

## Could it happen here?

### What existing data tell us about contemporary antisemitism in the UK

Jonathan Boyd and L. Daniel Staetsky

In the immediate aftermath of the murderous attacks on Jews in Paris and Copenhagen, and following a year in which a significant jump in antisemitic incidents was recorded by monitoring agencies, widespread anxiety among Jews in the UK and across Europe is being reported by the media. Concern appears to have risen to levels not seen for some time, and it is clear that some Jews, at least, are asking questions about whether they have a long-term future in the United Kingdom. At the same time, Jewish leaders working at all levels are trying to ascertain what measures are required to ensure that their sites and events are safe, and communal and national agencies with responsibility for security are making regular assessments about current security needs.

In order to answer such questions and to make such assessments, it is necessary to have access to reliable empirical data designed to meet these needs. Yet the data that exist only partially achieve this, and different sources suggest different trends. Some support the more alarmist claims that antisemitism is reaching intolerable levels; others support the conflicting claims that the UK, at least, remains one of the safest places in the world for Jews to live. The result is a distinct lack of clarity – a lot of ‘noise,’ a great deal of anguish and debate, but little certainty about the nature of the problem, its scale, or its direction of travel.

This policy paper examines existing data on antisemitism in the UK and elsewhere in order to demonstrate that a substantial leap in research

and analytical quality has become an imperative if leaders operating at a European, national and communal level are expected to be able to dispense sound practical advice both to Jews in general, and to those responsible for their safety.

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## Introduction

*“After the murderous attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris on January 9th, British Jews are scared. Should they be?” (The Economist, 24 January 2015)*

The quote from the January 24 edition of *The Economist* captures a central part of Jewish communal discourse in the United Kingdom in the aftermath of the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the kosher supermarket in Paris. In the first few days following the attacks, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research was inundated with requests for data on antisemitism

and analysis of contemporary reality. The Community Security Trust was similarly flooded with requests for comment and interviews, alongside demands for advice and support from community organisations concerned about their levels of security. *The Jewish Chronicle* issued a special edition on January 16, devoting thirty out of eighty of its pages exclusively to “After Paris” commentary from journalists, political leaders and prominent personalities in the Jewish community of the UK. And the conversation continued for several weeks and months afterwards, fuelled further by a new report published by the Community Security Trust in February showing a

huge increase in antisemitic incidents in 2014,<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent publication of the *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* later in the same month.<sup>2</sup> The communal debate about the extent and intensity of antisemitism in the UK goes on and on, and is likely to continue for some time.

Providing commentary on the issue of antisemitism is not a simple task, particularly if it is meant to serve any practical purpose: i.e. to inform the personal choices of British or European Jews, or to develop policy around combating antisemitism. In the aftermath of the Paris attacks, if the rhetoric is to be believed, at least some British Jews are asking themselves whether they should stay in Britain in the long-term, or move instead to a safer place. And, certainly, Jewish organisations, as well as the police, the security services and government agencies all asked themselves in the weeks following the attacks in Paris whether new measures should be put in place

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to combat antisemitism or to provide greater security to Jews living in the UK. So the Jewish community is beset by a series of very practical questions and concerns that are crying out to be answered, and people want, and indeed, deserve, the types of answers that go beyond mere conjecture and opinion, and that are based on robust empirical evidence. Indeed, any errors of judgment on the part of leaders or analysts could have very serious consequences, as the potential costs of erroneous advice – in terms of finances, reputations or even lives – are high. Faced with this situation, it is incumbent upon those bearing responsibility for the security of Jews in this country to ask themselves whether or not they feel they possess enough confidence in the research tools and designs currently at their disposal in the monitoring of antisemitism to enable them to dispense sound advice and to participate effectively in the political debates that need to be held.

Confronted with these types of questions during interviews with the national media, JPR's conclusion was that we remain at some distance from that position, in spite of the fact that the British Jewish

1 *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2014* (2015). London: Community Security Trust.

2 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* (2015). London: All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism.

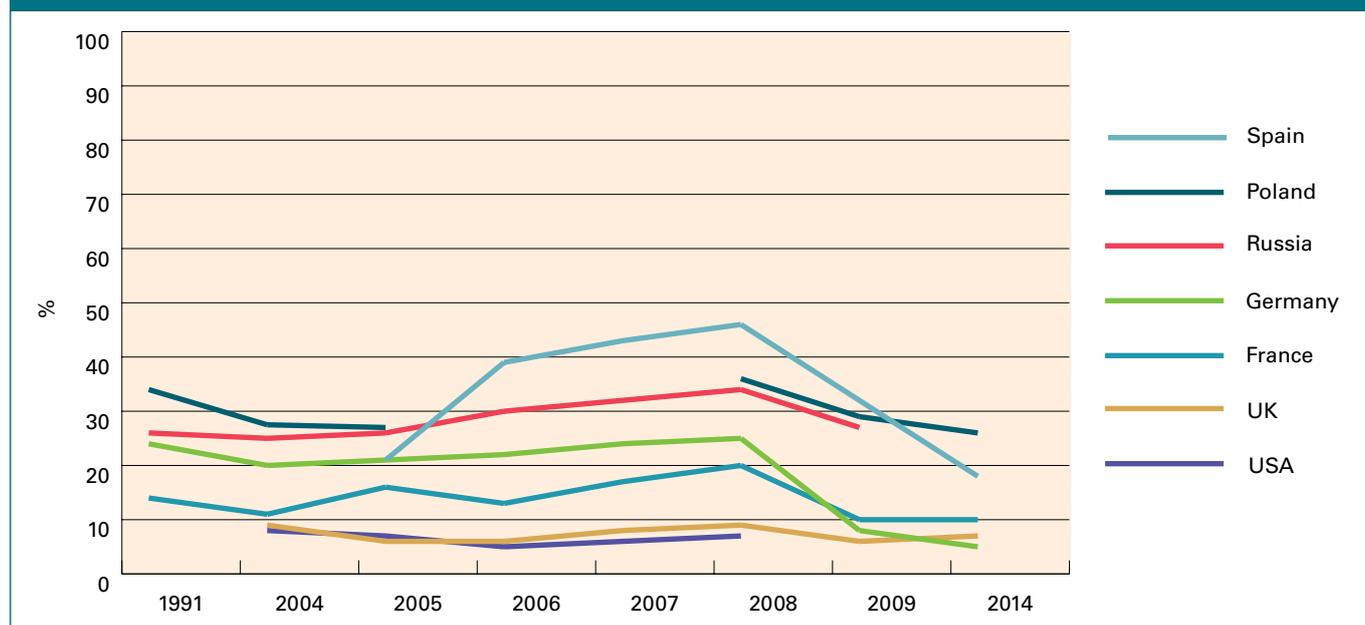
community appears to have started to pay greater attention than ever before to the empirical basis of any statements about antisemitism. The recent flurry of surveys commissioned by various Jewish and non-Jewish organisations in an attempt to establish the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes testifies to this tendency. However, as a community, we are still far from understanding what constitutes high-quality evidence, where it is to be found and what can and should be done with it. We can examine the data that exist – as we do at length in this paper – in search of clues to understand contemporary reality. But as will become clear, in spite of the huge amounts of research that has been conducted on antisemitism and the issues around it, we remain some way from being able to empirically and unequivocally determine the nature of the problem, its scale, or its direction of travel in ways that cut through all of the hyperbole, bias and conjecture that litter public discourse. Whilst the problem of contemporary antisemitism is far from alone in this regard – many other social ills also suffer from a lack of empirical evidence – this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. We need to know what is going on with a far greater degree of certainty than exists at present in order to define the problem, gain political and financial support to tackle it, provide security where it is most needed, and ensure that Jews in Britain have the evidence they need to make sound decisions about their families' future.

The first step in this process is to explore the sources of data that currently exist, to investigate their meaning and their shortcomings, and to assess the extent to which they enable us to achieve these goals. This paper constitutes an initial attempt to do this and it argues that, under the current circumstances, a substantial leap in research and analytical quality has become an imperative. In the next chapters, we present research findings on levels and trends in antisemitism, and explore both the multitude of meanings that can be attributed to them, and the somewhat paradoxical

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increase in uncertainty that occurs with each additional piece of data that is revealed. Whilst that may be conducive to public debate (indeed, commentators from across the political spectrum use much of the data investigated below to make their points and promote their agendas), this rhetorical sophistication is rarely translated into greater clarity concerning the policies that should be adopted to combat antisemitism. Furthermore, in spite of the wealth of quantitative data that exists on antisemitism, insufficient work is currently being done to allow us to measure the

Figure 1. Proportion of people holding 'very unfavourable' or 'somewhat/mostly unfavourable' opinion about Jews-selected European countries (Pew Research Center data)



Source: Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. Note that figures for year 2007 (for which survey data were not available) were obtained by averaging across the values of surrounding years, as was the figure for Poland in 2004.

phenomena under examination or to give unambiguous meaning to the results of that measurement. We will not progress in dealing with antisemitism without resolving this fundamental predicament.

## 1. Exploring the attitudes of non-Jews towards Jews

### General attitudes towards Jews

The first port of call for anyone interested in the levels and trends of antisemitism should be the existing data of major polling organisations. This is for a number of reasons. First, these organisations employ professional teams and implement scientific designs in the development of survey samples; typically, these are random samples representative of the population whose attitudes are being assessed. Second, these organisations possess significant resources which allow them to reach large samples, and, importantly, run surveys at regular intervals, employing the same methods and asking exactly the same questions on each occasion, thereby allowing them to reliably track change over time. Third, their surveys often integrate various topics, rather than single-mindedly focusing on Jews or attitudes to minorities, thereby reducing the risk of attracting respondents with a special interest in a particular topic. This combination of professionalism, resources and context makes the findings reliable, valid and comparable – both across time and across different countries, making them a good starting point for any discussion about antisemitism.

One of the global leaders in this field is the Pew Research Center, an American non-profit research organisation that runs its highly insightful 'Global Attitudes Project,' a long-term data collection enterprise that, through the deployment of public opinion surveys throughout the world, seeks to document people's views on contemporary issues and affairs.<sup>3</sup>

Among other issues, Pew's surveys regularly include a question using the following formulation: "I'd like you to rate some different groups of people in [survey country] according to how you feel about them. Please tell me whether your opinion is very favourable, mostly favourable, mostly unfavourable or very unfavourable. a. Jews; b. Roma; c. Muslims." This question has been asked in various countries over several years, thereby allowing us to see changes in attitudes over time.<sup>4</sup> The question about attitudes towards Jews has been included on all occasions, and the earliest data on this topic for the United Kingdom comes from 2004. The results for seven countries, including the UK, are set out in Figure 1.

In examining these data, two particular observations are worthy of mention. First, the levels of antipathy towards Jews that are observed in Britain and the USA

3 The practical element of work is coordinated by Princeton Survey Research Associates International, and the actual fieldwork (either telephone or face-to-face interviewing) is carried out by national research organisations.

4 It is worth noting that earlier surveys also included attitudes towards other groups too - such as Blacks, Christians (in general) and Catholics.

are consistently the lowest in the comparison. In both countries, less than 10% of people hold unfavourable (combining the counts for ‘mostly unfavourable’ and ‘very unfavourable’) attitudes towards Jews. Similar levels were recorded by Pew in Canada and Australia, although these countries are not presented here to

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avoid cluttering the diagram. Thus, 10% appears to mark the approximate level of antipathy towards Jews in English-speaking countries.

Second, viewed over time, the countries shown on the diagram can be largely divided into three groups, based on their levels of antipathy towards Jews: (i) high level: in Spain, Poland and Russia, where levels are in the region of 25% to 45%; (ii) low level: in English-speaking countries where under 10% of the adult population holds unfavourable attitudes; and (iii) intermediate level: in Germany and France, where the levels have mostly been between about 10% and 25%. However, whilst this hierarchy has held over much of the period shown, the most recent data for Germany and France suggest that levels have declined to such an extent that they are beginning to converge with the UK and the USA.

Given recent events, the data on France are perhaps particularly puzzling. Levels of antipathy towards Jews remain only marginally higher there than in the UK, and in the last two points in time are at the lowest levels shown. Yet, this decline coincides with a period that has seen a series of particularly violent and murderous attacks on Jews in France. So are

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the findings correct? If so, what are we to make of them? And can they serve in any way as a guide to the seriousness of the threat facing the Jewish community? Technically, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of these findings – they do, indeed, reflect some sort of reality. At the same time, they clearly fail to capture something very important, and something that we need to understand to help explain what has changed

in recent years to cause the upsurge in brutal violence against Jews in France.

One might also hypothesise that because the Pew data only go up to spring 2014, they fail to capture any change that occurred as a result of the war in Gaza in the summer of that year. As we will see later on in this paper, there is clear evidence to indicate that a significant spike in antisemitic incidents took place across Europe as a direct result of that conflict, so perhaps Pew’s data are simply insufficiently up-to-date to capture the changed reality? However, this does not appear to be the case. A YouGov survey commissioned by *The Sunday Times* in January 2015 – six months after the war – replicated a version of the Pew question, and found that 7% of British adults said they had either a ‘very negative’ or a ‘fairly negative’ opinion about Jews.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that, when measured six months after the war in Gaza in summer 2014, we observe *no discernible change* overall in British people’s attitudes towards Jews in the UK as a medium to long-term result of that conflict. If this is correct – and again, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the findings – we are still left feeling rather puzzled. Many Jews feel as if antisemitism is on the rise in the UK, yet on this measure, the data indicate no change. How should we make sense of this?

### Examining more detailed attitudes towards Jews

In understanding these findings, it is important to bear in mind that they are based on a particular approach to measuring antisemitism. They take a very general question (e.g. what is your overall opinion of Jews?), and ask it to a broad sample of people (e.g. adults in the UK). Other surveys have attempted to go beyond this basic attitudinal question above, and, whilst addressing their research to similarly broad populations, have looked to explore the actual content of antisemitic views in greater depth. Undoubtedly the largest of these surveys was run by the Anti-Defamation League in 2013 and 2014. It examined the attitudes of adults in over one hundred countries worldwide and was published in 2014 as the *ADL Global 100*.<sup>6</sup> ADL has also conducted similar surveys

- 5 The published data showed that 2% held a ‘very negative’ opinion, and 5% a ‘fairly negative opinion.’ 17% of respondents didn’t know how they felt; if these are proportionately redistributed across the scale, the proportion holding ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ negative opinions rises to 8%.
- 6 See: <http://global100.adl.org>. The surveys were carried out by various research firms (First International Resources; Anzalone Liszt Grove Research; Ipsos-Reid Public Affairs) on large randomly selected samples via telephone and in face-to-face interviews. As far as the ADL methodological literature allows us to understand, the ADL samples are weighted to reflect the national population composition

Figure 2. Proportion of people saying that the statement ‘Jews have too much power in the business world’ is ‘probably true’ – selected countries (Anti-Defamation League data)

