

# **Antisemitic Attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review**

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**ISGAP** | INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY  
OF GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM  
AND POLICY

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### **Series Editor**

Charles Asher Small

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## **Abstract**

In Western Europe, Muslims have been identified as a significant group of perpetrators of antisemitic acts. Is the level of antisemitism higher among Muslims than among non-Muslims? This paper will discuss European surveys on antisemitism and compare attitudes between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is based on the review of surveys from nine countries with more than 40,000 participants, including almost 13,000 Muslims altogether. While no comprehensive study has been conducted on an international comparative scale and most national studies focus on selective samples such as certain ethnicities or student groups, a review of the available surveys shows a clear tendency: antisemitic attitudes are significantly more widespread among Muslims than among other segments of European societies. What is more, the interpretation of Islam seems to be highly relevant. Antisemitic attitudes are particularly strong among believing and practicing Muslims and correlate with authoritarian, “fundamentalist” interpretations of Islam. A comprehensive survey on antisemitism in France is discussed in detail.

## **About the Author**

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# Antisemitic Attitudes among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review

GÜNTHER JIKELI

## Introduction

Since the early twenty-first century, Muslims have emerged as a new group of antisemitic perpetrators in Western Europe. Perpetrators of the most extreme cases of violence against European Jews in recent years were Muslims, and they partly justified their actions by their interpretation of Islam. The most terrible incidents include: the terror attacks in January and February 2015 in Paris and Copenhagen, where nineteen people were murdered, among them at least five because they were Jewish; the shootings at the Jewish Museum in Brussels in May 2014, where four people were killed; the murder of three children and a teacher at a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012; and the torture and murder of Ilan Halimi in Paris in 2006. Statistics for France and Great Britain from the last decade show that antisemitic perpetrators have been disproportionately of Muslim origin. Exact numbers are difficult to establish, however, because most perpetrators have not been identified. Cautious estimations put the percentage of Muslim perpetrators of antisemitic acts in Great Britain at between 20 and 30 percent, while the percentage of Muslims in the general population stands at 5 percent. About 30 percent of the perpetrators in all antisemitic incidents in France in recent years have been identified as Muslim/Arab. Adding the number of non-identified perpetrators, the actual percentage can be estimated to be above 50 percent.<sup>1</sup> Muslims make up 6 to 8 percent of the total population of France. While antisemitic acts peaked during tensions in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the Iraq War, the annual levels of antisemitic acts have risen significantly compared to the 1990s and cannot be attributed solely to fallout from these conflicts. How is this reflected in antisemitic attitudes?

Antisemitic attitudes in many Muslim-majority countries are high, including in those countries where the majority of European Muslims, or their parents, originate. Indeed, a 2014 Anti-Defamation League (ADL) survey revealed that 74 percent of the population in Middle Eastern and North African countries agreed with at least six out of eleven antisemitic statements. The numbers rose to 87 percent in Algeria, 75 percent in Egypt, 92 percent in Iraq, 81 percent in Jordan, 87 percent in Libya, 80 percent in Morocco, 74 percent in Saudi Arabia, 86 percent in Tunisia, and 69 percent in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> The Pew Global Attitudes Project, using a simpler questionnaire, yielded similar results and included Pakistan and Indonesia.<sup>3</sup>

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1. These figures are based on the annual reports by the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH) in France and the Community Security Trust (CST) in Great Britain. For a detailed discussion, see Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urban Males Say They Don't Like Jews* (Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 2015), pp. 33–41.

2. *The ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism*, <http://global100.adl.org/>.

3. Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Little Enthusiasm for Many Muslim Leaders: Mixed Views of Hamas and Hezbollah in Largely Muslim Nations* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2010), <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/pdf/268.pdf>.

Levels of openly antisemitic attitudes, however, are lower in European countries (24 percent of West Europeans agreed to at least six out of eleven antisemitic statements in the above-mentioned study), and most European Muslims either have lived in Europe for decades or were born and raised in European countries.

How extensive are antisemitic attitudes among Muslims in Europe, and to what are these attitudes ascribed? Do specific antisemitic tropes exist among European Muslims? Combating the new threat of antisemitism in Europe cannot neglect these questions. A review of recent surveys provides some answers.

### **International Comparative Surveys**

Few representative surveys have been conducted to establish levels of antisemitism among Muslim Europeans. The lack of representative and comparative studies on a European level leads to false generalizations about Muslims, on the one hand, and, more frequently, the denial of an increased level of antisemitic attitudes among Muslims, on the other. Surveys on antisemitism that distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims have been limited to certain geographical areas or focus groups, or else they have been criticized (in part) for methodological reasons. However, the sum of available studies to date provides strong evidence that the level of antisemitism is indeed particularly high among Muslims. Furthermore, this heightened antisemitism is related to interpretations of Islam, with some antisemitic tropes specific to Muslim communities.<sup>4</sup>

The only representative comparative survey of different European countries that distinguishes between Muslims and non-Muslims was conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in April 2006.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, only a single question was used to measure antisemitic attitudes.<sup>6</sup> The study showed that Muslims in France, Germany, and Spain were twice as likely as non-Muslims to harbor negative views of Jews. The factor was almost seven for Great Britain. The difference is even greater concerning “very unfavorable” views of Jews. In 2006, Muslims were three to ten times more likely to harbor “very unfavorable” views of Jews than did non-Muslims in France, Germany, and Great Britain. The factor was slightly lower in Spain, where negative views of Jews were by far the highest among both Muslims (60 percent) and the general population (39 percent). Other surveys confirm particularly high levels of antisemitic attitudes in Spain in the general population.<sup>7</sup>

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4. Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism*.

5. The survey was conducted before the war in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah in summer 2006. Attitudes were therefore not influenced by this war.

6. A single item is unlikely to grasp complex antisemitic attitudes in a comprehensive way. Antisemitic attitudes are expressed by individuals (and groups) in different and sometimes distinct ways. Therefore, surveys on antisemitism typically use a number of items.

7. According to regular surveys conducted by the Anti-Defamation League from 2002 to 2013, around 50 to 60 percent of the Spanish populations believes that it is probably true that “Jews have too much power in the business world” and 50 to 70 percent believe that “Jews have too much power in international financial markets.”

**Table 1**

<b>Unfavorable View of Jews</b>	France general population	France Muslims	Germany general population	Germany Muslims	UK general population	UK Muslims	Spain general population	Spain Muslims
Very	3	9	5	31	3	33	14	37
Somewhat	10	19	17	13	4	14	25	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project (2006)

The margin of error due to the sample size is between 4 and 6 percent depending on the country.

