shocks or offends.<sup>45</sup>

It is also important to note that neither of these statements explicitly addresses the legality of such statements. While more people disagree than agree with both statements, this disagreement should not necessarily be interpreted as support for a legal prohibition on all speech that may threaten national security, or on all speech that may offend or ridicule other people.

# Majority accepts national security as reason to limit expression, many also justify limitations based on offense and ridicule

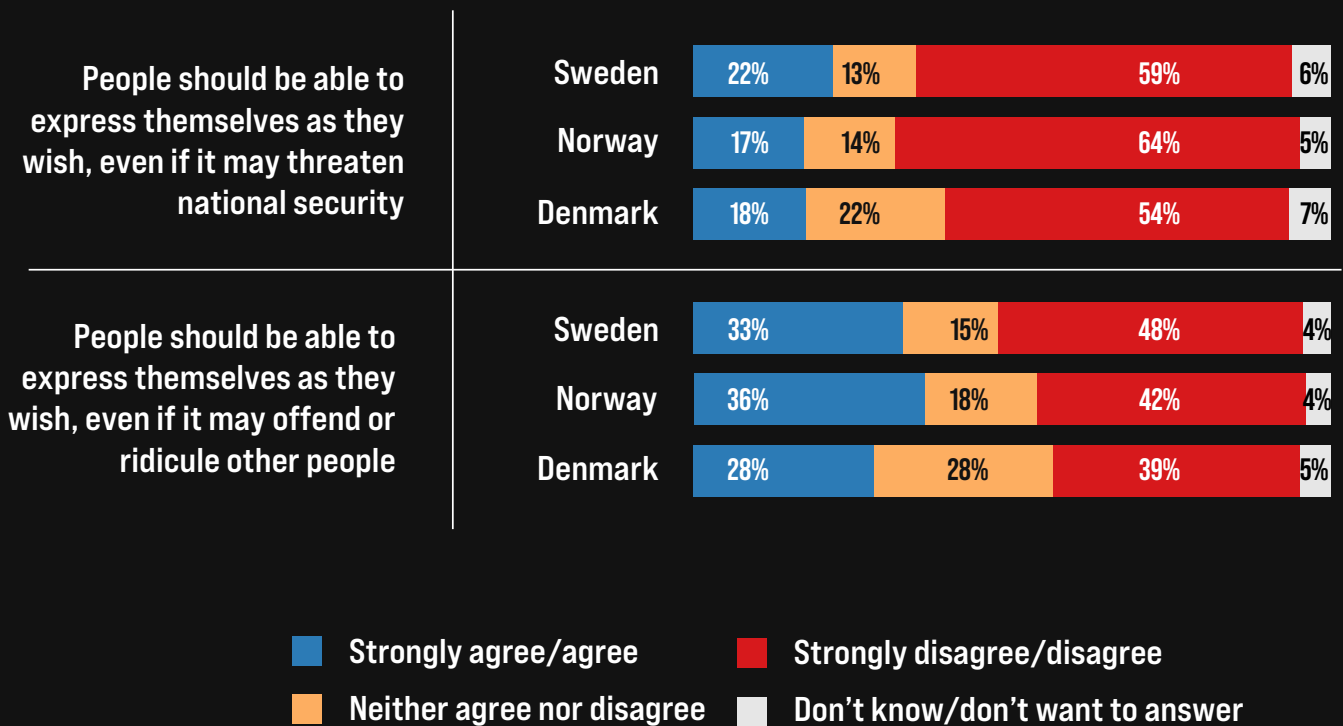


Figure 14: Response distribution of answers to the statements about limitations of freedom of expression (n=7,500)

### High awareness respondents less likely to accept limitations

Respondents with higher rights awareness are more likely to agree with both statements than respondents with lower awareness, representing a difference of 6-7 percentage points between the two groups. The proportion that disagrees with the two statements is similar in the two groups.

# More than half of respondents support a ban on the public burning of religious symbols or books

**In recent years, the issue of publicly burning religious symbols or books has sparked debate across all three Scandinavian countries. The freedom of expression includes the right to criticise religion and protects both the contents and the form of expressions.**

Although all three countries have repealed their blasphemy prohibitions, arguments for banning the burning of religious books often focus on national security concerns or characterize such acts as hate speech.<sup>46</sup> Denmark stands alone in formally criminalising this conduct through a 2023 amendment to its criminal code. This amendment prohibits “inappropriate treatment of a text that has a significant religious importance to a recognized religious community, or an object, that appears to be such a text”

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk addressed the burning of the Quran in Sweden. In his speech he addressed the conflict between the freedom of religion and the freedom of expression, highlighting the burning as an act of hate speech and underscoring the importance for leading politicians to speaking out clearly against intolerance. He did not, however, argue for a general ban, but stressed that national courts must determine each case in a manner “that is consistent with the guardrails that international humanitarian law provides.”<sup>47</sup>

Despite the differences in legislation, responses are relatively similar in the three countries. There is a majority who agree that the public burning of religious symbols or books should be banned, with 57% of respondents agreeing with the statement in Denmark and Sweden, and 54% in Norway. There is also a considerable minority who disagree, ranging from 19% in Denmark to 28% in Norway (Figure 15).

## **Other studies**

This issue has also been examined in other studies. A 2023 survey in Sweden found that 36-38% of respondents supported a ban on burning religious books, while 38% also supported a ban on burning the Swedish flag.<sup>48</sup> In a 2022 Norwegian study, 49% of respondents disagreed with the statement “It should be allowed to burn religious symbols.” This study also revealed that many participants believed such actions should be met with social rather than legal consequences.<sup>49</sup> The studies all reflect a public discomfort with the act of burning religious symbols, and the responses highlight the ongoing debates about the limits of freedom of expression and the appropriate measures to address provocative acts in democratic societies.

Moreover, distinguishing between criticising a religion and targeting its followers is essential for navigating the complexities of freedom of expression and the respect for individual rights. Criticising or challenging a religion or religious practice lies at the heart of what freedom of expression is meant to protect. However, when criticism shifts towards targeting the followers of a religion—such as through incitement to violence or hate speech—it crosses into an attack on individuals based on their identity, often leading to discrimination and hate speech. This balance is crucial for safeguarding both free expression and the right of individuals to be free from harm based on their beliefs.



# A majority support a ban on burning religious books and artefacts

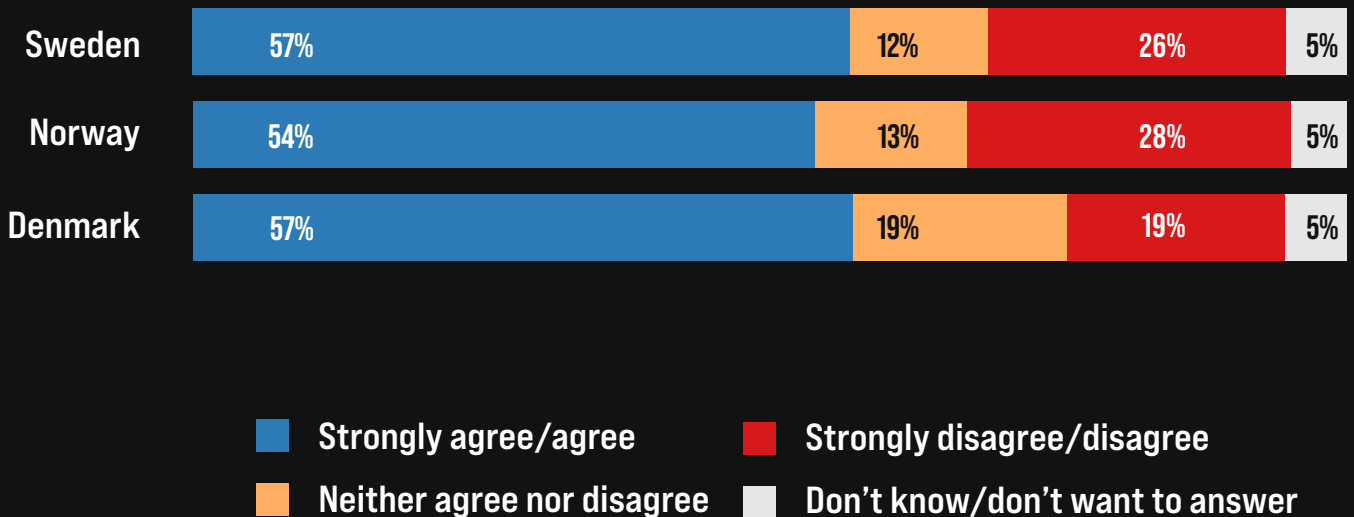


Figure 15: Response distribution of answers to the statements "Public burning of religious symbols or books should be banned" (n=7,500)

### High awareness respondents are more likely to disagree with ban

- ▶ The percentage of respondents who disagree is higher among respondents with high awareness about human rights (27 %), than among respondents with low awareness (21 %)
- ▶ The proportion who agree with the statement is similar for both low (56 %) and high (57 %) awareness respondents.