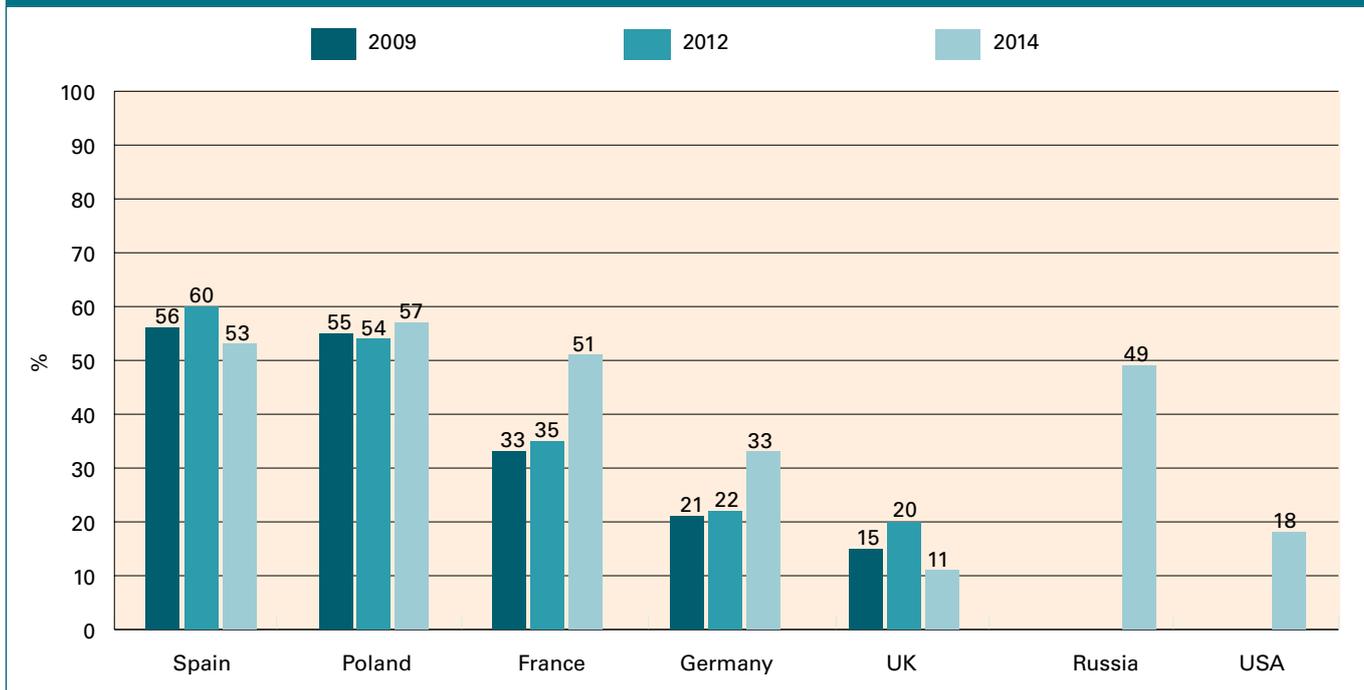
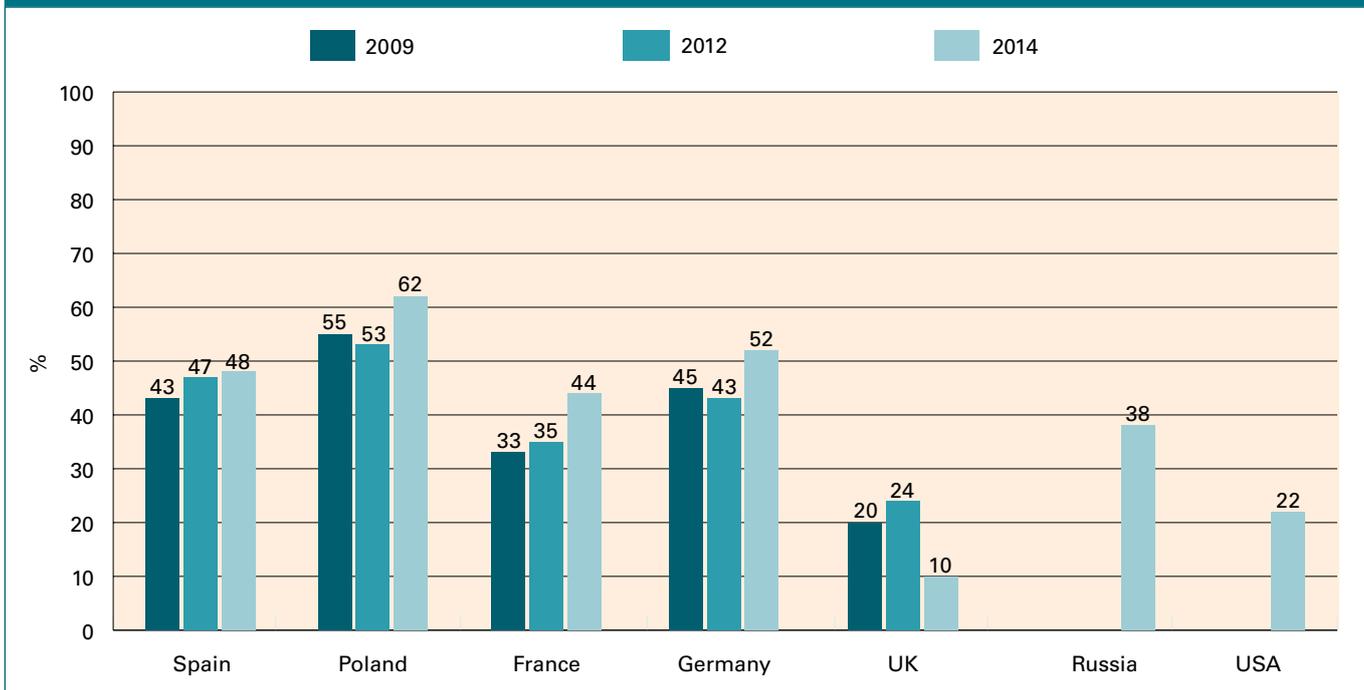


Figure 3. Proportion of people saying that the statement ‘Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust’ is ‘probably true’ – selected countries (Anti-Defamation League data)



in the past, and in Figures 2 and 3 we integrate the findings of the ADL Global 100 with two other ADL surveys from previous years. Figure 2 focuses on the proportions of adults in five selected European countries (plus Russia and USA figures for 2014; 2009

and 2012 are not available) for those who maintain that the statement ‘Jews have too much power in the business world’ is ‘probably true.’ Figure 3 does the same for the statement ‘Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.’

for each country in terms of age and gender, and at times also by religion, locality (urban or rural), ethnicity and language.

Before investigating the proportions themselves (which one instantly notices are markedly higher than those found in the Pew data shown in Figure 1), the

results support the impression from the Pew data that the UK and USA have the lowest levels of the seven countries investigated. However, among the other five countries, the picture is slightly more complex. The Pew hierarchy seems to hold when looking at Figure 2: there is a distinction between Spain, Poland and Russia on the one hand (the high group), and France and Germany on the other (the intermediate group). Yet Figure 3 presents a slightly muddier picture where Poland stands out as the highest, followed by Spain and Germany, followed by France and Russia.

Because ADL has developed a methodological approach that allows comparisons to be drawn across time, its data can also help to provide an indication of the direction of travel in attitudes: an increase or decline seen on multiple measures over time is likely to indicate an equivalent shift in antisemitic sentiment. Thus it is worth noting the difference in patterns between France and Germany on the one hand, and the UK on the other, where the former two countries provide evidence of a recent jump in antipathetic attitudes, whereas the UK shows a drop. The jump – or the growth – in counts for France over time may be particularly significant, as certainly one’s intuitive sense, based on recent outbreaks of antisemitic violence there, is that the situation for Jews has become more precarious over time. On the other hand, this conclusion contradicts the Pew data showing a recent decline in unfavourable attitudes. Moreover, somewhat confusingly, other countries in the graphs show similar patterns to France with even higher counts, yet to date at least, they have not experienced the same levels of violent antisemitism. One can only hypothesise about why this might be the case, but these different results create a degree of complexity which needs to be explored and understood. The UK data are interesting too, insofar as they somewhat challenge the Pew finding of stability over time, indicating instead that antisemitic attitudes have actually declined in the most recent past. Without corroborating evidence from other sources, one should not read too much into either organisation’s result, but the dissonant findings demand to be explained.

It is also possible to investigate other pieces of data that approach antisemitism from a similar perspective. Indeed, the *Sunday Times*/YouGov poll mentioned above was actually one of three surveys relating to antisemitism that were commissioned, paid for, and undertaken in the UK in the course of just five weeks between 21 December 2014 and 25 January 2015.<sup>7</sup>

7 Two of these three polls were undertaken by YouGov, a reputable research firm specialising in internet polling which used a self-selecting panel of respondents weighted according to the basic country’s demographics. The third was conducted by Populus, a respected research and

One of the other two was also conducted by YouGov, on behalf of a new British Jewish organisation, the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA). It is not clear whether or not the CAA was aware of the ADL findings when it commissioned its own study in early 2015, or whether it thought that the 2014 ADL survey was outdated, but its findings are not too dissimilar from those produced by the ADL. The CAA question wording was somewhat different from the ADL’s, but in response to the statement “In business, Jews are not as honest as other people” it found 11% agreement, and in response to the statement “Jews have too much power in the media” it found 17% agreement. These types of results align well with the ADL’s findings from recent years, but add little of substance to our shared understanding or to policy development.

Similarly, a poll conducted by Populus in January 2015 as part of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, also investigated these issues. In response to the statement “Jews have too much power in the UK media and politics” it found 11% agreement, and in response to the statement “Jews talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust” it found 14% agreement. Both of these findings are a few percentage points *higher* than the ADL 2014 survey, which possibly points to a slight *increase* in antisemitic attitudes in the UK in recent months, but differences in question wording make comparisons imperfect. That said, the findings broadly confirm the approximate level found by others, but need supporting evidence from elsewhere to verify, and multivariate analysis of the data would be required to understand with any depth or nuance precisely what is going on.

By contrast, Fondapol (*Fondation pour L’innovation Politique*) data from France allow us to see how French adults responded to similar statements in a survey the foundation commissioned and published in November 2014.<sup>8</sup> Again, the statements are not identical to those in the ADL surveys, but the

strategy consultancy, which used a similar approach. It is particularly striking that these three new surveys designed to test the levels of antisemitic attitudes took place in such a short space of time. Whilst this sudden burst of activity reflects the levels of concern and interest about the topic, and, in some instances, a desire to do something to address existing anxieties, it was not coordinated, its purposes varied from survey to survey, and ultimately, considered from the perspective of developing policy to combat antisemitism, the work seems to have generated far more heat than light.

8 Fondapol worked with l’Ifop (Institut français d’opinion publique) to survey a representative sample of 1005 French citizens aged 16 and above, online, between 26 and 30 September 2014.

contrast between the findings of the two surveys is quite arresting. Fondapol found that 25% said 'Jews have too much power in the realm of the economy and finance,' 22% said 'Jews have too much power in the realm of the media,' and 19% said 'Jews have too much power in the realm of politics,' all of which are proportions which differ substantially from the ADL finding of 51% for the similar statement 'Jews have too much power in the business world.'<sup>9</sup> Quite why this should be the case is unclear.

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However, perhaps the real puzzle in all of these data is that the levels of antisemitism revealed by specific statements about Jewish power and the Holocaust seem to be significantly higher than the non-specific dislike of Jews presented earlier (Pew data, Figure 1). What does this finding mean, if indeed, it has any meaning at all? Might one assessment be more accurate than the other? Might it mean, for example, that antisemitic attitudes are latent in some way, and are not easily revealed without specific prompting, i.e. presenting specific statements? Or, alternatively, might the data on specific statements conceal an underlying degree of affinity with, or empathy for Jews? Moreover, what does any of this really tell us about people's politics, or the likelihood of them becoming violently antisemitic? Fundamentally, do the 'specifics' paint a more reliable picture of antisemitism than the 'generics', or vice versa, and are either in any way indicative of future political behaviour or the potential for violence?

Often, organisations employing this methodological approach have used the findings to try to quantify the number of antisemites that exist in a given country or region at a particular moment in time – the ADL Global 100, for example, argued that 26% of the adult global population harboured antisemitic attitudes in 2014, equating to 1,090,000,000 people. But it is important to understand that these figures are based on a very particular approach to measuring antisemitism that differs from other approaches (such as those employed by Pew). Moreover, again, it does

<sup>9</sup> See: *L'Antisémitisme Dans L'Opinion Publique Française. Nouveaux Éclairages*. Fondation pour L'Innovation Politique, 2014.

not allow us to understand the extent to which any of these people might act on the basis of the attitudes they hold – i.e. the proportions within that 26% that are likely to perpetrate the types of acts of terror seen recently in France, or ground their political actions in these attitudes. Indeed, whilst these types of figures often generate headlines, few researchers, when pressed, would be able to provide this level of interpretation, or offer any meaningful policy uses of their findings, and this is rarely, if ever, acknowledged. Thus how one uses this information to develop policy designed to combat antisemitism or to provide helpful advice to Jews is wholly unclear.

### Antisemitic incidents

Perhaps one way of adding to our understanding would be to examine Community Security Trust (CST) antisemitic incident data, which, at first viewing at least, appear to challenge the ideas that levels of antisemitism in the UK have remained stable (as suggested by Pew) or declined (as suggested by ADL) in the recent past. Its *Antisemitic Incidents Report* for 2014 begins: "The CST recorded 1,168 antisemitic incidents in the UK in 2014, an increase of 118% from the 535 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST for 2013 and the highest annual total ever recorded by CST. The previous highest number of antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in a single year was 931 incidents, recorded in 2009."<sup>10</sup> Its first chart, replicated in Figure 4 below, provides clear evidence of the recent story, and particularly if one focuses exclusively on the past five years (2010-14) shown in light blue, the dramatic jump in 2014 is very striking.

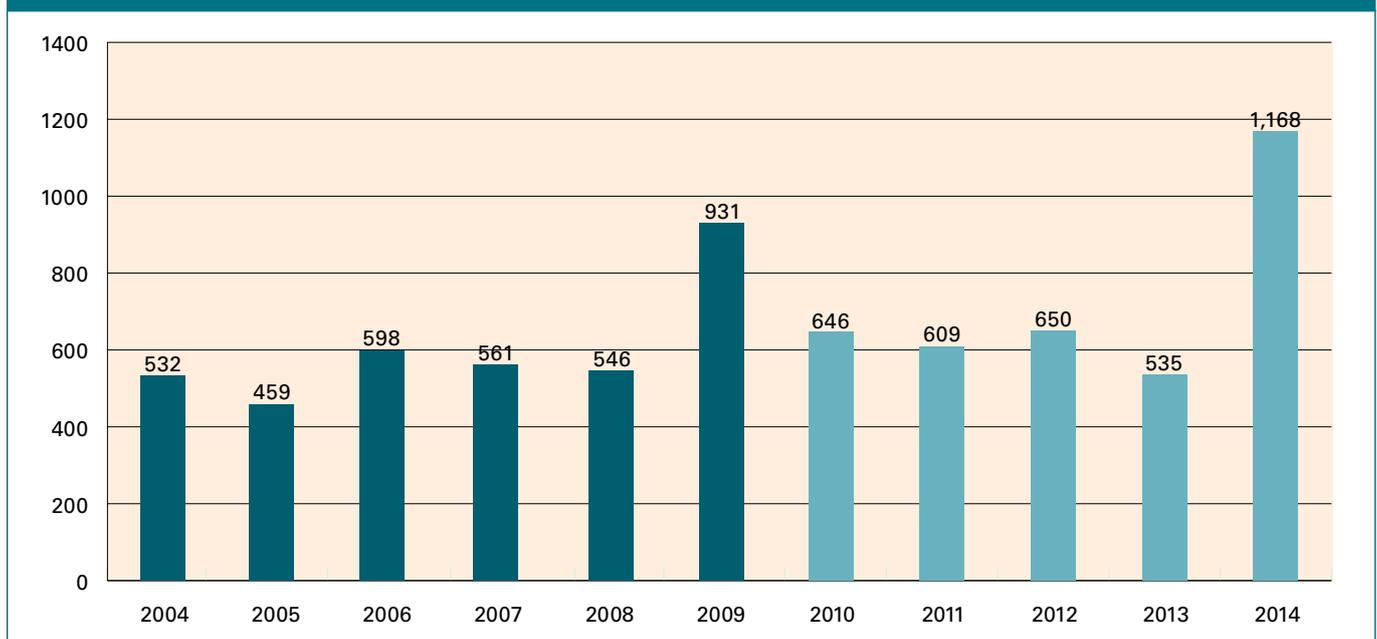
The CST report goes on to provide an explanation for the 2014 spike. "The sharp increase, and record high total, in antisemitic incidents recorded in 2014 follows a pattern whereby UK-based reactions to 'trigger events', often from overseas, cause temporary but significant 'spikes' in antisemitic incidents in the UK. In this case, antisemitic reactions in the UK to the conflict in Israel and Gaza that occurred in July and August 2014 were the biggest contributing factor to the record total of incidents reported to CST. A similar

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pattern contributed to the two previous record yearly totals in 2009 and 2006, due to antisemitic reactions to conflicts in Israel and Gaza (2009) and Israel and Lebanon (2006)."

<sup>10</sup> CST *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2014*, op. cit.

Figure 4. Antisemitic incidents in the UK recorded by the CST, by year, 2004-14 (CST data)



This conclusion can be confirmed by looking at annual totals for antisemitic incidents over the entire period shown in Figure 4. The spike for 2014 is clearly the most pronounced so far, but a slightly smaller, albeit highly significant one can be seen in 2009, as well as a far less pronounced one in 2006.

Annual statistics reveal something of the change that is going on, but arguably, the monthly figures, also included at the back of the CST's annual reports, provide us with a clearer picture. Indeed, the 2014 report notes that in July 2014 "CST recorded 314 antisemitic incidents, a 432% increase from the 59 incidents recorded in July 2013 and more than the number of antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2014 combined. In August, CST recorded 228 antisemitic incidents (a 375% increase from the 48 incidents recorded in August 2013). Of the 542 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in July and August 2014, 258 (48%) involved direct or indirect reference to the conflict in Israel and Gaza alongside antisemitic content, motivation or targeting." Thus almost half of the year's incidents occurred over a maximum of two months.

Figure 5 investigates the picture when the data are examined on a month-by-month basis over the same period of time. What it confirms is that the spikes are very time-specific, rather than being indicative of an overall and prolonged increase in antisemitic incidents. Once the trigger event and its immediate fallout are over, incident levels appear to return approximately to their previous levels. Looking at the chart overall, whilst there is no question about the extraordinary spikes that occur periodically, there appears to be

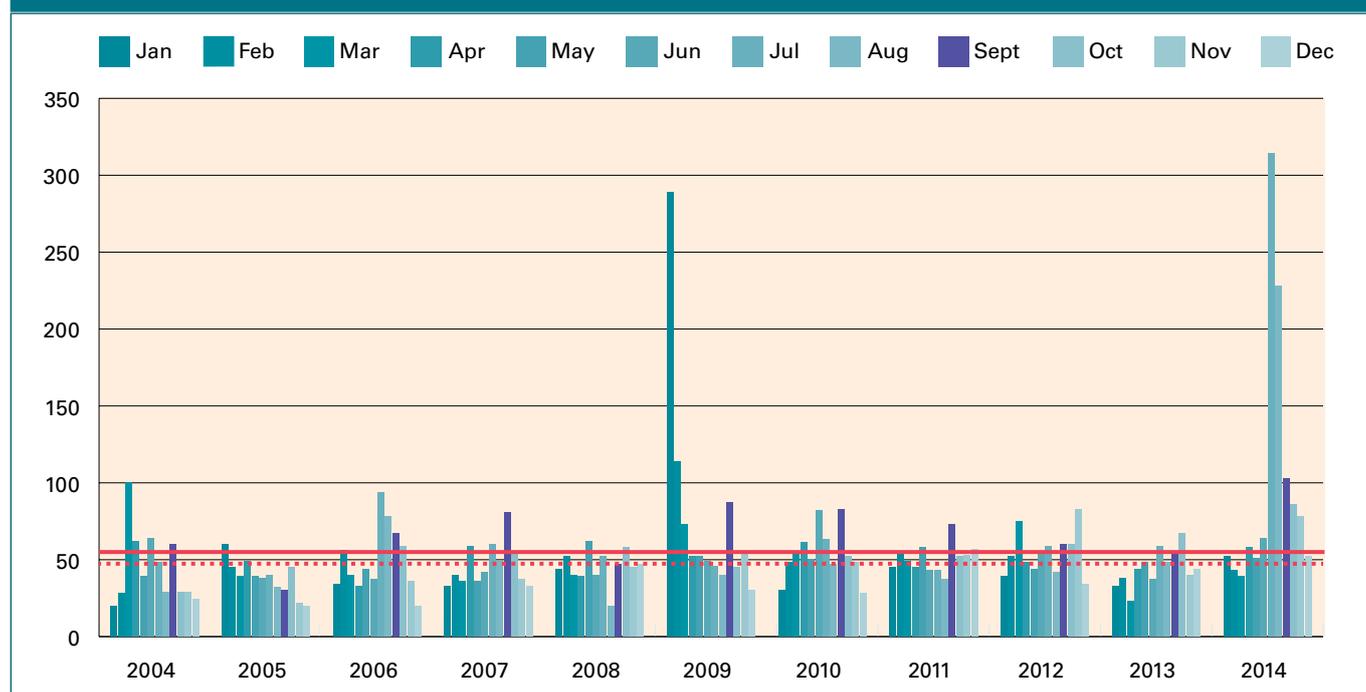
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little evidence for a dramatic increase in levels of antisemitism over time. Whilst monthly incident totals clearly fluctuate under 'normal' circumstances, the range is quite small. On average, 55 incidents per month were recorded by the CST between 2004 and 2014 (solid red line); when the few months with major spikes caused by significant outbreaks of violence in or around Israel are removed, the monthly average is calculated at 48 (dotted red line).

