

Study Exposes the Ugly Depth of European Muslim Anti-Semitism

Abigail R. Esman writes at the [Investigative Project on Terrorism](#):

A [fluctuated by country](#) since the beginning of this century. For the most part, reports of anti-Semitism are lower now than they were during the “second intifada” of 2008-2009 despite terrorist attacks on Jews in Brussels, Copenhagen and Paris in the past year alone. But anti-Semitic incidents have risen substantially from 1990s levels; and while, as the ISGAP report notes, “surveys on anti-Semitism that distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims” have been subject to criticism, “the sum of available studies to date provides strong evidence that the level of anti-Semitism is indeed particularly high among Muslims.”

The report, authored by Gunther Jikeli, the director of ISGAP France and a research fellow at the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies at Potsdam University, examines several surveys conducted since 2006, comparing results country by country. (France and the UK receive particular emphasis.) Most of those surveys were based on subjects’ responses to stereotypes about Jews, asking them to agree or disagree with such statements as “the Jews have too much power in politics” and “the Jews have too much power in the media.” Country for country, the number of Muslims agreeing with those anti-Semitic statements far surpassed that of non-Muslims.

In a 2014 study in France, for instance, 25 percent of the general public agreed with the statement “Jews have too

much power in the economy and the financial world," but 50 percent of Front National (right wing nationalist) sympathizers agreed; 67 percent of the Muslim population surveyed agreed.

Similar criteria used by Ruud Koopmans in 2008 showed a like trend among 900 participants in six European countries, reports Jikeli. Subjects in Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands were [Reports ISGAP](#):

"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 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 ten and eight percent of the perpetrators, respectively, while the figure stands at three percent for both student groups in the Netherlands."

What makes the ISGAP report especially interesting, however, is the evidence it offers against the commonly-held belief that social class, discrimination, and similar factors play a role in Muslim anti-Semitism in Europe. Rather, notes Jikeli, "the level of anti-Semitism rises with the level of religiosity and with fundamentalist interpretations of Islam." Yet, he notes, "although anti-Semitism is particularly strong among fundamentalist as well as believing and practicing Muslims, the level of anti-Semitism among less religious Muslims is still higher than in the general population."

Reading through the report and the consistently vast differentials in surveys between non Muslim and Muslim populations across Europe makes for depressing reading. Yet not wanting to totally give up on changes in Muslim attitudes, one can't help but hope for the one instance, the one country, where things are different, where Muslims – at least European-born, Western-raised Muslims – did not exhibit the highest level of Jew-hate and bigotry, where Muslims led the way in attitudes of tolerance, of peace.

But it never happens.