# Freedom of speech and citizenship

**Authorities have human rights obligations towards all persons under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality and citizenship status. The starting point is therefore that citizens and non-citizens should be treated equally.**

Some exceptions are nevertheless permissible. For instance, states are allowed to limit the right to vote or stand for election to citizens. Limitations of the rights of non-citizens must however be lawful, serve a legitimate objective and be proportional to the achievement of that objective.<sup>50</sup> Tying the granting of citizenship to immigrants' critical statements about the host country likely fails to meet these criteria. In addition to being discriminatory, such a restriction could undermine the rule of law.<sup>51</sup>

## **Critical statements and citizenship**

In this study, respondents were asked whether they agree that critical statements about their country by immigrants should negatively impact their eligibility for citizenship. Approximately 50% of respondents agree with the statement, ranging from 45% in Norway to 54% in Denmark, while 17% disagree in Denmark and 29% disagree in the other two countries (Figure 16). Note, however, that the statement is not explicit on the type of critical statements it covers, thus we cannot know what types of criticisms respondents think of. Nevertheless, it is worrying that such a high share of respondents support limiting expressions that can include acceptable forms of criticism of authorities for refugees and immigrants, that is expressions that are protected by human rights.

## **Other studies**

In 2019 The Danish Ytringsfrihedskommission explored public opinion on whether selected groups should be permitted to participate in public debate. This survey sought to understand whether Danes are less tolerant of expressions from certain groups. Here, they found that people in Denmark were most restrictive towards expression from "neo-Nazis" and "Islamic fundamentalists". Researchers have interpreted these results as indicating that "freedom of expression for large parts of the population is, so to speak, up for negotiation, and that for certain expressions and/or expressing groups, the majority of the population is not the guarantor of freedom of expression—in fact, quite the opposite."<sup>52</sup>

## **Need for more informed perspectives**

Promoting a more informed perspective on freedom of expression can lead to more balanced and constructive debates on its limits, ensuring that freedoms are upheld without undermining public order or social cohesion. Additionally, fostering greater support for freedom of expression can empower citizens to engage in open discussions and participate in the democratic process, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard, minority views are protected, and the public can hold those in power accountable, foundational elements essential for any pluralistic society.<sup>53</sup>

# The freedom of speech of immigrants

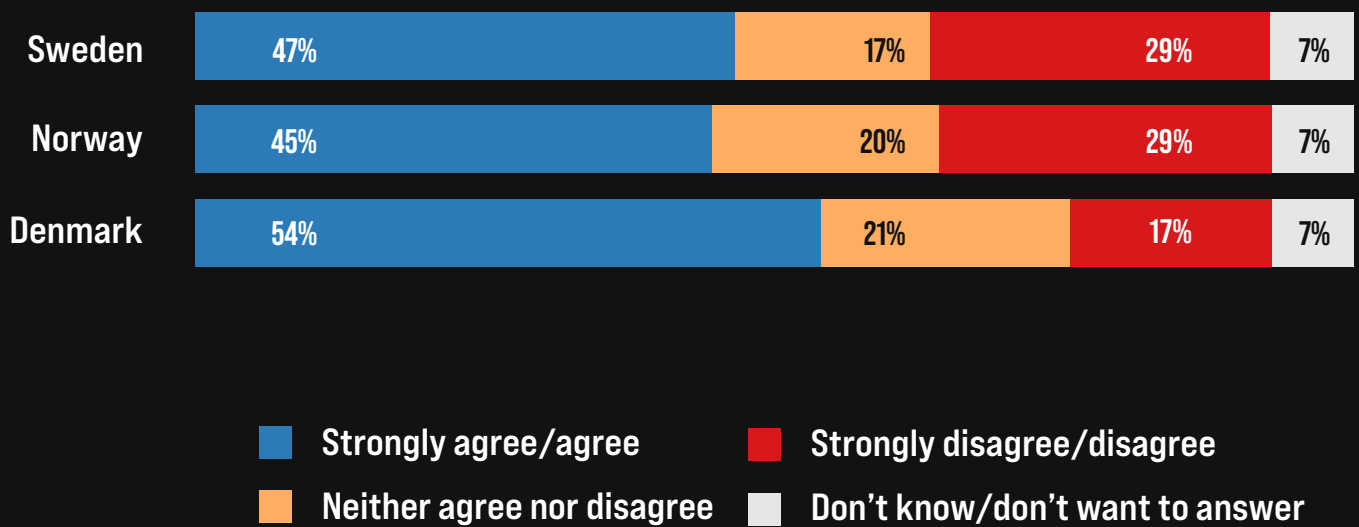


Figure 16: Response distribution to the statements "Critical statements about *this country* by immigrants should have a negative impact on whether they are offered citizenship status" (n=7,500)

**High awareness respondents less likely to think criticism should affect citizenship prospects**

- ▶ The percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement is higher in the high awareness group, 32%, compared with 19% in the lower group.
- ▶ 51% in the low awareness group agrees with the statement compared with 47% in the higher group.

## 4.2.4 Support of freedom of assembly varies in Scandinavia depending on who is assembling

The right to freedom of assembly and association is closely associated with freedom of expression, and like the latter it is also a precondition for public and political participation. Similar to the freedom of expression and the right to privacy, authorities may interfere with the freedom of assembly and association, provided that these limitations are lawful, serve a legitimate aim and are necessary and proportionate.

Around one third (32-37%) of respondents agree with the statement “people who express discriminatory views against different ethnic groups should be allowed to hold public meetings and demonstrations, as long as they do it in a peaceful way” (Figure 17). The proportion of those who disagree is highest in Sweden (47%) and lowest in Denmark (33%).

Four out of ten respondents agree with the statement “People with extreme religious viewpoints should be allowed to hold public meetings and demonstrations, as long as they do it in a peaceful way”. Also here, disagreement is stronger in Sweden than in the other two countries.

In both statements, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly conflicts with other concerns and rights. It is important to note that the statements differ: in the first statement, a reference is made to discriminatory views being expressed, whereas the latter concerns who the assembling persons are, and not what their message is. This may contribute to explaining why disagreement is higher for the first statement relative to the second.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have repeatedly called for all three countries to prohibit organisations that promote discrimination and/or racial hatred.<sup>54</sup> However, there is an ongoing discussion if a prohibition would be proportional in relationship to the infringement on freedom of assembly.<sup>55</sup>

### Freedom of assembly and association in the European Convention on Human Rights

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.