The CST has also noted a second trigger for reported incidents. It is common to see an increase at the time of the High Holydays (*Rosh Hashana* – the Jewish New Year, and *Yom Kippur* – the Day of Atonement) which typically take place in September and October. Indeed, in eight of the past eleven years, September (shown in purple in Figure 5) has seen above average counts of incidents (and in two of the other three years, all, or most of the holidays fell in October), a finding CST attributes partly to the increased visibility of Jews on the streets at this time of year, and partly to the increased presence of CST and police officers on the streets, which makes it easier for people to report incidents when they occur.

When both of these trigger factors are taken into account, is it possible to ascertain empirically whether

Figure 5. Antisemitic incidents in the UK recorded by the CST, by month, 2004-14



or not there has been an increase in antisemitism in the UK over the 2004-14 period? Using advanced statistical methods this can be done, and the results can be seen in Figure 6.<sup>11</sup>

The columns shown in the darkest shade of blue provide the monthly average for five years between 2004 and 2014 if the two trigger factors are removed from the assessment. If all years were shown, the picture would fluctuate more readily, but the selection of these five points in time reveals the overarching trend. It shows that the monthly average has indeed increased somewhat over time, from 35 incidents per month in 2004 to 51 in 2014. The columns in the lightest shade of blue similarly reveal a gradual increase over time when the Jewish holiday factor is taken into consideration. By comparing the two figures, we can also calculate the ratio of the 'normal' average to the average when Jewish holidays are taking place, which has remained consistently around the 1:1.3 mark (i.e. on average, the number of antisemitic incidents occurring around the time of the High Holydays is

30% higher than 'normal'). The middle column for each year shown calculates the expected monthly level if a trigger security conflict around Israel was taking place (e.g. the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza), and this too reveals an increase over time – from an average expected total of 101 incidents in a month in 2004 to 147 in 2014. The ratio can also be calculated, and it too has barely changed over the period of investigation – it stands consistently at just below 1:3 (i.e. *on average*, a trigger security conflict almost trebles the number of antisemitic incidents taking place).

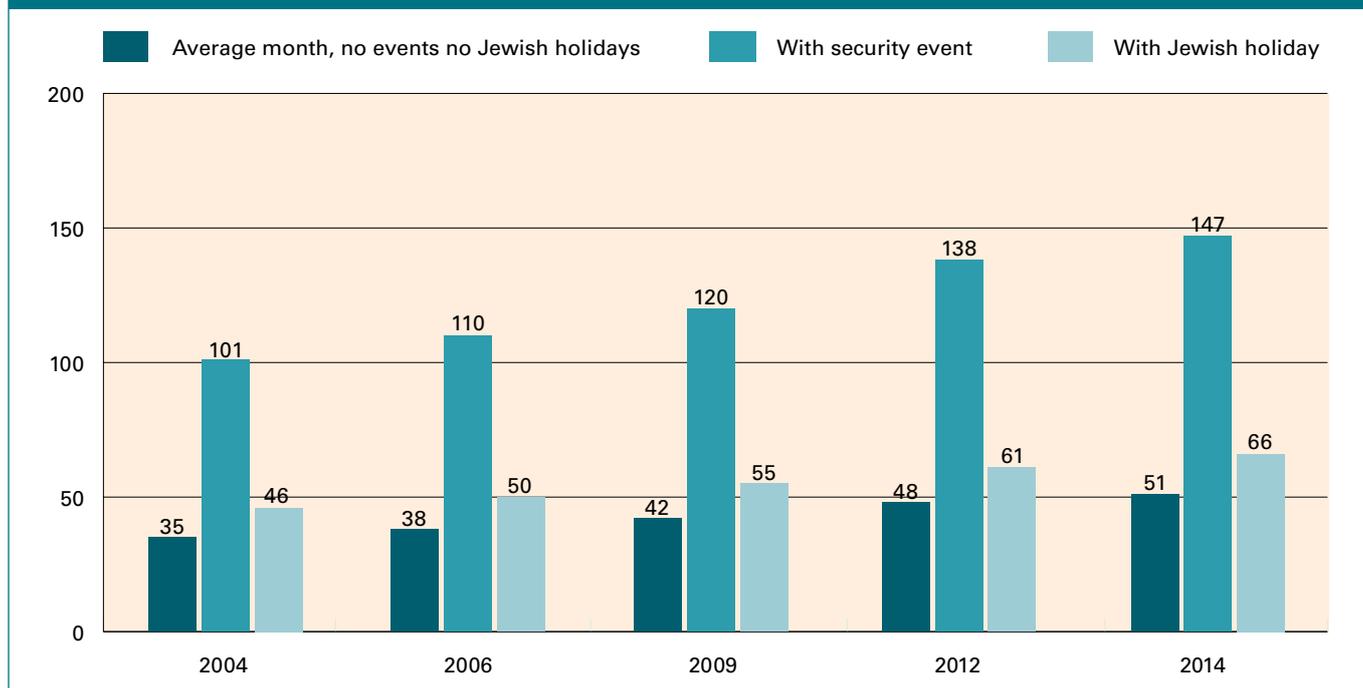
How should these findings be interpreted? They may well indicate that levels of antisemitism in the UK have climbed over the course of the past decade – certainly, at first viewing, that would appear to be the case. However, one cannot rule out an alternative explanation – that the increase shown is due to an

There is no way, at this stage, of empirically ascertaining whether the increase shown is real, or whether it is due to a change in reporting habits of Jews in Britain.

11 In order to generate this chart, we modelled the monthly number of incidents (the dependent variable) as a function of security conflicts in Israel, Jewish holidays, and a variable capturing the general time trend (the independent variables). This was in order (i) to establish the effect that security conflicts in Israel and Jewish holidays have on the number of antisemitic incidents in the UK, independently of each other; and (ii) to understand whether there is a general trend of increase in antisemitic incidents in the UK, after the effects of security conflicts and Jewish holidays are controlled for.

increased prevalence among Jews to report incidents in the first place. Certainly, whilst CST incident reporting data are a vital source of information and make a critical contribution to understanding (they are one of the very few available sources on antisemitism in Britain that have been monitored in a consistent fashion over many years) there is no way, at this stage, of empirically ascertaining whether the increase shown is real, or whether it is due to a change in reporting

Figure 6. Assessment of whether levels of antisemitism have increased between 2004 and 2014 (JPR analysis of CST data)



habits of Jews in Britain.<sup>12</sup> So whilst we may have evidence here that challenges the Pew thesis of stability or the ADL thesis of decline, we cannot be certain.

The problem about whether an increase in the number of recorded antisemitic incidents is real, or whether it is caused by changes in reporting habits, needs to be solved. However, unfortunately, little is known about changing patterns of reporting behaviour over time. Perhaps the best available source on the topic is the 2012 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jews' perceptions and experiences of antisemitism, which was conducted by a joint JPR/Ipsos MORI team on behalf of the FRA. It examined the extent to which Jews report antisemitic incidents to the police or any other authority, and revealed

12 It is worth noting that significant efforts have been made in recent years to improve reporting practices across Europe. Indeed, frustrated by the lack of official, high quality and standardised data, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the CST began to work together in 2008 to establish the Facing Facts project. The project, paid for by the European Commission, funds partner bodies to train volunteers and professionals to standardise criteria for comparable hate crime and hate incident data collection, as well as to learn how to hold their governments accountable to international agreements and to work to improve cooperation between civil society and public authorities. These efforts are to be welcomed, but the data gathered need to be cross-referenced with other sources by professional statisticians to maximise their value in order to answer the practical questions posed earlier: is it safe to remain in Europe, and what policies are required to safeguard Jewish life?

that, across Europe, Jews behave rather similarly to other minorities, and tend not to report incidents, particularly in cases of harassment, an issue that has also been noted by the CST.<sup>13</sup> The findings from the FRA survey for Jews in the UK are shown in

Just 17% of all incidents in the UK are estimated to be reported to the police, and 22% are estimated to be reported to another organisation.

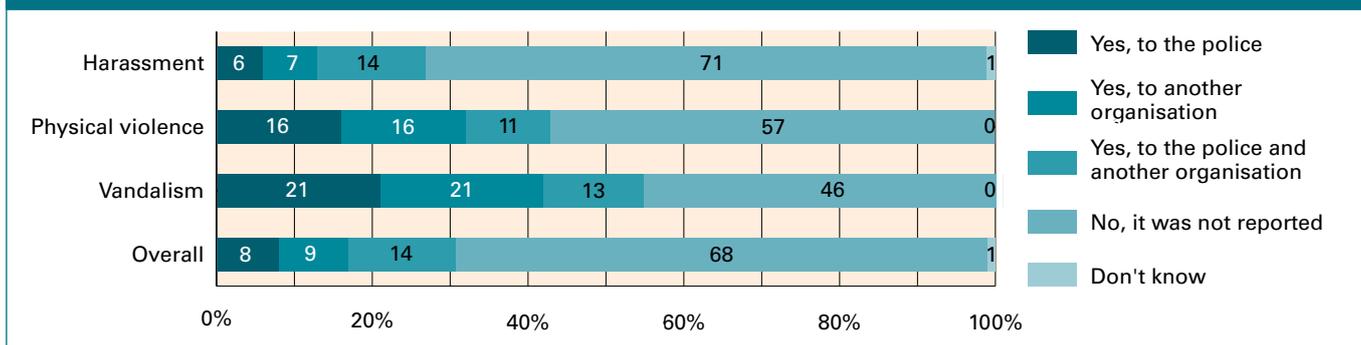
Figure 7.<sup>14</sup> Overall, they demonstrate that just 17% of all incidents are estimated to be reported to the police, and 22% are estimated to be reported to another organisation (these figures include cases of harassment, which would typically be recorded by the police as 'hate incidents' rather than 'hate crimes'). They also show that cases of physical violence and vandalism are most likely to be reported to the police, whereas cases of harassment are marginally more likely to be reported to another organisation.

These results give us some indication of the extent to which Jews typically report antisemitic incidents, but because they represent a mere snapshot in time, they cannot be used to make an assessment of whether the increase shown in Figure 6 is due to changes in reporting habits. However, they can

13 See: CST, *Antisemitic Incidents* 2014, op. cit.

14 See: Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. (2014). *The Exceptional Case? Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in the United Kingdom*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Figure 7. Reporting rates of antisemitic incidents in the UK, for period 2008-12 (%)



N = 425 (harassment); N = 24 (vandalism); N = 70 (physical violence). Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

be used for other purposes, including making an approximate assessment of the likely scale and extent of antisemitism today. There may be particular value in doing this in order to explore similarities and differences between the situations in the UK and France, not least because much of the anxiety that has been generated in recent months was prompted by the attack on the kosher supermarket in Paris in January 2015 and concern around whether a similar type of incident might occur in the UK.

### Drawing comparisons with France

As in the UK, the French Jewish community also gathers statistics about antisemitic incidents. The SPCJ, *Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive*, is the equivalent body to the CST in the UK, and recently published its statistics for 2014. It is valuable to compare these figures, not least because the anxieties felt about antisemitism in the UK today have clearly been influenced by recent events in France.

Figure 8 compares the counts for France and the UK, based on these two sources.

Interestingly, and perhaps surprisingly, the counts for the UK have been consistently higher than those for France every year since 2006. That might lead one to assume that levels of antisemitism are higher in the UK than in France, an assumption that would appear to be problematic based on recent observed events. That

Interestingly, and perhaps surprisingly, the counts for the UK have been consistently higher than those for France every year since 2006. That might lead one to assume that levels of antisemitism are higher in the UK than in France, but before drawing that conclusion, one would need to look very closely at the methods of data gathering and the propensity to report in each country to determine what else might be contributing to the results.

Figure 8. Comparison of number of antisemitic incidents in UK and France, 2004-14, using CST and SPCF data

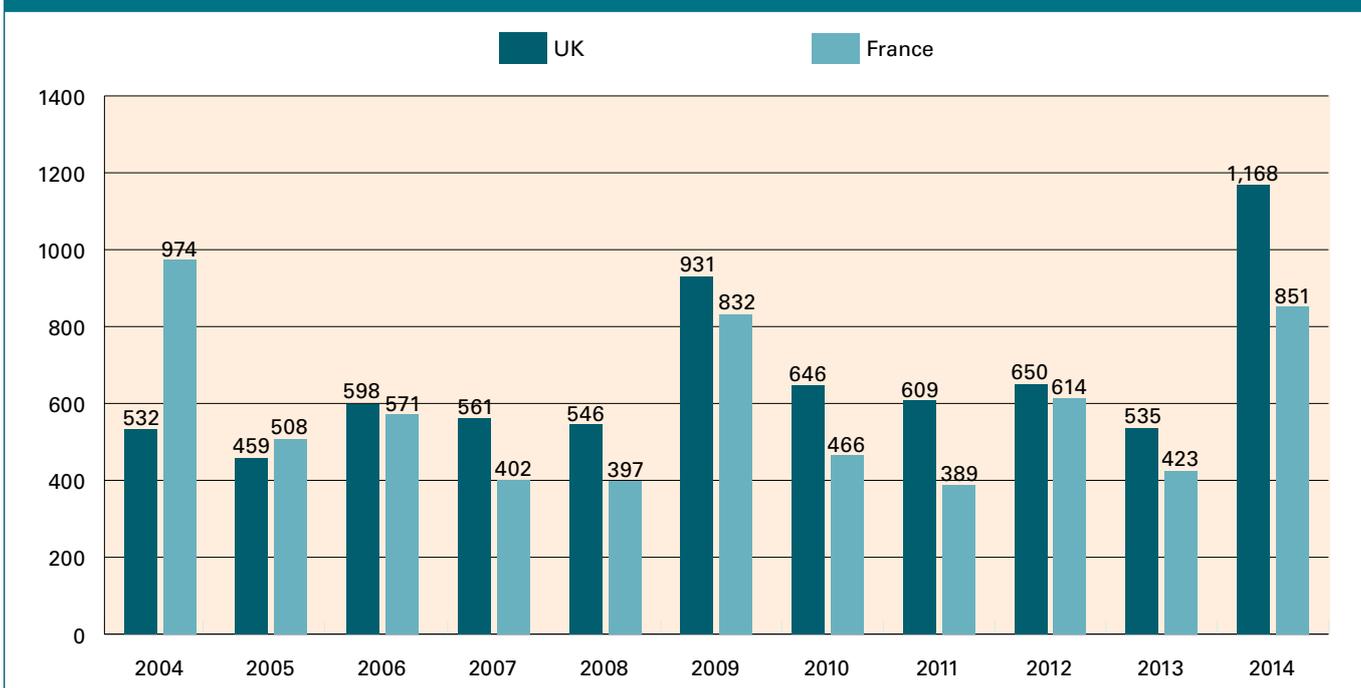
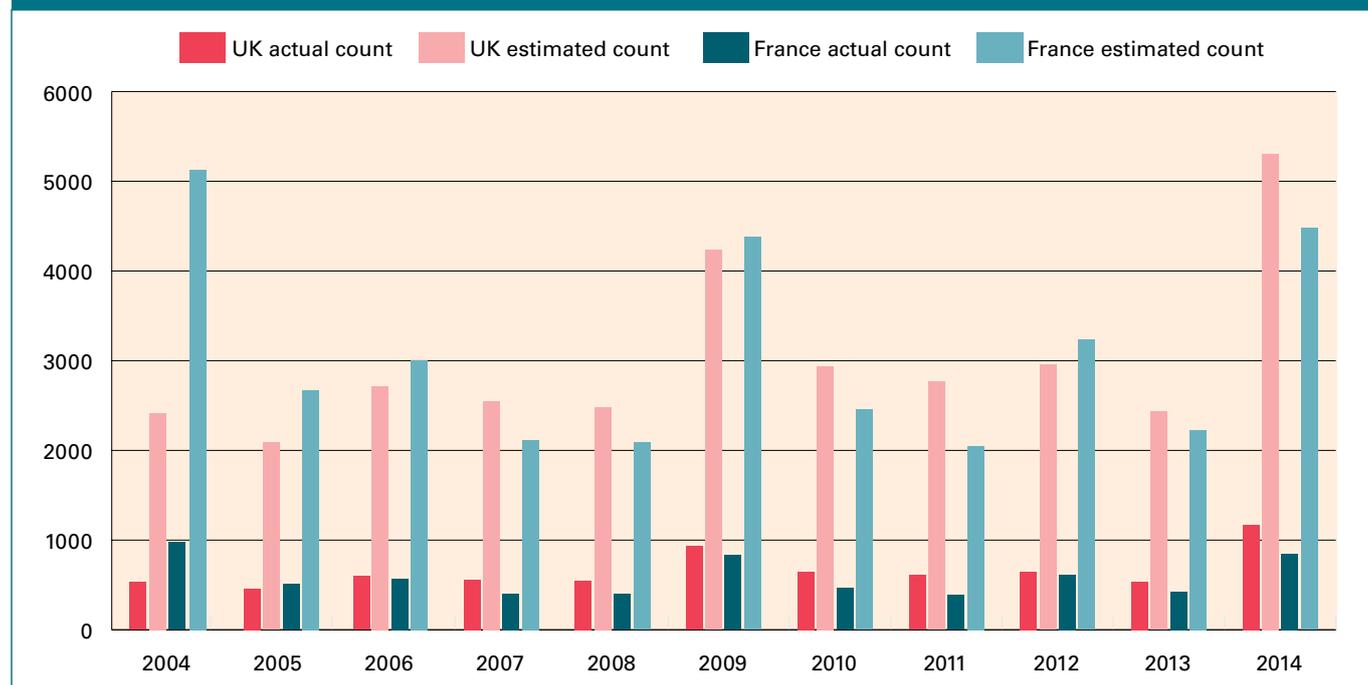


Figure 9. Actual and estimated counts for the number of antisemitic incidents per annum in the UK and France, 2004-14 (JPR analysis of CST, SPCF and FRA data)



said, the distinction may be real – one cannot rule out that possibility – but before drawing that conclusion, one would need to look very closely at the methods of data gathering and the propensity to report in each country to determine what else might be contributing to the results. Inconsistencies in approaches, or differences in understanding among Jews in the two countries about what to do in the event of experiencing an antisemitic incident, may well affect the results.