Another comparative study of antisemitism analyzed interviews (conducted in 2008) of almost nine thousand participants from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Participants were asked if they agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with the statement “The Jews cannot be trusted.” The sample consisted of about five hundred interviewees in each country from each of three groups: “natives,” “Turkish origin,” and “Moroccan origin” (except for Austria and Sweden, where no Moroccans were interviewed due to their low numbers).<sup>8</sup> A comparison between self-identified Christians (70 percent of the native sample) and self-identified Muslims (97 percent of the interviewees of Turkish and Moroccan origin) can be seen in Table 2. Whereas agreement among Christians with the antisemitic statement “The Jews cannot be trusted” was around 10 percent or lower, depending on the country, agreement among Muslims was between 30 and 60 percent. Agreement also varied along ethnic and religious lines: it was highest among Sunnites of Turkish origin (52 percent), followed by Sunnites of Moroccan origin (37 percent), and relatively less pronounced among Alevites of Turkish origin (29 percent). Interestingly, “very religious, fundamentalist Muslims” scored highest (above 70 percent), whereas less than 30 percent of “very religious, non-fundamentalist” Muslims agreed. This indicates that a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam is an even more significant factor than religiosity itself. Around 20 percent of “not very religious” Muslims believe that “Jews cannot be trusted.”<sup>9</sup> The study found no significant correlation between fundamentalism (and thus antisemitism) and perceived discrimination or legal restrictions of Islamic practice. Ruud Koopmans, the author of this study, noted that while “demographic and socio-economic variables explain variation within both religious groups, they do not reduce the large difference between Muslims and Christians. Within the Muslim group, moreover, they do not explain the much lower level of fundamentalism among Alevites.”<sup>10</sup> Muslims of Turkish and Moroccan origin are not representative of all Muslims in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, but they form an important group in these countries, as well as a two-thirds majority in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

8. Ruud Koopmans, “Religious Fundamentalism and Hostility against Out-Groups: A Comparison of Muslims and Christians in Western Europe,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 33–57, doi:10.1080/1369183X.2014.935307.

9. For a definition of these categories, see *ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

**Table 2**

<b>Agree: “Jews cannot be trusted.” (in percent)</b>	Austria	Belgium	France	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden
Self-identified Christians (70% of the native sample)	10.7	7.6	7.1	10.5	8.4	8.6
Self-identified Muslims (97% of the interviewees of Turkish and Moroccan origin)	64.1	56.7	43.4	28	40.4	36.8

Source: Ruud Koopmans (2013).<sup>11</sup> Data based on the Six Country Immigrant Integration Comparative Survey (SCIICS)

### National Surveys from France

To date the most comprehensive representative study in a single country was published in France by Fondapol (Fondation pour l’innovation politique) in November 2014, based on two polls conducted by Ifop at the end of September and beginning of October 2014.<sup>12</sup> The study reveals particularly high levels of antisemitism among French Muslims (self-defined as “born into a Muslim family”), the extreme right, and, to a lesser extent, the radical left. The representativeness and comparability of the Muslim sample has been contested<sup>13</sup> mainly because this sample of 575 individuals (16 years old or older) was surveyed in face-to-face interviews in different regions of France, while the other (1,005) interviewees filled out an online questionnaire. However, both samples were stratified by age, region, agglomeration category, gender, and profession to ensure a representative sample.<sup>14</sup> While the margin of error might be higher than usual (the margin of error is 3.2 percent for a sample of 1,000 interviewees and 4.1 percent for a sample of 575 interviewees in France), it is hard to argue that the samples are not representative at all. Nevertheless, comparisons between the Muslim sample and the sample of the general population should be done with caution due to the different interviewing methods.

Graph 1 illustrates some of the key results of the Fondapol survey. The exact figures and statements can be found in Table 3. Muslims and sympathizers with both the Front National (extreme right) and the Front de Gauche (radical left) all agreed significantly more often with antisemitic statements than did the general population. The difference is particularly strong for Muslims and Front National sympathizers.<sup>15</sup>

11. Ruud Koopmans, “Religious Fundamentalism and Out-Group Hostility among Muslims and Christians in Western Europe,” presentation at the 20th International Conference of Europeanists, Amsterdam, June 25, 2013, [http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u8/ruud\\_koopmans\\_religious\\_fundamentalism\\_and\\_out-group\\_hostility\\_among\\_muslims\\_and\\_christian.pdf](http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u8/ruud_koopmans_religious_fundamentalism_and_out-group_hostility_among_muslims_and_christian.pdf).

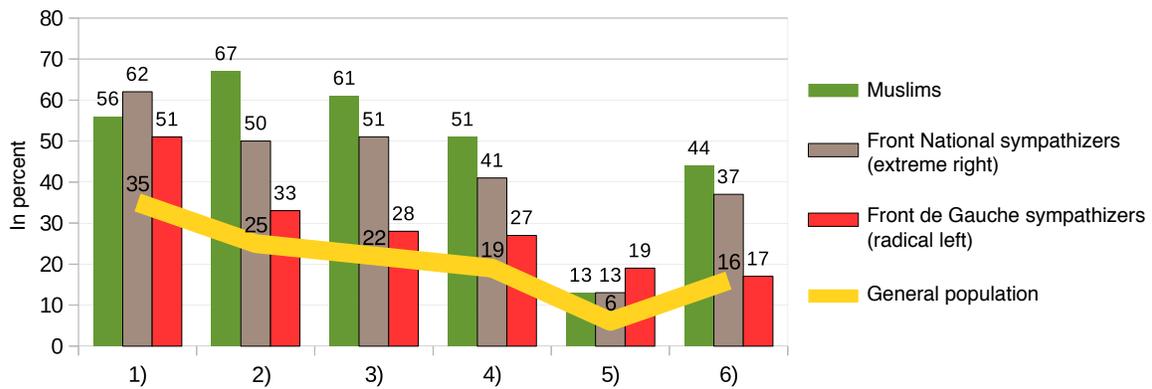
12. Dominique Reynié, *L’antisémitisme dans l’opinion publique française: Nouveaux éclairages* (Paris: Fondapol, 2014).

13. Nonna Mayer, “Il faut parler d’antisémitisme avec rigueur,” *Le Monde*, December 6, 2014.

14. Due to legal restrictions on collecting data on religious affiliation, the French government does not publish statistics that would allow construction of a representative sample based on quotas of the Muslim population. However, the Fondapol study uses official INSEE statistics on migrants and data from other Ifop surveys (of 80,000 interviewees altogether) to construct quotas on gender, sex, age, occupation, region, and size of the municipality of residence.

15. The study distinguishes between sympathizers of the Front National and those who voted for the Front National leader Marine Le Pen in the 2012 presidential elections. Those who voted for Le Pen have only slightly less antisemitic attitudes on average than Front National sympathizers. It shows that Le Pen’s electorate still adheres to antisemitic beliefs although she tries to distance herself from openly antisemitic positions.

