

European Muslim Antisemitism

Stereotypes, Tropes and Sources

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Background: Muslims in Europe

- 15-20 million Muslims in the EU, 70% live in France, Germany or the UK.
- Mostly immigrants or their descendants from North Africa, South Asia and Turkey, as well as former Yugoslavia and Middle Eastern countries.
- Large variety of different Muslim communities and interpretations of Islam.
- Muslims are disproportionately often disadvantaged (housing, employment rate, formal education).

Surveys on Discrimination

Racism Still Dominant Factor in Discrimination?

1 in 3 Muslim respondents (34% of men and 26% of women) stated that they had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months.

However, the rates are even higher among Roma and people of African descent and there are significant differences among Muslims related to ethnic background: 43% of Sub-Saharan Africans and 10% of Iraqis had experienced discrimination.

Discrimination perceived as based on

Religion or belief: 10%

Ethnic or immigrant origin: 32%

Combination of the above 43: %

Source: EU-MIDIS 2009

Muslim Antisemitism: Significant Factor of Antisemitism in Europe

- 30% of perpetrators of antisemitic incidents in France and Britain are Muslim (CNCDH, CST), e.g. Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse; attack on rabbi and school children in Berlin.
- Surveys reveal higher levels of antisemitism among Muslims than in overall society (PEW, Brouard/Tiberj, Elchardus, Mansel/Spaiser, LHF).
- Still reluctance to talk about the issue (for fear of further stigmatization; wrongly interpreted as a form of “outrage” against Israel; sharing antisemitic views).

Surveys: Anti-Jewish Attitudes

“Negative views on Jews”

Views on Jews	UK overall	UK Muslims	Germany overall	Germany Muslims	France overall	France Muslims	Spain overall	Spain Muslims
Some-what/ very negative	7%	47%	22%	44%	13%	28%	39%	60%

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006

Survey: Antisemitic Attitudes of Students in Germany

(2,404 students in Berlin, Bielefeld, Cologne, and Frankfurt)

“Jews have too much influence in the world.”

Ethnic background	German	Polish	Turkish	Arab	Kurdish
Totally agree	3%	9.9%	24.9%	40.4%	26.9%

“In my religion it is the Jews who drive the world to disaster.”

Ethnic background	German	Polish	Turkish	Arab	Kurdish
Totally agree	2.5%	8.7%	15.9%	25.7%	16.7%

“I am tired of hearing about the crimes against the Jews over and over again.”

Ethnic background	German	Polish	Turkish	Arab	Kurdish
Totally agree	20.2%	33.8%	14.7%	26.0%	20.8%

What do Muslims say why they don't like Jews?

Survey of Young Male Muslims in Berlin, Paris, and London

- A) “Classical” antisemitism
(conspiracy theories, “Jews are rich,” etc.);
- B) Negative views of Jews with reference to Israel
(“Jews/Israelis kill children”);
- C) Negative views of Jews with reference to the Muslim or ethnic identity or to Islam
(“Muslims dislike Jews”);
- D) Negative views of Jews without rationalization
(“so what?”/ “Jew” as an insult).

A) “Classical” antisemitism

*Well, obviously if you can see that Jewish are the **rich** ones around nowadays. They are the one [sic] who **control everything** [...] even Britain because if you see Sainsbury's, Tesco, Iceland, it all belongs to them. They are the rich ones. They're the ones who're controlling the country and the world right now.*

(Nirmal, London)

B) Negative views of Jews with reference to Israel

The Jews are just starting it. They kill small Muslim children, they do everything, they even rape small children, women, even grannies. (Memduh, Berlin)

Palestine, it belonged to the Muslims and then through the Holocaust they came through. (Tarak, London)

2 most important topoi:

- *“Jews kill children.”* → **emotionalizing**
- *“Jews have taken Muslim/Palestinian/Arab land.”* → **delegitimization of Israel**

C) Negative views of Jews with reference to the Muslim or ethnic identity or to Islam

In reality, we, the Arabs, erm, the Muslims and the Jews, we don't understand each other. (Azhar, Paris)

Interviewer: And then you'd rather say that because of the [Middle East] conflict you also have a problem with Israelis?

Ümit: No, not because of them. As a Muslim you have problems, not with Israelis, [but] with Jews [...]. Because they have been condemned by God.

(Ümit, Berlin)

D) Negative views of Jews without rationalization

No need felt for justification/rationalization.

Antisemitism in the language: shared negative associations with Jews: e.g. use of the term “Jew” as an insult.

→ norm of negative views of Jews, “common sense” to dislike Jews.

The damned Jews should be burnt [...]. Because they are Jews nevertheless. Jews are, a Jew is a Jew anyway.

(Bashir, Berlin)

Factors of Influence

- **Family and friends;**
- Media (foreign TV, domestic TV, Internet, social networks, newspapers);
- School;
- Mosques; and
- Islamist organizations.



Relations Between Discrimination and Antisemitism

- **No direct relation** (statistically and in argumentative patterns).
- Indirectly: Some perceptions of discrimination such as the **perception of an alleged global war against Muslims** often include antisemitic conspiracy theories.
- Islamist-extremists use the term “Islamophobia” to portray such a global attack against Islam and to compare “Islamophobia” to antisemitism. Unfortunately, this approach gets political support with the identity policy paradigm.

Positive Examples

Why Do Some Stand Up Against Hatred of Jews?

Diverse motives:

- **Universal Human Rights.** Nabil (Berlin, Palestinian background) believes that everybody is equal and nobody should be discriminated against for his or her background.
- **Individuality.** Jamil's (Berlin, Lebanese background) motivation to reject such assumptions as “Jews and Muslims are at war with each other” is rooted in his individualism, which prevents him from unquestionably adopting such views. He is also influenced by a close cousin's questioning of misogynistic aspects of Muslim societies.
- **Seeking a normal live.** Boualem (London, Algerian background) lives illegally in London, he longs for a simple and normal life and wishes the same for everybody. Ideologies of hatred are not helpful for him and rather only potentially signify more trouble.

Conclusions

- There is no one single factor of influence. Antisemitism among Muslims is multifaceted and usually fragmented.
- Certain perceptions of Islam and Muslim identity include hatred against Jews → “Muslim antisemitism.”
- Muslim antisemitism in Europe is significant. It has become the norm in some social circles and cannot be reduced to “anger” towards Israel or “political outrage.”
- A firm approach is necessary to prevent further spread and (re-)adoption of radical forms of antisemitism in mainstream society. Critical views of collective identity and individual rights should be encouraged.

Kontakt

Thank you.

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