However, if we take the FRA data for reporting incidents for the UK (shown in Figure 7) alongside the equivalent data for France,<sup>15</sup> we can reconstruct the picture presented in Figure 8 in order both to estimate the actual number of antisemitic incidents that occur in each country each year, and to investigate whether the distinctions in the comparative counts for the two countries remain when reporting behaviour is taken into account. The results can be seen in Figure 9.

Based on this analysis, we can see that the picture presented in Figure 8 changes to some degree. Whereas, in the UK, the CST recorded 12% more incidents than the SPCF did in France over the eleven years shown (actual counts), when the adjustment is made, the estimated number of incidents that took place in France is marginally higher (by 3%) than the estimated number in the UK (estimated counts). Furthermore, the pattern of consistently higher counts

in the UK since 2006 is broken somewhat: in 2006, 2009 and 2012, the estimated annual counts for France are higher than for the UK.

However, it is also worth noting that the French Jewish population is significantly larger than the UK Jewish population, and this factor should also be taken into consideration when seeking to understand these figures. When we do so, we see that, whereas in France there are, on average, six incidents per annum per 1,000 Jews in the French population, in the UK there are ten. Thus, once again, we are left with a result showing that levels of antisemitism appear to be higher in the UK than in France, a finding which may feel intuitively strange given recent events. Clearly, more work needs to be done to be able to make sense of whether the observed distinctions are real, or simply a result of other external factors concerned with data gathering procedures.

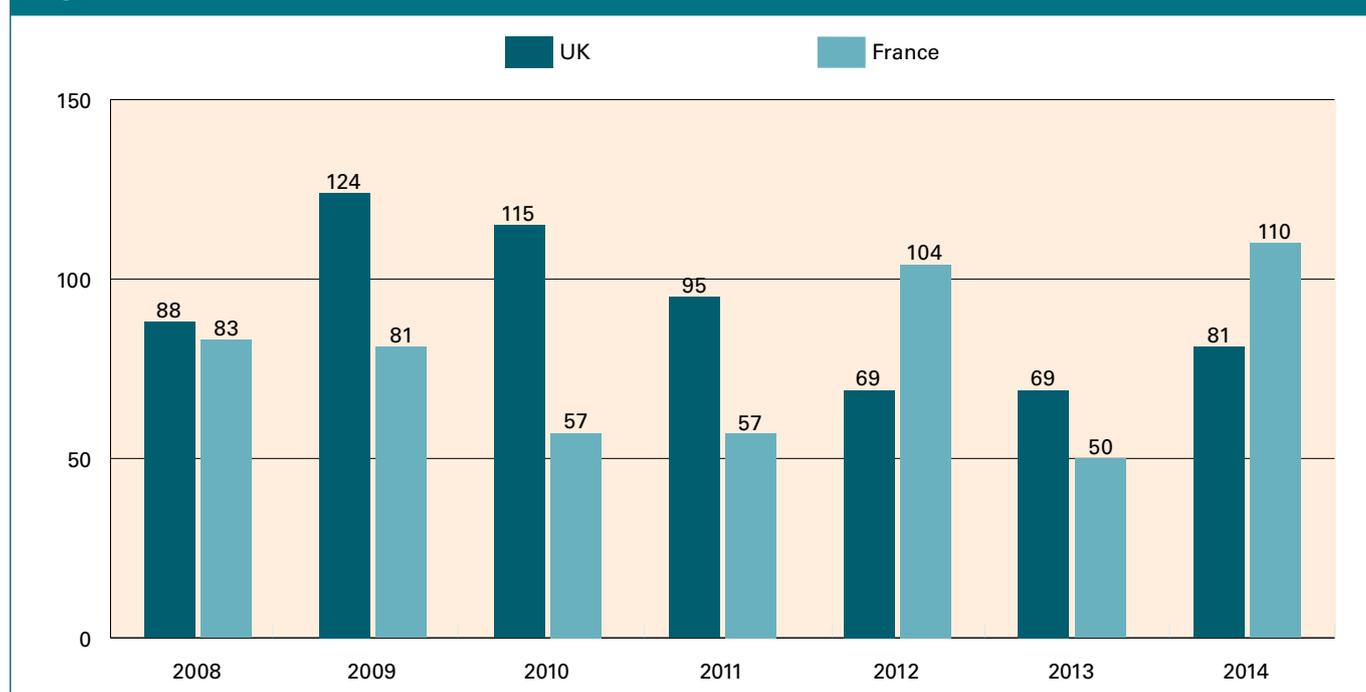
However, what can be said with a high degree of certainty is that the spike in incidents seen in both countries in 2009 and 2014 is related to the conflicts

What can be said with a high degree of certainty is that the spike in incidents seen in both countries in 2009 and 2014 is related to the conflicts in Gaza that took place in those years

15 The equivalent findings for France are: 72% of incidents are unreported, 19% of all incidents are reported to the police, and 16% are reported to another organisation.

in Gaza that took place in those years, and thus the phenomenon of an increase in antisemitic incidents at such times is clearly not limited to any single

Figure 10. Violent antisemitic acts in France and UK, 2008-2014 (CST and SPCF data)



country.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, one can also say that this phenomenon has been noted not only by Jewish security organisations, but also by the police – the French data are based on French police data, and both the Metropolitan Police (London) and the Greater Manchester Police recorded spikes in antisemitic incidents in 2009 and 2014.<sup>17</sup>

All of this stated, one might hypothesise that the critical issue is less the number of incidents that occur *as a whole*, but rather the number of *violent* incidents. Perhaps a clear distinction between the two countries can be drawn on this basis? Figure 10 provides the counts for the most serious types of incidents – physical assaults, and the far rarer cases of homicides, attempted homicides or terrorism – for the years 2008 to 2014.

16 To further prove this, the count for antisemitic incidents in France for July 2014 was 208; the next highest for any single month during the year was 87. See: *2014 Rapport sur l'antisémitisme en France*. Paris: Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive. What is less clear is why there would have been a spike in France in 2004 but not in the UK.

17 See: *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry in Antisemitism*, February 2015, section 3.2, pp.40-42. It is worth noting that this issue has been going on, and has been known about, for a long time now – it was observed in France during the explosion of antisemitic violence that took place in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000. Of the 119 recorded acts of violent antisemitism that took place in France in 2000, 114 of them occurred after the second intifada broke out on 28 September. See: Robert Badinter, Address at OSCE Meeting on Antisemitism, Vienna (June 19, 2003), PC.DEL/642/03, <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/42105>.

The overall impression one receives from the chart is that there is no overarching pattern. Neither country is shown to have consistently more violent incidents over time, although, if anything, violent antisemitism is shown to be more common in the UK than in France. Indeed, over the seven years shown, the number of incidents recorded in the UK is 18% higher than in France, and in five of the seven years, counts for the UK outnumber counts for France. However, in two of the past three years, there have been significantly more violent antisemitic incidents in France than the UK. When known patterns of reporting are applied to these figures, the lack of distinction remains. In four of the seven years, the UK scores higher than France; in the other three France scores higher than the UK, and overall, the total number of violent antisemitic incidents that have taken place in the two countries over the seven years is more or less identical: 352 in France compared to 339 in the UK. Thus, there is little one is able to ascertain from these calculations that serves to meaningfully differentiate between the two countries.

In summary, looking across the various sources of data explored so far, we learned from Pew that French people's attitudes towards Jews in France have been less favourable than British people's attitudes towards Jews in the UK, but that the levels of antipathy towards Jews in France show signs of improvement to the point where they are starting to converge with those found in the UK. We saw in the ADL data that, when attitudes towards Jews are investigated with more specificity, antisemitic sentiments are consistently higher in the French population than the

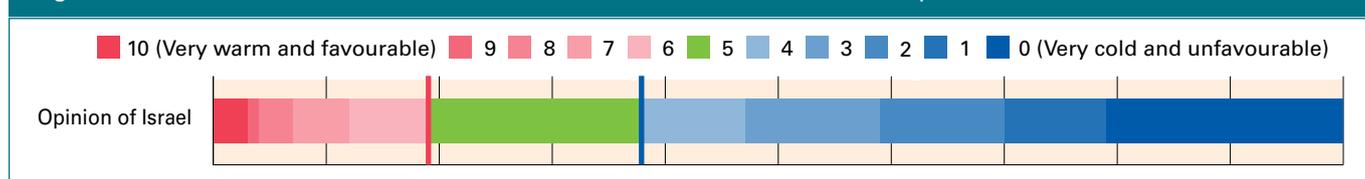
Whilst many Jews in the UK appear to sense intuitively that the events they have witnessed in France could soon be replicated in Britain, the various sources of data fail to paint a coherent picture of reality that either confirms or challenge people's anxieties, or offers them an intelligible plan to inform them about what they should actually do.

British population and that the trends are moving in opposite directions – becoming better in the UK and worse in France. And when we look at antisemitic incident data, we see that, if anything, the situation in the UK appears to be worse than in France, that antisemitic incidents spike in both places when conflict

extent do British people harbour anti-Israel views, and do we know anything about those who do?

Polling data gathered by Populus for BICOM in October 2014 provide us with a snapshot of reality. That survey investigated British adults' general opinions of Israel, and invited them to locate themselves on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = very cold and unfavourable towards Israel and 10 = very warm and favourable. Figure 11 shows the results: the two coloured vertical lines mark out the 19% of people who position themselves in the middle of the scale, expressing neither a favourable nor an unfavourable view. All those to the right of the blue vertical line (62%) hold unfavourable views; all those to the left of the red vertical line (20%) hold favourable views.

Figure 11. Attitudes of British adults towards Israel, October 2014 (BICOM/Populus data)



erupts between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, but that, beyond that, the differences seen do not appear to follow patterns that in any way allow us to ascertain the level of risk currently facing Jews in Britain, or to determine whether it is rising or falling. In short, whilst many Jews in the UK appear to sense intuitively that the events they have witnessed in France could soon be replicated in Britain, the various sources of data fail to paint a coherent picture of reality that either confirms or challenge people's anxieties, or offers them an intelligible plan to inform them about what they should actually do.

### The Israel factor

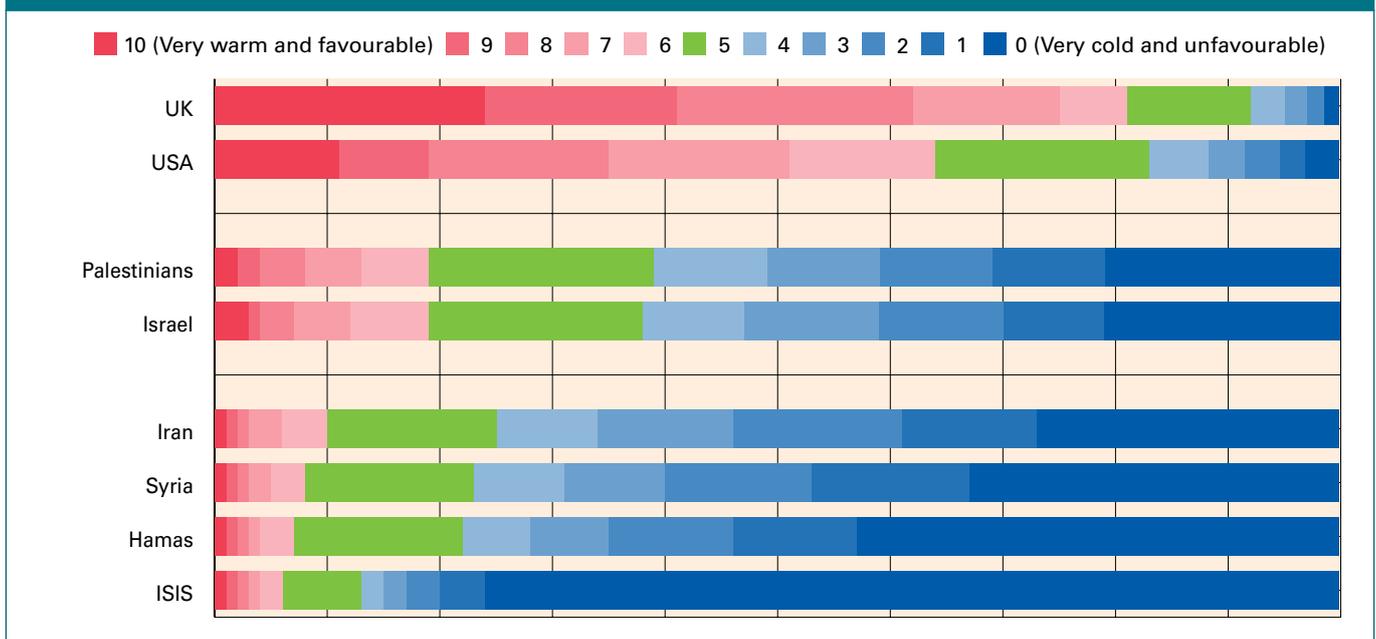
Nevertheless, the spike in antisemitic incidents that was seen in both the UK and France in 2014, as well as in other years, clearly points to at least part of the current problem. Plainly and undeniably, these spikes occur when conflict arises in Israel, and the Israel-Gaza conflict in summer 2014, known in Israel as 'Operation Protective Edge,' was simply the latest example of this. Indeed, much of the apprehension that exists within the Jewish community today about antisemitism is related to Israel; the summer 2014 conflict prompted a series of anti-Israel demonstrations across Europe, several of which descended into clear examples of antisemitic violence. This fact alone raises questions about how the public's attitudes towards Israel affect levels of antisemitism in society, and, more generally, about the relationship between antisemitism and anti-Israelism. So to what

Intuitively, this is a troubling finding in and of itself, although, examined alone, it offers no contextual information, neither in terms of British attitudes to other countries, nor whether the levels indicated are higher or lower than those recorded in the past. Fortunately, the BICOM survey included the former in its study, and this information is shown in Figure 12. Not surprisingly, attitudes toward the UK and the US stand out as most positive – at some distance from Israel. But British attitudes towards Israel appear to more or less mirror British attitudes towards the Palestinians – indeed, the results are largely identical. In contrast, attitudes towards some of the other countries in the Middle East – Syria and Iran, as well as to entities like Hamas and to ISIS – are considerably colder.

British attitudes towards Israel appear to more or less mirror British attitudes towards the Palestinians – indeed, the results are largely identical.

This context is important, but again, does little to provide any direction in terms of policy. As interesting as these findings are, they tell us little about the nature or character of the people who hold the most hostile views towards Israel, or for that matter, those who hold the most favourable views towards ISIS or Hamas. So, whilst they show us the lay of the land, they are of limited value when it comes to determining the nature or scale of anti-Israel and/or antisemitic

Figure 12. Attitudes of British adults towards various countries and groups, October 2014



As interesting as these findings are, they tell us little about the nature or character of the people who hold the most hostile views towards Israel, or for that matter, those who hold the most favourable views towards ISIS or Hamas.

attitudes in the British population, or to designing policy to combat the most dangerous excesses of antisemitic or anti-Israel sentiment.