*The European Convention on Human Rights, Article 11*

# Freedom of assembly for people with extreme or discriminatory views

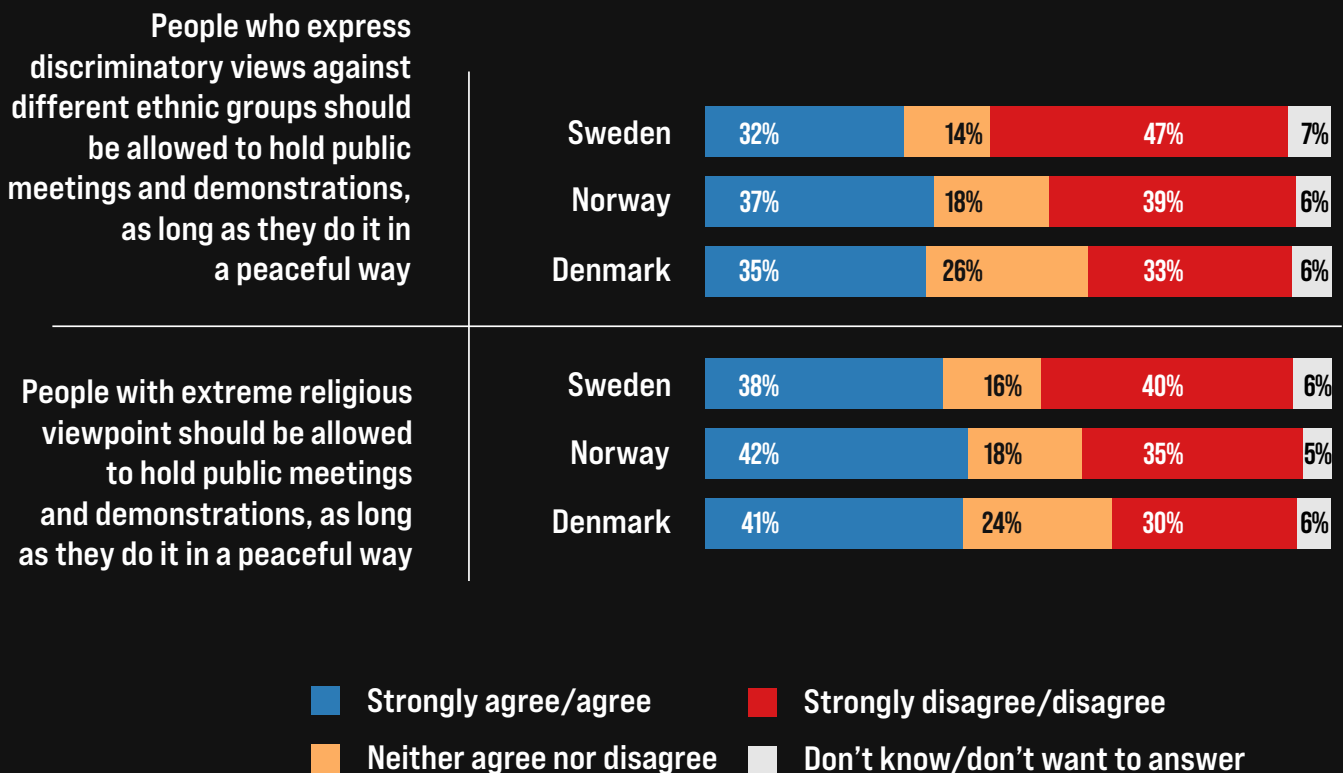


Figure 17: Response distribution of answers to the statements about peaceful assembly (n=7,500)

## High awareness respondents more likely to favour freedom of assembly for mentioned groups

- ▶ The share of respondents who agree with both statements is larger in the higher awareness group than in the lower.
- ▶ There is a higher share of respondents in the low awareness group who disagree with the statement concerning people with extreme religious views (37% versus 33%).

# 5. Perceptions of the human rights situation in Scandinavia

In this chapter we examine how people in Denmark, Sweden and Norway perceive the domestic human rights situation.

Understanding the perception of a country's human rights situation is important for several reasons. First, public perception influences discussions around human rights and thereby shapes the societal and political environment in which human rights are protected, or potentially violated. Second, understanding how people view the human rights landscape helps identify gaps between legal protections and lived realities, revealing whether citizens feel their rights are upheld or at risk. This can highlight areas where governmental actions are needed, such as addressing abuses or strengthening legal frameworks.

Public perception also has a direct impact on policy decisions and the level of pressure on governments to implement reforms or enforce protections. If people perceive human rights violations as widespread or ignored, it can lead to erosion of trust in state institutions. Conversely, a positive perception may indicate a stable and rights-respecting society but can also mask underlying issues if people are unaware of, or indifferent to, certain violations. By investigating these perceptions, government bodies can better target efforts to protect and promote human rights and ensure that public concerns are addressed in policymaking.

To better understand the perception of the human rights situation in Scandinavia, the survey contains questions about the realisation of human rights within the three countries. In this chapter we will examine how the populations see the performance of their countries when it comes to upholding rights, what they see as the greatest challenges to human rights in their countries (section 5.1) and to what degree respondents trust various public entities to uphold human rights (section 5.2).

## Key findings:

- ▶ **Many Scandinavians consider their countries to be at the forefront of human rights.** Half of the respondents think that Scandinavian countries are the best in the world at respecting human rights and as many think that the three countries are similar regarding upholding them.
- ▶ **But many Scandinavians still perceive that human rights abuse exist in Scandinavia.** Only 34% think that human rights abuses are rare in the Scandinavian countries, whereas 33% of Scandinavians disagree with this notion.
- ▶ **There appears to be a widespread perception across all three countries that economic and social rights are more at risk than civil and political rights.** The right to health, to a healthy environment, to freedom from discrimination, and to social security consistently rank among the top five rights perceived to be threatened in each country.
- ▶ **A greater share of Swedes perceives various rights as being under threat compared to Danes and Norwegians.** While respondents in all three countries agree on which rights are most at risk, people in Sweden are more likely to think they are threatened than Norwegians or Danes.
- ▶ **Swedes are most likely to think that the government should do more to safeguard human rights, while many Danes think the government is doing what can reasonably be expected of them.** 50% of Swedes think their government should do more compared to 43% of Norwegians and 33% of Danes. In Denmark, 50% of the respondents think the government is doing everything that can be reasonable expected to safeguard human rights.

## 5.1 Scandinavians see their countries as leading the way, but believe threats still exist

Scandinavian countries often rank on top of international indexes when it comes to human rights compliance. To see whether the population in Denmark, Sweden and Norway shares this assessment, we asked participants in the survey whether they think that the Scandinavian countries are best in the world at respecting human rights (Figure 18). About half of the respondents agreed with the statement and just 12% disagreed.

When asked which of the Scandinavian countries they think is better at upholding human rights, more than half of respondents in all three countries answered that the three countries are equally good (Figure 19). Between one in four in Denmark and Norway and one in five in Sweden identified their own country as the best of the three.

### Many respondents believe that human rights abuses exist in Scandinavia

While Scandinavians view the human rights efforts of their own countries favourably in comparison with elsewhere, only around a third (34%) of Scandinavians think that human rights abuses are rare in their countries. 33% of respondents from Sweden and 32% from Norway think that abuses are rare, while a larger share disagrees (Figure 20) - namely 39% in Sweden and 38% in Norway. In Denmark, a higher proportion considers abuses rare (41%) than those who do not (24%).

The 2019 Fundamental Rights Survey, conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), asked whether respondents agreed that "Human rights abuses are a problem in some countries, but they are not really a problem in this country". This yielded quite a different response, as 67% of Danish respondents and 54% of Swedish respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The differences may stem from the FRA study's comparison between the respondents' own country and "some countries" where "human rights abuses are a problem".

#### Respondents with higher human rights awareness rate performance of their own country higher

People with high awareness of human rights are more likely to think that Scandinavian countries are the best in the world at respecting human rights than respondents in the 'low awareness' category (60% versus 44%). Moreover, they are less likely to think the three countries are equally good (53% versus 60%).

