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OIC MIGRATION AND THE “NEW ANTISEMITISM” – ATTEMPTING A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS INTO A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF RISING ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

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Recent years have seen reports of rising antisemitism throughout the world, and especially in OECD countries, where such activity is often monitored on both a state and nongovernmental level. According to the Kantor Center’s Annual Report for 2019, that year saw an overall rise of 18% in violent antisemitic cases, and most countries examined also included an increase in additional manifestations of antisemitism. ¹

Antisemitic incidents may be expressed in a number of different ways – whether through violence, vandalism or harassment – and their sources vary. The “Working Definition of Antisemitism” as accepted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and adopted by approximately 30 countries around the world, outlines the various manifestations of antisemitism. These include traditional examples of antisemitic stereotypes and beliefs as expressed in right-wing or Christian circles, as well as the colloquially-termed “new antisemitism”, which includes attacks on Jewish self-determination and collective identity in the State of Israel – and which tends to also come from left-wing and Islamic elements.

Along with the discussion on antisemitism in Europe and other OECD countries in recent years, there has also been increased attention paid to migration and integration issues in those same countries, especially for migrants coming from largely Muslim backgrounds. The two issues – migration and antisemitism – are often mentioned together following high-profile attacks in Europe, such as the 2006 Ilan Halimi murder, the 2015 Copenhagen

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https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/sites/humanities_en.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/humanities/kantor/Kantor%20Report%202020_130820.pdf.

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shootings and the Hypercacher kosher supermarket attack in Paris that same year. Yet while a number of qualitative studies and case study analyses have been conducted from the perspectives of various disciplines over the years, there has been a shortage of concrete and comprehensive quantitative analyses examining the relationship between the two phenomena. Thus, a more serious look into the potential significance of migration – specifically from Muslim-majority countries – as a factor related to rises in antisemitic incidents is needed for any attempt at gaining a better understanding of the issue on a larger scale.

In order to provide an initial look into this question, we conducted a quantitative examination of this sort, using data on recorded antisemitic incidents and migration over a period of 15 years (2001-2015) and in a total of 10 developed countries, all of them members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The results, while somewhat expected, are telling on a social and policymaking level, and invite further exploration and solution-based thinking.

Methodology

The basic goal of the study was to examine a quantitative connection between migration originating in Muslim-majority countries, and a potential subsequent rise or fall in recorded antisemitic incidents in the absorbing country. The study conducted a multivariate panel regression analysis across multiple years and countries, and controlling for different covariates that can serve as potential influencers for rising antisemitic incidents.

Dependent Variable: Antisemitic Incidents

The primary dependent variable in this study was the number of antisemitic incidents as defined and gathered by each monitoring organization or government, over the time period of 2001 until 2015, in 10 different countries. Countries were selected based on available data, and this inevitably led to a data set consisting of OECD states with developed information-gathering systems. Data for antisemitic incidents was collected from both official governmental and nongovernmental sources (largely Jewish organizations which keep track of such incidents) in the following countries: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States. In the case of a country with both a government and an NGO source of figures, the data set

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used the most complete source. The figures used for each country were consistent in their source and methodology each year.

The sources for the data set were as follows:

Official (Government):

Austria (Federal Ministry of the Interior), France (CNCDH – National Consultative Commission on Human Rights – together with the Jewish NGO CRIF), Germany (Federal Ministry of the Interior), Sweden (BRA – National Council for Crime Prevention), United States (FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation)