Furthermore, as is the case with any data, they require verification from other sources, and interestingly, data gathered by JPR for its 2011 student survey presented a rather different picture. Whilst the main part of this work was focused specifically on *Jewish* students, the study also included a survey of British

These results tell us little, if anything, about the nature of antisemitism, or the relationship between anti-Israelism and antisemitism, or the extent to which one ought to be concerned about how the 4% at the most negative end of the spectrum might translate their attitudes on this issue into political or violent action that might do damage in some way to Jewish life in this country.

students in general. It asked a random sample of this latter group to express its feelings towards Israel on a four-point scale from ‘very positive’ to ‘very negative,’ with a fifth option to state ‘no feelings either way.’ Somewhat unsurprisingly, we found that a clear majority (63%) had no feelings either way, but rather more surprisingly, we found that the remainder were distributed in a bell curve across the four-point scale,

with 5% ‘very positive’ and 13% ‘fairly positive’ on one side, and 15% ‘fairly negative’ and 4% ‘very negative’ on the other. That is to say, we found that among the minority of students in Britain in 2011 who held an opinion of any kind, they were more or less equally split between positive and negative, and only 4% held views likely to be intensely hostile.<sup>18</sup> Yet, again, these results offer a mere snapshot in time, so whilst interesting in and of themselves, they tell us little, if anything, about the nature of antisemitism, or the relationship between anti-Israelism and antisemitism, or the extent to which one ought to be concerned about how the 4% at the most negative end of the spectrum might translate their attitudes on this issue into political or violent action that might do damage in some way to Jewish life in this country.

We can gain a little more insight by returning to the 2015 Populus poll for the Parliamentary Council Against Antisemitism, which included a question about whether the respondents – British adults – think that the State of Israel has a right to exist. Inquiring about this takes the respondent beyond his or her general feelings towards Israel, which is what the questions discussed above looked at, and enters into far more fundamental and existential territory.

18 Interestingly, when we examined the results for students studying at Russell Group universities alone, the undecided dropped to about 50%, and the ‘fairly negative’ category climbed by more or less an equivalent amount. So there is evidence to indicate that those studying at the top universities in the country are both more likely to hold an opinion than students in general, and more likely for that opinion to be fairly negative than in general, raising the question about whether attitudes among the elite are rather more critical than the population at large.

And interestingly, the results are unambiguous: 89% said ‘yes,’ the State of Israel does have a right to exist. Of the remaining 11%, 7% did not know, 1% refused to answer, and just 4% said ‘no.’ Whilst these data again represent a single snapshot in time, and tell us little in detail about the characteristics of the respondents beyond their sex, age band, general socio-economic status and the region in which they live, they do provide an interesting insight into our shared understanding of general British attitudes towards Israel.

There is also some data available on whether British adults feel that British Jews have divided loyalties. The same Populus poll explored this issue, and found that only a small proportion, 6% to 7%, of British adults feel that British Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Britain.<sup>19</sup> Proportionately, this aligns very well with the Pew data which demonstrate that a similar proportion of British adults hold unfavourable

Attempting to pull together all of the data discussed above is extraordinarily difficult because each type of survey has its own independent rationale, purpose and methodology, and many fail to draw adequately on existing research traditions to make comparisons meaningful or reliable.

views of Jews, but we have no way of knowing the extent to which the groups identified by Populus and Pew overlap with one another. This highlights one of the problems of dealing with data from multiple sources, gathered at different times in different ways with different underlying purposes. Attempting to pull together all of the data discussed above is extraordinarily difficult; in the event that it all revealed similar levels and trends, one might be able to draw some reasonably robust conclusions, but that would be extremely unlikely, not least because each type of survey has its own independent rationale, purpose and methodology, and many fail to draw adequately on existing research traditions on antisemitism to make comparisons meaningful or reliable. Again, it becomes clear that a planned, systematic approach to data gathering and analysis, informed by a clear rationale, is an imperative if we wish to understand contemporary antisemitism and develop effective policies to combat it.

<sup>19</sup> Populus found that 60% to 62% of British adults thought that “British Jews are as loyal to Britain as any other British citizen,” 23% to 27% thought that British Jews “have divided loyalties and are as loyal to Israel as to Britain,” 6% to 7% thought that “British Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Britain,” and 6% to 8% didn’t know or refused to answer.

## Summary

In summary, the data presented in this section reveal a rather confusing and incoherent picture of reality. We have sources showing that levels of antipathy towards Jews are comparatively low and stable in the UK, even though other sources demonstrate that 2014 broke all known records for the number of antisemitic incidents in the country. We have sources suggesting that antisemitic attitudes are held by a considerably smaller proportion of British adults than French adults, but other sources showing that more antisemitic incidents per member of the Jewish population occur in the UK than in France. And we have sources demonstrating notably cold and unfavourable attitudes towards Israel among British adults, but others indicating overwhelming support for Israel’s existence. These contrasting images provide commentators with plenty of scope for discussion and debate, and one can readily find analysts offering doomsday predictions, or dismissing such forecasts as vast exaggerations, calculated mainly to score political points. But in the midst of all this are European Jews, trying to make some sense of reality among the conflicting claims, and European Jewish leaders trying to set policy. The data, while fascinating, are, more often than not, failing to enlighten in ways that can be of genuine use.

## 2. Exploring Jewish attitudes about antisemitism

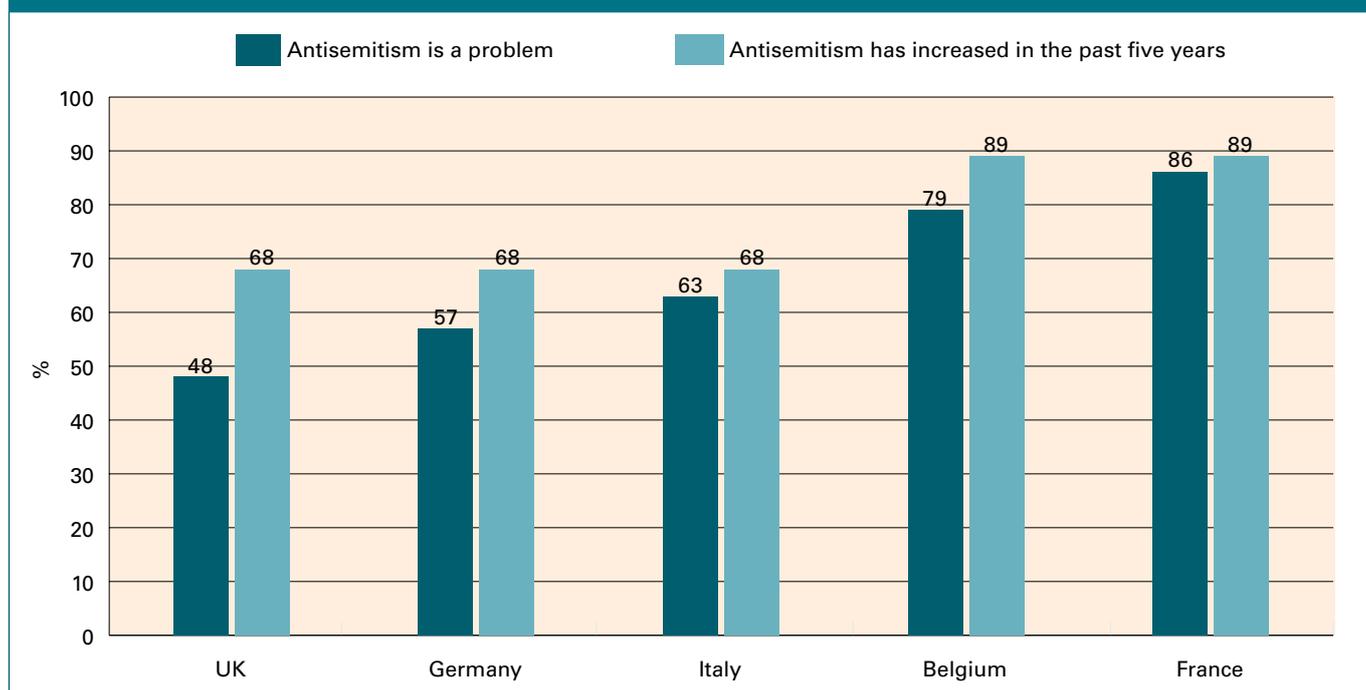
### Jewish perceptions and experiences of antisemitism

Up to this point, most of the data we have investigated have been based on the attitudes of non-Jews towards Jews. Whilst the picture produced from these data is complex, the lack of clarity generated is only part of the overall complexity that exists, because it is based on just one overriding approach to examining antisemitism, namely what non-Jews, in general, think of Jews. However, there is a second approach to researching this topic which should also inform our understanding of reality: how Jews experience and perceive the reality in which they find themselves.

Trends and levels of antisemitism, as shown by the various surveys of non-Jews, have a rather loose, or, more accurately, ambiguous relationship with what Jews actually feel.

There is far less data on this, not least because surveying small, difficult-to-reach populations is notoriously complex. However, in this section, we explore some of the data that do exist. We do so to illustrate an important point of this paper: that trends and levels of antisemitism, as shown by the various surveys of non-Jews, have a rather loose, or,

Figure 13. Proportion of the respondents saying that antisemitism is a problem and proportion saying it increased in the country of the respondent's residence in the past five years, %



more accurately, ambiguous relationship with what Jews actually feel, both in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Whilst the levels and trends in antisemitic attitudes are somewhat unclear, many Jews are worried nevertheless.

Consider the following findings from the aforementioned FRA survey of perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among European Jews. When asked (i) whether antisemitism constituted a problem in their country; and (ii) whether or not antisemitism had increased in the past five years, 48% and 68% of the UK respondents, respectively, answered yes. Yet, as Figure 13 testifies, the UK in this case, as previously, is the country with the lowest levels of worry. By contrast, in France, the corresponding figures are 86% and 89%.

When asked about their actual exposure to antisemitism, one in five respondents in the UK indicated having experienced antisemitic harassment in the twelve months prior to the survey, in contrast to between one in three to four respondents in France, Belgium and Italy. So, again, we observe a comparatively low level in the UK. This conclusion also applies in relation to antisemitic physical attacks, reportedly experienced by 3% of the UK respondents and 7% of respondents from France and Belgium (Figure 14).

We can also see that nearly one in three respondents in the UK said they were worried about becoming a victim of antisemitism in the future, and one in five

said they were considering emigrating as a result of it. In France and Belgium a sizeable majority of Jews appear to be worried, and 40-50% say that they are considering emigrating.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the Jewish populations of each country are quite clear about how they understand reality. We can see, for example, that French Jews feel that antisemitism in their country is a greater problem than British Jews feel it is in theirs: they experience

French Jews feel that antisemitism in their country is a greater problem than British Jews feel it is in theirs: they experience it more frequently, they are more likely to think it is on the rise, they are more anxious about it, and they are more likely to be contemplating emigration as a result of it.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that, to date, rather small numbers of Jews have acted on this. Approximately 7,000 French Jews migrated to Israel in 2014, representing less than 2% of the total French Jewish population. However, this is the largest number on record and represents a two-fold increase on 2013, and it obviously does not include French Jews opting to migrate to countries other than Israel. By contrast, the number of British Jews migrating to Israel has remained stable in recent years – around the 500-600 mark – constituting approximately 0.2% of the UK Jewish population. However, in understanding all of these figures, it is important to bear in mind that antisemitism may not be the driving factor in all, or even most of the cases. The decision to emigrate may equally be driven by other factors, notably employment prospects and the state of the economy.

Figure 14. Proportion of respondents saying that they had experienced antisemitic harassment or an antisemitic physical attack in the previous 12 months, %

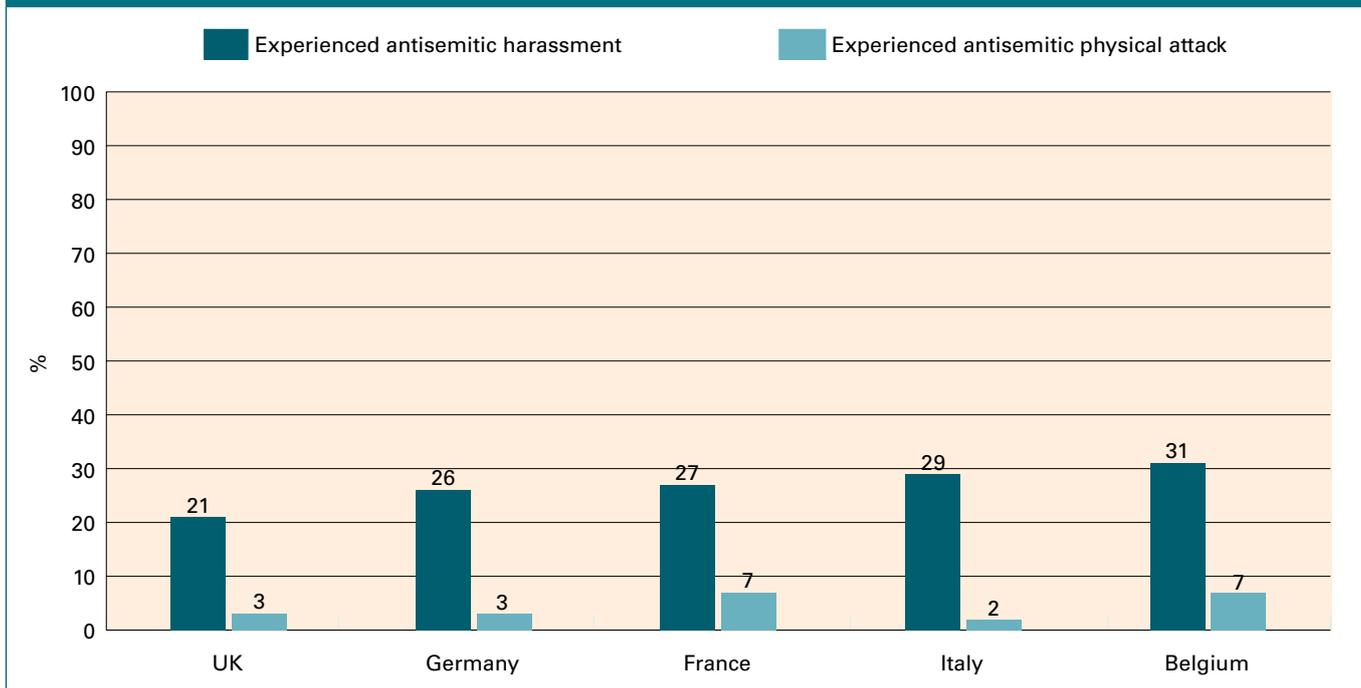
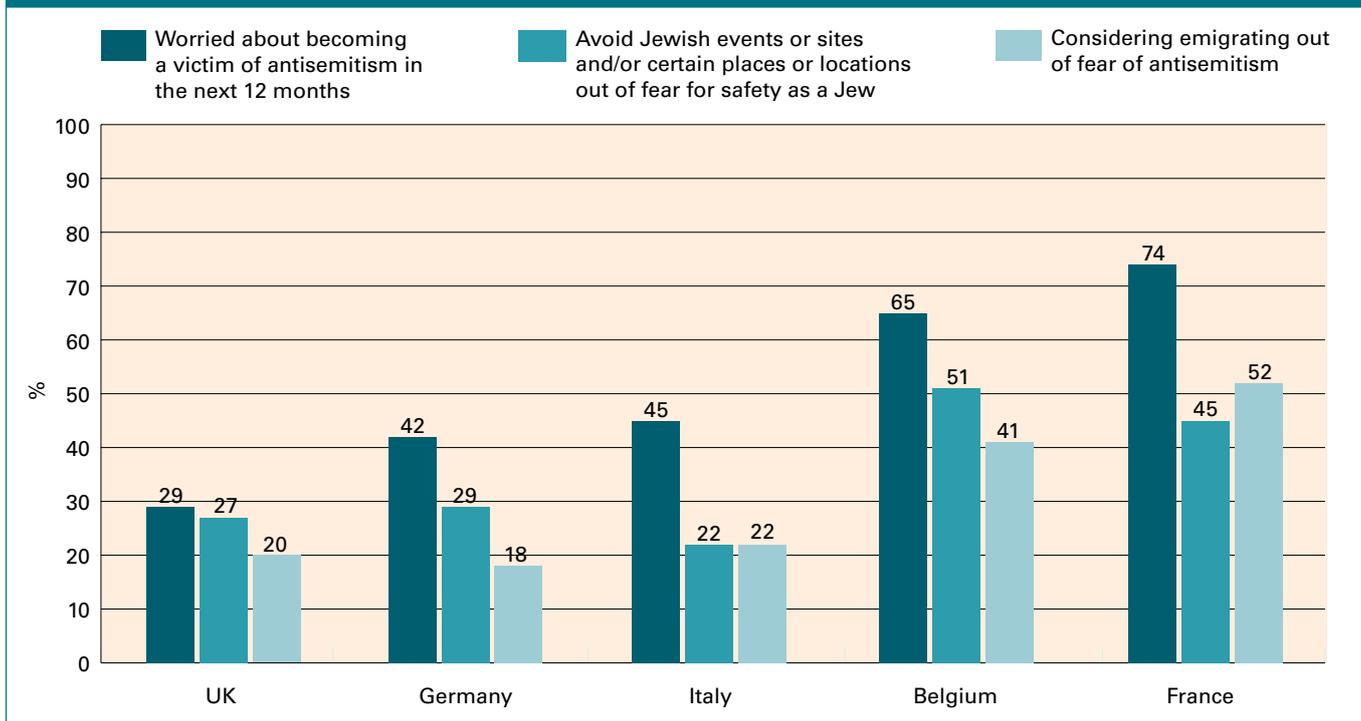


Figure 15. Proportions of respondents expressing anxieties about antisemitism, using various measures (%)