# Best in the world?

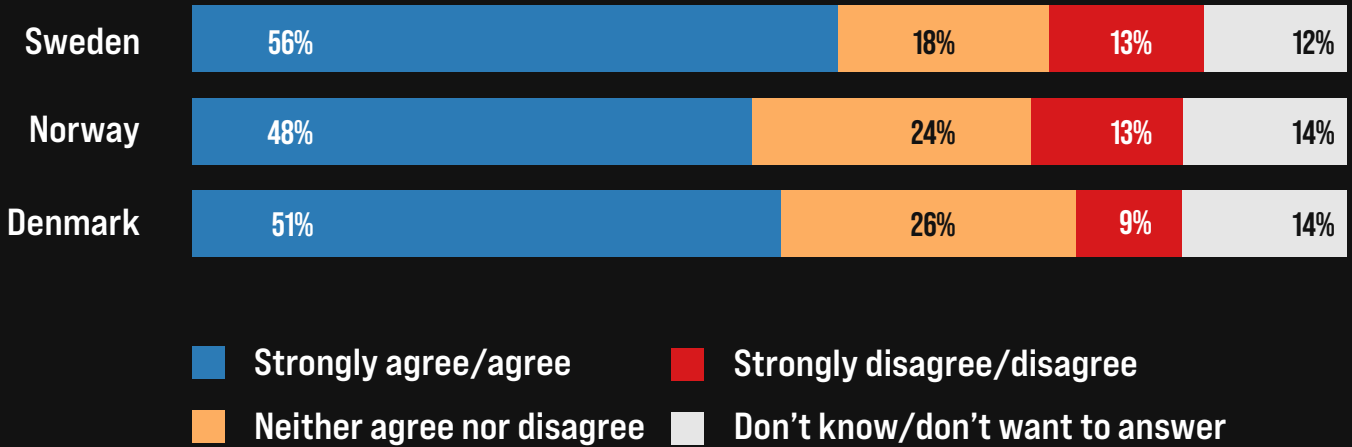


Figure 18: Response distribution of answers to the statement "Scandinavian countries are best in the world at respecting human rights" (n=7,500)

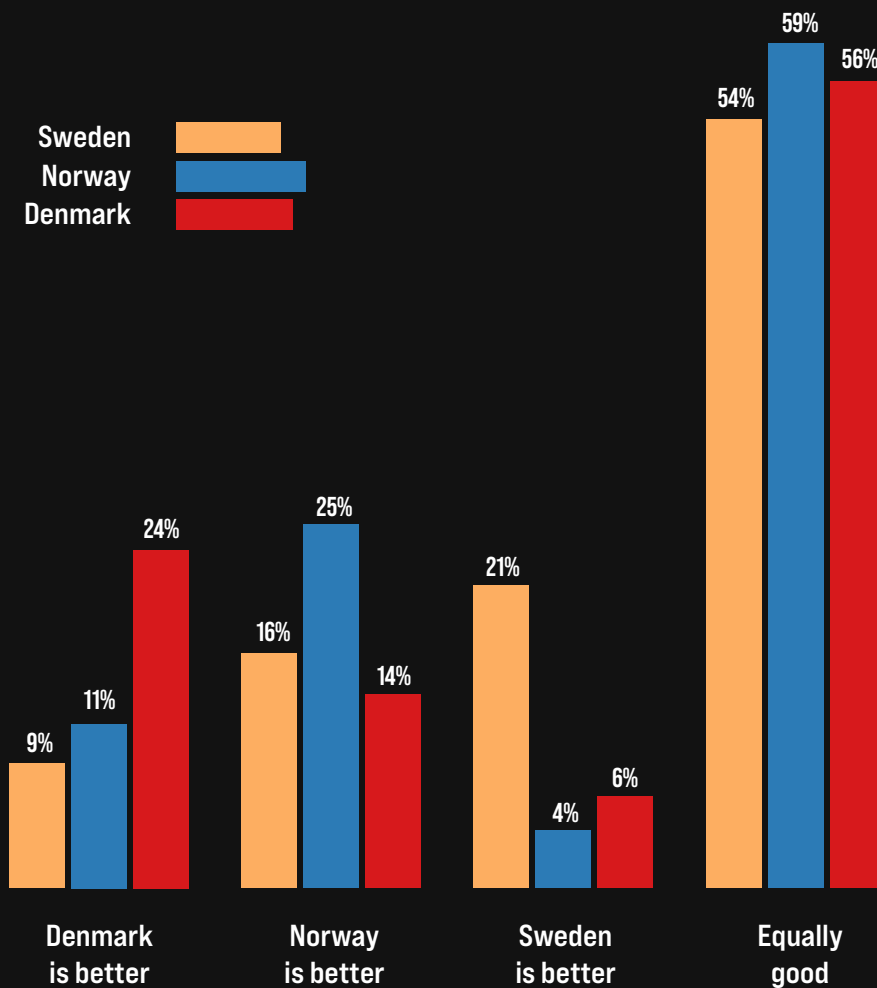


Figure 19: Response distribution of answers to the statement "In your perception, which of the following countries is better at upholding human rights?" (n=7,500)



# Perception of human rights abuses in Scandinavia

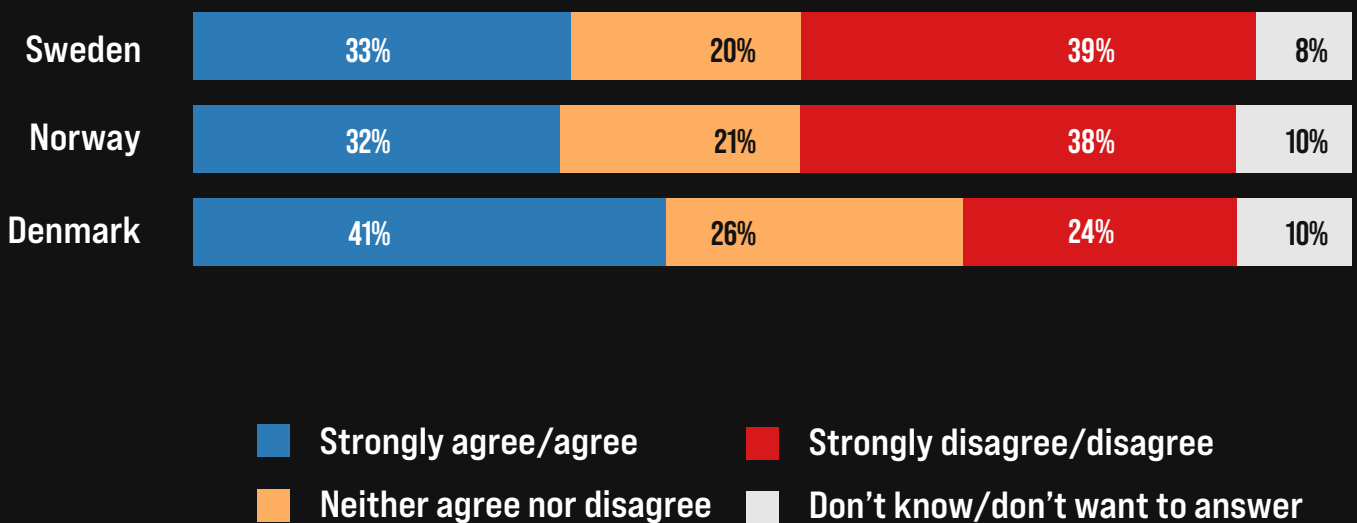


Figure 20: Response distribution of answers to the statement “Human rights abuses are rare in this country” (n=7,500)

## High awareness respondents most likely to think that human rights abuses are rare in the Scandinavian countries

- ▶ People with high awareness of human rights are more likely to think that human rights abuses are rare in the Scandinavian countries, compared with respondents with lower awareness (41% versus 29%).
- ▶ This difference corresponds to the difference in respondents who answer that they don't know if abuses are rare, which make up 4% in the high awareness group and 13% in the low awareness group.

## Scandinavians agree on which rights are threatened, but Swedes are more worried.

There are similarities across the three countries when it comes to which human rights respondents identify as most threatened in their country. The right to health, a healthy environment, freedom from discrimination, and social security appear among the top five in all three countries.