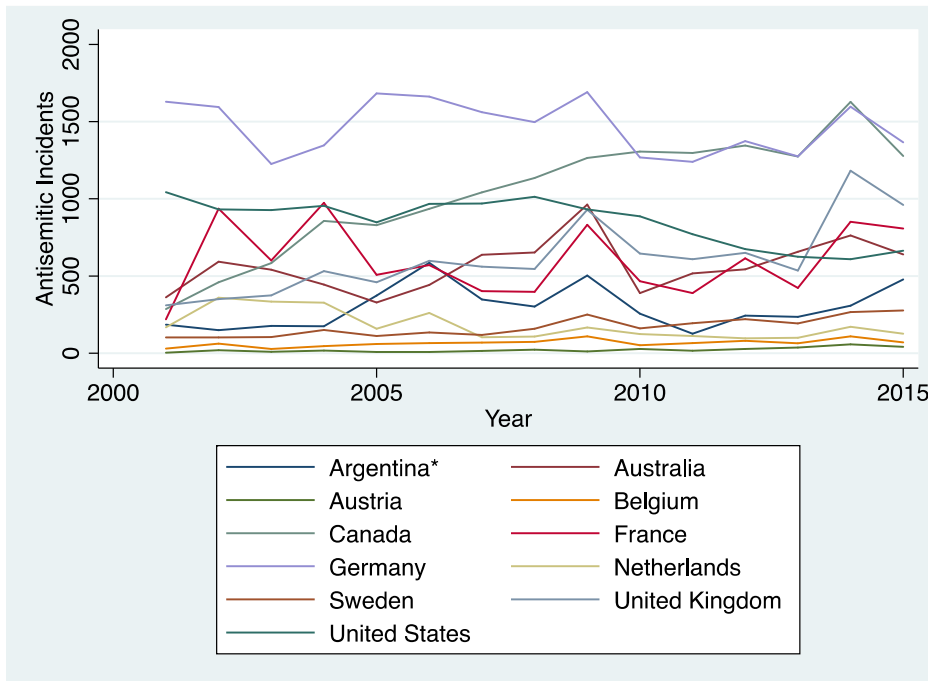
Unofficial (Jewish NGO):

Australia (ECAJ – Executive Council of Australian Jewry), Belgium (Antisemitisme.be), Canada (B'nai Brith), Netherlands (CIDI – Center for Documentation and Information on Israel), United Kingdom (CST – Community Security Trust)

It is important to note that at the beginning of data collection, the initial sample consisted of 20 countries, but due to difficulty in filling all of the applicable years and in finding corresponding independent variables for each country, half of the original group was dropped in favor of a more complete and balanced sample. Changes in methodology were also taken into account in choosing the sample; thus, countries whose data collection techniques experienced an overhaul that significantly altered the statistics were excluded from the final sample.

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Figure 1: Graphics of Panel Data – Antisemitic Incidents, by Country and Year



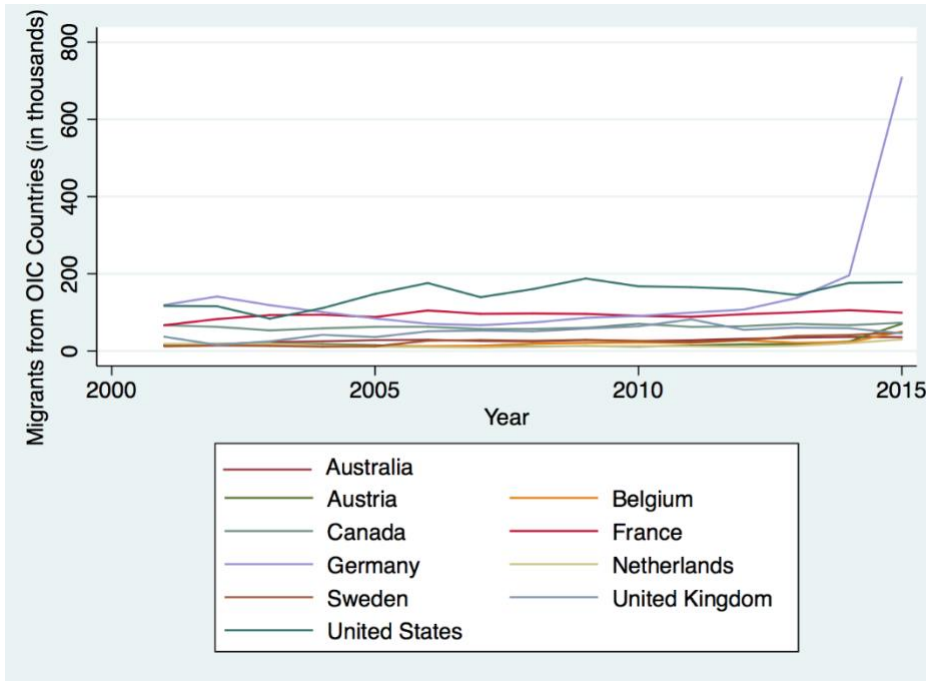
*Argentina was not included in the final sample of this study.