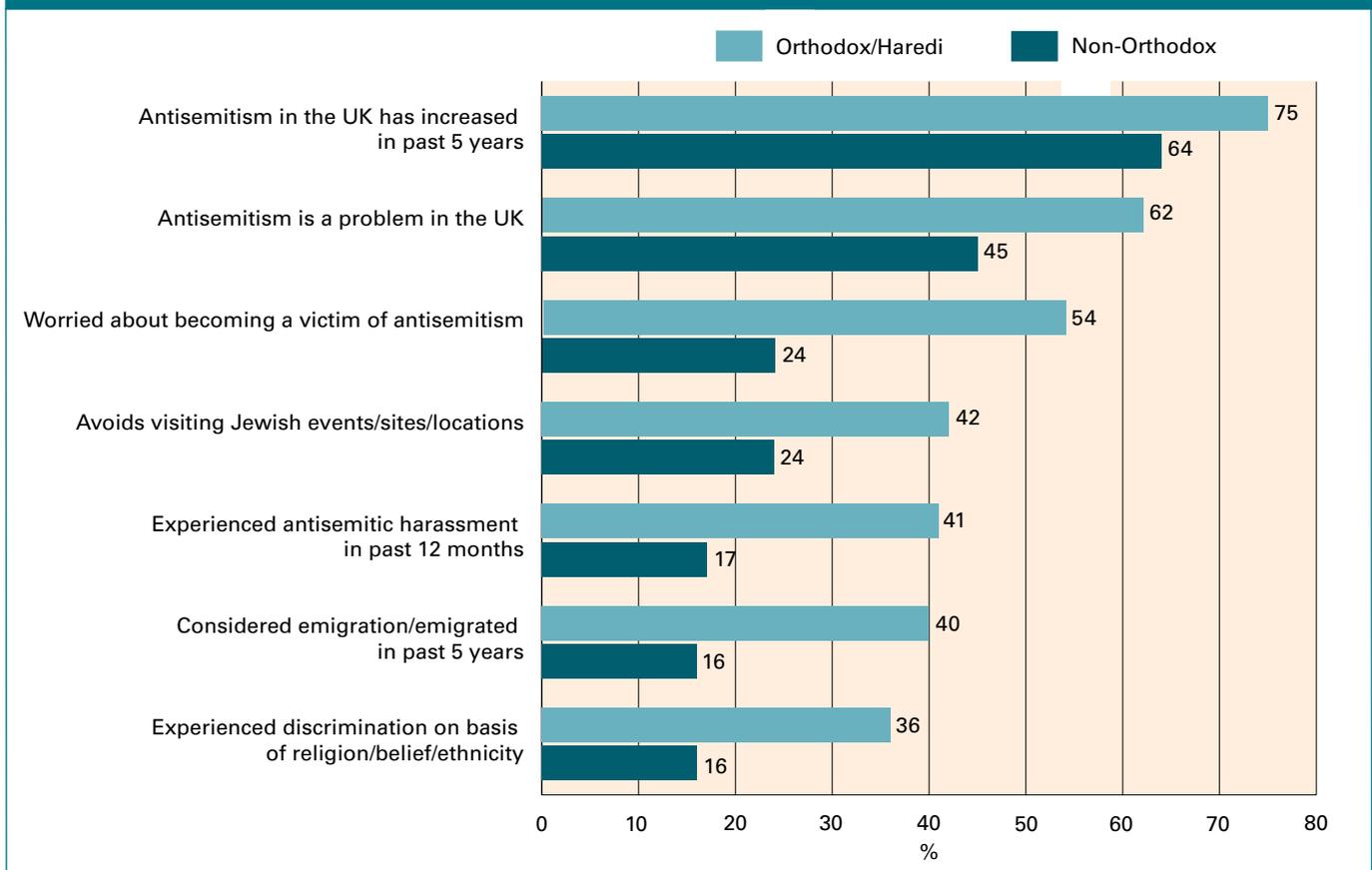


it more frequently, they are more likely to think it is on the rise, they are more anxious about it, and they are more likely to be contemplating emigration as a result of it.

Yet, in considering these results, it is important to bear in mind that these are the results for Jews *as a whole*; they do not take into consideration that different types of Jews may perceive and experience

antisemitism differently. JPR research on the 2012 FRA data investigated this, and, most notably, identified important distinctions between Orthodox or *haredi* (strictly Orthodox) Jews, on the one hand, and non-Orthodox Jews on the other, or, expressed slightly differently, Jews who are identifiably Jewish as a result of the clothing they wear or some other distinctive external sign, and Jews who are not. For example, Orthodox Jews in the UK are twice as likely

Figure 16. Differences in perceptions and experiences of antisemitism between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews in the UK (%)



to have experienced antisemitic harassment and/or discrimination in recent years as non-Orthodox Jews in the UK. Orthodox Jews are also more than twice as likely to be worried about becoming a victim of antisemitism and to have considered emigration as non-Orthodox Jews. More generally, it is the Orthodox group that is most likely to think that antisemitism is a problem in the UK and that it is on the increase (Figure 16).

Whilst further data are required to deepen our understanding of how Jews differ from one another in terms of their perceptions and experiences of antisemitism, the fundamental finding in Figure 16 is sound. However, the shortcoming of these data lies predominantly, once again, inasmuch as they offer a mere snapshot in time, so at this stage at least, we have no way of ascertaining the extent to which the gaps between these two groups of Jews are growing, declining or stable. This is important, not least because demographic data indicate that the numerical balance between these two groups is likely to shift over time, in favour of the more Orthodox. So, even if we were to see the gap between them changing over time, we would need to take into consideration how these demographic changes were exacerbating or dampening the observed results.

However, there is a much more important complication. Overall, we can see that a significant minority of Jews in the UK, for example, is worried about the level of antisemitism and concerned that it is increasing. Yet this stands in stark contrast to the relatively low and stable trends in antisemitic sentiment as expressed by non-Jews when they are polled. Why is this? And, which side is more 'right'? At this stage, based on existing data, we have no way of answering these questions.

A significant minority of Jews in the UK is worried about the level of antisemitism and concerned that it is increasing. Yet this stands in stark contrast to the relatively low and stable trends in antisemitic sentiment as expressed by non-Jews when they are polled. Why is this? And, which side is more 'right'?

Our position is no better when we try to form a view of how significant the volume of concern expressed by Jews is in policy terms. On the one hand, UK Jews seem to be the least worried Jewish population in Europe; indeed, almost half say that they consider antisemitism to be 'not a very big problem' and a small minority (one in twenty) says it is 'not a problem at all.' Yet, at the same time, nearly one in three fears an antisemitic attack of some sort

in the next twelve months. How do we explain this discrepancy? And, for those who express concern, what do the levels of concern expressed actually

On the one hand, UK Jews seem to be the least worried Jewish population in Europe; at the same time, nearly one in three fears an antisemitic attack of some sort in the next twelve months.

mean? Do they imply a high level of deep personal anxiety, or mild apprehension, or something in between? Indeed, what is the 'normal' level of discomfort for an ethnic minority with a long history of persecution and religious/political conflict with a surrounding majority population? These questions remain unanswered.

However, we do have a benchmark to help us to explore the relationship between Jews' perceptions of antisemitism and its realities. JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey investigated various dimensions of the Jewish identities of British Jews, and the previously unpublished data shown in Figure 17 present the findings for where 'combating antisemitism' sits in their conception of their Jewishness. The chart divides the whole sample into six denominational groups, and within each of these, three sub-groups by age. One of the clearest observations is that, in all denominational categories, younger people consider combating antisemitism to be a less important part of their Jewish identity than older people. This could suggest declining levels of concern about antisemitism over time – those born more recently clearly see antisemitism as a less important feature of their Jewishness than their elders. But it could equally suggest adaptation to reality – a sense among the young that the antisemitism they observe and experience is simply a 'normal' feature of contemporary Jewish life.

It is also interesting to note that haredi Jews – i.e. those most religiously observant and clearly identifiably Jewish – are among the least likely to see antisemitism as an important part of their Jewish identity, whereas 'Traditional' Jews (most likely to be members of British modern Orthodox synagogues, but not necessarily identifiably Jewish), are most likely to do so. However, overall, it is clear that combating antisemitism features as a highly prominent component of contemporary British Jewish identity. Indeed, presented with a list of twenty different items that might comprise important elements of their Jewish identities, 'combating antisemitism' came in fourth, with 55% maintaining that it is 'very important', and a further 32% saying it is 'fairly

important.'<sup>21</sup> Given that 'Remembering the Holocaust' featured as the second most important part of British Jews' identities, it is clear that antisemitism, both contemporary and historical, looms large in their minds. Yet, the extent to which this is primarily a reaction to current reality, or a perception informed by recent Jewish history, is unclear.

In public discourse, some commentators maintain that the threat facing British Jews today is not dissimilar to the threat facing German Jews in the 1920s or 1930s. Others calmly believe that Britain remains one of the best places in the world for Jews to live, and that, in many respects, Jews have never had it so good. British Jews sometimes adopt one of these positions, but most probably sit somewhere in the middle, trying to make sense of all the noise, concerned by an uncomfortable sense that they should be more concerned than they actually are, or worried by a lingering sense that they might be more worried than is actually necessary. And, in the sea of data that exists, few seem to notice that the findings often speak with multiple voices and at cross-purposes, that Jewish concerns about contemporary antisemitism may be intertwined with the Jewish historical experience (rightly or wrongly), and that our resultant capacity to develop practical insights or sound policy is severely limited. Indeed, looking at the various different sources presented thus far, can anyone say with any degree of certainty whether or not it is safe for Jews to remain in the UK, whether or not the threat is growing or declining over time, or precisely what it is that we should even be monitoring that might help us to answer these questions? This situation begs the question: do we

This situation begs the question: do we need to change something in our research philosophy and practice to get better and more useful results? Can we undertake research in new ways that would make us more confident about our findings, and more able to devise sensible policy?

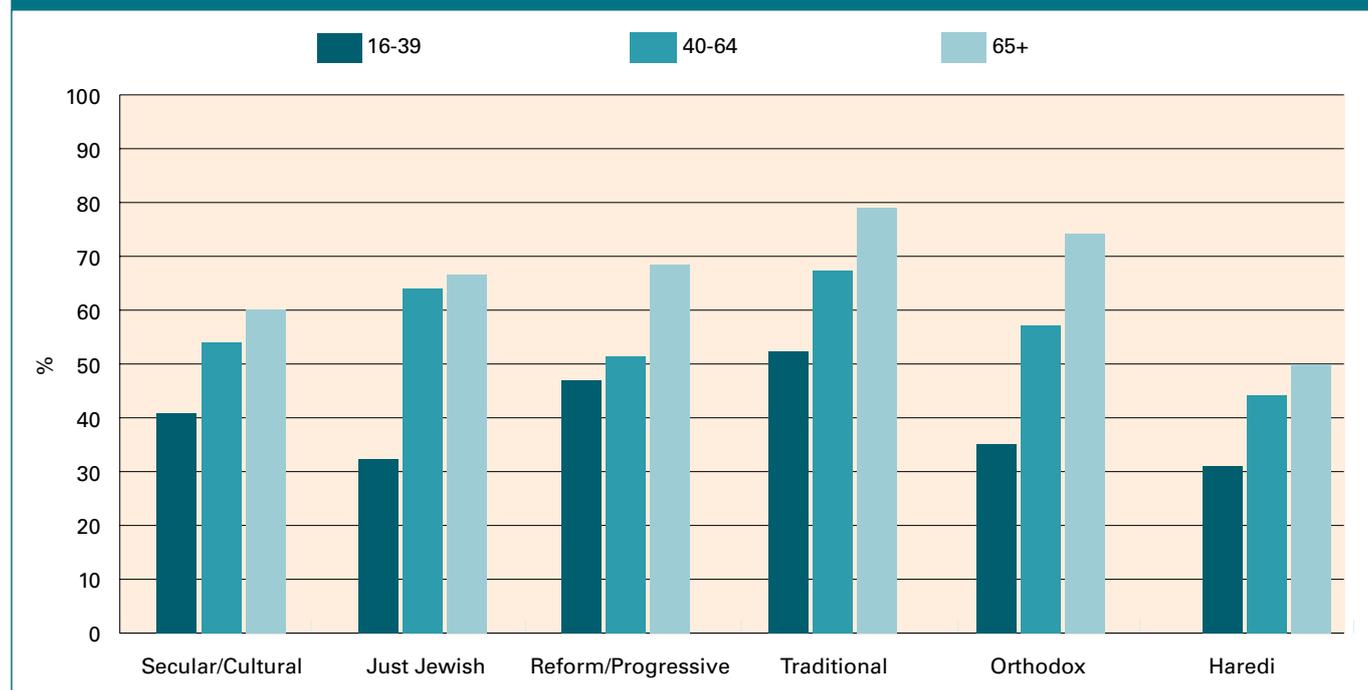
need to change something in our research philosophy and practice to get better and more useful results? Can we undertake research in new ways that would make us more confident about our findings, and more able to devise sensible policy?

## Summary

In most countries across Europe, there is evidence to suggest that a majority of Jews believes antisemitism

21 See: Graham, D., Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. (2014). *Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013: Preliminary findings from the National Jewish Community Survey*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.13.

Figure 17. Proportions of different denominational groups and age bands saying 'combating antisemitism' is 'very important' to their own sense of Jewish identity (%)



to be a problem in their country and that levels of it have increased in recent years. Large proportions are worried about becoming a victim of it in the coming year, particularly in France and Belgium, and significant minorities avoid Jewish sites or events out of fear for their safety, and have considered emigrating as a result. Nevertheless, it is clear that different types of Jews perceive and experience antisemitism differently – most notably the Orthodox and non-Orthodox – due, in part, to the differing ability of potential perpetrators to be able to identify them as Jews, and in part, to their own internal understanding of the place of antisemitism within their own sense of Jewish identity. However, there are substantial differences between the levels of antipathy towards Jews found in the data investigating the attitudes of non-Jews, and the levels of anxiety and apprehension about antisemitism found in the data examining the perceptions and experiences of Jews. Much more in-depth research among Jewish populations is required to make sense of these data, conducted with a clear eye on devising policy about how best to respond to existing Jewish community concerns.

### 3. Considering the perpetrators

#### Who are the antisemites?

Thus far, we have seen data from Pew which suggest levels of antipathy towards Jews in Britain have remained largely steady and comparatively low over recent years; data from ADL which suggest

that *antisemitic attitudes* among British adults are comparatively low and have declined recently (in contrast to the attitudes of people in France, Germany, Spain and Poland, which are higher and have increased recently); and data from CST which show a sharp increase in *antisemitic incidents* for a particular period during 2014, but generally a rather steady rise over time caused either by a genuine increase in the number of incidents, and/or by a change in reporting behaviour. We have explored attitudes of people in different countries towards Israel, and, from the fairly scant and sporadic data that exist, have seen that, whilst most British adults view Israel unfavourably, few appear to question its right to exist. We have also seen how Jews in different countries experience and perceive antisemitism differently, noting that more Orthodox (and thus more easily identifiable) Jews experience antisemitism more frequently and perceive it to be worse than non-Orthodox (and thus less easily identifiable) Jews, and noted how antisemitism appears to play a rather important role in contemporary Jewish identity in Britain. However, perhaps most importantly, in collecting and investigating these data, we are arguably no clearer about the real nature of the problem. We have some conflicting indications of its scale, and its direction of travel, but we have not yet shone a spotlight on, arguably, the most important issue of all – who holds these hostile views and/or perpetrates these violent or aggressive acts? If we want to tackle antisemitism, we must develop an understanding of this.

Table 1. Description of the person(s) making negative statements about Jewish people in the past 12 months, by EU Member State<sup>23</sup>

Description of person(s)	EU Member State								Average
	BE	DE	FR	HU	IT	LV	SE	UK	
Someone with a left-wing political view	58	47	67	12	62	15	54	57	53
Someone with a Muslim extremist view	60	48	73	15	38	10	51	56	51
Someone with a right-wing political view	32	40	27	79	55	29	31	33	39
Someone with a Christian extremist view	16	13	22	32	36	14	7	14	19
None of the above	14	22	8	12	22	15	21	10	14
Do not know	10	13	6	6	4	41	11	15	11

The CST investigates this issue when it gathers its data. It notes in its most recent report: “a physical description of the offender was obtained in 340, or 29 per cent, of the 1,168 incidents recorded by CST in 2014. Of these, 148 offenders were described as ‘White – North European’ (44 per cent); five offenders were described as ‘White – South European’ (1 per cent); 26 offenders were described as ‘Black’ (8 per cent); 127 offenders were described as ‘South Asian’ (37 per cent); 34 offenders were described as being ‘Arab or North African’ (10 per cent); and no offenders were described as ‘East or South East Asian’. These figures partly reflect the fact that Britain’s Jewish communities tend to live in relatively diverse urban areas, and that street crime offenders (where most antisemitic incidents take place) make up a younger, and more diverse, demographic profile than the population as a whole.”<sup>22</sup>

Another attempt to identify offenders was made by the FRA in its 2012 study. It used a system that included direct political and religious categories: ‘Someone with a left-wing political view,’ ‘Someone with a right-wing political view,’ ‘Someone with a Muslim extremist view,’ and ‘Someone with a Christian extremist view.’ The data presented in Table 1 report on people who made negative statements about Jewish people.

More detailed analysis of the FRA data by JPR revealed that, in the United Kingdom, the category of offender most likely to perpetrate antisemitic physical *violence* was ‘Someone with a Muslim

extremist view,’ followed by a ‘Teenager/group of teenagers.’ Interestingly, ‘Someone with a left-wing political view’ was found to be more likely to perpetrate both antisemitic harassment and antisemitic violence than ‘Someone with a right-wing political view.’ It is also noteworthy that the catch-all, non-descript category ‘Someone else’ is most likely of all groups to perpetrate antisemitic harassment, and second most likely after Muslim extremists to perpetrate antisemitic violence. The full results of the analysis for the UK are shown in Figure 18.