**Graph 1**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Different Segments of Society**



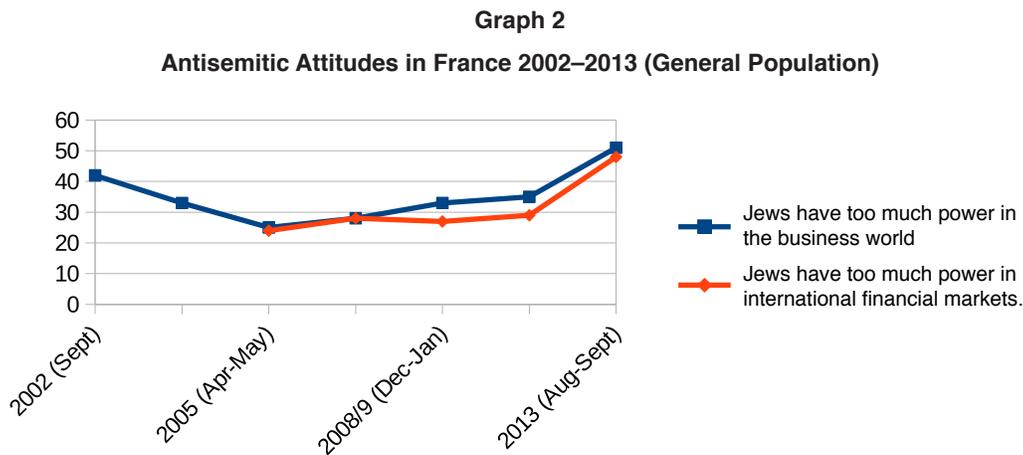
Source: Fondapol/lfop (2014), author's compilation

**Table 3**

<b>Agreement with Antisemitic Statements (in percent)</b>	General population	Front National sympathizers (extreme right)	Front de Gauche sympathizers (radical left)	Muslims
1) "The Jews today use their status as victims of the Nazi genocide during the Second World War for their own interest."	35	62	51	56
2) "The Jews have too much power in the economy and in the financial world."	25	50	33	67
3) "The Jews have too much power in the media."	22	51	28	61
4) "The Jews have too much power in politics."	19	41	27	51
5) "The Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis."	6	13	19	13
6) "There is a Zionist conspiracy on a global scale."	16	37	17	44

Interviewees were asked if they agree or disagree with six different antisemitic statements. The first five items are often used in surveys on antisemitism in these and other forms. However, slightly different formulations might significantly influence the results. The ADL, for example, published a survey in 2014 (conducted in France between August 6 and September 13, 2013) in which interviewees were not asked if they agree or disagree but rather if they believe that the antisemitic statements are “probably true.” While the Fondapol study found 25 percent agreement among the general population with the statement “The Jews have too much power in the economy and in the financial world,” the ADL found that 51 percent in France believe that it is probably true that “Jews have too much power in the business world,” and 48 percent that “Jews have too much power

in international financial markets.” The ADL has regularly conducted surveys in France since 2002, which show that the numbers have varied on a high level over those years, between 24 and 51 percent, as illustrated in Graph 2. A comparison of the Fondapol study with the ADL surveys shows that antisemitic stereotypes are generally widespread in France (and in most European countries), antisemitic attitudes vary with time, and one should be prudent when comparing different surveys, even if the questions are nearly identical. Another long-term study (1988 to 2013) reveals that between one-fifth and one-third of the population in France believes that “Jews have too much power in France,” varying between 21 percent in 1988 and 34 percent in 2000, 20 percent in 2005 and 2008, and 33 percent in 2013, and that a large majority (61 percent in 2013) believes that “The Jews have a special relation to money.”<sup>16</sup>



Source: ADL, author's compilation

### Muslims and Front National Sympathizers in France Score Highest

Differences between the general population and both Muslims and Front National sympathizers are striking in the 2014 Fondapol study. The level of antisemitism is between two and three times higher for all items in the Muslim sample and slightly less for the Front National sympathizers. The only item where interviewees close to the extreme right surpass Muslims on the level of antisemitic attitudes relates to the Holocaust. Sixty-two percent of Front National sympathizers and 56 percent of the Muslim interviewees agreed that “The Jews today use their status as victims of the Nazi genocide during the Second World War for their own interest.” The Muslim sample shows by far the highest level of antisemitism on four of the six items, including “The Jews have too much power in the economy and in the financial world,” “The Jews have too much power in the media,” “The Jews have too much power in politics,” and “There is a Zionist conspiracy on a global scale.” Agreement rates for these statements are between 44 and 67 percent. The lowest approval rates can be found for the statement “The Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis”: 6 percent in the general population and 13 percent among both Muslims and Front National sympathizers agreed. Interestingly, the

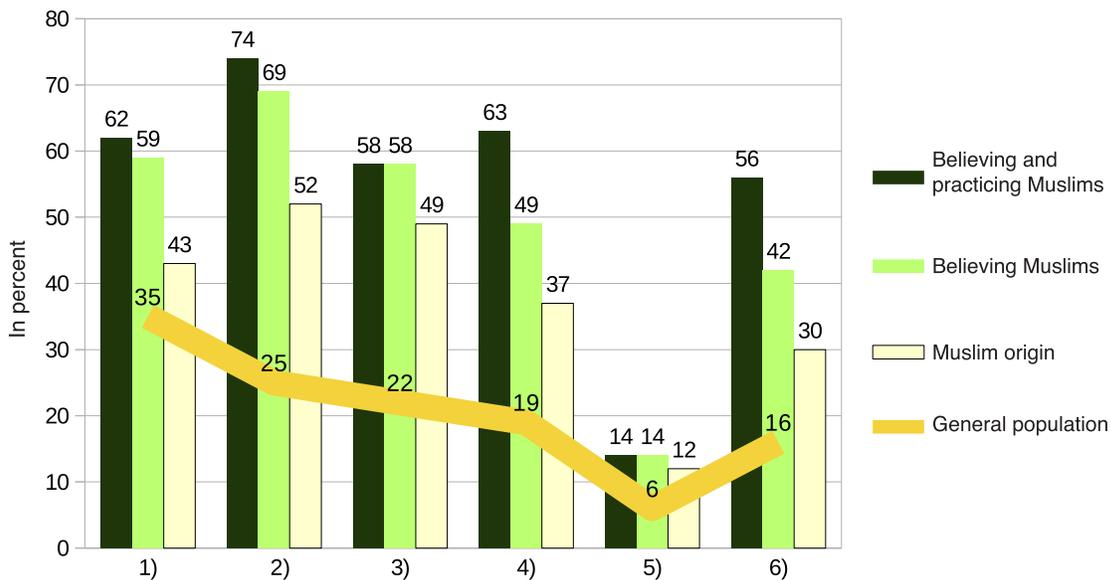
16. Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme (CNCDH), *La lutte contre le racisme, antisémitisme et la xénophobie: Année 2013* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2014), pp. 184, 471.

highest approval rates for this statement are among Front de Gauche sympathizers (19 percent), that is, from individuals who are close to the radical left. The belief in a global Zionist conspiracy was particularly pronounced among Muslims (44 percent) and Front National sympathizers (37 percent), compared to 16 percent in the general population.

### Clear Correlation to Religiosity

However, Muslims do not form a homogeneous category. Forty-two percent of the Muslim sample (“born into a Muslim family”) identified as “believing and practicing Muslims,” 34 percent as “believing Muslims” (34 percent), and 21 percent as individuals of “Muslim origin,” while 3 percent declared having no religion. These categories have been more or less consistent since 1989, with a slight increase in practicing Muslims. Differences between these groups of Muslims regarding the level of antisemitism are illustrated in Graph 3.<sup>17</sup> Antisemitic attitudes are by far less widespread among interviewees of “Muslim origin” for all items than among both “believing Muslims” and “believing and practicing Muslims.” However, they are still significantly higher than among the general population.