In Norway and Sweden, the right to housing also ranks among the top five rights most commonly identified as threatened, while Danish respondents identify the right to freedom of expression as one of the most threatened rights (Figure 21).

**Across all three countries, respondents tend to find economic and social rights more threatened than civil and political rights.** This observation is particularly noteworthy given Scandinavia's robust welfare systems, which are typically associated with strong protections for these types of rights. The heightened focus on the vulnerability of these rights may reflect rising concerns about growing disparities, and an increased cost of living, alongside a broader perception that the welfare state is under strain.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the agreement on which rights are most threatened, the degree to which Swedes, Danes and Norwegians think that human rights are under threat varies considerably. **Swedes are more likely to think that rights are under threat than Norwegians or Danes.**

Regarding the top five rights most at risk, between 48% and 58% of Swedish respondents consider these to be threatened. In Norway, the same is true for between 34% and 43%, while in Denmark, between 33% and 39% think the top five rights are threatened to a high or to some degree. For the full list of assessments of threats towards rights consult Appendix 4, Figure 2.

A different way to assess threats to human rights is by examining how many people that have personally experienced a violation of their rights. The differences between countries are notable: 19% of Danish, 24% of Norwegian, and 29% of Swedish respondents reported such experiences (Figure 22).

# Economic and social rights are viewed as most at risk

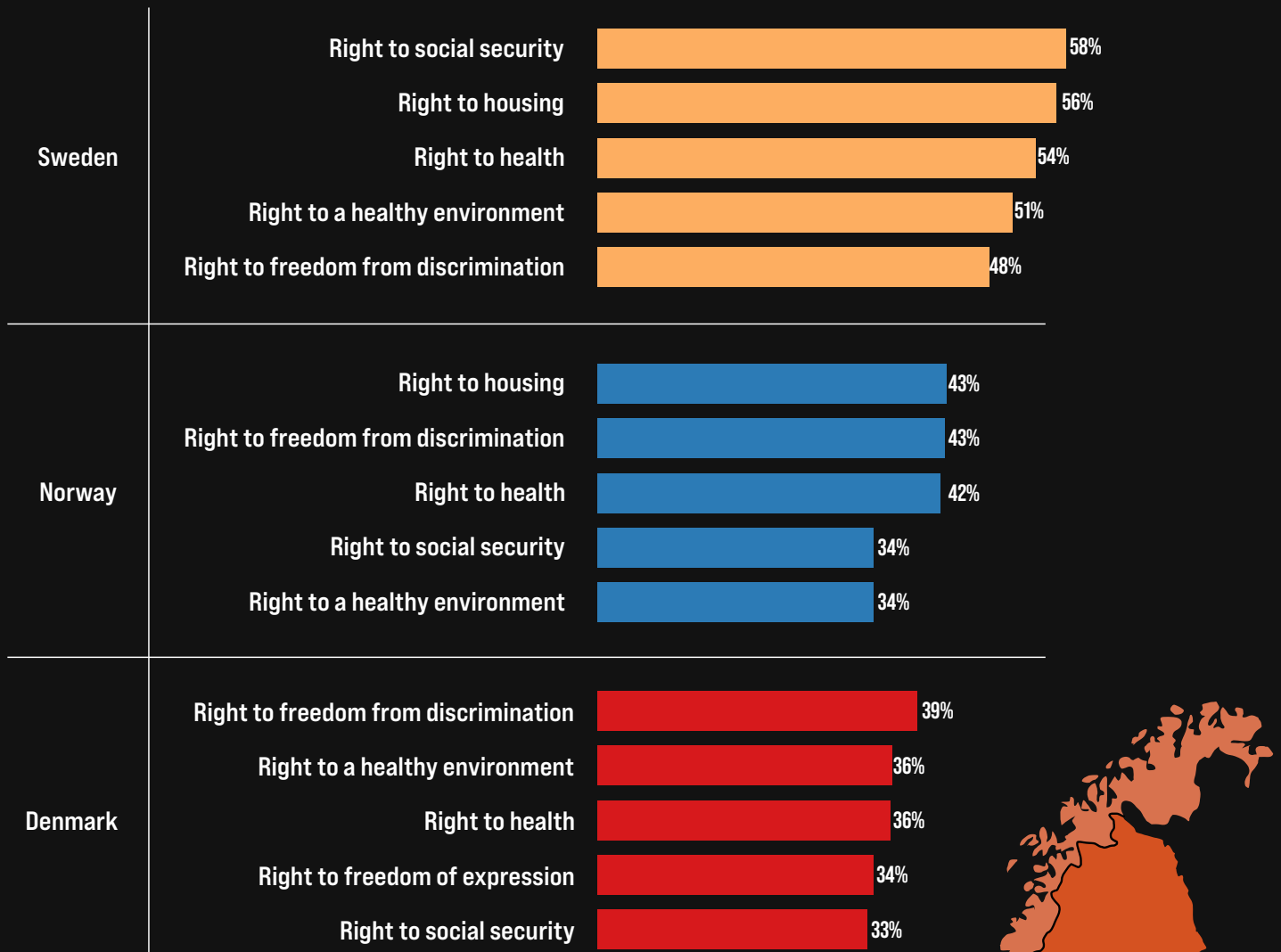


Figure 21: Top five human rights that respondents agreed or strongly agreed were under threat in their country (n=7,500).

## High awareness respondents more likely to identify threats and violations

- ▶ A larger share of the respondents in the higher awareness group believes that all the top five rights are threatened in their countries compared with the lower awareness group.
- ▶ Asked whether their own human rights have been violated, the respondents in the high awareness group are about 10 percentage points more likely to answer yes than ones with lower awareness (29% versus 20%). This difference corresponds with the difference in respondents answering that they don't know if their human rights have been violated

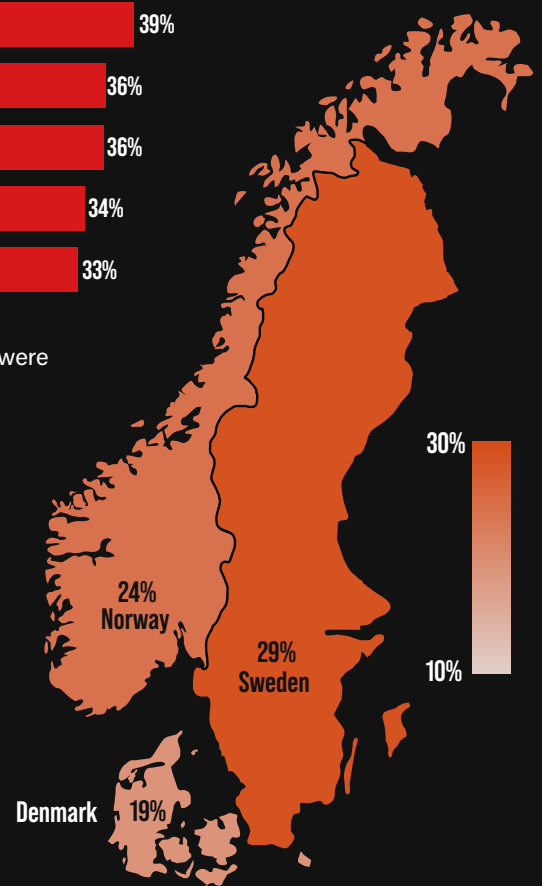


Figure 22: Share of population who have experienced human rights violations (n=7,500)

# Perceptions of discrimination

The right to non-discrimination is vital for ensuring that everyone can live with dignity, respect, and equal opportunity, allowing all individuals to fully enjoy human rights. However, discrimination remains a significant challenge in every society, including the Scandinavian countries despite comprehensive equality laws.<sup>57</sup>

In our survey, respondents were asked to rate the level of discrimination faced by various groups, ranging from high to none. All respondents were presented with the definition of discrimination as stated in the first paragraph in the box on the previous page. The results display considerable differences between the countries, both in terms of which groups were identified as most exposed to discrimination, and the overall level of discrimination perceived by respondents in the different countries. Similar to human rights at risk, Swedes are more inclined to think that minority groups face discrimination in their country compared to Danes and Norwegians.