Independent Predictor Variable: Migration from “Muslim Countries”

The independent predictor variable examined in the study was migration from so-called Muslim countries, isolated here to the 57 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an international body whose members include all of the world’s Muslim-majority and Muslim-oriented countries. The annual number of migrants originating from these OIC states and flowing into the 10 absorbing OECD countries was collected and aggregated from the OECD’s International Migration Database.

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Figure 2: Graphic of Panel Data – OIC Migrants, 2001-2015



Additional Covariates – Control Variables:

Taking into account the literature on both antisemitism and hate crimes in general, additional variable categories were incorporated as control factors and potential explainers for changing rates of antisemitism. These included economic factors such as GDP per capita and unemployment rate, national political factors such as a government’s ideological orientation and the proximity of elections, and a country’s relationship with Israel based on travel.

Building the Regression

A panel regression was constructed for the sample to examine the relationship between migrants from OIC countries and antisemitic incidents, while controlling for the additional covariates that may influence the prevalence of antisemitic incidents. The goal was to

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examine a connection between the variables which exceeds simple correlation, with the understanding that in a given year there may also be concurrent partial correlations between some of the existing variables (for example, economic conditions of a country and the number of migrants wanting to arrive, or economy and travelers to Israel, etc.).

A fixed effect was placed on both country and year, allowing to focus on the internal fluctuations in antisemitism within each country of the sample without subjecting them to external shocks that would raise incidents in all countries – for example, for events related to the Arab-Israeli Conflict. These fixed effects were also meant to control for any “inherent” antisemitism that may exist within a country without regard to changing variables, and to address the varying levels of trust across countries in law enforcement and the subsequent effects of under- or over-reporting.

A logarithmic transformation was conducted for all continuous variables (dependent, independent and covariates) except for unemployment in order to regularize the data and also to account for potential nonlinear relationships between the variables.²

Additionally, a one-year lead was placed on antisemitic incidents, in order to establish a clearer direction of influence for the relationships between independent/control and dependent variables. We thus assumed that the independent variable and covariates should all be reflected in the following year’s level of antisemitic incidents.³

Results & Conclusion

Through OLS⁴ panel regression analysis, the study found that incoming migrants from OIC countries were correlated positively with future antisemitic incidents in their OECD countries of arrival, for the years examined. This finding serves to substantiate concerns and increase awareness among policymakers and law enforcement regarding the

² A natural log transformation was not placed upon unemployment rate, which is itself measured by percentage points. Additionally, it was not placed upon the political variables (right-wing government and election year), which are binary categorical variables.

³ As data on antisemitic incidents and most of our covariates is collected and reported on an annual basis, we are not able to break it down by month or season and be certain of chronological validity. By placing a lead on the dependent variable, we are able to more confidently analyze the events chronologically and ensure that we are evaluating antisemitic incidents that occurred after the independent variable and covariates.

⁴ Ordinary Least Squares.

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effectiveness of immigration and integration policies on the one hand, and fighting bigotry and hate on the other.

The observed relationship was especially evident among the European countries in the sample, and it was robust for an alternative data set for US figures. The model was also robust both when migrants from OIC countries were measured by the thousands and when they were measured as a proportion of the total arriving migrants. This means that for the sample as a whole, and especially for European countries, we found a positive correlation between incoming OIC migrants and subsequent antisemitic incidents, as well as a positive correlation between high percentages of immigrants from OIC countries and subsequent antisemitic incidents. This relationship was found to be specific to OIC migrants and was nonexistent in tests for non-OIC migrants.

At the same time, the findings were also robust for antisemitic incidents per 1 million population, displaying significant positive relationships for a rise in OIC migrants and percent OIC migrants on the one hand, and subsequent antisemitic incidents per million population on the other.