**Graph 3**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Muslims in Comparison to the General Population**



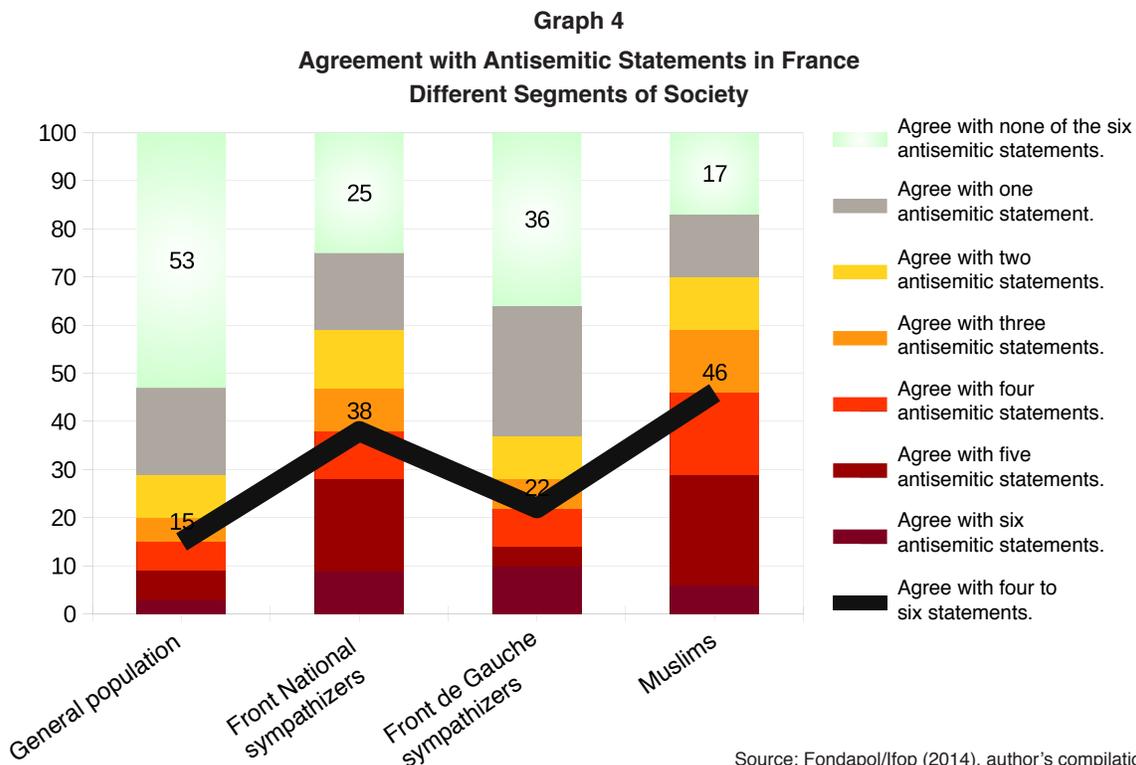
- 1) "The Jews today use their status as victims of the Nazi genocide during the Second World War for their own interest."
- 2) "The Jews have too much power in the economy and in the financial world."
- 3) "The Jews have too much power in the media."
- 4) "The Jews have too much power in politics."
- 5) "The Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis."
- 6) "There is a Zionist conspiracy on a global scale."

Source: Fondapol/lfop (2014), author's compilation

17. There is an error in the numbers on item 3 in the Fondapol report. The percentage of agreement among “believing and practicing Muslims” must be higher than 58, or else the percentage of agreement of all Muslims to item 3 must be lower than 61, in order to be arithmetically correct.

## Coherent Antisemitic Views

The level of antisemitism can also be measured by the number of antisemitic statements with which individuals agree. Individuals can be regarded as very antisemitic if they agree to five or six of the above statements. Individuals' antisemitic attitudes seem to be more fragmented if they agree to only one or two statements. Agreement with at least four of the above statements shows a consistency in antisemitic beliefs across different areas of antisemitic stereotypes, and therefore an antisemitic belief system is very likely. Graph 4 illustrates the results for the general population in France, Front National and Front de Gauche sympathizers, and Muslims. The exact numbers can be found in Table 4. Fifteen percent of the general population in France, 22 percent of Front de Gauche sympathizers, 38 percent of Front National sympathizers, and 46 percent of Muslims agreed with four or more of the six antisemitic statements. This leads to the conclusion that almost half of French Muslims are likely to adhere to an antisemitic belief system.

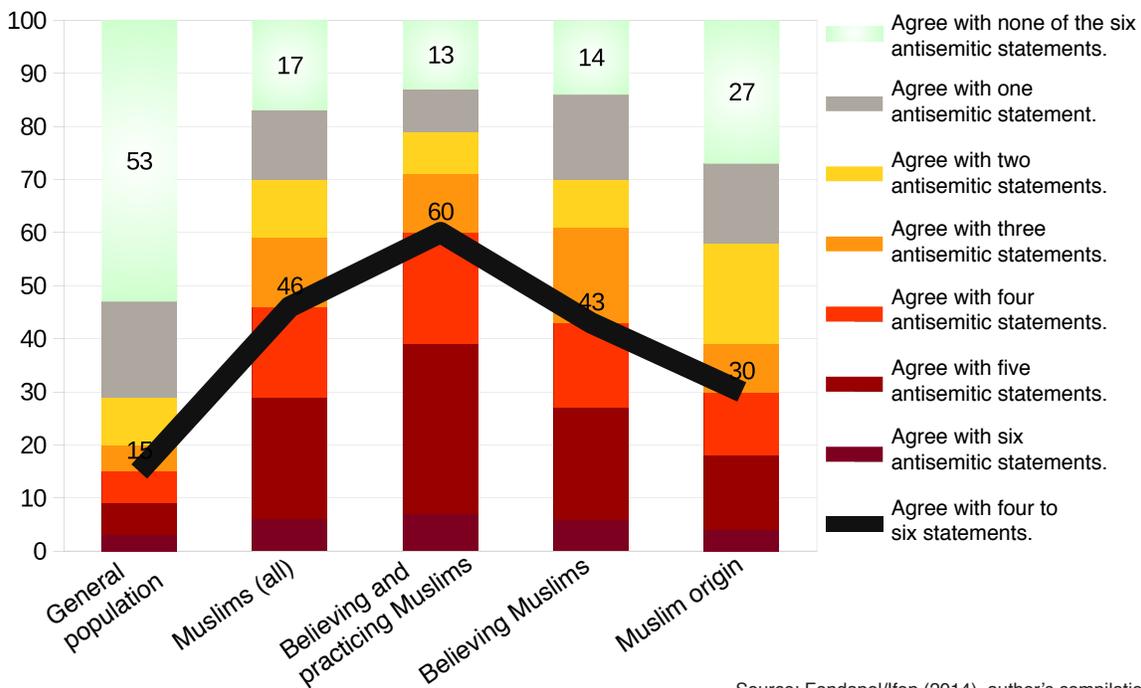


**Table 4**

Agreement with Antisemitic Statements (in percent)	General population	Front National sympathizers	Front de Gauche sympathizers	Muslims
Agree with six antisemitic statements.	3	9	10	6
Agree with five antisemitic statements.	6	19	4	23
Agree with four antisemitic statements.	6	10	8	17
Agree with three antisemitic statements.	5	9	6	13
Agree with two antisemitic statements.	9	12	9	11
Agree with one antisemitic statement.	18	16	27	13
Agree with none of the six antisemitic statements.	53	25	36	17