There are notable differences across the five groups most frequently perceived as facing discrimination in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. The only group common to all three countries is persons with intellectual disabilities, with 26% of Swedish, 19% of Norwegian, and 13% of Danish respondents reporting high levels of perceived discrimination (Figure 23).

In both Sweden and Norway, people with physical disabilities are the group most commonly identified by respondents as facing discrimination (27% and 21%, respectively). Roma persons are also identified by many as facing discrimination (23% of Swedes, 14% of Norwegians). Refugees are common to both Sweden and Denmark (20% and 15%, respectively), while 21% of Norwegians and 15% of Danes report high discrimination against trans or non-binary people. Additionally, 21% of Swedish respondents point to the elderly, 16% of Norwegians to people with mental health problems, and 16% of Danes to Immigrants and Muslims.

## Non-discrimination in human rights law

Discrimination means treating people unfairly because of their personal characteristics or group membership. Discrimination can both be **direct** and **indirect** through, for example, seemingly fair policies that have unintended negative impacts on specific groups.

The right to freedom from discrimination is **enshrined in various international human rights treaties**, such as the European Convention on Human Rights article 14, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights article 2 article 26 and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 2 and Convention on the Rights of the Child article 2.

The Scandinavian countries are also parties to more **specialised non-discrimination conventions**.

States have a duty to ensure that different groups in society **have the same opportunity** to enjoy their human rights. States also both have a duty to criminalise discrimination, and to work proactively through different political measures to eliminate discrimination.

# Perceived discrimination in Scandinavia

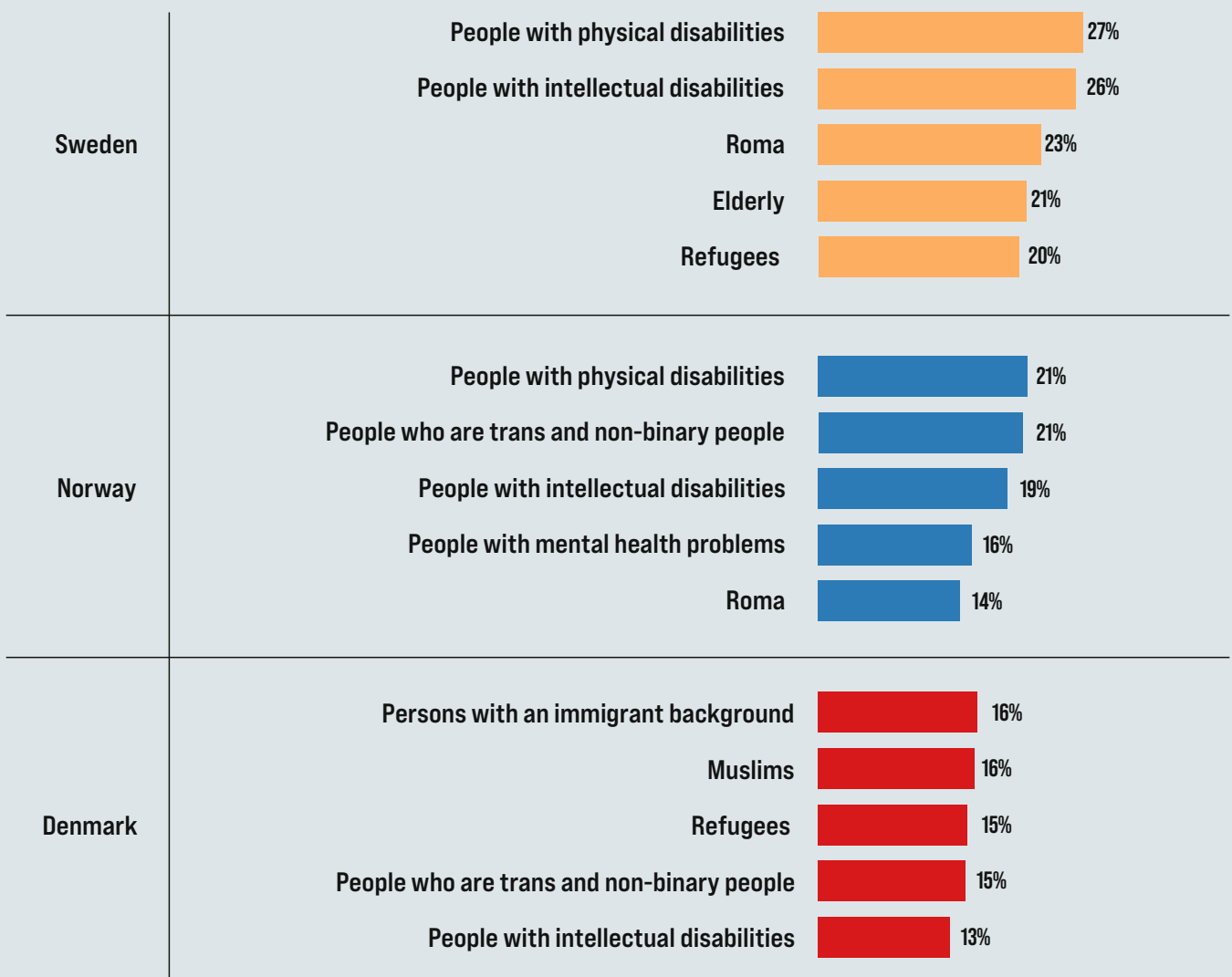


Figure 23: Top five groups that respondents answered that are discriminated to a high degree (n=7,500)

## 5.2 How do Scandinavians see their governments' efforts in safeguarding human rights?

National governments have a fundamental responsibility to protect, respect, and fulfil human rights for everyone within their jurisdiction. This includes creating and enforcing laws that protect human rights, prevent abuses, and provide mechanisms for justice and accountability when violations occur. Additionally, governments must ensure that individuals have access to essential services like education, healthcare, and social security.

Many Scandinavians recognise challenges to the realisation of human rights within their countries, yet they remain divided on whether their governments should take further action to protect these rights. In Sweden, a majority (50%) believe their government should do more to safeguard human rights, compared to 43% who feel the government's current efforts are sufficient (Figure 24).

The opposite view prevails in Denmark, where only a third (33%) think more action is needed, while half (50%) consider the government's efforts adequate. In Norway, opinion is evenly split, with 43% on each side of the question. These differences reflect varying levels of public trust in governmental action on human rights across the Scandinavian countries.

Just a very small minority in any of the three countries thought that the government should do less to safeguard human rights, while a little more than one in ten did not know.

### High awareness respondents more likely to think government should do more

Compared with respondents in the lower awareness group, respondents in the higher awareness group are more likely, 47% compared to 38%, to answer that the government should do more to safeguard human rights.