When the dependent variable was switched from antisemitic incidents to total hate crimes and non-antisemitic hate crimes, we found that the influence of migrants from Muslim countries acted in a manner opposite to that of the antisemitic incidents – non-antisemitic hate crimes were positively correlated with a preceding influx of non-OIC migrants, but showed no relationship with the arrival of migrants from OIC countries.

The uniqueness of the positive connection between OIC-origin migrants and subsequent antisemitic incidents supports our hypothesis and gives backing to theories studying the “new antisemitism” in the developed world, which link the phenomenon in part to a growth in Muslim communities, some of which may be importing certain antisemitic trends prevalent in Muslim countries.⁵

⁵ As discussed and researched in:

Richard L. Rubenstein, “Antisemitism and the Contemporary Jewish Condition,” in Berenbaum, Michael (ed.), *Not Your Father’s Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21st Century*, (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House 2008).

Mark Weitzman, “Transmigration of Antisemitism: Old Myths; New Realities,” in Berenbaum, Michael (ed.).

Michael A. Kahn, “Strange Bedfellows? Western Deniers and the Arab World,” in Berenbaum, Michael (ed.).

Pew Research Center, “Muslim-Western Tensions Persist,” *Global Attitudes and Trends*, 2011, available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2011/07/21/muslim-western-tensions-persist/> .

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Policy & Research Implications

On the public policy scale, this study helps to increase knowledge and point governments and researchers in a potential direction towards addressing issues regarding immigration, social cohesiveness and hate crime. While somewhat alarming, the results point to an issue which needs to be dealt with in a cautious and prudent manner.

It is important to mention that the study does not take a position on how best to address this issue, nor was it our desire to target any particular group as such. Rather, the purpose was to find an empirical basis for one aspect of a complicated phenomenon which has been increasingly worrying Jewish communities and law enforcement agencies across Europe and other regions which have experienced antisemitism and other forms of hate activity.

There are a number of directions for continued research on this subject, as well as gaps to be filled. One policy issue that can be studied is an examination of varying absorption and integration policies in and outside of Europe and how they affect the link between OIC migrants and antisemitism. Additionally, it may be important to determine the role of nativist extremists in OECD countries versus that of groups of newcomers in perpetrating antisemitic incidents, and it is important to be able to distinguish which groups perpetrate what kinds of acts.

Further data on total hate crimes and non-antisemitic hate crimes is needed in order to better understand the relationships between these phenomena and antisemitic incidents, and the relationship between groups of incoming migrants and these variables.

Another important gap in data is an empirical, alternative measure of antisemitism. In addition to incidents, an annual, representative measure of attitudes among a large number of countries would be helpful in creating alternative research and substantiating results.

Additionally, as put forth by a number of previous researchers and as regularly discussed in roundtables on this issue, it is crucially important to expand the pool of countries that collect reliable and consistent data, and to minimize the influence of under-reporting and over-reporting. Similarly, a more uniform reporting system which can combine the experiences of different countries and provide them with an effective way of monitoring such incidents would be helpful on a policy and a research level.

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Finally, in the years since 2015, there have been huge spikes in antisemitic incidents and overall hate crimes, whether in Europe, the US or around the world.⁶ These have been nominally tied to different factors, from rising far-right populist forces to left-wing radicalism and Islamist attacks, to the current international COVID-19 crisis. Statistics from the last few years are necessary to expand the study and be able to cover the current situation among the sample countries. Such research could attempt to re-examine OIC migration and add additional variables, such as indicators of extremist politics, to check in determining a relationship with rising antisemitic incidents.

⁶ See:

Anti-Defamation League, "Antisemitic Incidents Hit All-Time High in 2019," 2020, available at: <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/antisemitic-incidents-hit-all-time-high-in-2019> .

Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, "Antisemitism Worldwide 2019 and the Beginning of 2020," 2020, available at: https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/sites/humanities_en.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/humanities/kantor/Kantor%20Report%202020_130820.pdf .

Henry Benjamin, "Anti-Semitic incidents up 30% in Australia, report says," 2019, available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/anti-semitic-incidents-up-30-in-australia-report-says/> .