However, there are major differences with the level of religiosity, as illustrated in Graph 5. Sixty percent of “believing and practicing Muslims” agreed to at least four of the six antisemitic statements. The number dropped to 43 percent among “believing but not practicing Muslims” and was “only” 30 percent for those who declared themselves to be of Muslim origin (and not believing Muslims). The number is still high compared to the general population (15 percent) but lower than within the group of Front National sympathizers (38 percent). While the majority of the French population (53 percent) does not agree with any of the six antisemitic statements, only 17 percent of Muslim interviewees do not agree with any of the six antisemitic statements.

**Graph 5**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Muslims**



Source: Fondapol/lfop (2014), author's compilation

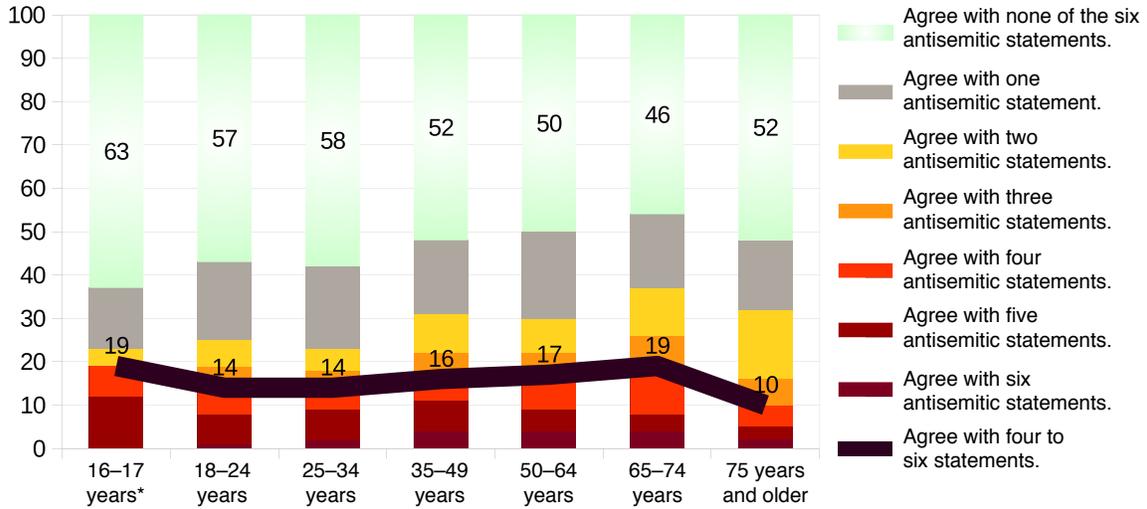
The strong correlation between antisemitic attitudes, Muslim socialization, and Islamic belief and practice indicates that these are major factors for antisemitic attitudes. What other correlations exist?

**Trust in Institutions, Gender and Age Differences**

The Fondapol study found a correlation in the general population between antisemitic attitudes and a lack of trust in the French Parliament, the State, the European Union, trade unions, and schools. However, trust in these institutions is not lower but somewhat higher among Muslims than the general population. Gender differences exist among both Muslims and the general population. Nineteen percent of men and 11 percent of women in the general population and 52 percent of men and 41 percent of women in the Muslim sample agreed to at least four of the six antisemitic statements. Age seems to have some influence, but there is no linear

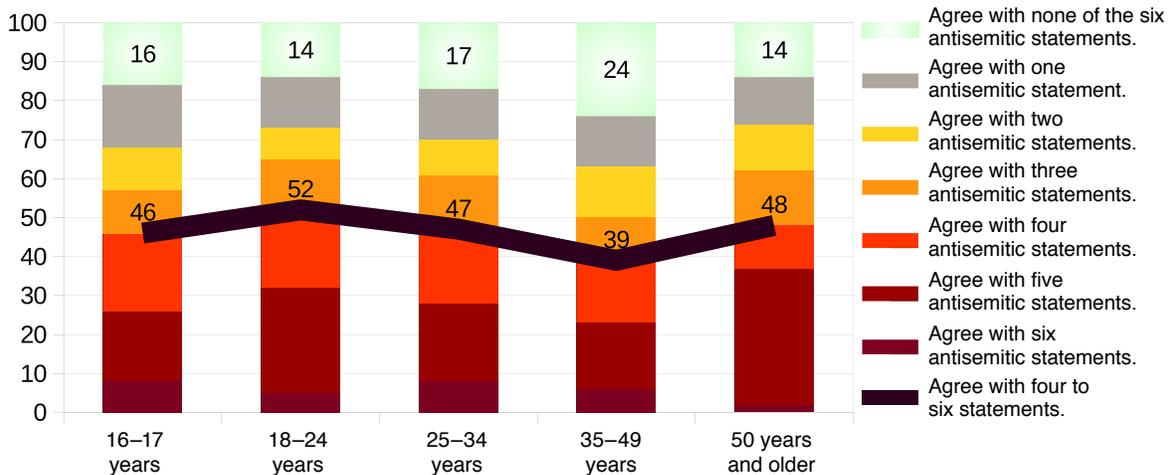
tendency and patterns are different from the general population (see Graphs 6 and 7). The Muslim age group with the lowest level of antisemitism is 35 to 49 years old. The age groups in the general population with the least antisemitic attitudes are 18 to 24 years old and 25 to 34 years old, followed by the age group of 75 years and older.