## Swedes most likely to think government should do more

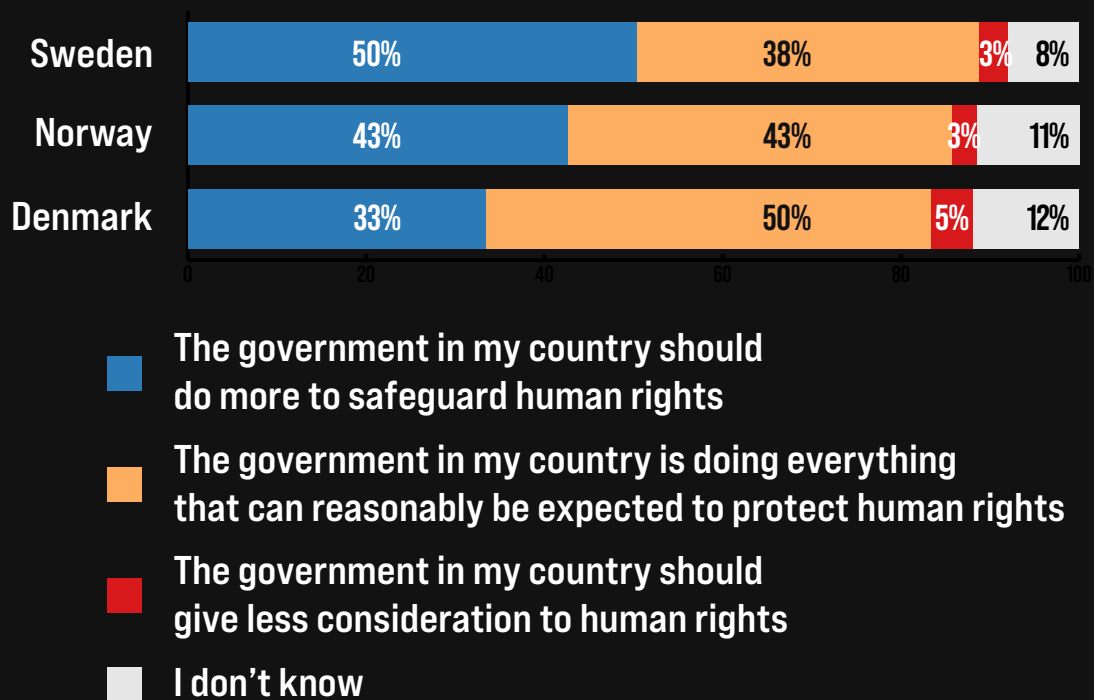


Figure 24: Response distribution of answers to the statements "Considering that the government has the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding human rights in a country, which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?" (n=7,500)

# To what extent do Scandinavians trust public institutions to uphold human rights?

The Scandinavian countries are considered ‘high trust societies,’ meaning that there is a high level of trust both towards other people and public institutions.<sup>58</sup> Multiple surveys have confirmed Scandinavia as high trust societies compared to most other countries in the world and the results from longitudinal studies have not found evidence for a large shift during the last decades.<sup>59</sup>

Our survey asked respondents to what degree they trust different public entities to uphold human rights. **The results reveal notable differences in trust levels across the three countries. Generally, Swedes exhibit lower trust in public institutions than Danes and Norwegians (Figure 25).**

The survey reveals both similarities and differences in how respondents in the three countries rate their trust towards different public entities:

## Swedes trust hospitals most

In Sweden, people have the highest trust in hospitals and childcare institutions. 39% of Swedish respondents express high trust in these institutions to uphold human rights. Trust is lowest for prisons (19%) and the asylum system (20%). Trust is also low for intelligence services and elderly nursing homes, with only 20% of respondents expressing trust in each of these.

## Danes have highest trust in courts

In Denmark, people have the highest trust in courts (47%) and hospitals (46%) to uphold human rights, with the least in the asylum system (21%) and psychiatric institutions (23%).

## Trust in child protective services lower in Norway

In Norway, people have the highest trust in courts (44%) and hospitals (43%), and lowest in psychiatric institutions (20%), child protective services (21%), and municipal governments (22%). Notably, Norwegians have significantly lower trust in child protective services (Social services concerning children) than Swedes and Danes—7 percentage points and 10 percentage points lower, respectively. This may be linked to the high number of cases involving Norwegian child protective services brought before the European Court of Human Rights and the public attention these cases have received.

Norwegians and Danes place the highest trust in courts to uphold human rights. Although courts are also among the most highly trusted institutions in Sweden, the gap in trust between the countries is greater for courts than for any other public institution surveyed. While 47% of Danes and 44% of Norwegians express high trust in courts, only 35% of Swedes do so.

## Asylum systems, psychiatric institutions, prisons, and nursing homes for the elderly rank lower in public trust across the board, although trust in prisons and the asylum system is somewhat higher in Norway than in Sweden and Denmark.

These institutions share common human rights challenges in all three countries.<sup>60</sup> They share the commonality that they are arenas where persons may be subjected to confinement, involuntary treatment or use of force. Additionally, the people served by these institutions are often vulnerable, including asylum seekers fleeing conflict, elderly individuals with health concerns, and people with psychiatric conditions.

Swedes’ lower perceived trust in institutions to uphold human rights is interesting in the context of a heightened awareness of human rights issues within the country. As we have seen, many Swedes report feeling that human rights are at risk, and they also perceive a higher level of discrimination affecting various groups. High trust in institutions correlates with trust in other people which is important for democracy, solidarity and the willingness to help others.<sup>61</sup> This interconnectedness of perception and trust highlights the importance of addressing these concerns to restore confidence in public institutions.

**High awareness respondents have higher trust in public institutions in upholding rights**

The difference varies between 4% for prisons and the asylum system to 10% for childcare institutions.



# Varying trust in public institutions

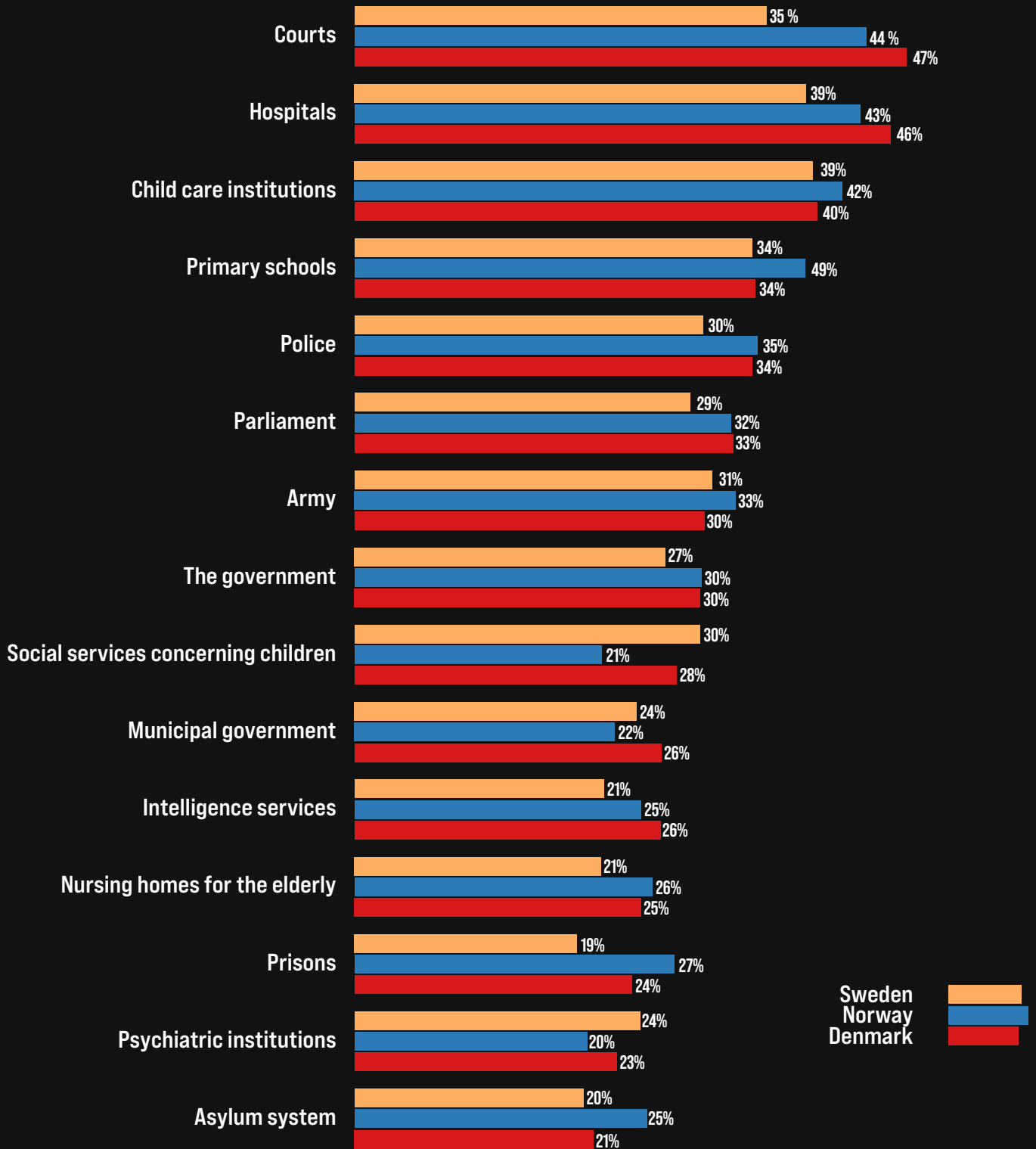


Figure 25: Share of respondents that trust the following public entities to uphold human rights to a high degree (n=7,500)