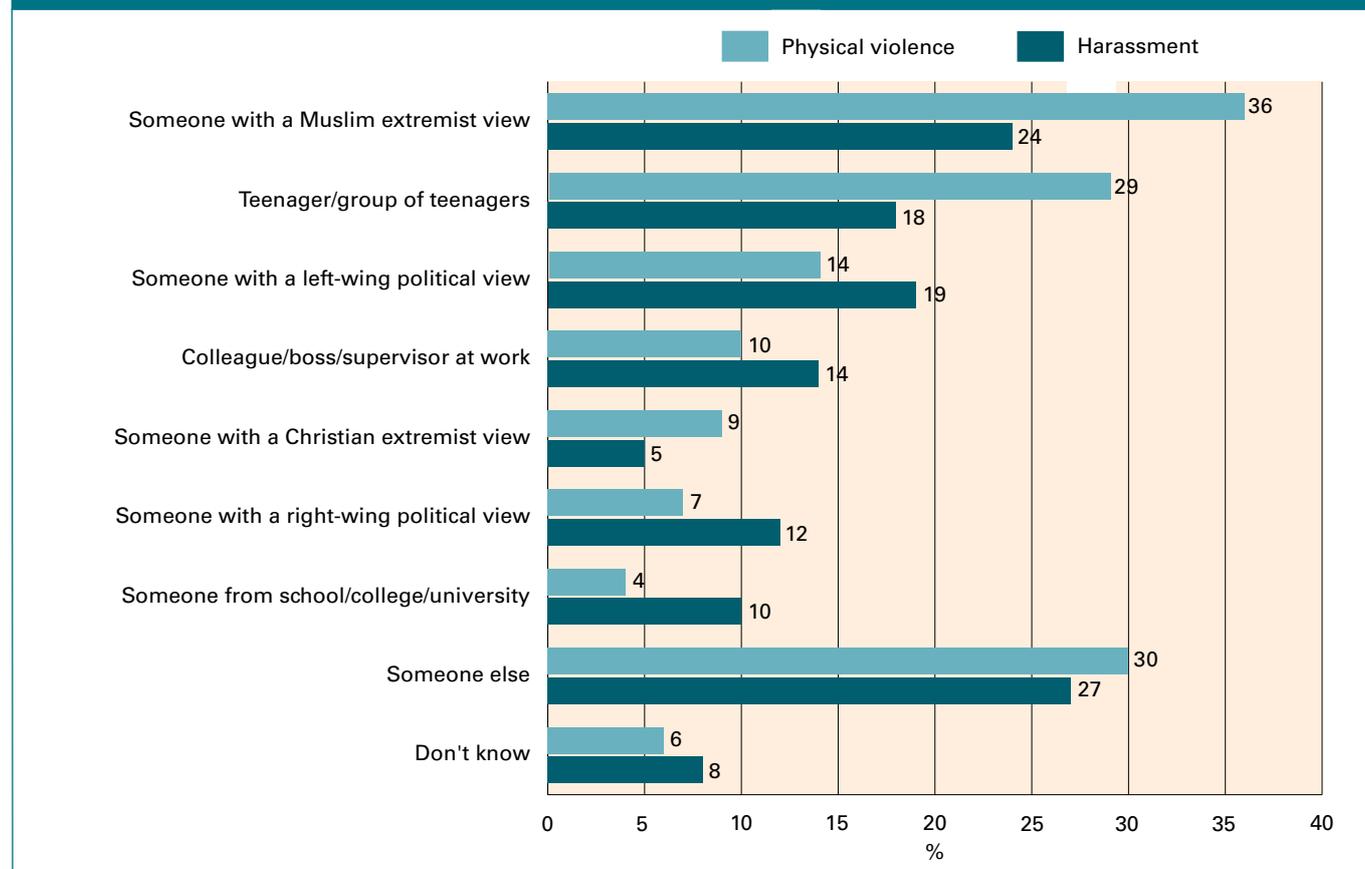
Looking at the CST and FRA data together highlights some of the research challenges. First of all, the two organisations have used different systems of categorisation, rendering comparisons not entirely straightforward. Second, both assessments are based on the *perceptions* of the victims, creating room for some, at least, to potentially question the results on these grounds. Third, the two sources investigate different types of incidents, the details of which are sometimes revealed, and sometimes not. Part of the reason for this is due to a common reluctance to stigmatise particular groups – notably Muslims – yet, as will be argued below, this type of obfuscation may actually create more problems than it solves. Yet these problems also exist, in part, due to the absence of a clear overarching and comprehensive research programme designed to understand the nature of contemporary antisemitism and to help set policy on how to combat it.

Such a programme would need to be based heavily on existing hypotheses about who the perpetrators of antisemitism today are most likely to be. The FRA’s questions in its survey recognised this, incorporating general categories (e.g. teenagers, colleagues, educational staff, etc.) that were also included in its various studies of racism against others groups, as well as specific categories that might be more relevant in the particular case of Jews,

22 CST, *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2014*, op. cit. CST notes that it uses the ‘IC1-6’ system to identify offenders, the same system as is used by UK police services. It is worth noting that the equivalent French Jewish body, the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive (SPCJ), does not include data on offenders in its reports.

23 BE = Belgium; DE = Germany; FR = France; HU = Hungary; IT = Italy; LV = Latvia; SE = Sweden; and UK = United Kingdom.

Figure 18. Perpetrators of specific cases of antisemitic harassment or physical attack in the previous five years in the UK, as perceived by respondents (%)



N=425 (harassment) and N=70 (physical violence).

given the known history of antisemitism (e.g. the political right and left, and Christian and Muslim extremists). Indeed, one of the most intriguing and challenging features about antisemitism is that, at different stages in its development, it has come from all parts of the political spectrum and from different religious groups living in close proximity to Jews, most notably Christians and Muslims.

One of the most intriguing and challenging features about antisemitism is that, at different stages in its development, it has come from all parts of the political spectrum and from different religious groups

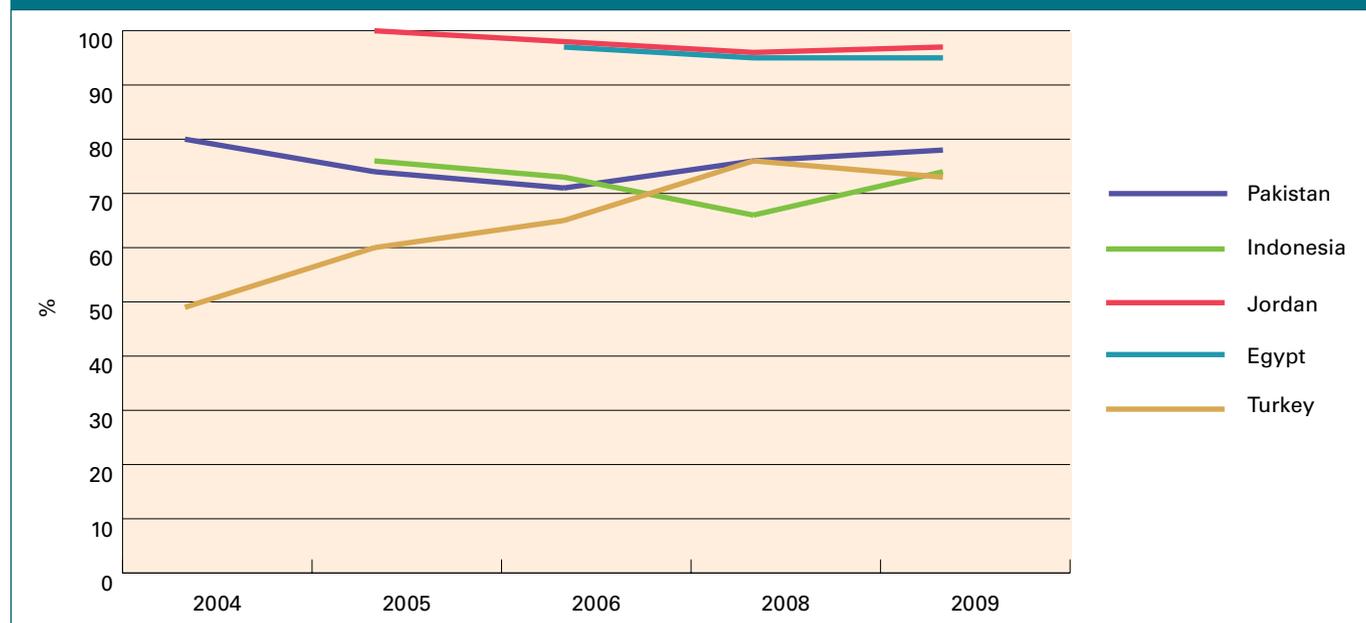
Any serious research initiative should acknowledge this reality, and include within its programme attempts to understand and monitor antisemitism from all of these sources, not only to determine its contemporary character, but also to ensure an on-going assessment of whether more latent forms of antisemitism are showing any signs of revival. This requires complex and costly data gathering and analysis, not least because each of these sub-populations needs to be researched in sufficient detail to be able to draw meaningful conclusions not only about each group as a whole, but, much more

importantly, about the sub-groups within the sub-groups that may pose the most serious threats.

However, at present, it is clear which group is causing the highest level of concern. It can be seen in the FRA findings that situates 'Someone with a Muslim extremist view' at the top of the list of most likely perpetrators of antisemitic harassment and violence in Europe, and in the somewhat euphemistic 'South Asians' and 'Arabs or North Africans' in the CST data. Furthermore, all of the most murderous attacks on Jews in Europe in recent years – on Ilan Halimi in Paris in 2006, at the Ozar HaTorah Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012, at the Brussels Jewish Museum in 2014, in the kosher supermarket in Paris in 2015 and outside the synagogue in Copenhagen in 2015 – were all perpetrated by Islamist extremists. So what do we know about Muslims and antisemitism?

British Muslims represent just 5% of the UK population, so the number of Muslim respondents in general polls of the UK population is typically far too low to undertake any detailed analysis of them. Furthermore, any significant differences between the attitudes of British Muslims and the attitudes of the British population as a whole will typically fail to be picked up in general polls of British adults, because

Figure 19. Proportion of people holding 'very unfavourable' or 'mostly unfavourable' opinion about Jews, in selected predominantly Muslim countries



Source: Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project.

Muslims do not comprise a large enough proportion of the whole to affect the counts.<sup>24</sup> That said, from time to time, survey takers allow 'boosters' for specific, usually small, ethnic and religious minorities, and these can be valuable. However, sources which, in the context of surveying national populations around the world, regularly survey people in countries with large Muslim majorities, are particularly revealing.

When we examine such data, there is clear evidence to indicate that the level of antipathy among Muslims towards Jews is a major issue. The Pew data investigated earlier in this paper, for example, have also explored attitudes towards Jews in countries with predominantly Muslim populations – notably Turkey (which is 98.6% Muslim), Egypt (94.7%), Jordan (98.8%), Indonesia (88.1%) and Pakistan (96.4%)<sup>25</sup> – and it is clear that, based on this measure, levels of

There is clear evidence to indicate that the level of antipathy among Muslims towards Jews is a major issue.

24 For example, whilst Pew finds that only about 2–3% of British adults holds 'very unfavourable' views of Jews, that count conceals much higher levels of antipathy among the Muslim population of the UK (see Figure 20). Moreover, even if those levels were to remain stable over time, the significant projected increase in the size of the Muslim population over the coming decades will still barely register any change in the overall figures because they will continue to be a small minority among the UK population as a whole.

25 Pew Research Center (2011). *The Future of the Global Muslim Population. Projections for 2010–2030*.

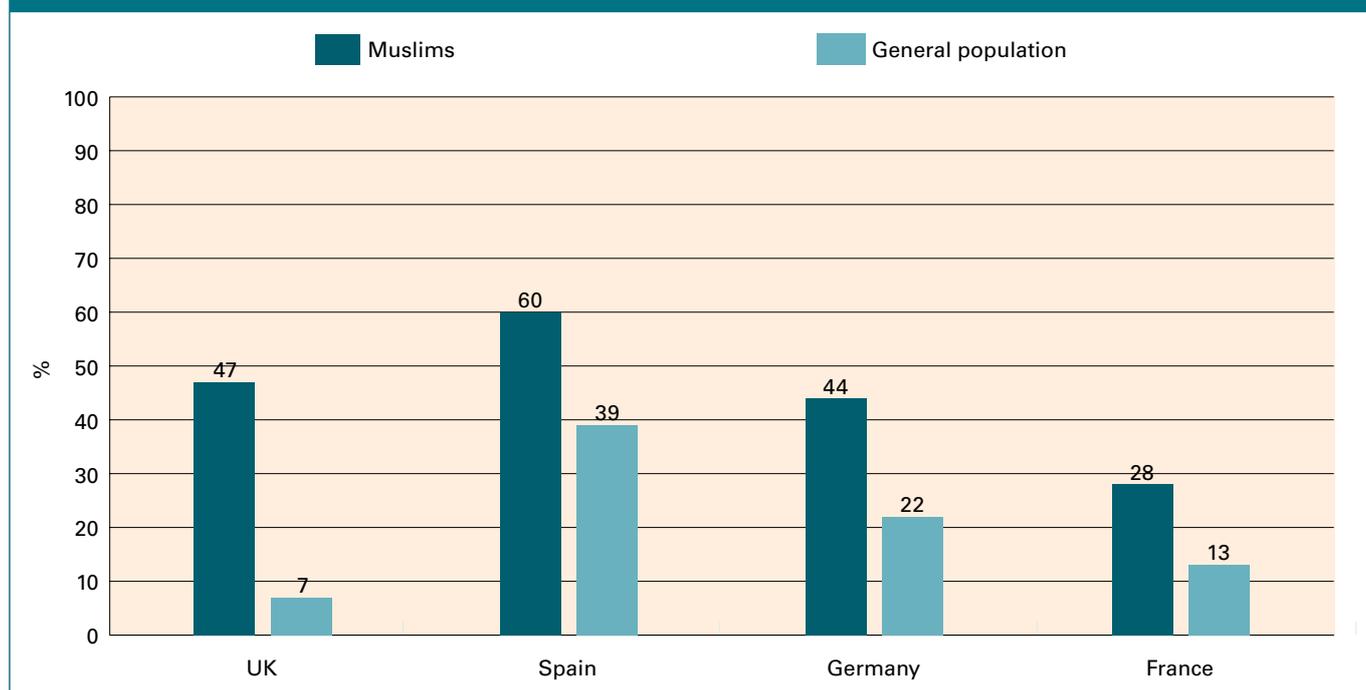
antipathy towards Jews are significantly higher in these countries than in any of the countries in Europe explored previously (Figure 19).

In countries bordering Israel with a history of armed conflict with it but which currently have peace agreements in place (Jordan and Egypt), unfavourable views of Jews are held by almost 100% of their populations. In the predominantly Muslim countries of South Asia (Pakistan and Indonesia) that do not share borders with Israel and have no history of military conflict with it, Jews are also seen unfavourably, across most years, by over 70% of population. In all countries shown, with the exception of Turkey, the trend is essentially flat from 2004–2009. In Turkey, Jews are seen unfavourably by 50% of the population in 2004 and by over 70% of the population in 2009; indeed, the trend there converges over the years shown to the levels exhibited by Pakistan and Indonesia. The lowest levels of unfavourable attitudes towards Jews in the given set of predominantly Muslim countries (Turkey in 2004) is marginally higher than the countries with the most unfavourable attitudes in Europe (see Figure 1). In short, in the words of the Pew analysts who first investigated these data, "anti-Jewish sentiment is endemic in the Muslim world."<sup>26</sup>

In short, in the words of the Pew analysts who first investigated these data, "anti-Jewish sentiment is endemic in the Muslim world."

26 See: *Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics. 17-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey*. Pew Research Center, 2005, p.5.

Figure 20. Proportion of Muslims and general population holding 'very unfavourable' or 'mostly unfavourable' opinion about Jews – European countries, 2006



One might hypothesise that these types of attitudes are not simply directed at Jews, but rather at all minorities. However, this does not appear to be the case. Attitudes towards Christians in most of these countries are far from positive, but do not reach the levels of antipathy shown towards Jews. In Egypt, between 46% and 51% hold unfavourable views of Christians; in Jordan, the figures range from 25% to 41%. The range in Indonesia is between 32% and 41%; in Pakistan it is highest, between 54% and 62%. Indeed, only in Turkey are the figures for Christians very similar to those for Jews, rising from 52% in 2004 to 74% in 2008. In short, there does appear to be something highly distinctive about how Jews are perceived in these countries.

The question is whether the attitudes of Muslims living in these countries bear any relationship to the attitudes of Muslims living in Europe. In thinking about this, it is worth noting that 36% of all Muslims living in the UK today – close to one million people – were born in the Middle East or Asia, and thus may have been exposed in some way to the attitudes that are prevalent in their countries of birth.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, it is also worth noting that this proportion declined slightly over the ten years between 2001 and 2011, down from 39%, suggesting that these levels of exposure may

<sup>27</sup> See: Sundas Ali (2015). *British Muslims in Numbers. A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census*. London: Muslim Council of Britain.

become less significant over time. However, more importantly, there is clear evidence to indicate that Muslims living in Europe do demonstrate higher than average levels of antipathy towards Jews. Using Pew data from 2006 to investigate attitudes towards Jews, we see a snapshot of this in Figure 20.

It is clear from these data that unfavourable views among European Muslims lie somewhere in between the levels registered in Muslim countries and those exhibited by non-Muslims in European countries. In Britain the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims appears to be particularly pronounced: almost one half of Muslims hold 'unfavourable' views of Jews whilst

In France, somewhat counter-intuitively, a much smaller proportion of the Muslim population holds unfavourable attitudes towards Jews than in any of the other three countries shown, yet it is here that we have witnessed the most deadly attacks in recent years by Islamist extremists on Jews.

only about 7% of the general population as a whole does so. In France, somewhat counter-intuitively, a much smaller proportion of the Muslim population holds unfavourable attitudes towards Jews than in any of the other three countries shown, yet it is here that we have witnessed the most deadly attacks in recent years by Islamist extremists on Jews.