**Graph 6**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Different Age Groups, General Population**



\* The number of interviewees of this age group (16-17 years) was below 40. Results should therefore be interpreted cautiously.  
 Source: Fondapol/Ifop, 2014, author's compilation

**Graph 7**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Different Age Groups, Muslims**

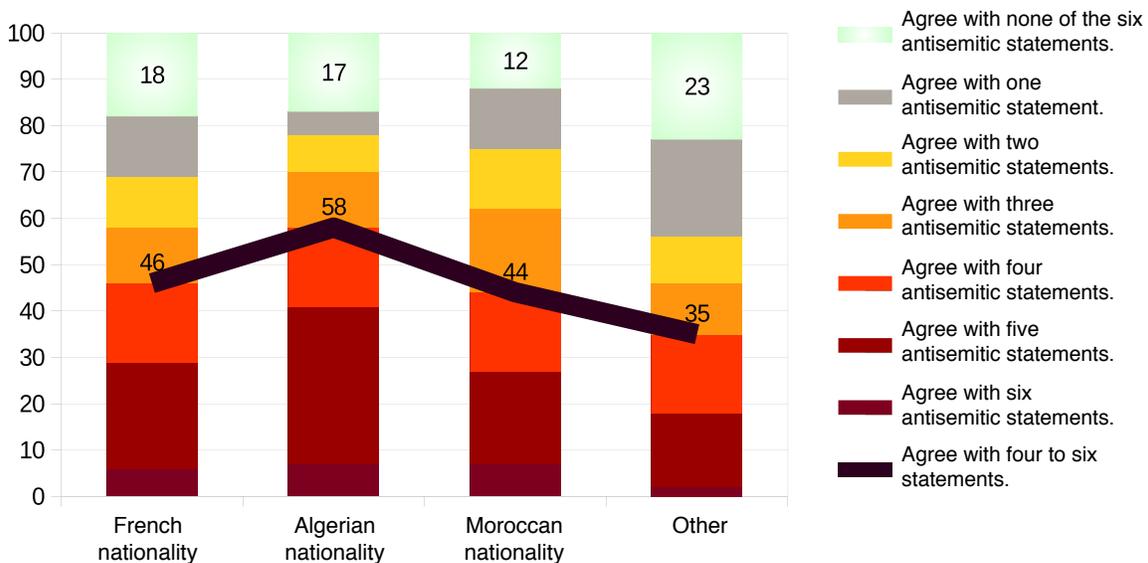


Source: Fondapol/Ifop (2014) author's compilation

## Occupation, Education, Regional Differences, and Nationality

Differences between workers and employees, as well as between professionally active and inactive interviewees, are low in both the Muslim and the general sample. The influence of the level of education remains unclear for the Muslim sample, whereas antisemitic attitudes decrease slightly with the level of education (with the baccalaureate) in the general population. Muslims without any formal degree are even more likely (26 percent) to disagree with all antisemitic statements than do all Muslims (17 percent). There is a tendency of slightly decreasing antisemitic attitudes with the level of income for those who agree with at least four of the six antisemitic statements (from 50 percent to 42 percent among Muslims and from 21 to 11 percent in the general population). Regional differences are interesting: antisemitic attitudes are slightly more pronounced in the general population in and around Paris than in the rest of France, whereas antisemitism among Muslims in and around Paris is no different from the rest of France taken together. However, Muslims in the northwest of France seem to harbor lower levels of antisemitism (only 28 percent agreed to at least four out of six antisemitic statements). Another major influence seems to be national identity, but the results are complex (see Graph 8). The percentages of Muslims with Moroccan and French nationality who agree with at least four of the six antisemitic statements are almost identical (46 and 44 percent), lower than Muslims with Algerian nationality (58 percent) and higher than Muslims with other nationalities (35 percent). But only 12 percent of Muslims with Moroccan nationality agree with none of the six antisemitic statements, compared to 18 and 17 percent of those with French and Algerian nationality.

**Graph 8**  
**Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France**  
**Different Nationality Muslims**



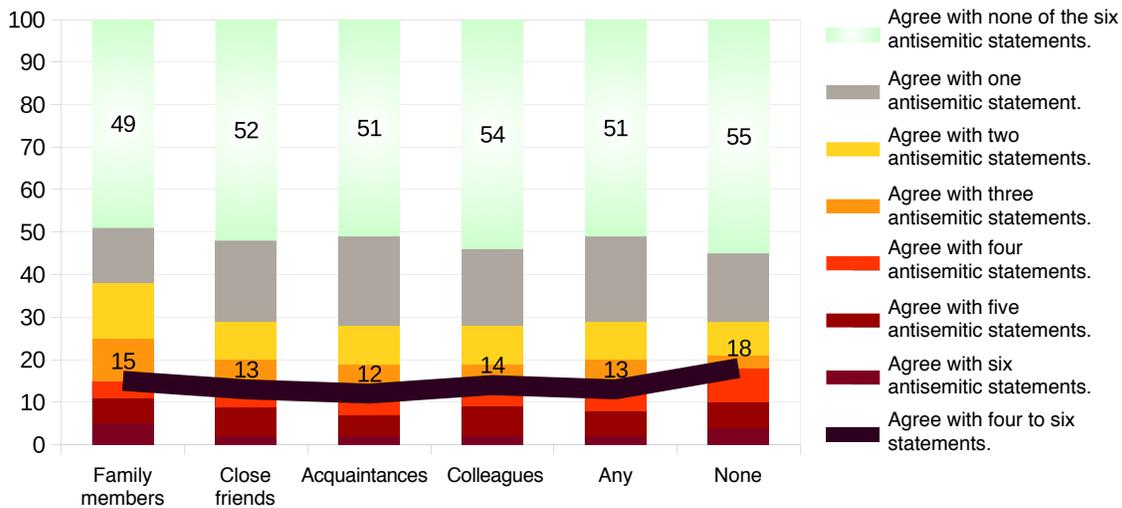
Source: Fondapol/Iifop (2014), author's compilation

## Effects of “Knowing Jews”?

Contrary to intuition, the effect of knowing Jews personally is minimal, both for the general population and for Muslims, as seen in Graphs 9 and 10. Fifty-five percent of the general population who do not know any Jews personally, as well as 51 percent of those who do, disagree with all antisemitic statements. However, the percentage of those who agree to at least four of the six antisemitic statements is slightly higher among those who do not know any Jews personally (18 percent) than among the average (15 percent). Among Muslims, those who have Jews as close friends are somewhat less likely (41 percent) to agree to four of the six antisemitic statements than do Muslims on average (46 percent). However, those who know Jews personally are somewhat less likely to disagree with all of the antisemitic statements (16 percent) than those who do not know any Jews personally (19 percent).

Graph 9

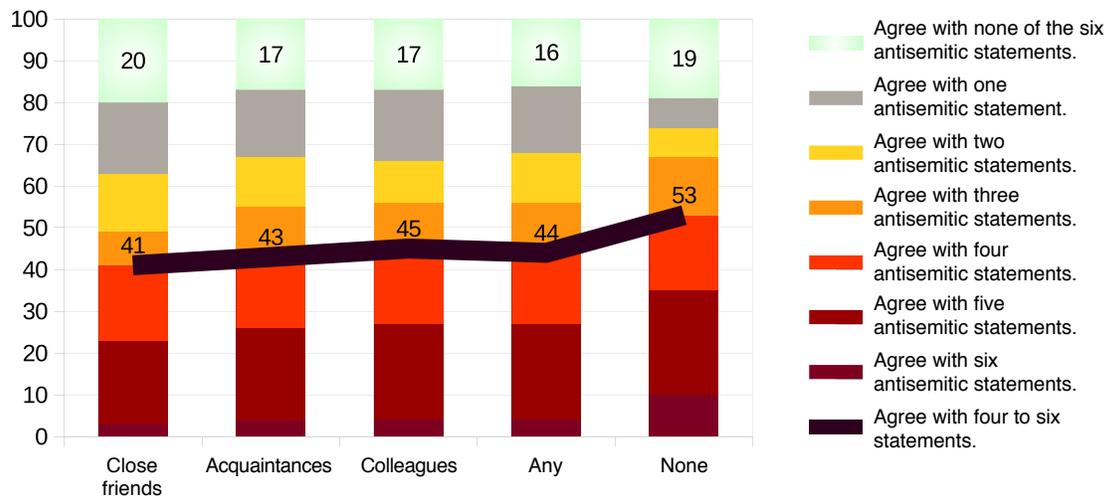
### Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France (General Population) At least one Jewish person among ...