# Conclusion



While there is a broad support for human rights, awareness and attitudes differ between the three countries. Sweden stands out with the highest awareness levels, but also a heightened perception of rights being at risk, coupled with lower trust in public institutions compared to Denmark and Norway. Moreover we find that people with greater awareness of human rights tend to show stronger support for them and hold more positive attitudes.

## **Despite broad support, challenges remain**

Many believe human rights abuses are not rare in their countries, and many feel that social and economic rights are at risk today. In all three countries, the right to a healthy environment, the right to health, the right to freedom from discrimination, and the right to social security appear among the rights that respondents see as most threatened. The heightened focus on the vulnerability of the economic and social rights may reflect rising concerns about growing disparities, higher living costs, and a growing sense that the welfare state is under pressure. These issues raise important questions about how human rights fit into Scandinavia's social contract. The growing perception that the right to a healthy environment is under threat is undoubtedly driven by the worsening impacts of climate change, leading more people to see environmental stability as critical to protecting human rights.

A considerable minority of the respondents report that they have experienced human rights violations, and many perceive that groups in society face discrimination. Moreover, there are significant variations in peoples trust in public institutions when it comes to upholding human rights underlining the need for a deeper understanding of public concerns and more targeted efforts to address these gaps.

Respondents' attitudes to issues such as surveillance, freedom of expression, and religious freedoms highlight the challenge of balancing different human rights and public concerns. The complex relationship between security measures, such as surveillance, and privacy protection underscores the ongoing tensions of safeguarding public safety while maintaining fundamental freedoms. Similarly, support for banning certain expressions to combat hate speech or protect national security shows how freedom of expression sometimes conflicts with other priorities. Moreover, we find that people support limiting human rights for certain groups or types of expression in ways that go beyond democratic norms. This raises critical questions about how societies can balance security and freedom while ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and equitably.

## **Need for further engagement**

The findings of the report suggest that while Scandinavians broadly support human rights, human rights education and public attention are essential to ensure that the protection of human rights remains robust. A more in-depth analysis of the attitudes of different societal groups is crucial to understanding the complexities and dynamics of support for human rights. This includes exploring how factors such as education, geography, age, gender, political beliefs, and socioeconomic status influence perspectives and drive variations in support across groups. Decision-makers need this knowledge to carefully balance and protect rights when conflicts arise.

Overall, this study highlights the need for sustained public engagement and education. These efforts can help strengthen understanding and ensure that human rights are upheld in ways that align with both societal values and individual freedoms.

# Endnotes

- 1 Eleanor Roosevelt, "Where do universal human rights begin?"; statement on 27 March 1958 to the UN Commission on Human Rights; sometimes called "The Great Question" speech. Quote from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). *Human Rights Indicators. A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, HR/PUB/12/5, 2012 (United Nations publication).
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- 3 Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, and others (Eds.). *Nordic Histories of Human Rights* (Routledge, 2021); Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, and others, Histories of Human Rights in the Nordic Countries, *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 136 no. 3 (2018), pp 189-201. Langford, M., Schaffer, J. K., "The Nordic Human Rights Paradox: Moving Beyond Exceptionalism," Research Paper No 2013-25, (University of Oslo Faculty of Law, 2015).
- 4 In this report we use the terms "Dane"/"Norwegian"/"Swede", "people in Denmark"/"people in Norway"/"people in Sweden" and "Danish"/"Norwegian"/"Swedish" interchangeably. While not all respondents may identify with any of these terms, they are selected for simplicity to refer to the populations in the three countries.
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- 7 All survey respondents have received the same introductory text which defines human rights in this survey as "a legal concept and is based on the idea that certain rights are universal, meaning they apply to all individuals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, nationality, race, cultural, ethnic, or religious background"
- 8 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR): Article 10: Freedom of expression.
- 9 ECHR: Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- 10 ECHR: Article 6: Right to a fair trial.
- 11 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): Article 12.1: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- 12 ICESCR, article 11.1: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.
- 13 ICESCR, article 9: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

- 14 ICESCR, article 13: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education.
- 15 Relevant instruments include the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in independent countries.
- 16 Norwegian Human Rights Institution (2021) Climate and Human Rights; OHCHR, What is the Right to a Healthy Environment? Information Note.
- 17 Truth and reconciliation processes in Norway and Sweden also include certain national minorities. In Norway, it includes the Kven/Norwegian Finns and Forest Finns in addition to the indigenous Sami people. In Sweden, separate processes concern Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset.
- 18 Norwegian Supreme Court, HR-2021-1975-S (Fosen), Judgment, 11 October 2021 The judgment can be found with an English translation at: <https://www.domstol.no/en/supremecourt/rulings/2021/supreme-court-civil-cases/hr-2021-1975-s/>
- 19 Swedish Supreme Court, T-853-18 (Girjas), Judgment, 23 January 2020. A summary of the ruling can be found in English at: <https://www.domstol.se/hogsta-domstolen/nyheter/2020/01/the-girjas-case--press-release/>
- 20 Jette Laage-Petersen and Lise Garkier Hendriksen, "Ligebehandling af grønlandere i Danmark", *Institut for menneskerettigheder*, 2015.
- 21 Article 108 of the Norwegian Constitution states that "The authorities of the state shall create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life." In the 1 chapter, 2 § The Instrument of Government in the Swedish fundamental laws (the constitution) (SFS 2009:724) states that the Sami people opportunities to maintain and develop their own cultural and community life must be promoted.
- 22 Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2024 - The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict", 2024; Gilmour, A., "The global backlash against human rights", *OHCHR*, 2018); Hassan, T., The Human Rights System Is Under Threat: A Call to Action, in *Human Rights Watch World Report*, 2024, pp. 1-11.; Helfer, L. R., "Populism and International Human Rights Law Institutions - A Survival Guide", in *Human Rights in a Time of Populism*, Neuman, G. L. (ed.) (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 218-227.
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- 26 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Fundamental Rights Survey*, (2021). Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/2021/frs>
- 27 Betts, A., *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 2013); Doty, R., *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies - Statecraft, Desire and the Politics of Exclusion*, Routledge RIPE Series in Global Political Economy, (Routledge, 2003).
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- 29 See for instance, Hopgood, S., *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 2013); Hafner-Burton, E., *Making Human Rights a Reality*, (Princeton University Press, 2013); Clapham, A., "The Limits of Human Rights in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Armed Violence", in *The Limits of Human Rights*, Fassbender, B. & Traisbach, K. (eds.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 305-318.
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- 34 Institut for menneskerettigheter and UNICEF, Børn har begrænset kendskab, (2023). [https://menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Analyse\\_B%C3%B8rne%20rettigheder\\_Institut%20for%20Menneskerettigheder%20og%20UNICEF%20%28002%29.pdf](https://menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Analyse_B%C3%B8rne%20rettigheder_Institut%20for%20Menneskerettigheder%20og%20UNICEF%20%28002%29.pdf)
- 35 ECHR Article 1 on the Prohibition of discrimination states that "the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status"
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