How can one explain this? Given that the most murderous attacks on Jews came from Muslims

subscribing to an especially extreme, radical and violent interpretation of Islamic ideas, does this suggest, for example, that levels of general Muslim antipathy towards Jews are not, in and of themselves, a predictor of antisemitic violence? Might it suggest that other factors – perhaps the levels of antipathy among the non-Muslim population, or the relationship between this and the levels found within the Muslim population – are influential? Or might it be entirely different factors, such as the presence or absence of specific Islamic doctrines or ethnic groups that are critical, or socio-economic factors, or the availability of weaponry, or the visibility of Jews and Jewish infrastructure? Alternatively, there are other data sources which generate different results. For example, Fondapol data on French Muslims indicate that hostility towards Jews is actually much higher than this: in its 2014 survey, for example, it found that 67% of French Muslims believe that Jews have too much power in the realm of the economy and finance, and 56% believe that Jews use their status as victims of the Holocaust for their own interests.<sup>28</sup> It is conceivable that something significant changed in the period between 2006 and 2014 to account for the huge discrepancies between the Pew and the Fondapol findings. However, again, because attitudes have not been monitored systematically over time, we have no way of knowing.

Thus, even when we use existing data to focus on a sub-population known to hold higher than average antipathetic views of Jews, we are left with some uncertainty. Yet, of all the data we have examined in this paper, the findings concerning Muslim attitudes to Jews contain the least cacophony: combining all insights in this section clearly allows us to identify Muslims in Europe as the primary group requiring investigation. However, as much as it provides us with evidence of the need to do this, it also confirms that, at this stage, we remain at some distance from being able to explain the particularly deadly nature of Islamist antisemitism in France or to predict what lies ahead for the UK Jewish community.

## Summary

Existing research on antisemitism carries within it traditions and methods designed to investigate the nature, politics and religious affiliations of perpetrators. The categorisations used to characterise the culprits vary, reflecting both variation in research methods and a wariness about the possibility of stigmatising entire groups. However, in analysing the approaches used, there is an acknowledgement that antisemitism can be found on the political left and the political right, and among both Christian

and Muslim groups. In seeking to understand and monitor antisemitism today, it is necessary to investigate all of these groups on an on-going basis, in order to determine precisely where the threats exist, and whether they are growing, declining or stable

There is a clear need to investigate contemporary Muslim attitudes towards Jews in order to develop a detailed and nuanced understanding of the extent to which this particular group, and/or sub-groups within it, pose a threat to Jewish life in Europe.

over time. In particular, there is overwhelmingly clear evidence of hostility towards Jews among large numbers of Muslims living in Europe and beyond, and, as a result, there is a clear need to investigate contemporary Muslim attitudes towards Jews in order to develop a detailed and nuanced understanding of the extent to which this particular group, and/or sub-groups within it, pose a threat to Jewish life in Europe.

## 4. Towards the future of antisemitism research

### Identifying key principles

All of the aforementioned data and analysis, which merely scratch the surface of what exists, help to generate vast amounts of commentary, from different perspectives, on antisemitism in Britain and across Europe today. However, at best, much of this commentary tends to use the data selectively in order to illustrate the author's particular point or agenda. So we are left with a great deal of 'noise' – opinions, thoughts, conjecture, prejudices – some more eloquent than others, which is often interesting and occasionally extremely insightful, but does little to really clarify contemporary reality in a way that can be used to make an empirical assessment of what is going on. If the chief concerns at present are (i) what is the nature of the threat that exists?; (ii) what is its

We are at a juncture where more data does not necessarily translate into better understanding. The reason for this is an absence of three critical elements in the research that is being undertaken: definitional clarity, an understanding of arithmetic necessities, and a capacity to benchmark

scale and is it growing or declining?; and (iii) what should I, an average member of the Jewish community, or I, a community leader, do about it?; it is really unclear how most of this commentary helps to inform policy or action. In short, we are at a juncture where

28 Fondapol (2014), op. cit.

more data does not necessarily translate into better understanding. The reason for this is an absence of three critical elements in the research that is being undertaken: definitional clarity, an understanding of arithmetic necessities, and a capacity to benchmark.

Concerning *definitional clarity*, in order to develop policy around combating antisemitism, the first thing we need to do is to define the problem. This is an absolutely fundamental principle in public policy analysis. And in this particular instance, we need to ascertain what it is that is of chief concern to British Jews; what it is that is causing the level of concern and fear that has been widely reported in the media. Much of the data investigated above demonstrates that, taken as a whole, the British population does not appear to be overwhelmingly antisemitic, certainly when contrasted with other European or Middle Eastern populations. In theory, at least, this should bring significant comfort to British Jews, and assuage many concerns. Yet, the discourse about Israel, particularly in summer 2014, the spike in antisemitic incidents that took place at that time, and an uncomfortable sense that an Islamist extremist attack on a Jewish site or sites in the UK is almost inevitable, are all generating widespread anxiety. In building a research agenda going forward, one needs to be absolutely clear about

In building a research agenda going forward, one needs to be absolutely clear about the specific problems that require investigation, and then focus energy clearly and robustly on those.

the specific problems that require investigation, and then focus energy clearly and robustly on those. More than any other, Muslim antisemitism in the context of Western societies is a key topic to investigate in greater depth. Any obfuscation, avoidance or understatement in this regard, however politically expedient, is not only scientifically problematic, but potentially socially irresponsible.

Concerning *arithmetic necessities*, it should be clear by now that a great deal of the polling data that exist fail to capture the intricacies of key sub-populations within society. This is a major failing when researching antisemitism. For example, today, the populations of Western Europe as a whole, and Britain in particular, contain non-Muslim majorities. These are absolute majorities – nowhere in Western Europe does the Muslim component of the population even come close to approaching 50%. It is the opinions and views of those majorities (shown in the Pew data presented in Figure 1) that shape the overall levels of antipathy towards Jews registered by the surveys of the whole population. Indeed, minority groups'

views are not seen in these counts simply due to their (still) modest impact on the total measures. A view of a 10% minority will not have a perceptible impact on the total measures, irrespective of how different that view may be from the views held by the majority population.

Continuing the example, Muslims constitute 4.8% (0.048 when expressed as a proportion) of the population of England and Wales.<sup>29</sup> Non-Muslims therefore constitute 95.2% of the population of England and Wales (0.952 when expressed as a proportion). For illustrative purposes, let us assume that the prevalence of unfavourable attitudes to Jews in the Muslim population of England and Wales remains at the value registered for British Muslims in 2006, i.e. 47% (Pew data, Figure 20). If the prevalence of antisemitic views in the population of England and Wales as a whole is 7% (Pew data, Figure 17), then the prevalence of these views among non-Muslims (let us call it  $x$  in the meantime) can be found by solving the following equation for  $x$ :  $(0.048 \times 47\%) + (0.952 \times x\%) = 7\%$ . The answer is  $x = 4.983$ . Thus, the prevalence of unfavourable attitudes towards Jews among the non-Muslim population is just under 5%. The presence of unfavourable attitudes among the Muslim population therefore pushes the overall prevalence up by just two percentage points – within the margin of error for these data. Yet this calculation allows us to see the Muslim population within the wider UK population, and to begin to see that whilst Muslims constitute 5% of the population of Britain, they contribute about one-third of the antipathy towards Jews that exists in the country.

This type of calculation serves two purposes. First, it enables us to demonstrate both the importance of monitoring attitudes within certain sub-populations (in this example, the Muslim population), and the importance of monitoring attitudes more generally: these data show that most of the antipathy that exists actually comes from non-Muslims. However,

Population composition alone can drive changes in the overall level of antipathy towards Jews, but, when a particularly small but antipathetic segment of the population grows in proportion, the change in overall levels of antipathy can be rather inconspicuous.

second, it demonstrates the link between the level of antisemitism in segments of a given population, in this case the population of England and Wales as a whole, and population composition. The overall level

<sup>29</sup> ONS Census Table DC2107EW

of antisemitism is, effectively, a weighted total of the segment-specific levels, with proportions of the segments in a given population serving as weights.

This second point is important. The equation linking the segment-specific level of antisemitism and the population share of this segment is:  $(0.048 \times 47\%) + (0.952 \times 4.983\%) = 7\%$ . If we imagine, for the sake of simplicity, that the proportion of Muslims in the population of England and Wales was to rise from 5% to 10% over time,<sup>30</sup> we would have to substitute 0.1 for 0.048 in the equation above and 0.9 for 0.952 for the non-Muslim population, thereby creating the following revised equation:  $(0.1 \times 47\%) + (0.9 \times 4.983\%)$ , assuming, of course, that attitudes remain stable. The answer is 9.2%. So even in a scenario where the Muslim population was to become twice as large a segment of the British population as it is at present and its proportional opinion of Jews remained stable, the overall level of antipathy towards Jews in the country would barely change; indeed, it would still remain lower than the level of antisemitism in France between 1991 and 2009.

These types of calculations demonstrate that changes in population composition alone can drive changes in the overall level of antipathy towards Jews, but, importantly, when a particularly small but antipathetic segment of the population grows in proportion, the change in *overall* levels of antipathy can be rather inconspicuous, or easily interpreted as such. What will be seen is a rather slow change, not least because the investigated growth in the proportion of the Muslim population will not occur overnight, but will rather take place over the course of several decades, based on its current rate of growth. Furthermore, even when the proportion of the small antipathetic segment remains unchanged, measuring the overall level of antisemitism of the whole population is not something that can meaningfully reveal the tendencies of this segment. In short, the only way to know what is happening within a particular segment of the population, is to quantitatively monitor that segment.

Regarding *benchmarking*, one of the great strengths of the CST and Pew data discussed above is their consistency and longevity. By monitoring antisemitic incidents in a constant fashion over an extended period of time, clear trends emerge. As has been shown, a single snapshot in time – the figures for a single month or even a single year – have limited value, but by repeating the same exercise again and

again over the course of many years, we start to observe important patterns. By working in this way, we begin to develop notions of what we mean by ‘high, ‘low’ or ‘standard’ levels of antisemitism, or, expressed differently, benchmarks. Benchmarking is the process of comparing a given situation with a situation considered to be normal, or desirable. For example, a normal body temperature is around 37°C, with relatively small variation from person to person. A body temperature of 38°C is defined as a fever, but not a medical emergency, whilst a temperature of 41°C is a medical emergency requiring intervention. This is an example of perfect benchmarking. Medical practitioners know the real-life meaning revealed by the measurements they take: 37°C, 38°C, and 41°C stand for normality, illness and emergency, respectively. In relation to many social and political issues, including but not limited to the prevalence of antisemitism, we have very limited capacity to benchmark in such a straightforward manner. We have seen from the Pew data explored above that, in

By monitoring antisemitic incidents in a constant fashion over an extended period of time, we begin to develop notions of what we mean by ‘high, ‘low’ or ‘standard’ levels of antisemitism, or, expressed differently, benchmarks.

2014, 7% of the British public and 10% of the French public held unfavourable views of Jews, and we have also seen how those attitudes have changed over time. We also know that in Jordan and Egypt nearly 100% of the public hold such views, and that the levels have remained steady over time. We can also see that, in Eastern Europe, the level of antisemitism lies somewhere in between these two poles. However, while 100% is clearly a dangerous level, can we be certain that 10% is not? And what about 25-45%? Are these levels dangerous, i.e. indicative of imminent violence or political danger? What exactly is that ‘point of no return’ for Jews in Britain? Benchmarking antisemitism – i.e. researching the same populations, using the same methods and the same questions over and over again – would allow researchers to make clear pronouncements of this kind.

## 5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, we quoted from *The Economist*: “After the murderous attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris on January 9th, British Jews are scared. Should they be?” This is the all-important question, and those within the Jewish community who are demanding a clear and straightforward answer to it are right to be doing so. It appears that, at present, not

<sup>30</sup> This is not a far-fetched scenario. Pew data indicate that the Muslim population of the United Kingdom is expected to rise from 4.6% of the UK population in 2010 to 8.2% by 2030. See: *The Future of the Global Muslim Population. Projections for 2010-2030*, op. cit.

only is it impossible to guarantee the security of Jews – there is always a risk that an attack could occur and no amount of intelligence can ever completely eliminate that – but it is also impossible to empirically assess the nature and scale of antisemitism today, measure from where the risk to Jews emanates, or determine whether it is growing, stable or in decline. This is partly due to all of the issues discussed above about existing research on antisemitism, and partly due to the more general state of social sciences and the apparent disconnect between analytical and methodological agendas and policy uses. Resolving these challenges in the future will involve building an intelligent research strategy utilising skilled social statisticians, alongside experts in antisemitism, Jewish community affairs and policy development. In essence, a significant leap in analytical quality is required.

More specifically, that research strategy must draw on existing hypotheses about contemporary and historical antisemitism. It is abundantly clear that a threat today exists from Islamist extremists, but not enough is known about the extent to which their ideas, even in diluted form, permeate the Muslim population as a whole, and whether the danger is growing, declining or stable over time. We know too that, historically, anti-Jewish ideas have been entrenched in parts of Christianity, and whilst antisemitism among British Christians has largely been a fringe phenomenon, it remains important to monitor both because the Christian population of the UK is changing as a result of immigration, and to draw meaningful comparisons with Christian populations elsewhere. Similarly, right-wing antisemitism, particularly at the political extreme, has been a source of violent and murderous assaults on Jews in modern European history. Whilst the UK has largely been spared from such excesses, the importance of monitoring it is important nonetheless, not least as rhetoric about immigrants is becoming more commonplace. And antisemitism can also be found on the left of the political spectrum, and there is much debate today about the relationship between antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes on the political left. Much more work is required to understand both the nature of this relationship, and the extent to which it does or does not pose a threat to Jewish life in the UK. All of these sub-populations within the UK need to be examined and understood in greater detail, and contextualised in order to ascertain the extent to which any anti-Jewish hostility that exists in any parts of the British population constitutes a danger to the country's Jews.

Furthermore, much more work needs to be done to understand the Jewish population itself. The data outlined in this paper reveal strikingly high levels of anxiety and concern, but also important distinctions

between Jews in different countries and with different levels of religious observance. To some degree these differences reflect higher and lower levels of threat in different places, and whether Jews are identifiably Jewish to others or not. At the same time, it is likely that they are also informed by internal factors – the place of antisemitism in people's Jewish identities and the extent to which their personal politics, or the history of antisemitism, shape and inform their views. Antisemitism exists both externally to the individual and internally, and in developing policy to combat it, it is essential to develop a sophisticated view of both of these.

In researching both Jews and non-Jews, it is critical that the methods used draw on best practice, and that the questions posed investigate antisemitism in a multi-faceted and systematic fashion.

Furthermore, it is essential that the data are then examined by qualified social statisticians, using not just univariate or simple bivariate analysis, but multivariate approaches to ensure that real trends are identified, and the reported findings are empirically sound. These results also need to be written up and presented in a responsible fashion, steering clear of both sensationalism and complacency, and taking care not to exacerbate the problems by falsely stigmatising others. And all of the data need to be stored securely and utilised not simply for the purposes on a one-time report, but on an on-going basis, ensuring our shared understanding develops and grows over time.

In addition, our understanding of antisemitism will be significantly enhanced by reviewing existing data, and indeed, engaging with researchers to try to maximise the value of their work. Whilst pollsters will continue to investigate antisemitism on their own terms, the development of a robust and centralised approach to researching the topic will inevitably inform their efforts. Being actively involved in the examination, utilisation and development of these data is an important part of the work that needs to be done.

Monitoring trends in antisemitism requires professionalism, objectivity and expertise in survey-taking and data analysis, supported by long-term financial investment.

In essence, in developing its research strategy, the Jewish community needs to steer away from knee-jerk reactions and ad hoc research enterprises. Monitoring trends in antisemitism requires more than 'being concerned' or having good intentions. More than anything it requires, at an absolute minimum, professionalism, objectivity and expertise

in survey-taking and data analysis, supported by long-term financial investment. In addition, the community's capacity to benefit from existing and future data depends critically on statistical, or, rather, numerical education, to ensure that community leaders and members are able to fully understand numerical regularities and how they impact on what the data do and do not show. Moreover, it also depends on the capacity of analysts to link the observed levels and trends in quantitative measures of antisemitism to real-life developments, and to elaborate a risk assessment model capable of

predicting the outbreaks of violence on the basis of the observed figures.

If policy makers in the community want to see some progress in understanding antisemitism, both in terms of analysis and for policy development purposes, long-term investment in the professionalisation of this subject area is required. The alternative is deeply problematic: further wastage of resources, continuing inflow of superfluous data, and persistent uncertainty as to 'what this all means', all at the expense of greater clarity and, we believe, greater safety for Jews.



## About JPR

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is a London-based independent research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in Britain and across Europe by conducting research and developing policy in partnership with those best placed to influence Jewish life. For further details about our work, and access to all our publications go to [www.jpr.org.uk](http://www.jpr.org.uk).

## Other recent work on antisemitism by JPR

DellaPergola, S. and Staetsky, L. D. (2015). *From Old and New Directions. Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in Italy*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. (2014). *The Exceptional Case? Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in the United Kingdom*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) (2013). *Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Boyd, J. (2013). *Jewish Life in Europe: Impending catastrophe or imminent renaissance?* London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

In addition, JPR produces a monthly digest covering news stories about Jewish life in Europe, which can be downloaded each month from the JPR website.

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