Source: Fondapol/Ifop (2014), author's compilation

Graph 10

### Agreement with Antisemitic Statements in France (Muslims) At least one Jewish person among ...



Source: Fondapol/Ifop (2014), author's compilation

## Views on the Holocaust and Israel

The Fondapol study also revealed that direct Holocaust denial<sup>18</sup> is low among both Muslims and the general population (5 and 3 percent). However, 35 percent of the Muslim population and 29 percent of the general population diminished the Holocaust when they agreed to the statement that the Holocaust is “one drama among others during the [Second World War] that caused many victims,” rather than describing it as a “monstrous crime” (58 and 63 percent, respectively). Twenty-four percent of the Muslim sample and 12 percent of the general population disagreed that the Holocaust should be taught to younger generations to avoid its repetition. The large majority of both samples agreed (67 and 77 percent). Hostile attitudes toward Zionism are common, particularly among Muslims. Fifty-seven percent of the Muslim interviewees, 25 percent of the general population, 32 percent of Front National sympathizers, and 28 percent of Front de Gauche sympathizers agreed that “Zionism is an international organization that aims to influence the world and society for the benefit of the Jews.” High approval rates can also be found in responses to the statement “Zionism is a racist ideology.” Forty-six percent of the Muslim interviewees, 23 percent of the general population, 23 percent of Front National sympathizers, and 44 percent of Front de Gauche sympathizers agreed. Negative views of Israel are confirmed in another survey for the CNCDDH (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme) from December 2013.<sup>19</sup> Forty percent of the French population declared that they have a negative view of Israel, while only 26 percent had a positive view. Negative views of Israel were more common among the political right than the left. The CNCDDH survey also found that antisemitic attitudes were significantly more common among those who have negative views of Israel, but antisemites are divided into those who have negative, positive, or neither positive nor negative views of Israel.

## Surveys from Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden Confirm Results

Other surveys from European countries confirm that anti-Jewish attitudes are stronger among Muslims than among the general population, even though more surveys are needed to establish the differences on a representative national level in various European countries. In Germany, Katrin Brettfeld and Peter Wetzels included one item on antisemitism in their questionnaire completed by 2,683 high school students, including 500 Muslims, in Cologne, Hamburg, and Augsburg. They found that 15.7 percent of Muslims of migrant background, 7.4 percent of non-Muslims of migrant background, and 5.4 percent of non-Muslims without any background of migration strongly believe that “people of Jewish faith are arrogant and greedy.”<sup>20</sup> Another study, also commissioned by the German Ministry of the

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18. Measured with two items: (1) the Holocaust is “exaggerated; people died, but far less than what is said” and (2) the Holocaust is “an invention; all this has never existed.”

19. Survey conducted by the BVA (Brulé Ville et Associés) Institute for the CNCDDH, *La lutte contre le racisme, antisémitisme et la xénophobie*.

20. Katrin Brettfeld and Peter Wetzels, *Muslims in Deutschland: Integration, Integrationsbarrieren, Religion sowie Einstellungen zu Demokratie, Rechtsstaat und politisch-religiös motivierter Gewalt* (Berlin: Bundesministerium des Innern, 2007), pp. 274–75, [www.bmi.bund.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/139732/publicationFile/14975/Muslims\\_in\\_Deutschland.pdf](http://www.bmi.bund.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/139732/publicationFile/14975/Muslims_in_Deutschland.pdf).

Interior, focused on the radicalization of young Muslims (14 to 32 years old) and surveyed 200 German Muslims, 517 non-German Muslims, and a representative sample of 200 young non-Muslim Germans in 2009 and 2010. The questionnaire included two items on antisemitic attitudes, both related to Israel: (1) “Israel is exclusively to be blamed for the origin and continuation of the Middle East conflicts” and (2) “It would be better if the Jews would leave the Middle East.” About 25 percent of both German and non-German Muslim participants and less than 5 percent of non-Muslim Germans agreed to both items. Antisemitic attitudes varied between different ethnic and religious groups.<sup>21</sup> In response to a 1997 survey that asked youths of Turkish background if they think that Zionism threatens Islam, 33.2 percent agreed that it does.<sup>22</sup> Jürgen Mansel and Viktoria Spaiser conducted a detailed survey<sup>23</sup> in 2010 in which they surveyed 2,404 high school students with different backgrounds in Bielefeld, Cologne, Berlin, and Frankfurt. Antisemitic attitudes related to Israel, religious antisemitism, classic antisemitism, and equations between Israel and the Nazis were significantly higher among Muslim students, and Arab students in particular, than among other students.<sup>24</sup> Religious antisemitism was measured with two items: 15.2 percent of students with Turkish background, 18.2 percent of those with Arab background, and 20.8 percent of those with Kurdish background completely agreed with the statement “In my religion, they warn us against trusting Jews.” Only 2.8 percent of those without any migrant background did so. Similarly, 15.9 percent of students with Turkish background, 25.7 percent of those with Arab background, and 16.7 percent of those with Kurdish background completely agreed with the statement “In my religion, it is the Jews who drive the world to disaster.”

However, Muslim students showed less anti-Jewish attitudes with regard to so-called “secondary” antisemitism (“I am fed up with hearing about the crimes against the Jews”). The authors noticed a correlation between antisemitic attitudes and religious fundamentalism among Muslims. Another study from 2012 conducted in Germany also found that Muslims endorse classic antisemitic statements more often than their non-Muslim counterparts; approval of “secondary” antisemitism, which is related to the Holocaust, was slightly weaker.<sup>25</sup>

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21. Wolfgang Frindte et al., *Lebenswelten Junger Muslime in Deutschland* (Berlin: Bundesministerium des Innern, 2012), pp. 227–47.

22. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Joachim Müller, and Helmut Schröder, *Verlockender Fundamentalismus: türkische Jugendliche in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 181, 271.

23. Jürgen Mansel and Viktoria Spaiser, *Abschlussbericht Forschungsprojekt* [Final Research Project]: *Soziale Beziehungen, Konfliktpotentiale und Vorurteile im Kontext von Erfahrungen verweigerter Teilhabe und Anerkennung bei Jugendlichen mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund* (University of Bielefeld, 2010).

24. These attitudes were measured using the following items: “Because of the Israeli policies, I increasingly dislike Jews”; “Regarding Israel’s policy, I understand if one is against Jews”; “In my religion, they warn us against trusting Jews”; “In my religion, it is the Jews who drive the world into disaster”; “Jews have too much influence in the world”; “What the State of Israel is doing with the Palestinians is principally nothing other than what the Nazis in the Third Reich did with the Jews”; “The Jews in all the world feel more strongly attached to Israel than to the country where they live.”

25. Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess, and Elmar Brähler, *Die Mitte im Umbruch: Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2012* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 2012), p. 79. The study found “primary” antisemitism among 11.5 percent of the overall population and 16.7 percent among Muslims, but it also found 23.8 percent of “secondary” antisemitism among the overall population and 20.8 percent among Muslims. However, the poll included only 86 Muslims out of a sample of 2,510 people.

A 2009 study from Denmark by the Institute for Political Science at Aarhus University conducted interviews with 1,503 immigrants with Turkish, Pakistani, Somali, Palestinian, and (former) Yugoslavian backgrounds, as well as 300 ethnic Danes. Analysis of the study revealed that a number of antisemitic stereotypes are significantly more common (up to 75 percent) among immigrants than among ethnic Danes (up to 20 percent). The study also showed that anti-Jewish attitudes are more widespread among Muslim than among Christian immigrants.<sup>26</sup>

In Brussels, 1,223 students from 42 Flemish-speaking secondary schools filled out questionnaires on antisemitic attitudes. Forty-eight percent of the students were Muslim. About half of the Muslim respondents agreed with the following statements:

- (1) “Jews want to dominate everything” (total, 31.4 percent; Muslims, 56.8 percent; non-Muslims, 10.5 percent).
- (2) “Most Jews think they are better than others” (total, 29.9 percent; Muslims, 47.1 percent; non-Muslims, 12.9 percent).
- (3) “If you do business with Jews, you should be extra careful” (total, 28.6 percent; Muslims, 47.5 percent; non-Muslims, 12.9 percent).
- (4) “Jews incite to war and blame others” (total, 28.4 percent; Muslims, 53.7 percent; non-Muslims, 7.7 percent).

The antisemitic attitudes were unrelated to low educational level or social disadvantage.<sup>27</sup> Mark Elchardus confirmed the findings two years later in 2013 with a study of 863 students from Ghent and Antwerp, including 346 Muslim students. While 45 to 50 percent of Muslim students revealed antisemitic attitudes, “only” about 10 percent of non-Muslims did so.<sup>28</sup>

In 2013, 937 teachers in the Netherlands participated in a survey about antisemitic attitudes and Holocaust diminishment among their students. Both are vastly more common in schools with a higher percentage of students of Turkish or Moroccan background (who are predominantly Muslim). In schools where less than 5 percent of the students had Turkish or Moroccan background, 28 percent of the teachers reported that their students made hurtful remarks about Jews or diminished the Holocaust once or a few times during the preceding year. In schools where the student population is over 25 percent Turkish or Moroccan, 43 percent

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26. Peter Nannestad, “Frø af ugræs? Antijødiske holdninger i fem ikke-vestlige indvandrergrupper i Danmark,” in *Danmark og de fremmede: om mødet med den arabisk-muslimske verden*, ed. Tonny Brems Knudsen, Jørgen Dige Pedersen, and Georg Sørensen (Århus: Academica, 2009), pp. 43–62; Svend Andersen et al., *Danmark og de fremmede: om mødet med den arabisk-muslimske verden* (Århus: Academica, 2009).

27. Mark Elchardus, “Antisemitisme in de Brusselse Scholen,” in *Jong in Brussel: Bevindingen Uit de Jop-monitor Brussel*, ed. Nicole Vettenburg, Mark Elchardus, and Johan Put (Leuven; Den Haag: Acco, 2011), pp. 265–96.

28. Antisemitic attitudes were somewhat stronger among “conservative Muslims” than among “progressive Muslims.” See Nicole Vettenburg, Mark Elchardus, and Stefaan Pleysier, eds., *Jong in Antwerpen En Gent* (Leuven; Den Haag: Acco, 2013), pp. 187–222.

of the teachers gave this answer. Interestingly, when we exclude insults made in the context of the Middle East or soccer, the percentage of insults against Jews is also significantly higher in schools that have many students of Turkish or Moroccan background. According to teacher reports, perpetrators with Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds are overrepresented, forming 10 and 8 percent of the perpetrators, respectively, while the figure stands at 3 percent for both student groups in the Netherlands.<sup>29</sup>

A comprehensive survey conducted in 2003 in Sweden analyzed the results of 10,600 student questionnaires that included six items on antisemitic attitudes. Muslims showed the highest percentage of strong antisemitic attitudes with 8.3 percent versus 3.7 percent among Christians, but they were followed closely by those considering themselves non-religious (7.6 percent). The survey also revealed significant differences among male and female respondents: 12.9 percent of Muslim boys were found to be “intolerant” toward Jews, but only 4.8 percent of Muslim girls were reported as such.<sup>30</sup> A similar survey among 4,674 upper secondary students in Sweden in 2009 showed an overall rise of antisemitic attitudes compared to 2003. Twelve percent of students affiliated with the Church of Sweden, 26 percent of other Christian students, 55 percent of Muslim students, and 18 percent of students with no religious affiliation showed negative attitudes toward Jews. Gender differences were significant in the overall sample: 27 percent of the boys and only 9 percent of the girls showed negative attitudes toward Jews.<sup>31</sup> The Fondapol study from France showed gender differences in the sample of both the general population and Muslims, whereas the study by Wolfgang Frindte et al. on young Muslims in Germany found no gender differences.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

The review of surveys from different European countries demonstrates that the level of antisemitic attitudes is significantly higher among Muslims than among non-Muslims, although many European Muslims do not share antisemitic beliefs. The level of antisemitism rises with the level of religiosity and with fundamentalist interpretations of Islam.

Notably, demographic and socio-economic variables—that is, educational level, age, gender, social disadvantage, discrimination, and legal restrictions of Islamic practice—cannot explain the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. This refutes the widespread assumption that Muslim antisemitism is a reaction to discrimination or suppression.

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29. Eva Wolf, Jurriaan Berger, and Lennart de Ruig, *Antisemitisme in het voortgezet onderwijs* (Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting, 2013), pp. 16, 21, 31.

30. The Living History Forum, *Intolerance. Anti-Semitic, Homophobic, Islamophobic and Xenophobic Tendencies among the Young* (Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande rådet [BRÅ], 2005), pp. 59, 152–53.

31. The Living History Forum, *The Many Faces of Intolerance: A Study of Swedish Upper Secondary School Students' Attitudes in Sweden in the 2009/2010 School Year* (Stockholm: Living History Forum 2010), p. 93.

32. Frindte et al., *Lebenswelten Junger Muslime in Deutschland*, p. 222.

The surveys considered are strong evidence that current interpretations of Muslim identity and belief are major sources for hatred against Jews. Further research should identify which particular interpretations of Muslim identity and Islam are prone to antisemitic beliefs and, perhaps more importantly, which are not. A distinction between Islamism and Islam is surely important, but might be insufficient: although antisemitism is particularly strong among fundamentalist as well as believing and practicing Muslims, the level of antisemitism among less religious Muslims is still higher than in the general population.

Differences related to country of origin indicate the influence of the latter on views of Jews.